

### **Landscape Partnerships, Community Archaeology and Heritage in a Divided Society**

The National Lottery Heritage Fund, formerly the Heritage Lottery Fund, is the largest funder of heritage in the UK investing more than £200m each year in heritage projects. Central to that mission has been connecting communities with their heritage. Over the 20 plus years of the Fund's life archaeology has proven to be a powerful ally to community engagement in heritage, through its ability to involve people and capture their imaginations about the past. This paper will explore how archaeology has been used by NLHF projects, with particular reference to Northern Ireland. It will show the power of heritage to bring people together and challenge people's existing assumptions about the past. It will also show how communities' engagement in projects can be transformative to those communities' sense of their own identity and, in particular, in creating new relationships between those communities and their landscapes. Some of the material discussed in this article comes from interviews with those who were intimately involved in the projects mentioned.

Paul Mullan is the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Director for Northern Ireland. He is currently undertaking PhD research on heritage in a divided society.

#### ***The National Lottery Heritage Fund***

The National Lottery Heritage Fund (formerly the Heritage Lottery Fund) is the UK's largest funder of heritage. Since its inception in 1994 £8b has been invested in all aspects of heritage from buildings through to landscapes, in museum's and archives, and in heritage's tangible and intangible forms. The Heritage Fund operates on a UK-wide basis with country offices in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, whilst dividing England into three areas (formerly nine regions). It has a UK-wide board supported by Area and Country committees. The Heritage Fund reports to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in London.

From about 1999 onwards the Heritage Fund has informally defined heritage as being what people value and want to remember about the past. Embedded in this open definition is one core idea; that heritage should not be defined in any prescriptive way, as it is up to people themselves to give shape and value to what heritage actually is. Implicit within this thinking was the rejection of the idea of an authoritative heritage voice, the idea that gives primacy to those who have a more profound understanding of heritage through an expertise built up through their technical or professional understanding (Hewison, Holden 2004: 5).

Defining heritage in this way was not a rejection of the role of experts or professionals in any discourse around the value of heritage, but more a statement, and challenge, as to how that value would be determined. So, for the Heritage Fund, in addition to appropriate expertise about the heritage, a successful funding application has to have a strong people or community component built into its proposals and be able to show a demonstrable community interest. This approach sits comfortably with calls for the democratising of heritage suggested by many writers including Stuart Hall (Hall 2008), Rodney Harrison (Harrison 2010), Laura Jayne Smith (Smith 2006), and Ashworth, Graham, and Tunbridge (Ashworth, Graham et al. 2007).

Over the years the Heritage Fund has run a range of different funding programmes and this paper is mainly focusing on one, the Landscape Partnership Scheme, a scheme that made project funding awards of between £250K and £3 million.

### ***The Landscape Partnership Scheme***

Landscape Partnership Schemes (LPS) had been a core programme for the Heritage Fund from 2005, with over £200m committed by the time the programme officially ended in 2018. While the scope of these schemes was often unique, they contained a number of common characteristics with their focus on built heritage, natural heritage and community appreciation of local heritage. An LPS was made up of a range of discrete projects that encompass heritage conservation and restoration; community participation in local heritage; access and learning; and raising in local heritage skills; all delivered through partnerships which could include statutory agencies, local authorities, community groups and NGOs.

Since 2005 the Heritage Fund has provided funding for 10 Landscape Partnerships in Northern Ireland. Between the first one in the Lagan Valley, and the final project award recently made in Binevenagh, County Derry, there have been partnerships in the Mourne mountains, the Sperrins, Lough Erne, the Faughan Valley, Lough Neagh, The Glens of Antrim, the Ring of Gullion, and the Belfast Hills.

Community archaeology has also benefited, over the last decade, beyond the LPS funding with £50m spread amongst 858 Heritage Fund supported projects UK-wide.

### ***Community Archaeology in Northern Ireland***

Archaeology's roots in Northern Ireland can be seen through the enthusiastic endeavours of 19<sup>th</sup> Century antiquarians such as William Wakeman (1878) and Thomas Plunkett (1878) who published papers on their fieldwork endeavours in County Fermanagh within journals such as the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*. In 1853 the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* was first published and edited by Robert Shipboy MacAdam, whose varied interests also included music and the Irish language. The Belfast Natural History and Philosophical Society, which also set up the first museum in Belfast (Nesbitt 1979), supported a number of early archaeological excavations including Henry Lawor's at Nendrum Abbey in the 1920s. Up to this point all excavations had been volunteer-led, however, that all changed in 1937 when the Ancient Monuments Act (Northern Ireland) required all archaeological excavations to be licensed. So, with this sweep of the official pen archaeology became the preserve of professionals, as deemed by government, for the next 70 years, and it still remains the case today that an excavation for archaeological purposes in Northern Ireland has to be licensed by the government-sector archaeologists within the Historic Environment Division of the Department for Communities. This approach, while likely to have been well intentioned and being about protecting the heritage, was in direct contrast to what continued to happen in Britain where the tradition of amateur involvement in archaeology remained an important part of the archaeological scene.

This change towards licencing and the professionalisation of archaeology should not be taken to mean that interest in archaeology subsequently diminished through lack of active involvement. During this period historical societies like The Glens of Antrim Historical Society and Seanchas Ard Mhacha in County Armagh flourished and professional archaeologists were always in demand to speak at their events and lead many field trips to sites. However, historical societies membership tended to be older, retired and with broad interests in a variety of topics, of which archaeology was only one. The focus of these societies was more about exploring local heritage in all its forms, unlike, for example, the situation in England where there were the archaeological societies who facilitated their members direct participation in archaeological fieldwork. If there was to be volunteer engagement in archaeology it was generally limited to a few individuals from within the ranks of the Ulster Archaeological Society, such as Billy Dunlop, who took part in the annual

excavations organised by the academic staff at Queen's University Belfast for their students, or for non-invasive survey work which did not require a license. All of this engendered a barrier between the professional and the amateur.

This lack of community and non-professional engagement in archaeology, however, did not go unnoticed. In 1991 Jim Mallory and Tom McNeill, both lecturers in Archaeology at Queen's University, noted in the final chapter of their seminal book *The Archaeology of Ulster* that 'Archaeology has now become too much the preserve of a small group of professionals ... This is something which we must hope will change, and work towards this end' (1991: 336). In their view monuments in the landscape would be better protected if they were appreciated, valued, and properly understood by the communities that lived beside them rather than solely through the work of knowledgeable professionals. Where once the superstitious lore and tradition of the countryside had been a protection in itself, the rejection of those old ways left much of what was once valued in the landscape defenceless: the fairy forts (ringforts), the giant's graves (megalithic tombs), and ancient field systems. Mallory and McNeill's call came just a few years after a very public dispute over the future of Navan Fort, when an adjacent quarry sought to expand its workings around the perimeter of Northern Ireland's most important archaeological monument, Emain Macha, the ancient capital of Ulster. The very fact that such an important site could be imperilled signified the importance of building public appreciation of heritage and its place in the rural landscape. The danger was clear and unambiguous for Mallory and McNeill,

'By becoming concerned with professional standards, archaeology had risked losing touch with the support of people, who will ultimately ensure, much better than the actions of professionals, that there is archaeology left for future generations.' (1991: 336)

There now could be no clearer call or rationale, nor indeed stronger advocates, for the involvement of communities in the protection of their local heritage.

### ***Archaeology and heritage in a divided society***

The dispute over Navan Fort created a motivation of a very different kind to that of exploiting the landscape solely as a resource for quarry material. Public interest had been roused about Navan Fort through the campaign to save it, and there was now a call for the site to tell its story better and create a greater understanding of its importance. The Navan Research Group was established in 1986 by members of staff in Queen's University Belfast and the Ulster Museum to encourage academic research into the monument and its surrounding landscape. The group set up a journal, *Emania*, which is still periodically published. And its second issue carried an article advocating for the development of a heritage centre at Navan Fort (Mallory 1987). This call chimed with an emerging political desire to develop the tourism infrastructure of Northern Ireland, in the hope of being ready to take advantage of any move towards peace and the potential of a subsequent tourism boom; this was still a decade prior to the Good Friday Agreement, when 'the Troubles', that period of intense societal conflict that ultimately claimed over 3,000 lives, still raged (Hennessey 1997). Contained within that idea of promoting Navan Fort for tourism purposes was also the recognition of another opportunity that presented itself, that of archaeology's potential for improving mutual cultural understanding, and the belief that through telling the story of Navan Fort there was the potential for wider societal benefit.

Navan Fort told not just an archaeological tale, but a mythological one as well. For Navan Fort, was Emain Macha, central to the *Táin bó Cúailnge*, part of 'the Ulster Cycle', which told the heroic stories of a legendary battle between Conchobar Mac Nessa and Queen Medbh of Connaught (Kinsella

2002). The central figure in this conflict was Cú Chulainn a mythical figure of great prowess who was claimed by both sides of the recent conflict in Northern Ireland. Community murals<sup>1</sup> in both Nationalist and Loyalist areas have proudly used his image. Loyalists viewing him as an ancient defender of Ulster who provided protection from the Irish, while for Nationalists Cú Chulainn symbolised the heroic qualities of Irish freedom (Rolston 2003). So here we had the potential of a site which could speak to both communities in the divided society of Northern Ireland, and, importantly, a figure who predated the Planter and Gael conflict of the last 400 years. For many the origins of conflict go back to English attempts to control Ireland which ultimately led to the Ulster Plantation when Scots and English settlers took control of vast tracts of land in Ulster in the Early 17<sup>th</sup> Century (Bardon 1992). It was this malleability and use of the past which excited a number of civil servants and politicians in the late 1980s, who began to explore the potential for Navan Fort as a site which could support the ongoing search for peace. And, with influential backers for the project, funding was eventually found with the Navan Centre opening in 1993.

For many archaeology and material culture are not necessarily the first places where one looks to try and find answers to the challenges of living in a divided society. However, for those deeply immersed in it, the potential for historical culture to reveal a deeper understanding has always been there. This is no better exemplified than in the history gallery of the Ulster Museum where the scene is set with the first object on display, the Dungiven costume, 17<sup>th</sup> Century clothing found in a bog, and showing very clearly Scottish, English and Irish design influence (Horning 2014). What is remarkable about this costume is that it suggests that the people of that time were mixing in a way that does not fit easily into the simple modern narrative of 'us' and 'them' (Blair 2016). In this way the past unleashes its potential in many different and interesting ways. Similarly, if we look to one of the most important historic sites in North Antrim, Dunluce Castle, accepted notions and narratives can be unsettled through thoughtful inquiry and through archaeological investigation.

The past in Northern Ireland is constantly claimed to fit contemporary narratives, in this way Dunluce, because of its links to the Ulster Plantation and subsequent history, is seen as contributing to an interpretation of the past which ultimately leads to Unionist dominance in Northern Ireland. Yet a deeper look shows how Dunluce is situated in an area from where there has been movement backwards and forth between Scotland and Ireland for many thousands of years (Breen 2012). Indeed, the excavations conducted by Breen at the site confirmed that Dunluce was,

'... a place of multiple identities and voices and was a place that featured in all aspects of Ulster's past. This was not a place exclusive to one identity or another and was a place that exemplifies the fluidity and diversity of past societies.' (Breen, Reid et al. 2015:924).

The archaeological discoveries at Dunluce showed, just like with the Dungiven costume, a variety of influences that refused to be pinned down to a single ethnic claim, a claim that reflected more about how, in a divided society like Northern Ireland, the past is politicised in the present. It is through this complicating of the past that the binary narratives which pervade all discussion of the discourses about Northern Irish identity can be challenged.

Breen also points out how the local community connection and understanding of Dunluce had been eroded over time as the site was becoming more prominent and important from a tourism perspective. It was striking for Breen that the historical focus of local schools was on places other than Dunluce with 'no central attempt to develop local histories or associated resources' (Breen,

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<sup>1</sup> Murals on gable walls are a traditional mode of expression and transmission of community memory within Northern Ireland.

Reid et al. 2015:924). The danger as ever in Northern Ireland is that a disconnection and alienation from such an important historical site creates the space for narratives that seek to own and exclude through the politicisation of landscapes (McDowell 2008).

### ***Mullycovet Mill and Battles, Bricks and Bridges***

From 1997 to 1999 the Heritage Fund supported the restoration of Mullycovet Mill in Fermanagh. A small aspect of the programme, supported by the Heritage Fund, was architectural recording and archaeological excavation conducted within the ruins of the building in advance of the reconstruction work. This involved frequent site visits from school groups and members of the public to see the work as it progressed. Colm Donnelly, who now heads up the Centre for Community Archaeology at Queen's University Belfast, was the project officer for the programme and, building on his experiences at the Crow Canyon Archaeological Centre in Colorado, where he was an intern in Summer 1993, this was the starting point for something very different in his career as an archaeologist.

'Mullycovet was unique in Northern Ireland at that time. It helped me to recognise just how people could get involved and the public value that could be created from this type of work. The value was not just in knowledge, there was also a wellbeing side to the community being involved as well.' (Donnelly 2020, pers. comm.)

Donnelly commenced work at Queen's University Belfast in 1992, and in 2002 he became involved in a British Telecom sponsored archaeological project involving primary school children from outside Derry-Londonderry in a state school (Maytown Primary School) and a Maintained sector school (St Oliver Plunkett's Primary school), who came together in a cross-community project designed and led by a teacher, Peter Monaghan. Facilitated by the government archaeologists, the children participated on an excavation at Ballyvarnet with a team from Queen's University Belfast and this represented the first time that school children on the island of Ireland had been directly involved in excavation on a genuine archaeological site. While these examples were both quite low-level, they signalled the potential of archaeology to support wider societal benefits. Community involvement became an increasing element of the workload for the fieldwork unit that Donnelly established and led in Queen's University, the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork (CAF). Consequently between 2017 and 2019 the unit underwent a rebranding exercise to reflect the scale of its involvement in community-based archaeological research, and it now operates as the award-winning Centre for Community Archaeology (CCA), which he directs with Professor Eileen Murphy (see Donnelly and Murphy, this volume).

One of the most successful projects that the CAF was involved with was the archaeological components of a small Heritage Fund project at Arney, in County Fermanagh, run by the Cleenish Community Association and Killesher Community Development Association (Sloan and Redmond 2015). The Ambitions for 'Battles, Bricks and Bridges' were quite modest. The project set out to link a number of heritage interests in the local area: the folk memory of a battle during the Nine Years War (1593-1603) between the Gaelic Irish and the Tudors, the lost early modern brickmaking industry in Arney, and a bridge that had been threatened by road widening. The bridge had introduced the local community group to the world of heritage through an appeal to ensure that a proposed road widening scheme would not alter its structure in any way. Architectural study by Donnelly, however, identified that what had hitherto been viewed as simply a beautiful but otherwise unimportant bridge was a rare surviving example of early to mid 17<sup>th</sup> Century date, a heritage resource that needed proper heritage management and conservation.

The archaeological aspect of the project was the identification of the 1594 battle site of what had come to be known as the Battle of the Ford of the Biscuits, when the combined forces of the Maguires and O'Neills had defeated the Elizabethan army of Sir Henry Duke. When an archaeological survey of the potential site was proposed the local people questioned the location where a government archaeologist had proposed that the battle had been fought. For the local people the archaeological expert was incorrect, as they retained a folk-memory of a totally different location for the battle-site. By way of a compromise, it was agreed that fieldwork would be undertaken at both locations, with metal detector sweeps undertaken in each. As the work proceeded, however, it became apparent that no musket balls or the detritus of war was being found in the expert's chosen location. Conversely, a range of artefacts of the period were being retrieved in the location favoured by the locals, thereby vindicating their oral traditions as to where the battle had been fought; there could be no clearer expression of the value of local knowledge and folk memory amongst a host community than this fieldwork project.

There were other archaeological elements to the Arney project including the excavation of an old National School (McKerr, Graham et al. 2017). The community contributed significantly with children being heavily involved, particularly with the excavation at the school. An early 19<sup>th</sup> Century house associated with the brickmaking industry was also investigated. This was known locally as Robert Lamb's house, since he was the last resident of the building before it was abandoned in the late 1960s. During the excavation the archaeologists were visited by Myles Keogh, who had holidayed with its owner, his uncle, during the 1950s and 1960s. Myles was able to explain how the space within the bare walls had once been organised and utilised when this now ruined building was Robert's home (Sloan and Redmond 2015, 22-31). In all of this work connections were being made to people's lives, and that made it all the more real for the community participants. The connection between the community engagement and the archaeological work opened up the discoveries to 'the wit and memory that can never be uncovered by the archaeological fieldwork alone' (Donnelly 2020, pers. comm.). Collective memory and folklore sat alongside archaeology as a means of discovery. While Arney is probably no different to many places in Ireland the community's imagination had been opened up to their own folklore through the writing of the eminent American folklorist, Henry Glassie, who had lived amongst its people and written about the area for over four decades (Glassie 1982; Glassie 2016). What was so interesting about the Arney project was the degree to which the community had its place within the project, ensuring that everything that was done was community inspired. The archaeologists and other expert voices were in fact commissioned by the project leaders. It was not surprising, therefore, that in 2016 Battles, Bricks and Bridges won the Best Community Archaeological Project at the British Archaeology Awards (Henderson 2016).

When describing the Arney project, which he was involved in, government archaeologist Paul Logue outlined the benefits the participants identified: how they started to lose weight, stopped going to pubs, got out more into the landscape, or simply finding that were spending more time chatting to neighbours, and on a cross community basis since the project brought together people from the local Catholic and Protestant communities. He also described how, when community archaeology is well done, and this is when they are active agents in the process, communities feel greatly empowered and passionate about protecting the heritage around them. This confidence is important as it helps local communities to be proactive in that protection. In a follow up project at Arney, *Cuilcagh to Cleenish*, it was the local community once again who identified where they wanted to excavate next, Clontymullan fort, a previously ignored rectangular earthwork. The excavation by the community, assisted by professional archaeologists from Northern Archaeological Consultancy Ltd., revealed that the site belonged to the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries AD and was an example of a moated site, a monument type usually associated with the Anglo-Norman in the south

and east of Ireland. This example had been identified in a Gaelic part of the country and, as such, has been described by Logue as a ground-breaking discovery; an article is currently being written up for publication in the general-reader magazine *Archaeology Ireland* in order that this information can get widely disseminated.

### ***The Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership – deepening the community experience***

Colm Donnelly is strongly of the view that what has enabled community archaeology to develop and flourish within Northern Ireland over the past two decades has been the support provided by the Heritage Fund, no more so than with their Landscape Partnerships. The Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership (LNLP) recognised the value of archaeology as a very useful way of engaging the community and helping them to reconnect better with their past. One particular opportunity came from looking at a very old map.

The English cartographer Richard Bartlett had accompanied Lord Mountjoy's English army into the north of Ireland in the latter stages of the Nine Years War, when the Gaelic confederate forces were in retreat. Like a modern war correspondent, Bartlett had compiled a series of wonderful pictorial maps which depicted what he had seen as he moved through this hitherto foreign landscape in 1602, with the maps being sent across to London so that Queen Elizabeth and her court might see the progress that was being made by Mountjoy, including the army camps designed to hold down their newly conquered territories. One of these camps was on the western shoreline of Lough Neagh, in the heart of the Gaelic territory, and Bartlett depicted a massive fortification capable of housing 1000 men. This military camp, named Mountjoy Fort, was soon abandoned, however, in favour of a smaller, red brick construction nearby (Mountjoy Castle); as the decades turned to centuries all trace of the 1602 fortification became lost on the landscape, but its presence was remembered within the local community and became their chosen target for a community archaeology project as part of the LNLP, leading to a geophysical survey being conducted by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork in 2017 (McKerr, Graham et al. 2017; McDermott, Logue et al. 2017). The results were spectacular. Using local knowledge, the archaeologists had concentrated their efforts in a field near the lough's shoreline and the distinctive angular anomalies revealed by the survey demonstrated the location of the fort and provided targets for a highly successful community excavation in June 2018.

Brockagh was an intriguing choice because it spoke directly to the different versions and narratives of the past that exist within Northern Ireland. How the locals give name to the site, either Mountjoy Brockagh or Brockagh Mountjoy, reflected the divisions that still exist today, divisions that can draw a direct link to what was going on in the Early 17<sup>th</sup> Century. However, the archaeological excavation revealed, yet again, the complexity of the past when it became clear that there was a deeper chronology to this location on the loughshore, with the discovery of artefacts belonging to the Mesolithic; evidently this had been a place of settlement going back more than 7500 years embracing the lives of the hunter gatherer groups who first colonised Ireland. The discovery of local Medieval coarseware pottery sherds within the fortification was also intriguing. Was this evidence of some form of trade being undertaken between the English soldiers in the fort and the native Gaelic population? Or had the materials contained within the pots been commandeered by the soldiers during raids on the local people? A complicated picture emerges for which we have no clear answer.

Liam Campbell, Built Heritage and Cultural Officer with the project, described to me how the active physical engagement in the archaeological process meant so much more to those involved. One participant in the excavation commented that she wondered 'if those people could be related to me'. The continuity of time brought her close to those earlier people. The tangibility of her

involvement connected in Liam Campbell's words 'her head, heart and hand. For Campbell the excitement for the community was in finding that Bartlett's map was so accurate. He had some initial concerns because the site was located within what could be perceived as a Catholic-Nationalist- Republican (CNR) community and the work was focussing on a monument associated with a conquering English army, albeit from 400 years ago; this may not have gone down well among a community who might instinctively have sided with the defeated Gaelic confederates. This was not to be the case. Active engagement with the local community, sharing information, engagement with experts, building relationships, particularly with the landowner, all worked to the project's advantage as the monument was revealed and new stories about the area emerged. Yet another example of how communities are prepared to engage with difficult and complicated heritage. One particular factor which helped greatly was the proximity of the site to a local school. With an engaged principal, and the pupils drawing in their families, more and more people got involved and this built up to an open day with 347 visitors; in total 788 people visited the site over four weeks. Members of the community were encouraged to bring their own objects to show the archaeologists, with one person bringing a porcellinite axe. Much was achieved at Brockagh, according to Campbell. For the local community the importance and value of their heritage was emphasised. There had been a sharing of knowledge and understanding, with everyone learning from what was found during the archaeological process of discovery. In addition, the work enhanced concepts of identity and sense of place within the host community.

In addition to the excavations, each year the Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership and the CCA have been running an archaeology festival. They used to run classes on flint napping which would only attract a few people. So instead they decided to bring a number of different elements together and run the festival over a week. The name has evolved from 'Experimental Archaeology Week', to 'Skills of the Ancients', and then to 'Skills of the Ancestors'. All the activities involved direct public participation, from log boat building to pottery firing.

### ***Archaeology and the opening up the Belfast Hills***

The Belfast Hills Partnership is a partnership of landowners and stakeholder groups, set up in the early 2000s to manage the many and diverse interests in the hills which overlook the city of Belfast. Funding for a Landscape Partnership was secured in 2011 for an ambitious programme to reconnect these peri-urban hills with the city and its people.

One of those stakeholders is the National Trust who have, since their purchase of Divis and Black Mountain in 2005, been an important strategic player in the opening up of the hills. Their Divis property has grown its visitor numbers from a few hundred people to over 200,000 per annum. For Malachy Conway, the National Trust's archaeologist in Northern Ireland, archaeology has helped the Trust to build powerful connections with their audiences and fulfil their desire to create 'experiences that move, teach and inspire' (National Trust 2020). The National Trust's vision for archaeology is not of achieving ground-breaking discoveries, for the Trust the archaeological experience can be enough, enabling visitors to see the historical narrative being analysed. The Trust's desire to engage with schools has been matched by the Belfast Hills Partnership and their collaboration has seen roadshows tour around many local schools.

There have been a number of archaeological projects within the Landscape Partnership Scheme on Divis. One, the excavation of a Cashel, a stone fort, whose full purpose remains elusive and bears further investigation. Another, of a vernacular house, saw 987 active participants in the excavation (Welsh, Logue et al. 2014). All of these digs have mixed professionals with amateurs, and university students with school children, but for Conway this is not enough, and it is the Trust's relationship



with the people of West Belfast that is important. This has been developing over recent years, but he would like to see this being enhanced through greater stakeholder engagement. His vision is that the community should be heavily involved in whatever interventions should happen next. The Trust's vision fully embraces the belief that engagement with communities can actually change people's lives; and that this more than anything else will ultimately be the greatest protection for heritage.

For Grace McAlister, from the Centre for Community Archaeology, the potential for Divis is considerable. There is no better place to tell the pre-AD 1600 story of Belfast. The archaeology of Divis and the surrounding hills goes back to the Mesolithic, and for her the value is through engagement with schools, and West Belfast's younger generations, to trace connections to the landscapes which surround them; over the lifecycle of the Landscape Partnership it has certainly been the case that many thousands of schoolchildren have been engaged with their local heritage in this way. The adults she has engaged with see connections that might have otherwise remained hidden, and people are always surprised at what can be found on their doorstep. It is seen as exotic, yet can be very local, opening up people's understanding to the past and the present, looking through people's rubbish in the past makes connections to the environmental concerns of today. However, community archaeology does take time and effort, and relationships must be constructed and maintained. For Grace, however, this is a challenging but very worthwhile endeavour.

### **Conclusion**

It is clear from my interviews with many of those involved in these projects that there is a debate going on among archaeologists and those with a stake in heritage issues within Northern Ireland as to the nature and essence of community archaeology. For some it is about building mutually respectful partnerships between the professional archaeologists and the host communities, with both groups listening to each other and members of the community involved at the very heart of the project, with the work undertaken in a manner that benefits everyone involved. Whilst for others community archaeology needs to be community-led with proper agency given to the communities themselves who are, after all, experts in where they are from. Whatever the outcome of this debate the benefits of engaging communities with their archaeological inheritance are evidently considerable, as exemplified in all of the examples I have provided in this paper.

This is also true when we look at some of the projects that the National Lottery Heritage Fund has been involved with UK-wide. There have been many innovative schemes such as Canal College Scotland where over 100 young people, unemployed and from deprived areas achieved qualifications working with Archaeology Scotland to learn a mix of practical and heritage skills over 13 weeks in excavation work, surveying, mapping, recording and photography. Another project '*Digability*' saw the Workers' Education Association in Yorkshire and Humberside seek to widen participation in archaeology from disabled people and others (Ellis & Kershaw 2019). The significance of this project was that it was delivered for people through working with their preferred learning styles, and when it came to ethnic groups it all happened in their own language.

While there will always be a place for archaeology through its own intrinsic merits, whether that be in the quest for new knowledge or the honing of practical archaeological skills. Archaeology offers its greatest potential through how it can help us to reflect on the human condition and our place in the world. The very process of archaeological inquiry, built on the needs of its participants, can reach deeply into those communities from where those participants come, helping them to change how they engage with the world around them. Through connecting communities with place and identity in a thoughtfully informed way archaeology can help to face into many of the issues which

confront society today. And, my own research into how we engage with difficult heritage in a divided society aligns with Breen's in showing how thoughtful engagement with the past helps to unsettle some of the claims that the past makes on us today (Breen, Reid et al. 2015; Mullan 2018).

Involving communities actively in the archaeological process is incredibly empowering and engaging; as Liam Campbell has observed it involves 'head, heart and hand'. It is this engagement which Mallory and McNeill cried out for back in 1991 when they closed their book with the following line '... a subject relying on a few professionals alone for its research is condemning itself to a limited and ineffective future; the future lies with amateurs' (Mallory & McNeill 1991: 337). Nearly 30 years on from those words I would only change two words in their comment: the future lies with not with amateurs but 'local communities'.

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