

Shaping heritage in the landscape amongst communities past and present

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Can community-based archaeology achieve different outcomes from more traditional academic approaches? In this chapter we explore how ways of knowing the past can alter significantly when the landscape is encountered through collaborative means. This not only provides a contrast to how archaeology is usually practiced in university and professional settings but enables us to study relationships with landscape that span the past, present and future. If one of preoccupations of mainstream archaeology is the regular chronological ordering of human activity from the past towards the present, working through a collaborative methodology opens onto how time and landscape can be understood in different ways.

Research co-design and co-production undermines assumptions that the past is a stable and static entity that can be uncovered and read off layer by layer (Simonetti, 2013). By drawing inspiration from phenomenological perspectives on landscape, we explore how notions of time develop from practical and discursive involvement with landscape. These forms of activity can become mediums through which senses of the past, present and future emerge, and in this way of thinking, 'time duration is measured in terms of human embodied experience of place and movement, of memory and expectation' (Bender, 2002: S103). We would add that plants, animals, seasonality and other non-human components of landscape create senses of time too. As ways of life in the landscape continue, so time itself unfolds, not simply according to a calendrical or 'clock' chronology but also by way of qualities of being past, present, future, and of duration and change. This holds true for the ways of practicing archaeology as much as for the landscapes of the past being described. Field research on 'heritage' can serve to provoke notions of temporality beyond standard associations with the past and beyond the imposition of a sense of time onto the landscape. By these means, collaboratively exploring the past of a landscape is also an emergence of its present and future too.

Our argument builds on ideas and practices of community and public archaeology. Dalglish (2013: 2) writes that community archaeology 'is evident in the many projects which have community participation as a primary aim and in the new funding streams which support such projects (...) it has become possible to see such involvement as a particular way - not the only way - of doing archaeology'. While we broadly celebrate the involvement of the public in archaeology and other heritage research, others have

drawn attention to the somewhat limited successes that can result from such work. Simpson and Williams (2008: 80) note that although standard archaeological excavations are often 'the draw' for the public, there may then be 'a lack of participation in subsequent non-excavation activities.' The same also might be said for preparatory work such as surveying and test pitting that is often hidden from public view or involvement, but which is vital for setting the scale and scope of the research. And more broadly, the task 'of really empowering the community in relation to its heritage' is much more difficult than merely providing the 'expected deliverables' of site visitor numbers, or a greater level of engagement with the archaeological process, and so on (Neal and Roskams, 2013: 151).

Moving practices of heritage away from the authorised heritage discourse (Smith 2006) of professional or official interpretations that are passively received by non-experts is what is at stake here. For Abu-Khafajah et al. (2015: 194), writing in the post-colonial context of Jordan, a significant liberation from such received truths is at stake: 'This liberation is essential for re-establishing the connection between lay people and heritage, reviving the role of heritage in building people's identities, and launching a future for heritage beyond tourism.' From this perspective, community or public archaeology is about substantially more than merely involving non-professionals at various, and usually isolated, points of the research process. In parallel with Abu-Khafajah et al.'s work we seek an active, creative and critical form of heritage, rather than one led by an expert-driven or rigidly scientific approach, and whose instrumental outcome is often commodification for tourism purposes.

The material we present is not intended as a straightforward evaluation of a further case study of community archaeology, although we do describe the ways in which we have worked. It is instead about the broader terms of temporality and landscape in which community archaeology and related forms of heritage research *could* engage. The empowerment that scholars engaged in public or community archaeology speak of, we argue, can be usefully conceived of in terms of the ability to imagine the possible futures of heritage sites and their associated communities, and to help bring them into being. Empowerment may be complicated by different agendas, perspectives and politics, yet at the same time it is these very processes that give the edge - or even the vital force - to heritage research, by purposefully bringing in multiple voices and practices. First, however, we need to briefly explore some key concepts in landscape, heritage and enskilment that ground the way we are thinking about heritage. We then move on to present our activities at the archaeological remains of the Bennachie Colony, together with how the future is being imagined through them.

A Scottish landscape, heritage and skills



Figure 1: The hill of Bennachie as background landscape (photo Jo Vergunst).

At the hill of Bennachie, on the edge of the Grampian Mountains about 20 miles from Aberdeen in north east Scotland, there are two main ways of getting around. Once arrived at the visitor centre or one of the car parks, one may simply follow on foot (or perhaps with a bicycle or on horseback) a series of signposted paths. The paths are mostly broad and well-made, and lead to the open moorland at the top of the hill or through plantation forests of conifers that encircle it. One of these lower circuits will take you around the small collection of ruined croft houses and partly enclosed fields and pasture - now mostly a timber plantation - that comprised the 19th century informal settlement known as the Bennachie Colony. Visitors can observe the ruins of toppled enclosure walls and the lower courses of stone buildings, along with the occasional quarry from which the stones were prised. It is however quite easy to miss these remains through the often thick undergrowth of broom, gorse, heather and bracken, and most of the time people pass by on their way around the forest or to the top of the hill.

The second way of getting about Bennachie is used less frequently by those who make the approximately 100,000 visits occurring each year. It involves stepping off the modern, well-laid paths and making one's way through the trees and the undergrowth. This would not be to attain a particular destination; it is more suited to simply seeing what is there or what happens along

the way. There are some small paths that have been formed through common use, and areas that afford passage by virtue of not being too overgrown. It is the way of moving through the landscape that a dog-walker might experience with their dog following a scent, or that a child might entertain; to look for a stick, to hide amongst the bracken and heather, or just because being off the path is more interesting than being on it. It is also how those wishing to explore the history of the landscape might choose to move, at least every now and then. Where *does* the wall of that field actually end? Traipsing away from the main paths brings a distinctive set of visual and bodily relations with the landscape. In a literal sense – being less concerned with gaining the view from the top of the hill, and being on a much less even surface – the walker looks down and around, and feels the ground itself rather just than the laid path.

There are broader historical resonances to these two ways of moving that speak to the themes of heritage we are concerned with. In the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, dominant visual modes involve the gaze on to an empty landscape, perhaps with iconic mountains, rivers, forests or moors (e.g. the art of Edwin Landseer, or in literature Compton Mackenzie's novel *Monarch of the Glen* that was inspired by Landseer's 1851 painting of the same name depicting a red deer stag). Conspicuously the people are absent, unless they are outfitted in tartan as a form of marketing for diaspora tourism (Gouriévidis, 2016). This vision of rural Scotland has underlain the highly concentrated pattern of land ownership in which much of the Highlands, and elsewhere, has been owned by a small number of people by way of large and thinly populated estates (Wightman, 1996). Mackenzie (2013: 12) describes this way of seeing the land in Scotland as a 'colonizing optic' that presents 'narratives of a sporting estate empty of people or a place of "wildness" that must be protected from people.' Within such settings there is an association of scenic nature with the landscape in these forms that can be traced to travellers undertaking a version of a Grand Tour in the later 18th century (following the subjugation of the Highland clans at Culloden in 1746), and became part of an emerging 'green consciousness' in the UK and beyond (Smout, 1991; Macdonald, 1998; Olwig 2002). But locally it also underpinned the development of large-scale recreational uses of the landscape for sporting purposes such as grouse-shooting and deer-stalking, which themselves followed the sheep farming that was key to the removal of large parts of the rural population from the Scottish Highlands and Islands in the 19th century (Richards, 2000; Lorimer, 2002; Hunter, 2015). In short, the tropes of heritage that come through to the present are often comprised of images of a wild, unpeopled landscape, which in north-east Scotland is combined with castles and whisky. Given the strength of such populist discourses, it is easy to forget that these places were, and are, also the homes of rural people and are inhabited by many regular visitors too. Their pasts, and how they might be brought into the present, are far less

frequently considered.

To metaphorically step off this 'main path' of conventional heritage offers a chance to see and feel things differently. By this reckoning, the landscape is not simply what is contained within a view from a mountain top. Even while this kind of 'gaze' is these days not necessarily a powerful appropriation when undertaken by ordinary hill-walkers (Lorimer and Lund, 2008), the historical and political resonances of the landscape are also altered. Rural histories in Scotland are being told in forms both traditional and new, and rural communities have been part of the broader turn towards community heritage activity in recent years that provides alternatives to the mainstream construction of the past. This has encompassed work in community archaeology (Dalglish, 2013), the arts (Smith and Hope, this volume), crafts (Bunn, 2015), archival history (Macknight, 2013) and technology-heritage hybrids (McCaffery et al., 2015), as well as established work in oral history and ethnology (such as the continuing interest in work among Scottish Traveller communities in the 1950s and 60s by Hamish Henderson). All of these forms of heritage activity are, in different ways, resituating the agency of communities themselves in terms of the past and present, and in terms of how they have lived with the landscape and its resources.

At the same time, the politics of the land in Scotland have taken a series of sharp turns away from traditional vested interests through the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 that had land reform on its agenda. The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 instigated a community right-to-buy of land in the crofting areas of the Highlands and Islands, and recent evaluations of the policy suggest that the changing relationships and new partnerships that involve communities in management of the land have been significant compared to the fairly small number of actual cases of community buy-outs (Warren and McKie, 2011). Alongside the buy-outs legislation, the Act also established a right of responsible access for walkers and other non-vehicular users to virtually the whole of Scotland's countryside. The severance of the right to control access to land from the right to own it has also changed the dynamics of rural landscape management, although as with the community buy-out rights this has also not gone uncontested (Vergunst, 2013). The point is that the terms in which we can think about landscape are changing in Scotland and indeed elsewhere (Déjeant-Pons, 2006), in ways that are power-laden.

Scholars have also developed concepts in tandem that recognise forms of embodiment and politics in relation to the landscape. Where Cosgrove and Daniels, in an influential edited collection, used visual representation as the core for understanding landscape, arguing that 'landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings' (1988: 1), other reckonings of landscape have come to emphasise the collective power relations and bodily relationships engendered with

and through landscapes (Bender, 2002; Olwig, 2002; Arnason et al., 2012). For Olwig, drawing on medieval European history, landscape is fundamentally created through a body politic of everyday conventions, tradition and common law, often in opposition to the gaze of the powerful. Ordinary interactions with the landscape can be as significant as those of the landowner and policy-maker. Subverting the standard optic of governance, it is as much through ordinary ways of being and knowing in the landscape that 'the political' is enacted, as it is through the formal processes of legislation and governance.

A further key concept for this chapter is enskilment, or specifically the way in which skills for engaging in heritage research including archaeology can be learned and shared. In 2013 we hosted a reflection and evaluation workshop for community heritage research projects in Scotland¹. One discussion was about the skills learned in this context, and prominent amongst examples given by the non-academic and academic participants alike were teamwork, negotiation, perseverance and other such capabilities. We were struck by how such 'soft skills' became an intangible outcome of heritage research. It is certainly the case that research projects involving partnerships between communities and other organisations need to draw on these kind of skills, especially in the management roles which many of the participants in our workshop had. Yet what also emerged was that participants and their communities had gained a wide variety of specific practical abilities to carry out the research itself: to access and use public archives, to elicit oral histories, to carry out archaeological field survey, excavation and analysis, and to synthesise all these into coherent narratives involving outputs such as exhibitions, publications and performances. These skills did not seem to be recognised, or valued, in the same way, and perhaps because of this it made us want to consider their significance in more detail.

Reflecting on the specific nature of archaeological skills being carried out with communities is something that the scholarly literature on community archaeology does relatively rarely, although in Scotland the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments (RCHAMS, now Historic Environment Scotland) have produced a practical guide (RCHAMS, 2011) that includes surveying and excavation techniques. Yet scholarly focus often returns to the 'soft skills' such as those identified by our workshop participants. Other approaches to thinking about skill may be useful here.

Tim Ingold (2000: 353) argues that considering skill demands an ecological perspective, in the sense that skilled practice encompasses a whole field of relations in a richly structured environment, rather than simply being the property of an individual. What we might think of as 'ecologies of skill' bring together landscapes, materials, people and their social interactions. Our

¹ Hosted by the University of Aberdeen's *Sharing All Our Stories Scotland* team (AHRC AH/K007890/1)

question is how they can produce forms of heritage that do not isolate and separate the past as a visual spectacle, as in the forms we have described above, but enable a much more critical consideration of temporal connection and disconnection. We make the case that through undertaking practical skills of heritage research – in this case field archaeology and exhibiting of the results – that communities can be enabled to imagine differently, to think differently about past, present and future and thereby to act differently too.

Our sense of ‘communities’ is very much inclusive of academics as well. We are indeed keen to explore the means and circumstances in which academics become enmeshed in the communities with which they were engaged, and we might trace the shift from engagement towards co-production that Vergunst and Graham propose in the introduction to this volume. The hard dividing lines between academic and non-academic partners can become blurred and both ‘communities’ may act as a unified body – in some ways, and at some times at least, and we will go on in this chapter to discuss limitations to this model as well. We argue that the enmeshing of interests of the ‘heritage’ and academic communities is a significant process in co-produced heritage process. The coalescing of perspectives is one way in which community empowerment in and through heritage has the potential to take place.

Researching in the landscape: from survey to exhibition

In this section we trace the progress of a collaborative heritage research project involving the University of Aberdeen and communities around Bennachie. Since 1973, the Bailies of Bennachie community group have been working to preserve the amenity of the hill and ensure public access and public interest in its history. While presence of multi-period archaeological remains has long been known about, in 2010 the Bailies began a co-ordinated effort to research the natural and cultural landscape of the hill through the Bennachie Landscapes Project (BLP), which was given an initial shape by independent archaeologist Colin Shepherd. In 2011 the University of Aberdeen secured funding through the AHRC Connected Communities programme to work with the Bailies, with a specific focus on the 19th century crofting colony that existed on its eastern slopes². While the Bailies had been involved in surveying the colony in the late 2000s, further funding enabled an expanded archaeological programme, along with archival and oral historical work that were also premised on notions of co-production (Oliver et al., 2016; Armstrong et al 2017).

Skills have been learned and shared through many different activities, including the practical, hands-on activities of archaeology in its various forms, during regular ‘work party’ volunteer days on

² AHRC grants AH/J013447/1; AHRC AH/K007750/1.

the hill and a parallel programme of training and research events. A key emphasis underlying much of the archaeological work has been the use of 'low-tech' procedures and equipment, because the skills required are those which can be quickly grasped through practice in the landscape.

Shovel testing

At the start of the BLP in 2011 a programme of shovel test pitting was implemented. This technique is used for determining the presence of archaeological remains not visible on the surface, in order to establish the extent of cultural activities within a defined area. Shovel testing was employed during the first year of the project to help define the character of the buried archaeology; specifically to identify the range of artefact types and to acquire dating material that could be compared with the standing archaeology. As the method is simple and easy to learn, and may be used to test relatively large areas such as agricultural fields, it can be very effective tool in the hands of a community group with only limited archaeological experience. To draw as much interest in the project as possible, the project commenced with a series of shovel-testing weekends. Events held on multiple weekends attracted between 30 and 40 people including members of the Bailies of Bennachie and the wider public, from around 13 years of age upwards. Participants were divided into teams and assigned one of three gridded-out enclosed fields (typically 10m x 10m squares) adjacent to the ruined dwelling houses. Each team further divided themselves into pairs or threes and were given the task of digging 20-litre test pits and sifting the soils to look for artefacts.

Shovel testing can be tiring and repetitive over the long term, but it proved to be an extremely popular way to make discoveries about the settlement and the landscape. Test pits can often produce negative results (i.e. no finds), although these are important for mapping artefact distributions. Most groups identified artefacts at least some of the time and the act of discovery was much anticipated. Pieces of ceramic, metal or glass were found, wiped clean of soil, handled, shared and discussed, initially among the local shovel testing pair and then with others. At this stage some of the technical terms were introduced to describe the 19th century pottery - e.g. sponge wear, transfer printed wear - while pieces of rusted metal or sherds of glass were given an initial appraisal too. Given the public's understanding of archaeologists as excavators who discover the past buried beneath their feet, test pitting may have helped to fulfil some of the expectations of first-time participants for doing archaeology (Holtorf, 2005). A school group who came to assist one weekend tested a former enclosed field with very few artefact finds, possibly because it was used for grazing rather than for arable (arable fields tend to be manured, which often contains domestic rubbish). Despite the low numbers of 'finds'

compared with other areas and groups, their interest in the task remained high for the duration of their visit.

Overall, shovel test pitting was a popular activity that was able to encompass a relatively large number of people. The ease of learning the method combined with the fact that almost everyone made 'discoveries' helped to establish interest in the project from an early stage. More broadly, however, it also draws attention to the significance of finding and handling materials, which has been a theme of our reflections on co-produced heritage research (see the introduction to this volume). While community archaeology literature has noted the importance of fulfilling the public's expectations of archaeology as a way of securing participation (Neal and Roskams, 2013), shovel testing also enables a set of tactile relationships involving artefacts being drawn directly from the landscape. In the small conversations around potsherds, as soil was wiped away to reveal patterns of line and colour, participants began to develop their own understanding of the archaeology as well as the practical skills to take part in it. These moments of close involvement with finds seem particularly important in community-based archaeological work, and we continue to seek ways in which they could be extended and maintained. In much archaeology, finds are all-too-soon packaged up and removed from local circulation into the keeping of professional finds specialists and curators according to national regimes of antiquities management (Karl, 2011).

Surveying

Subsequent phases of the project have incorporated a range of different types of methods for planning the Colony site. While this included methods like dGPS survey, kite photography and digital mapping, which are now commonly used by professional archaeologists, we placed greater emphasis on more traditional methods of archaeological survey, including measured off-set survey, the use of plane tables and detailed planning using 1m x 1m drawing grids. The real efficacy of these more low-tech methods was not only that they were accessible for our community researchers, but they also played an important role in further developing relationships involving the standing archaeology and the participants.

Surveying the Bennachie Colony was as much about exploring and discovering remains as it was about an objective recording of what was there. The process of offset survey involves a constant moving through the landscape in order to lay out a grid and then to measure offsets from both axes. In a wooded environment (750m x 450m, covered with trees and undergrowth of varying densities, as noted earlier) this work involves clambering and crawling through undergrowth in order to define that grid and then again, many times, in order to record any features (Vergunst, 2012). Sight lines

are inevitably blocked by trees and tapes snagged on brush. However, the process brings people into direct contact with their environment, and moving through this landscape in a sometimes tortuous way also forces a close attention to environmental detail. By the time any measurements are taken, the traverse of the tape is already known implicitly.

Whilst recording the more obvious remains, further elements are discovered. And, in order to perceive the extent of original structural lines and subsequent damage, often masking the original features, surveying becomes a decision-making process. What to record, what not to record? Where does this feature start and where does it stop? The choices become endless but measured marks have to go down on the drafting film. Individuals find themselves engaged in a dialectic with the archaeology and their decision becomes the accepted canon for an unspecified period of time. The community participant becomes the 'expert' whose decision, in this instance, is final. The dividing line between 'expert' and 'novice' blurs into a range of greys defined by a number of inter-dependant variables defined both by previous life experiences and experiences gained. Gradations of possibility are far more common than black and white assessments of right and wrong.

As the limit of inference within this historic environment is so prejudiced by undergrowth, previous site degradation and shear scale, a finer resolution than 1:50 cannot be countenanced for this type of survey. Buildings were, therefore, planned at that level of definition whilst the larger enclosures were planned at 1:100. Plane tabling was particularly effective for recording features at a middling level of detail, in particular at a scale of 1:200, which allowed us to represent individual crofts and their related kailyards and surrounding fields on a single piece of A3 paper. Planning using 1m x 1m drawing frames required a similar set of skills to plane tabling, but allows an even greater level of detail at 1:20. The selection of an appropriate scale is, as in all surveying, a key aspect of not just the final outcome but the whole field of relations involving participants, the archaeology and the landscape.

Offset surveying could be contrasted with plane-tabling where points are selected from a distance and measured in. As described in the RCHAMS field manual (RCHAMS, 2011), an idea of the site is generated by observation and points chosen to depict that notion. With offset survey the tape is moved routinely at intervals of one or two metres. The point at which the tape cuts the feature is, therefore, more random and the nature of the site unfolds during the process of recording rather than prior to it. In practice however, plane tabling often took place through a conversation between the recorder standing at the plane table and the measurer moving around the archaeology, in which decisions about what significant point to map in took place according to more than one perspective. It is this capacity for generating dialogue and shared understanding, rather than individual, expert-led decision making, that we think is

important. In this case the dialogue involves both the more distanced 'gaze' of the recorder and the mobile, tactile reckoning of the measurer, and requires a consensus to be generated between the two. Given the relative complexity of the ruined crofts, both plane tabling and offset surveying forced our participants to make very clear decisions about selecting what features would be included on the plans and which features would not be represented. This process required us to effectively untangle different kinds of material relationships - such as what was human made versus 'natural' or what features were in their original location and which features were not - in order to form a coherent picture about the site for later use.



Figure 2: Plane table survey (photo Jo Vergunst).

Building survey has also involved larger scale section drawings at 1:25 of the remaining stone walls. Looking side-on at the walls for drawing meant at the same time beginning to track their methods of construction. As a group we talked at one stage about the use of small 'sneck' pinning stones that could be seen between the larger ones in the wall, which helped to create a solid wall from unevenly-shaped blocks. The drawing again was undertaken in small groups mostly of pairs (one measuring, one drawing), again generating understanding through dialogue.

Unlike shovel test pitting with its focus on artefacts, survey and planning therefore guided attention towards features, and in particular the archaeology of buildings. The methods not only helped us to pay greater attention to materials and building techniques, but also gave us a much clearer picture of how the crofts were added to, redesigned and eventually torn down. The Colony buildings have interesting and complex biographies themselves that we have come to explore in our work (Oliver et al.,

2016). Surveying and planning have taken place over several years, typically as weekend events during periods of better weather and particularly during 2013 when our funding provided for additional help. While occasionally advertised to the wider public, these activities tended to attract far fewer 'general' members of the public, and tended to rely on members of the Bailies of Bennachie and a handful of other participants who routinely formed the backbone of field working parties. The positive aspect of this more limited participation was in helping to forge a particular sense of identity within the more involved group. With this more involved group, using 'low-tech' survey and planning methods not only encouraged particular kinds of tactile and other sensory attentiveness towards the archaeology within the landscape, but also greater degrees of engagement amongst participants themselves. By these means the shared process of learning about the landscape is emergent from the shared practice of recording.

Excavation

During the summer of 2013 we undertook archaeological excavations of two of the croft houses, Shepherd's Lodge and the MacDonald house at Hillside, in order to compare and contrast lifeways within the Colony. The excavation was evaluative in nature. After removing rubble from the interior of both dwellings, exploratory trenches were opened both inside and outside the former structures. Excavation revealed interesting details about the different construction methods used at the two crofts. At Shepherd's Lodge it cast doubt on a more popular folk tradition that suggests the croft was burned to the ground during a dramatic eviction event (Oliver, 2015). At Hillside on the other hand the discovery of fragmented but whole pottery vessels suggests a second eviction event. While archaeological excavation has provided the project with the most fine-grained evidence about life at the scale of the household, it also encouraged a more diverse series of outcomes among those who participated. This was enabled through a number of variables including the technical difficulties surrounding excavating, the quality of the archaeology discovered and the level of interest it produced among the excavation teams and other members of the project.

Excavation, like some of the later survey phases described above, required the establishment of a more intimate group of participants. This was further reinforced by the general requirement for community researchers to participate for the full two weeks of the excavation to ensure a degree of continuity. The work thus provided an important setting for learning excavate and work as a team. While the technical requirements of excavation meant that professional archaeologists played an oversight role (in particular Oliver, Shepherd and a contracted community archaeologist Aoife Gould), as skills and knowledge competencies were developed team

members become increasingly responsible for undertaking certain tasks, including providing site tours for frequent visitors. At one point community members also took charge in removing rubble from the McDonald house interior. Because the building debris consisted of bulky and heavy granite blocks an efficient and safe method was required for their removal. The answer came in the form of a 'bier', a stretcher of logs tied with rope that was made by our participants.



Figure 3: An improvised bier for moving large pieces of granite (photo Jeff Oliver).

The skills and identities of participants thus continued to develop through the field research, in similar ways that occurred during shovel testing and surveying activities. At the same time however, much imaginative and interpretive work was also underway. On one level, the constant involvement with interpretation and narratives of the sites through specific research techniques (survey, excavation, etc.) can be thought of as imaginative work. All participants on-site have the opportunity to take part in the shaping of the temporal and spatial narrative to emerge from it. A simple example of this was in shovel test-pitting around the field and garden areas of one of the colony houses. We quickly realised how deep and rich the topsoil was; in short, how much work, effort and labour had been expended by those living in the croft houses to improve the soil. These were efforts that the Forestry Commission, the current main landowners at Bennachie, now benefitted from in having excellent soils to grow their conifers from. At the same time, pieces of richly decorated and colourful pottery came readily from a number of the pits we dug. Our stereotypes of poor, marginal squatters scraping a living from the land were re-thought, and re-imagined, with each shovel-full of soil. Now we are thinking of the colonists not as subsisting hand-to-

mouth but as having their own ambitions for the future and making long-term commitments to living on the land through improving the soil, building dykes and houses (which we now survey and excavate), and raising families (whom we find recorded in archives). As it is for many farmers, the land must have been the locus for the growth and emergence of the future. The eventual failure and break-up of the colony at the hands of surrounding landowners must have been all the more painful for it.

This recognition of the future-oriented historic landscape of crofting at Bennachie contains within it the possibility of further change. This is both within the landscape itself and in community relations with structures of power and decision-making regarding the landscape. On the hill, the Bailies of Bennachie are developing management plans for the croft houses that including further historical research possibilities but also considering anew the land itself. At the Shepherd's Lodge croft we have begun to reinstate a kailyard or croft garden, with currant bushes and other historically-appropriate plants, as a way of both indicating the previous use of the land and exploring how such plants grow in the location. Another house will have a protective surrounding of native hazel trees, in a contrast with the timber production conifers that clothe much of the hillside. Shifts towards native trees and a more diverse range of benefits of forestry are slowly happening in Scotland, which in themselves form a new cultural imaginary of what forest landscapes could be (Collins et al. forthcoming). The Bailies themselves are able to take part in decision-making processes with the Forestry Commission and other landowners, who in turn are coming to recognise the significance of the narratives of the past that heritage research is producing.

Exhibiting

The Bennachie Landscapes Project has also had a broader aim to communicate not just with the Forestry Commission, other landowners, and archaeological specialists through publications, but also with the public. How and where this happens is a further important dynamic in research that is intended to be grounded in a community, but that has a less defined relationship with the wider population. If the research merely stays 'within' the community, there is a risk of cementing its boundaries rather than encouraging openness and new connections. Wider dissemination also raises questions of who is, or can be, authorised to tell the story of the research, and if the traditional role of the academic as expert interpreter can be subverted (Smith, 2006).

At the heart of the Bennachie Centre is a permanent exhibition about the hill and its heritage which, the Centre's website claims, is 'the ideal place to learn about Bennachie' (Bennachie Centre, 2016). Such professionally designed exhibitions have become a standard of heritage interpretation, offering visitors an easy way of

encountering expert knowledge. Although expensive to create, they are relatively cheap to maintain, but also inflexible and difficult to update. An integral part of research is sharing its results with others, from the telling of discoveries with friends to academic publication, lectures, exhibitions and events. Increasingly research funders expect the 'outputs' of research to go beyond academic dissemination, so it is far from surprising that the application for Connected Communities funding to support the Bennachie Landscapes Project included a 'co-produced exhibition that will form an important strand of the dissemination of project results' (quoted from the Case for Support).

A mixed group of people from the existing Bennachie Landscapes Project and the University of Aberdeen was established to develop the exhibition. Early discussions showed the tensions between the different ways in which the hill is experienced, from visiting the interpretation centre before a walk on the well-laid paths to exploring the hill through trees and undergrowth. In the funding application we had written that the exhibition would 'showcase archaeological and historical results of the project and provide an overview of the reflexive aspects of co-produced research'. An exhibition in the Bennachie Centre of finds from excavations and the results of archival research could therefore helpfully offer visitors an insight into the research, but could also confirm the idea of the visitor as consumer, passively viewing the work of others. The traditional, modernist, model of exhibitions has seen them as being 'a linear process of information-transfer from an authoritative source to an uninformed receiver' (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000: 15), whereas more critical approaches have seen them as 'contact zones' (Clifford, 1997) in which visitors as well as curators are able to participate in discussions. Could the desire for co-production and reflexivity therefore be extended beyond the Bennachie Landscapes Project group to include other people visiting the hill?

Rather than considering the different views of the purpose of the exhibition as a block in its creation, they offered an opportunity for discussion about its aims and audiences that had not been pre-determined by the funding application. The exhibition gradually moved from being a small agenda item in our monthly or bimonthly BLP meetings to the mainstay of debate. Long discussions (late evenings in the unheated Bennachie Centre in winter!) concluded that the exhibition would not be about the results of the project, instead being about what is happening; 'an interim report to show where we have reached and what we are still to do'. The group hoped that this would inspire other people to join in with the research over coming years. The expectation of sustainability from the funders therefore moved from the investment in long-lasting exhibition hardware to sustaining the involvement of people over the longer term.

The exhibition plans therefore ceased to be about new display cases in the Bennachie Centre, but rather for a series of pull-up

banners that could be exhibited at events and locations around north-east Scotland. Although initially there was some discussion about the banners following a broad thematic structure, it was soon agreed to focus on particular places and stories. For example, the banner on the house known as Shepherd's Lodge had the sub-title 'Evicted - House Ablaze?' and presented the archaeological and archival evidence that address the local story that the house has been burnt as part of the eviction of the tenant. That focusing on the croft on Burnside highlighted the contributions to the project of the analysis of soil from test pits that showed how the colonists had enriched the soil to a deep rich loam. With the aim of encouraging other people to join in, much of the writing was in the first person plural with many illustrations depicting members of the Bennachie Landscapes Project at work, while the contribution of individual members was highlighted by a series of short quotes accompanied by a photo of the person quoted to explain their involvement. Examples from the exhibition include:

'As we excavated the McDonalds' home it was easy to feel that we could welcome 21st century visitors - friends and relations, local people, tourists - to Hillside, showing them round the house almost as if it had been ours. If only for a moment' (BLP participant Colin Miller)

'Digging in the archive has been a great experience. My particular highlight was the discovery of papers stuck into the back of a book which listed the colonists and the conditions of lease being imposed on them in 1859, the year the Commonty was divided up by the local landowners' (BLP participant Ken Ledingham).

Care was taken so that those quoted included representatives of the overlapping groups from the University of Aberdeen and the Bailies of Bennachie.

The production of the banner drew on a range of skills, including those a professional designer paid from the grant, with writing and editing shared among the group so that all banners were collaborative writing efforts. Main texts were edited down to a compressed but fluent 100-200 words, with short quotes and illustrations that showed people engaged in research, and examples of archival and archaeological finds. Despite individual draft contributions being criticised and re-written by other people, that this remained a friendly and constructive process was the result of the long discussions about the aims and audiences that took place at the first meetings. In many cases, the very drafting and sharing of the texts enabled participants' imaginative ideas to be floated and discussed openly, as the above examples show, alongside the 'hard' factual content. In their first year the banners were displayed in the nearby town of Inverurie, in the Bennachie Centre and in the

University. Subsequently they have continued to be exhibited in libraries, community centres, cafes and events, though at the time of writing, the banners now need updating to reflect new discoveries.

Through the process of its creation, the purpose of the exhibition therefore shifted from presenting the products of research for an undifferentiated general public, to focusing on the attempt to involve more people in the process of research. This can be compared with the contrast between visiting Bennachie by using the well-maintained gravel and wooden paths to an invitation to join those who enthusiastically walk and clamber between the trees and over the walls of ruined houses.

Imagining past, present and future communities

The working examples of low-tech archaeological research and open-ended temporary exhibition are diverse and we do not want to convey a single narrative of co-production or temporal imaginings. Instead, the possibility for community heritage research to incorporate multiple strands and to allow shifts in identity and practice amongst participants are very much where its strengths lie. Here we might recall the 'liberation' ideology of heritage research put forward by Abu-Khafajah et al. (2015), in contrast to research being just the execution of a preconceived plan (see Vergunst and Graham, introduction to this volume).

We recognise that the Bennachie Landscapes Project has shifted between phases of more explicit co-production and times when either university partners or those from the community took the lead in defining questions and techniques of research. The latter often occurred, for example, in evening meetings when all attending were invited to give their opinions and ideas, which led to particular participants developing expertise in archival history, survey work, pottery and other fields. Community members were also frequently able to act as a team with substitutes able to step into the breach, for example to give public talks.

Amongst the academics, while it is true that they often played their 'main' role (e.g. as excavator (Oliver), educationalist (E. Curtis), exhibition curator (N. Curtis), oral historian (Vergunst), along with others including soil scientists, archival historians and other archaeologists), they also experienced significant changes in their working practices and perspectives. Vergunst, for example, re-learned archaeological field skills not practiced since he was an undergraduate, leading him to re-think his anthropological work on landscape from this perspective. Elizabeth Curtis was inspired to develop a new course on 'Making History' for her undergraduate Education students that gives them archival and other heritage research skills to take into their teaching careers. At the same time, Jeff Oliver found that letting the project take its course, including directions that were unanticipated, was often immeasurably of more

value than the more narrowly defined academic goals we began with. All four academic co-authors of this paper (Vergunst, E. Curtis, N. Curtis and Oliver) can reflect on how they became 'volunteers' on the project as well - enmeshed in it - by committing beyond the terms of the initial project grants, pursuing the work for its own sake, and sharing in the formal and informal parts of the work, such as social events, as equals. The trick for the academics was to find the value of this kind of work in circumstances where they were also limited by restrictions placed upon them by their 'other' lives at the university, where commitments and the long hours culture sometimes limited participation - together with the problem of having public engagement or community-based research recognised as worthy of the time spent on it.

What has emerged throughout these circumstances is a set of distinctive temporal imaginations of landscape. The point is not simply that through close-up involvement in archaeology participants could imagine more realistically what life in the past had been like, although when directly asked this is frequently put forward by community participants as a significant motivation for taking part in the work. It is instead to consider imagination in a broader sense as coupled with a person's perception, situated in a relation with the landscape rather than a form of mental activity located solely inside the head. The scope of what imagination is and can do seems to broaden through these means of research. In a discussion of the connection between imagination and perception, Ingold writes that imagination needs to be thought of 'not just as a capacity to construct images, or as the power of mental representation, but more fundamentally as a way of living creatively in a world that is itself crescent, always in formation' (Ingold, 2012: 3). So imagining the places and times of heritage research happens through participants' contact with them - on site and in the archives.

Further, those very subjects of imaginative work are never still. There is no stable moment that we can return back to or recreate, and instead participants become involved with the emergent, rather than inherent, temporalities of landscape. As Bender writes (2002: S103), 'landscape is time materializing: landscapes, like time, never stand still'. There is no single, fixed moment of landscape that can be discovered archaeologically in the past or indeed ethnographically in the present. Bender's experimental and creative methods of researching a phenomenology of landscape in prehistoric sites on Bodmin Moor in south west England open on to further connections between past and present, including her and her co-researchers 'embodied negotiation' of landscape in the small routes, journeys and conversations taking place around it (Bender, 2002: S108), which must have had their equivalents in the prehistoric past. 'Time materializing' at Bennachie might refer to a similar process of exploring the past, present and future. The Bennachie crofters were striving for their own sense of the future,

that was sometimes partly realised but, ultimately, denied to them.

It is surely in such temporal openness that the possibility of change in relationships with landscape lies. In our case, while permanent settlement on the side of the hill is no longer sought, the ability to nonetheless be there regularly, and to influence the use and management of the land, is still at stake. This is where the imagination of how the land was in the past comes to be relevant in the present and future, not simply for the mainstream heritage interest in the spectacle of Scottish history.

The low-tech skills of heritage research, then, become the grounds for imagining different kinds of futures for the landscape. This is to situate community archaeology as a practice that can go beyond the 'expected deliverables' of participation (Neal and Roskams, 2013), which in themselves would be unlikely to more fundamentally challenge structures of knowledge and decision-making in heritage. A hallmark of this kind of work in the future, therefore, would not simply be the participation of non-professionals in the research process, but the means by which dialogue, shared learning and different perspectives were also incorporated. As well as providing a challenge to accepted academic structures, this approach could also enable more sustainable community heritage research itself as more voices are heard and more people become skilled at working within their own landscapes.

Connecting the skills of participation in landscape research with the capacity to reimagine temporal relations starts to invoke the possibility of positive social and environmental change. These are processes that do not necessarily need high-technology input or 'expertise' of the sort usually associated with academia. Our work at Bennachie has used low-tech engagements with the landscape that build on skills in the community. This posits a different sort of future for heritage research to that of technological modernity, and it might contribute to building a model for sustainable landscapes overall.

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