

Presenting Archaeological Sites to the Public in Scotland

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Abstract

This thesis is an exploration of the nature of archaeological sites presented to the public in Scotland through an analysis of five case studies. The project utilises qualitative in-depth interviews, an approach that, although well recognised in other social sciences, has been little-used in archaeology. For this project, semi-structured recorded interviews were undertaken with participants at the sites, which were subsequently transcribed and analysed using QSR NVivo software. This approach, the rationales behind using it, and benefits for research in public archaeology, will be discussed in detail. This will be followed by an in-depth analysis of the roles and significances of archaeology, the ways it influences and is influenced by perceptions of the past, and the values placed upon it.

The essence of the thesis will then focus on the in-depth analysis of the case studies. Backgrounds will be given to each of the sites, providing a framework from which extracts of interviews will be used to elucidate on themes and ideas of participant discussions. This approach allows for the real, lived experiences of respondents to be relayed, and direct quotations will be used to provide a greater context for discussions. This will reflect a number of recurring themes, which developed during interviews, both within sites and across sites. The interviews will also reflect the individual roles and functions of archaeological sites for the public, and the often idiosyncratic nature of participant engagements with archaeology.

The information and insights gained from this research will then be considered with regard to potential impacts on the presentation of archaeological sites to the public in general. Themes and ideas which are developed in the case study chapters will be discussed in more detail, before suggestions for changes to the ways archaeological sites are presented are made. Finally, specific suggestions for changing approaches to the case study sites will be considered.

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1 Introduction

Since their creation in the past, archaeological sites have always had a role within landscapes and societies, memories and places. These sites have undergone continued interpretation and have been assigned meanings and values through time. Today archaeological sites are bound up within networks of the heritage 'industry', identity, the planning process and tourism. Sites are viewed as social, cultural and economic resources, ideological and political signifiers, and direct and tangible links to a distant and dislocated past.

At the same time archaeology as both a professional and academic discipline does not have, as a core rationale, an engagement with the public, through the dissemination of information in more accessible, approachable formats. Instead, communication, as at archaeological sites, has often been left to those involved with cultural resource management and heritage. Studies into the use of archaeological sites have generally been undertaken through the economic motivations of these fields.

In the more recent past 'public archaeology', a term first coined by Charles McGimsey in 1972, has come increasingly to the fore, with the development of modern uses of the term 'heritage' and an increasing interest in all aspects of the past. Many archaeological sites today are presented, in a myriad of ways, to the public. As part of a region or nation's 'heritage', archaeological sites can often be viewed as cultural icons. Archaeological sites are amongst a set of locations which include "historical sites and parks, museums, and places of traditional or ethnic significance" (Hoffman *et al* 2002, 30).

The way that sites are presented, the motivations for their presentation, and the reasons, thoughts and opinions of those who visit and use these resources are not adequately understood. The result of both expense and epistemological standpoint, most analyses of visits to archaeological sites and heritage attractions have been short, closed question, quantitative questionnaires. The resulting findings are analysed to provide statistics on certain aspects of these visits, allowing decisions to be made in terms of the conservation, management and promotion of these sites. These quantitative studies provide larger-scale samples of users of these resources, but are set very much within an economic-management framework. What these types of study fail to do is understand the processes and experiences which occur at these places: how people understand and interact with sites; their expectations and realisations of archaeology; the way they negotiate

archaeological spaces; and how they understand and experience vestiges of the human past.

1.1 Aims

The main aims of my research were to:

- Analyse the presentation of archaeological sites to the public in Scotland, through the thoughts and experiences of the users of this ‘resource’;
- Analyse the thoughts, expectations and experiences of users of sites;
- Establish, using comparative case studies, the different ways archaeology ‘in the field’ has been developed for public benefit;
- Provide an understanding of the different roles and meanings which archaeological sites have for the public;
- Use the results of this analysis to suggest more effective ways of presenting archaeology.

1.2 Methodology

This research project used in-depth qualitative interviews at five case study sites across Scotland, covering both broad geographical- and time-period-related locations (fig. 1). These case study sites were chosen to provide a diversity of presentation, from those which were organised and coordinated at a local level, through regional initiatives, to sites which were in national care. The five case studies were:

1. Yarrows Archaeological Trail, near Wick in Caithness;
2. Tarbat Discovery Centre, Portmahomack;
3. Rough Castle, Bonnybridge;
4. Urquhart Castle, Loch Ness;
5. Skara Brae, Orkney.

These five case studies also provided opportunities to examine the nature of presentation at very different types of site which all fall into the ‘archaeology’ bracket. They were strategically chosen (de Vaus 2001) to represent different approaches to presenting

archaeology, and the diverse nature of archaeology as it is encountered by the public on the ground. These case studies also provided opportunities to encounter different ‘types’ of participant, through the use of very popular and well known visitor attractions, and to contrast these with sites which were off the beaten track (May 1996). This variety also provided the potential to engage with different ‘publics’, those who used and or identified with archaeological resources at these diverse locations within Scotland.

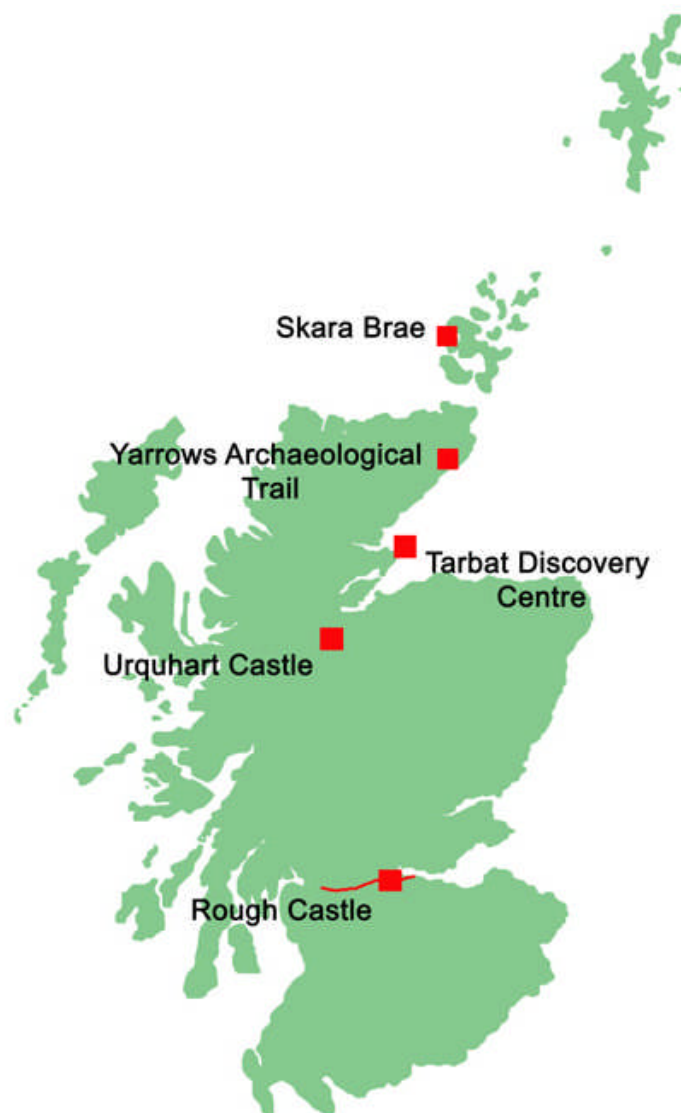


Figure 1 - Scotland showing location of case studies

1.2.1 Development of qualitative research

Qualitative research developed in the twentieth-century as a reaction to the positivist approach of the new science developed by Auguste Comte in the early nineteenth-century (Hamilton 1994; Johnston and Smith 1994). Whereas positivism was concerned with the development of “universalistic laws, whereby actual or real events in the world are explained in a deductive fashion by universal laws that assert definite and unproblematic relationships” (Altheide and Johnson 1994, 487), qualitative research arose from a growing disenchantment with science and its search for fact and truth. This reaction was part of a much wider change in the development of social investigation in general (Hakim 2000; Snape and Spencer 2003).

The development of modern qualitative research was associated with the development of the social sciences as a whole, with a change in philosophical approaches, especially the development of phenomenology and hermeneutics (Rossman and Rallis 1998; Holstein and Gubrium 1999). The development of ethnographic research created with it a number of problems of ‘measuring’ what ethnographers saw and experienced in the field. There was an increasing need to move away from that which could only be measured and quantified, to attempt to try and gain a deeper understanding of the cultures and peoples being studied, with the concomitant acknowledgement that depth of information was fundamental in attempts to understand what was being studied.

1.2.2 What is qualitative research?

There is no single way of ‘doing’ qualitative research: the term encompasses a large variety of techniques, from observation of, through to interaction with, what is being studied (Snape and Spencer 2003). There are, however, general trends and features of such techniques. Qualitative methodologies are often defined by what they are not; that is, quantitative techniques.

Qualitative and quantitative methods are two very different approaches to research. Qualitative research has often been viewed as ‘soft’, compared to the hard-science approach of quantitative systems, normally based around statistics (Gillham 2000). This is, however, an over-simplification. In-depth techniques have been criticised for not having a basis in real scientific rigour: of being ultimately subjective and therefore lacking in any real credibility within a scientific (positivist) framework. With purportedly ‘objective’ or ‘scientific’ approaches, however, there must be an interpretation of results.

This interpretation does not occur in an objective vacuum, but rather reflects the biases and preferences of the researchers (*ibid.*).

One of the primary differences between these two approaches is that qualitative researchers undertake a study with the underlying knowledge that what they do will occur within a subjective framework. Whilst acknowledging this situation may be viewed by some to invalidate the process (from a positivist viewpoint), it instead frees the researcher, allowing them to follow where the research leads, rather than fitting in to a tight, pre-determined structure (Stouthamer-Loeber and Bok van Kammen 1995). By recognising any thoughts, opinions and ideas on what one may expect of such a study, and noting these both prior to commencement and through the research process, the researcher accepts that he/she will be influenced by other factors.

Gillham (2000, 11) lists a number of key facets of qualitative research methods:

1. To carry out an investigation where other methods – such as experiments – are either not practicable or not ethically justifiable.
2. To investigate situations where little is known about what is there or what is going on. More formal research may come later.
3. To explore complexities that are beyond the scope of more ‘controlled’ approaches.
4. To ‘get under the skin’ of a group or organisation to find out what really happens – the informal reality which can only be perceived from the inside.
5. To view the case from the inside out: to see it from the perspective of those involved.
6. To carry out research into the processes leading to results (for example how reading standards were improved in a school) rather than the ‘significance’ of the results themselves.

Qualitative methodologies attempt to study, understand or interpret data that is ignored by quantitative techniques. Qualitative research is focussed on an analysis of peoples’ individual thoughts and opinions, of how they experience and understand situations, how they read their world and interpret and make sense for themselves (Hakim 2000). It has a focus on the importance of process, and is situated within a theoretical framework of inductive analysis and grounded theory (Geertz 1973; Strauss and Corbin 1994; Woods 1999). Grounded theory, a term developed by Geertz (1973), refers to the way in which

qualitative researchers create theories through themes and ideas derived from the data they observe in the research process. These theories are 'grounded' in the evidence of this research, in direct contrast to positivist approaches that set out to prove or disprove theories established at the start of the research.

Another key consideration of qualitative research is the concept of the 'construction of knowledge', which sees the researcher playing a key role in this process (Kvale 1996; Rossman and Rallis 1998). Often, researchers set out to probe volunteers in the belief that the data they are searching for already exists as untapped information. Instead, it can often be the case that they are asking participants questions on subjects that these contributors have never considered prior to the meeting. In this way knowledge is created, and it is this 'unknown' which can provide very valuable data, if researchers do not try to force or control interactions too closely (Ely *et al* 1997). It is this process of the development of ideas, rather than the ideas themselves, which are the primary focus of much qualitative research (Woods 1999).

Being led through a series of general ideas and themes, the participant can begin to think about these new ideas and form opinions on them, something they may never have considered before. Kvale identifies two possibilities: the *miner* metaphor, where knowledge of a subject and/or thoughts and opinions on a subject are taken as given; and the *traveller* metaphor, which has just been discussed, where knowledge is created through discussion (Kvale 1996; Legard *et al* 2003). It is only with the guidance of the researcher that this information can be attained (whether through mining or travelling): without the researcher these details potentially do not exist, or at least have never been considered.

1.2.3 In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews (also known as semi-structured or conversational interviews) were the primary qualitative technique used in this research project, and are one of the main methods used in qualitative research (Legard *et al* 2003). One of the strengths of interviews, as with all qualitative research, is the ability to gain a level of detail not available when using a closed-question questionnaire (Valentine 1997). Interviews enable the researcher to move around general topics, allowing the interviewees to have a strong influence on the direction of the interview and the information provided (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). Through the use of open and/or general questions, the interviewer can encourage respondents to discuss their own thoughts and ideas within a wider theme.

By taping interviews, the researcher is free to pay full attention to what the respondent is saying. This allows for any confusion to be clarified, and any comments the researcher deems to be important to the study to be developed fully. It also allows the researcher to return to points that may have been made earlier in the discussion, and to move around the themes discussed to make sure that all of the important areas have been discussed fully (Legard *et al* 2003). But it also allows the researcher to recognise, and establish, any new ideas or themes which may arise in the interview; something that would be lost in the process if the interviewer were only taking notes. It also allows the researcher to establish what factors have affected an interviewee's response (*ibid.*).

The taped interviews are then transcribed into 'field texts' (Clandinin and Connelly 1994) to be analysed at a later date. It is often advised that transcription should occur as soon after the interview as possible to allow for any thoughts, ideas or interpretations the researcher may have to be noted along side the transcribed interview (Legard *et al* 2003). This allows for any important observations which may not be picked up by the tape to be recorded, (such as any mood or atmosphere the researcher may feel) and will place the transcript in a more coherent context when analysis occurs, often many months after the original interview.

The use of excerpts from recorded interviews allows for part of the essence of the individual experience to be relayed and (re)told. Longer excerpts from interviews have been used where possible to retain the context of the discussion, and to evoke the feelings of participants who took part in this research. The complexity of encounters is reflected in the contradictory nature of some participants' responses, especially when asked to consider what they expected of a site prior to the visit. This in part reflects Kvale's (1996) concept of the 'construction of knowledge', wherein participants are asked to consider questions or ideas which they have hitherto never thought about. By asking participants what their initial expectations of the site were, they are required to think back through the experience to their arrival at the site, and to try to imagine what those initial (often subconscious) feelings were. As the interviews progressed, respondents often started to contradict themselves regarding what their initial thoughts and expectations were, through the process of their experiences on site. These initial responses often reflected a wish not to be viewed in a negative manner (by the interviewer) by appearing foolish or ignorant of the archaeology and the nature of the sites. The process of the interview, and that nature and route the interviews took, were crucial in allowing participants to open up and start to discuss their thoughts and experiences more freely.

In-depth interviews were chosen for the research methodology as they provided the most flexible approach for reaching target participants. Given the nature and location of some of the case study sites, this method of participant engagement enabled access to and interaction with a higher number of potential respondents on site. In contrast, the organisation and coordination of focus groups at sites was viewed as too complex, and at times impossible, to undertake. Tracking and participant observation were also considered, but at some sites the impact of the researcher on participants, and participants' experiences on site, were seen to outweigh any benefits that could be gained from these methods. In-depth interviews also provided the most flexible approach in terms of discussing participants' individual thoughts, ideas and experiences of sites and archaeology more generally. This approach thus provided the opportunity for 'theory building' from the research data.

Targeting 'users' of the resource, in terms of people who identified with the archaeology, or perceived value in the archaeology, at the case study sites through in-depth interviews was used as a form of 'theoretical sampling' (Glaser and Strauss 1967). This approach eschews attempts to obtain a representative sample, instead arguing that sampling should be wholly directed by the selection of participants who will maximise theoretical development (Arber 2001, 64).

1.2.4 Benefits of these techniques

The use of qualitative research techniques has a number of key benefits for researchers:

- By recording interactions, in both interviews and focus groups, the interviewer can focus on asking questions and following the respondents' answers. If he/she is taking notes, then points raised and opportunities to follow up and develop ideas may be missed;
- Focussing solely on the interview allows the researcher to make sure that all areas of the discussion he/she deems important to cover have been covered, whilst allowing the respondent to talk about what he/she deems relevant to the subject;
- Later analysis allows the researcher to study all of the responses in detail, rather than having to analyse them at the time where important information maybe missed overlooked. This will also allow comparison within and between interviews/focus groups conducted at various locations and various

times to establish any recurring themes and ideas or any conflicts which may arise.

1.2.5 The role of the qualitative researcher

Qualitative researchers are inherently involved in what they are studying. They interact with their subjects and settings rather than existing separately from them. Indeed, qualitative researchers are often viewed as research instruments (Legard *et al* 2003); part of, not above, the research process. In this way qualitative researchers can continually appraise the course of their research, and change what they are studying and how they are studying it (Rossman and Rallis 1998). This reflexivity is one of the great strengths of such methodologies; it allows those involved in carrying out the study to react to what they are learning and change focus if necessary. This allows coverage of any important phenomena, if or when they come up, rather than ignoring anything that doesn't fit in to a strict predetermined schedule as 'irrelevant'. In other words, this type of approach is much more holistic.

This is not to claim that the role of the qualitative researcher is a smooth one, as Gillham warns:

An 'open mind' is impossible... But there is a level of 'closed-mindedness' that we can deal with, and that is our preconceptions and expectations: in a word, our prejudices.... More sinister than our prejudices, however, are our preferences. Not just what you expect to find, but what you want to find. Ask yourself, what do I hope to uncover here? What is the preferred picture as far as I am concerned?

(Gillham 2000, 27)

By acknowledging their prejudices and preferences, the researcher is not negating any effect such prejudices may have on the study, but is ensuring that by being consciously aware of them he/she can take measures to reduce their impact on the study. By acknowledging that this situation exists does not show qualitative researchers to be any less professional than those conducting quantitative studies. Instead it shows an awareness of the position and role of the researcher in any study, not as a neutral, but as an active participant in what is being studied.

The first stage interviews and discussions will be "particularly useful for getting an early orientation on [the] research topic – asking simple open questions and then noting the

range and kind of responses you get. Issues of conflict or disagreement may alert you to hidden complexities” (Gillham 2000, 78).

1.3 Participants

A number of strategies were undertaken to access participants for this research. The first strategy was the use of an information leaflet for each case study site, highlighting who I was, the nature and potential outcomes of my research, and the ways that people could become involved (see Arksey and Knight 1999). This leaflet was sent out to various groups, individuals and organisations within each of the study areas, as well as to the sites themselves.

The second strategy undertaken was to establish ‘gatekeepers’. Gatekeepers are people who are able to provide a researcher with access to their desired study group. Those involved with the archaeology of the case study areas or in positions within local communities were contacted as a way of disseminating information about my research and encouraging people to take part.

The third strategy was to visit the sites and approach visitors, asking them to take part in my study, a method Bryman describes as ‘hanging around’ (2004, 298-9). In this way interviews with people at the site could be undertaken immediately, or arranged for a later time or date.

In total 138 participants (including gatekeepers) took part in 92 interviews for this research project, which comprised the following for each case study:

- Yarrows Archaeological Trail: 16 participants took part in 14 interviews;
- Tarbat Discover Centre: 38 participants took part in 23 interviews;
- Rough Castle: 12 participants took part in 12 interviews;
- Urquhart Castle: 51 participants took part in 28 interviews;
- Skara Brae: 21 participants took part in 15 interviews.

A breakdown of the biographical details of the interview participants is available in the appendix (Appendix IV), although interview codes are used to identify individual participants to ensure anonymity for all respondents.

1.4 The interviews

The interviews were recorded on mini-disc, allowing me to pay full attention to respondents' comments. This allowed for confusion to be clarified, and any observations made by participants to be developed and discussed in full. Although I used a series of general questions (Appendix I), these could be negotiated and the order altered depending on the interviewees' responses, and the ideas and themes they raised in the discussion. This process also allowed me to recognise and establish new ideas or themes which arose during the interviews.

Recording the interviews allowed me to focus fully on asking questions and listening to responses, in contrast to trying to make notes of what participants were saying, where opportunities to follow up and develop ideas would be missed. This also facilitated the analysis and comparison of interviews both within and between case studies, so that any recurring themes and ideas would be established and analysed in full.

These recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim into 'field texts', as Microsoft Word documents, with other aspects of an interviewee's response, such as laughing or smiling etc, noted in parentheses (see Appendix VI for sample interviews from the case studies). This better contextualised the nature of comments made when analysed later on. These transcribed field texts were imported into the qualitative data analysis program QSR NVivo. QSR NVivo allows for the detailed analysis of qualitative data in a way that goes beyond simple coding of texts, facilitating links to be made within and between documents, allowing for a more fluid approach to qualitative research projects. In this way patterns and themes were identified within the research data from individual case studies, and across case studies, allowing theory building informed by the responses of participants, often referred to as grounded theory (Geertz 1973).

This process of transcription and analysis is not, however objective. Through transcribing (and annotating) the spoken word, these interviews are in essence processed or 'interpreted'. They are further processed through the analysis of these transcripts, wherein aspects of the interviews are interpreted or classified as important and selected at the expense of other parts of the interview. Given the volume of data collected, and the

inherent restrictions of any report, key themes and ideas were drawn out from the data and written up within each the case studies, with other ideas and themes necessarily discarded or relegated in importance.

1.4.1 Ethics and consent

As with all University research projects involving human subjects, ethical approval was sought and received for this project from the University Ethics Committee for Non-clinical Research Involving Human Subjects. Participants were required to read an information sheet (Appendix II) explaining the purpose of the research and how their interview transcripts would be used, and required to give written permission authorising this (Appendix III). In accordance with standard procedures for this type of study anonymity for respondents was offered to allow participants to speak candidly. In this way all respondents are referred to using their interview codes, for example Yar6.

1.4.2 Qualitative research and archaeology

Although this approach to research is unusual for archaeology, there have been two major studies in Scotland which have utilised these techniques to gain insights into more in-depth, personal and lived experiences of the roles and functions of archaeological sites. Siân Jones' research into the Hilton of Cadboll stone (2004) investigated such roles for an archaeological site within the local community of a small village in northern Scotland. This research reflected the strong feelings and myriad roles which sites and artefacts in (and removed from) the landscape play in the development of identities, values and meanings at local and national levels. Angela McClanahan's research (2004) on the roles of the sites included within the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site again reflects the complex nature of archaeology and the public, with competing and conflicting functions and meanings for individuals and groups both physically and metaphorically.

Both of these projects were supported by Historic Scotland, and may reflect a changing attitude towards the benefits of using such methodologies in moving towards deeper understandings of the interactions between archaeology and the public. Indeed the benefits of using such qualitative research methodologies within the wider framework of site management have been recognised by the national agency through the inclusion of a section on 'qualitative interviewing and participant observation' (see Jones and McClanahan 2005) within *The Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site Research Agenda*. It is hoped that this research project will provide further evidence for the benefit

of these techniques in the practical management and future presentation of archaeological sites to the public in Scotland.

2 The Public Face of Archaeology

This chapter looks at the background to the growth of archaeology in a public sense, and within the public sphere. It reflects a wider interest in those monuments which provide a perceived tangible, physical connection with the past, and shows that people have always been interested in the past for myriad reasons.

The values which are placed on archaeology and archaeological sites are considered, alongside the development of modern perceptions of the past and the development of archaeology as an academic discipline. Issues over the nature of interpretation at sites are discussed, alongside less tangible, but equally important perceptions of authenticity, aura, and the growth in popularity of archaeology as a development of wider interests in heritage.

2.1 The development of an interest in the past

The past in some form has always been of interest in the present. History would have played an important role in the lives of prehistoric people who constructed their world through integrating the present and the past (Gosden and Lock 1998, 3; Barrett 1999). This is reflected for example, in the potential longevity of the White Horse chalk-cut figure at Uppington (Gosden and Lock 1998), the long-term use and often subsequent re-use of Neolithic burial monuments in Orkney (Hingley 1996), and the potential misinterpretation of natural knolls as burial mounds in the Bronze Age Cheshire Basin (Mullin 2001). Such appropriation of the past wasn't restricted to prehistory. The creation of royal centres often focused on important prehistoric monuments during the emergence of early medieval polities in the Celtic regions of Britain (Driscoll 1998). The importance of such ancient locations for contemporary socio-political systems may be exemplified by the development of "a separate literary genre *dindsenchas*, 'the lore or history of noble places'" (*ibid.*, 143). Such relationships played a crucial role in the development of concepts of linear time, associated with the introduction of Christianity and writing, and were used to reaffirm emerging ideologies (*ibid.*). The complexity of interpreting the past is reflected in Anglo-Saxon interpretations of similar prehistoric burial mounds, understanding them as altogether more malevolent structures, often interpreted as dragons' dens, and concomitantly associated with the execution and burial of criminals (Semple 1998, 109 and 111).

Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote his *Historia Regum Britanniae* in the twelfth century, in which he theorised on the origins of Stonehenge, incorporating it within a legend-history of Merlin and King Arthur (Ousby 1990, 93). His work reflects a political use of relics of the past in the present, which would be a hallmark of later antiquarian studies. Four centuries later, the destruction of monasteries as part of the Dissolution of the Catholic Church by Henry VIII caused a reaction amongst many, including Protestants, to the loss of a link with the past (Aston 1973; Boulting 1976): “The spectacle of physical loss, which already in the 1530’s motivated antiquarian researches, was thereafter a continuous element in the English countryside” (Aston 1973: 232).

An interest in the past had been given focus, leading many members of the upper classes in the subsequent years to undertake tours of Britain to view its many and varied wonders (Moir 1964). These kinds of engagements with the past were inherently elitist and romanticised. This touring developed through the sixteenth century, partially as a result of better roads and maps (Moir 1964, xiv). The primary source of this newfound interest, however, was “pride in the greatness of Tudor England, and a curiosity both in the historical roots of that greatness and its contemporary manifestations” (*ibid.*)

As the century developed more antiquarian thought was focused on studying the British landscape, and the ancient monuments which were part of it. By 1586 William Camden had produced *Britannia*, “the first general guide to the antiquities of Britain,” within a later edition of which he included an illustration of Stonehenge (Daniel 1967, 36). Stonehenge was a site that was popular for many of the early travellers (Ousby 1990, 94).

The Renaissance introduced the concept of historic time to western culture (Boulting 1976), a period during which an increasingly scientific approach was promulgated by the development and dissemination of knowledge through print. James VI/I commissioned Inigo Jones to survey Stonehenge in 1620, with Jones concluding that the site could only be of Roman origin (*ibid.*, 12). This reflected an academic bias which had developed through the reliance on written texts, generally either biblical or classical writings, in interpreting and understanding the past (Piggott 1976, 4). For all the scientific advances of the period, they were still bound up in the forms of control which informed an understanding of everyday life and reflected the hegemony of the period.

2.2 Antiquarians and a modern interest in the past

The antiquarian John Aubrey, working in the decades after Jones, challenged the interpretation of Stonehenge as Roman, instead suggesting that it had a prehistoric origin (Daniel 1967), alongside the monuments at nearby Avebury (Ousby 1990). Aubrey never came to publish his research, but his theories were extremely influential to the work of eighteenth-century antiquarian William Stukeley (Daniel 1967).

Stukeley was something of a paradox, as his approach to the past reflected the increasingly scientific and methodical archaeological investigation which had characterised the advance of the Enlightenment (Strong 1978, 24; Piggott 1985). His interest in these monuments developed from an early age (Moir 1964), and his early work, especially his survey of the stones at Avebury, reflects this high standard and attention to detail which has been compared to early rescue archaeology (Ousby 1990, 95). As his research into the monuments of the area continued, however, Stukeley became increasingly preoccupied with Druids, a characteristic of the work undertaken by John Aubrey (Daniel 1967). Aubrey had himself been influenced by the few writings by classical authors on Stonehenge, specifically with Caesar's description of Stonehenge as a Druid temple.

Stukeley's interpretation stemmed from these prior influences, ultimately resulting in an interpretation of the site as the centre of a Druid world (Ousby 1990: 95). Whilst this interpretation may have clouded subsequent views on the value of his research, Stukeley's imaginative interpretation of the monuments triggered an increase in the number of visitors to the site at the time, as more and more of the wealthier classes sought to view "the stones which form an extraordinary relick [sic] of the ancient superstitions of our countrymen" (*The Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1797, quoted in Jessup 1961, 38-9).

This link with Druids was a popular elucidation of the monuments at that time, and has remained so to this day. Stukeley had inspired many visitors to the site, who allowed their imaginations free reign when viewing these monuments, rather than adhering to the developing scientific rhetoric of the period (Ousby 1990: 95). This was also a time of escalating nationalist thought, accompanied in Britain by rapid industrialisation and an increasing sense of revolution throughout the western world (Strong 1978, 30; Anderson 1991, 21). The resulting destruction of the material remains of the past created a collective reaction of national conscience where "heritage became valued as a collective good, owned by society to be enjoyed by all" (Ashworth and Howard 1995, 36). In this way, the destruction created a nostalgia for the past, including the recent past (Lowenthal 1985), a

development which has parallels in the contemporary 'nostalgia' that has developed for industrial archaeology and industrial heritage sites as tourist attractions.

Stukeley's world was one of change as Romantic ideologies began to replace the neo-classicism that had characterised the previous centuries (Ousby 1990, 98-9). This was in part due to the development of nostalgia for the countryside which had originated from the mass influx of people into the cities (Ashworth and Howard 1999). Artists and writers, such as Walter Scott and Edwin Landseer, increasingly influenced, and were influenced by, changing attitudes to both the natural environment and the past. Scott was also a key figure in the early development of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, founded in 1780. He brought both his Romantic standpoint and his interest in antiquarian studies together in much of his writing, most evidently in *The Antiquary* (Piggott 1976, 133; Hunter 1996).

The development of national identities was inextricably linked with antiquarian studies of the past. From the middle of the seventeenth century the classical tradition, the preponderance for establishing and studying contemporary social connections with a classical past, had developed (Piggott 1976). Renaissance studies used antiquarian accounts of the past to legitimise contemporary political changes, through comparison with classical precedents (Athanasopoulou 2000: 277). Throughout Europe, and especially in Scandinavia, the preservation of the prehistoric and early historic past had developed ahead of that in Britain (Chippindale 1983; Cleere 1989). This reflected developing nationalist attitudes within much of Europe, as the growth and power of some nations during the industrial revolution threatened the very sovereignty of others. Denmark was a key nation in the development of an interest in northern European prehistory, partly as a result of the need to strengthen national identity and history as a result of the growth in power of Prussia, but also due to the long held interest and research into their own prehistoric monuments, culminating in the development of the three-age system by Christian Jurgensen Thomsen (Daniel 1967; Chippindale 1983; Jones 1997).

This was not the case in Britain. As the main global power at the time there was no need to look to the past for confirmation of identity and significance, although paradoxically this 'past' and the cultures which developed were the result of waves of invasion and migration. Instead historical interest continued to be focused towards Rome, Greece and the near East (Chippindale 1983). The political climate from the mid-eighteenth century was one of increasing government control and legislation (Hunter 1996). The opening of the British Museum in 1753 was the first state involvement in the preservation and presentation of, amongst other items, archaeological artefacts (Merriman 2004a), but these

displays were not intended to show British monuments, instead acting as a showcase for the spoils resulting from the clamour amongst Western European nations to possess the relics of the Ancient East (Chippindale 1983: 2).

2.3 Legislation and the archaeological monuments of Britain

The 1882 Ancient Monuments Protection Act was the first legislation which was aimed at the protection of archaeological monuments in the UK. This was a reflection of the increasing interest that monuments in the landscape had for the British public, alongside an increasing awareness of the destruction of many of these monuments through agricultural improvements and building development (Chippindale 1983). The Bill was presented to and rejected by parliament eight times between 1873 and 1880 before its eventual acceptance in 1882 (Champion 1996). This process saw the Act lose much of the rationale and power of the original application leading to some analyses of the final Act as being ‘toothless’ (Saunders 1983).

The monuments included within the original Act were nearly all prehistoric, reflecting a bias on the part of its main proponent, Sir John Lubbock (Saunders 1983). In all, 68 monuments were suggested for the list, including 21 in Scotland (Saunders 1983). The prehistoric bias was partly due to Lubbock’s belief that later monuments should be dealt with in a different way, requiring the dynamics and specific focus of local involvement, instead of the legislative powers of a national authority (Saunders 1983). This also neatly side-stepped the issue of monuments or buildings which were still in use, and relics of the more recent past which were viewed as more contentious (Champion 1996, 39), or alternatively at little risk from the destructive powers of agricultural improvement that were removing prehistoric monuments from the landscape at an alarming rate (Chippindale 1983: 9).

Prehistoric sites were also chosen for more exoteric reasons, as public as well as scientific interest in aspects of the past continued to increase. Many of the sites on the original list were increasingly popular for visitors, and these sites were typically substantial and conspicuous monuments such as megalithic tombs, stone circles and large earthworks (Champion 1996, 39). The original sites suggested for the schedule were also chosen to provide a broad geographical spread (Saunders 1983).

The 1882 Act allowed the government to take into guardianship any monuments identified as at risk or in need of protection, subject to an agreement with the landowner (Champion 1996). This meant that the landowner retained the freehold, whereas the government undertook the protection of the site (Saunders 1983). The only other form of protection afforded to monuments by the Act was the ability to prosecute individuals for any damage incurred to these sites (Champion 1996).

Since the 1882 Ancient Monuments Protection Act there have been a number of key pieces of legislation alongside a number of other legal measures which have affected the archaeological heritage in Britain. The Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendment Act (1913) was the basis of the modern system of preservation (Champion 1996, 42). This Act established the Ancient Monuments Boards, introduced a system of preservation orders, and an early form of scheduling (*ibid.*). The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) provided further protection for archaeological sites by assigning them with similar protection to that of listed buildings (*ibid.*).

Alongside the 1979 Act, there are two policy guidelines and one advice note which affect archaeological sites in Scotland today (although replacement guidance, Scottish Planning Policy 23 (SPP23) Planning and the Historic Environment, is currently at the consultation stage of development). National Planning and Policy Guidelines 5 and 18 (NPPG5 - Archaeology and Planning; NPPG18 - Planning and the Historic Environment) and Planning Advice Note 42 (PAN42) are all primarily focused on the protection of the archaeological and historical environment within the planning process. NPPG5 makes reference to the role of the Secretary of State for Scotland (although these powers are now devolved to the Scottish Government) and the national agency Historic Scotland that undertakes these duties:

The Secretary of State for Scotland is responsible for setting the general framework of the planning system. Through his executive agency, Historic Scotland, he is also responsible for compiling and maintaining a Schedule of nationally important monuments which are afforded legal protection; for controlling works (such as developments which could have an impact upon the site or setting of such monuments) through the scheduled monument consent (SMC) procedures; for protecting and preserving archaeological and historical remains of importance by direct and indirect means; **and for promoting public understanding and enjoyment of Scotland's historic monuments.**

(NPPG5; emphasis added)

In this way, a public element in the form of promoting understanding and enjoyment of monuments is enshrined in legislation, as opposed to the early narrower function of preserving and conserving sites for future generations. NPPG18 also discusses the role of Historic Scotland and its “functions in relation to the protection and **presentation** of Scotland's built heritage and advising [the Scottish Government] on built heritage policy” (NPPG18, emphasis added). PAN42, which focuses on the planning process and Scheduled Ancient Monuments, also discusses public education and promotion of the historic past through the development of regional sites and monuments records (SMRs), “an important first stage in the positive management and presentation of the historic landscape for the purposes of education and recreation, and as an input to local history, conservation and tourism projects” (1994, 7-8).

Historic Scotland was created in 1991 to “[safeguard] the nation’s built heritage and [promote] understanding and enjoyment” of the historic environment (Historic Scotland 1994, i). The ‘public’ aspect of valuing the historic environment was viewed within the developing heritage industry, with sites and monuments seen in part as resources which had a financial value or benefit. The role of Historic Scotland with regard to the sites in care was to “[improve] monuments’ **attractiveness to visitors** particularly, though not exclusively, at those which have the greatest potential for revenue generation” (Historic Scotland 1994, 42: emphasis from original). In this way, the focus of resources on sites which have the greatest potential for revenue generation reflected a perception of sites and monuments more generally as a source of income. In Historic Scotland’s later Framework Documents the public and interpretation angles of the historic environment have been developed. One of its main objectives is to “present Scotland’s built heritage to the public 1. to encourage visitors to properties in Historic Scotland’s care and ensure that they enjoy and benefit from their visits” and “2. to encourage knowledge about Scotland’s built heritage” (Historic Scotland 2001, 5).

2.4 Public archaeology

Public archaeology developed from the cultural resource management agenda in the United States (Merriman 2004a). The term was first used as the title of Charles McGimsey’s 1972 book *Public Archaeology* in which he discussed, the past, and public rights and access to that past, in relation to cultural resource management (McGimsey 1972; Carman 1995; Merriman 2004a). McGimsey subsequently developed his argument in later years, as a result of developing legislation within the USA (Carman 1995). This saw a change from a

belief that archaeologists needed to disseminate their work to a public audience in an effort to engender support, to a system where the legal system placed a value on the physical remains of the past and thus made it of public interest (*ibid.*).

Merriman cites Melton's twin definitions of the 'public' aspects of public archaeology: the public as defined by the state and its institutions, and the activities these undertake; and the public in relation to groups of people on behalf of whom such activities are undertaken (Merriman 2004a, 1). The last two decades has witnessed the growing development of specific public archaeology projects, where the public element of the archaeology, often working with local or indigenous communities, has become one of the main features of these projects. It is in this way that Lea and Smardz define the term public archaeology, "to describe those projects and programmes designed to enhance popular knowledge of and appreciation for archaeology" (2000, 141). The process of making archaeological processes, sites and results accessible to the public is not, however, a simple one.

Engaging with these myriad demands and dealing with the increased pressures on the time and resources of archaeologists has not been so simple. It has been recognised that archaeologists often struggle to make archaeology accessible to those outside the profession (eg. Lerner and Hoffman 2000), in part a reflection that the 'public' element of archaeology has always been seen to be on the fringe of what archaeologists do, a bolt-on aspect of project design. As professionals, they are normally engaged in the production of technical papers which are published as academic articles or specialist reports (Lipe 2002). Furthermore, archaeologists have a responsibility to communicate with three different audiences, all with differing demands: fellow archaeologists; funding bodies and developers; and the public (Carver, E. 2004). Many archaeologists have traditionally taken on the responsibility for providing public access to and interpretation of archaeology for wider audiences, but there is a general lack of training within the field for archaeologists to develop the skills required for interpretation for, and communication with, the public (McManamon 1991; Mytum 1999; Skeates 2000).

The majority of archaeological projects still have little or no public presentation element. Archaeologists have often sought to blame the system of developer-funded excavation as the primary reason behind the distinct lack of interpretation and presentation of excavations to the public (Stone 2004) although given that the system of developer-led archaeology only developed in the early 1990s it is invalid as a blanket explanation. The decreasing levels of investment in public agencies and the commercialisation of excavation have undoubtedly led to a lack of engagement between professionals and the public, often

resulting in fewer resources being made available to allow archaeologists to present what they do to the public (Lerner and Hoffman 2000). Without training, skills and investment in this aspect of communication, archaeology, as a professional enterprise and academic discipline, has often been unable to make connections with the public. But there also needs to be a will on the part of archaeologists as a whole to want to make what they do accessible to a wider public, something which has not always been forthcoming beyond the boundaries of communication within the profession in the past (Merriman 2004a, 8; Stone 2004).

One of the concerns archaeologists often have with presenting their work to the public is that they may have to ‘dumb-down’ their interpretation to suit non-specialists (Zimmerman 2003). Rather than take this negative position (*ibid*; Frodsham 2004), archaeologists should view the process of presenting to those outside their professional field as beneficial in understanding the nature and reasons behind their own interpretations (Cox 2004), a process which can often be helpful to archaeologists in their work. Making their work and results available to a non-specialist audience encourages archaeologists to critically analyse their results and inductions, as well as encouraging interaction with individuals from different backgrounds who may encourage different interpretations (*ibid*). The majority of excavation reports produced today are predominantly technical publications which are standard for the profession but generally unsuitable for and unpopular with the public (Kuttruff 1990; Lipe 2002). The process of communicating with the public can therefore help archaeologists to communicate better within the field, as well as opening it up to the wider public. Making archaeology accessible to the public also continues to maintain contact between the profession as a whole and the public who often, directly or indirectly, provide funding for their work (Lee Davis 1997; Lipe 2002). In this way developing public goodwill towards archaeology, as McGimsey discussed with his original definition of public archaeology, continues to be important for archaeology as a whole.

2.5 Engaging with archaeology

In the past two decades, archaeology has seen a rapid rise in interest associated with the growth of television programmes, magazines and books, as well as increasing numbers of visitors to historical and archaeological attractions (Skeates 2000; Paynton 2002; Schadla-Hall 2004). This interest may at times have very little to do with the profession of archaeology, however, with the difference between the roles and functions that professional archaeologists undertake, and the perceptions of archaeologists which

predominate in popular thought increasingly apparent (Stanley Price 1994). A general interest in the past, and of the *mystery* which is often associated with the past through the popular media mentioned above, may explain this growing interest. In this way it appears that archaeologists are not doing anything different but that the public are.

This interest has also manifested itself in the growth of what has often been termed ‘fringe’ or alternative archaeology. One of the problems of using such terms is the implication that there is a ‘correct’ mainstream archaeology (Schadla-Hall 2004). The development and popularity of these alternatives may reflect archaeology’s lack of contact with non-specialists (Schadla-Hall 2004), leaving those interested in the past to pursue their interest through other avenues, often leading to conflict (see Shanks 1992, 59). It may also reflect a growing mistrust of and challenges to authority, with the archaeology profession and heritage agencies viewed as another method of government control (Mapunda and Lane 2004, 213).

The popularity of alternative archaeologies can also be explained through the perception that they can often answer all-encompassing questions and mysteries, as with Graham Hancock’s *Fingerprints of the Gods* (1995). Conversely the academic subject is often perceived to focus on the minutiae of a sub-discipline. Non-professionals are not necessarily interested in the technical detail through which interpretations are made, but rather in the narratives created through the interpretation of this information.

In this way professional archaeology loses the opportunity to communicate to a much wider audience than is generally the case for their work. Instead of employing jargon and writing in overly complex or technical language, archaeologists are being challenged to be more open about the work they undertake and the processes involved in moving from artefacts to interpretation (Merriman 2000). A greater connection between academia, commercial archaeologists and the public is increasingly being advocated through the development of a dialogue between the profession and all interest groups (Skeates 2000; Moser 2003; Matthews 2004), for example the involvement of the Goddess Community within the Catalhoyuk project (www.catalhoyuk.com; Rountree 2007). Incorporating professionals from other fields, and those with other abilities and skills, to share the role of providing understandable and engaging material for public consumption greatly benefits this public role (Lerner and Hoffman 2000), although some believe that archaeologists should be taking on the role of primary communicators (Waddington 2004, 49). The paradigm shift from ‘objectivism’ to interpretive archaeology inevitably makes the opening of interpretation to all problematic, but it cannot be ignored.

2.6 Valuing archaeological sites

The archaeological heritage is valued in a variety of ways. Lipe identifies four different types of cultural resource value: *economic*, where the resource is associated with a financial value; *aesthetic*, based on an inherently subjective perception of the physical form and material of the resource; *associative/symbolic*, where the resource plays a role in creating a link to a cultural past; and *informational*, the ways in which these resources can inform us about the past (1984, 3-7). Darvill identifies three types of value system: *use*, based on the consumption of the resource; *option*, where any benefit is offset to an indefinite point for the benefit of future generations; and *existence*, essentially a perceived intrinsic value of the perceived resource (1995, 42-8).

These definitions reflect the value spheres within which archaeological sites are viewed, used and interpreted. In this way, the preservation of sites has primarily been undertaken for their option and use values. There have been concerns about increasing public access to archaeological sites, and their conservation and preservation (Mytum 1999), especially in the last thirty years, as visitor numbers to sites have increased greatly (Skeates 2000; see also Thompson 1981). Using archaeological sites as heritage attractions raises issues relating to the conservation of sites and the ‘correct’ roles and uses of sites in the past, present and future (Hoffman *et al* 2002). For instance, one means of damage to archaeological sites is through the overuse or misuse of sites from large numbers of visitors (Jones and Maurer Longstreth 2002, 188). The development of an archaeological site as a visitor attraction can be beneficial to the future care and protection of sites more generally, providing certain safeguards are put in place and any development undertaken is sympathetic (Hoffman *et al* 2002). Presenting archaeological sites can raise awareness of conservation and heritage value issues, having the potential to create a better informed society with greater knowledge and stronger understanding and value of the physical remains of the past (Smith and Ehrenhard 1991; Moe 1997; Historic Scotland 2004, 4).

Archaeological sites can also provide a much needed revenue source for local and national economies through visitor spend in local areas, but developing sites for economic benefits has often been criticised by archaeologists who view such actions as inappropriate. It is important to try to find a balance which allows the retention of the uniqueness and specialness of sites whilst facilitating the arrival of greater numbers of visitors (Frodsham 2004, 22), without impacting on the preservation of the site or the visitor experience.

Today it is economic and preservation interests which coincide in the world of heritage management and interpretation (Colomer 2002). There is, however, a need to balance the various interests (Colomer 2002; McClanahan 2004), if the archaeological heritage is to survive for future generations.

2.7 Interpreting the past

The past cannot be separated from the physical relics which have survived today (Molyneaux 1994). Through the scientific processes employed in archaeological recovery, information is provided through which interpretations about the past are made (Colomer 2002), sometimes argued as a dichotomous relationship between interpretation (subjective creation) and artefact (objective fact) (Durrans 1992). The subjectivity of interpretation is well recognised within academia. Wall refers to the definition used by the Centre for Environmental Interpretation: “the art of explaining the meaning and significance of sites visited by the public” (2004, 39). But whose significance? And which meaning(s)? Interpretation of the cultural heritage by experts has in the past been viewed as unproblematic (Uzzell 1998a), a situation which can no longer be argued for archaeology.

Interpretation of the past is a process of translation (Shanks 1992). Archaeologists act as interpreters between the archaeological record and the public, a role with a great deal of responsibility and trust required, which all archaeologists undertake. It is one of the underpinning concepts of post-processualism (Hodder 1991; Carman 1995).

“Interpretation contains the idea of mediation, of conveying meaning from one party to another” (Shanks and Hodder 1995, 6). Thus interpretation is a crucial element of public archaeology, as it is the interface between archaeology, the past, and the public. There are three main benefits from interpretation: benefits to individuals; benefits to society; and benefits to the organisations developing the interpretation (Historic Scotland 2004).

The roles and functions of interpretation in archaeology are complex. Tilden identifies two roles of interpretation, the first for the interpreter and the second for the public whom they are in contact with:

First....Interpretation is the revelation of a larger truth that lies behind any statement or fact.... [Second]: Interpretation should capitalize mere curiosity for the enrichment of the human mind and spirit.” (1977, 8)

In this way interpretation is more than information, but the use of information to communicate stories and messages (Tilden 1977), and should not be the sole preserve of

academic archaeologists. Thompson discusses the perception of two stages of interpretation at archaeological sites as:

“Primary interpretation, in which someone has to confront the ruin and give an intelligible account of it, usually embodied in the ‘official guide’ or ‘standard handbook’; [and] secondary interpretation, that is, the popular transmission of this account, or the more interesting parts of it, to other people.” (1981, 85)

Primary interpretation can in this way reflect interpretation undertaken by archaeologists for themselves and for other archaeologists in an academic capacity, as a way of understanding and negotiating the processes of information gathering within the profession. Secondary interpretation is largely dependent on the primary interpretation, as it is only through this stage of interpretation that information can subsequently be provided for other audiences.

Hall and McArthur discuss the increasingly popular definition of interpretation provided by the Interpretation Australia Association:

A means of communicating ideas and feelings which helps people enrich their understanding and appreciation of their world, and their role within it (Hall and McArthur 1998, 166).

These differing definitions reflect the various values and processes of interpretation. In the last few decades the nature and authority of official interpretations has come under scrutiny as the very nature of the past has been questioned.

2.8 Constructing the past

Instead of a single, uniform past waiting to be discovered, the past is the reflection of contemporary society’s values and beliefs (Funari 2000; Merriman 2000). Through the use of sites and landscapes, museums and artefacts, the past is commodified and reflected in partial forms (Funari 2000; Merriman 2000). In this way aspects or fragments of the past are used and interpreted to represent the entirety of ‘the past’. These relics of the ‘physical past’ are (re)used, interpreted and understood through contemporary social systems (Molyneaux 1994). The past, as depicted in museums and at archaeological sites, is a reflection of the biases and interests of the creators of any historical representation, as opposed to an objective illustration (Bograd and Singleton 1997). Indeed the nature and purpose of archaeological inquiry is socially driven:

Archaeological study itself is a part of present social negotiation. Archaeology is an active project of persuasion, a rhetoric aimed at an audience, which necessarily has a political or ideological character, intended either to disrupt or (more probably) to preserve the present.

(Pearce 1990, 33)

In this way the past is constructed, and these constructed pasts play a variety of roles (Cooney 2000) and can be used for different agendas. For example, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries interpretations of the past sought to justify the present, such as the growth of nationalism and the development of European empires (Merriman 2000), something which has been used more recently, for example in Nazi Germany (Arnold 1990; Jones 1996). The development of museums and their exhibits reflected a strong political element in reflecting a partial, commodified past (Merriman 2000). The very nature of the museum display has created a standard, recognised and often expected form of presentation of the material remains of the past (Moser 2003).

Today, museums and archaeological sites play a role in creating and reinforcing dominant concepts of identity (Merriman 2000), as well as in the construction and diffusion of meaning (Moser 2003). The recognition of multiple pasts has been a comparatively slow process for archaeology; the scientific methods involved in the discipline having led many to believe that the archaeological past, unlike the historical past, was not a contentious one (Cooney 2000). In this way archaeology was able to eschew alternative claims and interpretations of the past, instead focusing on creating a series of linear narratives (Cooney 2000). Instead, archaeologists are influenced by their own experiences and beliefs when analysing and interpreting archaeological data (Bintliff 1988, 6). At the same time, the role of archaeologists and institutions has come under increasing scrutiny as the position of archaeologists and other heritage professionals as ‘creators’ of the past is recognised. Other voices have begun to assert claims on ‘their’ past(s), including challenges to androcentric interpretations and reappraisals of gender in the past (eg Jones and Pay 1994; Hurcombe 1997; Holcomb 1998), indigenous communities (eg Anyon *et al* 2000; Jones 2004) and those with alternative interests and beliefs (eg Golding 1989; Wallis and Blain 2003; Scham 2001). Such a multi- or polyvocality of interpretation (Hodder 1991; Bender 2000; Graham *et al* 2000), however, has been viewed by some as a weakness or drawback for archaeology (see Lipe 2002) and a source of relativism.

Archaeologists tend to view the past and its physical remains in particular western science-based ways. The protection of sites in the UK involves the categorisation and evaluation of sites with regards to certain criteria (Schofield 2000) and the excavation and recovery of

archaeological data, for rescue or research purposes, is commonplace. This can come into direct conflict with other claims on the past, especially within the field of cultural resource management (CRM), especially in other parts of the world, such as the perception of sites as ancestral places by the Navajo in the United States (Anyon *et al* 2000), or indigenous perceptions and values of Uluru (Perera and Pugliese 1998).

While such obvious clashes of cultural values are not so immediately evident in Britain, it is useful to use examples such as these to question the hegemonic view of archaeological sites and artefacts, and the use of such terms when discussing the physical relics of the past, in the UK. Demands for the right to use archaeological sites, and alternative claims on the past and its physical remains are not new in the UK. For over a century Druids have undertaken ceremonies and activities at many prehistoric sites throughout Britain, and there has been a rise in the activities and claims of Druid communities since the 1960s, culminating for example in conflict at Stonehenge in the 1980s (Bender 1998; Blain and Wallis 2004; Worthington 2004).

Molyneaux discusses the existence of two pasts, “the temporal one that passes and is gone, and the metaphorical ‘past’ that is held in the memories and traditions of a society and its surroundings” (1994, 2). It is this ‘metaphorical past’ which has come under increasing scrutiny in the latter part of the twentieth century. The social contingency of the past has gradually been recognised and acknowledged. Within public archaeology, this has given rise to what Merriman terms the ‘multiple perspective model’ (2004, 6-7) wherein the public are encouraged to engage with archaeology in their own ways.

Interpretation of the past by its very nature changes perceptions of the past (McManamon and Hatton 2000; Frodsham 2004). This is what is described by McManamon and Hatton as the ‘uncertainty principle’ (2000, 1). No object, site or artefact can speak for itself, but instead have values and meanings projected onto them (Crew and Sims 1991). The problem of presenting new ideas, themes and theories is that certain perceptions and presentations of the past have become so transfixed in popular thought that they have become part of a fixed past (Walsh 1992, 130). Interpretations of the past involve the creation of a series of historical myths, the predominant myths reflecting ideas which are acceptable to the establishment at a certain time (Merriman 2000, 300). At sites, presenting ‘the past’, or even ‘a past’ gives precedence and authority to the narrative chosen over other interpretations of that site (McDavid 2004, 167). In this way, one interpretation may assume the authority of historical ‘fact’ rather than hypothesis, which

has occurred within both academic and public archaeology (Parker Pearson 1993; see Moser 2003).

Questions have been asked of ‘whose history’ archaeologists and historians write about (Uzzell 1998a), at a time when people are increasingly unwilling to accept authoritative interpretations of the past. This is a reflection of more general challenges to authority which have developed in part as a result of the democratisation of mass media (Thomas 2004). As a consequence what has occurred is a ‘crisis of representation’ (Merriman 2000), with questions asked of what authority academics have in analysing and interpreting the past, and linked to this, who they speak for (Merriman 2000, 303). At the same time, there has been a move away from presenting the past from an elite perspective to more ordinary and everyday depictions which encourage wider audiences to engage with the past (Lee Davis 1997; Funari 2000)

The origins of the preservation and valuing of the past were associated with the development of a social elite who sought to preserve and value the physical relics of elite pasts (Graham *et al* 2000). The recognition of the subjective nature of interpretation has in part opened up and validated the past(s) to a wider population. This egalitarian approach to the interpretation of the past does however present the risk of extreme relativism, although Merriman argues that most archaeologists would follow a perspectivist view where through “a shared belief system such as western rationality it might be possible to agree on certain core issues, [although] these themselves will be interpreted from a number of different perspectives” (Merriman 2004a, 7). Shanks and Hodder discuss the differences between epistemic relativism, which they advocate, and judgemental relativism:

Epistemic relativism....holds that knowledge is rooted in a particular time and culture. Knowledge does not just mimic things. Facts and objectivity are constructed. Judgemental relativism makes the additional claim that all forms of knowledge are equally valid.

(Shanks and Hodder 1995, 19)

Stone (2004, 115) argues that whilst non-experts should be encouraged to interpret for themselves, the value of interpretation by archaeologists should not be underestimated. Instead, archaeologists should be confident enough in their own skills and abilities to suggest alternative interpretations of the material with which they have worked. Neither should presentations eschew the use of narratives, as these have proven to be the most successful way of informing visitors (Moser 2003). But neither should experts solely play the role of narrators of the past, instead assuming responsibility for enabling people to

create their own understandings of the past (Merriman 2000, 306). Visitors should be encouraged to interpret for themselves with the help of experts through informed imagination - “an approach to interpretation which is based on the knowledge of the archaeological and historical context of the material provided by the expertise of curators, but which acknowledges diversity of views, the contingency of archaeological interpretations, and encourages imagination and enjoyment in the visitors’ own constructions of the past” (Merriman 2004b, 102).

2.9 Presenting the past

Traditionally, museum displays were the standard method of presenting the past (Stone and Planel 1999). Museums were associated with creating and reflecting elite pasts within society (*ibid.*), and are still perceived by many as elite locations today. The presentation of archaeological and other heritage sites in the later twentieth century reflected a growing interest in the relics of the past, and a move away from the artefact-based museum display to experiencing sites *in situ*. The suggested decline in the popularity of the museum is a reflection of the fact that the public wants the past to be presented in a different way (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999, 230). This in part reflects the role of museums in the disenfranchisement of the past for many people.

The preservation ethic that developed from the 1882 Ancient Monuments Protection Act was accompanied by new forms of value in the second half of the twentieth century. In part archaeological sites were developed and presented to the public as a reaction to the demand for on-site information, created as a result of rapidly increasing numbers of visitors to historic sites (Thompson 1981). Increasing amounts of leisure time, coupled with greater car ownership, allowed the public to visit sites which had hitherto been inaccessible, and this public required information to help them make sense of what they could see (*ibid.*).

Archaeological sites are often more popular than museums because they do not exude the same elitist atmosphere. The public are no longer satisfied with artefacts behind glass in cabinets, but rather want to be able to physically engage with the past (Blockley 1999). Visiting sites allows the public to experience archaeology first-hand (Skeates 2000), as opposed to viewing it behind a glass cabinet. The rhetoric that normally accompanies site presentation reflects a belief that presenting sites is integral to their future preservation and protection, as Tilden’s oft-quoted maxim reflects:

Through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection (1977, 38).

Representation through public display is not purely the natural result of academic research, but plays an inherent role in the creation of meaning itself (Moser 2003), with a variety of values and benefits being associated with archaeological resources. Copeland argues that often “the underlying motivation for presentation was to further archaeological ends rather than for general purposes of education and enjoyment” (2004, 133). Others take a different view, arguing that the primary aim of public interpretation comes from an ethical responsibility archaeologists have to encourage and assist people in accessing and making sense of the different pasts encountered (Lee Davis 1997, 86).

In discussing the nature of museum archaeological exhibits, Pearce notes the inherent design vernacular used with presentations and displays of the past:

“Exhibitions are clearly a ‘language’ system of their own, albeit a complex one, which combines objects of all kinds, label texts, graphics, hardware like cases and agents like lighting, all put together in a specific form.” (Pearce 1990, 146)

Likewise archaeological sites are ‘put together’ using certain forms of accepted treatment for remains *in situ*. The development of archaeological sites for visitors has often led to a standard form of interpretation being used, as Shanks (1992) describes:

In Britain many ancient sites, usually architectural, are in the care of the state and are open to the public. There is a very distinctive style to most of these sites. Many are ruins, but consolidated. Loose stones are mortared in position. Walls are cleaned and repointed. Paths tended or created. Fine timber walkways constructed. The ground is firm with neatly trimmed lawns. Park benches are provided. This is all justified in terms of health (stopping the further decay of the monument) and safety (of the visiting public). However reasonable such a justification, it creates a distinctive experience of the visit to such an ancient monument. Masonry, grass and sky: such monuments are almost interchangeable, if it were not for their setting (1992, 73).

In this way many archaeological sites are ‘landscaped’ in the manner of a public park or garden (Brophy 2004), placing these sites within an altogether different group of recreational locations. This not only leads to a homogenisation of the archaeological experience, but the overuse of, and over-reliance on, information boards and other interpretive materials can dominate sites, acting as a distraction from the remains themselves. This, along with pathways and signage, can impose a false order on the visitor experience. It can also create conservation issues, with increased erosion at certain points on sites when visitors gather to read the boards (Taylor 2004).

Archaeological sites are part of a larger collection of locations encompassing various aspects and interpretations of the past within the heritage sphere and may be viewed as “‘time capsules’ severed from history, islands of mediated image” (Walsh 1992, 103). There is a great difference between different types of archaeological site and the nature of presentation. The physical appearance of sites is crucial to visitor engagements with archaeology, although archaeological sites often have very little in the form of discernible identifiable extant remains with which the public can engage. As such, the success or value of archaeological sites is often predetermined by the nature of their visibility (Stanley Price 1994, 284), and precedence is often given to sites with substantial recognisable remains, regardless of academic importance.

In this way prehistoric sites may be more difficult for the public to comprehend and make sense of than, for example, a castle ruin (Urry 1990; Macinnes 1991). Whereas the architecture of a castle or church is recognisable and comparable with similar structures today, visitors often less easily understand the remains of a prehistoric settlement.

Thompson discusses the practical implications of presenting and displaying sites to visitors, which he separates into those associated with their physical needs: from toilets to footpaths and bridges; and their intellectual needs, which he associates primarily with written information in the form of books and guides (1981, 29). Copeland divides forms of representation at archaeological sites into three categories, based on Bruner’s (1966) scheme: “enactive (through action); iconic (visual representation); and symbolic (in which words or numbers are the main device)” (Copeland 2004, 138 and see table 1 below). Enactive and iconic forms of presentation are the most useful and effective for those with little or no knowledge, whereas participants with more experience, or who can understand and express concepts easily may engage with symbolic forms as well (*ibid.*).

Enactive experiences and interpretation is the most involving on the part of the visitor, wherein the process of touching, moving through or taking part in activities is the primary experience. Iconic, as Copeland discusses, is primarily focused on the visual, and requires little in the form of prior knowledge for visitors to be able to understand. Generally, symbolic presentations, especially labels and text, are ignored, primarily because they take time to read (Falk and Dierking 1992, 70), although paradoxically these are some of the most common forms of interpretation at archaeological sites.

Table 1 - Representations used on archaeological sites (from Copeland 2004, 138: Table 6.1)

<i>Enactive</i>	<i>Iconic</i>	<i>Symbolic</i>
Experimental archaeology	Photographs	Plans
Touching	Drawings	Excavation reports
Re-enactments	Reconstructions	Audio tours
Walking around the site	3D views	Guided tours
	Models	Guidebooks
	TV programmes	Lectures
	Information panels	Information panels
	Maps	
	Multi-media presentations	
	The layout of the site	
	Directional signs	

2.9.1 Interpretive panels

The most common method of presentation at archaeological sites today, and one that fits in to both the iconic and symbolic categories, is the interpretive panel or information board (fig. 2). This form of presentation has become a common sight at many archaeological and heritage locations, because they are considered to be a practical and affordable method of providing long-term on-site interpretation for visitors (Binks *et al*, 1988). But it is also the case that their popularity reflects the fact that they have become an integral part of presentation ideology.

This method of interpretation can take on many forms, however, with different media used (plastic, metal, laminated wood); different sizes of panel; free-standing or attached to the monument; different amounts of text; inclusion of images, maps and/or photographs; and varying levels of colour, from the use of two tone to multi-coloured. The reasons behind specific choices of panel reflects a number of influencing factors, including budget, availability of technology, and perceived ‘appropriateness’ and impact on the site.

The aim of the interpretive panel should be to capture the imagination whilst simultaneously informing the visitor. There are a number of key aspects to successful interpretation panels. The design of the panel itself is central to the success of the



Figure 2 - Information board overkill at Maeshowe chambered cairn, Orkney (photo S. Timoney)

presentation, with the layout and size of text, as well as the incorporation of photographs, drawings and other images necessary to provide interesting and varied methods of communication for the user (Scottish Natural Heritage 3). Binks *et al* (1988) suggest a strategy involving the use of: a main heading; the main text – covering the broad issues the interpreter is presenting to the viewer; the use of images to break up blocks of text; the use of questions to challenge and involve the reader; and a more detailed sub-text to inform those who are interested in finding out more (1988, 127).

This use of sub-text is also referred to as the *hierarchy of information*; a way of presenting information at multiple levels which enables users of the resource to access the level of information they require (Black 2001, 114). Most interpretation focuses on a reading age of between 9-12 years old, avoiding the use of jargon and with a maximum text of 200 words (Scottish Natural Heritage 2). Writing effective, interesting and informative text can be extremely difficult, especially with such constraints. Asking questions can often be a useful way of capturing the imagination of readers, drawing them into the interpretation and the site (*ibid.* 3). Making the interpretation relevant to the user and enjoyable to read are important aspects of this (Carter 2001, 39).

Equally important is the positioning of the panel, to tie into the landscape and be orientated to allow visitors to use the interpretation whilst looking at the monument (Scottish Natural Heritage 3). This is also important when considering the impact, both physical and visual,

that interpretation panels may have on the monument or landscape they are interpreting (Carter 2001, 43). The ordering and location of panels can also shape and guide the visitor experience, with visitors often tending to gravitate to them (McClanahan 2004), even if they don't always read them.

2.9.2 Visitor centres

A progression from the interpretive panel is the interpretive exhibit, introduced to the UK from the National Parks of the United States in the mid-twentieth century (Thompson 1981). These can include within them information panels as well as artefacts, images and reconstruction models, and range from relatively humble affairs to the increasingly popular multi-media interpretation centre (fig. 3). Indeed the latter, more commonly referred to as visitor centres, have become synonymous with the 'development' of archaeological sites as heritage attractions. They are a way of presenting sites and informing visitors in greater detail, providing interpretation which often covers the three categories (enactive, iconic, and symbolic) discussed earlier. Many of these sites provide a variety of forms of interpretation, from standard museum panels and displays of artefacts, to an increasing use of multimedia displays, including interactive computer systems, and audio-visual displays. These sites also often incorporate toilets, a café, and shop; fulfilling what Thompson refers to as visitors' intellectual and physical needs (1981, 29).



Figure 3 - Archaeolink visitor centre, Oyne, Aberdeenshire (photo S. Timoney)

This new technology is increasingly a part of the heritage experience, providing visitors with new and interactive ways of learning and enjoying sites. Those tasked with presenting sites have increasingly considered the use of other modes of informative media, which allow visitors to access multiple interpretations without the need to read through vast amounts of text (Merriman 2000), and can start to explain the processes of data recovery and analysis which reflect archaeological interpretation. New forms of interactive media are continually being developed, especially through the development of virtual reality systems and exhibits, alongside the growth of interactive internet resources (Merriman 2004b). But the use of new technology can also bring with it risks (Frodsham 2004). The danger with such developments is that they can trivialise the archaeology, wherein the processes and media through which information is transferred becomes the attraction, to the detriment of the archaeology itself (Bintliff 1988, 4; Carter 2001, 47).

Neither are visitor centres necessarily viewed as a positive development. Some of the case studies for this research reflect both ambivalent and negative attitudes towards the development of visitor centres at sites (see Urquhart Castle and Skara Brae chapters). In other areas, the development of visitor centres has been heavily criticised, for example by members of local communities at Brú na Bóinne (Newgrange) in Ireland (see Ronayne 2001) and Stonehenge (see Tilley 1998).

Visitor centres are also used as a method of managing and controlling access to the 'archaeological resource', to protect the physical remains through the control of visitor access and movement on the monument. The development of off-site interpretation, such as these custom-built centres, is a way of remedying the impact of large numbers of visitors at sites. Charging an entry fee can also be used as a method of control, with cost a means of deterring excessive numbers of visitors to a site. Visitor centres also play a role in the protection of the visitors themselves, with the increasing burden placed upon site guardians with respect to health and safety legislation.

2.9.3 Developments in information and communication technology

The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in interpretation has grown rapidly in the last decade (Merriman 2004a; Frodsham 2004; ImageMakers *et al* 2006). Such technology is not new, however, with many visitor centres and museums utilising audio tours recorded in different languages to assist visitors to their sites. Within the last decade, the proliferation of new media technology has brought with it increasing

opportunities to change the way heritage sites and landscapes are presented and interpreted for the public, although they bring with them a new set of problems and challenges to traditional forms of interpretation. For example, podcasts: internet-based audio broadcasts accessed via an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed, have developed throughout the wider media as a simple and effective means of providing information to interested parties on numerous themes. Within the heritage sphere, this technology is slowly being taken up, for example with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, where podcasts which provide a commentary on marked walking routes available to download free from their website (www.yorkshiredales.org.uk). Text and voice messaging for mobile phones are also being developed, with signs or markers on sites or in the landscape defining areas of interest, for which an interested party can call or request a message to be sent to their phone. This has been used for example with ‘Talking Trees’ at Kew Gardens, where visitors call a number on a marker next to a tree and listen to a recorded message describing the tree (www.kew.org).

2.10 Successful interpretation

Making archaeological sites accessible to the public both physically and intellectually is a primary concern for heritage managers (Cleere 1989, 14). Cleere argues this “should involve making the fullest use of modern techniques of mass communication” (1989, 14), although there is a fine line between effective and successful presentation and the danger of turning a site into a theme park (*ibid.*).

Conversely, minimal intervention at sites, where little else in the way of reconstruction or interpretation is done beyond the processes of preservation and conservation may be a way of allowing different interest groups to stake claims to these sites (Stanley Price 1994, 288). The problem of this approach is how non-professionals can endeavour to make sense of the sites devoid of any information, or at times even recognise where sites are.

Copeland (2004) discusses the constructivist approach to heritage presentation and interpretation, acknowledging that knowledge is not fixed and immutable but created and flexible. In this way, visitors bring their own individual biases, knowledge, experiences and expectations to sites, all of which impact on the experiences they have at sites, and the nature of the knowledge they create (Falk and Dierking 1992; Dierking 1998). Enabling visitors to play a role in the process of meaning-making puts them at the centre of the process, allowing them to engage with sites in their own ways. Showing and allowing them to participate in the process of interpreting archaeological data means that they can

start to understand the subjective frameworks within which interpretations are made (Merriman 2000, 304).

Successful interpretation at any level should therefore seek to provide links between what is presented and the visitor's own experience (Moscardo 1996; Uzzell 1998b). Moreover those tasked with presenting a site or feature should endeavour to allow people to interpret for themselves (Colomer 2002; Wall 2004; Frodsham 2004). Tilden states "the chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation" (Tilden 1977, 9). It is suggested that "visitors recall 10% of what they hear; 30% of what they read; 50% of what they see; and 90% of what they do" (Tabraham 1998, 10). It is therefore essential that any presentation allows the visitor to actively engage with what he/she encounters to allow them to fully appreciate the site in their own way(s) (Tilden 1977; Copeland 2004). This involves interaction between the viewer and the interpretive material which makes them part of the process of identifying and creating the past.

2.10.1 *Difficulties with presenting sites*

Through the use of traditional methods of presentation for archaeological sites; the setting out of paths, signs and information boards, public presentation has until recently reflected a top down approach. Managers of sites generally assume that visitors can (or should, or do) view the site in the same way that they do (Uzzell 1998b). The provision of information panels at sites does not guarantee successful interpretation, however, as there is a significant gap between the interpretive text and the physical remains on the ground, which cannot always be easily translated for those with little prior knowledge (Blockley 1999). Nor does the availability of interpretive materials mean that visitors will use them (Uzzell 1995). Text can be off-putting and dull for many visitors, and is often seen as a chore rather than an enjoyable part of the experience (Tilden 1977, 31). This can also reflect the problem that interpretation may not answer the specific questions which visitors have at sites, nor can it replace the "thrill of discovery" related to excavations (Heath 1997; Lee Davis 1997, 87).

A lack of engagement with the public may reflect a critical issue at the planning stage. It is necessary to find the right balance between the subject and the presentation as too often research is focused on the subject matter rather than visitor needs (Uzzell 1998b), and presentation often reflects archaeological biases rather than public interests (Copeland 2004). There is also the risk of disenfranchising the local community when interpretation

at sites is focused towards visitors and tourists, or aimed at individuals with a particular level of knowledge and education (Jones 2004; Mapunda and Lane 2004, 213).

Visitors to archaeological sites and exhibits are therefore not passive consumers, but instead move through these settings identifying what is of interest and superfluous to them, challenging, questioning, ignoring and engaging with elements of the exhibits in their own ways, and through group behaviour (Falk and Dierking 1992, 67). Thus interpretation which does not provide positive experiences for visitors may have a detrimental effect on their perceptions of the past.

2.11 Archaeological research and the public

Effective presentation of a message is therefore key (Frodsham 2004). Archaeological sites and visitor attractions should continue to tell stories about the past, but in a way that acknowledges that it is just one interpretation, or one story of many about the past (Merriman 2000). Presentations at sites should seek to show alternative interpretations of the same information, including both ‘alternative’ accounts and ‘academic’ interpretations (see Stone 1994a; Bender 1998; Merriman 2000; Moser 2003), although this can be problematic when interpretive panels require a maximum of 200 words. By providing visitors with information archaeologists can give them the tools to start to understand, evaluate and interpret for themselves (Merriman 2000, 303; Moser 2003, 14; Bennett 2004; Stone 2004, 115; Waddington 2004).

In this way the challenges to the hegemony of academic interpretations through continuing research can reinvigorate public archaeology, as it reflects the processes through which interpretations are reached (Lipe 2002). Through exposure to these processes the public are given the opportunities to start to interpret the past for themselves (*ibid.*). An effective way of encouraging visitor understanding is through access to the physical remains of the past: encountering and moving around and through archaeological remains. While some archaeologists have questioned the appropriateness of allowing large numbers of visitors onto archaeological sites, others have advocated for greater contact between visitors and the physical relics of the past (Frodsham 2004; Taylor 2004). A step further than this, allowing visitors to handle artefacts is a (controversial) way in which members of the public can start to engage with archaeology in a real sense (Merriman 2000, 304; 2004b, 93). By creating opportunities to engage and create pasts, however, and providing positive experiences, archaeologists fulfil the role of creating value for the past within society.

2.11.1 ‘The public’

The public is a term which is often used but more rarely considered when discussing archaeological sites and attractions. The public are often referred to as one simple, single group of people that ‘professionals’ deal with. But in reality the public is made up of a series of different publics, with different needs and requirements (McManamon 1991; Uzzell 1998b; Borman 1994). Merriman discusses two meanings of the word public in reference to public archaeology: that associated with the state and ‘public’ institutions; and relating to a group of individuals who inform ‘public’ opinion (Merriman 2004a, 1).

A number of studies have attempted to categorise the public in relation to heritage/archaeology. Pearce (1990, 133) identifies three sub-divisions within the term ‘public’:

The greater proportion of the adults includes those who have no regular commitment to the past, or whose interest takes a form which professionals often consider unfortunate or improper. The smaller section embraces those adults who do take an informed interest in the past. The third group are the children, whose interests are not yet fixed.

McManamon (1991, 123-127) identifies five different publics in archaeology: the general public; students and teachers; national government; regional and local government, including archaeologists; and indigenous communities. He further subdivides the ‘general’ public into: the archaeologically literate; those who read archaeological magazines and visit sites; the majority, who get archaeology (inadvertently) through television and film.

Iseminger divides those who engage with archaeological sites into eight categories: professional archaeologists and anthropologists; amateur archaeologists; collectors; academics; tourists; the general public; educators; and students; although these are not mutually exclusive (1997, 148-9)

All of these divisions reflect different attempts to quantify and categorise the public. These various interpretations and classifications of the public reflect the complexity involved in presenting the past to ‘the public’. The primary concern for archaeologists today is to provide the opportunities for all of these publics to access and interpret the past for themselves whilst simultaneously maintaining a balance between alternative claims on the past. While it is unlikely that archaeologists could ever engage with such subtle variants in ‘the public’, what this reflects is a need to consider different ways of presenting sites and archaeology.

2.12 Conservation of archaeological sites

Preservation and conservation are generally used as synonyms in relation to the protection of the historic environment. Conservation agendas today are a reaction to the restoration policies of the nineteenth century (Stanley Price 1994), and are bound up within the archaeological monument protection legislation which developed from that period (see above). Since the mid-twentieth century the preservation rhetoric in relation to archaeological and historical sites and monuments has developed considerably (Walsh 1992, 74). The conservation of sites can be viewed as a minimalist approach to the preservation and presentation of sites: “When the site is maintained as it is, conservation often suffices to preserve aesthetic and associative/symbolic values, with subsidiary information provided by means other than restoration” (Stanley Price 1994, 286). The motives for conservation are often questioned and challenged, although “conservation is not anti-change, it is only against change for change’s sake alone and against change for the sake of a single interest at the expense of the common good.” (Bell 1997, 6-7).

The common goal behind the conservation of archaeological and historic sites is their protection for the common good and for the benefit of future generations. The use of conservation measures may be interpreted and valued in other ways, however, as with indigenous groups such as the Narragansett Indian Tribe of Rhode Island, who see a conservation agenda as a way of protecting sites from any activity or intrusion, including archaeological excavation, in the future (see Robinson and Taylor 2000, 116).

Once a decision has been made to go beyond preserving or conserving a site *in situ*, the choice has to be made as to the nature and extent of the enterprise undertaken. This action may involve the stabilisation, rehabilitation, restoration, enhancement, re-creation, replication or reconstruction of a site or monument (see Bell 1997). These actions can involve increasingly invasive and destructive interventions on a site. The process of stabilising seeks to prevent any further degradation of the fabric of the monument. The re-creation, replication or reconstruction of a site may involve major changes to the monument’s composition, raising a number of issues pertaining to the conservation of sites, for example with the inquiry into the proposed development of Castle Tioram (Historic Scotland 2002).

The preservation of sites also brings with it the risk of ‘freezing’ sites and artefacts in time (Graham *et al* 2000). This effectively places sites in a heritage limbo (Walsh 1992)

wherein they exist separate from the past and the present, firmly ensconced in the heritage sphere (Hewison 1987).

2.13 Reconstructions

One such response to the issue of altering sites is through the use of reconstructions, either as drawings (fig. 4), 3-D models, or full-scale constructions on-site (fig. 5), in museums or in archaeology parks. Questions have been raised by archaeologists over the use of reconstructions and the way that they can influence perceptions of the past (Stone and Planel 1999, 2). In essence, the concern is over these interpretations of the past being read and understood by visitors as *the* past. In this way, reconstructions of any kind can give credence to the hitherto accepted interpretation of a single, fixed, linear past.



Figure 4 – Reconstruction drawing, Birdoswald Fort, Hadrian's Wall (photo S. Timoney)



Figure 5 – Reconstruction Bronze Age farm, Tanumshede, Sweden (photo S. Timoney)

Reconstructions are often criticised because of their lack of a factual basis (see South 1997, 55; Cleere 1989; James 1999), with a great deal of discussion and disagreement with respect to how they should be termed reflecting that often everything above ground is conjecture (see Stone and Planel 1999). A concern with the power and authority of reconstructions is their popularity with the public, and the willingness to accept these *constructions* as fact (Lee Davis 1997). Reconstructions can also reinforce stereotypes such as gender roles in prehistory (see fig.6 and fig.7).

They can also, however, create a positive attitude towards archaeological sites and monuments, especially those with few standing remains or which are not readily discernable to the untrained eye, through the opportunity for visitors to actively understand and engage with them, instead of leaving them confused and bewildered (Cleere 1989). Reconstructions are popular with visitors, as they help to bridge the gap between what remains of a site in situ and written interpretation of the past, and can act as a text which is more readily understood and available to those without the knowledge or inclination to interpret for themselves.



Figure 6 – Stereotypical gender roles in reconstructions (from Dyer 1990, fig. 39)

Reconstructions can also be used to reflect the inherent subjectivity of interpreting archaeological data. By presenting alternative interpretations of the same data at archaeological sites, through the creation of alternative reconstructions of the same data, it is possible to reflect the subjective nature of archaeological interpretation for visitors, helping to challenge the (mis)conceptions of a singular past, as for example with the split figure in the Alexander Keiller Museum, Avebury (see Stone 1994b).

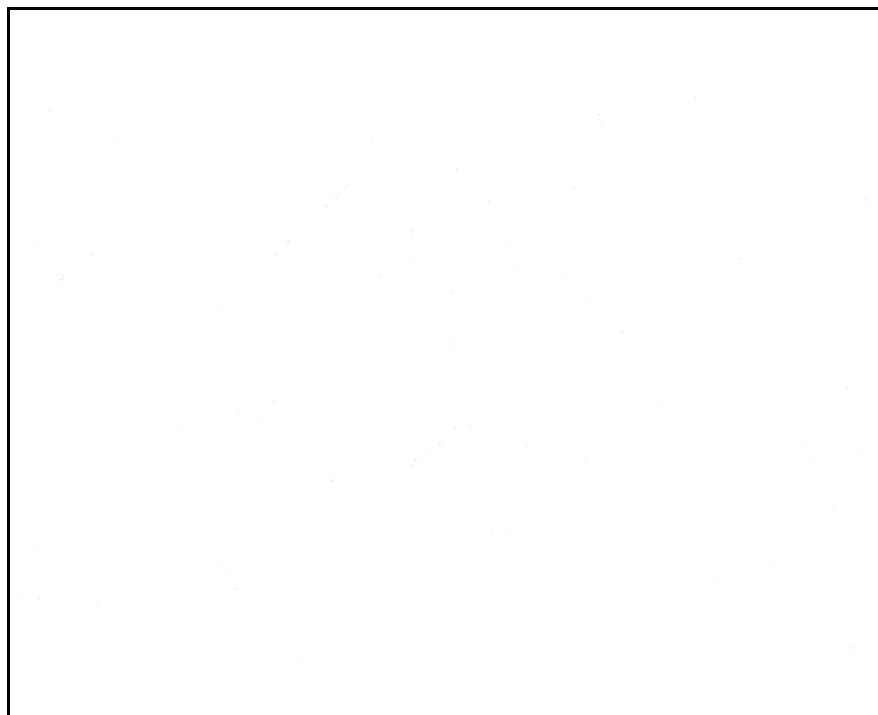


Figure 7 – Stereotypical gender roles in reconstructions (from Dyer 1990, fig. 52)

Reconstructions are also popular because they fit into the enactive category of exhibits (Copeland 2004), and are therefore a way of presenting the past which encourages visitors to engage with these structures. In this way, visitors can literally place themselves within the (a) past.

2.14 Presenting multi-period sites

Archaeological sites are seldom the result of one discrete phase of activity. One of the problems of presenting a multi-period site is that often one period will dominate the presentation (Mytum 1999). This may be a reflection of the nature of the data available, but may also reflect institutional or organisational biases towards what are regarded as the most important aspects of the site to present.

There are also logistical problems of trying to get across complex phasing without confusing visitors, for example at Cairnpapple Hill in East Lothian, an Historic Scotland guardianship site. This monument has evidence of use over 4000 years, from the earliest phase of ritual activity in the early Neolithic involving the deposition of broken pottery in hearths and pits (Barclay 1999). The second phase involved the construction of a henge monument, followed by a timber circle of 24 posts, with a complex rectangular setting near the centre of the henge. This was followed by subsequent reuse of the site in the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age, with the insertion of a series of burials and a small cairn, the latter altered and incorporated within a larger kerbed cairn. The final phase of activity appears to have been marked with four full-length inhumation burials to the eastern side of the henge, most likely early Christian reuse of an important prehistoric location. The site was excavated by Stuart Piggott in 1947-48 (Piggott 1948) and is now presented to visitors as what Piggott termed an 'exploded diagram' (Barclay 1999, 17), based on Piggott's own phasing of the site which was radically different from the Barclay interpretation as laid out above. The confusion of the reconstructed site is not only that it tries to present these four millennia on the ground, to limited success, but that the interpretation on the ground still reflects Piggott's interpretation of the site phasing, rather than Barclay's. Confusingly, it is the latter's version of site phasing which is interpreted on the information panels.

This issue of reinterpreting sites and updating interpretation is also reflected at another multiphase site, Croft Moraig stone circle, near Loch Tay in Perthshire. Piggott also excavated this site, in 1965, with three phases of activity recorded. Interpreted as beginning in the later Neolithic, the first phase was a setting of timber posts, dated through

associations with pottery deposited on the site. This was replaced by a stone setting, which itself was augmented with further stones, into the Bronze Age (Piggott and Simpson 1971). This interpretation of the site was cast into doubt by Bradley and Sheridan (2005) who, after re-examining the pottery and excavation evidence, interpreted four phases of activity, perhaps starting in the early Bronze Age, with the latest phase dating to the late Bronze Age. The Historic Scotland interpretation panel, however, still uses Piggott's phasing of the site, reflecting the difficulty of updating public interpretation as academic theories and interpretation changes.

2.15 Visiting sites

There are a number of common trends that run through visitor experiences regardless of setting (Falk and Dierking 1992). Visits to archaeological sites and museums are undertaken "to accomplish a variety of goals – recreational, social, educational, reverential, or a combination of these. Placing oneself in a particular setting is an active process" (Falk and Dierking 1992, 63). People visit sites for a variety of reasons, but all are ultimately in search of some kind of experience (Uzzell 1998b).

The processes and motivations of visitor experiences can be analysed through Falk and Dierking's 'Interactive Experience Model' (1992, 2). This involves three perspectives: the personal context; the social context; and the physical context (Falk and Dierking 1992, 2-3; Dierking 1998, 56-7). The personal context indicates that each visitor's experiences are unique; that they have individual likes and dislikes; and that they visit sites with personal agendas. The social context reflects the fact that most visits occur in groups; those who visit on their own will be influenced by others at sites; and these group interactions affect the visitor experience. The physical context refers to the nature of the site itself, existing as physical settings; separate from the everyday, which visitors choose to enter (Falk and Dierking 1992, 2-3).

2.16 Public expectations

Visitors to archaeological sites and exhibits often come with preconceived ideas of what it is they are going to see, or what they know (or think they know) about a site or place. Such perceptions of archaeology are often exploited through popular media to attract audiences. For instance, the use of Stonehenge in the title of an exhibition about prehistory

in the Netherlands reflects the use of common perceptions of sites as a means of encouraging visitors to archaeological attractions and exhibitions (see Borman 1994).

The development of archaeological sites can lead to a perceived loss of specialness (Frodsham 2004). In this way visitors have certain preconceived ideas about what they will discover at a site, for example the expectation of a pristine archaic environment set apart from the modern and everyday. With popular visitor attractions, visitors can often find themselves surrounded by dozens or even hundreds of other visitors, impacting on their experiences of the site and their perceptions of the past there. While this is often an expected part of the visit, it can still have a negative impact on experiences and perceptions of sites, as is reflected in the case studies (chapters 3-7).

2.17 Authenticity

The Romantic movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to the development of the modern concept of authenticity (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999, 231-2).

Authenticity can be reflected in many different ways and forms (Timothy and Boyd 2003; Jamal and Hill 2004). The term has been used in a variety of connotations including 'reliable', 'original', 'real', 'genuine' or 'authoritative' (Jokilehto 1995; Myrberg 2004). Archaeologists identify and confirm authenticity through an object's context (Shanks 1995, 105; Moser 2001, 274). Artefacts are often viewed as a tangible, fixed, and therefore authentic, link with the past (Lipe 2002, 21).

The concept of authenticity has become one of the central debates of heritage and cultural resource management (McManamon and Hatton 2000), and is "taken to mean a condition of an object which can be revealed in so far as it exists but which cannot be created wilfully" (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999, 232). It has increasingly been viewed as a marker for heritage with its inclusion in the criteria for World Heritage Site status (Myrberg 2004, 152), as well as its inclusion in a number of international conservation charters (see Bell 1997).

With the development of an ever-burgeoning heritage industry, the notion of authenticity is crucial to the value of sites and attractions, but equally, authenticity requires the *preservation* of sites and artefacts and an acknowledgement of the depth and diversity of the past (Little 2002, 11). As a result 'a cult of authenticity' has developed, where anything and everything from objects to smells may be associated with the past and

therefore may be preserved and interpreted as authentic (Lowenthal 1994; Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999, 232).

Age seems to be a dominating factor in determining the authenticity of archaeological sites (Myrberg 2004). But authenticity is a complex concept, and often it is the perception of authenticity that is important to the experience (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999; Lowenthal 1985). Archaeological sites and landscapes are often viewed as authentic because they exhibit few recognisable symbols of modern influence (Ronayne 2001). One of the critical features of authenticity of a site is to portray the past in what is perceived to be an accurate manner (Timothy and Boyd 2003).

Authenticity is a key aspect for visitors to archaeological sites and parks (Moscardo and Pearce 1986). Viewing or interacting directly with relics of the past can encourage empathy amongst the public towards the authenticity of the past and its links with the present (Lipe 2002). Different visitors will, however, perceive what is authentic and inauthentic differently, influenced both by personal experience prior to the visit as well as activities and experiences occurring during the visit (Moscardo and Pearce 1986).

As such, perceived authenticity is critical to the success of archaeological visitor attractions (Moscardo and Pearce 1986), and is therefore critical to positive perceptions of archaeological sites. In-depth archaeological research can often provide a perception of authenticity through the various types of information that can be provided from archaeological investigation (Lipe 2002). The incorporation of substantial amounts of this detailed evidence gives archaeological presentations their authority, and therefore authenticity (Moser 2001). Having the real artefacts there, rather than a museum, is also important.

Those tasked with presenting archaeological sites may also have concerns with regards authenticity, albeit from a different perspective. Authenticity has “become one of the key features of the success of archaeological representations” (Moser, 2001: 274). Sites as heritage attractions need to satisfy the expectations of visitors in terms of an authentic experience, whilst at the same time controlling and managing their impact on the site (Fyall and Garrod 1998, 213). Sustainable development of sites usually involves minimal visible intervention and intrusion of the modern on sites. In this way, authenticity and sustainability go hand-in-hand in developing and protecting archaeological sites both at present and in the future (Fyall and Garrod 1998).

Archaeological sites developed as tourist and visitor attractions use this perception of authenticity and timelessness to attract visitors. Authenticity is a key factor in the search for cultural tourism (Timothy and Boyd 2003), as tourists search for the authentic other which is believed to be ‘out there’ (Cohen 1988; Jamal and Hill 2004), and is integral to the modern heritage industry (Hewison 1987; McManamon and Hatton 2000). Cohen argues that ‘authenticity’ in terms of seeking out this authentic other during travel is a poorly considered concept, which exists only in the mind of the visitor rather than being a product of the culture they visit (Cohen 1988).

2.17.1 *Aura*

Related to authenticity is the concept of ‘aura’ (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999; Myrberg 2004). Perceptions of authenticity often involve less tangible aspects of sites, such as feeling and atmosphere. These perceptions can be manipulated, however, as “the aura and authenticity of an object can be created and (re-)negotiated by archaeologists and others” (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999, 231).

Whilst aura is perceived to exist out there, authenticity can have different meanings at different times and in different places (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999, 230). In this way “authenticity is not about factuality or reality. It is about authority. Objects have no authority; people do” (Crew and Sims 1991, 163).

2.18 Heritage

Instead of history we have heritage.

(Walsh 1992, 68)

Heritage today appears to be ubiquitous in both idiom and form. Everyone has (a) heritage (Harvey 2001). Until the latter part of the twentieth century, heritage referred to an individual’s inheritance bequeathed in a will (Graham *et al* 2000). In the more recent past the term has taken on a myriad of new meanings. Skeates discusses two interpretations of the term heritage: that referring to the physical remains of past human actions; and the symbolic meanings placed on these remains (Skeates 2000). In holistic terms heritage relates in turn to anything viewed or valued by an individual or group which has an origin in, or a connection with, the past (Ashworth and Howard 1999; Graham *et al* 2000).

The terms heritage and history are often used as synonyms. The distinction between heritage and history, is complex, although this is not always acknowledged (McManamon and Hatton 2000). Lowenthal advocates for a separation of real remains and accurate objective history, based on fact, from more subjective, populist accounts and reconstructions of the past, which he views as heritage (Lowenthal 1998; McManamon and Hatton 2000). This approach suggests that there is a ‘correct’ historical narrative (Harvey 2001) which is subjugated by heritage interpretations. Both history and heritage are, however, modern constructs (Hollinshead 2002). Historians seek to interpret aspects of the past in the present, but concomitant is heritage as the contemporary social manifestation of the values and aspects of ‘the past’ in the present (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996).

There is an obsession with ‘the present’ in heritage (Harvey 2001, 324). In this way, those aspects of the past perceived and valued in the present are preserved and presented as heritage. These values and interpretations are space and time specific, constantly undergoing processes of renewal as a reflection of changing attitudes towards the past (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996, 10). Part of the heritage process today involves the rejection of historical process, positioning the past as a series of snapshots in the present (Walsh 1992, 149). In this way “every generation has the past it desires or deserves” (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999, 230) a reflection of the social contingency of the past and its construction in the present.

2.18.1 *Tangible and intangible heritage*

The development of concepts of heritage often referred to the physical, tangible remains of the past. The preponderance for physical remains reflects a euro-centric western bias on what constitutes and reflects aspects of the past, and how it should be valued (Cullerton 1999). Whilst intangible heritage has been acknowledged as an important part of the concept of heritage, the primacy given to material remains has continued, and is notable in national and international legislation. This partiality was inherent in UNESCO World Heritage Status, with the status defined on cultural or natural heritage incapable of recognising and valuing intangible heritage (Munjeri 2004). The growing recognition of the value of intangible heritage has subsequently been recognised at international level by UNESCO. The tangible remains of the past, such as historical and archaeological sites and artefacts, are bound up within the same processes as intangible activities, such as cultural practices and folk memories, in the shaping and memorialising of the past (see Jones 2004). In a sense this creates a false dichotomy of tangible and intangible heritage, whereas the two more often coexist and interrelate (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004).

With the post-modern rise of relativism minority groups and excluded ‘others’ are increasingly laying claims to ‘their’ heritage, and challenging what were/are often western, imperialist interpretations of cultural pasts (Jones 2004; Mapunda and Lane 2004). In this way forms of cultural heritage hitherto ignored by the dominant ideological systems in heritage have been challenged, as the multivocality of the past and its myriad representations in time and space are increasingly valued. The separation of ‘the heritage’ into two heritages suggests that the situation is not resolved, however, as the division between tangible and intangible heritage reflects a continued belief that the two are separate, disconnected entities. This has resulted in the concern that intangible heritage continues to be perceived simply as folklore (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004).

2.18.2 *Heritage as a reflection of society*

The development of a modern national heritage took its form in Britain from the demise of empire, which created a nostalgic and reflective social conscience (Hewison 1987; Lumley 2005). The demise of traditional industries and the increase in leisure, travel and tourism from the mid-twentieth century have created a demand for commodified experiences of the past. In the 1990s local and regional governments were increasingly encouraged to maximise the economic benefits of their resources, of which heritage sites were one (Lumley 2005). The subsequent emergence of increasing numbers of civil servants with marketing and advertising backgrounds had a great impact on the nature and presentation of regional and national heritage (*ibid.*).

The development of concepts of heritage implicitly involves the selective appropriation and use of aspects of the past (Graham *et al* 2000). It is therefore often (although not always) the selection of elements of the past which a society views as positive (Timothy and Boyd 2003). In this way sites and monuments may be incorporated within widely accepted, non-contentious views of a communal past. Societies would often ignore, alter or reinterpret elements of the past which were considered undesirable in the present (Hollinshead 2002). This cosmetic approach to heritage often ignores other, less desirable aspects of the past.

This recognition has led to conscious reappraisals of the value of alternative and unsavoury aspects of the past (Jones 1997). The recognition by UNESCO of Auschwitz Concentration Camp as a World Heritage Site in 1979 reflects the need to represent “those elements that society is not so keen to reveal” (Timothy and Boyd 2003: 237).

Interpretation of the past as heritage can also provide benefits to cultures and societies in terms of constructing and promoting identities (Graham *et al* 2000, 40; Jones 1996; 2004; McClanahan 2004). Heritage and identity are reciprocal terms and processes: heritage roots identity in space and time, whilst identity gives heritage purpose and meaning (McCrone *et al* 1995). In this way heritage can be viewed as a dynamic process (Skeates 2000, 9). Heritage and identity are not static, but evolving and changing through time.

2.19 Archaeological sites and the creation of identities

Archaeological sites as relics of the past are used in the present through incorporation into the construction of ‘community’ identities on various levels: individual; group; local; regional; national. The importance of the past as an aspect of current identities means that heritage is critical in the shaping of identities for two reasons: “it is ubiquitous [...] and it is infinite in its variety” (Graham *et al* 2000, 204). Representations of heritage are often used to promote aspects of identity which are valued by a community: “A heritage representation is, intentionally, a cultural explicating device” (Macdonald 1997, 156). In this way people have always used the past in the present to create and reinforce identity (Jones and Graves-Brown 1996; Jones 1996). The very selection of aspects of the past, which are valued above others, is therefore a political gesture, and can be cynically exploited (see Jones 1997).

A paradox exists in the role of archaeological sites and identity. Where identity is the sharing of a common set of beliefs, sites identified as of, for example, national importance and therefore used to create a national identity, are often atypical, unique, or special. The association of heritage with national identity often reflects this positive bias, with the selective interpretation of aspects of the past used to promote communality. Research into the role of national identity was recognised as key in the development of World Heritage, under the auspices of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (Herrman 1989, 31).

2.19.1 Local culture and identity

Heritage is key in the development of local identities as, by its very nature, heritage has the capacity to be unique (Graham *et al* 2000, 204). The growth of heritage and tourism has led to local communities being encouraged to construct a ‘sense of place’ (Jones 2004; Lumley 2005, 20). The very nature of this process brings in to question whether perceptions of what is local heritage are altered to create an image for the other. This is especially the case if what is being presented as local heritage is constructed outside the

local community, through the use of heritage and tourist professionals, which can result in conflict (see Jones 2004; Lumley 2005).

Macdonald discusses the role of the 'heritage centre' in the creation of local identities: "a purpose-built representation of what is considered an appropriate depiction of the past and the locality" (1997: 155). In this way heritage and identity become rooted in a location, fixed in the landscape, from which emanates a sense of authority and authenticity. Through the democratisation of heritage and the creation of modern local heritage museums there is the opportunity for local communities to start to present themselves in their own ways (*ibid.*; Dicks 2000). This is reflected in the development and growth of local history societies and groups.

2.19.2 *The modern development of heritage*

The development of heritage today has occurred within both economic and political frameworks. Whereas the definition of heritage above refers to those aspects of the past that the present in some way values in a socio-cultural sense, today it is more often manifest in terms of economic or political values. According to Tunbridge and Ashworth elements of the past are commodified as part of an industrial process of heritage production, wherein 'historic resources' are selected, interpreted, packaged, and then targeted through heritage products (1996, 7). Thus in the semiotics of heritage and national identity, certain sites are marked out as symbols of both the past and the present. Interpretation of sites and artefacts can therefore be viewed as divisive: detaching what is interpreted as unique, special or other (Uzzell 1998a). Such thinking also demands that we render the past familiar, providing some link between the present and the past to make it more readily understandable, and ultimately removing its sense of difference.

This is most obviously done within the heritage tourism sphere. Heritage tourism, which is often referred to by the synonym cultural tourism, can be broadly defined as visits to "archaeological and historical sites, parks, museums, and places of traditional or ethnic significance. It also includes travel to foreign countries to experience different cultures and explore their prehistoric and historic roots" (Hoffman *et al* 2002: 30). Heritage tourism developed in the 18th century as a result of the industrial revolution, which created a new wealthy class, and allowed people to travel for pleasure for the first time (Berghoff and Korte 2002). The interest in viewing the past had evolved from the Grand Tours of the previous centuries where travel was viewed as a method of self-improvement (*ibid.*). It

also reflected a growing interest in other cultures, both past and present, through the accounts of exploration in Africa and the Americas.

Today tourism is a major global industry and cultural heritage, of which archaeological sites are part, is a major contributor to both local and national economies. In contrast to the financial benefits of cultural (or heritage) tourism, the risk of destruction of sites through the actions of tourists is a major current concern (Hamlin 2000; Hoffman *et al* 2002) and tourism in general is often viewed as having a negative impact in archaeological terms (Moscardo 1996). Tourism is said to lead to the commoditisation of certain aspects of a culture, society or community (Cohen 1988). This commoditisation leads to the destruction of the inherent identity of local products and activities, instead transforming them into 'staged authenticity' (MacCannell 1979; Cohen 1988).

Heritage tourism has, however, been identified as a key way in which archaeology can engage with an interested public (Hoffman *et al* 2002). In the last two decades many regions have viewed the development of heritage sites as a way of boosting flagging local economies, weakened by the loss of industry, by encouraging more visitors into areas. In the Scottish Highlands, for example, a number of heritage enterprises developed in the 1990s to take advantage of different aspects of the region's cultural heritage (Skeates 2000). This also reflects the growth in industrial heritage and archaeology, as the links to this more recent past are broken.

One of the concerns for archaeology and archaeological sites is the fact that they are positioned within the heritage sphere, competing against other 'attractions' in a leisure market (Merriman 2004a). In this way, the concept of heritage has been developed as a marketable product which is packaged and sold. This is what Hewison refers to as the 'heritage industry' (Hewison 1987). But it is also driven, as with all products, by consumer demand which, in the case of heritage, is often a demand for the nostalgic and mythical, or indeed the past that never was (Uzzell 1998a). This has resulted in many sites being developed primarily as revenue streams, rather than educational or community resources. As a result, sites and landscapes can be viewed in a form of heritage limbo, as relics of a past that no longer exists and a present where they are out of place. The protection and scheduling of ancient monuments can be seen as another way of separating this physical past from the present. Although not a process of presenting sites to the public, the processes involved in providing legal protection to sites can in its own way be viewed as interpretation, a lens through which sites and monuments come to be viewed and understood by the public as separate from the everyday and to be protected from

modernity. “Law gives archaeological material a publicly recognised value” (Carman 1995, 22), and here the past is frozen in time and space (Graham *et al* 2000).

2.20 Archaeology on the ground

This chapter reflects the complex issues and competing discourses which come in to play when considering the role of archaeological sites today, what they represent, to whom, and why. They also reflect the difficulties and issues which affect the processes of both interpreting sites and trying to make them accessible to the public.

The following five chapters examine these processes and issues as they are experienced at five different case study sites. The interview excerpts provide a unique insight into the perceptions of archaeology, as presented at the sites, from those engaging with them on the ground. These first-hand interactions also reflect the complexity of the issues encountered, reflecting how themes such as identity, authenticity, preservation and landscape are understood, interpreted and experienced on site.

3 Case Study 1: The Yarrows Archaeological Trail, Caithness

3.1 Background to Caithness

Caithness is located in the north-east corner of the Highlands of Scotland. It has an area of 7650km² (www.caithness.org), and the 2001 census recorded a population of 25,195, primarily focused in the two main settlements of Thurso on the north coast, and Wick on the east. The county is incorporated within the administrative boundary of Highland Council, geographically the largest regional government designation in Scotland.

3.2 Archaeological research in Caithness

Caithness was the location for a great deal of archaeological investigation during the 19th century, primarily focusing on the relatively abundant chambered cairns within the county. The two main protagonists of this work were Alexander Rhind in the 1850s and Joseph Anderson in the 1860s (Davidson and Henshall 1991). Indeed Anderson's and subsequent work on these sites revolutionised understanding of chambered cairns at that time. Other antiquarians, including Laing and Tress Barry, also conducted excavations in this area during the later 19th and early 20th centuries. After this extensive phase of research, interest in the archaeology of Caithness appears to have waned, with the focus in the north of Scotland primarily on the Orkney Islands through the 20th century.

In the last decade, an increasing number of archaeologists have undertaken research projects in Caithness. In 2000 The Caithness Fieldwalking Project began, with the Mesolithic activity at Oliclett discovered in 2001 (Pannett and Baines 2006). Excavation of the stone rows and a hitherto unknown Bronze Age kerbed cairn at Battle Moss on the shore of Yarrows Loch began in 2003, with a second season, focusing on the cairn, in 2005 (Baines *et al* in prep.). There were further projects in the county in 2005 at Nybster (fig. 8), with the excavation of a broch/atlantic roundhouse (Barber *et al* 2005), and an experimental archaeology project, the Chambered Cairn Project (fig. 9), at Spittal (www.aocarchaeology.com). All of these have a strong community element to them, particularly the Chambered Cairn Project where the involvement of members of the local community was essential for the construction of the cairn.



Figure 8 - Excavations at Nybster Broch (photo S. Timoney)



Figure 9 - Chambered cairn project, Spittal (photo S. Timoney)

3.3 The archaeology of the Yarrows basin: a linear narrative

The Yarrows Archaeological Trail is located approximately five miles south of Wick (fig. 10). The Yarrows area is arguably one of the richest prehistoric landscapes in Scotland, encompassing numerous chambered cairns, kerbed cairns, hut circles, a broch, standing stones and a set of multiple stone rows. As mentioned already, this landscape was the focus of much groundbreaking archaeological work in the latter half of the 19th century.



Figure 10 – Location map of Yarrows Archaeological Trail, Caithness

The Neolithic of this area is characterised by a relative abundance of chambered cairns, six of which are located around Yarrows Loch, surviving in various states of preservation (Davidson and Henshall 1991, 17). In the broader Yarrows area, there are as many as thirteen cairns within an area of 11km² (*ibid.*). Aside from chambered cairns, there is little direct evidence for other Neolithic monuments in the area, although the Yarrows standing stones may date from the later part of this period (Baines *et al*, in prep.). There is no direct evidence for Neolithic settlement in the vicinity, or indeed the County (K Brophy *pers comm.*).

Evidence for Bronze Age activity in Caithness can be found in the form of settlements and field systems, cairns and stone rows. One of the hilltop cairns of Warehouse, part of the

Yarrows Archaeological Trail, is thought to date to the Bronze Age, with a further four in the area thought to date to this period, including the recently discovered kerbed cairn at Battle Moss (Baines *et al*, in prep.). Although difficult to date, settlement evidence in the form of hut circles and prehistoric field systems in the Yarrows landscape probably also date from this period.

There are twenty-three sets of multiple stone rows known in Caithness and Sutherland (Baines *et al*, in prep.). The best known of these sites is the Hill o' Many Stanes (fig. 11), an Historic Scotland guardianship monument, alongside the stone rows at Battle Moss (fig. 12) excavated in 2003 (Baines *et al*, in prep.). These sites almost certainly date from the Bronze Age, although dating has been problematic (*ibid.*). The purpose of these monuments is equally unclear, although the suggestion that they were set out as lunar observatories (Thom 1971), and hinted at by the Historic Scotland noticeboard at Hill o' Many Stanes, is now largely discredited (Baines *et al*, in prep.).



Figure 11 - Hill o' Many Stanes, Caithness (photo S. Timoney)



Figure 12 - Battle Moss stone rows during excavation, 2003 (photo S. Timoney)

Within the Yarrows Basin evidence for Iron Age activity is focussed on Yarrows broch, located on the edge of the loch (although in prehistory the shoreline would have been further away); some of the hut circles may also date from this period. The broch was excavated by Anderson in 1886-7, revealing walls 3.5 – 4m thick and 4.5m high, enclosing an area over 9m in diameter (Anderson 1890). The remains reflect two main phases of occupation and construction, with the second phase witnessing the insertion of an inner wall in the broch structure, reducing the internal diameter to 8.6m, and the construction of buildings outside the broch (MacKie 1975).

3.4 The Yarrows Archaeological Trail

The Yarrows Archaeological Trail was developed in the late 1980s by the then Highland Regional Council (now Highland Council) in partnership with the local landowner, the tenant crofter, and Caithness and Sutherland Enterprise (CASE), opening around 1990. The trail incorporates eight sites in the Yarrows landscape spread along a 4km circuit. Improvements were made to the site in the early 1990s, including resurfacing of the access road, better signage, and an information board and car park at the start of the Trail.

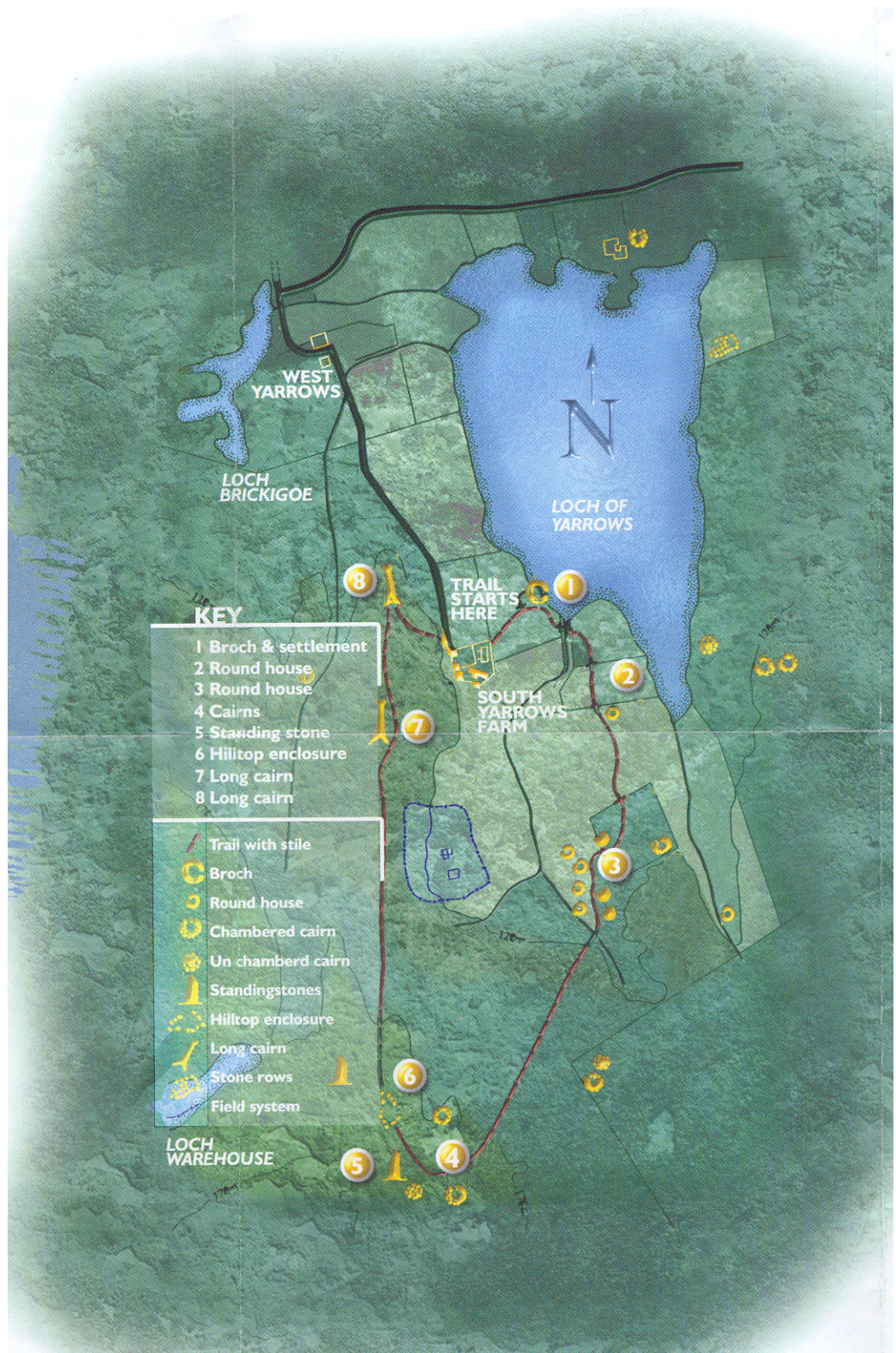


Figure 13 - Yarrows Archaeological Trail leaflet map © Highland Council Archaeology Unit

The Yarrows Archaeological Trail was the first archaeological trail in the Highlands (Yar7), reflecting a proactive approach to public engagement with sites in the region. This reflected the role and rationale of the Council Archaeologist at that time (John Wood), to undertake public education and improve public access (Yar7). The Council Archaeologist was employed within the Leisure and Museums Department, which differed from other

local authorities whose archaeologists were employed in the planning service. After the development of Yarrows, further archaeological and heritage trails were created at Castlehill in Caithness, Strathnaver and Lairg in Sutherland, and Sandriver by Gareloch (Yar7).

The Yarrows Archaeological Trail begins and ends next to South Yarrows Farm (see map fig. 13), c100m from the south-west edge of Yarrows Loch, and is interpreted through an panel at the site car park (fig. 14) and a self-guided leaflet (fig. 15). The first site on the trail is South Yarrows broch, continuing on to a hut circle; a larger prehistoric settlement and field systems; the cairns of Warehouse; a 19th century standing stone; a hilltop enclosure; South Yarrows South long cairn; and finally South Yarrows North long cairn. The trail itself is identified on the ground by a series of wooden way markers (fig. 16), leading visitors through the landscape on the route of the trail, following a path which is swiped a couple of times a year to keep the grass and heather back.



Figure 14 – Start of Trail: Yarrows Archaeological Trail car park information panel and leaflet dispenser (photo K. Brophy)

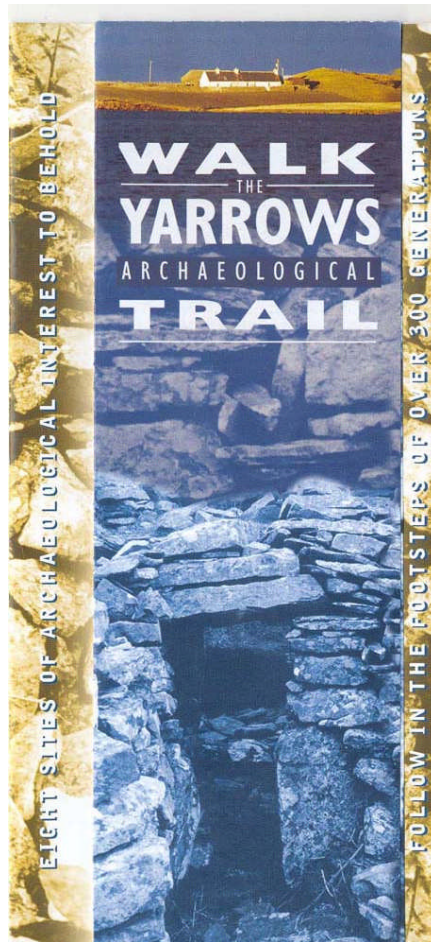


Figure 15 - Yarrows leaflet cover © Highland Council Archaeology Unit



Figure 16 - Trail waymarker (photo S. Timoney)

The leaflet provides information and pictures on the eight sites which make up the Trail, alongside a map to guide visitors along the route. These are available off-site at various Tourist Information Centres and other locations, as well as in a box dispenser in the Trail car park.

3.4.1 Local organisations

Two organisations have formed since 2000 with a focus on the archaeology and wider heritage of the area, and are now involved, amongst other things, in the development of the Yarrows Archaeological Trail. The Caithness Archaeological Trust (CAT) was set up in 2002 and incorporates members of various interest groups including Caithness and Sutherland Enterprise, Caithness Field Club, Caithness Business Club, and the Wick Society, as well as local and regional council representatives (www.caithness.org). The purpose of the organisation is to:

“Re-engage the people of Caithness with their heritage and cultural roots in a positive way, not only as spectators but as active participants in the development and conservation of an increasingly threatened cultural resource.[...] Overall, CAT wishes to develop the Caithness archaeological heritage as a cultural and economic resource for the benefit of the local community.” (www.caithnessarchaeology.org.uk)

With the support of the various member organisations on the CAT board, a full time position of county archaeologist was created, with a large proportion of the job focused on education and community archaeology.

Around the same time as the inception of CAT, efforts were made to create a separate organisation to assume responsibility solely for the Yarrows area, the Yarrows Heritage Trust (YHT). Many of the protagonists behind the creation of the YHT were also involved in the establishment of CAT. Unlike CAT, the YHT is not solely focused on archaeology, including the natural as well as cultural heritage of the area in its remit. During the data collection period in 2005 there were discussions about extending the Trail around the loch, or even creating another looped trail at Wattenan and linking this to the Yarrows trail, although neither of these has since developed.

3.5 Participant knowledge and expectations of the Trail

Visitors to the Trail generally had little knowledge of its existence or nature prior to walking the route. A number of participants alluded to their expectation of a number of monuments, possibly located around Yarrows Loch. The presence of a brown thistle sign on the A99 to Wick (fig. 17) was mentioned as the only other factor informing people of the presence of the Trail.



Figure 17 – Brown thistle sign (photo K. Brophy)

When questioned about their expectations of the Trail, initial responses from participants generally suggested that, apart from that mentioned above, they had few or no expectations of the sites. This was brought into question later in a number of interviews, however, when participant comments suggested reactions to the monuments which reflected certain preconceptions. This was exemplified by Yar8 who, when asked at the start of the interview, did not have any expectations of the Trail:

Yar8 *Well I knew that the Trail was there and it had archaeological bits, but I didn't know anything about it before I came to Scotland.*

Discussing the nature of the remains of the Trail later in the interview, however, Yar8 acknowledged some expectations of the sites:

Yar8 *I expected some well-kept sites that were identifiable. Like you looked at them and you thought oh yeah, that's....I expected something that would, it would like be quite well preserved. I mean I know it's up on a hilly bit and you'd expect it to be fallen down a bit but some of it was just like stones in a mound. It wouldn't really, it could just be that someone had decided to one day I don't know throw stones at a bit or something. But it wasn't really, some of the sites weren't very distinguishable from the normal landscape because the grass had grown over them.*

In this way, while not consciously expecting anything of or from the site, participants often reflected on hitherto subconscious expectations of the experience, or expectations which were not viewed as 'acceptable' at the beginning of the interview and therefore not mentioned until later in the discussion. An example of the former is in the way a number of respondents expected signs to be present at each of the sites along the Trail. Instead, participants often encountered a more confusing situation:

Yar9 *But some of the sites they weren't marked up on a plaque and so we missed some of them, cause we didn't know they were there, and 'cause they were covered in grass or whatever.*

A number of sites on the Trail, namely sites 2 – the hut circle; 3 – the prehistoric settlement and fields; and 6 – the hilltop enclosure, were missed by a number of participants, who only realised they had passed these sites when they reached the next site on the Trail. This difficulty was often exacerbated by the presence of a sign at the first site on the Trail; the broch (fig 18). This sign is not an integral part of the original Trail presentation, but rather a more recent attempt by the Highland Council Countryside Ranger to conserve the archaeological remains. The sign attempts to deter visitors from walking over the remains of the broch itself by indicating the age of the site and asking for visitors to take a responsible role in how they choose to negotiate the monument.



Figure 18 - Warning sign at Yarrows broch (photo S. Timoney)

What the sign also does, however, is mark out the site, acknowledging its separation from the landscape as a ‘sight’ to be viewed and experienced. This marking out, regardless of the primary purpose of the sign, led participants to make the assumption that all subsequent sites on the Trail would be marked out in a similar fashion (eg Yar10 below).

Another expectation for at least one participant, which was uncovered later in the interview, was the number of sites on the Trail, and the nature and level of prehistoric remains in the landscape:

Yar12 *I didn’t know what was up there, so I just thought well there must be something up there, but I didn’t realise there was so much up there. There’s quite a number of sites, was there eight of them? Eight, that’s quite a lot. You just don’t realise they’re there.*

The number of sites in the landscape and on the Trail was a surprise to a number of participants. The Yarrows area, and the adjoining landscape of Watenan immediately south of the Trail, is recognised as an extremely rich prehistoric landscape (Pannett 2000). What is also interesting is that the Yarrows landscape has numerous other prehistoric

remains which are bypassed by the Trail, including roundhouses and burial cairns. Some of these are marked with icons on the leaflet map, but no access is suggested.

The surprise at the number and density of sites in the landscape also reflects the assumption that archaeological sites are separate and withdrawn from the present and the everyday in public perceptions of the past. These monuments are normally viewed and experienced as single entities, often elevated to the status of visitor attraction, and set apart as pockets of the past in the modern landscape. Although the interpretation of the Yarrows trail breaks this landscape down into a series of discrete, numbered sites, it was viewed in a different way, with the entire area interpreted as archaic and unaffected by time.

3.6 Presentation of the Trail

The nature of the archaeological remains on the Trail was a key issue with respondents. Preconceptions of what an archaeological site would or should look like affected the experience of visitors to the Trail. The reaction to sites with substantial, recognisable remains was in general more positive than reactions to the more ephemeral features on the Trail:

Yar10 *Some of the, the 2nd and the 3rd things [the hut circle, and prehistoric settlement and field system] are like really hard to find, because as you're walking through the first thing is like there's a sign saying this is a broch. But as you get to the 2nd one there's nothing, it's just look out for it yourself and with it being something that's not very like [recognisable], the hut circle and the prehistoric whatever it is, you wouldn't really know what to look for if you weren't used to looking for that type of thing. So it's a bit hard to find those ones. But everything else is sort of really obvious.*

The lack of any obvious structures (fig. 19) made them difficult to locate in the landscape, especially for visitors with no knowledge of archaeology and site morphology. This lack of distinct structures, as had been found at the broch, was exacerbated by the absence of markers or signs, discussed earlier, were expected by a number of participants at the sites:

Yar12 *Just some indication that it's here, 'cause I was thinking if someone just comes along and they haven't done archaeology, they're not going to know what to look for. So they'll basically do what we did and just walk past. It's not good, but we weren't quite sure. We realised when we got to the*

end that we'd missed, was there like a fort up on the hill or something? I think we missed that or walked straight through it and didn't realise.



Figure 19 - Hut circles on the Trail (photo S. Timoney)

Expectations of the nature of archaeological sites presented to the public led participants to miss these altogether, although the depiction of the site on the ground did not match that of the leaflet (fig. 20). The perception of sites as tangible extant remains was reflected in the response of Yar4 to the excavation of the cairn being undertaken at Battle Moss at the time of the interview:

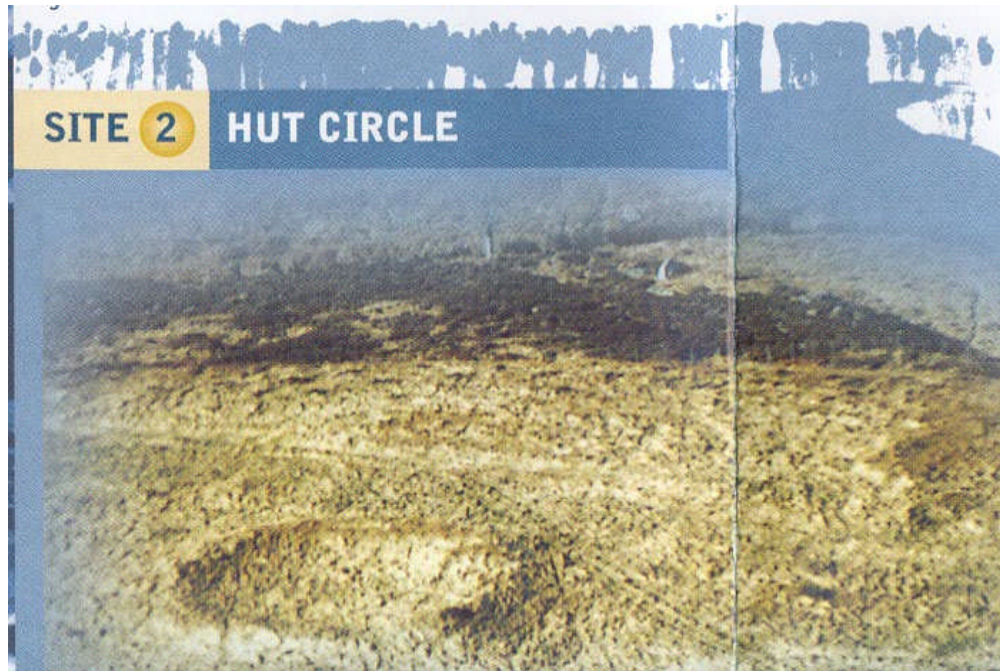


Figure 20 – Hut circles in the Trail leaflet © Highland Council Archaeology Unit

Yar4 *I was actually surprised at the number of sites in one way or another that are actually going on in the place itself, you know.[...] But there's quite a bit of stuff here that nobody knows anything about. And we'd've never known about that down there [Battle Moss cairn] if you [the archaeologists] hidnae come.*

The idea that sites could survive hidden below ground, unrecognised, can be a surprise to members of the public, who have only experienced them in certain ways, primarily as substantial structures presented as visitor attractions. Paradoxically, sites with substantial remains on the Trail were also perceived to be potentially problematic:

Yar10 *Some of the things on the Yarrows Trail even like the cairns, if you weren't sure what a cairn was, you'd be like oh this must be it, and think it was a big pile of stones. But it might just be a big pile of stones.*

The perception of a cairn as a 'big pile of stones' was an interesting analysis. In comparison to the Grey Cairns of Camster (fig. 21), c5km to the west of Yarrows, which have been fully excavated and (re)constructed by Historic Scotland, the Cairns of Warehouse (fig. 22) were more difficult to understand and 'read', because the nature of their original construction had been lost through time and the destructive processes of

antiquarian excavation. Conversely, the Yarrows cairns do reflect more accurately what most cairns look like.



Figure 21 – The reconstructed Grey Cairns of Camster (photo K. Brophy)



Figure 22 – Cairns of Warehouse (photo S. Timoney)

Yar10 discussed the recognition of a need for some knowledge of archaeology and site typology when visiting the Trail:

ST *What about the other sites. What were your thoughts on the long cairns?*

Yar10 *Again I just, if you didn't really know what they were, the Yarrows Trail isn't going to enhance your understanding any. Because there's just not, I don't think there's enough information telling you why they're different from the other cairns, and just you know.*

Although the Trail is designed to appeal to a wide audience, including those with no knowledge or interest in archaeology, the nature of the interpretative information and the physical nature of the sites themselves led participants to conclude that they required a certain level of archaeological knowledge to appreciate the Trail more fully. Respondents acknowledged the difficulties of presenting sites, especially in relation to encouraging visitors onto archaeological sites and private land. Since the introduction of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, landowners and legislators are still coming to terms with the ramifications of providing access to the countryside, and the issue of where responsibilities lie in terms of health and safety. A concern with the safety of visitors can therefore have an impact on the way a site is developed and presented, as Yar1 discusses:

Yar1 *The insurance raises its head because lots of our [Caithness] sites are on the edges of cliffs. How do you make them safe? Put a big fence round them and you ruin the site, you know. It's very, very difficult.*

Presenting sites and ensuring visitor safety were not always viewed as easy bedfellows. Putting in safety measures such as a fence around a site would impact on the essence and experiences of the archaeology itself, taking it out of the landscape and marking it out as separate and different.

Dissatisfaction with the current presentation of sites led to concerns with how to present the sites on the Trail. The limited amount of information that can be provided through information panels was recognised:

Yar1 *I suppose you could argue that the people that just want to wander around and gawp, they should leave the landscape as it is. And for people interested...putting up a stone plinth and a plaque is not, is insufficient for them. So I would probably go for an all or nothing approach.*

Yar1 identified two groups of visitors he considered would visit the Trail, with an all or nothing approach viewed as the only way of justifying interpretation of the Yarrows sites. The ‘nothing’ approach was viewed by others as a positive development:

Yar13 *I think it probably adds something to the Trail in a strange sort of way because you have to actively look for it. And it's not like some things where you're just wandering along and oh, there it is, oh, there it is. You've got to actually look for it and you interact then with what's going on. Because you've got yourself a map to look around and you're in the landscape and you're playing around in it basically trying to find where it is. Which is an experience in itself.*

In this way, the lack of interpretation was part of the experience, leaving visitors to ‘seek out’ the archaeology and the sites of interest, with the option of using the leaflet to provide information on each of the sites. This response also reflects a deliberate policy by the Council to avoid imposing signage on the ground.

3.6.1 The leaflet

The leaflet is therefore a method of providing information for visitors without intruding on the landscape. The original leaflet was created by Highland Council and consisted of a foldout pamphlet on grey paper with purple text and graphics (fig. 23). The leaflet has subsequently undergone cosmetic change within the last four years, with the original deemed to be “too bland and boring” (Yar7). The redesign introduced a new full colour layout, including photographs, but without the archaeological schematics of the original. The paper the leaflets are printed on also now incorporates a gloss varnish to allow it to withstand rain on the Trail. The text is, however, the same as the original, with cost suggested as prohibiting a complete rewrite at that time (Yar7).

The use of a leaflet as a guide to the remains on the Trail elicited a varied response from participants. A leaflet, as opposed to information boards or signs on the ground, is a more unusual way of presenting archaeological sites in comparison to more standard information boards. The information incorporated in the leaflet did not, however, elicit positive responses. A number of participants viewed it as disappointing, with even the accuracy of the information provided questioned. The nature of the text and the style of writing were

also unpopular, as it told little about the basics of the sites, and failed to contextualise these in the landscape, as Yar10 discusses:

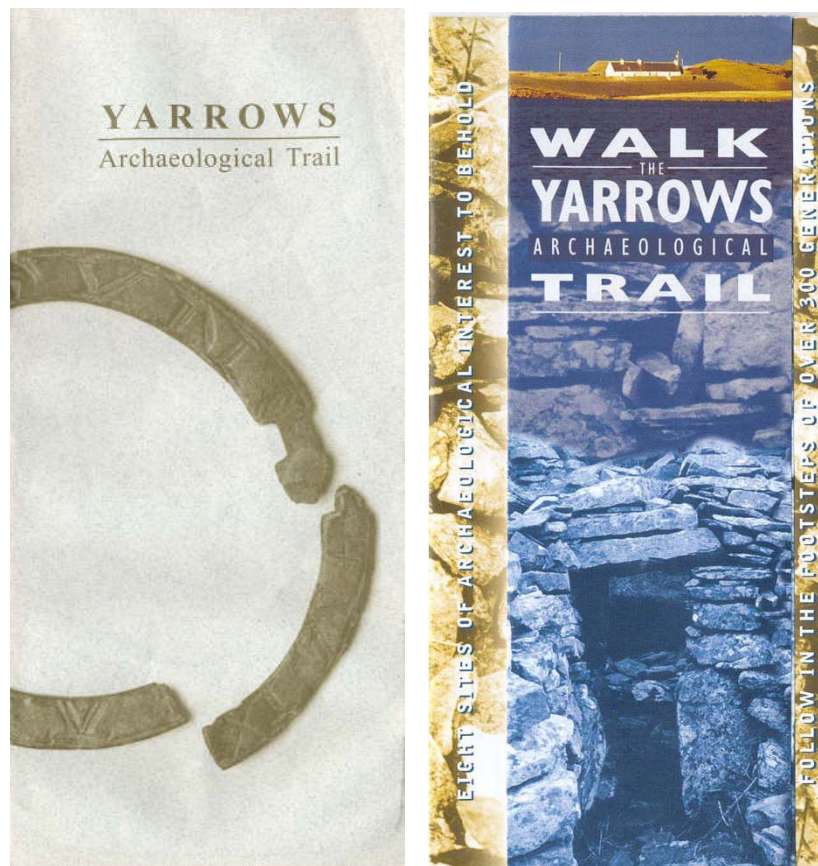


Figure 23 – The old (left) and new (right) Yarrows Archaeological Trail leaflets © Highland Council Archaeology Unit

Yar10 *The leaflet's....it's not wonderful. It's a bit sort of this is this. It doesn't give very much interpretation I don't think. It just sort of says this is a cairn, that's it. Sort of like it's not said why it's there, or if there's any reason for putting why they've put the cairns there. It's like this is the cairn, it's for putting dead people in. It doesn't go into very much detail about them.*

Another participant discussed this lack of a connection further, stating that what was described in the leaflet did not reflect the archaeological remains as they were experienced on the ground:

Yar4 *The description of what is there is not just quite the same as what's on the ground. [...] You know, it's a description of what it should be, rather than what it is at the moment.*

This reflected perceptions of archaeological sites and the forms that people expect them to take in the landscape. While from a typological perspective the identification of the sites in the leaflet are correct (apart, perhaps, from the date of the hilltop enclosure), the use of terms such as 'cairn' or 'broch' creates subconscious images of what visitors to the trail are going to see.

One of the major benefits recognised of this method of interpretation was the lack of impact on the archaeology on the ground, as Yar9 discussed when questioned about her thoughts on the presentation of the sites:

Yar9 *Well you had the leaflet didn't you, something about each site, that's what it said on the leaflet so it didn't have anything written on them [the sites] when you got there, so that was good.*

In this way the leaflet was acknowledged as a different and generally well-received way to present archaeological sites. Its lack of impact on the ground was recognised as a positive approach to presenting the remains. Yar13 was more philosophical about the 'presentation' of the Trail:

Yar13 *Yarrows wasn't presented to me. All I got was a leaflet and a map. I didn't have to read the words they put on it, I could just find the description myself. But I think I preferred it [the lack of information panels] as a feature of it, because I suppose it's probably unique to this area is that how closely everything is knit in with the landscape itself. It's good the way it's been left.*

An absence of interpretive media on the ground allowed participants to engage with these sites in their own ways, choosing how to see, negotiate and experience the monuments and the landscape. Although there is a route marked out through the landscape, it is not especially obtrusive, and therefore less prescriptive in exactly how the monuments should be approached and viewed.

A number of participants discussed not reading all of the information in the leaflet, instead primarily using it for the map, as a way of negotiating the Trail. Disinterest in written information is a common factor with the presentation of any site or exhibit, where users are often discouraged by the incorporation of too much text, and view it as a negative aspect of the visit (Falk and Dierking 1992). In this way, while some viewed the information provided as too limited (see above), other participants reflected that there were sections of the leaflet which had too much information which did not engage the reader. This was demonstrated when one participant discussed the assessment that leaflets were not necessarily for reading:

Yar8 *I may have been a bit, because with leaflets you generally just flick through them, and like we opened it up and we were generally looking at the map.*

The layout of the text in the leaflet (fig. 24) does not lend itself to successful presentation, as the use of different font sizes, styles and colours is distracting and precludes a flowing narrative. This deters an engagement between the visitor and the interpretation, and risks creating negative attitudes towards the archaeology.



Figure 24 – Leaflet text showing confusing layout © Highland Council Archaeology Unit

More practical issues exist with the use of the leaflet in adverse weather conditions. As has been mentioned, the redesign of the leaflet incorporated a waterproof coating to allow for use in the rain. Some participants had problems using the leaflet in the wind however (a common problem in Caithness), with the difficulty of holding on to and at the same time reading the leaflet leaving a number to abandon the interpretation altogether. This was not a criticism of the leaflet however, as Yar11 discusses:

Yar11 *We used them for the map, but it was quite windy, so if you try to get them out and try to fold them they blow off. I suppose if it hadn't been so windy we would have used them more, so it depends on what the weather's like. You can't do anything about that.*

Another issue was the lack of a narrative within the interpretation. Many visitors to sites and members of the public interested in archaeology still look to archaeologists to be experts and inform them about the past (Frodsham 2004). In this way the leaflet was viewed as the authoritative voice providing an account of *the* past. The admission within the leaflet that archaeologists were unsure about the nature of the hilltop enclosure (fig. 25) was disappointing.

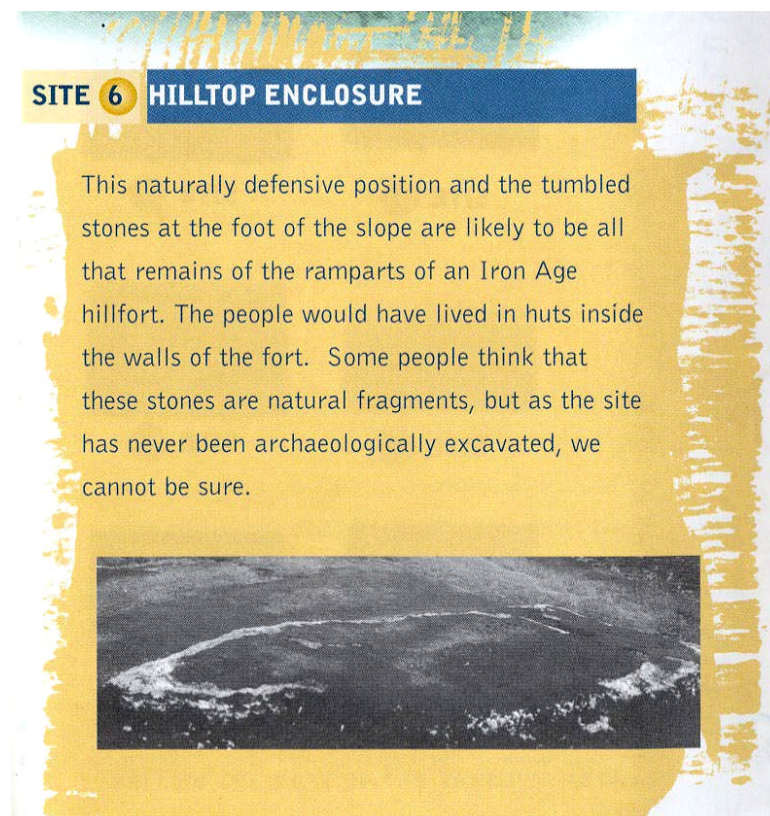


Figure 25 - Leaflet section on hilltop enclosure © Highland Council Archaeology Unit

Yar12 took an altogether more upbeat approach:

Yar12 *I read the leaflet and it said 'why was it built and what was it used for?' [the hilltop enclosure] And the first line underneath, we don't really know why or what it's for [laughs]. Well at least then everyone's in the dark about it and you can maybe think up your own theories.*

The information provided in the leaflet was also criticised for sometimes being irrelevant:

Yar14 *What they were talking about essentially it was irrelevant, we were at a long cairn and they were talking about what the people in the roundhouses were eating and what they were hunting, possibly what they were hunting and what they were using. It was like; this really isn't the point.*

This reflects the difficulty in providing a context to sites that will interest readers with relevant and engaging information. This is, however, difficult to do within the limited space of a leaflet, as the amount of space for text is inherently limited, necessitating a focus on only a few key themes.

Space on the leaflet was also limited by the use of other media, including photographs and a map. The map was the main feature of the leaflet which was used by participants. Although the route of the Trail is marked out on the ground by a number of wooden posts, the path is not always clear. In this way the map provides a tangible depiction of the route and the sites, which visitors can use to negotiate their way through the landscape.

Missing a number of the sites on the Trail was a significant issue for participants, and was partly associated with using the map. The scale of the map, and the size and positioning of the site icons meant that the location of a number of sites was unclear, as Yar14 describes when trying to locate the hilltop enclosure:

Yar14 *Well, it took a while to figure out where we were on the map, but once we figured out where we were meant to be at we did figure out pretty quickly what it was. Only because essentially we were making rings with our fingers on the land. It really was guess work.*

A concern for one participant was the orientation of the long cairns on the map:

Yar1 *Certainly the graphics that they've used show the orientation of the cairns the wrong way round. Which sort of suggests that the orientations aren't important when they obviously are important.*

The stylised nature of the map separates what is important in the landscape from what is superfluous; but maps are not mirror images of the real world (King 1996; Wood 1998). The creation of the map for the Trail involved the incorporation of the designer's "prejudices, biases and partialities" (Wood 1998, 24). This is a reflection not solely of the map, however, but the leaflet as a whole. In this way the leaflet is a product of an individual, or group of individuals, who have researched, identified and written about the Yarrows landscape, elevating some of the sites as sights to be visited (Lee Davis 1997), and relegating other aspects of the landscape, and interpretations of the sites, to the background.

The use of photographs in the leaflet provided false expectations for visitors to the Trail. Pictures of the roundhouses were aerial shots, a view of the sites which visitors would not be able to observe. The nature of the roundhouses is enhanced through the use of light and shadow, and monochrome photography, to create an image of a recognisable circular structure. The reality for visitors on the Trail is altogether different, with a landscape of confusion persisting over the existence and location of these monuments:

Yar3 *I think that the information presented is pretty bad, because we've got a leaflet which was made up by Highland Council which is prettier than the last one but less informative. In fact it's wildly inaccurate, it's got pictures of things which aren't the thing in the picture and the sort of thing like that.*

The inclusion of pictures of the modern walkers' cairns also led to confusion for some participants. The cairns are not part of the original cairn construction, but rather they are modern structures using the original cairn material, as the leaflet states:

"Small modern cairns have been made on top of some of these sites. Please just leave these as you found them – do not add to them, or take anything away from them."

SITE 4 CAIRNS OF WAREHOUSE

Alexander Rhind spent the summer of 1853 excavating here. He found burials, pottery and flint items, but they have been lost over time. The cairns were probably built in the Neolithic period about 5,800 years ago, and were still in use until about 4,000 years ago. The construction of this type of monument would have demanded considerable effort by many people.

The cairn on the left of the path, has no obvious entrance or chambers, and it is probably more recent in date than others. It may date to the Bronze Age - perhaps built by the people living in the hut-circles.

Small modern cairns have been made on top of some of these sites.

Please just leave these as you found them - do not add to them, or take anything away from them.

Walk along to...

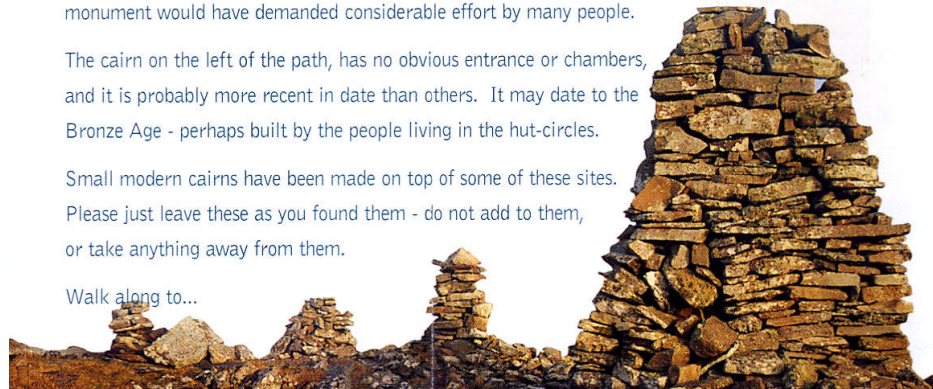


Figure 26 - Leaflet image showing modern walkers' cairns on Cairns of Warehouse © Highland Council Archaeology Unit

The inclusion of pictures of the modern cairns in the leaflet (fig. 26), however, gave them a sense of authority and authenticity, as by their very presence on the official interpretation they were legitimised in the landscape:

Yar10 *And some of the recent towers [cairns] from the walkers, I mean because they're, one of the pictures in the leaflet is of the stone towers, so people might get a bit confused by that I think. If it's in the leaflet, and they think ooh this is a cairn. And then they get to the next one and it didn't have that tower. So yeah, that's a bit.... [...] Because we were sort of like 'these aren't right' [speaks in an unsure voice mimicking their response on site]. And we were just checking, but yeah, I don't think they should be moved, but maybe the picture shouldn't be of them either, because that's really misleading.*

For those participants who located the remains of the hut circles at site 2, the ability to see something tangible on the ground was a positive experience:

Yar11 *Even the roundhouse when we did actually spot it you could see the foundations for it. [...] So it was good because you could still see where it had been and that was still quite interesting.*

One of the overwhelmingly popular aspects of the presentation of sites on the Yarrows Trail was the opportunity for visitors to directly experience the archaeological remains.

Enactive experiences are generally the most effective and successful form of visitor encounter (Copeland 2004). The ability to touch, move through and interact with the archaeological remains was viewed as a positive aspect of respondents' encounters with archaeology on the site:

Yar12 *It seems like a bit of an adventure kind of walk, where you come across stuff and you can go and look.[....][You've] got no one to say hold on, you can't go in there, you can't touch this, you can't do that. It's better that way I think.*

One of the key aspects of experiences of the Trail was the freedom to move about and interact with the monuments in any way (even with the sign at the broch requesting visitors do not walk on the remains). A number of participants discussed the way they could move around and through the sites without any regulation, something which was unavailable at other sites they had visited:

Yar11 *The ones [sites] that we spotted, they were interesting, so you want to have a look around them and get as close as you can to them. Which is why signs saying don't walk over them [the sign at the broch] doesn't really help, because you still want to get close and see what you can about them.*

In this way, an awareness of conservation and preservation issues was contrasted with a desire to experience the sites first-hand.

3.7 Preservation and conservation of the archaeological remains

The sites forming the Yarrows Trail have scarcely changed since the excavations by Rhind and Anderson, with little conservation work undertaken, although partial reconstruction was undertaken at the time of the excavations. The water level of the Loch of Yarrows has risen; dammed to provide the water supply for Wick. Although it is no longer the supply for the town, the water level remains high, and has encroached on the South Yarrows broch.

The impacts that visitors may have on sites was acknowledged, although knowledge of these impacts was not always a priority when experiencing the sites first-hand:

Yar11 *I think some of them could do with being looked after a wee bit better. Just, well it's probably because people do clamber over them even though you've got signs asking you not to, because you're not going to get shouted at. But perhaps if there were regular checks to make sure they were alright, and if they did some work on them then if it was needed, that might help.[....] We did clamber over them and have a look, and see if there were any holes.*

The presence of the modern cairns on the cairns of Warehouse elicited a mixed response from participants over the conservation and appropriate treatment of archaeological sites (see above). Whereas some respondents were unsure of the provenance of the modern cairns, and whether they should or should not remain as part of the monument, others were more philosophical about their existence and what they meant for the Trail and the prehistoric cairns:

Yar13 *It's a continuation of it [the cairn's use]. It keeps it alive if you know what I mean. Whereas if you take something and try and preserve it it's still dead, there's no life to it. Because all these sort of emotions that could have been going on there have been taken out, people have cleaned it up and made it look all respectable. And sometimes it's nice you know to have a bit of a mess to look around.*

In this way the preservation or restoration of sites was viewed as a freezing of monuments in time (see Graham *et al* 2000), with any restoration of the cairns interpreted as sanitising and homogenising the past, creating a pastiche which is neither past nor present.

Although a number of respondents cited an ability to move around, over and through the sites as an important part of the experience, they were aware of the impact such activities could have on the fabric of the sites (see above). Natural as well as human impacts were recognised as factors which may need to be more closely controlled in the future, if they were shown to be detrimental to the survival of the sites:

Yar12 *I suppose the weather is helping to destroy the site slowly, so they probably need something to keep them as they are, but not so much that you couldn't actually go in and have a look, you know. You don't really want them to be fenced off so all you can do is look. You should be able to go in and have a look and see what's going on.*

Although it was recognised that modern interference with the archaeological remains may affect the nature and ‘feel’ of these places, it was also recognised that impacts on the sites on the Trail should not go unchecked.

3.8 Authenticity and aura

Perceptions of authenticity are an important feature of visitor experiences at archaeological sites. Participants referred to aspects of authenticity when discussing the presentation and nature of the remains on the Yarrows Trail, as with the cairns of Warehouse (see above) and the layout and nature of the remains of sites more generally.

As the sites on the Trail have not been reconstructed or conserved in any way specifically for the trail (fig. 27), participants perceived them to be inherently more natural and authentic:

Yar12 *You can tell with the Yarrows Trail that no one's been there and tidied them up, to make them presentable to the public. They just happen to be there, and you can walk in and have a look around, you know. With like Camster [Neolithic chambered cairns], because they've rebuilt them up for people to come and see [with concrete and glass roofs]. On the sites on Orkney they've all been tidied up and stuff like that. But you can tell that these ones haven't, and you've got all the grass growing through them and the moss, and things like that.[....] They seemed natural. Like they should, that they were always there.*

ST: *They seemed natural?*

Yar12 *Yeah, just like, I don't know. You just walked up the path and they were there, and it doesn't seem like it was placed there, it just seems like it should be there.*



Figure 27 – South Yarrows North cairn: looking ‘natural’ (photo S. Timoney)



Figure 28 – Wideford Hill cairn, Orkney: ‘tidied up’ (photo S. Timoney)

The idea that the sites had not been ‘tidied up’ (fig. 28) was integral to the perception of authenticity. In this way they were perceived to have survived from the point of their original construction and use to the present day without being amended or disturbed. Such perceptions were developed in spite of the fact that a number of sites had been excavated. Instead, the unkempt and unaltered *appearance* of the sites, replete with grass and moss, offered visitors the impression of an unaltered ruin. In this way, the nature of the remains, preserved *in situ*, reflected a sense of authenticity, as though they were as old as the land itself, with this sense of ‘ruin’; an iconic state, attractive to participants.

A concern with age which was reflected in the varied responses to the cairns of Warehouse was brought into sharp focus by the disinterest shown for the standing stone (site 5 on the Trail). This is described in the leaflet as a 19th century boundary marker, set up on the ridge by estate workers to demarcate the edge of the estate boundary (fig. 29). The lack of longevity for this site led to it being dismissed by participants:

Yar14 *Then there was a stone pillar, or a Victorian pillar, but we knew enough from the leaflet that that was something that the Victorian's had done, so nobody bothered. You could see it. It was a stone on a hill.*

ST *Nobody bothered? Was that because it was Victorian as you said?*

Yar14 *Pretty much. I mean we were more or less up there for looking at Bronze Age stuff and looking at Neolithic stuff and that sort of thing. Which I guess most people probably would do that. I wouldn't be surprised if most people would go up, and if they knew it was Victorian, would probably pass it by. Which is probably a bit unfair. It's still older than I am. And it probably deserves a look, just to see what they've done with it. But we just walked past it.*



Figure 29 - Yarrows standing stone in the landscape (left foreground) (photo S. Timoney)

Although Yar14 acknowledged that it may be ‘unfair’ to ignore a monument primarily on the grounds of age, the stone lacked sufficient age for it to have a sense of mystery and otherworldly-ness. By contrast, if the leaflet had stated it was a Bronze Age standing

stone, it would have been perceived and treated in a different way, and visited and experienced as with the other prehistoric sites on the Trail. This may suggest the public invest archaeological sites with a mythical ancientness, even if, for instance, many standing stones were re-erected in the 19th century. It may also reflect the idea that people want to know about prehistoric standing stones, but at the same time it is their mystery and our lack of knowledge as to their purpose which makes them attractive. With the Victorian stone, its rather more mundane purpose as a boundary marker reflects this known and everyday function.

The modern cairns and the Victorian standing stone may be perceived as modern intrusions in the countryside, but what appeared to be a popular concept for most respondents was the sense of aura, specialness, and antiquity of the landscape as a whole. When considering hypothetical changes to the Yarrows Trail, the effect any changes would have on the aura of the landscape and the sites was questioned:

Yar2 *I have to think would it be so atmospheric if it was any different? Now I just love it because you go early in the morning and it's one place and you go in the evening and it's quite different. And there's nooks and crannies all the way around it. Nobody bothers you and it's not very busy. Yeah, it's just a great place and it has a great feel about it.*

The existence of this aura, not solely for the sites but for the entire landscape, allowed respondents to contemplate thoughts of stepping back in time:

Yar14 *The one thing about that walk that could really fire peoples' imagination is that it's so secluded and so remote that, there's no houses and no roads and no pylons, what you really can do is get people in that frame of mind that they can imagine themselves being 200BC, they can imagine themselves being 4000BC, that they really can.*

The nature of the Yarrows landscape, virtually removed from icons of the modern and everyday, created a situation which allowed participants to imagine themselves in the past. The archaeology was viewed in this way as being on the edge, the periphery of modern life. Some respondents believed that they could experience the sites as they would have been used in the past, and in some way make a connection *with* and be part *of* that past:

Yar13

It's just, I don't know, it's just the idea of how many thousands of years it's been stood there and how many people have done the same as I've done, or anything like that. It's just, it's quite a nice feeling, because there's so much history there. I mean it's not written history, it's all sort of no one can trace it, but it's there, these people have been there, touched the stones and experienced it for themselves. Just to be, you know, a part of that, because there's definitely an air around the area that you can just feel. As if other people have been coming and going sort of thing.

Participants' responses also reflected the predominance of the visual nature of experiences and encounters with sites on the Trail. The most popular sites: the broch; and the chambered cairns, especially South Yarrows South long cairn (fig. 30), were popular primarily because they were visually impressive and recognisable structures:



Figure 30 – South Yarrows South long cairn entrance and view down cairn (photos S. Timoney)

Yar11 *I don't know if better is the right word, but it's one way of describing them because they're visible. You can see them; you can walk around them and spot features on them, whereas like with the second long cairn [South Yarrows North long cairn] it just looked like there was a small chamber.*

Having recognisable structures was important in helping visitors to make the link in understanding what they were viewing. The second long cairn has been so heavily robbed out and ruined that it was difficult to imagine how it may have looked. This positive reaction to the visual nature of some of the sites was reflected in other responses to South Yarrows South long cairn:

Yar12 *I think we liked it [South Yarrows South long cairn] because we like to crawl around and have a little look around. And the two boys were a bit excited because they could see the chamber and everyone had a look. So it was good, in good condition. So at least if someone came along to have a look they could have a good idea of what they looked like. [...] The other cairn, the other long cairn [South Yarrows North long cairn] was the last one; it was all covered in grass so you can't really see it in comparison [to the other long cairn]. It's another case of you could just walk past it and, just another bump in the hill isn't it?*

3.9 Archaeological sites as economic and community resources

Caithness is often perceived to be different and separate from the other areas within the Highlands. The county differs greatly from the stereotypical image of Highland Scotland, with the mountains and lochs found south and west giving way to the flow country of north-east Sutherland and Caithness. Local perceptions of the area as distinct from the rest of the Highlands have long been acknowledged on cultural as well as geomorphological grounds:

“Caithness[...]is often erroneously included under the term ‘Highlands,’ whereas, in fact, it was an area wherein Norse influences predominated to a greater extent, perhaps, than anywhere else on the Scottish Mainland. This can be traced in place names, e.g., Wick, Thurso, and in the numerous farms and villages ending in ‘ster.’ This is further corroborated by language[...].

If a line be taken from the village of Forss on the North Coast through Halkirk to Dunbeath on the South, it will form the base of a rough triangle of undulating land, fringed on two sides by the sea, favourable to agriculture and isolate from the rest of Scotland by bleak hills and long stretches of moorland untenanted save by grouse and deer. From a purely historical aspect, this had a profound effect upon the life of the people[....].”

(Donaldson 1938, 13-14)

This perception of Caithness as separate continues today:

Yar3 *The [...] problem that Caithness has is it's part of Highland Region and it's not really Highland. [...] So whereas we're much more linked to Orkney and Shetland I think the sort of traditionally and topographically and archaeologically and all the other ways. We're sort of stuck with Highland and they [VisitScotland] don't like to bother with this area because it's not mountains and glens and sort of all the things that are easy to market or don't want to, don't have to be marketed because they do it themselves really. You have to treat Caithness a bit differently, and that's awkward for them I think. So it simply doesn't happen.*

As part of the prehistoric heritage of the county, the Yarrows Archaeological Trail is viewed as an economic driver for the local economy. In this way, the site has potential to be developed both for locals and tourists (Yar1). Research conducted for the Highland Visitor Survey (May 2002 – April 2003) found that visitors to Caithness stayed for an average of 2.6 days, much lower than the average for Sutherland (although Sutherland is a much larger county), which was 4.2 days (2003, 2). Visitors tended to include Caithness within a multi-location visit with other parts of the Highlands, 10% continuing on to or having already visited Orkney. This figure is somewhat surprising; especially as the local Caithness perception is that far more go to Orkney:

Yar4 *The people that come to look at the archaeology are going straight over to Orkney, seeing all that big digs, well, past digs and there's no.... I cannae remember what they're called, but there's two or three places and then they bugger off back south. This [the Yarrows Archaeological Trail] is no' advertised near enough.*

In this way, Orkney was perceived to benefit at Caithness' expense. The economic benefits the heritage industry has brought to Orkney are obvious, at a time when traditional

industries and population levels in Caithness are in decline. Encouraging visitors to stay and experience the Caithness archaeology is viewed as a way of encouraging people to stay in the region, both in the short term for visitors, and in the long term for members of the local community by providing valuable means of employment. By developing heritage sites in the county, it is hoped that increasing numbers of visitors will come to Caithness, and that those visitors will spend increasing amounts of time in the area. This will have a knock-on effect on the service industry, which will benefit from visitors through increased visitor spend via local shops, restaurants, hotels and bed and breakfasts (Yar2).

A key feature of this development has been discussion over the creation of a Caithness 'brand' as part of a marketing and advertising strategy:

Yar2 *We've still got to get to the point where we've got a Heinz brand and it actually attracts people here. Our archaeology does attract academics, and special interest groups. But that's because they know. Joe Bloggs in the street doesn't always know. And certainly Joe Bloggs in the street in New York probably wouldn't know.*

While increasing awareness of the potential of Caithness archaeology in academic terms continues to be encouraged, there is a perceived need in some quarters to use these developments to benefit the community as a whole. Part of the process of creating a brand would involve increasing awareness of the county and what it has to offer visitors. In this way, advertising is viewed as a way of increasing interest and knowledge about the area.

3.10 Summary

Although Highland Council promotes the Trail via its website and leaflet guides at Tourist Information Centres and other local public buildings, the Trail is not widely known. This lack of awareness of the Trail was reflected in the interviews, but did not detract from experiences.

The discussion of a lack of expectations and subsequent comments later in interviews reflected the complexity of participants' experiences on the Yarrows Trail. Respondents were also not keen to be openly critical at the start of the interviews, but once a dialogue had been established, were more open about their thoughts and experiences, both good and bad. Participants were influenced by perceptions of archaeological sites from images in mass media, and visits to other archaeological and cultural heritage sites, which often led

to the creation of subconscious expectations of what a planned archaeological trail should involve. This could be as simple as expecting markers, signs or information panels at each of the sites/sights on the Trail, but also reflected other assumptions in relation to the condition of monuments and their ability to be able to interpret what was on the ground.

Participants also found problems with recognising sites on the ground, especially those which were relatively ephemeral features, such as the hut circles. This reflected the minimum intervention approach which had been taken to 'presenting' the sites, allowing visitors from various interest groups to be able to stake claims, use and value these sites in different ways (see Stanley Price 1994). The problem with this approach was reflected in some of the responses to a number of sites, and the leaflet. While the leaflet showed an aerial image of the site, trying to locate these structures in the dense heather was beyond most participants. It was also interesting to note that although other monuments were marked on the leaflet map but not incorporated as part of the Trail, no participants had endeavoured to reach these sites. This may reflect the difficulty of crossing this type of landscape, but also an inclination to adhere to the path and the marked trail, rather than straying and investigating for themselves.

The strategy of using a leaflet to interpret the trail was generally popular with participants, even if the information included within the trail leaflet was often criticised. The ability to be able to choose to use the interpretation provided, or to experience the sites and interpret for themselves, was appreciated. This was recognised as a positive move away from the ubiquitous information panel, allowing an element of autonomy within the on-site experience. The information in and layout of the leaflet was not, however, as popular. Although it followed standard interpretation procedures, including using a hierarchy of information (see Black 2001), it did not appear to capture the interest or imagination of respondents.

The 'successful' sites on the Trail were those sites which had substantial, recognisable remains. This reflected a more general understanding of archaeological sites, and required less interpretation on the part of respondents to be able to understand and enjoy them. This also reflected a predominance for 'tangible heritage', reflecting a Western bias to what constitutes heritage more generally (see Munjeri 2004). But even these more recognisable structures were still open to criticism and misappropriations, such as the interpretation of one of the cairns of Warehouse as a 'big pile of stones'. Equally, the presence of modern intrusions on sites changed participants' perceptions, albeit in different ways. The modern walkers' cairns were seen both as a modern intrusion on a prehistoric landscape, and

simultaneously another phase in the biography of the monument. The latter response is incongruous with modern conservation agendas (see Walsh 1992), where the reuse of the material remains of the past is perceived as destruction of the monument and a link to the past.

The enactive aspects were in some ways the most important aspects of the experience discussed, as participants described their enjoyment at being able to move around and through the sites, to engage with the monuments, and in this way create a greater physical connection with the past. This ability to engage in a very physical way with the monuments was not viewed as without risks, however, as the threat to these monuments' long-term survival was noted, especially at the broch where the sign explicitly stated the damage which visitors to the site were causing. As with perceptions of the use of the monument discussed above, this 'issue' did not deter participants from walking over and through the monument. Instead, their experiences and engagements were considered to be more important, and their individual impacts on the site not viewed to be great. This attitude can be interpreted as participants choosing to ignore their negative impacts on a site's long term survival. Again however, it ties in with the perceptions of the walkers cairns as another use of the monument, and another part of its biography.

All of these interactions with sites on the trail, and the perception that many of them were unaltered and natural, all helped to create a sense of authenticity for the sites, the Trail and the landscape. The Yarrows Trail was commonly discussed with perceptions of it being 'real' 'genuine' and natural (see Jokilehto 1995; Myrberg 2004). Perceptions of authenticity were also bound up within wider Western perceptions of the value of age, as was shown during discussions on the lack of age and therefore authenticity of the standing stone. The lack of obvious interventions, in the form of conservation, allowed participants to assimilate these sites within broader interpretations of a natural landscape untouched by modern life (see Ronayne 2001). Thus there was often a happy contradiction between a lack of tangible remains on the ground, and the belief that the sites were more honest and authentic. It was important that what was viewed was perceived or believed to be authentic for each participant, but at the same time what was perceived to be authentic changed with each response.

Bound up with these perceptions of authenticity was the concept of aura, wherein the sites and the landscape combined to create an otherworldliness which was in itself a form of connection with the past. Although it has been argued that perceptions of aura can be manipulated and created (see Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999), in the case of Yarrows the

‘aura’ of the site was seen as being completely natural, and connected to a much greater (and less tangible) perception of landscape, age, and authenticity.

The creation of Caithness Archaeological Trust and the Yarrows Heritage Trust also reflected a developing (in an organisational sense) community interest in the archaeology and broader heritage of the region. This interest manifest itself in a number of different ways, and reflected different perceived values for the monuments. The sites of the Trail, and in Caithness more generally, were seen by some to be an integral part of the identity of Caithness. These discussions manifest themselves in perceived values for these monuments, as the sites were seen to play an active role in helping to identify the county and its inhabitants. The potential development of archaeological sites in Caithness, primarily to be used as a resource for the tourist industry, reflected another form of value for these sites, which was not entirely divorced from the former. But discussions on developing or changing the Yarrows Trail often led back to feelings that any changes made would affect the aura and specialness of place which these sites and this landscape have.

4 Case Study 2: Tarbat Discovery Centre, Portmahomack

4.1 Background to Tarbat Ness

The Tarbat Discovery Centre is located in Portmahomack, on the coast of Easter Ross in the Scottish Highlands (fig. 31). The broader geographical area of Ross and Cromarty has a population of 49,140 and an area of 5,173km² (www.highland.gov.uk).



Figure 31 – Location map of Tarbat Discovery Centre, Easter Ross

4.2 Early Medieval archaeology of Easter Ross: a linear narrative

The political landscape in Northern Britain was divided into competing polities during the early medieval period, with the Picts dominating the east and north, from Fife to Caithness, and the Northern and Western Isles. The Dál Riata were concentrated in Argyll, but also had power bases in the north of Ireland (Foster 2004). Southern Scotland was dominated by the British territories of Strathclyde, in the central west and focused on Dumbarton Rock; Gododdin, in the central and south east with a centre of power at Dun Eidin; and

Rheged to the south west. The Anglian territory of Northumbria was another influential faction in this developing region.

It has been interpreted as a period of political instability as rival kin groups and factions vied for control of territory within and between these larger divisions (*ibid.*). The struggle for power and control of territory was a fluid process, with boundaries continually changing over time. This has in part been attributed to a response to the Roman abandonment of Britain (Foster 1998, 4), with local leaders moving away from political alliances with other groups, and viewing the changing political landscape as an opportunity to strengthen their power.

In the Moray Firth area, at least two major Pictish settlements are known to have existed, at Burghead and Inverness, which would have played a significant role in the development of the site at Portmahomack (Foster 2004). Burghead is possibly the earliest known Pictish power-base, dating to at least the 4th century AD (*ibid.*). It is unique in that it is the only site producing evidence for both Pictish sculpture and fortification, and was the most substantial fortified structure in the north-east (Ralston 1987, 15, 17).

Inverness has often been mooted as the location for the stronghold of Brude, the Pictish king visited by Columba, although Craig Phadriag has also been suggested (Alcock 1987, 82). Control of and access to the Moray Firth area would have been important at this time, and the location of a centre at Inverness would have allowed this. The development of Burghead and possibly Inverness reflects the wider importance of the sea for communication and trade throughout the Pictish territories (Foster 2004, 68).

The expansion of Christianity in the Pictish world has long been a source of dispute amongst scholars (Henderson 1987). The earliest links with Christianity are associated with St Ninian who is credited with converting the southern Picts (Foster 2004, 77), although Columba has also often been associated with this. Adomnan certainly honours Columba with the conversion of the Pictish king Brudei, and associates him with the development of a number of monasteries that were evident in Pictland by Adomnan's time (Henderson 1987; Carver 2004).

The conversion of the hierarchy of the Picts to Christianity can be viewed as a new form of ideological control. The foundation of early monastic and church sites is associated with kings, and many of the early abbots were of royal descent (Alcock 1987, 89). The

association with the early church, and therefore literacy, suggests that Christianity may have been adopted as a means of controlling a wider geographical area (Foster 1998, 3).

Monastic sites developed not just as religious centres, but as the focus for the production and control of agricultural goods as well. In this way some of the larger monasteries have been described as 'proto-urban' centres (Alcock 1987, 89), with both Whithorn in Dumfries and Galloway, and Portmahomack viewed in this way (Foster 2004). The churches in Pictland appear to have been under much greater secular control than those of the Dál Riata (Anderson 1987, 13), a possible reflection of the increasing control those in authority exhibited, through their increasing association with this new ideological system (Foster 1998, 3).

Further evidence for the development and adoption of Christianity is found with the production of Christian iconography on the Class II and III Pictish symbol stones. Stone carving was already a developed part of the Pictish culture before the arrival of Christianity. Pre-Christian Class I stones appear to have been associated with a focus of power in the Moray Firth area, whereas Class II stones reflect the spreading influence of Northumbria to the south after AD710 (Carver 1995; Foster 1996; Henderson and Henderson 2004).

4.2.1 Tarbat – An Early-Medieval Monastery

Tarbat lies between two areas with rich assemblages of Pictish Class I stones, Golspie to the north and Burghead to the south-east (Carver 2004, 4). What is more intriguing is the complete absence of Class I sculpture on the Tarbat peninsula itself (*ibid.*). Instead, the region is renowned for its Class II stones, associated with Rosemarkie, Shandwick (fig. 32), Hilton of Cadboll (fig. 33) and Portmahomack. The amount and quality of sculpture appears to reflect a powerful and high-status religious centre in the area (Foster 2004, 90).

The site of the monastery of Tarbat was discovered in 1984 by Jones and Keillar through the analysis of aerial photographs (Carver 1995). The cropmarks showed a large enclosure which, given its size and shape, alongside the abundance of early Christian sculpture in the area, was initially interpreted as the *vallum* around a monastic settlement. Investigation at the site began in 1991, with trial trenching of a section of the ditch to establish a potential date and purpose. Radiocarbon-dating evidence provided dates for the earliest re-cuts of the ditch at cal.AD140-410 (*ibid.*, 19).

The Tarbat peninsula is assumed to have more closely resembled an island in the early medieval period, with the narrow strip of land connecting the peninsula to the rest of Easter Ross giving rise to the name ‘Tarbat’, literally a narrow strip of land between two water



Figure 32 - Shandwick stone (photo S. Timoney)



Figure 33 - Hilton of Cadboll reconstruction during carving (photo S. Timoney)

courses where boats were dragged across (Carver 2004, 4). The choice of site for the location of a new religious centre may in part have reflected its close resemblance to an island (*ibid.*). The connection with Columba has led to the interpretation of Tarbat being established by monks from Iona (*ibid.*). The site of the Tarbat peninsula at the opposite end of the Great Glen provides symmetry with Iona to the south-west, although the position of the settlement beside one of the best landing points in the Firth may better explain its location (*ibid.*, 4). With a predominance for trade and travel to be carried out via the sea during this period, the site of this new monastic settlement appears to have been chosen to take advantage of its access potential.

The monastic settlement is thought to date from the later 6th century (*ibid.*, 1). By AD800 the site had developed into an international centre, with high-status sculpture, in the form of at least three Class II stones, produced around this period (*ibid.*, 15). The designs reflect links to the Class II stones from the neighbouring seaboard villages, as well as connecting it to the Book of Kells (*ibid.*, 16). The ongoing excavations have also uncovered evidence for a much wider manufacture of high status goods, with a ‘workshop’ area identified, providing evidence for metal working, glass working and leather and vellum production (*ibid.*).

4.3 Tarbat Discovery Centre and Programme

The Tarbat Discovery Centre is located in the Tarbat Old Church at the south end of the village of Portmahomack (fig. 34). The centre, which is a fully accredited member of the Scottish Museums Council, was officially opened by the Prince of Wales in 1999. It is open May until September 10am – 5pm, with restricted opening times of 2pm – 5pm in early April and October, and closed November to early April. Admission prices for the Centre during the period of data collection were:

- Adults £3.50
- 12-18yrs £1.00
- Under 12yrs Free
- Concessions £2.00

The programme of excavations and the development of the Tarbat Discovery Centre were motivated by the Tarbat Historic Trust, which had originally formed in 1980 to preserve

and restore Tarbat Old Church, also known as the Church of St Colman (Carver 2004, 4-6). After initial archaeological investigations by Jill Harden in 1991, the Tarbat Discovery Programme began in 1993 as a research project of the Department of Archaeology at the University of York (*ibid.*). The programme was created with two broad aims: to conduct archaeological investigations to establish the site's regional and international context; and



Figure 34 - Tarbat Discovery Centre entrance and carpark (photo S. Timoney)

to excavate and renovate the church, creating a museum to display the excavated artefacts (fig. 35) alongside presentations of the local history and culture (*ibid.*, 43). In this way:

The Tarbat Discovery Programme is designed to reveal the character and meaning of the ancient settlement at Tarbat and to display the findings in Tarbat Old Church so as to provide a permanent educational and entertaining destination for local people, schoolchildren, scholars and tourists.

(Carver 1995, 2).

In 2005 the ongoing excavations were presented to the public via an information board next to the excavation. A leaflet, available in English, French and German entitled *The Stars of Last Year*, reported on the most important or interesting finds and features of the previous season's excavations. In previous years, guided tours were also given for visitors to the site and the centre, although during the period of data collection in 2005 no tours were being undertaken.

The church from the outside looks unchanged (fig 34), resembling any other parish church set within its graveyard. It is only upon entering the building that it becomes apparent that

it is different. The visitor arrives at the front desk, and then turns right into the main exhibition space (fig 34). The walls are painted white with light from the windows diffused through blinds and ambient 'Celtic' music adding to the serene atmosphere.

The exhibition space is divided into sections, focusing on various aspects of the site's discovery and subsequent excavation, as well as including a broader timeline to help visitors place the early medieval monastery within its broader context. There are



Figure 35 - The exterior; and interior of the centre (photo S. Timoney)

contrasting dialogues of the prehistory of Scotland; the history of the monastic settlement and the carved stones; the church and the peninsula in the 1800s; and the excavations of the church and site, shown alongside photographic displays and temporary exhibits. This places the site and the information in a number of different contexts, achieved through the use of mixed media, with information panels, interactive computers (fig. 36), video screens, and artefact exhibits. The crypt has also been opened up and included in the presentation, as has the upper gallery, which contains photographic displays. There is also a video/conference room, which has an introductory film giving a background to the site and the centre, and a computer database, which focuses in more detail on various aspects of the early medieval north.

To the left of the central gallery is the main collection of Pictish sculpture (fig. 37), including the calf stone and reconstruction carvings of stones by Barry Grove (stonemason and carver of the reconstruction Hilton of Cadboll stone). The stones are displayed in various frames allowing visitors to see the carvings without the interruption of glass panels. A board discusses the carving of the replica. The process used was experimental, with the board asking questions on behalf of visitors, before supplying answers through



Figure 36 - Computer database (photo S. Timoney)



Figure 37 - Display of Pictish carved stones (photo S. Timoney)

Barry's experiences carving these stones. The smaller artefacts on display are housed within more traditional glass-fronted display cabinets (fig. 38). There are also glass panels in the floor showing a skeleton (replica) in a long-cist burial and grave slab in situ (fig. 39).

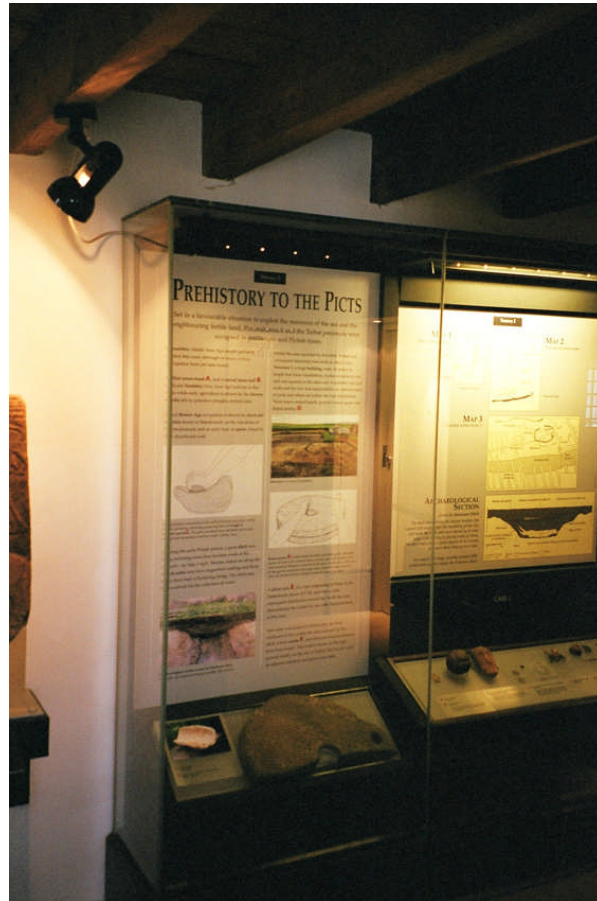


Figure 38 – Traditional glass cabinet displays (photo S. Timoney)

4.4 Visitor knowledge and expectations of Tarbat Discovery Centre

Participants generally had little knowledge of the Centre or the nature of the presentation of Tarbat prior to the visit. A number of participants were holidaymakers staying in the area that either had the centre recommended to them as a place to visit, or read about the centre through a variety of guidebooks. A lack of knowledge about the Centre or the nature or purpose of the displays reflected an interest not in the Centre *per se*, but rather with the Tarbat Discovery Centre fitting into the sphere of heritage and visitor attractions. The ongoing excavations appealed to a number of visitors, with a general interest in archaeology or a more vague interest in 'the past' discussed in a number of interviews. A

number of participants specifically discussed the attraction of the Picts, and popular aspects or concepts of the Picts such as their mystery and enduring legacy.

For one participant who was aware of the nature of the site as an important Pictish location, the different presentations in the Centre came as a surprise:

Tar3 *Well as I say there are quite a few things I expect to find, like in terms of artefacts and stuff. [...] All the stonework and stuff, it's very typical especially all the cross stuff. I'm not saying that's a bad thing, typical isn't a criticism but what I expect to find. It's definitely nice to go down to, although the crypt down there, I didn't expect to look down and see the [skeleton], I wasn't looking where my feet were going so. There's a couple of kooky features which make it stick out. And as I say these photographs [photo exhibit of 19th century images] are a really good idea as well. I didn't expect that, I just expected it to be focused on one particular period as opposed to, you know, quite broad. As I said I did expect to see stonework and that, but I expected it to be a modern building, to be honest, you know? But it's not.*



Figure 39 - Skeleton in long cist displayed below floor level (photo S. Timoney)

Although the ‘cross stuff’ was expected, the realisation that the centre had a much more varied set of displays and themes was not. This caused Tar3 to reconsider her expectations and experiences of the centre. Another participant discussed an understanding of the importance of Pictish art and metalwork. Having seen Pictish metalwork before, and having an interest in jewellery making, Tar9 expected there to be more in the form of artefacts from the excavations on display:

ST *You mentioned [before] your interest in the art and metalworking. Was that a specific interest when you came here?*

Tar9 *I thought there might have been more. I don’t know why I thought there might be more. Perhaps because I saw leaflets saying about the artefacts that had been found, sort of glass working, leather working, metalsmithing. I mean there are a few bits; I wasn’t quite sure what to expect. But the quality of the workmanship when you look at what they’ve done with what was available at that time yeah; it’s quite amazing really.*

Even with knowledge of Pictish art and metalwork, viewing the skills and expertise of these craftspeople in real life still had the ability to amaze Tar9. The lack of artefacts from the excavations was however recognised as a broader issue in relation to the long-term development of the centre. Although only a small number of artefacts recovered from the excavations were on display, it was hoped that more would be made available to help give a fuller story of the site:

Tar17 *We do if you like push York [University] to give us more finds that we can display. But obviously for reasons of analysis and whatever the finds tend to go to York and stay at York. So that’s where we have the problem. [...]*
It would be nice to have more detailed finds and a greater explanation of what’s going on. [...] I don’t know if it’s the same everywhere where archaeology’s displayed but we do have a problem actually getting any finds from them [laughs].

These tensions existed between locals and archaeologists over the rightful treatment of remains and issues over ownership and belonging.

4.5 Presentation of the Centre

The reuse of St Colman's Church as the location for the Centre was a surprise for a number of respondents, especially as the exterior of the building suggested to participants it was still a functioning church (fig. 35). Although people are more used to seeing churches converted for other uses, such as flats or pubs, such changes of use are usually more obvious through alterations to the facades of these buildings. The pathway from the visitor car park to the Centre entrance leads through the churchyard and between graves, many of which are hundreds of years old. This situation, and the process of travelling through an old church, placed the Centre literally *in* the past for some participants:

Tar13a *It was just interesting to go through the graveyard, and we did when we came in here read some of the headstones, and the whole, I think it's the McLeod enclosure at the back, a little bit of the history of the families in the area. [...] You kind of get into a place and it's interesting.*

The nature and design of the interior of the Centre contrasted with the preservation of the exterior, which still resembles that of an 18th century church, with no recognisable modern amendments to the structure. A number of those who were visiting after reading about the site in guidebooks were also surprised by the nature of the Centre. The *Footprint Scotland Handbook* describes the locale and the Centre:

The town of Tain serves a vast hinterland. Inland the hills are little-visited backwoods and farm towns, narrow valleys lined with crofts where cattle graze in boggy haughs and, to the west, glens and moorland. Along the seaboard are the windswept fields of the Tarbat Peninsula. Good sea angling is to be had from the harbours of the otherwise dull coastal villages such as Balintore, and at Shandwick is a massive Pictish stone. It is said that unbaptised children were buried near the stone which is now in the Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh [sic].

[....]

The seaside village of Portnahomack [sic], or 'port of Colman', is named after the missionary who was keen as mustard to found a religious settlement here. Archaeological work is revealing the importance of this area in Pictish times. The Tarbat Discovery Centre [...] in Tarbat Old Church displays recently discovered Pictish stonecarving.

(Murphy 2004, 415)

As is typical (and necessary) with guidebooks covering a nation, the information about the Centre, the village and the surrounding area is essentially brief. The contrast between the brevity of detail in the guidebook, and the subsequent discovery of the importance of the site, was discussed:

Tar13a *It was a Footprint Guide that had good information in it. And it did not let us know half of what was here. This is much better than it sounded in the guidebook [laughs].*

The experiences on the ground were different, and indeed better, than the guidebook had led Tar13a to believe. As well as reflecting the brevity of the description, this may also reflect the fact that an archaeologist did not write the guidebook, and so the understanding or value of the site for the author necessarily reflected this lack of knowledge.

The contrast between the archaic and the modern of the site was a pleasant surprise for some. The style of the internal presentation (fig. 35) contrasted greatly with the exterior:

Tar10 *It's very well laid out, very spacious. Light but not too light.*

In this way the inside of the Centre was viewed as a modern space, and in part can be compared to other structures such as art galleries in the use of light and white backdrops.

As well as the design, the quantity and quality of information surprised a number of visitors. The different formats, including the introductory film, traditional artefact displays, and computer database (fig. 36) proved popular with respondents. A number noted that there was almost too much information, particularly in reference to the database, potentially related to a concern with missing out on an important aspect of the experience. This had led some participants to make a return visit to the centre in order to appreciate the amount of information available.

The ability to take part and engage with the displays, alongside the use of non-text based interpretive media allowed visitors to start to engage in their own ways and have their own (individual or group) experiences. The relative lack of visitors to the Centre helped this to happen (approximately 20 – 40 per day during the period of data collection), as the lack of crowds allowed participants to move through the various exhibits in their own way and at their own speed.

The nature and professionalism of the display was a surprise to a number of respondents, who assumed that the presentation would be of a more temporary form associated with exhibiting finds from the on-going excavations. An overall lack of knowledge of the site, coupled with the perceived 'remote' location of the Centre on the end of a peninsula in the Highlands of Scotland, encouraged preconceptions and expectations of a more amateurish enterprise, instead of what they encountered on site:

Tar19b *It strikes me that the way that this has been presented to the public there's a lot of effort gone into it. You know, it's very well presented to the public. [...] This is well organised. And you've got these modern IT [points to the computer database] as well. Old fogies like me shy away from these things [laughs].*

In this way the style and layout of the Centre equated with some respondents' previous experiences of heritage sites, although the Centre still had the capacity to surprise and engage.

4.6 The carved stones

One of the most important aspects of Tarbat in archaeological terms is the quantity and quality of Pictish carved stones found at the site. The level of preservation of some of the pieces of sculpture (fig. 40), the result of their destruction and burial within a relatively short period of their carving (Carver 2004), makes them as visually stimulating for visitors today as they would have been for their original audience.

ST *You were talking about the stones downstairs [in the display]. What were your thoughts on the stones?*

Tar18c *I thought they were tremendous. Well, I thought the work that's gone into them is amazing really, considering how old they are.*



Figure 40 - The Calf Stone (photo S. Timoney)

Tarbat Discovery Centre is also one of the destinations on the Pictish Trail, a tourist route developed by Highland Council. The Trail links a series of Pictish sites and monuments, including the Shandwick stone and Hilton of Cadboll, within the wider area of Moray, and Ross and Cromarty. The Trail is marked out by a series of road signs (fig. 41), and has an accompanying broadsheet (fig. 42) with brief information on each of the sites:

Tar13a *There's a great brochure for that [the Pictish Trail], and it has a whole thing of the different symbols, what they're called and kind of simplifying the most common symbols. So now I can see them in a number of the things we've looked at [in the Centre]. I don't think that I would have noticed that it's the same symbol or really have picked it up without having looked at that brochure. It's a really nice, it's a particularly effective brochure that Pictish Trail brochure is.*



Figure 41 - Pictish Trail signs: Shandwick and Hilton of Cadboll (photos S. Timoney)



Figure 42 – Pictish Trail leaflet cover and guide to symbols © Highland Council Archaeology Unit

The use of the Pictish Trail leaflet and its depiction and interpretation of the symbols helped participants to appreciate the stylistic and cultural links of Pictish iconography, and their geographical spread across the region, encouraging interpretations of their purpose and meanings in the past.

4.7 Popularity of non-archaeological displays

As has been discussed, one of the primary motivations behind the creation of the Tarbat Discovery Centre was as a repository for the display of material from the excavations. Another of the key roles in the development of the Centre was the inclusion of a broader community element to some of the displays, reflecting other aspects of the history of the

local area. Alongside the exhibitions associated with the early monastic site, there were displays (at the time of research) on:

- aspects of local life since the Reformation;
- silverware (The MacLeod of Geanies Silver Exhibition);
- Sutherland Murray and Klondyke Gold.

The inclusion of a broader community aspect to the Centre necessitated the inclusion of displays showing other aspects of the history of the local area. Although often promoted as an important Pictish site, visitors weren't always primarily interested in the excavations or information on the early monastery, instead finding the more recent social and cultural aspects of the Centre and the genealogy more interesting. The display of Sutherland Murray was a temporary exhibit in the Centre:

Tar6 *The little bit about the man [Sutherland Murray] who went to the Yukon. I could have done with a wee bit more information about him when I think about it. Now maybe I missed it, because I'm doing it at speed sort of thing, but I wasn't sure exactly when he went to the Yukon, exactly where he lived, and exactly what happened to him. And also, why did he go to the Yukon. I mean, **why** [emphasis] did he go to the Yukon? There was a photograph from Kansas City I think it was where he was on holiday, and I thought, well what happened to him afterwards? Did he stay in America or did he come back here? Or are people still living here that have got connection?*

This interest, and Tar6's questions, reflects the inherently limited nature of traditional displays. The interest in the more recent history of the area and the people of the past was also reflected in the popularity of the photographic exhibits for some participants, as well as increasing interest and enquiries to the Centre relating to genealogies. It also reflects an interest in people and stories about the past, linking personal experiences between the past and the present which visitors can relate to and engage with.

4.8 Authenticity and touching the past

A number of participants discussed the idea of touching the artefacts on display. Although acknowledging that this was not appropriate behaviour, the idea of making a tangible connection with the physical remains of the past reflected the perception that in this way *the* past could be experienced or 'touched':

Tar12 *And you feel, I know you're not to, but you feel you want to touch the past [the artefacts on display]. Perhaps that's just me, I don't know. You think oh my goodness, think how, it's impossible to think how old it is, when it goes right back to BC almost. That's fascinating.*

In this way the artefacts on display were understood to be a physical connection to a past which, 'goes right back to BC almost', and provides a link to an otherwise unknown and unrecognisable past.

This was contrasted with the use of traditional methods of museum display in the form of display cabinets, which met with a mixed response from participants. As with the presentation of sites, some respondents had specific ideas on the way that artefacts would or should be displayed. In this way the division of some of the artefacts from the public through the use of glass and metal created a psychological as well as physical barrier between the viewer and the artefacts, which for some made any greater understanding of what they meant or represented difficult.

The decision to display some of the stone carvings in metal frames, but not behind glass, allowed visitors to better appreciate the fabric of the stone and the intricacies of the carving, without the potentially divisive and ubiquitous glass panel literally 'separating' them from the past:

Tar20b *It's always interesting to find out new things and we were also surprised that everything is, um...*

Tar20a *unprotected...*

Tar20b *Yeah. You can, you don't do it but you can see, feel things.*

Tar20a *This was also surprising.*

Tar20b *Most of the time you have bars or...*

Tar20a *...display cases as we've seen it before. Complete glass cases to cover in a way that is protecting by light and I don't know, all these kinds of things.*

Again, the surprise at the possibility of being able to touch the stones was tempered by an understanding and appreciation of the preservation of these artefacts, and the impacts visitors touching them would have on the stones' long-term survival.

4.9 The excavations



Figure 43 - 2005 excavations with path leading to Tarbat Discovery Centre (photo S. Timoney)

As with the close proximity of visitors and artefacts within the Centre, the ability to be able to get close to the excavations (fig. 43) was discussed as a positive part of the experience by a number of participants. Although there were issues over a lack of artefacts on display, many visitors were pleased to get the opportunity to observe the excavations and view the *processes* by which archaeological data is recovered:

ST *You've been to the Shandwick stone [Pictish Class II stone]?*

Tar21 *Oh yes, because we walked down to it, so we know that one. And there's some standing stones near aren't there which we've been to. But they're all things that are, you just stop and look and read a wee thing and move on don't you. It's not something as obviously work in progress [the excavations] as this place. It's the actual excitement of the dig.*

ST *What are your thoughts on the Shandwick stone?*

Tar21 *It's absolutely fascinating. It's fascinating the workmanship on the stone. Again the craftsmanship. But it's one isolated thing, you know, whereas this [the Portmahomack site] there's a workroom and a workshop they're undoing.*

Proximity to the site, coupled with the way the excavations were putting the carved stones in context, made it more appealing than a single site in the landscape. The thrill of the unknown, and the excitement of discovery were all implicit in the experience of the excavation.

The excavations were not without criticism, however, with some participants expecting to have more information and a greater interaction with the ongoing excavations at the site. While they acknowledged that there were difficulties in interpreting and presenting the site while the dig was taking place, a greater level of presentation and information would have helped to make sense of what they were viewing. The information panel at the edge of the excavation area (fig. 44) provided a brief introduction to the site's discovery and the ongoing work there. It was, however, perceived by some participants to be confusing, with the information presented not helping visitors to make sense of what they were seeing on the ground. The nature of the remains confused some participants who could not *read* the site and establish what features or structures were represented in the remains on the ground:

Tar15a *I couldn't quite figure out where the ditch was or the terrace walls. I was trying to figure out is that a terrace wall or is that a road [laughs]. That kind of thing.*

Tar15b *I actually had that problem too and I think the hills [spoil heaps] throw me off a bit, up there. I kind of find that as a reference point it was very prominent when you're out there. So I think that I'd appreciate that too. A bit more orientation into what you're looking at and the things that are there. But I like being able to walk right up to it and see what they're doing right here. That's great.*

This in part reflects the problem that archaeologists and heritage professionals often assume that members of the public can view and understand sites as they do. It also reflects the inherent difficulty in producing up-to-date interpretations of newly excavated

sites without the benefit of post-excavation analysis, and with the financial constraints of producing and frequently updating interpretive media.



Figure 44 - Interpretation board for the excavations (photo S. Timoney)

Thus unfamiliarity with archaeological sites and the processes involved in excavations left some participants unsure of their role in the process of interpreting the site:

Tar9 *I wasn't sure whether you'd be able to walk round the dig or not. You can sort of walk round the perimeter, can't you. Yeah, I wasn't sure if you could get closer to it but obviously you can't because it's quite a small area.*

In this way archaeological excavations can be viewed in the same way as traditional museum exhibits, with visitors physically separated from the site using ropes and fencing, as with the use of glass display cabinets to separate visitors from artefacts.

4.10 The enigma of the Picts

The common perceptions of the Picts, developed and augmented since the classical writings of Eumenius (Ritchie 1994), continues to reflect them as painted savages, within a period of post-Roman, pre-Enlightenment darkness. A number of participants reflected the historic perception of this period as the Dark Ages:

Tar19a *But when you see some of these things [the carved stones], you know, no education or anything, you know, just told their story in the stone. It's amazing.*

Whereas Tar19a acknowledged the skill and expertise involved in producing such high-quality stone carving, paradoxically she still discussed the artist/mason in terms of having 'no education or anything' to suggest a developed culture.

A number of participants discussed perceptions of the unknown and enigmatic nature of the Picts. This too is associated with an antiquarian view which has persisted to today, wherein the Picts were viewed as separate from all other Celtic tribes in the British Isles as a result of their description in the classical texts:

Tar15 *For me the Picts, I come to Britian fairly often, and the Picts are this unknown people who are somewhat fascinating because there's so little I've read about them. Other cultural groups in Britain are better known to me. So it was a curiosity about the Picts. Who were they?*

The lack of a definitive account of the Picts created a belief that they were special, in some way different. It also reflected perceptions that this knowledge exists 'out there', waiting to be uncovered. In this way archaeologists were also viewed as often being just as 'in the dark' about the Dark Ages as the public:

Tar18c *I mean it's all very secretive isn't it, the Picts, I find anyway. A lot of it's only starting to come out now really, and they [archaeologists] still don't really know.*

Perceptions of the Picts as mysterious and enigmatic are also reflected in the idea of their use of a separate language from the other Celtic groups in northern Britain. In this way, understanding or translating the language of the Picts was viewed as an opportunity to help translate *who* they were:

Tar10 *The language, the section on language [in the database], doesn't really enlighten because it's just not known, that's the problem. The Picts were an enigma, which I hope to unravel a little bit at some point myself. To see where my roots are.*

ST *You mentioned the word enigma.....*

Tar10 *Well.... They don't know what the symbols mean. You know. They keep on saying that everything's mirrors and combs. To me there's a far deeper symbolism to these. It could be this planet and the other world.*

The understanding that so little is known about them, and this perception of the Picts as an enigma, waiting to be decoded, provided an element of mystery which appealed to a number of participants. In this instance, the *not knowing*, rather than being viewed as a negative, provided opportunities for the public to start looking at and interpreting the information for themselves:

Tar18a *We've been to Groam House [Museum] as well. To see the stone carvings as well.*

[....]

Tar18b *That was quite interesting really. It fascinates me all the designs, I mean that's what I like. I like working them all out.*

Excavations and research projects such as those at the Discovery Centre were perceived to be an opportunity to fill in the missing sections in our knowledge of the Picts, as though an answer to the Pictish question was waiting to be discovered:

Tar11 *It's an area that there's only fragmentary knowledge of the pre.... of the first millennium Picts or anything. There's lots of unknown factors or speculation. And I guess this is a place that's got potential for filling.... collecting more data, hard data on the Picts.*

While this Pictish enigma was an attraction for some participants, and a reason to visit the centre, the majority of respondents had little or no knowledge of the Picts prior to their visit. A number acknowledged they had heard of *the Picts* but were unaware of what the term meant or to whom it referred:

Tar18c *I've heard of the Picts but I've not....didn't know much about them to be honest. And then we just came here this afternoon. [....] Also, I think, until*

you come up here, I don't think you really, especially where we're from, London, you don't hear a lot about the Picts.

This response reflected a perception of the Picts as of regional rather than national (Scottish or British) interest, and may echo a lack of interest in, or identity with, what is perceived to be a regional Scottish group. It also reflects an absence of informative processes through which knowledge and understanding of who the Picts were may be accessed by a wider audience, for example in the current educational curricula throughout the United Kingdom.

The interpretation of the symbols on the stones left a number of participants perplexed. The process of moving from evidence to interpretation was often not explicit in the presentation of Pictish stones:

Tar19b *How on earth do they manage to interpret what's on these stones? It doesn't make much sense to a layman like myself. And okay, sometimes you'll pick out something that looks familiar, but what it represents is a....*

Tar19a *It's obviously telling a story, because in some of them it's a horse, so somebody obviously went off on a horse or whatever, you know.*

Although the stones were interpreted as 'telling a story', the relatively simplistic interpretation of the horse rider reflecting that 'somebody went off on a horse' was in contrast to more complex readings of the symbols.

4.11 Christianity

For many, the most familiar symbols on Pictish stones, and those most easily related to today, were the Christian icons which decorate the Class II stones. As one of the earliest Christian sites in Scotland, and potentially the first monastic settlement in Pictland, Tarbat was an extremely important location for the development of Christianity in Scotland. As such, a number of participants cited an interest in the role and development of Christianity as a factor in their visit to the site and Centre.

Tar11 *I suppose I'm interested in the early church, origin of how Christianity arrived and how the division between Rome and Christianity.... Anyway, from that we can understand the political divisions and all the warfare that*

took place. I think that Christianity bears a big responsibility for a lot of the ills of the present age. I have strong feelings about what this country has done as a colonialist and the Americans seem to be following that line in a different way. And there's always been a church that's inspiring the conquerors across all the European countries. I'm just fascinated by the origins of Christianity.

In this way, some visitors were seeking to make a link between the past and the present through the role of Christianity in society, while others acknowledged their faith as an important part of their everyday lives. The connection with St Columba and Iona was important in influencing a number of people to visit the site:

Tar13a *We're pretty active church musicians, and the Iona community now is a source of a lot of more modern sacred music and we've played and sung music from a number of the composers there. So that was kind of the connection [to Tarbat], and then it had the long history, St Columba connection.*

Paradoxically the later history of the church of St Colman's was not as interesting for some participants. This may reflect perceptions of the uniqueness of the site in terms of its potential role in the introduction of Christianity to the Picts, compared to the abundance and 'everydayness' of post-Reformation churches today.

4.12 Identity and community

For one participant, the Picts reflected a concept of his own north-eastern identity, in particular through perceptions of a separate language and culture:

Tar10 *I've got a great affinity for the things [Pictish stones]. And I feel myself that I'm a Pict, and not a Celt. I don't feel Celtic. I went to Ireland and I didn't feel part of it, you know?[...] 'Cause I used to think that our language [Doric] was kind of bastardised English and we were a bit thick in the north-east and got words wrong. But it's not. We've always had a separate language. [...]*

ST *You're talking about the north-east and the Picts. Is there a link with the north-east of the present and the Picts?*

Tar10 *I would say so, because if you look at a map of the boundaries between the different Pictish tribes there was the Ce, however that's pronounced, the line of it is exactly Aberdeenshire. And if you take a line between Forres and Nairn, that's exactly where Doric changes to Highland. It's exactly that area. So I think it's always been a distinct separate kingdom.*

In this way the separation of the Picts from other late Iron Age groups in the north and the misleading dichotomy of the Picts compared to the 'Celtic' other was used to create and define separate cultural identities, which were perceived to have continued today. The regional variations within modern day Scotland were viewed as having a much more important historical legitimacy and legacy, to the point where Tar10 identified himself as Pictish. Although Tar10 had very strong convictions in relation to his Pictish heritage, his comments also reflected a sense of romanticising the past which conformed to other Pictish stereotypes discussed earlier.

Concepts of identity are also important in the creation and endurance of heritage resources. Issues relating to identity were important not just in terms of the local community, but also for some visitors who projected meanings onto the site and artefacts, as well as using them and the wider area to create identities. Reflecting on why they had chosen to visit the Centre, Tar19b discussed perceptions of heritage and history, viewing it as an important part of development of his grandchildren:

Tar19b *To keep them [his grandsons] interested in their history as well. To let them know what was in their native land before they appeared you know?*

In this way the centre played a role in communicating specific values to younger generations, in the form of identity and Scottishness, something that was equally important to older visitors as well:

Tar11 *I'm Scottish, but I'm very ignorant really of my native land [laughs] which I'm trying to remedy.*

ST *It's an interest?*

Tar11 *Yes. I just feel I want to be more in touch with the roots of my race. [...] I suppose I lost touch with my Scottish background where I think we have an*

instinctive leaning to democratic, I suppose the history of our church, John Knox and so on, there's that side to it.

Perceptions of Scottish identity and its links with the past were not limited to those who identified themselves as Scottish:

Tar12 *I think it's great that people do things like this, because otherwise the past would be lost, wouldn't it. And I think that would be a great shame. We should all know where we came from, shouldn't we. Lord knows where I came from. There are so many clans up here, you know. Our name is Murchie, but apparently we're to do with the uh, well the Murchisons, in Ireland the Murphys. Mackenzie, we can wear the Mackenzie tartan if we so wanted to. You know.*

The importance of the development of such sites as Tarbat and their links to the creation or presentation of identities and Scottishness were also discussed by those looking for a link to their own past, as a way of becoming part of this positive construction, and part of the growing obsession with genealogy. In this way sites also played a role in the creation of local and regional identities. The area has already been the focus for much heated debate over the role and rightful location of the Hilton of Cadboll stone (see Jones 2004; 2005). The importance of local heritage and the belief that artefacts should remain within the local community was a key issue for a number of respondents:

ST *You mentioned [earlier] that you were surprised at the number of things on display from the dig here, you thought they might be....*

Tar9 *worried away...*

ST *What was surprising about that?*

Tar9 *I think that it is quite important that things stay if they are going to represent what was going on in a community. Because it's got less meaning to that place if it's taken away somewhere else to be exhibited. There are times where it's maybe important to have a travelling exhibition to show what's available in different places. But I think that things... should be displayed or returned to where they belong because it's part of that heritage.*

Tar9 discussed a popular and growing opinion about the need for artefacts to remain at or return to their original locations. In this way the artefacts from the excavations were viewed as an intrinsic part of the local community and the heritage of the area, and therefore ‘belonged’ to that community rather than being sent to a centralised institution for conservation and display. A number of those who identified themselves as part of the local community discussed the same perceptions of the rightful place for the artefacts from the excavations being in Portmahomack:

Tar7 *I think the finds that are done here should be displayed here. I strongly feel that. Because they’re part of this district, they’re part of the culture if you like. And I think that anybody that wants to look at them should come here to look at them rather than go to Edinburgh and go to a museum and go to look at what should be here.*

ST *Why’s it important for it to be here?*

Tar7 *Because it’s part of this community. It’s here, it’s got a right to be here. Like the people that live here have a right to be here. Whatever you find has a right to be here as well. And I don’t think that the people in this area should have to travel to see something that’s found on their doorstep. I feel pretty strongly about that.*

ST *It belongs....*

Tar7 ***It belongs** [emphasis]. Precisely. That’s the word, it belongs here. And if you guys [the archaeologists] hadn’t dug it up it would still be here. All right, we couldn’t see it. A lot of people, if it’s taken away, they don’t see it anymore than they would if it was still under ground. It’s a link to this district’s history. And I think it should be displayed in this district.*

The belief that the artefacts should remain in Portmahomack was reflected in the perception that it was as useful to the community in the ground as it was in the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. The local outcry over the excavation and perceived threat of removal of the lower portion of the Hilton of Cadboll cross slab (see Jones 2004; 2005), 10km from Portmahomack, reflects an awareness and value for the material past which was perceived to be at risk. The climate of mistrust over the role of professionals in

the removal of the Hilton of Cadboll stone is reflected more generally in views on the long-term treatment of the artefacts from the Tarbat excavations:

Tar16 *Well I come from two or three villages over but I think that most Portmahomack residents are quite proud of it and want to see it succeed, and things. A lot of them come in and do research with the old photographs and the burials and things, so it is quite a community project as it were. But outside Portmahomack I'm not quite sure how well known it is amongst locals.*

The perception that the site and artefacts belongs to the local community, and how a local community could be defined, was, however, a more complex concept:

Tar8 *You see, it's not 'the village of Portmahomack' [emphasis] necessarily, it's the Parish of Tarbat. That's important, that's very important. It represents, this was the Tarbat Old Parish Church, and it's the whole of the Tarbat Parish that it belongs to for want of a better term.*

ST *That idea that this place belongs to the Parish as you say...*

Tar8 *It belongs as part of the Parish. It doesn't obviously belong, it's not allowed to belong to the Parish, it belongs to the Tarbat Historic Trust who took it over, I suppose had to.*

Whereas the local community could lay claim to the site and the centre in terms of the role it plays in local identity and the different meanings and values it brings to the locale, the *ownership* of the site and the Centre remained in a sense outside the community, belonging to the Tarbat Historic Trust.

4.13 Summary

Participants were generally surprised with their encounters of archaeology and history at the Tarbat Discovery Centre. This was a reflection of (amongst other things) a lack of knowledge of both the area and archaeology more generally, inherent biases about 'remote' locations, the influence of guidebooks, and experiences of other sites and museums. In this way the standard heritage vernacular of museums and exhibitions (see Pearce 1990) was not expected at Tarbat.

The setting of the Centre within the Church made it blend in to the landscape, and along with the location of Portmahomack on the end of a peninsula, created expectations of an amateurish enterprise. The location of the Centre within St Colman's Church also placed it literally 'in' the past, with the reuse of the structure providing a tangible connection to Portmahomack's past. Participant experiences of the Centre reflected surprise and shock at what they encountered, with a depth and variety of displays which contradicted these preconceptions. This included displays on life within the last two hundred years in the area, with photographs and accounts of local residents creating a connection to a past which was almost known and understood by some respondents.

The contrast between the old (ancient) and the modern was also popular, as the design of the centre created a familiar and yet at the same time exotic location for the displays. The use of different forms of interpretation, from standard museum displays to the computer database, temporary exhibits and photographs, created a depth and variety of information which appealed for as many different reasons. Again, the ability to get close to artefacts, especially the sculptured stones, without the normal barrier of a pane of glass, created a much stronger link between the viewer and the stone. This experience stood out for a number of participants, who discussed it in a number of ways, being able to make a (metaphorically) closer connection to the past, and making the experience more real and authentic.

The ability to be able to get so close to the stones also raised the prospect of self-regulation, wherein participants recognised appropriate forms of behaviour within this kind of setting, including not physically touching the stones. Although this was discussed as a temptation by some respondents, they acknowledged that this was not regarded as appropriate interaction. In this way the long-term preservation of the artefacts on display was recognised as more important than individual (physical) interactions with the monument. This ability to self-regulate in such an environment also questioned the standard approach used in other areas of the display, where artefacts were presented behind glass screens.

Even for those participants who had knowledge or experience of the Picts and Pictish design and sculpture, the Centre still had the ability to surprise and impress. What was disappointing for a number of respondents was the lack of finds from the excavations which were available to the Centre and on display to the public. This issue was discussed with care by respondents, who did not want to be seen as being overly confrontational. The undertone of these discussions was, however, a belief that these finds belonged to the site,

and should rightfully return to the Centre sooner rather than later. At times there was an element of unease about the removal of artefacts from the site with no sign of them returning. Some of these discussions were influenced by the developments over the neighbouring Hilton of Cadboll stone (see Jones 2004; 2005; 2006), and these issues were raised again with regards to the rights of the local community in Portmahomack. Although more commonly discussed with regards to indigenous communities in other parts of the world, such sites are increasingly viewed as important in perceptions of sense of place and local identity (ibid; Lumley 2005). Through its role in creating and reinforcing other forms of identity, whether as a symbol of local identity, or seen as a reflection of a (pre-) Scottish heritage, the site was imbued with multiple values and roles.

A perceived bonus to the Centre, and perhaps one which was not being fully capitalised on for a range of reasons, were the ongoing excavations at the site. Although inherently time-limited, the fact that this form of research and discovery was ongoing at the site made it attractive to visit. One of these benefits was the ability to get close to the site and witness the *processes* of excavation and discovery as it happened, which made participants feel more connected to the site and in some ways a part of the process and experience, rather than solely viewing the results of excavation. In this way, participants were bound up within the excitement of discovery and hope which the excavation presented, as well as the meticulous and slow-paced nature of the digging process. All of this created a different sense of aura to the main display, as it was temporal, and therefore even more enticing. This process was, however, often hindered by an inability to read the site and be able to reconstruct it for themselves.

It was also interesting to note that even after viewing and experiencing all of the various displays and exhibits, and commenting on the skills, abilities and complexities of the people who made these artefacts and lived on these sites, many participants still discussed the Picts as in some way backwards, ignorant or savage. Others were still caught up with the Picts as enigmatic people, and the old-fashioned term the Dark Age, with the solution to the 'Pictish problem' waiting to be quite literally uncovered. This paradox did not seem to necessarily concern participants (many did not seem to acknowledge it). Instead, the experience was often, whilst at once enlightening, at the same time ineffectual in *changing* long-held perceptions of the past.

An interesting outcome, and a surprise for me, was the popularity of the site for Christians as an important early Christian centre. Tarbat was seen and discussed in some ways as a pilgrimage site, as a marker for the development and spread of a faith which was equally

important to some participants today. Comparisons with Iona, and the connections to Columba, all led to the site and the Centre being viewed as important. In this way the sites tied in with wider understandings of heritage (see Ashworth and Howard 1999; Graham *et al* 2000), but also created a link for these participants which transcended the tangible physical remains, and formed another connection to the people of the past through a shared faith.

5 Case Study 3: Rough Castle, Bonnybridge and the Antonine Wall

This case study focuses on Rough Castle, a specific site on the much larger monument of the Antonine Wall. Participants in this case study were interviewed on their thoughts and experiences of Rough Castle, but discussions were also opened up to include perceptions of the Antonine Wall more generally.



Figure 45 – Location map of Rough Castle and the Antonine Wall in Central Scotland

5.1 Background to the Antonine Wall and Central Scotland

The Antonine Wall stretches across the Forth-Clyde isthmus, the narrowest part of mainland Britain (fig. 45). The Wall is around 60km long, terminating in the east near Bo'ness, with the western end located at Old Kilpatrick (Robertson 2001). The Wall was built c.AD142 by the occupying armies of the Roman Empire in central Scotland, under the order of the Emperor Antoninus Pius.

The Antonine Wall survives today as a series of pockets of archaeological remains of what was once a single continuous linear structure. Due to its location in the most populous area

of Scotland, the Central Belt, the majority of the Wall and associated structures have been destroyed or obscured by subsequent development, especially since the agricultural and industrial revolutions. The majority of the surviving sections are protected through scheduling. Excavations in recent years have also shown the survival of elements of the *vallum*, ditch and other structures under modern developments which had previously been assumed to be destroyed, as at Mary Street, Laurieston (Dunwell *et al* 2002).

Ownership and care of the Wall rests with five local councils: Falkirk, East Dunbartonshire, West Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire and Glasgow; alongside Historic Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland (fig. 46). A number of sites along the Antonine Wall are presented to the public, with the monument in the unusual position of being presented by up to seven different bodies. Historic Scotland manages 7.7 km of the Wall, totalling 72 ha, which includes “the best stretches of the rampart and ditch, the two visible sections of the Military Way, the four forts which have elements visible, a bath house and latrine, three expansions and the site of one fortlet” (Historic Scotland 2007, 41).



Figure 46 - Sign for Bar Hill Fort, Historic Scotland; and Kinneil Fortlet, Falkirk Council (photos S. Timoney)

5.2 World Heritage nomination application

The Antonine Wall was nominated by Historic Scotland on behalf of the British government to be considered for inscription as a World Heritage Site in January 2007, as the sole nomination from the United Kingdom for 2008 (Breeze 2004). The nomination involves the extension of the existing *Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site*,

which includes Hadrian's Wall and the German Limes (*ibid*; Historic Scotland 2007). The Antonine Wall nomination is part of a series of planned extensions of the *Frontier* inscription, which, if successful, will eventually incorporate a series of sections of frontiers of the Roman Empire which "stretched for 5000km (3000miles), from the Antonine Wall to the Euphrates, from the Black Sea to the Red Sea and thence along the edge of the Sahara to the Atlantic" (Breeze 2004, 26).

5.3 The construction and role of the Antonine Wall: a linear narrative

The military potential of the Forth-Clyde line, the location of the Antonine Wall, had already been recognised by Agricola during his campaigns in the north some 60 years earlier, and noted by the historian Tacitus (Robertson 2001). Agricola is suggested to have constructed a series of forts in the area, around the period AD79-83, before his most famous victory against the Caledonii at Mons Graupius (*ibid.*), the location of which is still unknown.

The military campaign which preceded the succession of Antoninus Pius as Emperor was launched in AD139 and concluded by c.AD142, when building of the Antonine Wall commenced (Hanson and Maxwell 1983; Robertson 2001). The builders commemorated the construction of each section through the carving of a series of distance slabs, providing a detailed account of the construction, as well as serving as a propaganda tool.

It is worth describing the construction of the Antonine Wall in detail as it is not simply a 'wall', but a series of related features, including ancilliary and support elements (fig. 47). The Wall is thought to have been around 4.5m wide and in the region of 3m high (Shotter 1996), built upon a stone foundation, consisting of cobbles lined on either side with squared kerbing (Robertson 2001). The upper section, the *vallum*, comprised cut sections of turf. The sides of the vallum sloped inwards, to provide greater stability for the structure (*ibid.*). Construction took into account the potentially wet environment, incorporating a system of drainage channels in the Wall to reduce erosion or outwash (Shotter 1996; Robertson 2001). It has been suggested that a timber palisade was placed along the top, adding another 1.5m to 2m to the overall height of the structure (Todd 1999; Robertson 2001). A lack of archaeological evidence for this, however, alongside the potential non-military purpose(s) of the Wall, has led to this assumption being questioned and often discounted (Hanson and Maxwell 1983).

Opposite the vallum, on the north side was the *berm*. In front of this was a V-shaped ditch (Shotter 1996), around 3.6m in depth, and varying from 12m to 6m in width (Robertson 2001). The spoil was deposited on the northern side of the ditch, to create an outer mound, amplifying the depth for anyone approaching from this side. As part of the later development and construction, the Romans constructed a 'Military Way'; a road which ran 50m to 150m to the south of the wall, and provided easy access between the forts, fortlets and other installations (Hanson and Maxwell 1983). At least three of the forts, Castlecary, Balmuildy, and the smaller fort at Duntocher, are known to have preceded the Wall's construction (Wacher 1978). These forts can be viewed as part of the initial phase of construction, and were large enough to hold a complete regiment (Hanson and Maxwell 1983). Part way through construction, it appears there was a change of plan (Wacher 1978). Both Balmuildy and Castlecary forts were constructed of stone, with the former having stone 'wings' leading out in either direction, suggesting it may have been expected to be incorporated into a stone barrier (Hanson and Maxwell 1983; Shotter 1996).

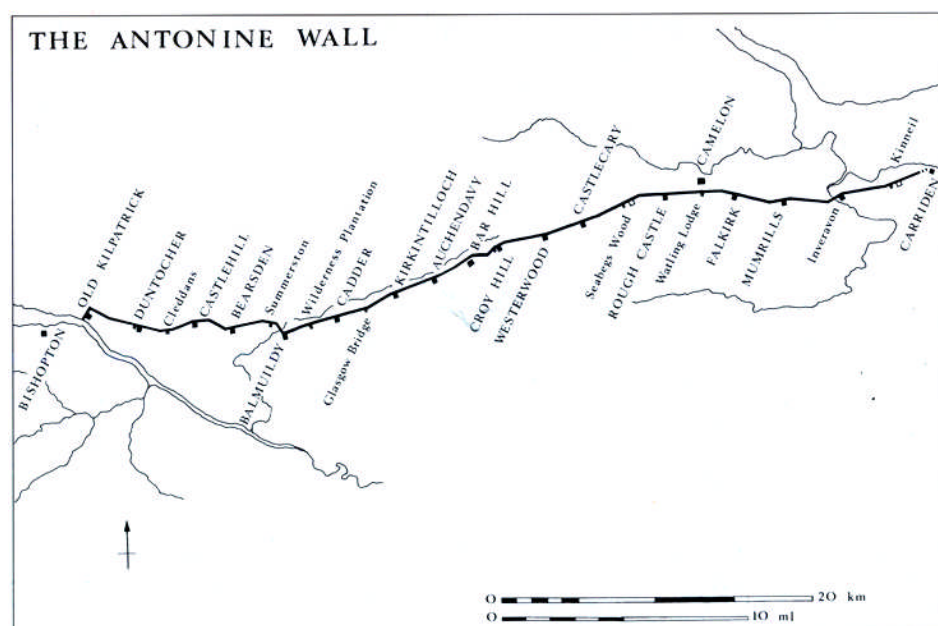


Figure 47 – Map showing sites along the Antonine Wall (from Robertson 2001, 7)

The subsequent sequence of forts and fortlets constructed along the Wall were on a smaller scale. Research has suggested that the fortlets were modelled on the milecastles of Hadrian's Wall (Wacher 1978), and implies a change in the purpose of the Antonine Wall. The original plan intended a greater number of troops stationed in fewer larger forts, with a later plan involving fewer troops spread out more evenly across the length of the Wall.

A number of theories have been suggested for the construction of the wall in the north. The military campaign which preceded the building work took place shortly after Antoninus Pius became Emperor. As a bureaucrat, the new leader lacked a military pedigree, and may have undertaken a military campaign to achieve glory within this sphere (Hanson and Maxwell 1978; Shotter 1996; Todd 1999). There may, however, have been genuine unrest north of Hadrian's Wall, which required a reaction to prevent unrest spreading south (Todd 1999).

Construction of the wall created a buffer zone which could be monitored, providing a much greater Roman presence in the area between the two Walls (Hanson and Maxwell 1983). Instead of having an overtly defensive purpose, it is likely that the Antonine Wall was used as a method of monitoring and controlling movement between the north and south. This process would also have facilitated attempts to 'romanise' the area south of the Antonine Wall (*ibid.*). By increasing their presence in the area, and encouraging (or imposing) their systems on the indigenous population, the Romans hoped to change the ideologies of these groups to a more pro-Roman system of self-government, which would make them both compliant and ultimately subservient (*ibid.*).

It is widely accepted that the Antonine Wall was abandoned around AD161-2. Planned abandonment and retreat is reflected in the way the buildings were dismantled, with items such as iron objects, which may have been of use to the local tribes, removed or buried. Bar Hill fort reflects this organised destruction, where excavation uncovered the well full of occupational debris from the destruction of the fort (Hanson and Maxwell 1983). A number of motives have been suggested, including increased unrest north of the Wall, or unrest elsewhere in the Empire, either in southern Britain or on the continent (Hanson and Maxwell 1983). As with the commencement of the offensive over twenty years earlier, there were probably a number of affecting factors which influenced the decision.

5.4 Rough Castle



Figure 48 - Historic Scotland sign, Bonnybridge (photo S. Timoney)

Rough Castle, 2km southwest of Bonnybridge, Falkirk, is owned by the National Trust for Scotland, and is managed under agreement by Historic Scotland (fig. 48). The site is one of the best-preserved sections of the Wall, with the fort of Rough Castle, the second smallest on the Wall (Robertson 2001), accompanied by one of the best preserved stretches of the rampart (*vallum*) and ditch, an annexe to the east, and defensive *lilia* to the north of the gateway (fig. 49). The fort ramparts and the ditch of the Wall are the most recognisable features on the ground today, with a series of small upcast mounds from excavations undertaken in 1902-3 and 1957-61 still apparent in the fort interior (Robertson 2001, 69). The area is covered with grass which is regularly mown, and interpreted for visitors through a series of four low-level information panels laid out as a self-guided walk.

Rough Castle is one of a number of sites along the Wall which are presented to the public by Historic Scotland. The presentation of this site is similar to that of the other Historic Scotland-managed fort sites on the Wall, at Bar Hill, Castlecary, and Croy Hill, with simple blue and white signs marking out directions to the sites, and information panels on the ground describing features of these sites.



Figure 49 - Elements of the Antonine Wall, Rough Castle (photo S. Timoney)

The information panels installed by Historic Scotland at Rough Castle focus on four broad aspects of the Wall during its construction and use. The first panel considers the landscape of the area through prehistory more generally, before briefly discussing the Roman occupation of the area and the changes to the landscape since then. It includes an artist's impression of how a native settlement may have looked two thousand years ago, alongside a plan of the site.

The second panel focuses on the construction of the Wall, describing the materials used, the methods of construction, and the scale of the structure. An artist's impression of the Wall under construction, a plan of the site, and a map of the Forth-Clyde isthmus showing the line of the Wall and forts accompany it.

The third panel focuses on the *lilia*, the defensive pits which were located in front of the Antonine Wall at Rough Castle, next to the entrance into the fort. The text describes their size and purpose, with an artist's impression of their construction.

The fourth panel describes the fort, its internal and external design and layout, as well as the annexe and Military Way (fig. 50). It also introduces the Sixth Cohort of Nervians which was based at Rough Castle. It includes a graphic depicting a stone inscription uncovered at the site which details the existence of the Nervians at Rough Castle, alongside the main image of an artist's impression of the fort.



Figure 50 - Rough Castle, information panel 4 (photo S. Timoney)

The site provides good views to the north, with the Glasgow to Edinburgh railway line immediately to the south, and behind this a series of large coal bings, a reflection of the area's industrial heritage. These bings rise above the height of the fort and change the perception of the site's position in the landscape (fig. 51), as visibility would likely have been good southwards as well as to the north when the fort was constructed.



Figure 51 – View south across fort with coal bings in background (photo S. Timoney)

5.5 Participant Knowledge and Expectations of Rough Castle

Many participants had little knowledge of the Antonine Wall prior to visiting Rough Castle, although most suggested that they thought it was possibly a Roman site. This appears to reflect a lack of awareness as to the existence of Roman sites in Scotland more generally, as well as reflecting a lack of knowledge, especially outside the Central Belt of Scotland, for the Antonine Wall today. The most common preconception related to the nature of the physical remains of the Antonine Wall, with respondents often expecting some form of stone or brick structure to be present at the site:

Aw3 *I probably expected, because it is called the Antonine Wall [smiles], in my ignorance I thought I would probably see **a wall** [emphasis]. You know, a brick structure, dismantled as it may be, but that's what I thought. But of course it's not like that, it's much bigger than that. It's not like a wall, it's thick, thick wall. It's not what I would term a wall, it's much bigger, much thicker. Everything was magnified, a lot more. No, I was surprised, but amazed too.*

The expectation of a 'brick structure' by Aw3 reflected an understanding and experience of a wall in modern terms. A lack of knowledge of the purpose and nature of the Antonine Wall led Aw3 to interpret the name for herself, reflecting her own understandings and experiences. This was also reflected in other interviews, where the expectation of a ruined, but still predominantly stone, structure was expected:

Aw4 *Possibly I thought I was going to see a wall. Certainly not a full-scale pristine battlement or whatever I expected. I presumed as it was called a wall I presumed it would be made of stone or such like, and it wasn't.*

In this way the nature of the remains at Rough Castle was a surprise to a number of participants. Few sites along the Wall have survived as recognisable upstanding remains, in large part because of their construction with organic materials. The very concept of the Antonine Wall today is slightly misleading, as the monument survives for the best part as the remains of the ditch, as mentioned by Aw11:

Aw11 *Well, we say the Wall, but it's the ditch you walk. You don't walk the Wall you walk the ditch.*

At Rough Castle, although the Wall only survives as a small mound in comparison to its original size, the ditch, which was excavated by Glasgow Archaeological Society in 1902-3 (Robertson 2001, 69), more accurately reflects the scale of the original structure. The defensive ditches around the fort were also left open after the excavations, presenting a more tangible outline for this part of the site.

The name of the site, *Rough Castle*, also led some respondents to assume that it was going to be a recognisable structure, corresponding to something analogous with a medieval castle:

Aw7 *I knew that it wasn't going to be intact. And that it was in ruins. And we visited Rough Castle, and as a lot of the others [in her group] said when you say 'castle', you imagine at least a half ruin or something. And it's not. You have to imagine everything in your head basically.*

The assumption that there would be a stone structure at the site was also a reflection of most participants' knowledge of Hadrian's Wall as the best-known Roman monument in Britain. A number of participants had visited Hadrian's Wall, and acknowledged those experiences in shaping their expectations of the Antonine Wall (fig. 52). Even those who had not visited Hadrian's Wall still used it as a reference point when discussing their expectations of what they would encounter on the Antonine Wall:

Aw5 *I'd been to Hadrian's Wall, and I thought it was going to be very similar to that, so. I was quite shocked when it wasn't, it was completely different. I used to live near Hadrian's Wall, so I was really shocked as it [the Antonine Wall] wasn't what I expected.*

ST *What were you expecting?*

Aw5 *I expected a big like brick or stone wall lying across, and when I got there I thought **where is the wall?** [emphasis, laughs] It was like a big ditch, and I got very confused.*



Figure 52 - Hadrian's Wall (S. Timoney); the Antonine Wall (photos S. Timoney)

In this sense, there was an element of disappointment for a number of participants, who had to reappraise their expectations of the site in light of what they encountered on the ground. Common images of Roman sites usually reflect large-scale stone structures, settlements and forts. In this way the Antonine Wall has existed in the shadow of Hadrian's Wall, both for those participants from Scotland and further afield:

Aw7 *I didn't even know there was a wall except for Hadrian's Wall. At least in the country where I come from there is even mention of Hadrian's Wall, there's a big tourist attraction that is a World Heritage site. [...] So I was really interested in **seeing** [emphasis] what it [the Antonine Wall] really was.*

Although Aw7 only knew of Hadrian's Wall prior to visiting Scotland, once she was aware of the existence of another substantial Roman site in Scotland she was interested in finding out more. Such perceptions may change, however, with the current application for WHS status for the Antonine Wall. If successful, such a move should raise its profile at both local and international level.

5.6 Presentation of Rough Castle

As part of the ongoing site management, Historic Scotland maintain the site by ensuring the grass is kept short through regular cutting. Participants interpreted the well-managed appearance of the site in a number of ways:

Aw4 *[At Rough Castle] there's obviously more of the original dyke and wall visible. As you're strolling along and up to the first height it is very reminiscent of a well laid-out golf course.*



Figure 53 - Antonine Wall, Rough Castle, 'reminiscent of a golf course' (photo S. Timoney)

The perception of the site as reminiscent of a golf course (fig. 53) reflects the remains of the Wall and fort today, surviving as small undulations in a well tended landscape, with trees growing over parts of the site.

Contrary to their initial assumptions and surprise at the nature of the remains at Rough Castle, a number of participants discussed a belief that the remains of the site were reflective of the way the Wall would have been:

Aw3 *I thought it was a really good way of letting you see the way the Antonine Wall would have been. I thought that the way the landscape looked you could see a great long stretch of it which gave a much better impression of size and depth. Just what a lot of work had gone into building something.*

The stretch of ditch which remains today, and runs both east and west from the site of Rough Castle fort, allowed visitors to start to appreciate the Wall, not just as a single site, but as part of a much larger linear monument which dissected the landscape over eighteen-hundred years ago:

ST *You said [earlier] that you could imagine...*

Aw4 *Yes, without too much imagination required you could see that they're [the fort and Wall] bloody impressive. You know the workload that was in there creating it. But also it must've been some site to see two thousand years ago when it was a solid line, across the country basically.*

Other participants, however, found the nature of the remains a significant factor in their *inability* to understand the site or the nature of the monument, in the past or the present:

Aw5 *I was just trying to imagine it as a wall and something that was defended. Something that made it harder because it just looked like a big grassy area.[...] Because it's made of grass especially it's difficult to see like this is the fort part or this is the wall part and the outer structure. It was only the defensive structure, those pits, were they lilia [fig. 54] or something, those gave a little bit to it. I can imagine a little bit of defence there. But apart from that I didn't think there was very much to show that there was a wall. It would have been hard to imagine it as a Roman site.*



Figure 54 – Lilia, Rough Castle (photo S. Timoney)

A lack of tangible, recognisable remains made parts of the site difficult to interpret. The expectation of certain forms of remains at a Roman site contrasted with what was experienced in the visit, leading to confusion when trying to reappraise the site. These preconceptions also tied in with the assumption that the Antonine Wall was purely a defensive structure, rather than performing a series of other functions in the landscape.

These assumptions that the wall was purely defensive in turn led to a degree of confusion as to the purpose of the Wall, especially when the construction materials were not considered to be defensive:

Aw5 *At first I thought how would it be able to keep people out, just being made of turf? I found it hard to imagine almost what it would have looked like with a big fort standing there, having seen Hadrian's Wall with all the bricks and stones and pictures of soldiers lined up on it. But because it was just grass [the Antonine Wall], I found it hard to imagine soldiers sort of stood on it or people defending this turf thing.*

This also reflected a difficulty in comprehending the size and scale of the original monument in comparison to what remains today. Viewing the Wall at its full scale may have altered Aw5's understanding of both the Wall and the suitability of the materials for building a defensive structure. The amount of information available on-site was not always enough to help participants understand various aspects of the site morphology, especially when trying to identify the location of specific parts of the fort in relation to the site as a whole:

ST *You mentioned the information boards, and your expectation that there would be more boards. What information were you expecting?*

Aw10 *I guess more information on what all the bits were and what they were used for.*

ST *What were your thoughts on the actual site itself and its presentation?*

Aw10 *I thought it was quite good, but maybe a bit confusing.*

ST *In what way confusing?*



Figure 55 - Rough Castle fort ramparts (photo S. Timoney)

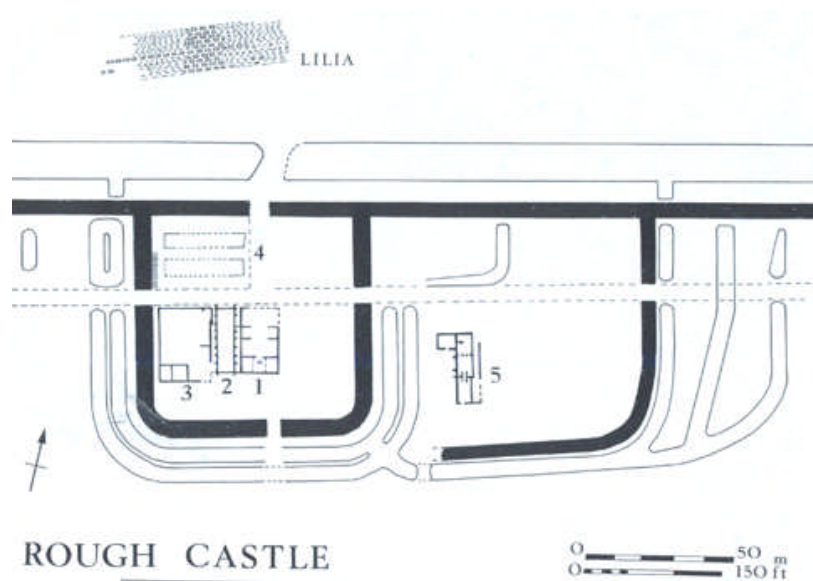


Figure 56 – Plan of Rough Castle (from Robertson 2001, 71)

In this way although the basic shape of the fort was visible (figs. 55 and 56), and the ditch of the Wall was obvious, the internal features and layout of the fort were not marked out on the ground. Traces of the excavations also added to confusion on the ground, making it difficult to understand or imagine the way the fort would have functioned, as Aw10 elaborated on when discussing the way the site is presented:

Aw10 *I think it's quite good, but maybe a bit confusing. I would have maybe found it useful to maybe have more like labelling, sort of explaining like this is, and then it leaves you to do the rest, but it leaves you with the basic information sort of thing.*

ST *Labelling in what way?*

Aw10 *Like on the site, specific to different parts of it.*

This also reflects the difficulty of presenting a site such as the Antonine Wall, where the lack of remains on the ground leaves the onus on the visitor, and the available interpretation on-site, to help make the connection between what remains and what once existed there. This is viewed in contrast to other types of site:

Aw11 *It's easier if you have a castle, very straightforward. Castles sell themselves like nobody's business. If you've got spiral staircases, if you've got big vaulted rooms, or dark dungeons that people can go down into or up on the roof and see the view and all the rest of it. Everything's there for you, and it can all work for you, and children can enjoy it. [...] Because if you've climbed a spiral staircase, you know how difficult it is to fight, you know. But if all you have is a flat piece of ground, with a few humps and bumps, how do you generate that [image]?*

The information panels at Rough Castle in part helped some participants form their own interpretations of the site:

Aw3 *I thought it was, especially on the visual effect and the siting of the board you know towards the fort, you could get a good impression of just, you could look at the board and your eyes would just follow and you could see everything just laid out.*

The placing of the panel across the ditch from the fort allowed the viewer to look from the panel towards the site (fig. 57), using the reconstruction drawing to help them imagine the way the site may have appeared in the past.



Figure 57 – Panel looking south across to fort (photo S. Timoney)

A number of respondents discussed the importance of moving around the site and experiencing and interpreting it *for themselves*. This meant that they could pay closer attention to the aspects of the fort and Wall that interested them. In this way, placing the site within its wider landscape context, both past and present, was important for some participants:

ST *What sort of things were you doing during your visit to Rough Castle?*

Aw10 *I was trying to get an idea of it in the landscape around it, and trying to work out how different bits of the fort related to one another.*

ST *What ways were you trying to do that?*

Aw10 *I was trying to work out, I suppose the geography of how they would have used it and how the local people might have seen it as well.*

Moving around and through the site allowed participants to focus on the layout and to try to visualise the scale of the Wall and fort:

Aw7 *Well I sort of went off from the rest of the group and went off down the slopes, down the hills. And getting more of a feel of maybe how those turf ramparts were and the walls. You could see under some of the trees on the ends of Rough Castle when you went down a bit that was when you could see more of the structures that once had been there and then try to visualise.*

These were buildings two three four metres high. They were digging a ditch seven metres wide and seven metres high. That's a huge amount of labour put into something I don't know quite why they did it.

This personal interpretation could also lead to confusion over the presentation of the site and landscape today however, compared with its layout and function during the use of the Wall:

Aw6 *I was just generally assessing, personally I was assessing the layout of the fort and where each building was, and then assessing perhaps practical values of where it actually was. Because the surrounding trees of it isn't an advantage for them since enemies could hide until nightfall and so therefore that would give them a disadvantage. But the height of it, that allows them to see and then there's the burn to the north? To the south. Well, to somewhere, which would obviously slow down any Picts or Saxons or whoever should be attacking them.*

The presence of trees immediately to the north of the Wall today led Aw6 to assume that this was how the landscape would have looked during the 2nd century AD (fig. 58). The purpose of the Wall, and those whom the Romans were defending or controlling were also confused. Paradoxically, Aw6 felt that he could engage and understand the site and the aspects of the site which were of interest to him, unaware of whether his assumptions were valid in academic terms. The first information board, located at the car park, does, however, give broad environmental information for the area around the time of the Roman invasion.



Figure 58 – Looking north towards lilia from fort (photo S. Timoney)

5.7 Imagining the past on the Antonine Wall

Thus an important aspect of the visit for many participants was being able to imagine the site as it was, and for some to be able to place themselves *in* the past

Aw6 *When I was standing at the bridge looking at the pits I could almost feel as if the walls were there and I could imagine the positions of the soldiers coming towards them [...]. And then I'd imagine where the different buildings were and what's the sizes of them in comparison to each other [...]. So I imagined that [and] what kind of things would be said.*

Being on the site and being able to see the scale of the ditch was important in getting to understand the nature of the monument, rather than listening to someone talking about the site or reading about it in a book. This also helped to imagine the monument in the past from the perspective of both the native population and the Romans:

Aw4 *The fact that you could see basically what had been there two thousand years ago. There was still...they'd utilised the landscape in that there was a ridge there and they'd cut out the rise down the ditch and raised it higher on the other side, and you could see that. You could get a chap standing telling you this all day and you still wouldn't see it in your mind, whereas at that section [the Wall along from Rough Castle] you could see exactly, as I say with a little imagination, it's not exactly, what it was, you could see exactly what you were up against in your mind if you were A one of the defenders, or B one of the attackers. You know, you'd see what you had to scale and what like.*

The visual encounter with archaeology was a key element of the visitor experience. Perceiving the site within its landscape, and visualising how the fort and the Wall may have looked in the past during its use were important aspects in ascertaining positive experiences of the site. This is reflected in the way that the sites along the Wall which are presented today focus on those areas (primarily the forts) where there are some form of remains to see:

Aw11 *It does tend to focus on the forts where there is something worthwhile to see, either where there are ditches to see or like at Bar Hill where you have something up high, you can see the Antonine ditch and you can see out*

*across the countryside. And you can get an idea of, **some** [emphasis] idea of, perhaps not a good idea of, what the landscape would have been like for the Roman soldiers.*

One way of creating an affinity with the past was to make links through people as well as places. Facilitating comparisons with visitors' own lives, and helping them to understand and engage with sites through their own knowledge and experiences was discussed:

Aw3 *I think that there's only so much you can say about the place, and after that it becomes the way that people live that becomes interesting. They make the place, you know, they're the ones who've set it up and run it. I mean it's a massive project. The whole thing. And it's interesting to find out how it was run, if there was a hierarchy. Obviously there was a hierarchy, but was there a fort commander that was in charge of all the things that went on in that fort, or was he answerable [to a superior]? I think it's a network thing. It's quite interesting.*

Part of the process of imagining being in the past often involves trying to disregard or block out any perceived 'modern' intrusions. In contrast to this, Aw6 discussed how the chatter of other visitors was used to help imagine the noise of the fort when it was in use:

Aw6 *Sometimes it helps the noise [of other visitors], because it helped me imagine the bustle of like Roman life. Because obviously there's going to be the soldiers are going to be chatting and singing and arguments are breaking out. There'll be normal noise like cooking so the noise of the people, whilst in a completely different language, it allows me to obviously imagine it and imagine myself there.*

5.8 General perceptions on the Antonine Wall

5.8.1 The Antonine Wall and World Heritage

Although the assignation of World Heritage status does not confer any further protection for monuments, a number of participants believed it would create a new way of protecting and presenting the Wall:

Aw11 *Hadrian's Wall is protected as a World Heritage Site, so lets get the protection that involves for those parts of it [the Antonine Wall] we can. Because obviously, being in the central belt, the most populous part of Scotland, it's an increasingly difficult job to protect the monument.*

World Heritage Site status was therefore viewed as a way of protecting the site in the face of various demands on land and resources through the Central Belt. In this way archaeology was viewed as losing out to other demands. By becoming a World Heritage Site, the status of the Wall would be transformed, providing it with protection through increased public awareness.

The inscription of the Wall as a World Heritage Site was also viewed as a way of promoting knowledge of the Antonine Wall and interest in the sites, both locally and further afield:

Aw9 *Once it becomes a World Heritage Site there will be far more publicity and I think people will be more interested in it.*

As a result, most participants were positive about the Antonine Wall becoming a World Heritage Site, although it was recognised that this would create certain demands and expectations of the sites:

Aw11 *This will all bring people to Scotland. And if people come, they will want to see something. And if something is a World Heritage Site, they will have certain expectations, particularly in Scotland. I mean if you go to Machu Picchu, you are not expecting to be able to drive up there on a coach, get off, take pretty pictures and drive away again. You have it in your head, this is in the wilds of Peru. It's up in the hills, in the mountains, you know, we'll have to, it takes something to get there.[...] People think, well where is this World Heritage Site? Oh, it's in Scotland. Well where in Scotland? It's not on an island off the coast, it's right in the Central Belt. They will have an expectation therefore that when they arrive to see it, there will be something other than a small piece of card on a frame telling them that this is the Antonine Wall.*



Figure 59 – Machu Picchu World Heritage Site, Peru (photo S. Timoney)



Figure 60 – Rough Castle fort, proposed World Heritage Site (photo S. Timoney)

At present, the lack of physical remains was considered to be the major problem in the Wall becoming a World Heritage Site, alongside the low level interpretation currently available at sites. This was in part a reflection of knowledge and experiences of World Heritage Sites in other countries, and the fame and popularity which these sites have (figs. 59 and 60):

Aw5 *I think it creates a sort of idea that it's going to be something quite grand and important there, and because it doesn't look like much, of how it stands at the moment, I think people will go and expect it. Because it's quite a way out as well, and especially if you have people from abroad, coming and thinking they're going to see an old Scottish Roman site named World Heritage. And they went there they'd think, well what is it? Where is it? They'd be quite disappointed having gone all the way and only seeing grassy turf areas. So I think if it was made a bit more presented, a bit more alive sort of with things going on in it, it would definitely be something for World Heritage. But as it stands at the moment I don't think it would be so impressive.*

This concern over a lack of recognisable remains would be exacerbated if the site were inscribed as a World Heritage Site, potentially creating an increased demand and expectation of the nature of the remains and the presentation of the site, leading to the risk of disappointment and the loss of public perceptions of value for the Antonine Wall.

World Heritage status was also interpreted as a vehicle for leveraging funding to help develop and protect the remaining sections of the Wall:

Aw8 *Well I think that it's essential that they get the World Heritage Status, I think that the funding's going to flow in there. I would hope the future is, that it actually becomes accessible, it becomes looked after, cherished far more than it is.*

Greater recognition with the various relevant authorities was therefore viewed as a method of instilling values at a national and international level.

5.8.2 The Antonine Wall and Scottish heritage

Respondents discussed the concept of value in a number of ways, for example when discussing the Antonine Wall in terms of heritage. The issue of whether the Wall has a use value as part of 'Scottish' heritage was discussed:

Aw4 *The Celts all left Scotland for all their various reasons in the Clearances and the Americans, and Canadians, and Australians would be more Scots than a lot of the Scots are. And their family connections and lots of stuff.*

And they would come and see Bannockburn as part of a tour I would imagine. They may come to see, if it was added on, the Antonine Wall, but they wouldn't be coming over, I wouldn't have thought, for that purpose.

ST *So it's not viewed as Scottish heritage?*

Aw4 *Yes, that's only my opinion. It could be included in the whole thing, you know, because long before Bannockburn the locals were fighting the Romans, they were just other locals over there with a Roman leader or whatever it might have been.*

This was viewed in stark contrast to England, where the Roman heritage was perceived by Aw8 as something which was valued and embraced:

Aw8 *I don't think there is a national consciousness in Scotland about it. There is in England, because they see it as dividing them from the barbarians to the north. Whereas in Scotland it's almost the other way around, it could be seen as sort of an intrusive feature in our national consciousness.*

In this way, the notion of the Romans as being linked to perceptions of English heritage and identity have led to the belief discussed above that anything Roman represents the *other* when compared to perceptions of Scottish identity and heritage. This connection between the Romans and the English may create issues in terms of individuals and communities appreciating the Antonine Wall as 'Scottish'. This can be associated with wider issues and conflicts over Scottish identity (see McCrone *et al* 1998)

A lack of knowledge and understanding of Roman activity in northern Britain has also led to the Antonine Wall, alongside the rich array of other Roman sites throughout Scotland, tending to be ignored by the majority of the population. This idea was discussed with the assertion that for the majority of Scots, all things Roman stopped at Hadrian's Wall:

Aw9 *Well I do feel that Scotland has a lots of things that are of interest to tourists. There are loads of castles and loads of stuff about the Borders and the Highlands. And there are some great sites. But I don't think that we pay enough attention to the Roman aspect that we had.*

The belief that the Romans never conquered Scotland is an important aspect of many people's perceptions of Scottish identity and the unconquered nation. In this way, the Romans are viewed as outsiders or invaders, and the remains of their activities in modern Scotland are often viewed in this way. This is reflected in the response of one participant, who identified himself as half-Scottish and half-English when discussing his perceptions of heritage:

Aw6 *Well....obviously because I live in Scotland, and I'm half Scottish and half English so I've got the half Scottish and the idea of the Picts living here so I'm sort of descended from them. But also because I'm half English I have the Anglo-Saxon and Roman side to it. So since a lot of the Romans will actually be English and so they'll be the ones invading Scotland. So I have the kind of mixed, I have both sides essentially, of people defending their homeland, but I also have the, my people trying to extend their homeland. So I like to think that while they're not directly related to me, both sides are part of my heritage. So it just enables me to believe in both sides and that what both sides were doing was right and wrong at the same time.*

Aw6's ideas reflect an interesting and very personal interpretation of the Romans in Northern Britain. This frequent connection of the Romans as 'English' was not really contested by participants. In this way modern identities were inextricably linked to those of the past, with geography playing a crucial role in the development of these identities and perceptions of the past.

Some participants discussed the Wall in terms of its importance in *British* history. In this way the concerns over what was or was not Scottish or English were bypassed when the monuments were considered in the broader context of the British Isles:

Aw12 *But it is an amazing part of British history, isn't it? Because the Romans got here, in my book they didn't leave much trace, but they got this Wall and retreated. And when you think about that, that's the northern, it's not the edge of the world but it's getting there.*

The perception that Scotland today (and by default Northern Britain in the past) is on the periphery reflects a continued bias towards a commonly perceived centre. Whilst the Antonine Wall may have represented the very extremes of the Roman Empire, it was (and still is) at the core of the indigenous people of this area.

The ideas of local or national heritage were also contrasted through a belief by some participants that although in a sense archaeological sites belong to the nation they are in, in more philosophical terms they belong to everyone:

Aw7 *I don't believe it belongs to anyone. It is there, it's a legacy from our ancestors, and it's a reason for them leaving it behind. They wanted it to stay, because they also knew that when they built it it's going to stay for long past their lifetime. And on and on and on. And especially considering that a lot of these sites [archaeological sites] have been used over generations, for several hundred years, from the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods and all that, it's not a site that's used for one period and then move on. [...] And I think that in general the sites belong to the country it's in. The people there. But they have an obligation to present it to others so that others can learn from it and can draw their own conclusions, and see if there are similarities across the borders in other countries. I mean it is a valuable piece of education and information, so why not try and preserve it. The country should be proud of its legacy and what was left behind.*

The Antonine Wall therefore has the potential to play a variety of roles, and mean different things to different people. As with the Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments, this period was perceived to be just another phase in the site's biography. In time it would be viewed, understood and used in new ways. But the site was also interpreted as being of international importance, and through this the necessity to make more people aware of the monument, and to create links within and between nations, was important.

5.8.3 Local community and the Antonine Wall

Local community has increasingly come to the fore in archaeology and heritage studies in the last two decades. During a number of interviews the importance of engaging members of local communities with these sites was viewed as crucial for their long-term protection, use and development:

Aw9 *But I think that that is one of the ways, if it does become a [World] Heritage Site, that it will increase people's interest. And I think that the only way to keep or maintain an interest in sites like that is to have people on the ground who are interested.*

In this way a number of respondents discussed a belief that local communities along the Antonine Wall had an important role to play in the continued survival and value of the Wall, as discussed by Aw8:

Aw8 *Well it's not just a role [the local community aspect], I think it's absolutely a key to the whole thing. I think in a way it's got, when you look at Hadrian's Wall it's different. It's a national thing, so you can in a way impose things above the local community. But I don't mean that. But it would be interesting to see what they've done at places like Gateshead which are large former industrial, post-industrial communities living in close proximity to an ancient monument. But I think that's got to be the key to it, and I don't think that that's impossible to do.*

The possibility of the Wall becoming a World Heritage Site was also seen as a way of creating new values at a local level, encouraging members of the neighbouring communities to recognise the wall in new ways:

Aw9 *The fact that it's going to be a World Heritage Site is that it's not just to be for a few people, it's to be I would hope open the access and the interest of local people in the Antonine Wall, and also encourage tourists from abroad. Instead of just doing Edinburgh Castle, Stirling, they would perhaps do it a little bit more. That it would be made interesting enough that people would say well I'll come and do that. I think that there are a lot of people who are interested but who find it difficult to access and to find out things about that.*

World Heritage status was viewed as focusing money and resources on the Wall, creating a much stronger link between sites, and a much stronger public information element to the Antonine Wall. This would in turn facilitate the investigations or interests of a wider group of people than have traditionally been interested in visiting the Antonine Wall. It was therefore viewed as fundamental that these new interest groups should be provided with opportunities to access information which was relevant and interesting to them.

5.8.4 Creating value and a sense of place on the Antonine Wall

The sites which make up the Antonine Wall today are predominantly located in, or in close proximity to, urban environments, which has created a series of concerns over the preservation, conservation and presentation of these sites to the public. One participant discussed the juxtaposition of the past and the present in terms of the continued use of the area today, creating a continued link:

Aw10 *I like the way with the Antonine Wall it's sort of still really close to where people live now. Like with Rough Castle you go through the industrial estate, or with the bathhouse [at Bearsden] which is in the middle of a housing estate. If it's sort of like that then it's still a part of the community.*

ST *Can you elaborate on what you like about that?*

Aw10 *I think it's the idea of continuity, that people still live there in the same place that they did before.*



Figure 61 - Antonine Housing Co-Operative, Kirkintilloch (photo S. Timoney)

The idea that people continued to live in the area of the wall suggested a continued link between people, sites and landscape. This is also reflected in the adoption of Roman references to street names in modern settlements along the wall, such as Roman Gate in



Figure 62 - Antonine shopping centre, Cumbernauld (photo S. Timoney)

Allandale, as well as the appropriation of the area's Roman heritage in other forms, as with the Antonine Housing Co-Operative in Kirkintilloch (fig. 61) and the Antonine Shopping Centre in Cumbernauld (fig. 62).

5.8.5 The Antonine Wall in urban settings

The location of some of the sites within a modern landscape was not however popular with all respondents:

Aw12 *Like the bathhouse at Bearsden doesn't excite me at all. Partly because it's surrounded by flats, and no place to park. And it just, it doesn't look like it's real. Because it's surrounded by modern flats, isn't it.*

In this way, the preservation and presentation of a Roman site within a modern urban landscape (fig. 63) was perceived to be flawed. The juxtaposition of what was viewed as new with old created an unbridgeable divide. The archaeological site could not be enjoyed or appreciated because it was viewed as being out of context: Instead of inhabiting a perceived 'natural setting', surrounded by trees and fields, its position beside low-rise flats on a busy road made it more difficult to interpret.



Figure 63 - Bearsden Roman bath-house (photo S. Timoney)

The development of the Antonine Wall for the public is therefore seen as a way of creating new values of the sites for the local community.

Aw11 *I think it's about, it comes back to I suppose in a way what do you think archaeology's for? And what are your purposes in preserving these monuments and looking, interpreting them, and passing on that interpretation. So when you are coming to think in terms of what are we doing here? Why do we have an interpretation centre? Because we are telling people about their past. We're informing them about the landscape past and present. We're educating them into geologic, agricultural historic processes. All these things go into that. And it's their landscape, so they have an element of ownership of it, so they want to see what's under the ground or know what's under **their** [emphasis] ground or **their** [emphasis] area.*

This belief in the value of sites to the community was in contrast to other respondents, who discussed perceptions at present that most of the local communities along the route of the Wall have little or no interest in it:

Aw12 *I suppose if they thought it was something they could get tourists to then surely [...] they should take an interest. And perhaps they do. But the community had obviously never taken a serious interest in the sites, and vandalism is everywhere. There's no answer to that.*

5.8.6 Valuing the Antonine Wall

An appreciation of the economic value of the wall was seen, in a vaguely derogatory way, to be perhaps the only way to encourage an interest in the Antonine Wall amongst many of the local communities. Instead, concern with the long-term survival of the site due to vandalism and misuse was a more pressing concern. The location of the wall within the most populous area of Scotland has brought with it a series of issues concerning the protection of the monuments within (and often from) the local community. Visits to Rough Castle recorded evidence of various forms of (mis)use of the monument (figs. 64 – 67).



Figure 64 - Fire on the Antonine Wall at Rough Castle (photo S. Timoney)



Figure 65 – Burnt out car on the Antonine Wall at Rough Castle (photo K. Brophy)

The difficulty with improving access and knowledge about the sites whilst avoiding an increase in the amount of vandalism or current misuse of sites was a concern:

Aw9 *I think that also that with lots of the sites being quite relatively removed, not all of them but some of them are, if you don't have local people who are interested and, if you like, keep an eye on them, then they will suffer really from vandalism. And I think that is a big problem. I suppose you've got to hit a happy medium between talking to children in schools, primary schools and secondary schools, and giving them an interest, and on the other hand, some of the local lads thinking oh that would be a good place to hang out, and they just go and hang out and make a mess. I suppose that really is one of the things that I think, I suppose I really feel quite strongly about. That sites should be made accessible, and people should have easy access to them, but on the other hand if you have too much of it then, you know, the thing gets ruined. But there's got to be a happy medium somewhere.*

Concerns with the misuse of Rough Castle led Historic Scotland to change the vehicular access arrangements after the site was used for joy-riding and a quad bike track amongst other things. The site today is still utilised by different people for different purposes



Figure 66 - Mountain biker on fort ramparts, Rough Castle (photo S. Timoney)



Figure 67 - Wedding marquee, Rough Castle (photo S. Timoney)

In this way the site of Rough Castle can mean different things to different people. Although it is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, many people use the space for recreation, including dog walking and picnicking, with little knowledge of what the site is or what it represents.

A number of the sites along the Wall have suffered from the effects of vandalism, and this is perceived by some participants to be a major issue for those in charge of the preservation

and protection of the Wall, although there are exceptions, as Aw1, an archaeologist, discusses:

Aw1 *We get some of the local people who tend to adopt them [sites] which is quite fun. There's one at Castlecary that the people who live opposite it in the old school phone us up if there're any problems with it, and actually cut the grass around it and all this kind of stuff which is very nice of them.*

To further this local community value and ownership, the development of the Antonine Wall and the inscription of the Wall as a World Heritage site was discussed as an opportunity to bring new value, and improve the sense of place of a number of socially deprived areas within the Central Belt:

Aw9 *I think it would be positive for Scotland and, I suppose really I'm being selfish and thinking about the Central Belt. But there are lots of bits on the Central Belt that could do with an uplift, and something that would make people pleased and proud, and not saying 'oh it's the same old tat that you get'. I think that it would be quite good.*

The development of the Wall as a tourist attraction was viewed as positive in terms of the opportunities and benefits it would potentially bring to the local communities along the Wall, as Aw9 continued to discuss:

Aw9 *I'm one of these people that think that tourism and things like that, tourism and all the bits that go out from it, are, is a way forward. Because, I'm talking about Scotland, I just feel that if we have jobs in that area, whether that's archaeology or the tourist industry, and all the things that filter out from that. I just think it's a good thing. It's probably very good from the point of view of academics, because it will keep you going for a long while [laughs]. But there are other facets of the fact that it will be, well hopefully it will be a World Heritage Site, and again it comes round again to this idea of the media, and how people perceive what they have. And lots of people don't realise what we have and it should be encouraged.*

5.8.7 Tourism and the Antonine Wall

Throughout the interviews, the inscription of the Antonine Wall as a World Heritage Site was inextricably linked to its development as a tourism resource. This development was discussed in terms of requiring stronger links with the broader network of tourist and visitor activities in the region:

Aw1 *'Cause most people who come to visit the Wall, from what I can tell, want to see other sites in the locality, whether it's Museums in Glasgow or Museums through here, or the [Falkirk] Wheel or canals or whatever. Shopping, if that's what they're interested in. So I do think you have to tie it in to other features.*

These themes were elaborated on, with the World Heritage status requiring a need to create an 'experience' for people to have as part of a visit to the Wall:

Aw11 *Tourism is a big, **major** [emphasis] economic player in Scotland. A vast part of the Scottish economy, I think it's 20 or 30% or something, a huge figure.[...] And if people come, they will want to see something. And if something is a World Heritage Site, they will have certain expectations, particularly in Scotland.*

Discussion of development varied from providing better signage to sites, to developing areas of the wall more extensively, by providing reconstructions and a visitor centre on or near to the Wall:

Aw6 *Obviously for the average tourist who goes there, they're going to go there and not know much. If they go there thinking this is a famous site, if they go to a field then they are going to be disappointed probably. But if they go to a place which has been reconstructed with a guide or like things on the wall telling you to each room, they're going to like be able to enjoy it more. It's going to be inside as well.*

The location of Rough Castle was viewed as being potentially problematic in terms of finding and accessing the site for visitors, although the role of having to seek out and discover the archaeology for themselves was a positive experience for one participant:

Aw7 *The only drawback is maybe that you have to walk quite a distance. For the average tourist, tourists are not, as I see them [smiles], they are not that interested in walking too much. They are interested in finding it there, inside, and then move to the bus and go on. But you have to walk quite a distance that may for some be an obstacle that they don't want to have. I didn't mind. I love it [smiles]. But for some that may be a bit of a drawback.*

5.9 Summary

A number of the responses of participants at Rough Castle reflected the preconceptions that are inherent in a great deal of public encounters with archaeology. A key theme to develop from this case study was the preconception many participants had with the nature of Roman sites and remains. The idea that something as substantial as a fort or wall could be constructed from earth and timber seemed to leave many participants confused or unsure, expecting or anticipating the solidity and imposition of substantial stone remains. This confusion reflected a perception of Roman sites that was influenced by the Roman archaeology in England and continental Europe. Most often this was associated with Hadrian's Wall, although participants did not have to have visited that site for it to influence their expectations of Rough Castle and the Antonine Wall. In this way, portrayals in popular media had helped to create an 'understanding' of Roman sites and how they were evident on the ground. But these expectations were also affected by interpretations of language, and how a 'wall' and 'castle' would be manifest in the landscape.

The layout and presentation of the site also led participants to view it in different ways, whether being confused by the topography and flora of the site in the present and the past, or through the ways in which the site was cared for and presented by Historic Scotland. In this way participants varied in their appreciation and understanding of the physical remains, with some reflecting that a lack of substantial structures made it difficult to comprehend the scale of the site in the past. Conversely, others suggested that, especially with the stretch of wall apparent at Rough Castle, that the scale of the monument could be envisaged and appreciated in its landscape setting. A lack of knowledge of how the site would have looked in the past left most participants reliant on the information panels. While these boards do not impose on the site, they did not always help participants to start

to interpret the site on the ground, and understand the scale of the fort and wall and imagine how it may have looked in the past. Some participants expected to see more information panels on the site, as a way of providing a fuller description of what remained on the ground.

During interviews at Rough Castle participants often had difficulty in understanding and appreciating the site as part of a much large linear monument which (originally) stretched across the country. This was also the case when discussing the Antonine Wall more generally, wherein sites which were presented along the wall were often understood as individual sites, or pockets of archaeology. This was exacerbated by the close proximity of the Wall to modern settlement, creating an uneasy juxtaposition between the ancient and modern. This proximity of old and new also created issues over understanding the site in the landscape, with the mounds of spoil from the areas recent industrial heritage, and the close proximity of trees to the north of the site, both creating barriers to viewing the site in its wider landscape context. What these tended to do was focus the eye *along* the wall, heightening perceptions of the site as a linear monument, but separating it from its wider landscape.

Being able to move around and across the site in their own way was, however, a positive part of the experience, as participants could investigate the site and look at features which were of interest to them on their own terms. This was important in participants trying to ‘place’ themselves in the past, of creating a connection with the past or some aspect of the past which they could recognise and empathise with. This ability to, in a sense, experience the past first hand was important in the success of the experience, and the lack of restrictions on site was crucial in allowing participants the freedom to move around and attempt to create these links. The lack of control of movement on site did, however, also led to misuse of the site. Various destructive activities were documented, including the setting of fires, letting off of fireworks, and mountain biking across the monument which pose a threat to the survival of the archaeology.

The nature of the remains was also a major concern with the suggestion of the Antonine Wall as a World Heritage Site (WHS). The provision of WHS status was inaccurately discussed as a way of providing additional protection for the monument. Although there is no further legislative protection in this status, the inscription of sites on the list does raise general awareness of monuments, which can be both beneficial and detrimental for a sites long-term survival. Concerns were also raised over the issue of whether the Antonine Wall was worthy of such status, with concerns over the lack of physical, tangible remains on the

Antonine Wall which were seen as a necessary part of a World Heritage Site. This in part also reflects the western bias towards tangible physical remains (Cullerton 1999).

Value for the site was also discussed with regards to whose heritage the Antonine Wall was, and resulted in contrasting and conflicting attitudes towards Roman sites in Scotland. In this way the wall was drawn into modern concepts and preconceptions of identity, at once Scottish, English and/or British. Value for these sites was also discussed in relation to the economic and social benefits and qualities it could provide for local communities, as a way of instilling new values for the archaeological heritage in these areas. At present the primary way in which the Wall has more generally been valued or adopted by local communities is through the naming of streets, to buildings and organisations after aspects of the Roman heritage within the development of local areas.

6 Case Study 4 – Urquhart Castle, Loch Ness

6.1 Background

Urquhart Castle is located on the banks of Loch Ness, 27km drive south-west of the Highland capital Inverness (fig. 68). The Castle is today in the care of Historic Scotland, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors per year.

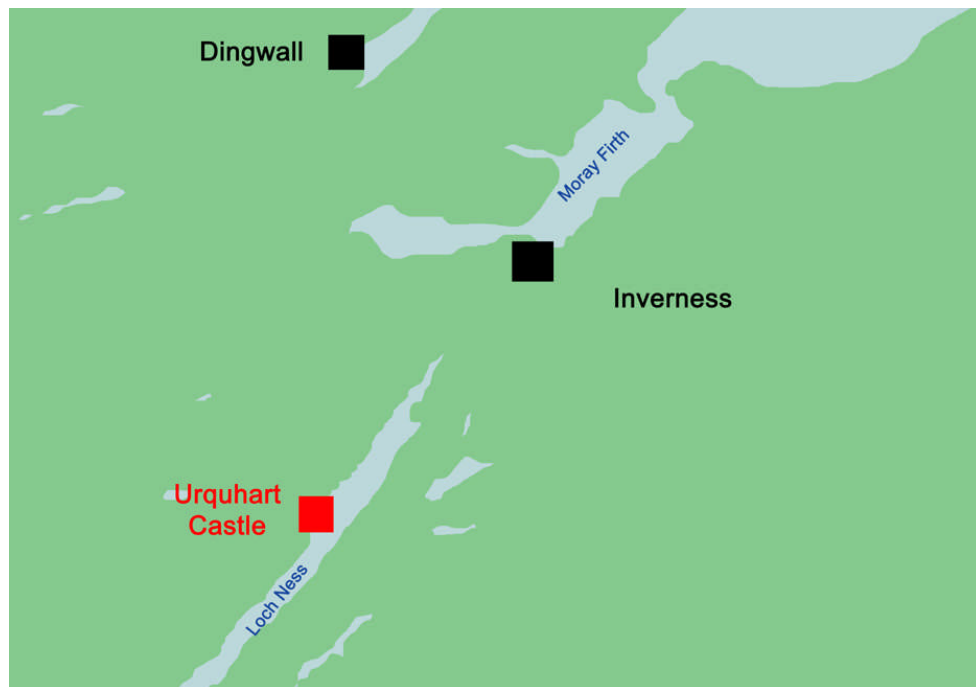


Figure 68 – Urquhart Castle location map

6.2 A history of Urquhart Castle: a linear narrative

There has been a castle or defensive structure at the site since at least the sixth century AD (Banks 2000). Adomnan, in his *Life of Columba*, writes of Columba stopping at a site called *Airchartdan*, assumed to be Urquhart, on his way to meeting the Pictish king Brudei (*ibid.*, 6). Carbon 14 dating evidence from Alcock's excavations at the site in 1983 provided a date of around AD 460-660, and excavations at the start of the twentieth century discovered evidence of a vitrified fort pre-dating Urquhart Castle (Will 1999). Evidence from the site, including part of a Pictish brooch, as well as Pictish place-names in the Glen and a Pictish burial ground not far from the Castle site all suggest a strong Pictish presence at this time (Tabraham and Stewart 2002).

Radiocarbon dates suggest the construction of the first castle at Urquhart to be between AD1030-1280, possibly by King William the Lion although the Castle is normally credited to Alan le Durward, a supporter of King Alexander II (Will 1999, 6; Banks 2000, 6; Tabraham and Stewart 2002, 18). The strategic location of the site would have been a key factor in determining control and movement along the Great Glen. The castle style at this time is assumed to be motte-and-bailey, although the surviving remains of the castle today cannot confirm this (Tabraham and Stewart 2002).

Although the early use of the site is unclear, unequivocal evidence for the existence of a castle at Urquhart comes after its capture by Edward I of England, in 1296, at the start of the Wars of Independence (*ibid.*). The Wars of Independence marked the beginning of a turbulent period for Urquhart, punctuated with recurrent attacks on the castle and a frequent change in custody which only ended with the castle's eventual destruction.

The structure which survives today reflects the stewardship of the Grants in the 17th century, who modified the castle, most notably with the addition of Grant Tower (*ibid.*, 40). By 1689, Urquhart was garrisoned by the chief of Grant as he allied himself with William and Mary's claim to the crown, following King James VII's exile (*ibid.*). The garrison survived against the Jacobite siege, and on their departure in 1690, used charges to destroy the castle to prevent it from falling into enemy hands in the future (*ibid.*, 41). The Grants chose not to rebuild the castle again, reflecting a widespread move by the elite at this time from fortified sites to more comfortable and elegant residences. In the subsequent years much of the stone was robbed, leaving the castle in an increasingly ruinous state. The castle was subsequently assimilated with developing perceptions of the Highlands into the 19th century, with new Victorian values being projected onto the ruined castle in a picturesque landscape.

6.3 Urquhart Castle and visitor centre

Urquhart Castle is today in the care of Historic Scotland, and is the organisation's third most popular visitor attraction, after Edinburgh and Stirling Castles (Martinolli *et al* 2007, 24). The castle is open to visitors from April to October 9.30am – 4.30pm, and from November to March 9.30am to 4.30pm. Admission prices for the castle (during the research period in 2005) were:

- Adults £6.50
- Reduced £4.50
- Child £2.40

The site was redeveloped in the late 1990s to provide a new visitor centre, complete with shop, café and museum. The redevelopment of the site was heavily contested, with local opposition resulting in a public inquiry. In 1999 the inquiry decided in favour of Historic Scotland's plans, with the new visitor centre officially opening to the public in 2002.



Figure 69 - Urquhart Castle visitor centre (photo S. Timoney)



Figure 70 - Visitor centre entrance and car park; information panel at entrance (photo S. Timoney)

The visitor centre and car park were constructed into the side of the hill behind the castle ruins, in an attempt to minimise the impact of the centre on the castle remains (fig. 69). The car and coach park is located on the roof of the centre (fig. 70), and visitors enter through a doorway and follow a spiral staircase, with painted banners on the wall highlighting key events from Scottish history during the period of the castle's use (fig. 71). The stairway leads down into the shop, with the exit to the castle immediately ahead, a small museum and cinema to the left, and the café to the right.



Figure 71 - Entrance stairwell with interpretive banner (photo S. Timoney)

The museum has a number of cabinets displaying artefacts from the site, including those found during the recent excavations prior to the construction of the visitor centre. These are placed in context through a series of panels outlining the roles and activities of all those involved in the day-to-day life of the castle, and the hierarchies which existed (fig. 72). An interactive scale model of the reconstructed castle (fig. 73) allows visitors to use buttons to highlight the various areas of the castle.

The cinema shows a short film (fig. 74) highlighting the castle's origins, development, and eventual destruction, before the screen is removed and the curtains drawn back to reveal a view over the castle ruins today (fig. 75). The layout of the site means that it is not

possible to see the castle from the car park, unless visitors climb the car park walls. The sequence in the cinema is often the first view of the castle visitors have, and is designed to make a marked impression.



Figure 72 - Museum and display cabinet (photo S. Timoney)



Figure 73 - Model of the castle (photo S. Timoney)

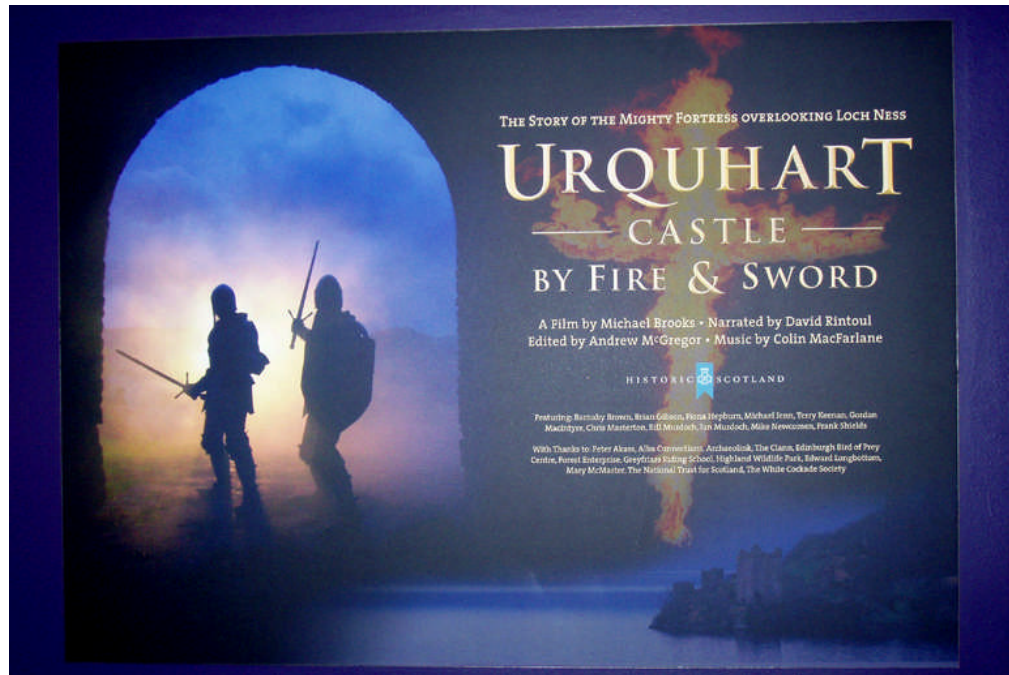


Figure 74 – Poster for film outside cinema (photo S. Timoney)



Figure 75 - View of the castle from cinema (photo S. Timoney)

The castle remains are presented through the use of a number of different levels of interpretation panel, from name plaques, to small and larger information boards (fig. 76). Paths and walkways lead visitors through the site, with a metal stairway providing access to the top of Grant's Tower. A reconstruction trebuchet is situated in the open ground between the visitor centre and the castle, complete with stone balls.



Figure 76 - Large information panel; and small information panel on-site (photo S. Timoney)

6.4 Knowledge and expectations

When questioned about their knowledge and expectations of the Castle, initial responses from participants generally suggested that they had few or no expectations of the site. As many of the interviews developed, however, expectations of the site and the visit began to emerge. For many participants, the ruinous nature of the remains seemed to be the most surprising element (fig. 77). Conversely, for others the size and scale of the castle remains came as a shock or surprise. Even those who had seen images of the castle prior to their visit expressed surprise at the nature of the ruins:

Urq22a *We've seen pictures obviously probably because it's so well known. But as I said [earlier] I just thought it would be a bit more built. I never actually realised that they'd destroyed it away back.*

For Urq22a there was an expected, possibly even accepted, level of ruination for the castle which fitted in with his preconceptions of what the site would look like. Reflecting upon his experiences at the site, the lack of visible structures within the castle led him to re-evaluate what it was he was viewing and experiencing.

A number of respondents developed these ideas, discussing that although a ruined castle was unexpected, it did not necessarily detract from the visit, and often provided a new and different kind of experience:

Urq24 *It's neat. It wasn't what I was expecting. Here I'm thinking of like huge and gothic and it's kinda cool that it's all ruined.*

In this way the castle moved away from the category of stately homes and country houses, instead being incorporated in an expected, archetypal and stylised state. Expectations of what a castle is and how it looks were reinforced for some respondents by visits to Stirling and Edinburgh castles. In contrast, other participants were better prepared for what to expect at the site:

Urq1 *I had seen pictures on postcards and all, so I knew that it was in a pretty ruinous state. And I know that there's quite a lot of people get frustrated with it because it's expensive to go into for the amount of castle that's actually standing.*



Figure 77 - Castle ruin (photo S. Timoney)

This reflected the role popular guidebooks played, helping to foster certain expectations of both the castle and what it represented. The Lonely Planet Britain guide describes the castle:

“Historic Scotland recently opened a visitor centre at Urquhart Castle [...] really an excuse to hike up the admission charge and open a gift shop. Although the castle is in a brilliant location and well worth seeing (the views on a clear day are outstanding), frankly it is difficult to justify the entry fee as

it's mostly ruins [...] and its remains perch dramatically on the edge of the loch. The five-storey tower house at the northern end is the most impressive remaining fragment and offers wonderful loch views."

(Wheeler and Else 2003, 966).

The description of the castle immediately reflects the perception of a tourist trap, with the development of the site seen primarily as a means of increasing revenue for Historic Scotland. This perception was acknowledged in an interview with a heritage professional, who suggested that the redevelopment of the site had been for these specific goals:

Sk13 *Urquhart Castle. Urquhart Castle is a really funny one – it's about mass tourism. And I would equate that with Bru na Boine, totally, I would say. Big car park, massive car park, massive visitor facility. Look how small the exhibition is. Look how big the café is, look how big the shop is. Pulse it through, single AV [audio visual] get them to site, mostly consolidated, mostly rebuilt. Is it a real site? Is it a sacrificial site? Where's that site going?*

In this way, Urquhart was seen to have been sacrificed to benefit purely from tourist revenues at the expense of historical integrity. The consideration of space allotted to displays in comparison to that for the shop and café reflected what was perceived to be the primary concerns and aims of this site.

The criticism of the site in the guidebook was interesting because of the perception of value in comparison to the level of remains. In this way, the castle was not seen to justify the expense because it was a ruin. The Rough Guide to Scotland mentions the same concern with excessive numbers of tourists, but instead sees the remains as a reflection of another Scottish stereotype:

"Today it's one of Scotland's classic picture-postcard ruins, crawling with tourists by day but particularly splendid floodlit at night when all the crowds have gone."

(Humphreys and Reid 2004, 561).

In this way, the value of the castle was perceived to be its ruined nature, and the way that it assimilated with these preconceived ideas of Highland Scotland.

6.5 Reasons for visiting

Whilst some participants acknowledged particular reasons for visiting Urquhart Castle, the majority of respondents did not identify a specific interest in the castle or its history as the key motivation for their visit. Instead, the castle was perceived to assimilate within broader perceptions of Scotland, as a continuation of the Victorian reimagining of the Scottish Highlands as a location of mystery and wonderment. These themes were developed in some interviews, with Scotland discussed as a location for castles, lochs and mountains:

Urq6a *Well, Scotland's famous for castles; it's famous for castles from the Middle Ages so we thought we'd have a look. We've only just arrived in Scotland yesterday so we thought we'd come here and it's the first castle we've visited.*

The location of the castle on the banks of Loch Ness was equally important to many participants, with the fame of the loch making it a must see for some:

Urq25a *I think we had, I don't know if we had specifically planned to come to this one [castle], but because it's by Loch Ness we kind of get two birds with one stone kind of thing.*

In contrast to the lack of knowledge many participants had about Urquhart Castle and its history prior to their visit, Loch Ness, and more specifically the Loch Ness Monster, were familiar icons, commonly recognised and influential for many participants in choosing to visit the castle:

Urq28a *When we started I said if I go back to South Africa and say I haven't been to Loch Ness, phew [laughs]. It's one of the few places you talk about and say about.*



Figure 78 - Tour group viewing castle and loch from A82 (photo S. Timoney)

The castle was seen as a means by which people could have access to and experience Loch Ness, providing an opportunity to view Nessie (fig. 78). The picturesque nature of the ruined castle was, in this sense, a bonus for many visitors, ‘ticking the boxes’ of expectation for a (stereo)typical Scottish Highland landscape.

Urq26a *We’re from Canada. We were staying over by Edinburgh so we decided rather than staying there we’d go up around Loch Ness and this area then head back down. [...] So we were up here and we wanted to get pictures of castles and stuff for the history, and to see Loch Ness because of its notoriety, so I guess this is a good spot to do that.*

In this way, the visit to Urquhart was seen as an opportunity to encapsulate and experience all of the elements of what ‘is’ Scotland.

6.6 The presentation of the site

The initial thoughts of participants as they arrived at the castle for the first time varied greatly, with some overwhelmed by the scale of the site:

ST *What were your first thoughts when you arrived?*

Urq10b *Bigger than what I thought it was going to be [laughs]. Yeah, wasn't it...bigger...*

Urq10a *Yeah...I didn't really....*

Urq10b *Didn't really....first impression was it was a lot bigger than I thought it would be.*

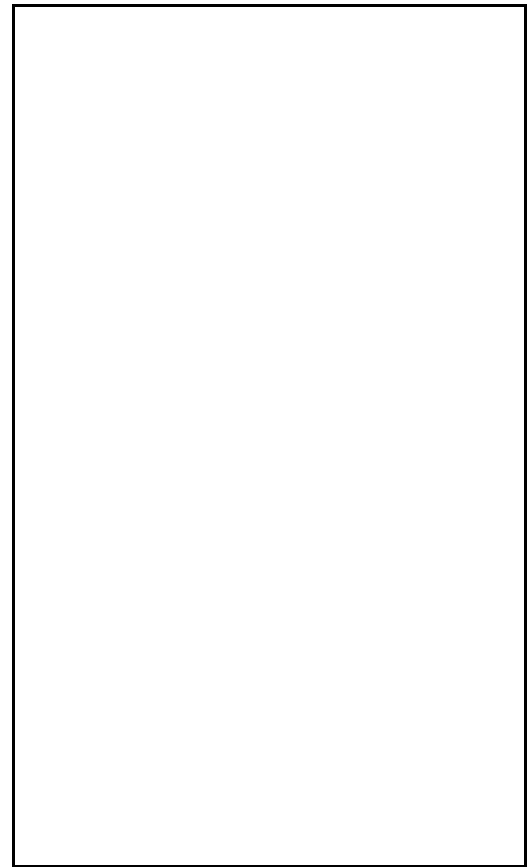


Figure 79 - Grant Tower (photo S. Timoney); Black and white image of Grant Tower (from Humphreys and Reid 2004, 560)

Popular images of the castle generally focus on Grant Tower (fig. 79) and its location next to the loch, with the result that the rest of the castle is often ignored. These photos do not reflect the scale of the site, especially when the wider grounds of the visitor centre are included.

The car park and visitor centre are generally the first sights encountered when arriving at the castle. Unless visitors climb up on to the boundary wall, which is prohibited, it is

difficult to view the castle from this area without entering the site. This layout elicited a mixed response from participants:

ST *When you arrived what were your first thoughts, your first impressions of the site?*

Urq7a *I thought the outside was too modern, I thought it was going to be more old fashioned outside, you know the visitor centre. [...] When you first drive in it's too modern, I think it's too modern. I'm not sure really what I expected but it was kind of just too much of a contrast I think between that and the ruins. I think I was a bit disappointed that you couldn't really see that much of it from the car park. Which I suppose is probably just to get folk to come in.*

The modern nature of the visitor centre was viewed as incongruous with expectations of an ancient ruined structure (fig. 80). This was compounded by the fact that the castle was not visible from the car park, which reflected negatively on this modern development. The visitor centre and car park, however, were not always viewed as inappropriate:

Urq11a *When we parked up in the car park eh my first impressions were modern visitor centre and quite pleasant aspect to it.*

Urq11b *I think it was the views across Loch Ness and everything...*

Urq11a *Yeah and just the vastness of Loch Ness itself was eh, breathtaking.*

The design of the centre and car park were instead viewed as a positive development, facilitating good views of the surrounding landscape, and not necessarily imposing on the natural grandeur of the castle setting.

Others discussed a sense of relief when viewing the castle for the first time and seeing that it was in a ruined, 'authentic' state, as this confirmed both their expectations and their desires of what a Highland castle should look like:

Urq15a *I thought, oh how old, how wonderful, actually a bit of really old history, to see it like that, you know, of it in ruins, rather than refurbished and done up nicely. It was like, mmmh, that's history.*



Figure 80 - Juxtaposition of centre and ruins (photo S. Timoney)

The ruined nature of the castle provided assurances that it had been unaltered, and was in a natural state, as opposed to having been renovated or reconstructed. It was also perceived to reflect the way that a large number of Scottish castles survive in the landscape today:

Urq1 *I did want my parents to see that it wasn't just the castles in Stirling and Edinburgh that are all fixed up nicely, but you know the actual ruins. But at the same time the castles are there in Scotland that are in ruins and don't really see any visitors. Location may be in favour for this one but it's....I don't know why this one is necessarily much more appealing than others but because of its appeal it's become more widely known and therefore more people come to it, you know, it's a big circle.*

Participants who had visited castles before discussed feelings of familiarity, and broader ideas of understanding this type of site. This often facilitated interactions with the castle which moved beyond simply viewing the physical remains, towards interpreting and imagining what the site may have been like in the past:

Urq11a *I think that because of the number of times we've visited places like this you get a feel for the grandeur of the place even though it is a ruin, you feel the grandeur of it and it's presence and what it must've meant when it was in operation.*

Conversely, other participants saw the site not only as separate from castles which were not ruined, but also separate from other ruined castles which were not perceived to be tourist sites:

Urql3a *It's a ruin, you can't compare it to a working castle or in a public place like Stirling. So we can't give you a proper answer, you can't compare it I think. And Stirling is as crowded as Urquhart because both are famous, Dunnotar was not so crowded because I think it was further off the beaten roads. The main roads for tourists.*

In this way, although Urquhart, Stirling and Dunnotar were bound together as castles, experiences of these sites saw them categorised in different ways, reflecting a number of important factors including the nature of the remains and the number of visitors or tourists at each site.

The use of paths, gangways and signs as a method of negotiating the castle (figs. 81 -82) was recognised as a way of managing large numbers of visitors on-site at the same time, but also as a way of controlling how and what people saw at the site, as discussed by Urql1:

Urql1 *We climbed all the stairwells and like we climbed all the towers and everything. I think we pretty much walked to all the parts that Historic Scotland has laid out sidewalks to. And you know basically you have to stick to the sidewalks so you only see what they want you to see.*



Figure 81 - Paths across site (photo S. Timoney)



Figure 82 – Gangways on site (photo S. Timoney)

6.7 On-site interpretation

The difficulty with sites such as Urquhart Castle is creating interpretive media which appeals to a broad demographic:

Urq1 *But it didn't tell me well this is what they had in the room so much, you know, this is how often they were here this is what the room would have felt like. I didn't get the feeling of what these places would have actually been like when they were occupied. I know when I was up in Orkney I got the same feeling, there were a lot of empty stone rooms like at the Bishop's Palace and Earl's Bu and... you know it's really hard to visualise some times that these were actually warm, decorated you know bustling with people.*

Although for other participants it was set at the right level:

Urq6b *I thought they were good because they didn't give too much information so that you'd think oh I'm not going to bother reading all of this. But it just gave an overall view of where you were and what happened there, so yeah it was good.*



Figure 83 - Site markers (photo S. Timoney)

The use of on-site interpretation panels (fig. 83) was viewed as both a positive and a negative development of the site. Some participants were enthusiastic about the use of interpretive media on the site, as it allowed them to understand, recognise and interpret for themselves as they moved through the site:

Urq10b *I think it was interesting because you can see it whereas if you read it up here and then go down there like well what did it say whereas it put, 'cause you're in that room you can visualise what they were doing around you when you were in that room.*

The use of information panels on the castle site itself was not however universally popular with participants:

Urq19a *If you keep it in a centre like this you could put it in a number of languages on the way through, do you know what I mean? You could have some German guides if you want. Because if you are interested in what individual parts of the Castle are, you'd buy a guide and the guide would tell you, and then why would you need plaques out there at all. I just think that they interrupt the ruin itself. But again that's just my personal opinion.*

In this way the on-site interpretation had an impact on the experience regardless of whether visitors wished to interact and use it or not. Urq19a raised concerns over the way that these panels were perceived to impose on the site itself, interrupting any engagements with the past and being continually reminded of the present.

Other participants disregarded a lot of the information panels for a different reason. Some discussed the belief that there was a heritage vernacular, which was effectively transferred from site to site and reflected the same information each time:

Urq10b *We read a few of the bits [in the guidebook] when were going round to explain a few of the bits we weren't sure of, but we've been to quite a few so we know the jist [laughs].*

Other participants viewed the need to keep the interpretative material and the castle ruins as separate, but from a different perspective:

Urq21a *Just wandered about really. We kind of, we didn't buy a guidebook or anything like that. It's just extra money isn't it? No, we were just interested in going down and having a look at the Castle and the views. We were probably more taken by the views than really what was going on in the Castle. I think this bit up here [the centre] helped explain what the Castle was about so when you're down there you're like oh that's that bit there and that's that bit there. We weren't wanting to get into great detail about exactly what the Castle was about because this bit up here gave us the information. We went down just to see the Castle and see the views. You know, experience a bit of Loch Ness, because there's not many places along Loch Ness you can actually get down onto the water.*

For Urq21a the site of the castle was to be appreciated for its intrinsic and landscape values, rather than to have value placed upon it or parts of it through the imposition of signs and information panels. As with Urq19a, such measures detracted from the effect of the site, creating a modern intrusion on what was an idealised view of the past.

6.7.1 Difficulty with the level of remains

The level of remains, as discussed earlier in relation to expectations, was a continued issue for some participants during their visit. The lack of upstanding remains and recognisable structures led to confusion for some in terms of working out where they were within the castle structure:

Urq1 *Uhm... there were quite a few things that we walked to, we looked around, and then you'd notice the sign and then figure out what it was. So I didn't feel like I knew where I was going, maybe if I...because we landed on the boat we didn't go through the visitors centre first.*

When compared to the model in the visitor centre exhibition (fig. 73), some participants suggested that they couldn't imagine the scale and grandeur of the castle when out on the site:

Urq19b *When we actually seen the Castle and walked round and everything, when we got up and it showed you exactly how big it was [the exhibition model] you don't get that impression. You don't do you? You don't get the impression of how big it actually was.*

Urq19a *It must've been an impressive Castle. When you look the site of it all and the size of it, but when you're walking it's bitty bits, it's not clear exactly how impressive it would have been.*

6.8 Other visitors

The impact of other visitors (fig. 84) on participants' experiences was often raised during interviews:

Urq1 *Well I have to say that if the site had been any more crowded than it was it probably would have been a disappointing experience because the way it was there were just enough people that it was comfortably spread out but if there had been any more we would have been justit would have been easy to get trapped in places for a very long time or you know just be crowded in.*

Urq1 also discussed the perception that there were different types of visitor at the site, with those 'serious' about the history of the castle and experiencing it properly, and those who were there just to get 'their picture taken in front of it':

Urq1 *You get all the people, they're just there because they should see a castle darn it and sometimes that takes away from the experience, if you're really serious about just experiencing the castle and other people just wanna have their picture taken in front of it.*



Figure 84 - Visitors on site (photo S. Timoney)

Urq1 viewed herself as serious about experiencing and learning about the castle, an approach which she understood to be in direct contrast to many who were visiting the site at the same time. Other participants discussed what they perceived to be a lack of value or appreciation by other visitors at the site:

Urq13a *I don't like tourists although I'm one myself you see [laughs]. But I can imagine a castle without having multimedia shows okay. I succeed in it.*

Urq13b *The Castle is a must, the visitor centre is not. And when you look around, more people are in the visitor centre than the Castle. It's sad.*

Urq13a *And no-one is reading the signs.*

This lack of appreciation of what Urq13a and b viewed as the ‘important’ aspects of the site exacerbated their perceptions of the distance between what *they* understood, experienced and valued, in contrast to what they saw as the more ephemeral interests of other tourists and visitors at the site (fig. 85).



Figure 85 - Visitors enjoying refreshments outside the visitor centre (photo S. Timoney)

Those who had visited the castle before the visitor centre had been developed raised concerns over the impact of increased visitor numbers on personal experiences of the site:

Urq5b *It's generally very good. It's always nice when there's not so many people around I find but that's the down side of eh.... obviously being turned into a high profile kind of site now.*

In this way the increasing fame and popularity of the site was in part changing the way some participants were viewing and experiencing the castle. Urq5b discussed the perception that the castle had become something different from that which they had experienced years before. Although the new interpretation was good, it did mean that there were many more people on the site, which changed the experience.

6.9 Touring Urquhart Castle

A large proportion of visitors to Urquhart Castle arrive in organised tours, either as a day trip from Inverness, or as part of longer tours of Scotland both from within the UK and

across Europe (fig. 86). The location of the castle means that taking an organised tour is the only practical way for those without their own transport to realistically make the journey in one day, as Urq1 describes:

ST *With your tour, why did you choose that as opposed to visiting the Castle[on your own]?*

Urq1 *For one thing, because the Castle is kinda out on it's own it's difficult to get to if you don't have a car. You've to time the Citylink buses just right and it's kind of iffy when you're only there for a day. And you have other buses to catch and all. That's the thing, this [the Castle] is kind of in the middle of nowhere and that's why we chose that [the tour].*



Figure 86 - Tour bus, Drumnadrochit (photo S. Timoney)

One of the problems some participants acknowledged when visiting on a tour was the limited amount of time they had to visit the site. This affected what they could see and do at the site, in terms of visiting the castle ruins, as well as reading the interpretation and watching the film:

Urq1 *Unfortunately because of the tour we didn't have very much time and so I actually missed the film because my parents wanted to get some things from the gift shop. So I got those for them and so I missed the film which I heard the ending is quite impressive.*

6.10 Reconstructing Urquhart

As has already been discussed, the ruined nature of the castle was a disappointment for some participants, who were expecting a more complete structure. Some participants discussed the opportunity to reconstruct the castle as a way of helping visitors to understand and experience the structure as it would have been:

Urq27b *It's a pity that it's a ruin, but it's like you are outside.*

[...]

ST *You said it's a pity it's a ruin.*

Urq27b *I don't know if it's possible for there to be a reconstruction or something more like that. It would be also interesting. It is true that it's not the truth because it is a reconstruction, but I think it will help. I don't know, maybe I am a little bit expedient, or I ask for too many things but yeah.*

Urq27a *You could possibly reconstruct part of the Castle so that you could see how it would have been, maybe.*

The idea of reconstructing the castle, or part of it, was raised by a number of other participants. For some, the on-site interpretation was not enough for them to understand and experience the site for themselves and to appreciate how it would have looked in the past. Instead, they would rather have a tangible, physical structure to negotiate, as Urq3a discussed:

Urq3a *Rather than seeing boards saying 'the chapel' [fig. 87] it's better to see the chapel there. Rather than just seeing a board.*

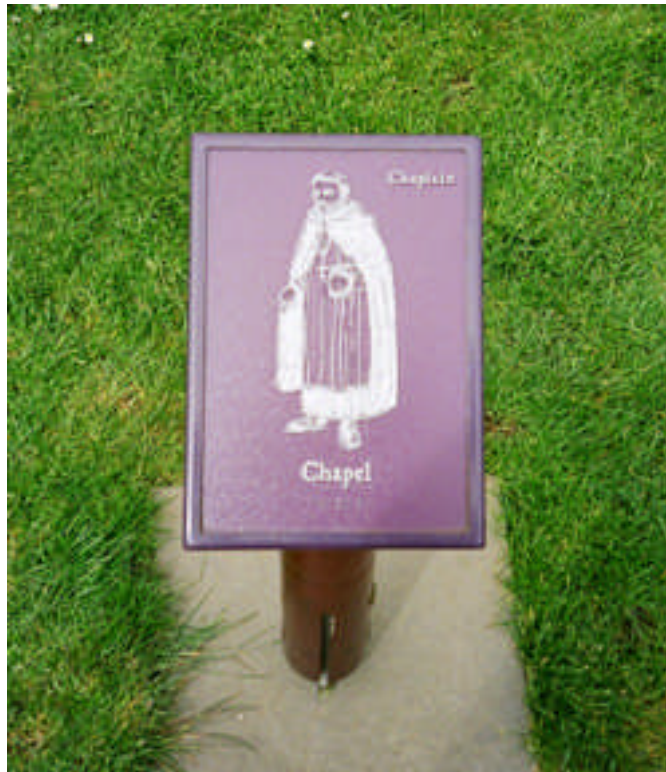


Figure 87 - Chapel sign (photo S. Timoney)

The effects of the past, the deliberate destruction of the castle and the subsequent stone robbing, are integral parts of the castle's biography. These events were not perceived to be as important to some participants, who saw the important part of the castle's past when it was functioning and flourishing:

Urq3a *I think probably, eh I don't know whether this can be reconstructed. We just thought that it was too, there was too much damage from the past. The history.*

The use of a board providing an overall plan of the castle at the top of Grant Tower (fig. 88) was, in contrast, popular with some respondents as it was seen to provide an easy way of getting an impression of the overall site as it may have been, in comparison to what remains today:

Urq9a *The little exhibition plaque quite high up which gave you a birds-eye-view of the development with an artist's impression of what it was like....I found that quite useful. So you could sort of stand there and actually make some sense of the ruins. At some stage of walking through it it's useful to just. That's the first opportunity you have to really make sense of it.*



a question of whether the lord of the house was both lord and slave of the house as it were and ehm.... I'm not sure how good an experience it would have been being the owner of an establishment like this [smiles and Urq9b laughs]. Here I am standing on top there and I own this place, ehm and there they're putting up this bit of equipment [the trebuchet] to besiege the place [laughs].

Urq9a's comments reflected a move away from romantic notions of the castle ruin. Other participants were drawn in by these stereotypically idealistic views of castles and the past:

Urq8a *I was saying that, wasn't I, that they was self-sufficient in them places wasn't they, with the animals and all. Oh the thickness of the walls. Yeah. All I could think of was it would be lovely all those years ago to wake up in the morning with that view [all laugh]. Just sort of looking out that window and thinking oh look at that. Where else on earth would you want to stay?*

In contrast to Urq9a's comments on the realities of medieval life, Urq8a was caught up in a common fairytale perception of life in castles in the past.

6.12 Authenticity

As discussed earlier, the site often didn't fit into expectations of what a castle should be like, ideas promoted by media such as film and television, leading many to believe that the castle would more authentically replicate medieval life, for example with 'burning torches in walls':

Urq24 *I don't know what I was thinking. But you know, think about a castle and oh I'm gonna go and it's gonna be nice and you know torches in walls and whatever. But it was...the staircase freaked me out a little if I'm gonna be honest [laughs].*

The reality of the castle remains as with the staircase did not, however, fit into the romantic views of the past discussed before. The nature and perceptions of authenticity were, however, an important, and often crucial, aspect of the castle experience. What was perceived and accepted as authentic in terms of these experiences, however, varied greatly between participants. One common theme of authenticity revolved around the ruined, conserved castle remains:

Urql *You don't get the feeling that they've tried to reconstruct it just to bring tourists in there. I mean they make no apologies for the fact that it was blown to bits and this is the rubble, this is how it's been for you know, what was it three or four hundred years. And that was the point of it, telling people that, I think it's great that they don't say well we brought in a special designer to create these ruins to give you the authentic experience. I think its location helped a lot, because it's not in the middle of a neighbourhood now.*

A number of respondents discussed perceptions of authenticity with regards to the castle ruins, in terms of both 'Scottishness' and the past. The age of the site, and the perceived age and unaltered state of the fabric of the castle, were important factors in the site being viewed as authentic:

Urql5b *Uhm, I guess just coming from Toronto where everything is so new we think something a hundred years is old to see this is really quite impressive. And we just came from Eilean Donan Castle and my first thought the first time I was really impressed but then you go in and find out that it [Eilean Donan Castle] was totally rebuilt for a movie which was really disappointing. So to see this in it's natural state was really good.*

[....]

Urql5b *Yeah, and to actually be able to touch it as well knowing that somebody like hundreds and hundreds of years ago had made that is really quite astounding.*

Seeing the castle in its 'natural' state reflected perceptions that the site was organic: in some way part of the landscape itself. The ability to be able to touch and interact with the site in a physical sense also led to perceptions of authenticity, and created a link to the past. This understanding of a link to the past, and the role that historical artefacts from the site played in these interpretations, were crucial aspects in the success of the experience:

Urql25b *It's just amazing to see things that are that old.*

[....]

- Urq25a *I appreciate actually that they keep and maintain the actual artefacts here on the site rather than saying it's in a different museum down in London or somewhere else. That is very helpful, and a nice touch.*
- ST *What do you like about that?*
- Urq25a *About having the things here?*
- ST *Yeah.*
- Urq25a *I think it's a connection. You know it's an 800, 700 year history span that you can see a coin from 1300 that's here that was found...*
- Urq25b *...here...*
- Urq25a *Yeah 200 metres away. It's very, I think it's breath-taking to know that somebody managed this 700 years ago and we're looking at it today. So that's very cool for me.*
- Urq25b *And they could've put all just replicas in there and they didn't. And I appreciate the fact that I'm looking at the real thing.*
- ST *The real thing....*
- Urq25a *It gives it an air of authenticity that other places don't necessarily have.*
- ST *Is that a feeling that you've had here?*
- Urq25a *That raises the level of the visit significantly. And I don't know if we saw anything other than doors and fittings and fixtures at other castles that were authentic. There aren't really any artefacts at Edinburgh [Castle] or Stirling [Castle].*

The display of artefacts found at the site gave the modern visitor centre its own sense of authenticity, as a repository for 'real' artefacts, rediscovered on the site and creating a continuous link between the present and the past.

The development of the castle site was not, however, popular with all participants. As discussed earlier, a number of respondents viewed the imposition of a visitor centre and the development of the site as a visitor attraction as detracting from the authentic feel of the site. The imposition of the modern on a site and landscape regarded as a link to the past was seen to compromise the authenticity of the castle itself. The development of the site as a tourist attraction was seen as changing the role that the site played in the landscape, and the role of the castle in representing the past.

This perception of the modern impacting on the authenticity of the site was not always viewed in such a clear-cut sense, however:

Urql *I mean, authentic back in the time there would have been people constantly going in and out, bringing in supplies and cattle. You know, it was by no means a quiet stone retreat that the king and queen just go and kick up their heels and be the only ones for miles around. And it wasn't that way. Obviously they didn't have the noise around, you know the noise pollution of cars and the planes and everything, but to be fair it was teeming with people back then.*

Although other visitors impacted on her ability to move around and through the site, affecting her experiences of the castle, Urql discussed a belief that in some ways having large numbers of people on the site was a more 'authentic' experience in terms of imagining the medieval castle in everyday use, rather than as a static and lonely ruin. In this way, rather than a remote, quiet ruin in the landscape, the castle was understood to have been a thriving bustling locale. Although the functions had transformed, people moving around and through the site today were perceived to be a more realistic, and in some ways more authentic, reflection of the site.

6.13 Aura

A number of participants elaborated on these perceptions of authenticity to discuss less tangible, but equally valid, observations regarding the aura of the site:

Urql4b *I thought it would be quite spiritual, and it is, it's very spiritual. Quite surprised that the Grants blew it up. They didn't want anybody to have it so, they couldn't have it so they didn't want anybody else to have it so they blew it up. But I can sense a lot of the stuff in the past when you walk in the*

grounds you can feel it, and men on the land and the fighting and the hard, hard living. You can sense it. It's got an aura about it.

Urq4b discussed perceptions of something intangible which could be felt on the site, evoking links and memories of the past in the present. In this way, the past was perceived to continue to exist, with historic sites providing a real link between the past and the present for those who were willing to make the connections and 'sense it'.

Equally, for those participants who had also visited the site prior to its development, the previous incarnation of the castle was remembered and memorialised as a more enigmatic location, with remoteness playing a key role:

Urq8c *The first time we came it was nothing. We went down and we were the only people there and I was.... Well I was overcome how quiet and.... well I thought it was eerie. It was so quiet and I looked at the water and it was so dark.*

Perceptions of the remoteness of the site were exacerbated by the belief that prior to the development there was 'nothing' on the site. Observations of the castle as 'eerie', and reflections on the solitude of the site all led to an almost otherworldly aura around the castle ruins. For others, this aura assumed a more benign form:

Urq10b *For me it was very peaceful. I don't know, you just had the sense of calm and tranquillity around it.*

Contrasting and often contradictory though these encounters were, perceptions of aura and authenticity were both crucial to many participants' experiences of the castle.

6.14 Perceptions of Scotland

Urquhart Castle fits into the stereotype image of Scotland of lochs, highlands, castles and history, promoted throughout tourist literature and holiday brochures. The ruined castle on a loch vista is one of the enduring images, and something which the majority of participants were keen to see and experience for themselves:

Urql *We don't have these castles at home [USA] it's the only chance to get to see the things that we read about in fairytales and magazines and everything like that.*

ST *So the castles exist with fairytales....*

Urql *For Americans. Uhm, because we don't grow up surrounded by them. You know, for Europeans the whole cowboy mythology is something that, for me I see cowboys driving down the street whereas Europeans get quite excited, and it's the same with us for castles because growing up we have all the same fairytales we read about and usually there's a castle in there and the knights, kings and everything. But it's not something that we can experience.*

Although Edinburgh and Stirling Castles are the two most popular charging visitor attractions in Scotland (Martinolli *et al* 2007), Urql did not view them as indicative of what really represented Scotland. Likewise, the ruined castles were more closely related to the fairytales of childhood, and common romantic notions of the Scottish past from a visitor's perspective.

In this way, parts of Scotland were therefore perceived as 'more Scottish' than others, as they assimilated with these well worn and commonly recognised stereotypes of Scotland:

Urql18 *I've always been fascinated with Scotland, and the scenery, and Glasgow and places like that don't give me the feeling you're in Scotland. It feels you're in Scotland when you're in the Highlands. It's different.*

For some respondents there was also the necessity to indulge in 'buying' Scottish heritage in the visitor centre shop:

Urql26b *I enjoy looking at the traditional, all the tartans and traditional things. But for me it's an obligation, not because I want to. I'd rather look at the other things [the displays]. And I think it's that way for a lot of people. They have to shop because they have people wanting things.*

Urql26a *We have a lot of friends who have Scottish heritage so we were looking for their clan names.*

Visiting sites such as Urquhart Castle was also viewed by some respondents as something they 'had' to do when visiting Scotland:

Urq6b *We sort of came to Scotland as a relaxing part of our trip and we just had a Lonely Planet Guide and yeah, castles seemed to be predominant in there and people have told us wow the castles in Scotland are great so, yep we've got to see castles in Scotland.*

UC9a *We consulted as many publications as possible and we tried to figure out from that with there being so many castles which were the ones we wanted to see. And there were three including this one.*

ST *What were the other two?*

UC9a *The other two were Culzean Castle because that was a fully completed castle all still intact with its furnishings and so on. And the other one we are going to see is Eilean Donan because of just its site and silhouette.*

Others discussed the importance of learning about sites such as Urquhart Castle as key to instilling a sense of identity for Scottish people more generally:

Urq7b *You must remember the people of my generation we were never taught Scottish history at school. It wasn't allowed.[...] I think a lot of the Scottish history that I know I've only read since I've been an adult. [...] So I think there is a lot to be done in education for young people.*

Urq7a *And I think there was one bit on the film I think it said when in 1300s or something when the English or it might have been the inter boards and the English were coming up here and I thought 'I didn't realise they got up here' because I was educated in England so I didn't do much Scottish history.*

6.15 Summary

This case study reflects the role Urquhart Castle plays today as a tourist attraction, a signifier of identities, a cultural construct and stereotype, and a connection to the past. The

nature of the remains and the level of ruination was a key feature of the interviews at Urquhart Castle. Many participants alluded to surprise and sometimes disappointment at the lack of tangible structures surviving within the Castle, with only Grant Tower immediately recognisable. This level of remains was also discussed in relation to perceptions of value for the site, especially financial value and the cost of entry in relation to the amount of castle which survived.

The ruined castle did, however, fit in with many participants' stereotypical images of Highland Scotland, and its location on the banks of Loch Ness provided a classic setting that was reflected in guidebook references to the site. But the idea that it was a tourist trap, and had been 'sacrificed' by Historic Scotland to bring in tourist cash was reflected through these same guidebooks, as well as comments and perceptions from participants. The process of visiting and the success of experiences was also confirming and reinforcing these stereotypes.

The redevelopment of the castle site and the construction of the visitor centre were not without controversy, resulting in an inquiry before planning permission was granted. Participants viewed the construction of the centre, and its position in the landscape in relation to the castle site, in different ways. The visitor centre was discussed both as a way of processing the large numbers of visitors Urquhart Castle now gets, and as an attractive modern space which provided all of the facilities many participants expected from such a site. Others were more critical, with it being viewed as imposing on the site and dominating the landscape, a case of sacrificing the integrity of the site to create a revenue generating hub. Such critiques were also based on the cost of entry, wherein some participants felt that they had not received value for money, whether through high entry fees, or even a perceived lack of value with regards the cost to level of remains ratio. Historic Scotland were therefore seen to have taken a popular and important site and developed it in the wrong way; not for local or public benefit, but primarily for economic gain. The concomitant changes to the site were also criticised, as the increasingly controlled and focused movement on site was seen as a form of censorship on the part of Historic Scotland, wherein the site was to be viewed and experienced in a certain managed, correct way.

With the museum and cinema taking up only a small percentage of the internal space, the centre was primarily laid over to other revenue generators - the café and shop. A number of participants made observations about this imbalance, discussing perceptions that this site was designed for tourists, and at worst, specifically a tourist trap. But the interpretation

which was in the museum and the introductory film were both popular with participants, as they provided an opportunity to put the castle in context.

Many participants also discussed the castle as an essential part of their visit to the area, especially overseas visitors who discussed the idea that they could not come to Scotland and not visit a Highland castle, or Loch Ness. In this way the castle was part of a process of wish-fulfilment, wherein the choice of Urquhart as the castle to visit was not a specific one, but rather than it fitted in with the various criteria which many participants had for their visit to Scotland.

The layout of the castle ruins creates a controlled experience of movement around the site, with paths, walkways and barriers controlling access on the site. This is a necessary part of site management, preserving the physical remains for the future. But it also creates a very controlled experience for visitors, an idea which was raised in a number of interviews. These 'barriers', alongside the various interpretative panels, and even other visitors encountered on site, all impacted on participants' abilities to imagine and experience the past. These attempts to engage with the past were also hindered by the lack of standing structures on the site, which left many participants at a loss as to how the site may have looked in the past. One option to ameliorate this would be to reconstruct part or all of site, something which was raised in a number of interviews, although this would necessarily focus on one period in the site's biography at the expense of others. In contrast, there was also a belief that the ruined castle was in a natural, authentic, unaltered state that was seen as key to its validity and authenticity.

The perceptions of authenticity and aura were varied and sometimes contradictory, but reflected a connection, real or imagined, with the site. These discussions on authenticity and aura reflected how important such engagements and insights were to participants experiences of the castle and these often also tied in with wider perceptions of Scotland and Scottish heritage. Through its ruination the castle was viewed as being in a natural, honest state, an embodiment of history in physical form. Through its development as a mass tourist attraction, the aura of the site was at risk, if not already irrevocably changed, as the development of the visitor centre and the increase in people on site changed the feel of the castle.

7 Case Study 5 – Skara Brae, Orkney

7.1 Background to Orkney

The Orkney Isles are located off the north coast of mainland Britain. Orkney consists of around 40 islands and a number of smaller islets (Ritchie 1995), the largest of which, Mainland, is the location of the islands' capital, Kirkwall (fig. 89). Orkney has been the location of antiquarian interest for hundreds of years, especially since the chance discovery of the Neolithic settlement of Skara Brae, after a violent storm removed sand cover in 1850.



Figure 89 – Skara Brae location map

7.2 Orkney and archaeology

The Orkney Isles are renowned for the unique level of preservation of archaeological sites, which is aided by the geology and physical geography of the islands. The natural bedrock for most of the islands, Orkney flagstone, lends itself to construction as it cleaves into easily worked flags, which has allowed a great deal of the archaeology to survive to the present day. This level of preservation, alongside the abundance of prehistoric sites, has

led to the islands continuing to be one of the primary foci for archaeological research through the 20th and into the 21st century.

This wealth of sites led to a group of prehistoric monuments being inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999. The Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site (HoNOWHS) focuses on the prehistoric heritage of the islands, and incorporates a rich prehistoric landscape in the area of the Ness of Brodgar, which includes the Ring of Brodgar, the Stones of Stenness, and Maeshowe chambered cairn and other smaller monuments, alongside the late Neolithic village of Skara Brae located on the west coast.

The wealth of archaeological remains from all periods has made Orkney a site of constant fieldwork and research activity. This has been paralleled by an increasing demand for access to sites from members of the public as Orkney has developed into a haven for heritage tourism. Tourism is an increasingly important element of the Orkney economy, and growth in this sector is actively being encouraged for the future (Orkney Islands Council 2004, 32). Statistics compiled for VisitScotland show visitor numbers at Skara Brae as 68,812 for 2004, 67,222 for 2005 (Martinolli *et al* 2006, 59), and 64,587 in 2006 (Martinolli *et al* 2007, 64), having risen from 57,138 in 1997 (Lennon *et al* 2000, 85).

7.3 Skara Brae and late Neolithic settlement in Orkney: a linear narrative

Excavations since those at Skara Brae have provided a body of data which is only paralleled in Britain by the Wessex region of south-west England. Early excavations in Orkney generally focussed on burial mounds, but in the latter part of the twentieth century settlement sites were increasingly being studied (Card 2005).

The early Neolithic in Orkney has generally been associated with the creation of chambered cairns, construction of stone houses and the production of Unstan Ware. Up until the late twentieth century it was believed that the early Neolithic was characterised by dispersed farmsteads, located on the best arable land (Renfrew 2000). These farmsteads were viewed as individual social entities, with their own associated ritual sites in the form of individual chambered cairns (Renfrew 1979). This view has been criticised and largely discredited as research into Neolithic settlement on Orkney has reflected a much more complex situation.

This growing body of evidence has given further strength to the developing argument that the early Neolithic in Orkney comprised various settlement types throughout the various islands. Domestic architecture from this period reflects a multitude of different styles, from individual dwellings to smaller clusters of houses and larger dispersed villages, reflecting a heterogeneous population within and between islands (Richards 1999).

The style of the individual buildings is another characteristic feature of early Neolithic settlement types in Orkney. This period is characterised by linearity in building design (Richards 1996; Bradley *et al* 2000). House architecture finds a mirror in the design and layout of chambered tombs of the early period. Houses consisted of an elongated central space, subdivided by upright slabs to create separate areas, presumably with distinct purposes within the communal social space.

The majority of evidence suggests that early Neolithic houses were made from stone, with Wideford Hill the only possible timber settlement known of from this period on Orkney (Card 2005). The dominance of stone reflects necessity as much as choice, as Orkney had very little in the way of indigenous timber.

House architecture altered in the transitional period between the late 4th millennium and the early part of the 3rd millennium BC on Orkney. The design changed from a linear construction to a more central cruciform style (Richards 1996, 193). Two of the most important settlements, Skara Brae and Barnhouse, were both constructed during the transition period, c3300BC. Bed recesses were initially constructed within the side walls, and a dresser was positioned opposite the entrance (*ibid.*) within domestic structures at both these sites.

The design was subsequently changed, with the most notable modification in the size of the overall structures which, along with the internal area, increased. There were, however, alterations to the furniture within these new houses, with the beds no longer recessed into the walls, instead protruding from them (Richards 1991). This change in layout resulted in the internal space actually negotiated by the inhabitants remaining comparable between the two periods. The external features of house design also changed from rounder to squarer structures with rounded edges, as observed at Skara Brae, Barnhouse and Rinyo (*ibid.*).

The early houses at Skara Brae were freestanding, but relatively quickly midden and aeolian deposits built up around the walls of the structures (*ibid.*). The subsequent remodelling and building of houses at the site were placed within these deposits (Card

2005). Whilst the house design had changed, the layout of the furniture continued from early into later houses. Bed stalls were still located on the left and right of the houses, with a dresser located at the far side. At the centre of the house was the hearth, oriented north-west to south-east and focused on the midsummer sunrise and midwinter sunset (Richards 1991).

Evidence from Skara Brae shows a series of phases to the site, with houses rebuilt on the site of earlier structures (Richards 1991). Richards suggests that this rebuilding was not necessarily the result of structural need, but may reflect a social or cultural rebuilding on the site relating to the inhabitant(s) of the previous structures (*ibid.*, 27). This may reflect a way of legitimising contemporary position within society through a link with the past.

The change in design of settlements in this period reflects an increase in the control and movement of individuals through sites (*ibid.*). Again, this can be seen in the layout and design of other parts of the late Neolithic landscape, namely chambered tombs and henge monuments. Houses were arranged around a central platform, as seen at Skara Brae and Barnhouse. This demarcation and control of space is also reflected in the creation of larger structures, found at both these sites. These structures were separated from other buildings by open paved areas, with neither thought to have had a domestic purpose (Card 2005).

Structure 8 at Skara Brae is twice the size of any of the other buildings on the site, and is located across a paved area to the west of the settlement (Richards 1991). This building has a different alignment to the other houses – south-south-west to north-north-east rather than the north-west to south-east orientation found at the other houses. The hearth did not adhere to this change however, maintaining its north-west to south-east orientation, offsetting its position within the room (*ibid.*). Other features of the layout also differed from house structures, with recesses replacing the projecting bed stalls (*ibid.*). Evidence from the site suggested an increase in the use of fire, with a number of areas within the structure indicating burning, including a possible kiln to the rear of the structure (*ibid.*). Thus, the internal space was divided up into a series of separate areas, probably for the production of different artefacts requiring not only different processes and materials, but also different skills and techniques.

Structure 7 at Skara Brae is again another larger building set apart from the rest of the settlement (Richards 1991). It had been altered through its lifespan but was the oldest structure on the site (Richards 1991). Again, this building has been interpreted as having a non-domestic purpose, alluded to through a variety of unusual occurrences, including the

presence of two female burials under the floor (Card 2005, 51). It is not only the structure itself which is unusual, but its location within the settlement and the way access was gained to this part of the site which sets it apart:

Every boundary confronted on the way to Structure 7 symbolises conceptual discontinuity along a passage from everyday areas through progressively ‘weighted’ sacred space to a particular goal. The undertaking of such a journey would probably have been restricted to certain times and specific events, and may have involved people being exposed to the dangers of symbolic impurity and close proximity to the dead.

(Richards 1991, 40-1)

7.4 Presentation of Skara Brae

Skara Brae is today in the care of Historic Scotland. The site is open to visitors from March to September 9.30am – 6.30pm, and from October to March 9.30am – 4.30pm. Admission prices for Skara Brae (during the research period in 2005) were:

- Adults £6.00
- Reduced £4.50
- Child £2.40

The site was redeveloped in 1998 to provide a new visitor centre (fig. 90), complete with café, museum and reconstruction house. Prior to this interpretation at the site was housed in a small hut to one side of the monument. Access was less restricted on the site, with visitors permitted to walk into and amongst the structures.

Today there is a large coach and car park (fig. 91), with visitors required to go through the visitor centre to reach the site. Entering the centre the visitor arrives at the reception desk and payment point, with the café to the left and the shop straight ahead (fig. 92). Visitors are then led through to a small room with a short film which introduces the site and basic concepts of the Neolithic in Orkney, which then leads on to the museum exhibition.



Figure 90 – Skara Brae visitor centre (photo K. Brophy)



Figure 91 – Skara Brae car and coach park (photo K. Brophy)



Figure 92 – Visitor Centre reception; and shop (photos S. Timoney)



Figure 93 – Traditional artefact display; interactive interpretation (photos S. Timoney)

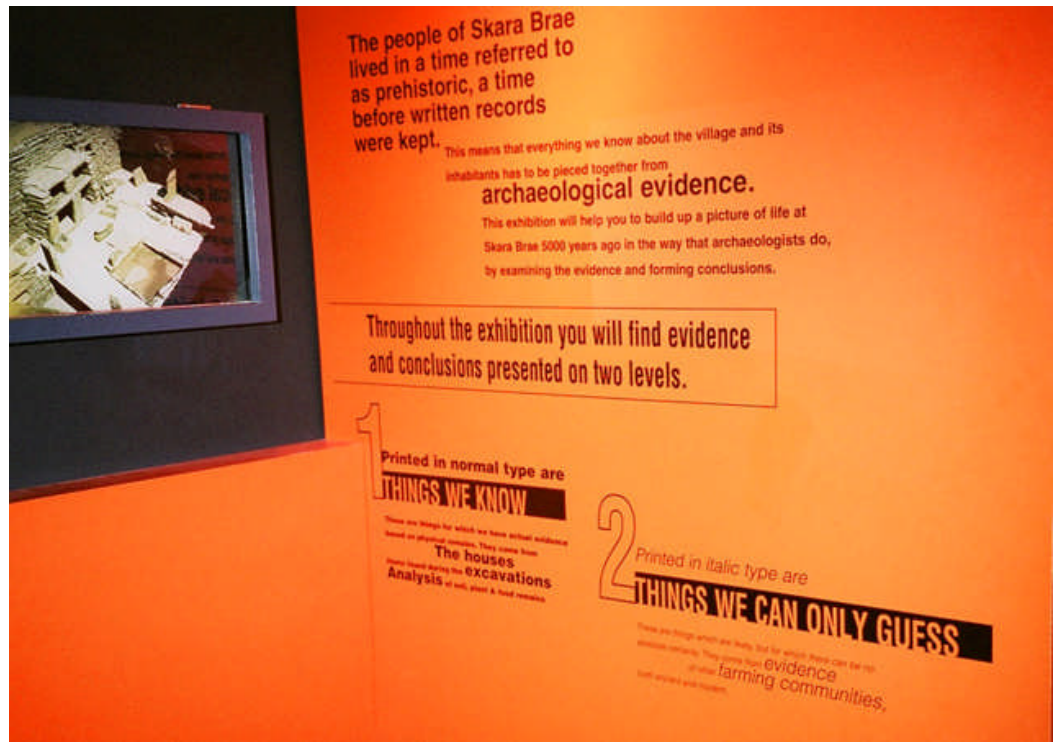


Figure 94 – Exhibition text (photo S. Timoney)

The exhibition uses a number of different techniques to provide information. These include traditional displays of artefacts but also incorporate more hi-tech displays, including touch-screen computers which allow visitors to work through various processes of archaeology, such as the excavation of a site, or interpreting information to work out how to roof one of the Skara Brae structures (fig. 93). Exhibition text is also written in two ways – bold text is used to denote ‘facts’ and ‘data’ – what is known about the site (fig. 94). Italicised text is used to distinguish ‘interpretation’, showing the processes through which archaeologists process this data to interpret the past.

Once through the displays, visitors leave the centre and arrive at the reconstruction house, based on House 7. The information panel outside the reconstruction explains its rationale (fig. 95):

Because the 5000-year-old settlement at Skara Brae itself is so fragile, visitors may only look down into the village from above. So this reconstruction gives you a unique glimpse into what it must have been like for the Stone-Age residents as they threaded their way through the passageways and into the houses.



Figure 95 – Reconstruction entrance and sign (photo S. Timoney)

Inside, artificial light is used, with the passageways taller than in Skara Brae (for health and safety reasons). A central hearth, side bed stalls and a dresser are all recreated, with animal skins and plastic food used to provide detail (fig. 96).



Figure 96 – Interior of reconstruction (photo S. Timoney)

From the replica house a path leads visitors down to the site, with key points in history displayed on markers at the side of the path, signifiers of moving back through time to the Neolithic and into the site of Skara Brae (fig. 97). Movement on the site itself is heavily controlled, with paths, walkways, fences, chains and signs delineating access around and through the site, with House 7 protected with an iron and glass cover. Each of the

structures has a separate information panel explaining what can be seen, and the old warden's office, which formerly housed the interpretation for the site, has been revamped to provide some basic interpretation, including a number of reconstruction drawings of the site (fig. 98).



Figure 97 – Marker on path symbolising movement back in time (photo S. Timoney)



Figure 98 – Interior of former warden's office (photo S. Timoney)

7.5 Pre-visit knowledge and expectations

Skara Brae is one of the most recognisable archaeological sites in Britain, and is the most famous of the archaeological sites in Orkney. Some participants were aware of the name ‘Skara Brae’ prior to their visit to the islands, although the majority had little further knowledge about the site:

ST *What did you know about the site before you came?*

Sk1 *I knew that it existed, I don’t know that I could really describe what it was or anything particularly about it.*

In contrast to the lack of knowledge the majority of participants had of the site, a number of respondents were visiting Orkney *because* of their interest in history and archaeology, often specifically mentioning the prehistoric and Norse heritage of the islands:

Sk12a *And I’d done a study on the Vikings and knew that it was the Vikings that had been in Orkney and that was the reason for coming here. I mean they’re [prehistoric sites] pre-Vikings but, you know, there’s strong context of.... I’m also keen on Norway and Orkney was Norse, so, you know, a mixture of things.*

Whilst Skara Brae did not tie in with Sk12a’s specific interest in the Viking and Norse heritage of the islands, it did conform to a wider interest in the (pre)history of Orkney and broader perceptions of Orkney as a place of history. This is reflected in a lot of promotional material for the islands:

Orkney is a truly unique destination. A deep sense of history can be felt everywhere in the 70 or so scattered islands that make up the archipelago, islands where life is defined by the past and sculpted by the sea.

(VisitScotland Orkney guide)

A number of participants knew very little about the islands, and only found out about places to visit and things to see once they had arrived:

Sk6b *We were at yesterday, the Tomb of the Eagles. They said ‘have you been to Skara Brae?’, and I thought ‘well I suppose we’d better go and have a look’.*

Another group of participants had more personal reasons for visiting the site:

Sk5a *Well, there's all kinds of reasons, but one of the reasons was that I haven't been here for 20 years and Arlene is my daughter and we used to bring the children here on family holidays. And she has just graduated and we decided to come back before she starts off her work in the south of England because we had a few days to spare. We're just coming back to look over the old haunts and when my children were little, I had three of them, and I used to drag them round the Neolithic bits and pieces [laughs].*

For Sk5a the visit to the site was part of a wider rite of passage and revisiting of personal heritage. The site existed within a framework of memories and nostalgia which surpassed its role as archaeological heritage or visitor attraction.

Many participants discussed having no conscious expectations of Skara Brae. As many had little or no knowledge of the site prior to their visit, when questioned they were not immediately conscious of expecting anything of the site. Upon considering the site and their experiences further, however, underlying expectations of the nature of the remains, and the presentation of the site became more apparent:

ST *Did you have any expectations?*

Sk1 *Not really, I mean I came here sort of...well I suppose I've talked to people who've been here before and heard it was wonderful. But I never really got engaged with it until I knew I was going to see it for myself. Ehm, so I suppose I didn't really know what to expect totally, I mean I read up a little bit about it this morning before I set off to come here but. I suppose if I'd been asked to describe it two weeks ago I might have said I thought it would be something bigger. But that's not a problem, it's actually fine. The scale is fine.*

ST *In what way bigger?*

Sk1 *Well I suppose I thought it might be a more extended kind of settlement. I mean you know it's small but that's fine. But that's just a reflection on my ignorance really more than anything else.*

The scale of the site was a surprise, and initially, a disappointment for Sk1. Influenced by the term ‘village’ and how it associates with modern settlement, Sk1 expected to see habitation on a larger scale. That the site was relatively small was not a disappointment *per sé*, but instead required Sk1 to realign her parameters as to what she would or should expect from a Neolithic settlement site. Sk1 was also influenced by the fame of the site and accounts from other people of the site being ‘wonderful’. This in turn affected her own expectations and created an unrealistic impression of the scale of what she would encounter.

Other participants had different expectations or perceptions of the site, for example confusion over its survival and discovery:

Sk11a *I didn't know what to expect. I got the wrong end of the stick because I thought it was a village that had been sunk by sand, to be quite honest, by a storm and that they'd moved off because of the....*

Sk11b *Like Oban Sands....*

Sk11a *Like Oban Sands, that's the impression that I got. That's what I thought it was. So I was totally surprised by what I saw today.*

In this way a vague knowledge of the discovery of the site, allied to a vague knowledge of other coastal sites, led Sk11a to create a biography of the site from these ‘remembered’ elements, which contrasted with experiences of the visit.

The ‘diversity’ of the site was also unexpected, especially when contrasted with the overall size of the site:

Sk12b *I think the diversity within the site, I hadn't expected that. The fact that it's quite distinct buildings, and you can make that out. When you look at pictures of it it looks just much of a muchness. But it's....it's possibly smaller than I'd imagined, as things often are, and you think actually there's so much crammed in to such a small space.*

The level of preservation at the site allowed for a detailed understanding of the various aspects of life in the settlement, reflecting a hitherto unexpectedly complex lifestyle:

Sk2a *I just thought it would be little piles of, you know, piles of very low stone circles and things. I didn't expect to have so many, and to have the interior of the houses, to see the hearths and the beds....*

Instead of 'little piles of stone' the site survives in such an easily interpretable way that visitors can immediately start to make their own interpretations of the site, and with help from the site interpretation, to 'read' the site and the various different aspects of it, including the 'workshop' and houses. In this way the familiarity of these household elements made interpretation much easier than with the unfamiliarity of 'ritual' monuments.

Regardless of prior knowledge, for the majority of participants, once on the island, Skara Brae was viewed as 'something you have to do' when visiting Orkney. In this way archaeology is synonymous with Orkney, as one of its *raison d'être*. This is also one of the ways that Orkney 'markets' itself. Skara Brae, and the other sites which make up the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site are often used in promotional material for a variety of products and ideas associated with Orkney.

In this way, some of the archaeological sites are seen as an essential part of 'doing' Orkney: to have visited the islands and not seen Skara Brae was viewed as unacceptable:

Sk12a *Well one of the reasons we came to Orkney was to see this site plus the others. So that's the reason for coming here, apart from the fact we like Scottish islands. [...] I mean apart from the fact that we weren't going to go home without having seen it.*

For Sk12a and Sk12b one of the main draws of the islands were the archaeological sites. Visiting these sites was viewed as an essential part of the success of their trip, and the fame of Skara Brae meant it could not be missed, unlike some of the less well known prehistoric sites.

Other participants knew less about the site prior to the visit, but through guidebooks, magazines or tourist literature were aware of the site and its importance in archaeological terms:

“A visit to extraordinary Skara Brae offers the best opportunity in Britain for a glimpse of Stone Age life. Idyllically situated by a sandy bay [...] and predating the pyramids of Giza and Stonehenge, Skara Brae is northern

Europe's best-preserved prehistoric village. Even the stone furniture – beds, boxes and dressers – has survived the 5000 years since a community first lived and breathed here.[...] There's an excellent interactive exhibition and short video, arming visitors with facts and theory and enhancing the impact of the site."

(Else *et al* 2003, 1005)

This perceived value led to the sites being viewed as an essential part of a visit to the islands:

Sk1 *Well I'm here for a week's holiday in Orkney and it seemed like one of the essential sites to come and see really, it's so ancient and interesting.*

Although Orkney has a vast resource of archaeological sites, many of which are open to the public, certain sites have been elevated in common perceptions so that there are 'essential' sites to visit. During the period of data collection, hundreds of visitors arrived at Skara Brae, the Ring of Brodgar and Maeshowe, whereas other prehistoric sites, including Barnhouse and Wideford Hill cairn were deserted.

7.6 Thoughts on the presentation of Skara Brae

The controlled movement and packaged 'experience' of Skara Brae was popular with a number of participants:

Sk2a *It's a four-minute film that introduces you to it [Skara Brae]. We went to see it, then we went through the exhibition, then we went to the mock-up thing [reconstruction], and then we went out to the real thing didn't we? And that's a good way of doing it.*

Others were a little more critical about the site, with the fact that it was necessary to have to pay to visit part of what was perceived to be Scotland's heritage raised as a concern:

Sk7 *No, I didn't, as it's £6 to get in, which is a bit of a disgrace. It's in the care of the nation, so I don't think you should be getting charged that much to see what's meant to be part of your own history. Having said that, no doubt they need to charge that much to pay for the centre.*

The fee was seen as a way of covering the costs of the centre as opposed to seeing the site itself, but being charged for the site was still a major issue.

The presentation of the site has changed dramatically with the construction of the visitor centre and changes in access to the site. Some participants had visited Skara Brae before these changes had taken place:

ST *So how does it compare after 20 years?*

Sk5a *There was just the hut.*

Sk5b *We were able to run around in it were we not?*

Sk5a *Well everything's been cleaned-up. I have this terrible feeling that the children ran around and climbed into the stone beds [laughs]. Yeah everything's improved enormously, 100%. And you know just seeing the bus tours coming, I mean there weren't bus tours coming in those days. So yeah we were saying the fact that this is a World Heritage Site, isn't that right?*

Movement around and through the site was seen to be increasingly controlled and restricted, in contrast to earlier access to the monument where it was possible to go into the individual structures. The perception that everything had been 'cleaned-up' reflected a belief that the site had been tidied and possibly sanitised to fit into the World Heritage Site framework. This was seen to correspond with a wider approach to presenting sites and the perceived increase in popularity World Heritage Site status was understood to create.

Other participants discussed this 'cleaned-up' approach to the site in more detail:

ST *What were your thoughts on the site itself?*

[....]

Sk12a *Very well kept. And I liked, I mean okay they've turfed it, and you can see the turfs on the top. It does look nice, doesn't it? It's very aesthetically pleasing, as well as archaeologically intriguing and all the rest of it.*



Figure 99 – Turf capped walls and site interpretation (photo S. Timoney)

This way of presenting the physical remains was viewed as ‘aesthetically pleasing’ partly because it reflected a clean, well-maintained, ordered and laid-out site, but also because it adhered to the heritage vernacular for sites more generally, fitting in to standard ways of maintaining sites for visitor access (figs. 99 – 100). For Sk12a who discussed visiting sites regularly, the use of the turfs to cap the walls was seen as a modern intrusion, but an acceptable change to the site.

In this way the site compared favourably with others visited:

Sk10 *I would say it's just as good as any I've seen. Probably even better because it's got the little markers on the actual houses and stuff so you don't necessarily have to stand with a map, it's actually got it at your feet so you can see it. Whereas a lot of other places just let you wander without the information.*

The layout and interpretation on-site provided security for Sk10 to understand what was on display. This use of information panels allowed Sk10 to move knowingly around the site, rather than just ‘wander’.



Figure 100 – Site interpretation panel (photo S. Timoney)

During busy periods there are also monument wardens on-site to monitor visitor access and movement across the site. Whilst not specifically there to provide information and answer questions about the monument, some participants still took the opportunity to clarify issues which they were still unclear about after the exhibition:

Sk11b *It's good that the lassie's [monument warden] down there to explain, even just wee things.*

ST *Were you asking questions?*

Sk11b *Yes I asked her a question, well nothing very interesting, right enough. But I asked her a couple of questions. It's handier rather than you know, reading something. It's always just better speaking to someone.*

In this way the interactive nature of this experience, being able to question and respond to information, was viewed as much more helpful in understanding the site more fully than static written displays.

7.7 Thoughts on the site

The visual nature of the site, and the recognisable structures and features of the settlement allowed participants to use their own experiences to interpret and understand the site. This was in stark contrast to other sites which were ‘just a pile of stones’, and required, not only imagination, but also knowledge about sites and archaeology to be able to understand and ‘read’ the surviving remains.

Even when critiquing the development of the site as a tourist attraction, Sk6a and b still suggested that the nature and condition of the remains had not been compromised:

Sk6b *It's very commercial, as in.... but it's well kept, the actual site itself is well kept.*

Sk6a *Well preserved, now.*

Sk6a and Sk6bs comments reflected a paradox between the perceived ‘commercialisation’ of the site through the construction of the visitor centre, and the belief that the archaeology itself had managed to survive those changes unaffected (fig. 101).



Figure 101 – Visitors on site (photo S. Timoney)

This increasing popularity and commercialisation was also viewed to be changing the site, as different groups were now coming to Skara Brae, and were now being catered for:

Sk9 *I just went out. I didn't actually spend that much time out there. I kind of went out and wandered around, and I had this rucksack [60 litre Berghaus rucksack] so I wasn't allowed to leave it in case I wanted to blow up Skara Brae. But it was nice [...] But I liked the way that it was almost cheesy as you walked along, that it was a walk back in time. And I just thought that was fun [laughs], I thought that was good. But I also thought it was good because it displayed it in a good historical context for people to understand. I liked the way there were wee display boards all around. [...] But I didn't spend very long because it was swarming with people. So I had a look, and I've been to the other ones [settlement sites at Barnhouse and Knap of Howar] which are more quiet, and I had time to sit down and think about it. And those ones were, I didn't have hundreds of people.*

The idea that part of the presentation was 'cheesy' reflected a bias towards a more academic, professional, authoritative approach to the presentation of the site and archaeology more generally, as a science as opposed to entertainment. For Sk9 the timeline walk could be viewed as part of a process of packaging or Disnefying the site (Laws 2001), turning it into infotainment. Whilst the large number of tourists affected her ability to take photos and experience the site, the large numbers of visitors were viewed as a positive way of promoting a wider knowledge of the prehistoric past.

7.8 Fragility of the site

The issue of increased commercialisation and rising visitor numbers was also raised when considering the fragility of the site, changes to site access, and control over visitor movement. The impact of large numbers of visitors was acknowledged and accepted, even though it changed the experience. The long-term survival of the site was recognised as being of primary concern. This awareness was also reflected in Sk5a's comments where a level of concern was intimated when considering that 20 years earlier they were allowed to 'run over the site' which she now considered to be an inappropriate treatment of the monument. In this way the monuments were increasingly being separated from the landscape, but also from people. The separation of the past was increasingly seen to be taking the form of physical exclusion at the site (fig. 102).



Figure 102 – Cover over House 7 (photo S. Timoney)

The location of the site in the landscape was also discussed, with its position on the coast highlighted as a possible focus for concern:

Sk10 *It's such an incredibly well preserved site. Or by the looks of things it is.
And it's just so close to the sea as well.*

The preservation of the site was viewed in stark contrast to its location immediately on the coast, with the belief that the site had been rescued just in time (fig. 103). The condition and survival of the site was also discussed in terms of the ongoing threat of coastal erosion. Some participants noted their surprise at the survival of the site, as it had been open to the elements for 150 years:

Sk4a *And the state of preservation is incredible.*

Sk4a *You said [earlier] you were surprised...*

Sk4a *Well I was. I mean, it's open to the elements most of it and I know they've got the little things on to see if the stones are going to move or anything like that. But yeah, when you think of some of the weather they get round here and what actually uncovered the thing in the first place, yeah.*

Thus perceived harsh Orkney weather, and the very nature of the site's discovery, was viewed as having a major role to play in the site's long-term survival.



Figure 103 – Proximity of Skara Brae to the coastline (photo S. Timoney)

Human as well as environmental impacts on the archaeological environment were also raised as a concern:

Sk9 *I mean I don't know what the visitor numbers are here, but I was actually interested to see how they stop people jumping up and down on it [the site] and destroying it as well. [...]*

ST *What are your thoughts on that? How do you think they....*

Sk9 *They just are quite.... Well the village itself is quite restricted in what you can do and what you couldn't. And there are people [monument wardens] up there. They just do it with manpower. They just have staff and they just have people up there all the time and people keeping an eye on people, and big signs saying keep out and yeah, basically they just do it with manpower.*

Responsibility was therefore seen to lie in the hands of Historic Scotland as the curators of the monument. Rather than visitors having an individual or collective responsibility with regards to their own actions on the site, Historic Scotland were viewed as the guardians,

and it was their responsibility to use measures including exclusion from areas and staff on site to minimise impact.

7.9 Other visitors

The necessity for such exclusions and monitoring is a result of the volume of visitors the site receives. One of the disappointments for many participants was the number of visitors on the site, and at some of the other World Heritage Sites:

Sk6a *Here [Skara Brae], you seem to be pushed along all the time.*

Sk6b *It's only because of the volume of people coming through.*

ST *You said [earlier] that 'it's going that way, these sites'.*

Sk6a *It's going that way. You've no choice now, it's like the museums that you're in and they're trying....they give you time but they're still trying to encourage you to move faster.*

Some participants felt increasingly pressured to move through the monument quickly, a reflection of the large number of visitors the site gets, especially over the popular summer months. There was a perception that this was increasingly the case at heritage sites more generally, and that freedom and choice to move around the site was being taken away from visitors as places focused on moving more paying visitors through the monument.

This perception that sites were increasingly changing their *raison d'être*, from providers of information and facilitators of access, to revenue generators for Historic Scotland had a major impact on perceptions of the site. The impact of timed-ticketing at another of the World Heritage Sites, Maeshowe, has been a relatively recent development to control numbers and access to one of the most popular monuments in Orkney (Sk1). This process, which requires people to book tickets for allotted times, has resulted in some visitors being unable to visit the monument during busy periods. The use of timed-ticketing has also increasingly formalised experiences of archaeology at this site:

Sk7 *I didn't realise that you had to book for Maeshowe, which was a bit disappointing.*

ST *What was disappointing?*

Sk7 *Well, you know, I wanted to visit the site myself and take my own time, whereas there you're in a tour of 20 people and you have to go where you're told and you have a guide at all times. But I prefer to be able to see things for myself. I suppose it's necessary because of the numbers of visitors that Skara Brae and Maeshowe get, but it's just a shame, because it kind of spoils it.*

ST *In what way does it spoil it?*

Sk7 *Well I'm one of these people, probably like yourself, who prefers to visit these sites when they're quiet, rather than having people everywhere and you're like aaaargh! I just like to be able to go where I want and see things, and imagine how things were, which is difficult when you have 50 tourists in bright waterproofs wandering over the site.*

The increasing control over movement at sites impacted on visitor connections with the archaeology and the past, which was exacerbated by the large numbers of visitors on the site, a constant reminder of the modern.

The use of permanent guides on-site at Skara Brae was also viewed as a way of improving understanding at the monument:

Sk2a *I mean in a way, but it's very selfish, but it would be nice to have somebody down there that actually talked to you and gave you an actual personal account. But how would you do that with that many people? It would be very difficult wouldn't it?*

In this way the difficulty of responding to large numbers of visitors would lead to groups requiring their own guides. This would in turn lead to a more controlled and led experience, resulting in a system along the lines of the timed-ticketing which has been criticised at Maeshowe.

7.10 The visitor centre

Although the visitor centre was also seen as a way of controlling movement and access to the site, participant reactions to the centre were generally positive:

Sk12a *I was very impressed with the fact you press the buttons [on the computers] and you got the next layer of the archaeology down, that was one particular one. The touch screen takes you down the levels [the stratigraphy of the site] and that was the one thing I thought was the most impressive.*

ST *What was it about that, the levels you were talking about?*

Sk12a *Well you could understand how they went about it and the information they got at different levels. I mean you see Time Team on the television which of course I watch, and you get it. But that was so much more impressive.*

Sk12b *The fact that it had the stratification, it said that there were multiple sites and said that the buildings had been rebuilt. It worked down, you could understand why they could come to some of the conclusions that have been drawn, and then you got to go out and see, looking at the walls and going well that's obviously cut into that, which for amateurs is very interesting to see.*

In this way, explaining the processes allowed some participants to appreciate the archaeology more fully and to better understand the site. This enabled them to feel more involved in the 'process' of interpretation - rather than being passive consumers, they were now actively involved in interpreting the site. It also encouraged an understanding of how archaeological processes develop interpretations.

This allowed a number of participants to challenge ideas of a fixed, immutable past: the traditional, familiar approach of museums and sites. Some participants viewed the acknowledgement of multiple pasts, or at least multiple interpretations of the past, as refreshing and honest, in comparison to traditional authoritative texts:

Sk9 *I liked the....they just gave you a wee bit more information about the thoughts of how people lived. And I liked the way that it was, they had two types of text. They had the definite information in the bold text, and*

guesswork in italic text, which I really like. [...] So I like it when they're honest about guesswork. I like that, because you might as well be. So I liked the way they said that this is guessing, and this is what we actually found, so this is how we've come to the conclusions about that. And I liked the way they showed the historical thinking all the way through, which often you don't get. Often you just get....such and such. I mean the other ones [other sites] I have a guidebook, and a lot of the other ones my book has contradicted with the information on the display boards. And that....in a way that's nice because it causes you to think about it more and think about the historical evidence, but at the same time it's obviously it's just 'cause it's two different people coming to different conclusions. And that's quite annoying in a way. I mean my guidebook's great because she says this is guesswork, whereas the boards present it all as fact.

ST *Do you feel that happens with these boards?*

Sk9 *Yeah, quite a lot. They are just...they do come across as fact. The drawings, a lot of people look at the drawings and think, well that must've been how people lived. Well....no! [laughs]. It's good coming here though and getting that extra bit of information, and knowing some of it's guesswork. Knowing that that's an interpretation and knowing for definite it's an interpretation. As with the board, you don't know whether....'cause there isn't anybody there, it's not clear in the way it's presented. You don't know how much of what they're saying is guesswork and how much of what they're saying is fact. Yeah. Does that make sense?*

7.11 The reconstruction

Participants were generally enthusiastic about the reconstruction house at Skara Brae, viewing it as a valuable part of the experience, as it allowed them to go into, move around and experience the scale of the buildings for themselves:

Sk11b *It was good because at least you could walk round and have a.... again you're actually getting into it, whereas if you were just looking down into it you're just, you're not actually seeing it quite the same. You get a different perspective by actually being in it, because it gives you, you know, well*

there's the size of bed and you get to sleep in that size of bed. Which is, well you know beds have got bigger over the years as people have got taller. Same as we were crossing the house over there and the beds are quite small, well for me.

The reconstruction was therefore viewed as having an important role in helping participants to understand and appreciate the scale of the buildings and movement within them, something which is not possible on the site itself

Being able to move around and through the reconstruction house allowed some participants to start to interpret and imagine the past for themselves:

ST *Did you go to the reconstruction?*

Sk2b *Yes we did.*

[...]

Sk2b *We were saying they must've been smoked out living in choking smoke most of the time which must've been appalling. That part of it.*

Sk2a *They didn't get it from cigarettes but they got it from... [laughs]*

Sk2b *Yes, passive smoking.*

This exchange, albeit discussed with an element of humour, reflected the interaction between site and people (especially in groups), as they encouraged each other to imagine aspects of the past, and often to place themselves *in* the past, imagining how it would have been. Others made the deliberate choice to visit the reconstruction after visiting the site itself:

Sk3 *We visited the site first and the reconstruction afterwards.*

ST *Was that a choice?*

Sk3 *Yes we choose to do it that way actually yes by purpose.*

ST *Why did you choose that?*

Sk3 *I think it was recommended in one guidebook but anyway we might have done it anyhow, because when you have seen the place itself the reconstruction will give you much better impression of what it is, the impression of being there and having an impression of daily life where you are. That was why.*

In this way their thoughts and experiences of the site itself were not influenced by the reconstruction. This allowed participants to enjoy and interpret the site for themselves, without being influenced by the interpretation of the reconstruction house. The reconstruction was then used to confirm their own interpretations of the site without influencing their experiences on site. The guidebook could, however, also be viewed as changing the experience by advising of a particular way to view and experience the site, which is just another way of leading people through a site, albeit not the 'official' voice. What it does reflect is the fact that reconstructions can often be taken as literal translations of the past, rather than interpretations or suggestions of pasts.

Other participants were more reserved in their praise for the reconstruction, acknowledging the interpretive nature of the structure:

Sk6a *It was interesting. Not quite what I expected but it's....It is an interpretation, but that would appear to be reasonably accurate. And it's a way of finding out what happened in the past, isn't it?*

The reconstruction itself did not reflect expectations, especially as the site had artificial lighting and plastic food inside, items which stood out as inauthentic and false. But Sk6a's comments also reflected the use of reconstructions in experimental archaeology as a way of testing theories, and informing interpretations of sites through experience.

A major concern with reconstructions was the idea that they are read as 'fact' rather than interpretation. Modern health and safety issues have meant that alterations had to be made to the reconstruction at Skara Brae to meet health and safety standards. Whilst some participants appeared oblivious to this issue, it was occasionally noted:

Sk9 *I wished in a way that there had been a fire in it and there had been dim lighting, you know because the lights were very bright and the thing had*

been made a lot bigger for health and safety reasons. But it was good because it allowed you to have a peer and a wander and explore and use your imagination.

The concessions to health and safety were viewed as impacting on the reconstruction, changing the experience and preventing a more imagined, authentic connection with the past.

The reconstruction was also viewed as a good way of physically experiencing the site without impacting on the archaeology itself:

Sk9 *But it was good because it allowed you to have a peer and a wander and explore and use your imagination [...]. But you can do that on the site as well. But it was good just to see it, just to have that wander which you can't do in the village. If you could've wandered round the village then the reconstruction for me wouldn't have been as necessary. But obviously that's why the reconstruction's there. That's the thinking behind it.*

In this way, being able to move through, touch, feel and experience the reconstruction was a crucial part of being able to understand and interpret the site more fully. This was set in context by the acknowledgement that if the site itself was accessible, there would be less need for the reconstruction.

In this way the reconstruction was appreciated as a way of complimenting the site, but it in no way replaced viewing the archaeology itself:

Sk1 *[The reconstruction] was quite interesting, but actually I got far more from seeing the actual site I think. I suppose it gives you more of a, I suppose the reconstruction, maybe I'll go back and have another look at that actually now that I've been round the site. But I suppose it gives you more of an idea of completeness.*

In this way authenticity was an important factor in discerning what was a success for respondents. The reconstruction was viewed as a good tool to help to create an understanding of how the site may have looked. In contrast to the 'actual site' it had very little impact, as participants moved to more intangible experiences of aura and authenticity.

7.12 Changing perceptions of the past

A number of respondents noted major changes in their perceptions of the past, and life in the past, after visiting the site:

Sk2a *The fact that they actually did farming in those days. I didn't realise that they were actually growing crops and things that early on. I can see they'd have animals but...*

Sk2b *Didn't think they'd be growing the wheat....*

The details of life, especially at what is perceived as a far-flung peripheral location in today's world, were a surprise, contradicting preconceived ideas of prehistoric people.

ST *You said [earlier] something other, something special.*

Sk1 *Yeah, well I just feel there's a lot we don't know about the way people lived and why they did the things they did. I mean I still can't get my head around the things like the standing stones and how they got them there. And it's just very interesting to reflect on what they knew, you know at a time when people were considered to be very primitive andthey obviously knew more than we think they knew I think. You know, that's interesting.*

In this way Sk1 was challenged into reconsidering her perceptions of prehistoric people as she realised the contradiction between notions of a primitive past and what was seen and experienced at Skara Brae. This was also reflected in the surprise at the detail of life in the past which the artefacts found at the site have provided.

7.12.1 **Romantic views of the past**

Many of these perceptions of the past often developed into romantic notions, reflecting ideas of mystery and otherworldliness:

Sk10 *So just really fascinating to see and that everything's still intact the way that it was then. Which is also the kind of the tantalising question of like why, you know did everyone just up and leave or did they just leave the*

village and why? And why did they leave everything just so. So it was really interesting.

It was not only the otherworldliness which appealed, as a sense of community was also raised when viewing the site. The close proximity of the buildings gave an immediate sense of closeness, but also reflected a modern concern with a perceived loss of community today and nostalgic notions of a kinder, fairer past.

Sk2a *The sense of community that the passageways that connected all the houses that's what I loved. I thought that they'd all be in different areas. They obviously lived very closely together. And the bit about the midden fascinated me as well. That they used the midden. I hadn't heard anything like that before ever.*

The comparisons with modern life were juxtaposed with contradictory realisations, such as the use of the midden material as a functional building product, something which would be inconceivable today.

The location of Skara Brae, removed from modern development was also incorporated within romantic perceptions of the past and a natural landscape:

Sk5a *Because that's the beauty of it that you get the feeling of what it might have been like in the past. The sound of the sea and the quietness of the space. You can help your imagination.*

Although the site would have been much further from the coast in the Neolithic than it is today, this close proximity to the sea and its perceived natural setting helped to create an aura of authenticity about the site.

7.13 Authenticity and aura

Although the visitor centre and reconstruction were primarily viewed as positive additions to the site, the ability to be able to access the site itself, in spite of the restrictions relating to movement, was crucial to the visit. The ability to move into the site, rather than observing from a distance, was key to appreciating the archaeology and helping participants to move towards a better understanding and awareness of the site and the past:

Sk1 *A reconstruction is a reconstruction and I just think there's something very special about being standing amongst the actual stones and in the actual place where they lived 3000 years ago.*

Although the reconstruction answered many questions and allowed participants to attempt to experience the past, viewing the real, authentic remains was always the key part of the experience.

A number of participants discussed Skara Brae in comparison to the Tomb of the Eagles (Isbister) a locally run site, where some of the artefacts are handed around groups of visitors. This very physical connection with the past creates a powerful link in the minds of visitors:

Sk2b *It's just nice the little human touch sometimes is quite important. We went to the Tomb of the Eagles yesterday and the, it's absolutely marvellous isn't it, there?*

Sk2a *That's right. And they actually let you handle the artefacts which was....*

Sk2b *Yes they let you handle the artefacts which is very rare....*

Sk2a *And I think for children especially that's important. They become more interested don't they when it's real to them, when they can actually touch it.*

[....]

ST *You said you're able to handle the objects.*

Sk2a *Yes they have like the tools they used like a piece of rock when you hold it, and they used to grind with it. And when you hold it the other way round, it doesn't fit your hand [right handed]. And it's really spooky to think that some person in the past had held it.*

Sk2b *But just seeing it in a glass case you wouldn't know that. And you can feel the weight of it and how they used it, and that was really exciting.*

Being able to touch and feel the objects was important, to allow a greater and more tangible connection to the past. Rather than viewing through a glass panel, the ability to try out and hold objects, to see how they feel and fit in the hand, were key memories from the visit.

Participants also discussed, in various ways, the ‘feelings’ of Skara Brae and the importance these responses had on their wider perceptions of the site:

Sk1 *It’s quite exciting to think that that’s actually been there for all these thousands of years and nobody knew about it.[....] And I think there’s something about, you know the standing stones and everything are fascinating, but there’s something about this site where you get a sense of how people lived back then. You know....it just makes it very interesting and you start to pull all these things together as you sort of reflect on what you’ve seen, both where people live, and the kind of things like Maeshowe and the standing stones and the Ring of Brodgar, you know, it’s just essentially very different and other, and special.*

The notion that this was an ancient site where people lived set it apart from the standing stones. Whereas it is often the monuments which reflect the exotic or atypical which interest people, the very fact that Skara Brae was the site of everyday life distinguished it as exceptional. When combined with the other Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Sites this expanded to become a landscape which was perceived to be ‘different, other and special’.

It was not only experiences on site which created these feelings or perceptions of aura. The short film in the visitor centre was also seen as a way of ‘setting the scene’ and creating an atmosphere which was taken forward to the site:

Sk2b *Certainly seeing the little film first, that’s good.*

Sk2a *Yes, seeing that first is helpful.*

Sk2b *It puts you in the mood.*

The film creates an ethereal and otherworldly tone, which plays on the mystery and elusive nature of the past. Visitors were preconditioned through the film to view the site in a

certain way, and some participants acknowledged its role in helping them to create these feelings and ways of experiencing the site.

7.14 Summary

This case study reflects the complexity and individual nature of participant experiences at Skara Brae, reflecting in part personal knowledge and experience of archaeology, alongside the nature of the remains and the presentation of archaeology, both on site and within the visitor centre. Through the interviews a recurring theme that was discussed was the belief that Orkney was synonymous with archaeology and history, and that the islands were inherently historic. In this way there were certain archaeological sites on Orkney which were bound up within a perception of ‘doing’ Orkney, of which Skara Brae was one. This reaction to the Islands is also reflected in Angela McClanahan’s research, where the sites comprising the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site (HoNOWHS) were discussed as “emblematic symbols of Orkney” (2004, 73).

Knowledge of the site prior to the visit did not appear to be important. Many participants had heard of Skara Brae, but knew little about the site before visiting. This did not preclude expectations of the monument, however, especially given the fame of Skara Brae and the fact that it is a World Heritage Site. Images through various popular media, as well as knowledge and experience of other ‘important’ archaeological sites all led to certain expectations of archaeology on the ground. On the ground experiences often created a tension or realigning of such expectations, for example with the size and scale of the site raised as an issue, reflecting both an understanding of the term ‘village’ and the belief that the fame and importance of the site would be inherently reflected in its scale. Equally, the process of abandonment of the site in the past, and its subsequent (re)discovery were sometimes confused, as participants started to create pseudo-biographies of Skara Brae, bound up within snippets of information and half remembered ideas which were used to create an (mis)understanding of the site. The complexity of life in the past, and connections which could be made between past and present were also often discussed with surprise and, to a degree, embarrassment, as participants realigned their understandings of people in the past, the technologies they had and the way(s) they lived.

The site ‘package’ – the visitor centre, reconstruction and archaeological remains – were popular with a number of respondents. The use of modern enactive multi-media alongside more traditional artefact displays in the visitor centre helped to engage visitors and to start to put the site, and the processes of archaeological interpretation, into context. The

construction of the visitor centre has, however, moved the site away from a more simple experience to fix it firmly within the tourist sphere. This is also discussed in McClanahan's work through the changing reactions to unstaffed and staffed sites, wherein the latter, Skara Brae and Maes Howe, are seen as visitor attractions and increasingly mediated spaces (2004, 77).

The development of Skara Brae was seen to be impacting on visitor experiences, with some feeling the need or pressure to move through the site and centre quickly because of the steady influx of new visitors. This was not viewed as a problem solely for Skara Brae, but was a reflection of what was understood to be occurring at more places, and with it a restriction on movement and opportunities to engage with the archaeology at sites. Such locations were also seen to be changing their values and *raison d'être*, moving from providers of information and protectors of a communal resource to revenue generators.

This was in part countered by the perceived success of the visitor centre. The interactive, engaging exhibits were popular, capturing the imagination and encouraging interaction and participation. This helped to explain the *processes* of archaeology and interpretation, rather than presenting it as a *fait accompli*. This revealing of the processes of interpretation enabled participants to challenge such interpretations, and at times interpret for themselves.

The reconstruction was popular, although aspects of the structure, including the scale of the passageways, the use of artificial light, and the plastic lobster were viewed as detracting from the experience. The reconstruction did, however, provide an opportunity to physically engage with the site, as participants could move through the spaces and try to 'experience' the past, and opportunity which was not available on the site itself. While this experience did not replace the opportunity to move around the 'real' remains, it did go some way to mediating the experience and providing a more enactive (Copeland 2004) encounter with the archaeology than would have otherwise been afforded.

Experiences of the site itself varied, although most participants were impressed with the nature and level of survival of the remains. This perceived completeness of the site helped participants to engage with the monuments, although access on site was heavily restricted. An ability to distinguish between structures, and note features within structures, allowed respondents to start to imagine the site in the past, and interpret these spaces within their own knowledge and practices. The restriction of movement around the site itself was also acknowledged as a necessary development, something which had changed within the last two decades. The number of visitors which Skara Brae receives was viewed as a threat to

the site's long-term survival, and participants were generally satisfied to be able to move about and view from above the site, without the opportunity to get within the structures. This issue is also raised, with a similar conclusion, in McClanahan's research. Participants in that study acknowledged that by keeping to marked routes and paths, they were "following 'correct' etiquette and demonstrating 'respect' for the monument" (*ibid*, 75). It is, however, interesting that her research on perceptions of other HoNOWHS monuments, for example the Ring of Brodgar, were different, with an important aspect for some being the ability to get right up to the stones (*ibid*, 77).

This access was important when considering aspects of authenticity and aura, as the preservation and level of completeness of Skara Brae allowed participants to imagine life in the past, and everyday process and activities. It was important to get as close to the real site as possible, as it was seen to be the authentic, tangible, physical relics of past human activity. This was seen by participants as a way of connecting more closely to the past through an understanding of shared experiences. Such attitudes were also reflected in McClanahan's research, where Skara Brae was often viewed as domestic and mundane, and therefore comparable with visitors everyday experiences (*ibid.*, 73, 77).

The location of the site on the coast also allowed participants to remove themselves from the modern and everyday, creating a more idyllic setting which was viewed as natural and untainted, creating an aura and sense of place as well as conjuring up romantic notions of the past, only interrupted by the imposition of other visitors on site. This was also a theme which was raised by participants, when discussing perceptions of 'atmosphere' during McClanahan's research at all of the HoNOWHS sites (*ibid*, 77). This romantic view of the site was also in part a reflection of the sanitised nature of the presentation, through the use of turf-capping and gravel pathways. In this way the very picturesque setting and presentation of the remains belied the idea that Skara Brae, midden and all, would have been a much dirtier place during its original use. But the aura of the site could also be created by this mundane 'everydayness', as it held a different sense of aura to the standing stones because of the connection with the way people lived in the past, as something tangible and understandable, yet distant and otherworldly.

Discussions of aura were also raised during comparisons with Tomb of the Eagles (Isbister), and appropriate treatment of artefacts and sites. At that site, the ability to have unrestricted access to the site, as well as opportunities to handle artefacts, provided a connection to the past which was not possible at Skara Brae. There was a particular, connected sense of aura with these experiences, where it was felt to be 'spooky' to hold

something which was made and used thousands of years ago, in contrast to seeing it in a case behind glass. The *interaction* was crucial to the success of this experience. While a sense of aura could also be created by the film, this was recognised by participants as a created experience, part of the package to put visitors in the mood, and different from their own feelings of aura on site.

8 Conclusions and Recommendations

The five case studies which have been a practical focus of my research reflect a number of recurring themes of participant experiences at a range of archaeological sites, all of which are encompassed within the 'heritage sphere'. The use of case studies which focused on the presentation of archaeology at different levels, local, regional and national, and in different geographical areas of Scotland, enabled comparisons within and between case studies, recording and developing recurring ideas and themes from participant responses. These themes reflected both anticipation and expectation of archaeology and archaeological sites: ideas, beliefs, views and experiences of archaeology which were formed through specific encounters with archaeology within both mass media and in heritage settings. These themes also reflected actual, lived experiences of sites on the ground. What these detailed reflections show is that rather than being simple experiences, participants visited and engaged with archaeology in various, complex and sometimes conflicting ways. The methodology used allowed for the essence of individual experiences, understandings and engagements with archaeology to be recorded, interpreted and represented, reflecting the complex sphere within which archaeological sites exist and are negotiated by members of the public. In contrast, quantitative questionnaires which are a staple of visitor analyses would have been unable to identify and analyse such complex responses.

Although archaeological sites presented to the public are generally bound up within the heritage and tourism spheres today, participants' visits to these site reflected the wide variety of roles which archaeological sites played. As well as being incorporated within the myriad option of tourist attractions (Hoffman *et al* 2002; Urry 1990), archaeological sites were important symbols linked to personal or national heritage and identity (Graves-Brown and Jones 1996; Jones 1997; Jones 2004; MacClanahan 2004; Macdonald 1997; Merriman 2000), as well as being connected with a sense of place, of representing place, but also of providing a physical, tangible and negotiable connection to the past, real or imagined. These encounters with archaeology reflected both recurring themes and specific and sometimes unique demands on sites by participants in all the case studies. These themes which developed from the case studies will now be discussed in more detail, alongside suggestions and recommendations for changes to the presentation of archaeology at the case study sites, and implications for presenting archaeology more generally are made.

8.1 The presentation of archaeological sites

The archaeological sites used as case studies reflected approaches to presentation at different levels: nationally by Historic Scotland at Rough Castle, Urquhart Castle, and Skara Brae; regionally by Highland Council at Yarrows Archaeological Trail; and locally by Tarbat Historic Trust at the Tarbat Discovery Centre. All five of these sites presented archaeology from various time periods, and in diverse geographical areas, in different ways. They also had different stimuli and rationales for presenting these sites, although these motivations may have changed over time.

At Yarrows, Highland Council presented a series of (primarily) prehistoric monuments in a much wider landscape, trying to promote the wealth of archaeological resources in the area in a low-key way. The presentation of this landscape can be seen as a localised reaction to the perceived increase in demand from the public to visit archaeological sites which developed through the latter part of the 20th century (Thomson 1981). The use of the interpretive leaflet for the Trail reduced the impact on the landscape, and also reflected the rationale behind the presentation of these sites and this landscape, to encourage people who may have had no prior interest in archaeology as well as those with such an interest to visit the area and *walk* the Yarrows Trail. The presentation and interpretation of this site also reflected the limited budgets within which this project was created, for example with the lack of financial resources cited as the reason why the text was not rewritten when the leaflet was reworked.

The Tarbat Discovery Centre was different from the other case studies in a number of ways, primarily in that the ‘site’ itself was still under excavation during the period of data collection. It also stood out as an independent enterprise, undertaken by a local charitable Trust rather than at local or national government level. Unusually, the visitor centre came before the site, and provided an opportunity for visitors to find out more about a site which they could not, as yet, experience properly on the ground (apart from viewing the ongoing excavations). The centre itself utilised a mix of media, from hi-tech touch screen computers to traditional artefact displays. The centre was also different because it did not solely focus on the archaeology of the early monastic site, but instead provided displays on a number of other aspects of the later history of the area.

The three Historic Scotland sites reflected different approaches to archaeology directly cared for, and presented by, the national agency. At Rough Castle, the interpretation on site reflected standard Historic Scotland approaches to the majority of Properties in Care

(PICs) more generally, with the use of a small number of interpretation panels combined with a policy of mowing grass and basic maintenance on site. The 'lack' of interpretation on site at Rough Castle may change, however, depending on the outcome of the application for World Heritage Status.

Urquhart Castle, on the other hand, has undergone a great transformation through the construction of the visitor centre to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of visitors the site now receives. The Castle site itself, however, still retains the standard interpretation signs and panels, although movement around the site is more closely controlled with walkways and barriers. The interpretation within the centre, however, appears to play a secondary role to the other facilities which are provided for visitors, with the café and shop dominating the interior. The small museum display area is limited in scope, although the film's finale has a certain impact on perceptions of the site. This suggestion that the primary concern for heritage managers is making the sites accessible to the public, both physically and intellectually (Cleere 1984, 14), does not appear to have been the primary motive for the redevelopment of this site. Instead, the 'sacrifice' of the site for financial gain appears to have been the primary motive.

Skara Brae, the third Historic Scotland case study, has also undergone a great transformation, the construction of a visitor centre in part a reaction to the increasing number of visitors the site receives, and its inclusion within the wider Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site. In contrast to Urquhart Castle, more effort appears to have been made with this centre to change the ways visitors experience and engage with archaeology, through the use of more recent technological innovations such as touch screen computers and other interactives, alongside the reconstruction. The changes to the site have also seen a decrease in visitors' interactions with the monument itself, with visitors no longer able to enter the structures, instead viewing them from the turf-covered wall heads and walkways which are laid out across the site, a potential conservation issue in itself.

8.2 Visiting archaeological sites

The growing popularity of archaeology associated with the development of mass media has been mirrored in the increasing numbers of visitors to historical and archaeological sites and attractions (Thompson 1981; Skeates 2000; Paynton 2002; Schadla-Hall 2004). The majority of participants in the case studies were visiting sites as part of a day out, with sites viewed as part of a wider selection of visitor attractions. Some respondents also discussed

more individual or personal reasons linked to different roles which the sites were perceived to play (see also Falk and Dierking 1992; 1998). Sites were often recommended to participants by other people, guidebooks, adverts and promotions, and websites, all of which encouraged them to visit. Sites were also marked out on the ground, often with the ubiquitous VisitScotland brown thistle signs which denote heritage attractions throughout the country, and in the case of Historic Scotland sites, blue and white signs with their corporate logo. In this way, sites were marked out on the ground as special or different.

This increase in visitors to sites does not necessarily reflect an increase in the knowledge visitors have about these sites or archaeology in general. A common theme throughout the case studies was the lack of knowledge many participants had about the sites they were visiting. For the majority of respondents prior knowledge did not seem to be an important factor in either choosing to make the visit or the success of the visit (or site). Nor did this lack of knowledge appear to affect experiences once participants were on site. Instead, the very marking out of sites in some way as attractions, through advertising, promoting and 'presenting' the archaeology, created certain standard expectations of sites, which included an expectation that the site would be interpreted or explained to them in some way, involving entertaining or educational (or both) experiences. In the case studies, the lack of control at sites such as Yarrows and Rough Castle enabled greater connections and at times positive reactions with the monuments. In the same way that the public view museums as elitist establishments (see Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999; Stone and Planel 1999), so too the heavily controlled and monitored 'experiences' of some of the case study sites elicited similar responses as to control and access.

When respondents did allude to knowing something about the site they were visiting before hand, it often took the form of fragments of information, half remembered, or of photographs and images in tourist brochures, travel guides and television. In this way, many participants had created pseudo-biographies of the site, producing vague or partially understood ideas about the site which were not necessarily encountered on the ground. These fragments, along with experiences of visiting other archaeological sites, all led to (often subconscious) expectations of the sites, which required subsequent reassessments to contend with the surprise, difference or disappointment of the lived experience. This may in part reflect the ways that members of the public normally engage with archaeology, for example television, and the expectations and demands which such media create. It also reflects television in the role of interpreter, creating a narrative through the archaeology which is all but missing at the majority of sites.

8.3 The archaeological remains

The majority of participants had certain expectations of what they were going to see at the sites, regardless of the type of site. As discussed above, these expectations were influenced by images in popular media, and other encounters with archaeology (Skeates 2000; Paynton 2002; Rojek 1993; Schadla-Hall 2004), which generally revolved around the following preconceptions of:

- a well maintained site, where the grass was cut regularly, with paths marking out routes across the site or landscape (Thompson 1981; Urry 1990; Shanks 1992);
- the archaeological remains visible as tangible, recognisable, and interpretable (and most likely ruined) structures (Thompson 1981; Urry 1990; Shanks 1992);
- sites marked out as ‘sights’ (Lee Davis 1997) in the landscape, through the use of markers, signs or interpretative panels to denote what was (and by extension was not) archaeology.

Participant responses to the physical remains encountered on sites varied greatly: shock; surprise; disappointment; dislike; frustration; satisfaction; delight; and relief. Again, these responses were a reflection of the preconceived ideas discussed above, but were nevertheless a crucial factor in determining the success of the visit.

Most participants expected on-site encounters to be with tangible, (relatively) substantial remains which they could interpret and understand for themselves. Experiences of the archaeology on the ground often differed quite considerably from this, however, as the nature of the remains often fell short of these expectations. On the Yarrows Archaeological Trail, participants reacted more positively when discussing the broch and the long cairns, sites which they could recognise and interpret as visible, tangible structures. Other sites on the Trail, such as the roundhouses, did not elicit such positive reactions because they were difficult, and occasionally impossible to find and understand.

At Rough Castle, these expectations on the nature of the remains were strongly influenced both by the name(s) of the sites, and the impact that knowledge and experiences of Hadrian’s Wall in particular, and Roman sites more generally, had on participants. With the Antonine Wall the term ‘wall’ was commonly misconceived, with participants expecting a substantial stone structure. Equally the word ‘Castle’ also led participants to

expect a more substantial stone structure on the ground, akin to that of a medieval stronghold.

These types of expectations were also reflected in experiences at Urquhart Castle, where the level of ruination of the site was greater than some participants had expected, and changed the way they saw and experienced the site. In this sense, there was a level of ruination which was expected of the castle, but the remains on the ground had been so heavily robbed out and degraded that it made sections of the site impossible to understand.

At Tarbat, the excavation of the site created confusion for participants, who were unable to understand the remains which were being excavated. A lack of knowledge and understanding of the processes of archaeological excavation left many confused as to what it was they were actually viewing on the ground, although the ability to get close and witness the process of excavation and discovery was appreciated.

Even with the high level of preservation at Skara Brae, some participants expected more substantial remains, in terms of scale and size of the site, than actually existed. In part a reflection of the fame and popularity of Skara Brae for visitors, language was again a misleading factor as a number of participants misconstrued the term 'village' and what a Neolithic village would represent.

All of these responses reflected an expectation of certain attributes of sites presented and interpreted for the public, regardless of time period or location. The process of highlighting and interpreting sites brings with it 'baggage' which resulted in these monuments being imbued with certain roles and values. The presentation of 'the past' is generally the presentation of 'a past', as aspects of past are selected and presented by experts for consumption by the public (Funari 2000; Merriman 2000). Through the proliferation of modern media images and information about archaeological sites, the participants expected certain features of sites, including the scale and preservation of remains. The increasing number of television programmes in particular provided participants with a narrative for archaeological sites, explaining processes and rationales, something which did not occur on the ground, leaving participants in the position of having to find out for themselves. The responses of participants also reflected preconceptions which could also develop based on site name/type alone.

8.4 The presentation and interpretation of sites

The kind(s) of information provided on site varied significantly; the result of a number of factors:

1. the different organisations involved in the creation of the interpretation;
2. the background of the author(s) writing the text;
3. the forms of interpretation: information panels; leaflets; interactive displays;
4. the amount of space for interpretive media.

Rough Castle and the Yarrows Archaeological Trail had less interpretive media and therefore limited space with which to provide information. At Skara Brae and Urquhart Castle, the creation of visitor centres provided an opportunity to utilise mixed media throughout the interpretations, as well as providing further information on site, although this was done to varying degrees. The interpretation at Skara Brae appeared to be a more focused and whole-hearted attempt to present the varied values of the site to the public, and to encourage them to engage (albeit not in a physical sense) with the archaeology. The interpretation at Urquhart, by contrast, seemed to be a secondary consideration for the site, with its primary aims much more focused on processing large numbers of visitors by providing fewer engaging distractions. With the Tarbat Discovery Centre, the museum provided a resource which will feed in to the final presentation of the site, and give the nature of the *in situ* archaeology, the centre will need to carry the majority of the role of engaging visitors for the site as a whole, unless a radical approach to site presentation is adopted. But at all of the case study sites, decisions had to be made not only about *how* to provide information, but *what* information to provide. Those tasked with presenting the site needed to:

1. research and negotiate the data available about the specific sites;
2. prioritise and discard this data;
3. and to interpret the data in a form which was accessible to different user groups/audiences they were aiming for.

It was not always clear how much the audience/users of the resource had been considered, both in terms of their knowledge and interest, when the interpretation was created. Although some of the more recently developed sites at Skara Brae and Tarbat have sought

to engage audiences in new and different ways, Yarrows and Rough Castle appear to have been less focused on the end user over providing general information per se. Although Urquhart was a recently redeveloped site, the focus of this energy was not on the interpretation of the site.

Expectations of the types of information provided at sites were equally complex. Although visitors to sites bring with them their own thoughts, experiences and biases (Moser 2003; Falk and Dierking 1992) the majority of participants were waiting to be told, through official interpretations, what to think and understand, question and appreciate about the site. As they generally had little knowledge about the sites they were visiting, they did not have expectations relating to the information which was available about the site. It was normally only at the point where participants started to interact with the monuments in a physical sense, through moving around, over and through them, that they engaged with the interpretation available and started to seek out specific information relating to questions which they had.

The use of the leaflet for Yarrows received positive reactions from most participants, primarily because it allowed the sites on the trail to be interpreted without the physical imposition of interpretive media on the site. In this way, the choice was left to the individual as to whether they read about specific sites, or walked the trail and experienced the landscape for themselves. The information within the leaflet was not as keenly received, partly because of the 'dry' nature of the writing and its lack of engagement with the user, and also because it gave little encouragement or opportunity for visitors to start interpreting and engaging with the sites and the landscape for themselves.

The panels at Rough Castle received an equally mixed response. A number of respondents regarded the use of the reconstruction drawings as beneficial in trying to interpret the site on the ground. The use of the location map, showing the position of the site in relation to the much larger monument of which it was part, allowed participants to get an idea of its scale. The lack of information available on the boards was an issue, however, and not always adequate for explaining the layout of the site, especially given the difficulties with understanding the archaeological remains on site discussed above.

The presentation of archaeology at Tarbat was primarily done through the visitor centre, with a single information panel interpreting the excavations. The mix of interpretive media used in the centre was positively received by participants, particularly the ability to get close to view the sculptured stones, without the barrier of glass, which created more

positive responses in comparison to the traditional artefact display cabinets which were also used. Although the public are no longer satisfied with objects behind glass (Blockley 1999), the removal of glass and closer proximity to artefacts created a sense of a stronger link to the artefact, a half-way solution which requires increased responsibility on behalf of the viewer.

At Urquhart the interpretation was done both within the visitor centre and on the monument itself. Participants appreciated the focus on the different roles and aspects of castle life, showing how the building operated as a complex hierarchy composed of many individuals with different roles to play in castle life. The interpretation was however quite limited, and did not always engage participants. This in part reflected the different roles the castle played for different participants, and also reflected the wider difficulty of presenting a site to different audiences or publics. It also reflected the concern amongst many participants that the presentation of the site to encourage visitor interactions was not its primary goal. In this way Urquhart was seen as a sacrificial site, laid over to revenue creation at the expense of providing a more in-depth interactive experience, which also reflected Historic Scotland perceptions of the types of user of/visitor to the site.

With Skara Brae the interpretation was again done through the visitor centre and reconstruction, as well as on the monument itself. The mix of interpretive media within the centre was discussed as positive, and the use of the two styles of text was appreciated by some participants in showing and acknowledging the processes of archaeological interpretation. This approach to reflecting the 'interpretation' of data was the only obvious acknowledgement of the past as more than a fixed, linear narrative, to be presented by experts. Instead, such tentative acknowledgements of the interpretation of the past should be viewed as a first step, rather than an end product, in opening up the understanding and experiencing of the past(s) in the present. Although the reconstruction at Skara Brae was also well received, it was not seen as a replacement for experiencing the site itself, and reflected a myriad of attitudes to the past and the material remains of the past, including ideas of authenticity.

Some of the concerns with interpretation panels on sites reflects one of the main issues with interpreting and presenting sites: interpretation is inherently limited, and can either have a general, broad-brush approach to the site, or focus on a specific aspect at the expense of other aspects of the site. They also generally provide a single authoritative interpretation of the past. The criticism of panels also reflects the lack of an interactive or interrogative capacity for the information provided – an ability to ask questions or find out

more about the site which is simply not possible using fixed information boards. Instead, these panels fall under the iconic or symbolic designations defined by Copeland (2004, 138), and as with much in the way of text-based interpretation, are often ignored because they take time to read (Falk and Dierking 1992). Thus a certain catch-22 situation develops, wherein sites which have only limited space must choose whether to increase the amount of information on site, and therefore impact and impose on the fabric of the site itself, or retain a small amount of interpretation, acknowledging the inherent limitations of this medium. While the development of new remote technologies and resources are currently being utilised at a few locations, such applications are limiting due to the substantial budgets which are required. In the longer term, however, such technologies may provide greater opportunities to provide information and data for users of sites to negotiate and interpret for themselves, without impacting on the ground.

The use of reconstruction drawings, and in the case of Skara Brae, a full-scale reconstruction, was generally positively received. These reconstructions allowed participants to imagine or view what the site *may* have looked like, or at the very least a starting point with which to understand and interpret potentially confusing and/or ephemeral remains. They also did not require participants to read sections of text to acquire the information, as it was more easily read in visual form. This does however create issues over the authority such reconstructions can possess (Stone 1994b; Lee Davis 1997; Colomer 2002). The ambiguity of the reconstruction drawings, and the data on which they were based, were not generally questioned. Instead, the authority of interpretation boards and these images were accepted in presenting how the site would have looked in the past, a reflection of the public's preference for single, authoritative responses to questions about the past (Moser 2000). In this way, a successful medium such as a reconstruction drawing is being underused in its ability to enlighten the public about the possibilities of multiple pasts and interpreting the past. For example through the very simple process of splitting the model of Avebury Man (Stone 1994a) this process can be readily shown to all audiences without the need for a great deal of written text. In this instance a picture, if used appropriately, can indeed tell a thousand words.

One interesting aspect of the presentation of sites, and directly linked to Shanks' (1992) analysis of the modern method of presenting sites, is the pristine way in which they are presented to the public. Visitors only get a partial impression of sites, with the less savoury elements ignored or relegated within any interpretations. This is reflected in written text and multimedia interpretations, but is also more explicit in the sanitised way in which sites are presented. Skara Brae, for example, would have potentially been a squalid

and stinking settlement. Equally, life in the medieval Urquhart Castle would likely have involved similarly fetid situations, which are generally removed from visitor experiences. With Tarbat, the industry on site, including leather and metal working, would have involved a vast array of sites and smells, as would the Roman fort at Rough Castle, and Yarrows, for example with life within the broch, or people moving in and out of the long cairns. This process removes sites from their often domestic situations of the past to entirely new roles in the present. What this reflects is the predominance of visual encounters with sites for informing participant experiences of sites. This inclination is not restricted to archaeology, as developments in modern culture have led to the post-modern experience being a primarily visual phenomenon (Urry 1990; Slater 1995; Lee Davis 1997; Rojek 1997; Moser 2001).

Whether through interpretation on the sites themselves, or through the displays within visitor centres, the primary focus for archaeological sites is on what can be seen, and what is represented visually (Lee Davis 1997). Archaeology and archaeological sites and attractions are typically created as visual experiences because seeing is the principal method of use. But this also keeps them within the wider sphere of visitor spaces which include museums and art galleries, where the processes of observing, looking but not touching, continue to dictate.

8.5 Choosing which sites to present

Choosing a site to present is not, however, a straightforward process, nor is it an exact science. The process of interpreting and presenting a site is by nature a method of separating the site from the normal and everyday, presenting something different which marks the site out in the landscape. The process by which sites may be chosen can reflect the perceived importance or value of that site: atypical; an excellent example of its type; the survival of the remains, but also arbitrary: a keen landowner; an easily accessed site. These processes may change views on a site that would hitherto not stand out from any other of its class or type, for example. The Yarrows landscape was chosen because it has a wealth of prehistoric sites which were in close enough proximity to lend themselves to being incorporated in a trail. But there are other prehistoric sites in that landscape which are of equal importance to the development of that place in the past, but have not been included in the trail.

Sites are often chosen because they are atypical or unusual, as with Tarbat. Its role as an early monastery and wider associations with the spread of Christianity in Scotland (Carver

2004) marked it out as important for a variety of reasons. The presentation of Tarbat focused on the wider roles and contexts of the site in early medieval Scotland, rather than solely focussing on the religious nature of the site. It is interesting that a number of participants cited their faith as an important factor in choosing to visit.

Sites are also chosen to be interpreted because they are stereotypical, not of the everyday, but recognisable and easily identifiable as symbols of a specific message or idea, as with Urquhart Castle. The archaeological significance or 'value' of the castle is no greater than that of many other ruined medieval castles in Highland Scotland. Its location on one of the country's most famous lochs, and its condition as a ruin have, however, made it popular beyond any purely archaeological value, as the site conforms to more general perceptions of Scotland (Barclay 2001).

Other sites can at the same time be ordinary and extraordinary, as with Skara Brae. As a settlement comprising primarily 'domestic' structures, it is recognisable to the public, but through its age and level of preservation, however, it is set apart from other prehistoric settlement sites.

In contrast sites can be at the same time underwhelming and important (in an archaeological sense), as with Rough Castle and the Antonine Wall. Participants often had difficulty with the nature of the remains on the site. This was exacerbated when the proposal of the Antonine Wall becoming a World Heritage Site was discussed, as participants could not see in tangible terms on the ground the World Heritage value of the site(s).

What this also reflects is the idea that only certain monuments in the landscape are available to the public, that (often through chance circumstance) these are within the public sphere, with the vast majority of sites and monuments continuing to survive in the landscape, monitored and protected by legislation for the public as a form of 'option value' (Darvill 1995), without the majority of the public being aware that it exists, or that they value it at all.

8.5.1 *Creating value*

The initial genesis of the interpretation of sites may not necessarily be obvious, but instead reflects perceptions of value, or changing perceptions of value on a site. In this way the Yarrows landscape, once the hive of activity of antiquarian excavators, was again made the

focus of attention to a new (albeit small) audience through its interpretation and presentation. The process not only creates changed values for visitors to the sites, but also for members of local communities living within the same landscape, who, through the defining and marking out of the landscape as important, may come to view it in a new way. The Yarrows Trail also brought a new audience to the sites who viewed and interpreted them in new ways, as was reflected in the treatment of the cairns of Warehouse through the construction of modern cairns, and participants' reflections on value associated with age with regards to the standing stone.

The redevelopment of Urquhart Castle reflected a perceived change in value by Historic Scotland, who chose to redevelop the site as an opportunity to capitalise on the heritage tourism market. The increase in numbers of visitors to the site also reflected changed perceptions and values, as Urquhart was now marked out as a heritage attraction, complete with visitor centre and other paraphernalia. It also reflected the conflict which can arise when different value sets are placed on a monument, for example with the redevelopment of the castle and construction of the visitor centre. This decision by Historic Scotland, based on the perceived economic value benefit in comparison to the aesthetic (Lipe 1984) or existence (Darvill 1995) value of the standing remains, was in conflict with other perceptions of value held by the local community and those from further afield. After a public inquiry which involved a number of different stakeholders, the development went ahead, much to the abhorrence of those against it. In this way, the various values and interpretations of the site were in a sense compared to establish a *true* value, with the inquiry ruling that the national body's perceptions of value outweighed other concepts of value for the castle. But this has also *created* new perceptions of value, bringing new visitors to the site.

The development of Skara Brae has also seen it increasingly marked out, although the site itself has been 'valued' for many years. The World Heritage Site status has raised its profile as a visitor attraction, and the development of the visitor centre has occurred as a result of the increasing demands on the site from visitors, partly associated with the great development in cruise liners stopping at Kirkwall. The development of the centre also reflects the perceived changing or developing needs and demands of visitors, providing a greater context within which to understand and interpret this famous monument.

The approach to the presentation of Rough Castle, and along the Antonine Wall, has in general been low key. The changes which are occurring, or about to occur, as the application for World Heritage Status continues, reflects new values for the site, certainly

on a cultural level. Whether these values will be reflected on the ground by increasing interest, locally or from further afield, remains to be seen. It will also be interesting to note how the different organisations involved in owning and presenting the Antonine Wall as a single entity work together to promote the monument, and anticipate an increase in demand from visitors interested in visiting the monument.

Value is therefore not fixed but created, and can evolve and indeed be lost, depending on the agents involved. Value should not, however, just be imposed in a top-down process, by a learned elite to the public, but should also be created via a bottom-up approach to truly engage all publics and communities in valuing and using sites.

8.6 Linear and multivocal narratives

Whereas public archaeology is increasingly acknowledging the non-prescriptive, multivocal past (Hodder 1991; Bender 1998; Bender 2000; Graham *et al* 2000), the visitor experience can often be diametrically opposed to this. Instead of subjective interpretations of the past, many archaeological sites lead visitors in a linear authoritative manner, prescribing how the sites and archaeology should be viewed and understood. This can come in various guises, through plans, numbered elements of a site, guidebooks, paths and signage. The potential for sites to start to present alternatives to a fixed past has been touched on above, with the potential to develop such approaches a crucial aspect of future interactions between the public(s) and archaeology on the ground. This is also bound up within perceptions of value discussed above.

In this way the Yarrows Archaeological Trail quite literally ‘leads’ people through the past in the landscape. Wooden markers and a low-maintenance route-way are an economical and practical approach to such a site, but they also act to dictate a way of experiencing the sites and the landscape. Participants generally adhered to this proper way of moving through the landscape, visiting the numbered elements in order, rather than making their own way. Likewise, Urquhart Castle and Skara Brae had both conspicuous and imperceptible methods of controlling visitor movements and interactions with the archaeological remains, through the use of barriers, paths and signs/arrows, with the interpretive panels again pointing out ‘facts’ in the landscape.

The interpretive materials for Urquhart were relatively simple, standard displays with limited amounts of information focusing on aspects of life in the castle, which did not provide opportunities for visitors to interrogate or interact with the information which was

presented, other than pressing buttons to light up named areas of the castle model. On-site visitor experiences were equally controlled, from the path leading visitors in an arc around to the ruins from the visitor centre, to the paths, walkways and rails which controlled movement on site.

At Skara Brae, the interpretation within the visitor centre was more engaging for visitors as it presented and explained the processes of archaeology and how archaeologists come to their conclusions and interpretations, instead of presenting it as a *fait accompli*. It also showed how the process of interpretation works, opening up a side of archaeology which is generally concealed, and allowing visitors to question these processes and conclusions. On-site, however, Skara Brae reflected a similar situation to that of Urquhart, and reflects the inherent limitations of this form of interpretation as discussed above.

The site of Rough Castle was presented in a more open fashion on the ground, with minimal control on visitor movements once on site. Although there was a path leading up to the site from the car park, the scale of the monument was such that the entire site was open and accessible, with the four panels spaced out across the area, with no specific route or way of moving around the site prescribed. The information on the panels was, however, very simple, with a degree of repetition on each of the panels relating to information about the Antonine Wall more generally. With the proposal for World Heritage Status, consideration must be given to how the site will be used and presented in the future.

For Tarbat Discovery Centre the interpretation of the excavations was inherently limited, as the information panels for the dig required regular updating for each season's work. Inside the centre, however, the use of a variety of media and presentation styles presented information to visitors in different ways, and through the use of the computer database, provided in-depth information on a much wider scope of information which visitors may be interested in, although this did not generally permit questions on the validity of the interpretations. Still, the availability of this space and opportunities for developing the site and centre mean that more inclusive approaches could be adopted to provide more opportunities for visitors/participants to interpret the past for themselves.

8.6.1 The public and multivocal narratives

Contrary to the growing move towards greater recognition of a multivocal past (Hodder 1991; Jones and Pay 1994; Holcomb 1998; Bender 2000; Graham *et al* 2000; Merriman 2004a), however, many respondents did not want the ambiguity of multiple interpretations

and understandings of the past, instead seeking information and stories that told them about *the* past and the sites they encountered. In this way, archaeologists held the role of experts, telling the general public about the past (Moser 2000), where answers would be provided on specific questions, and further archaeological research would be undertaken to answer any new questions. In this way, archaeologists were seen to be uncovering the past, both literally and metaphorically.

A small proportion of participants did, however, discuss the role of archaeologists as experts in *creating* knowledge about the past, and the concept of *interpreting* data and creating meaning. In this way the role of archaeologist was seen more as facilitator: a conduit to understanding and interpreting data within specific points of reference. While there was no specific dialogue on the fluid nature of the past and its interpretation, discussions sometimes moved towards the processes archaeologists undertake through the interpretation of data, and how they progress towards conclusions. Jokes were sometimes made about archaeologists changing their minds, and new theories replacing old in the search for what was the ‘real past’. But some participants appreciated the nature both of interpreting the past, and the idea that it is not possible to know everything about the past, or even to know the past at all.

The current situation reflects the hegemony of heritage, with the public generally not encountering the processes of interpretation, and the system as is continues to utilise the perception of a fixed past. Only through wider developments in the ways societies understand and encounter the past, crucially including the way (pre)history is taught at all levels in schools, can the concept of multiple past be more readily accepted.

8.7 The location of sites in the landscape

Landscape and setting were important characteristics of all of the research sites, creating different impressions or interpretations of the archaeology for each case study. The location of the Yarrows Archaeological Trail in what was perceived to be a natural, untamed setting was a crucial and anticipated aspect of the site experience. The dislocation from anything perceived to be modern allowed participants to create links and imagine these prehistoric sites in the past. In this way there were aspects of the landscape which were perceived to be objectively modern, including pylons and houses, which would have a negative impact on such landscape. Other, less obvious, or more ‘natural’ modern impacts, including for example land-use, were less of an obvious intrusion.

The location of Skara Brae was equally important in providing links to the past, with its location on the coast providing a very tangible connection with the natural environment. This also helped to create timelessness for the site more generally, with some participants reflecting on their belief that the site and the landscape had remained unchanged. Although the landscape of Skara Brae has changed considerably, these same ideas of the 'natural' and 'organic' in the landscape helped to create these positive perceptions.

The location of Tarbat Discovery Centre, on the edge of the small settlement of Portmahomack, reflected different issues, with the discussions on wonder about the site's survival and discovery, and perceptions of the remoteness of the location with regard to modern ideas of core and periphery (see for example Barclay 2001). The ongoing process of excavating the site in the landscape connected it to the past with the site literally 'in' the landscape as it was being uncovered. The location of the centre itself within the former church also positioned it in the past.

It has been argued that archaeological sites do not, however, sit well in modern urban settings (Tilley 1993; Brophy 2004). This was reflected most notably in the case study at Rough Castle, and through the broader discussions at the site, at other locations along the Antonine Wall, where the close proximity of modern life in the form of settlements, roads and pylons to the site made it more difficult to create links to the past in the landscape. But this research reflects a much more complex situation, where certain aspects of the modern are seen to have a greater impact on sites and settings than others. Indeed, the very process of presenting a site was at times viewed as removing it from a natural setting and placing it within a modern one.

The imposition of the modern on perceived natural or ancient landscapes was also discussed with regards to the interventions made in presenting sites to the public, the juxtaposition of ancient and modern not fitting in with expectations of where archaeology is or should be. Urquhart Castle was an intriguing site in this sense, as participants discussed its setting as both natural and unspoilt, and conversely with the development of the site and visitor centre, as an intrusion upon a pristine landscape.

Although archaeological sites seemed to be more popular with participants across the case studies when these sites were perceived to be situated within a natural and unaltered setting, what pertained to be natural was a matter of personal interpretation. The natural environment was, however, in some ways seen as timeless, and an appropriate setting for

ancient monuments, with urban areas not generally viewed as suitable locations for archaeological sites.

8.8 Experiencing the past

One of the key aspects of participant encounters with the case study sites was the attempt to, in some way, *experience* the past. An important aspect of many participants' experiences was the necessity to imagine the past: to in some way place themselves *in* the past and engender a form of empathy with that past, often with the people of the past. Success in these efforts varied greatly both within and across case studies. Participants discussed the different ways they tried to engage with the past and the importance of certain aspects or concepts of the past and the sites in helping them to do so. These attempts manifested themselves in a myriad of ways, reflecting individual encounters with archaeology which were as much to do with the personalities and experiences of the participants (Falk and Dierking 1992; Dierking 1998; Jones 2004; McClanahan 2004) as with the archaeological remains. In this way, no two visitor experiences were the same, regardless of whether the site was visited by an individual or group.

An element of mystery about sites was an important part of the experience. Not to be confused with a lack of information or knowledge about a site, certain elements of the 'not knowing' about the past conversely proved intriguing, exciting and even inviting to participants. This element of mystery often encouraged participants to start to interpret sites, or aspects of sites, for themselves. This was qualified in a number of interviews through the espousing of a belief that these mysteries, or at least some of these mysteries, were temporary. In time, through further archaeological research, many of these questions would be answered. But these mysteries were also positive aspects of the experience because it placed the experts and the visitors at a similar point of 'not knowing', and in their own way participants could take part in this process of discovery through their own ideas and interpretations. Instead of 'not knowing', it was often viewed as 'not knowing....yet'.

In this way, for example, the abandonment of Skara Brae was intriguing: Why did the inhabitants leave the site? Was it a sudden departure or gradual movement away? The lack of answers to these and many more questions was, in contrast to criticisms of the information available at sites mentioned above, an attractive aspect to the site which provided another element to the experience.

At Yarrows, imagining the landscape in the past was made easier by the lack of modern intrusions, although the survival of some of the sites at times made such attempts to connect with the people of the past more difficult. The sites did enable participants to physically engage with them, which helped to form connections to the past they represented, encouraging imaginative encounters and feelings of (both physical and metaphorical) separation from the modern world.

A common theme to develop from discussions of experiences on site was the attempt to engage with the past; to move back in time and experience the site as it would have been in the past. These engagements were facilitated in a very real sense by attempts at different sites to ‘transport’ participants to the past, either by using markers denoting shifts in time, or replicas and reconstructions to physically ‘place’ participants ‘in’ the past. At Tarbat the introductory film was used to provide a context for the site and the experience, something which was used to a similar effect at both Urquhart and Skara Brae. The latter also utilised markers on the ground moving back in time as participants walked towards the site, alongside the reconstruction for participants to experience what these structures may have been like. At Yarrows and Rough Castle, participants were able to physically experience the past through moving over and through the remains, while this was also possible to a degree, but in a much more controlled fashion at Urquhart.

Facilitating such processes and engagements must therefore be seen as a crucial processing in encouraging or creating value for sites more generally.

8.9 Authenticity and aura

Bound up within these lived experiences on site was the concept of authenticity, which was an important aspect of many participant experiences. The popularity and at the same time contradictory nature of concepts of authenticity was an overriding issue with the archaeology at all five case studies. What constituted authenticity varied both within and across the case studies, often reflecting conflicting or alternative perceptions, and reflects the broad range of meanings and interpretations such a terms has more widely.

Perceptions of authenticity were important because they were pivotal in giving participants experiences value. In this way:

- Authenticity related to the *real* remains at sites, but it also related to the *setting* of sites.

- It related to the *experiences* on site mentioned earlier, associated with the physical, tangible and sensory encounters with archaeology.
- It was a crucial aspect of the success of many encounters and provided an intangible but fundamental *value* for sites.

8.9.1 Landscape and setting

Landscape and setting were important factors in perceptions of authenticity. The imposition of anything perceived to be modern had an impact on the nature of the experience and the way the site was viewed. In this way a landscape devoid of ‘modern’ paraphernalia (especially built structures) was more conducive to perceptions of an accurate and authentic historic landscape. Managed nature, from the control and planting of trees to the cutting of grass and removal of leaves, was not generally considered to impact on this historic landscape, although at times this stylised ‘tidy’ approach was commented on, as with the comparison of Rough Castle to a golf course or Skara Brae being aesthetically pleasing. Often, however, the perceived naturalness of the constituent elements of sites, organic materials devoid of obvious human construction, allowed them to be absorbed within this sphere of the past.

At Yarrows, concepts of authenticity were absorbed within discussions on the perceived unaltered nature of both the landscape and the sites. The location of Skara Brae was also seen as an integral feature in creating an authentic setting for the archaeological site. At the other sites, the connections between landscape and authenticity were more complex. At Tarbat, the site’s perceived remote location was important, together with the ongoing excavations which provided links between the past and the present which could be seen in the trenches through the excavated remains. At Rough Castle, the setting was in part perceived to be natural and authentic, although the Antonine Wall more generally was caught up in concerns over its appropriateness in urban settings.

Urquhart Castle provided mixed responses, with the ruin and location discussed both as authentic and inauthentic. These related to more common stereotypes of Scotland, and the developments on the site through the imposition of the visitor centre. Equally, modern intrusions in the landscape, discussed earlier, affected perceptions of authenticity, as with the standing stone on the Yarrows Trail when it was discovered to be of 19th century date. This issue of modern intrusion and value was, however, much more complex, as

discussions on the validity of the modern walkers' cairns on the Cairns of Warehouse reflected.

8.9.2 The use of reconstructions

The use of reconstructions was interpreted by participants as providing a tangible recognisable image of the past, which was given authenticity through its perceived authority. The creation of these various reconstructions through the use of archaeological data gave them an essence of authenticity. At the same time, while the reconstructions were viewed as accurate interpretations of archaeological data which could be used to create a structure 'from' the past, this would never replace the experience or the need to 'see the real thing'.

More generally, reconstructions are appreciated as visual aids in learning more about processes of the past, and in this respect they are seen as authentic. But the sites on the ground are regarded as 'better' because they are viewed as the real thing. Regardless of what degree of research and effort is applied to making accurate reconstructions, remains *in situ* are still the most important aspect of the site visit because they are physical relics surviving from the past.

8.9.3 The importance of artefacts

This was equally true of having artefacts from sites on site. The conservation and display of artefacts devoid of any landscape context has been a crucial development in the presentation and value of the past (see Merriman 2004a). Artefacts have been viewed as 'objective fact' (Durrans 1992), a fixed and recognisable identifier of the past, an argument which no longer holds such value (Crew and Sims 1991). Although the public are no longer satisfied with objects behind glass cases (Blockley 1999), such artefacts still have the power to create increased value for sites. Indeed, such arguments often have a strong social and political element, for example with the appropriate long-term strategy for the Hilton of Cadboll stone (Jones 2004; 2005; see below).

Through the case studies the importance of having artefacts on site (where possible), at or near to the location of their discovery, was key in creating value and enhancing the authenticity of sites. Rather than being an empty shell, with all of the artefacts removed to remote locations, the display of finds from the sites at Urquhart, Skara Brae and Tarbat were discussed as a fundamental part of the site experience. In this way, having artefacts

on-site gave the site greater legitimacy in representing the past, by providing stronger links through items which had been created or used and then lost or discarded in the past.

Some participants at these sites discussed both the value of having artefacts displayed at the site where they were discovered, and a sense of relief that they had been retained there. In this way, these aspects of the site: the physical *in situ* remains, and the artefacts from excavations; were all part of the authentic *whole* of the monument. At Urquhart, participants voiced both their appreciation that artefacts from the site were on display there, but also that the decision had been taken to make an effort to keep them at the site. This was viewed as beneficial in two ways – by keeping the artefacts on site, the value of the site was increased, and the value of the artefacts was increased by keeping them within the context of the site, rather than disconnected in a display cabinet hundreds of miles away. In this way, the site provided greater authenticity (and value) for the artefact, and vice versa.

This interest in artefacts on site also raised the issue of concerns about the removal of artefacts to other locations for conservation and display. Repatriation of artefacts is a significant issue within heritage both across national borders and cultures, and within states and regions. The examples of the Hilton of Cadboll (Jones 2004), and the Lewis Chessmen (Dawson 2007; see Morgan 2007) are two high-profile cases where concern has been raised about the removal of artefacts from areas perceived to be on the periphery of Britain to locations within its core (Barclay 2001). At Tarbat, the discussion of the issues relating to the Hilton of Cadboll stone was all the more ardent given the close proximity of the sites. Concerns over the treatment of the site and the community were raised as issues which had developed at Hilton of Cadboll and were discussed during some interviews at Tarbat. Allied to these concerns, the lack of finds on display at Tarbat compared to the number of finds which had been removed from the site during excavation led to feelings of unease about the plans for these artefacts.

8.9.4 Aura

The perception of ‘aura’ is as equally intangible as authenticity at heritage sites, although it was concomitantly crucial to the success of many encounters on site. In this way, the varied and missed experiences, encounters and perceptions of aura were very much individual, and of the moment, but very real to these participants. Participants often discussed the feeling they got from a site, a connection with place which was often difficult to describe but a very real part of the experience. In this way, the aura of the site was

interconnected with perceptions of authenticity and connections with the past. Aura could be both eerie and otherworldly or natural and benign, but was focused on feelings and atmosphere on the site.

But the interpretation and presentation could be used to ‘create’, or at least encourage perceptions of aura at sites (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999). The use of mood music, sound effects and video displays at Skara Brae, Urquhart Castle and Tarbat Discovery Centre created a sense of aura and otherworldliness for participants. In this way, visitors were encouraged to imagine and experience the sites in certain ways as a result of these media. But this process was recognised by participants, and this ‘created aura’ was not perceived in the same way as what could be termed the ‘authentic aura’ of the site and the landscape, or indeed personal experiences and engagements themselves.

The use of such media at sites was not always necessary to create this aura, however, as participants at all sites discussed these aspects of the experience. At Urquhart, the location of the castle on a loch, its ruination, and the mystery and romance of castles more generally all combined to create a sense of aura for some participants. Equally, at Skara Brae the location of the site on the edge of the coast in a picturesque position considered separate and removed from modern life, was experienced in a certain way.

Possible changes to the archaeology at the case study sites were discussed in a number of interviews. While aura was described as ethereal, and associated with perceptions of a natural site, it was also seen as fragile and ephemeral. Any changes to the physical remains on site, whether through minor changes in terms of signs and paths, or major changes such as the landscaping of ground or the construction of a visitor centre, were all seen to threaten the aura and specialness of the sites. And again although certain auras could be created, these would not replace the ethereal authentic auras which sites were deemed to possess, if development took place. This was particularly the case at Yarrows, with the aura of the site was seen as at risk when considering making any changes to the Trail. A reflection of the impact such changes could make on the site was reflected at Urquhart, with participants who had visited the castle prior to the redevelopment discussing a change in the aura and feel of the site.

8.9.5 The romance of the past

These encounters with archaeology and various connections with the past were often bound up with an allusion towards the romance of the past. Ruins in themselves also have

certain social and emotional meanings to society, bound up within romantic or idyllic notions of the past and landscape. These ideas were elucidated in a number of ways, focusing on well-used stereotypes of the past which have continued to influence common perceptions of historic sites today, including the concept of a linear past discussed above. In this way the past was often discussed as unaltered, something which had once existed, and could possibly be imagined. The location of the case study sites in the modern landscape played a crucial role in this process (see above). The way of life at Urquhart and Skara Brae, the skill of the stonemasons at Tarbat, the inhabitants of the hut circles at Yarrows, and life garrisoned on the frontier of the Roman Empire at Rough Castle were all discussed and caught up within these romantic notions.

In contradiction to this, however, some respondents also discussed their interest and intrigue in the *everyday* aspects of sites. In this way links between the past and the present were more readily made as people considered how they encountered and undertook everyday tasks today, and then considered how such activities would have been undertaken, and indeed how *they* would have coped, in the past. These issues were raised when considering the lifestyle of the inhabitants of Skara Brae, with their bed stalls and dressers, and the consideration of the close proximity of houses and perceptions of ‘community’. The popularity of the everyday was also reflected in atypical sites such as Urquhart Castle, where an interest in ‘normal folk’ was discussed as of much more interest than the lords of the castle, with the interpretation at the site focusing on hierarchies and roles within the castle’s social structures, and reflects a broader trend within presentations from elite pasts to ordinary and everyday depictions (Lee Davis 1997; Funari 2000).

8.10 The role(s) of archaeological sites

Archaeological sites play a myriad of roles and functions across time and space. They are viewed, used and valued as economic, social and cultural resources.

8.10.1 *Archaeological sites as visitor attractions*

Archaeological sites presented to the public are bound up within the wider heritage and tourism spheres. The very act of presenting an archaeological site, from a sign or information board, right up to a state-of-the-art visitor centre, suggests a perception on the part of the presenter that there is something worth viewing, and an audience (or audiences) for whom to present. Visits to such sites are therefore often incorporated within a series of

tourist activities involving outings to locations which are viewed as separate from the everyday (Urry 1990).

Participants often viewed the case study sites to exist within this tourist sphere, to serve the primary purpose of visitor attractions, a role which is viewed as increasingly important for many sites in local, regional and national care (see Historic Scotland 1994; 2001). Indeed, Historic Scotland's own rhetoric has in the past discussed improving "monuments' attractiveness to visitors particularly, though not exclusively, at those which have the greatest potential for revenue generation" (Historic Scotland 1994, 42). The discussions regarding the proposed World Heritage Site status for the Antonine Wall generally focused on a need to improve facilities and interpretation at sites, to accommodate a perceived greater demand on the sites from increasing numbers of visitors and tourists. The benefits to be gained from the site for local communities were also often discussed with regards to the knock-on effect of increasing tourist numbers to sites, creating a financial value which would encourage hitherto disinterested local communities to re-evaluate their thoughts on the site. This secondary concern with local communities is recognised as a significant problem in engendering wider values and engaging local communities across the world (Jones 2004; Mapunda and Lane 2004). To focus purely on financial benefits is surely missing the point of creating value, and ensuring the survival of sites into the future.

A similar response with regards to benefits from economic development was found with some participants at Yarrows, although any changes to the site were seen to seriously risk destroying its aura. In this way it is interesting that the very popular sites, Urquhart Castle and to a lesser degree Skara Brae, are viewed as 'sacrifices' to tourism: a way of bringing revenue in by forfeiting a site to be developed and overhauled as a tourist experience, complete with café and gift shop. As part of this, one of the issues raised during interviews was the charging of admission fees at sites. Concerns about the charging of such fees ranged from issues over the high cost of the site and lack of discounts (at Urquhart), to a belief that sites had to charge fees to validate and cover the costs of modern interpretation centres. Concerns were also raised about the concept of charging to visit sites at all, especially at those sites managed by Historic Scotland. As the national agency tasked by the Scottish Government with protecting, preserving and promoting the historic environment of Scotland, the issue of being charged for something which was considered to have already been paid for (through taxes) was raised as a concern, and questions the body's role for the taxpayer.

What these charges did do was set the sites apart from the wider heritage, as attractions or experiences devolved from the everyday. By charging, the sites also created a level of expectation: for £X visitors expected certain standards, to be informed or entertained, or both. Conversely, at sites which had no interpretation centre and no entry fee, the experience was equally detached from the everyday, but inherently more linked into the landscape (especially at Yarrows). In this way cost was directly linked to perceived quality and value for money.

8.10.2 *Other visitors*

As would be expected at the busiest sites, Urquhart Castle and Skara Brae, the number of visitors on site had an impact on the experiences of participants. In general, large numbers of participants were viewed as having a negative impact on the experience, crowding the site, creating noise, and limiting choices in terms of moving about and viewing different parts of the site. A number of participants did, however, view these impositions in different ways. Whether using these modern intruders to imagine a thriving, bustling settlement at Urquhart, or recognising the value of promoting archaeological sites, and the conservation value message at Skara Brae, the impact of other visitors was not necessarily a negative experience. It could also create value for other, less popular archaeological sites which were not on the tourist circuit.

At the less popular sites, the lack of other people on site was an important part of being able to move around and experience the site without interruptions or interference. At Tarbat, the serenity of the museum allowed participants to move around the exhibits, and get close to the Pictish stones, without having to compete with other visitors. When discussions turned to the possibility of changing the interpretation and presentation at the Antonine Wall and Yarrows Archaeological Trail (as discussed above), the impact of increasing visitors was raised. By encouraging more people on to sites, it was accepted that this would inherently change the site, both physically in terms of the layout and provision of facilities, but also with regards to the experience on site, where the separation from the everyday and connections to the past would be inherently more difficult.

8.11 Conserving and preserving sites and monuments

Archaeological excavation is, by its very nature, destruction of a resource. Archaeological sites presented and interpreted for the public can equally be viewed as encouraging the destruction of the very thing that is valued (Thompson 1981; Mytum 1999; Skeates 2000).

By encouraging people onto sites which are often fragile or ill-equipped to cope with large numbers of people, those tasked with presenting and conserving sites run the risk of causing permanent damage (Jones and Maurer Longstreth 2002; Hoffman *et al* 2002). But does this mean that the public should be discouraged, or more drastically banned, from visiting archaeological sites? At many popular sites access to and movement around the site is heavily controlled and monitored, with restricted areas and public access limited in an attempt to preserve the monument for the future. This is especially true of atypical sites, wherein wider or multiple perceptions of value are imposed on these sites, encouraging many more people to want to visit. Within the case studies, this was certainly true for both Skara Brae and Urquhart Castle, while increasing awareness of the Antonine Wall (through the WHS application) was viewed with trepidation by many participants.

At Skara Brae, the increasing numbers of visitors at the site have seen both major changes in the interpretation available in the form of the visitor centre and reconstruction, but also in the much more heavily controlled access to the sites. Equally at Urquhart, areas are chained off, and access to and from sections is controlled through the use of paths.

The sites on the Yarrows Trail also came as a surprise to many participants due to the perceived lack of conservation or preservation measures which had been taken with the monuments. In this way, the lack of interventions, in the form of conserving or possibly reconstructing the sites, made the monuments appear to have been abandoned in the landscape. This was exacerbated by the presentation through reconstruction of, for example, the Grey Cairns of Camster, an Historic Scotland guardianship site only 5kms away.

The issues of site preservation, conservation, and potential (re)construction are frequently reconsidered and contested. At what point preservation becomes conservation and vice versa, and whether reconstruction is possible at all, or whether it becomes construction anew, are all thorny issues within cultural heritage management (Walsh 1992; Bell 1997; Graham *et al* 2000). At all of the case study sites, some form of remedial action has been undertaken to stabilise the monuments on display.

8.11.1 *Alternative uses of sites*

Although all of the case study sites are interpreted and presented to the public, these monuments and the spaces they occupy are not always visited or used as archaeological sites. At Rough Castle, the site continues to be a popular place for local dog walkers,

while also being used by people on mountain bikes and motorbikes and other recreations. During visits to the site evidence for camping, fireworks displays and joy-riding was noted, with an alternative wedding ceremony and reception taking place during one visit. To what degree the participants of these activities were aware of the monument in the landscape which they were using is not clear, but it is interesting to note that this space is in the consciousness of a wide variety of people, even if they do not necessarily value it as an archaeological or heritage site (Brophy 2004).

Some of these activities were clearly vandalism or misuse of the site, but it is interesting to consider why these sites were treated in such ways and what those taking part in such activities thought or knew both about the sites and the effects of their actions on the fabric of the sites. Some of these activities reflect intriguing reuses of the monuments, wherein the site was imbued with a new meaning and importance. It may also reflect the profession's inability to create links with other stakeholders and interested communities, an indication of wider problems in the profession (see Goulding 1989; Jones and Pay 1994; Harcombe 1997; Holcombe 1998; Anyon *et al* 2000; Scham 2001; Wallis and Blain 2003; Jones 2004). These approaches were manifest in a much more commercial manner with the popularity of wedding ceremonies at Urquhart Castle. This again ties in with romantic and picturesque notions of the site, but removes it further from its position as an historic monument to become a backdrop and set for a different, alternative, form of use.

8.11.2 *Touching the past*

Raising awareness of the fragility of historic monuments to both human and environmental action is a crucial aspect of heritage management. Whilst many sites try to avoid being overtly 'educational' through their interpretation, raising awareness of the fragility of sites is important in ensuring their long term survival, especially those which are drawn into the tourism sphere.

Even though such activities were generally prohibited, physical contact with monuments and artefacts was still viewed by many participants as providing a direct and crucial link between the present and the past. In this way, touching the fabric of something that had been made or touched by another human, often thousands of years earlier, created a powerful feeling and sense of connection with the past. This was reflected in the way that the more popular sites of Skara Brae and Urquhart Castle were laid out: the use of paths and barriers acknowledged as controlling visitor impact on the fabric of sites. This was also acknowledged, although not necessarily adhered to, with some of the sites on the

Yarrows Archaeological Trail and the focus of responsibility on visitors to avoid damaging sites. It was also raised as a topic with regard to the display of artefacts at Tarbat Discovery Centre, with the lack of physical barriers between visitors and some artefacts on display again placing a level of responsibility on visitors not to touch the displays.

At times, although concern with impacting on the sites was raised, (as with Yarrows) the attraction of walking over and through sites was too important an aspect of the experience to deter participants. This was especially true with the broch site at Yarrows, where the sign specifically requested that visitors avoid walking on the broch due to its poor condition. The actions of participants reflected a more deliberate reaction to the conservation issue. To a number of respondents, their experiences and understanding of the monument were discussed as more important than the survival of the monument in the long term. But such attitudes were qualified by the belief that a few people walking over a site would not cause any lasting damage to a monument which had survived in the landscape for over 2000 years.

Some participants at Skara Brae noted the changes to access which had developed at the site in the last few decades, with reduced access making an immediate impression about the potential damage visitors could cause to sites. This was reflected through the closure of House 7, and the use of monitors to record the impact of visitors on the site itself, but more dramatically through the changes in the presentation and access to the site over the last two decades. The reflection of two participants who had previously visited Skara Brae 20 years earlier was a mixture of horror and helplessness: earlier experiences of being able to move around and through the sites with few other visitors had been replaced by heavily controlled movements at the site. The visit two decades before was re-evaluated within the context of the recent visit, with past activities on-site now viewed as an, albeit unintentional, misuse of the monument, which reflected the attitudes of those in charge of the monuments as much as those who were visiting.

8.12 Heritage, values and identity

As well as playing a major role within the tourism industry, archaeological sites also have a large role to play in perceptions of heritage and identity (Piggott 1976; Jones 1997; Graham *et al* 2000; Merriman 2000; Moser 2003). Heritage, identity and tourism can be interconnected concepts, with aspects and values of each informing and affecting others. Archaeological sites can be used in the construction of identities, but can also have

meanings and values placed upon them. They can be used to reflect aspects of a recognised or valued heritage, or to create heritage value.

Participants discussed perceptions that some of the case study sites were inherently Scottish, or part of a wider Scottish heritage. Urquhart Castle was perceived to fit into stereotypical representations of Scotland, ticking the boxes of picturesque lochs and ruined castles. But it was also seen as a valuable site in terms of creating a more valid, authentic identity for Scots. Skara Brae and the Tarbat Discovery Centre were also discussed in this way, playing an important role in providing and informing the public of Scotland about *their* past, although interestingly, not the past of the ‘Scots’.

Alongside perceptions of national identity, some sites were simultaneously seen as being important in terms of a more local concept of heritage and identity (see also Jones 1996; Graham *et al* 2000; Jones 2004; McClanahan 2004). Skara Brae was viewed as important in the construction of an Orcadian identity, a major theme to develop with regards to perceptions of all of the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site sites as identified in McClanahan’s study (2004). The Yarrows Archaeological Trail was also seen as providing a separate identity for a more localised area, tapping in to Caithness identity and heritage, and often in direct contrast to the ‘other’ of the prehistoric remains on the neighbouring Orkney Isles.

The Antonine Wall was a contentious site with regard to heritage and identity. Participants discussed widely differing views of what it represented, and *whose* heritage it was. Some participants viewed it as part of an English heritage and identity, in this way the *other* to modern Scottish understandings of their own heritage. It was recognised by some as being part of a Scottish heritage, albeit in a more contradictory and contested way, with participants discussing a changing attitude to Roman sites in Scotland, recognising it as a Scottish site (or series of sites) that was increasingly being recognised as a part of Scottish heritage. But it was also discussed in terms of British heritage, and the idea that the modern imposition of identities lacked any value for such sites.

The possibility of heritage and identity being inter-related at different levels was also reflected in terms of heritage value from national to global level. Skara Brae, as part of the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site, and the proposal for the Antonine Wall as a WHS reflected views that these sites could at once represent local, national and international heritage.

Community input and value appeared to be more obvious at Yarrows and Tarbat, where through different channels, members of local communities were taking a more hands-on approach to the archaeology which was being interpreted and presented. The Antonine Wall was also discussed with regards to local community value, although the general perception discussed was one of a lack of value locally for sites.

Discussions on developing the archaeology of Caithness in general and Yarrows in particular were also focused primarily on the potential of economic development. Many of the organisations involved with CAT view the archaeology of the area as a way of bringing more visitors to Caithness and encouraging longer stays in the county. This is reflected in the context of the proposed new Caithness Horizons Museum in Thurso town hall (www.caithnesshorizons.co.uk), and indicates both a requirement for improving the social and economic situation of Caithness, particularly with the decommissioning of Dounreay Nuclear Power Station, and the juxtaposition of Orkney, across the Pentland Firth, gradually developing over the last three decades as a natural and cultural heritage destination for increasing numbers of visitors and the obvious financial benefits this brings.

Some of the sites were also discussed in terms of values relating both to personal experiences and interpretations of sites, from revisiting sites from childhood (at Skara Brae) to revisiting sites from past lives (at Tarbat). In this way sites were bound up within a myriad of criss-crossing interpretations, from personal meanings and experiences, both tangible and intangible, to simultaneously being interpreted as part of a reflective Scottish heritage and valued globally as a World Heritage Site.

8.13 Recommendations for the case studies

“Qualitative researchers need all the help they can get as they swim against the tide of cultural heritage of how science is done. While the current is less strong than it was a few years ago, it is still powerful.”

(Maykut and Morehouse 1994, 2)

There is a need to understand and appreciate the value of qualitative research in informing strategies, involving stakeholders and including the wider community in the presentation of archaeological sites in the future. As well as providing an understanding of the different roles and meanings which archaeological sites have for the public, the results of this research (as with Jones 2004; McClanahan 2004) have been used to suggest more effective ways of presenting archaeology to the public. These recommendations cover both

approaches to presenting archaeological sites in Scotland (and more widely), and specific proposals for the individual case study sites.

The following are specific recommendations for the case study sites.

8.13.1 *Yarrows Archaeological Trail*

- The most obvious suggestion for Yarrows would be to rewrite the text of the leaflet. Ideally, this would include a reworking of the whole leaflet, incorporating reconstruction drawings, as well as more engaging text which asks questions and encourages participants to question what they see.
- Such a development could be augmented by the provision of more information about the Yarrows landscape and the sites within it (and within Caithness more generally) through a website, with the Caithness Archaeological Trust website (www.caithnessarchaeology.org.uk) the obvious location. This could possibly be done in conjunction with wider developments through Highland and held centrally on the Highland Council website (www.highland.gov.uk), or via a community website such as www.caithness.org
- Although the ‘abandoned’ nature of the sites on the Trail makes interpretation at times problematic, improving the information in the leaflet would be preferable to changing the presentation of sites, or putting interpretation on the sites. The naturalness and aura of the landscape is one of the key factors of the Yarrows Trail, and is something which should be valued and protected through any proposed changes.
- Expansion of the Trail was mooted during the period of data collection, although to date no such changes have been made. The wider landscape of Yarrows and the surrounding areas have a wealth of prehistoric sites which would sit well within the broad theme of the Trail. The creation of new loops, to take in the Watenan landscape to the south, or to move around the south and east of Yarrows Loch incorporating the standing stones and Battle Moss stone rows, have both been suggested, and would open up the wider landscape to the public. If done in the same low level way as the current Trail, there is no reason to see why such developments would not have a positive impact on perceptions of the archaeology

of the area. Ongoing disputes over land ownership, and the prospect of windfarm developments in the area, may however preclude such expansion.

- The impact of visitors on the sites at present appears to be at a manageable level. While there are concerns over the broch and the cairns of Warehouse, continued monitoring is the preferred option, as opposed to restricting access. A process of low level consolidation, with limited visual impact, would be the preferred option to protect concepts of aura if visitor impacts on these sites are seen to be affecting their long-term survival. The encroachment of the loch on the broch site, however, should be resolved, with consideration given to how best to reduce the water level of the loch to prevent damage to the fabric of the monument.

8.13.2 *Tarbat Discovery Centre*

- Tarbat was unique amongst the case studies in that it did not in a sense have a fixed site to interpret. Now that the programme of excavations have concluded, it is important that the site itself is interpreted and presented on the ground. This could be done in a number of ways. It is unlikely, given the nature of the archaeology, that the site can be left open post-excavation, as with more substantial stone monuments such as Skara Brae. It is likely that some form of marker will therefore be required to mark the constituent parts of the site out on the ground. This could be in the form of posts, markers and gravel on the ground, used to identify the location of structures, routeways and other features, as has been done at Kinneil Fortlet, on the Antonine Wall at Bonnybridge (fig. 104). Although this could be potentially confusing to ‘read’ in the landscape, providing interpretive material from the Discovery Centre, in the form of a leaflet or card, or alternatively through the use of boards around the edge of the sites could be used to interpret the site.
- Reconstruction drawings could be used in this interpretation to suggest how these sites may have looked on the ground (see general comments on use of reconstructions above). The possibility of ‘reconstructing’ part of the site should also be considered, with the creation of for example a workshop providing a tangible, negotiable space for visitors to interact.



Figure 104 – Kinneil fortlet, Bo'ness (photo S. Timoney)

- The roles and functions of the Centre within the local community should continue to be developed, and attempts to engage with the wider community should be actively encouraged. The availability of these kinds of community resources within the Centre was well received by most participants, and should continue to be developed.
- The ability to get close to the stones, with the knowledge and understanding that they should not touch the artefacts, was important part of the experience, and such access should be encouraged in the future at the site. The traditional glass cabinet displays were less popular, and consideration should be given to ways in which the artefacts within these can be presented in more engaging ways.
- The issue of the rightful place for artefacts from the site is not unusual (see Jones 2004), but consideration should be given to the importance and value such artefacts have for Tarbat, in creating different forms of value for the site and the community. It is likely that attitudes similar to those encountered by Jones at Hilton of Cadboll would be experienced in Portmahomack and its environs, and the value of these objects should not be measured on archaeological importance alone (ibid.).
- The Tarbat Discovery Centre website, www.tarbat-discovery.co.uk, could be developed to provide more information (for example information stored on the

database) for people to investigate the various contexts and interpretations of the archaeology of the site and the wider area. Developing and promoting this resource would benefit members of the local communities and prospective visitors to the area.

8.13.3 *Rough Castle and the Antonine Wall*

- As the best preserved fort and stretch of wall along the whole of the Antonine Wall, Rough Castle is an important monument in archaeological terms. Participant responses on site were less positive, however, reflecting the inherent issues of presenting sites without ‘sights’ (Lee Davis 1997). Any planned development of the site will need to investigate alternative ways of interpreting the modest remains on the ground if the public are to be more fully engaged.
- Consideration will also need to be given to the presentation of this site, and the other monuments along the Antonine Wall, and the wider implications of a successful outcome in the nomination for World Heritage Site status. While this accolade will undoubtedly raise the profile of the monument, the sites on the ground do not at present tie in with common perceptions of World Heritage Sites. Changes to the presentation of Rough Castle will likely be made, alongside interpretation at other sites along the Wall. It is important that, although these sites are owned and presented by different organisations, that the approach to any new interpretation is joined-up. It is also important that consideration is given as to how any changes will impact on perceptions of the sites, and on the fabric of these sites.
- Future development of the wall may include the creation of large scale interpretation, most likely in the form of an interpretive centre. Although access to Rough Castle through Bonnybridge is problematic, the site itself is likely to be one of the frontrunners for any major development as it does, by comparison to other ‘sites’ on the Wall, have a (relatively) tangible site on the ground to visit.
- The opportunity to reconstruct a section of the wall, and also a fort or fortlet, would be popular with regards to encouraging the public to engage and interact with the site. Although reconstructions are problematic (see above), they can also be of great benefit both academically in the form of experimental archaeology, and through providing alternative interpretations to be demonstrated, for example did the Antonine Wall have a timber rampart? This had been used to good effect in

other locations, as with the various alternatives presented at Vindolanda on Hadrian's Wall. This would be valuable in helping visitors to start to engage with sites on the ground.

- Any development of the site must consider community values and not solely economic values. At present little consideration seems to have been given to truly engaging with local communities along the Wall. The promotion of local community values and views will be crucial in creating wider values for the site, and raising it above being another tourist attraction (see Jones 2004).
- This should also involve interpreting past indigenous communities as well as engaging those of the present. It is important that a better balance is created within any interpretation to acknowledge the indigenous communities who would have inhabited the area prior to, during, and after the Roman occupation, as a way of connecting to the local communities who live around Rough Castle and along the Wall more generally.
- Any development of the presentation or promotion of Rough Castle and other sites along the Antonine Wall could also be done as a way of increasing awareness of the location of archaeological sites more generally (see above). In this way, the imbuing of new values on the site through possible World Heritage Site status could raise awareness of the value of sites in urban settings, and be used to try and change attitudes towards the correct position of sites in the landscape (see also Jones 2004; McClanahan 2004).

8.13.4 *Urquhart Castle*

- The dominance of the café and shop within the visitor centre reflects its primary purpose as a tourist location. The development of the site has actively encouraged large numbers of visitors on to the site itself, creating issues about the long-term impacts on site. These large numbers of visitors have also led to the castle being laid out in certain ways to control access, movement and impact on the site. This in turn affects people's perceptions of the castle and their experiences on the ground. While it would be difficult to reduce visitor numbers on the site, consideration should be given to the ways in which people can more fully interact with and experience the monument.

- To attempt to engage a wider audience, consideration should be given to reworking the interpretation in the centre, with more space provided for this. This should involve more enactive and engaging experiences than the traditional artefact displays which are currently used. One of the values of the current interpretation is the display of artefacts from the site which has created a greater value for the visitor centre. Any redevelopment of the presentation should consider opportunities to develop such perceptions of value through the use of artefacts from the site.
- Although the castle ruin was bound up within various perceptions and stereotypes of Scotland (see McCrone 1995; Barclay 2001) the value of the site appears to be solely economic and for the benefit for visitors/tourists. While there was a local outcry during the development of the visitor centre at the site, it is important for Historic Scotland to try and engage with the local community, and to work with local communities in developing alternative values for the site.

8.13.5 *Skara Brae*

- The interpretation within the visitor centre was popular with participants and provided opportunities to engage with and understand the processes of archaeological interpretation. Any future developments in the interpretation, either on site or in the visitor centre, should continue to focus on these engaging elements of the presentation.
- The position of the site in the landscape was important to a number of participants, and has been acknowledged as important to the wider Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site (see McClanahan 2004). Whereas development of the site in the form of the visitor centre has undoubtedly had an impact on perceptions of the site, the centre and the monument are at a suitable distance to enable deeper connections with the archaeology to be made. Any future development should consider landscape setting as a crucial aspect of the site (ibid).
- The impact of the high volume of visitors the site receives is being constantly monitored, with changes made in the last few decades restricting access to the site. While this is a necessary development for site conservation, further limiting access in future should be considered in relation to the impacts it will have on experiences of and engagements with the site. The heavily controlled experience of visits to

Maeshowe, which incorporates timed ticketing, would seriously impact on perceptions of the monument and experiences on the site.

- Although the reconstruction was popular with many respondents, it was seen as a supplement to being able to visit the ‘real remains’. While there are values and drawbacks to reconstructions (discussed above), the benefits of being able to move through and engage with the structure should not be underestimated. It is unfortunate, however, that certain aspects of the reconstruction have been altered to accommodate modern health and safety regulations which did impact on participants’ experiences of the structure. It is equally unfortunate that plastic food and other objects are included in the reconstruction, as they reflect the artificial nature of the reconstruction in a very crass manner.

8.14 General recommendations

The results of this study reflect the importance of this type of research in more fully understanding the processes, experiences, and understandings of members of the public who visit archaeological sites. Such approaches can benefit those tasked with managing, preserving, conserving, presenting and promoting sites by providing detailed analyses on the myriad roles and functions sites play for individuals, groups and communities (Jones 2004; McClanahan 2004; Jones and McClanahan 2005). Indeed, the broad acceptance of both Jones and McClanahan’s work, and the inclusion of a section in the methodologies for the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site Research Agenda on ‘qualitative interviewing and participant observation’ (Jones and McClanahan 2005) reflects the growing value of such approaches within archaeology and the broader heritage sphere.

This type of research reflects the importance of sites in the landscape, and the way that they are bound up in concepts of identity and a sense of place at various levels (ibid; Lumley 2005). Sites have important roles to play both in creating identity and sense of place, and in having roles and values imposed upon them. It is important that such values are acknowledged in the wider management of archaeological sites through the consultation of all ‘users’ of these resources.

- Opportunities for hands-on enactive experiences are important at archaeological sites (Copeland 2004). Whether involving artefacts or monuments, responses throughout the case studies reflected an importance in being able to physically engage with sites and artefacts. While such access needs to be balanced with the conservation of the resource, it is important that ways of providing opportunities to facilitate people's engagements with archaeology on the ground are investigated. While not being an easy problem to resolve, if a wider public value for archaeological sites is to be recognised, much greater consideration must be given to how sites are presented, and how we want them to be valued and used in the future.
- The development of archaeological sites as tourist attractions for visitors should not be seen as the sole possibility for sites (Jones 2004). Greater acknowledgement needs to be made of other values beyond the purely economical. Sites are bound up within concepts of identity, not just at the local level, but regionally, nationally and personally, and such values should be considered and thoughts and opinions canvassed before decisions on the development of sites should be made. The predisposition in the past to short, closed-question quantitative questionnaires will not enlighten those tasked with presenting archaeology about the myriad roles and functions sites play in the landscape. Only through the adoption of more in-depth, qualitative research techniques can real opportunities to more fully engage with all interest groups, rather than just those in positions of control or power, be realised. The value sites have in creating and reinforcing identities can be strong, and should be included in any considerations for the possibilities of such resources. Indeed without local community value and involvement, the challenges will be all the more difficult to overcome.
- The development of a site should not automatically result in the wholesale change of the site or landscape. The insertion of information panels, paths, barriers and railings should not be undertaken without considering the impacts such activities will have on perceptions of archaeological sites (Jones 2004; McClanahan 2004). Greater consideration should be given to all aspects of the site, including those less tangible elements of sites, such as authenticity and aura, before any changes are instigated. While these concepts may be difficult (impossible?) to measure using traditional quantitative techniques, this research and that of others (*ibid.*) reflects that it is possible to understand and utilise such aspects of the intangible heritage for the benefit of such sites in the future. Given that some of the most important

aspects of archaeological sites for the public are bound up within (often) intangible perceptions of aura and authenticity, even small changes to sites on the ground can have dramatic effects on such perceptions. It is important that these intangible attributes of sites and the lived experiences of members of the public who use these sites are considered before any development takes place. In this way, interpretation of sites need not be on or near the site itself, but instead can be at a central location nearby, or accessible anywhere through online resources, reducing physical impacts on the ground. The process of discovery is one of the most important aspects of on-site experiences for many people. By providing no interpretation on the site itself, other than making the site physically accessible, the public would be given more of an opportunity to interpret and understand these places and their landscapes for themselves, with or without official interpretations.

- The development of hi-tech media brings with it opportunities and possibilities to access and use resources from remote locations on sites. While such technologies, such as podcasts and PDAs can be expensive and often off-putting to the uninitiated, their potential uses and benefits both to those tasked with presenting and promoting sites, and those who value and use such sites, should be investigated further. If data can be held in a virtual system, the cost and impact of on-site interpretation can be reduced. This also provides opportunities to be able to add to and update information without any great expenditure. Although presently too expensive for all but the largest of budgets, it is likely that through time such technologies will become more accessible and everyday, providing real opportunities to revolutionise the ways we interpret and present sites for the public.
- The presentation of multiple pasts and the interpretive nature of the past are equally important in developing valued archaeological sites, although more difficult to interpret and present on the ground. It is important that the public understands this interpretive nature of archaeology, and that public perceptions of the past move away from single, fixed, linear narratives to more reflexive and interpretive analyses. It is important to avoid perceptions of the 'anything goes' extreme relativism feared by some (eg Lipe 2002), but this should be done through changes to wider and more popular approaches to presenting the past, namely through the media. It would also be of value to see changes in school curricula, where children are exposed to these ideas of the interpretive and subjective processes of understanding the past, and seeing the value of these. In this way, if such ideas are approached at an early age, it is possible that they can be used to develop

understandings of and relationships with the concepts of interpreting the past, rather than confronting and challenging long-held and deeply rooted beliefs that the past is waiting to be discovered.

- As well as promoting the small proportion of sites which are interpreted and presented to the public in Scotland, it is important for those involved within archaeology and heritage to raise awareness of the number and nature of sites in the landscape more generally. In this way, instead of trying to over-develop sites, heritage managers should be seeking to promote the vast majority of sites which exist outside the realms of public knowledge. By improving knowledge and awareness of this resource, we can aim to improve the public's understanding of the nature of archaeology, and its place in the landscapes and townscape around us. The development of resources, such as RCAHMS Canmore and Pastmap resources, is a method of increasing knowledge and access to this information. The addition of local Sites and Monuments Records and Historic Environment Records to Pastmap will provide more detailed information from the ground up. It is, however, important that such information is mediated to allow it to be accessible and understandable for members of the public with little or no prior knowledge of archaeology, although this mediation requires no little skill.
- Although they can be culturally loaded, and have the potential to create authoritative views of the past, the use of reconstructions, whether full-scale or through drawings, can be useful in helping members of the public understand and engage with sites, especially when there is little to engage with on the ground. Whereas text is often ignored, images can be easily read, and if used carefully, can provide opportunities to create value and understanding for the archaeological resource (Duncan and Duncan 1988; Urry 1990; Moser 2001). Such methods can also be used to reflect the interpretive nature of archaeology, through the provision of alternative images created from the same data. In this way, the public can see in a very obvious manner the process of archaeological interpretation, and if access to the data is provided, can seek to interpret this data for themselves.
- It is important that the value of archaeological sites is not seen solely in the benefits it provides for visitors to sites, or in purely economic benefits for local communities (see Jones 2004; McClanahan 2004). While such values need to be considered, if they are the only consideration, then we run the risk of furthering the hegemony of archaeological sites primarily used as visitor attractions.

8.15 Postscript: putting theory into practice

Undertaking this research has provided me with an opportunity to analyse and interpret the processes and motivations of public engagements with archaeology on the ground. This research has also provided me with an opportunity to participate in presenting archaeology and engaging with the public, having taken up the post of Outreach Officer with Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust in September 2006. Although working fulltime in this post has led to delays in completing this thesis, the practical experiences of engaging with people on the ground have provided a beneficial counterbalance to the theoretical underpinnings of this research. Being challenged to engage with the public and deal with issues such as multivocal narratives and subjective engagements with the past in a practical way have also given me new insights into approaches to public archaeology, which have in turn influenced the final thesis.

Through my role as an outreach officer, I have sought to promote the wider archaeological heritage to members of local communities and visitors to the area. Through the development of guided walks around archaeological sites and landscapes, the provision of talks on various aspects of the heritage of the area, the provision of hands-on practical activities for volunteers, as well as writing mediated summaries of sites for the Historic Environment Record for the region, I have sought to raise awareness of and to facilitate interactions with archaeology in the area. It has also enabled me to develop the way that members of the public can feedback into the outreach work the Trust does, and influence the way that I develop this in the future. The post has also provided me with opportunities to continue to develop the ideas and theories established through this research project, for example from simple changes to visitor evaluation, through the design of a new semi-structured questionnaire for all participants on outreach events, to plans for developing online resources for public benefit, from simple pdf leaflets of walking routes, to examining the possibilities for developing hi-tech resources in future. It is especially in the latter that I plan to continue to develop my work, from both a theoretical and practical standpoint, as I seek to test and explore new opportunities and ways for engaging the public in archaeology in the future.



Figure 104 – On site with the public, Pitcarmick (photo G. Logan)

Appendix I

Research Questions

QUESTIONS

a)

- **Why have you visited this site?**
 - probe – family/culture/heritage/day out/education/identity
- **Have you visited this site before?**
 - probe – if yes, when?/why/why return/
- **What did you know about the site prior to this visit?**
 - probe – why visit?/reasons as above – family/culture/heritage...

b)

- **What were your first impressions of the site?**
 - probe – immediate thoughts/emotions/expectations
- **How did these compare to your prior assumptions of the site?**
 - probe – impressed/disappointed/indifferent/expectations
- **What did you do at the site?**
 - probe – wander around/how experience?/ read signs/alone/in a group/soak up atmosphere/hurry around/ boring...
- **What did you see?**
 - probe – what presented?/ means to you/ impressed/ bored

c)

- **What are your thoughts on the site now that you have visited?**
 - probe – enjoyed/ stands out/ valid/ important/disappointed/poor
- **Why?**
 - If disappointed – what should change? /how
 - If pleased – how does it compare?/to what/why is it good/pleasing
 - If indifferent – why – expectations?

d)

- **What do you think about the way the site has been presented?**
 - probe – noticeboards/landscaped/rural/separate from modern
 - probe – false/authentic
 - probe – suggestions of alternatives
- **Have you visited any other sites recently?**
 - probe – when/where/how/why
- **How do the sites compare**
 - probe – authenticity/value/enjoyment/entertainment/education
 - probe – cost/purpose/expectations/

e)

- **What does the term *archaeology* mean to you?**
 - probe – concepts/misconceptions/
 - probe – TV/ time team/Indiana Jones/digging/Fringe

- probe – tourism/heritage/finance/income for areas

LEADING/CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

- **Does archaeology have a place in modern society?**
 - probe – yes-no/ what role?/ on the edges?/ as heritage/as history
 - probe – local heritage/national/ identity/ belonging/shared past
- **Do archaeological sites belong to anyone?**
 - probe – yes-no/local/national/landowner/ScottishBrit public/inherited/passed on
 - probe – higher level/culture/society/education
- **Do these ideas you have mentioned affect the way sites are presented?**
 - How/why
 - Are they positive or negative influences?

FINISHING QUESTION

- **Are you planning on visiting any other archaeological sites?**
 - probe - Where/why/when
 - probe – reasons/same as here/different

ANY OTHER ISSUES RAISED WHICH NEED TO BE COVERED

Do you have any further thoughts, ideas or comments you would like to make regarding any of the topics discussed?

CLOSE

Thanks for taking the time to participate in my research. If you give me your email address I can update you with progress on my research.

*****Make sure participant has signed release form and has copy of info sheet.*****

Chat in general.

Appendix II

Location code	
Interview/ group No.	
Date	/ /

Copyright Clearance Note and Deposit Agreement

The purpose of this agreement is to ensure that your contribution to my research project is used in strict accordance with your wishes.

Name of researcher: Steven Timoney

Institution: University of Glasgow, Dept. of Archaeology

Project title: Presenting Archaeology to the Public in Scotland

- I have read and understood the information sheet provided and give my permission for my interview discussion to be recorded. ☐
- I give my permission for the above named researcher to use my interview discussion for the above named research project, and associated projects. ☐

I agree to take part in this research study.

Name: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please tick this box if you do not want your real first name to be used in any written work associated with this project. ☐

Appendix III

- Information Sheet -

Presenting Archaeology to the Public in Scotland

This research forms the basis for my PhD in archaeology at the University of Glasgow. The purpose of this research project is to better understand the presentation of archaeological sites to the public in Scotland. Your interview/focus group transcripts will be used to analyse perceptions of archaeology in Scotland, to establish the experiences and thoughts of visitors to these sites. In this way it is hoped that the information gained from these discussions will be used to better interpret archaeological sites and other attractions in the future.

These interviews and discussion groups will be tape-recorded to allow more thorough analysis of participants' input. The information will be held on mini-disc and will only be used by the researcher for this research project (and any associated projects). None of the information provided will be of a sensitive nature, and participants will only be referred to by their first/chosen name. If you do not want your real first name to be used, please tick the box on the consent form and an 'actor' name will be used instead.

Thank you for taking time to be involved in this research project. Your involvement is greatly appreciated.

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Appendix IV – Table of interviewees’ biographical details

Yarrows Archaeological Trail, Caithness				
Code	Name	Gen.	Age	Description
Yar1		M	60+	Local; Yarrows Heritage Trust; English
Yar2		F	51-60	Local; CASE
Yar3		F	41-50	Local; Yarrows Heritage Trust; Scottish
Yar4		M	51-60	Local; farmer
Yar4b		F	41-50	Local
Yar5		F	21-30	Professional; local archaeologist; English
Yar6a		F	60+	Local; crofter
Yar6b		F	60+	Local; crofter
Yar7		F	41-50	Professional; regional archaeologist; Scottish
Yar8		F	21-30	Visitor
Yar9		F	21-30	Visitor
Yar10		F	31-40	Visitor
Yar11		M	31-40	Visitor
Yar12		F	31-40	Visitor; English
Yar13		M	18-21	Visitor; English; 1 st year University student
Yar14		M	18-21	Visitor; Welsh; 1 st year University student
Tarbat Discovery Centre				
Code	Name	Gen.	Age	Description/Notes
Tar1		M	51-60	Visitor
Tar2		F	51-60	Visitor
Tar3		F	18-21	Local; 1 st year University student
Tar4a		F	51-60	Local; English
Tar4b		M	51-60	Local; English
Tar4c		F	51-60	Visitor; English
Tar4d		M	51-60	Visitor; English
Tar5		M	60+	Visitor; Scottish
Tar6		F	51-60	Visitor; Scottish
Tar7		M	60+	Local; incomer; English; volunteer at centre
Tar8		F	60+	Local; member of Tarbat Historic Trust

Tar9		F	31-40	Visitor; Scottish; Angus; part-time artist
Tar10		M	31-40	Visitor; Scottish; Banff & Buchan; alternative
Tar11		M	60+	Visitor; Scottish; Moray.
Tar12		F	51-60	Visitor; visiting friends in area; English
Tar13a		M	41-50	Visitor; American; family holiday; Christian
Tar13b		F	41-50	Visitor; American; family holiday; Christian
Tar13c		F	11-18	Visitor; American; family holiday; Christian
Tar13d		M	11-18	Visitor; American; family holiday; Christian
Tar14		M	21-30	Visitor; local(ish) – Dingwall; 1 st year student
Tar15a		M	51-60	Visitor; American; minister
Tar15b		M	31-40	Visitor; American.
Tar15c		M	51-60	Visitor; American; lecture in history
Tar16		M	31-40	Local; English; volunteer at centre
Tar17		F	31-40	Local; museum curator
Tar18a		M	51-60	Local; incomer; English
Tar18b		F	51-60	Local; incomer; English
Tar18c		F	51-60	Visitor; English; visiting friends in area
Tar18d		M	51-60	Visitor; English; visiting friends in area
Tar19a		M	60+	Visitor; Scottish; Highlands
Tar19b		F	60+	Visitor; Scottish; Highlands
Tar19c		M	5-10	Visitor; Scottish; Highlands
Tar19d		M	5-10	Visitor; Scottish; Highlands
Tar20a		M	21-30	Visitor; Dutch
Tar20b		F	21-30	Visitor; Dutch
Tar21		F	51-60	Visitor; English
Tar22		M	51-60	Professional archaeologist; academic
Tar23		M	51-60	Professional; Local government; planner
Rough Castle, Bonnybridge and the Antonine Wall				
Code	Name	Gen.	Age	Description/Notes
Aw1		M	51-60	Professional; Regional archaeologist
Aw2		M	60+	Professional; national government
Aw3		F	41-50	Visitor; Scottish
Aw4		M	41-50	Visitor; Scottish
Aw5		F	18-21	Visitor; English

Aw6		M	18-21	Visitor; Scottish; 1 st year university student
Aw7		F	21-30	Visitor; Norway; 1 st year university student
Aw8		M	60+	Local; member of Glasgow Arch Soc
Aw9		F	60+	Local
Aw10		F	18-21	Local
Aw11		M	41-50	Local; member of Glasgow Arch Soc
Aw12		F	51-60	Local; American ex-pat.
Urquhart Castle, Loch Ness				
Code	Name	Gen.	Age	Description/Notes
Urq1		F	21-30	Visitor; American; student
Urq2		M	31-40	Professional – national government; local
Urq3a		M	21-30	Visitor; Swansea; British/Indian
Urq3b		F	21-30	Visitor; Swansea; British/Indian
Urq4a		F	21-30	Local; Australian working in area
Urq4b		F	41-50	Visitor; Scottish ex-pat in Australia
Urq5a		F	41-50	Visitor; Australian; Scottish heritage
Urq5b		M	41-50	Visitor; Australian
Urq6a		M	51-60	Visitor; Australian
Urq6b		F	51-60	Visitor; Australian
Urq7a		M	21-30	Visitor; Scottish
Urq7b		F	21-30	Visitor; Scottish
Urq8a		F	41-50	Visitor; English; Scottish heritage
Urq8b		M	60+	Visitor; Scottish
Urq8c		F	60+	Visitor; English
Urq9a		M	51-60	Visitor; South African
Urq9b		F	51-60	Visitor; South African
Urq10a		F	21-30	Visitor; English; Newcastle; member of English Heritage
Urq10b		F	21-30	Visitor; English; Newcastle
Urq11a		M	31-40	Visitor; English; member of English Heritage
Urq11b		F	31-40	Visitor; English; member of English Heritage
Urq12		F	41-50	Professional; Independent tour guide; Scottish
Urq13a		F	31-40	Visitor; German
Urq13b		M	31-40	Visitor; German

Urq14		M	41-50	Visitor; Dutch
Urq15a		F	51-60	Visitor; Canadian; Toronto
Urq15b		M	51-60	Visitor; Canadian; Toronto
Urq16a		M	60+	Visitor; Scottish; Edinburgh
Urq16b		F	60+	Visitor; Scottish; Edinburgh
Urq17a		M	41-50	Visitor; English
Urq17b		F	41-50	Visitor; English
Urq18		M	60+	Visitor; American
Urq19a		M	31-40	Visitor; English; Alternative
Urq19b		F	31-40	Visitor; English
Urq20a		M	41-50	Visitor; Scottish; Highlands
Urq20b		F	41-50	Visitor; Scottish; Highlands
Urq21a		M	51-60	Visitor; American
Urq21b		F	51-60	Visitor; American
Urq22a		M	41-50	Visitor; English
Urq22b		F	41-50	Visitor; English
Urq23a		F	51-60	Visitor; American
Urq23b		M	51-60	Visitor; American
Urq24		M	60+	Visitor; American
Urq25a		M	21-30	Visitor; American
Urq25b		F	21-30	Visitor; American
Urq26a		M	51-60	Visitor; Canadian
Urq26b		F	51-60	Visitor; Canadian
Urq27a		M	21-30	Visitor; Swedish; student at Edinburgh
Urq27b		M	21-30	Visitor; Spanish; student at Edinburgh
Urq28a		M	60+	Visitor; South African; Scottish heritage
Urq28b		F	60+	Visitor; South African
Skara Brae, Orkney				
Code	Name	Gen.	Age	Description/Notes
Sk1		F	41-50	Visitor; English; academic (natural heritage)
Sk2a		F	51-60	Visitor; English
Sk2b		F	60+	Local; English
Sk3		M	51-60	Visitor; Danish
Sk4a		F	51-60	Visitor; English

Sk4b		M	51-60	Visitor; English
Sk5a		F	41-50	Visitor; Scottish; Highlands
Sk5b		F	18-21	Visitor; Scottish; Highlands
Sk6a		M	60+	Visitor; English; Skye
Sk6b		F	60+	Visitor; English; Skye
Sk7		M	21-30	Visitor; Scottish; student (geology)
Sk8		F	31-40	Visitor: German
Sk9		F	21-30	Visitor; Scottish; student (engineering)
Sk10		F	21-30	Visitor; Australian
Sk11a		F	41-50	Visitor; Scottish; Highlands
Sk11b		M	41-50	Visitor; Scottish; Highlands
Sk12a		F	51-60	Visitor; English
Sk12b		F	21-30	Visitor; English
Sk13		F	31-40	Professional; national government
Sk14		M	41-50	Professional; local government (non-archaeologist)
Sk15		F	41-50	Professional; archaeologist; local government.

Appendix V – Sample interview transcripts

Location: Urquhart Castle Interview No.: 1 Date: 8/6/05 No of Partic: 1

- ST *Why did you visit Urquhart Castle?*
- Urq1 *We were in Inverness for a trip with my family and I knew that that's one of the famous castles in Scotland. It's on all the postcards and in all the books. And eh, because I'm interested in medieval stuff and castles I decided to take my parents there. We'd been to Edinburgh and Stirling Castles, but this way they got to actually see the ruins of a castle which, I think that represents far more of the castles in Scotland.*
- ST *You said that you visited other castles, Edinburgh and Stirling. Do you mean the ruinous state you wanted to see as opposed to Edinburgh and Stirling?*
- Urq1 *Well yes. Eh, we didn't actually go inside Edinburgh, but eh, Stirling Castle is of course all fixed up so supposedly representative of how it was at the time [smiles] though I, you know, I still feel like it's kind of empty. I think today castles in Scotland are mostly ruins and so most people experience them in that respect. And so I wanted to take my parents to see it too because you know we don't have these castles at home [USA] it's the only chance to get to see the things that we read about in fairytales and magazines and everything like that.*
- ST *So the castles exist with fairytales....*
- Urq1 *For Americans. Uhm, because we don't grow up surrounded by them. You know, for Europeans the whole cowboy mythology is something that, for me I see cowboys driving down the street whereas Europeans get quite excited, and it's the same with us for castles because growing up we have all the same fairytales we read about and usually there's a castle in there and the knights, kings and everything. But it's not something that we can experience. And here, it doesn't feel so contrived as though it was set up as a theme park. That would just take away from the experience, and I know we'll talk about the visitor centre later, but I don't feel as though it was a set-up. I mean these ruins have been sitting here for hundreds of years and I think that's important that it's not surrounded by a huge town or complex or anything like that.*
- ST *So it's set apart?*
- Urq1 *It's more in its natural context, 'cause it wasn't originally, it didn't originally have a visitor centre so pilgrims could buy their trinkets before they went into the castle or anything. You know, it was always just sitting on a lonely promontory overlooking the loch and I think the feeling still gets across.*
- ST *What were your first impressions of the site when you arrived? Did you know what the castle looked like before you visited?*

- Urql *I had seen pictures on postcards and all, so I knew that it was in a pretty ruinous state. And I know that there's quite a lot of people get frustrated with it because it's expensive to go into for the amount of castle that's actually standing. We took it as part of a tour, the Jacobite tour, so they actually drove us down there and drove us to the Loch Ness Museum and we took a boat ride on the loch as well so it was part of [smiles] 'Highlands in a nutshell' kind of thing.*
- ST *With your tour, why did you choose that as opposed to visiting the Castle [on your own]?*
- Urql *For one thing, because the Castle is kinda out on it's own it's difficult to get to if you don't have a car. You've to time the Citylink buses just right and it's kind of iffy when you're only there for a day. And you have other buses to catch and all. That's the thing, this [the Castle] is kind of in the middle of nowhere and that's why we chose that [the tour]. They did give us some information on it but I don't think it was.... I think the inside the visitor centre was much more informative than what the tour guides actually told us on the boat.*
- ST *Did you have a tour guide around the Castle or were you left to.....*
- Urql *We were pretty much left to look around. He pointed out this is the Castle, this is what happened to it the Jacobites blew it up. And they also have the giant, uhm, catapult up there now. So he kinda told us a bit about that and uh mentioned go up and see the visitor centre it's worth seeing. But he didn't say, you know, this is what was here, that was there, he didn't give us a room by room rundown or anything like that.*
- ST *What did you do at the site? Did you spend a lot of time at the Castle or the visitor centre?*
- Urql *We did. We ended up spending most of our time there [the Castle] and we climbed all the stairwells and like we climbed all the towers and everything. I think we pretty much walked to all the parts that Historic Scotland has laid out sidewalks to. And you know basically you have to stick to the sidewalks so you only see what they want you to see.*
- ST *Did you get that feeling?*
- Urql *Ehm, a little bit, but at the same time the Castle is situated kind of precariously right on the edge so I can see where there would be a problem where you know if you stepped in the wrong place you might fall in the loch or something. Which probably wouldn't be a problem in other places.....uhm....It's definitely, it's a workout there too. It's...there are a lot of places you can't you know take it in a giant circle like some of them. Here you have to go up the stairs then back down, that way and back, sssso...I don't know. I didn't get a feeling in some of the areas of how the Castle was laid out you know when it was still standing if I would have been able to just walk that instead of having to walk back and around. It's hard to say.*
- ST *Not being able to know how it was laid out in the past, how did you feel when you were moving about the site?*

- Urql *Well there was one reconstruction kinda hidden away I thought. It was actually one of the last things we saw, just because where it was placed, it was kind of up on top of the hill where you had to climb several flights of stairs to, if I remember correctly. Uhm... there were quite a few things that we walked to, we looked around, and then you'd notice the sign and then figure out what it was. So I didn't feel like I knew where I was going, maybe if I...because we landed on the boat we didn't go through the visitors centre first. We came up and you know perhaps the visitor centre if we'd bought the guidebook it would have had a room by room rundown of the place but we didn't so we were kinda left to fend for ourselves.*
- ST *Were you able to use the on-site interpretation? Did you use that to help you on your move about the Castle or....*
- Urql *Not for actually moving around, uhm, just kind of walked.... Well in a way trying to avoid the crowds because you know there are a whole group of people and the sidewalks were narrow, and especially when you have older people they basically create a bottleneck [laughs] because they're walking slowly along, had to take the stairs slowly so pretty soon there'd be this huge group of people behind them. So that's one thing, it's easy to get trapped in a place there and well, the stairs in the tower were the original so they can't do anything about that you know but you can't pass another person on the stairs unless you're really really careful, so I think movement is somewhat limited there.*
- ST *Did that affect your experience at the site?*
- Urql *Well I have to say that if the site had been any more crowded than it was it probably would have been a disappointing experience because the way it was there were just enough people that it was comfortably spread out but if there had been any more we would have been justit would have been easy to get trapped in places for a very long time or you know just be crowded in so I can see how it would be easy for that space to get overfilled because it didn't seem to....the numbers weren't that big but...*
- ST *How many roughly were there when you visited?*
- Urql *From our tour there were probably about twenty and then I'd say there were another around ten or fifteen tourists who had driven there or were not a part of our group. I imagine during the summer it can almost be an unpleasant experience crunched in there.*
- ST *Did you visit the visitor centre?*
- Urql *We did. Right at the end, and unfortunately because of the tour we didn't have very much time and so I actually missed the film because my parents wanted to get some things from the gift shop so I got those for them and so I missed the film which I heard the ending is quite impressive...have you seen it?*
- ST *Yes.*
- Urql *You know the ending where it raises the curtain and everything, I heard that was pretty cool. And we actually didn't get a chance to go to the museum*

much which is part of the problem with the tour which is that you can either see the Castle or see the visitor centre with the amount of time they allow which I can see you know that they need to get people moving and all but at the same time I think I could have spent more time there.

ST *Would you have liked to spend more time at the site?*

Urql *Yeah. The information boards on the inside [in the visitor centre] about the different people who lived and worked in the Castle and what jobs were and that sort of thing I found that quite intriguing and actually quite a lot of information there compared to what some of the other displays have had at other castles. Because too often I feel that Historic Scotland focuses on....just on the kings or on, I don't know not the day to day activities so much, or the average people. I feel that they get overlooked quite often and....so it was nice to actually see that information and to know, okay this was who was here and this is what they were doing everyday. So I was quite interested and I did read those boards.*

ST *What did you think of the museum?*

Urql *Well I didn't get through it all. I only got through the first portion by the theatre entrance, but I really liked what I saw there. Because I just don't think that territory gets covered enough at Historic Scotland sites. Too often, at least for me, they focus on whether it's a reconstruction of it you know how the kings, when the kings lived there and that sort of thing and that's not what interests me so much. You know they're....for every king there were thousands and thousands of you know peasants or just servants, secretaries, whatever they had. And it just seems that you don't hear too much about those people and what they did, what their job was. And so I was really happy to see that and I actually found them very interesting compared to other displays I've seen.*

ST *What did you think of the way the Castle was presented?*

Urql *Uhm..... Well there were parts of it that I'm not sure that they were being reconstructed I think that they're just always blocked off. But uhm, there, especially when I look back at my pictures now, there are a few places where there was bright orange fencing across the wall or something, and I thought obviously that wasn't there before [smiles] and I understand the need for it safety wise that they have to do that, but it's too bad that they couldn't do it some other way. So that every time I look at that Castle in my picture I'm not going to see the old Castle I visited. I'm going to see bright orange fencing right in the middle. You know, the modern day. And that kinda takes away from the mystique of it I guess.*

Uhm, other ways it was presented. Again I kind of thought the information in the Castle itself was almost a little boring. You know, well this is the room of so and so they lived here. But it didn't tell me well this is what they had in the room so much, you know, this is how often they were here this is what the room would have felt like. I didn't get the feeling of what these places would have actually been like when they were occupied. I know when I was up in Orkney I got the same feeling, there were a lot of empty stone rooms like at the Bishop's Palace and Earl's Bu and... you know it's really hard to visualise some times that these were actually warm,

decorated you know bustling with people. And sometimes I just don't think that that gets across with Historic Scotland. You know, I don't....it would be hard to reconstruct everything but it's too bad that somehow they can't reconstruct parts of these so we see more than just the cold stone you know with the moss growing on it or what not.

ST *Do you think it would be a good idea to reconstruct part or parts of rooms or...?*

Urq1 *Well, it couldn't be done within the Castle itself within the original structure obviously because especially for this Castle it's too exposed, but unless there is something that I missed you know in side the museum they couldn't even just recreate one of the small rooms, you know something to show there were carpets on the floor tapestries on the walls, you know the fireplace there was colour and light and everything. I think that would make it more real for me.*

ST *That would help you...*

Urq1 *Yeah, because you can look at so many castles in Scotland but all you can see is the bare stone, and it would be quite easy, I'm lucky that I study it so I know it wasn't that way, but for the average person they're going to think you know these people slept on cold stone floors and you know with rain pouring in the windows and everything else, and that's not an accurate representation of how life was for the people there.*

ST *Moving back to when you were talking about the orange fence and your photographs, how does the modern, the fence, the panels, impact on your experience?*

Urq1 *Well the sidewalks, I guess they've kept them quite orderly, uhm they obviously do stand out but at the same time for practicality's sake they could leave dirt paths because that would ruin the structure, as you know, numbers of people tramp through the mud and everything. Possibly they could have done gravel walks or something although I'm sure that would require a lot more maintenance so again maybe just practicality. The signs were discreet, sometimes almost too much so. And some of them were kind of, uhm, sun worn and cracked. They probably were ready for a change. In general I would say that the modern additions didn't get in the way too much. I was just thinking the orange fencing when I took pictures of the tower standing up but when I actually took pictures from the tower you could still get just the rock with the trees and the other parts of the Castle still standing. So you still could get pictures of you know the Castle as it was a couple of hundred years ago, which is good. And you know, as much as we hate to admit it, pictures really remind us of what we saw and we'll remember the aspects better that we actually you know can look at pictures over the years just like so many memories you know say when you were children things that we think are memories but probably only have seen the pictures and in our minds you know gradually created an experience. And so any time I go back to my pictures I'm going to read the experience based on what I saw and anyone I show the pictures to and tell about their whole, I mean everything they know they can't turn around and look at another part, the only experience they have is those pictures that I can show them and what I can tell them of it.*

- ST *Was that affecting what you were trying to represent in your picture?*
- Urql *Very much so. I think I was able to get one or two, that are pretty much the whole idyllic scene, but whether it was the sidewalks or the, you know, fencing that I was trying to avoid or just a lot of people it's really really difficult to take these pictures without lots of tourists in them, because everyone wants to get their picture taken on the tower and you know, everywhere else, so in a way the people also get in the way of the experience. But obviously that can't be avoided because I'm one of them also and I was there I'm sure getting in the way of other people.*
- ST *It seems to be part of what's coming out [in this interview] that parts of the Castle are real and parts are impositions, whether sidewalks or people visiting. How are they reconciled?*
- Urql *Uhm, I think it is because you don't get the feeling that they've tried to reconstruct it just to bring tourists in there. I mean they make on apologies for the fact that it was blown to bits and this is the rubble, this is how its been for you know, what was it three or four hundred years. And that was the point of it, telling people that, I think it's great that they don't say well we brought in a special designer to create these ruins to give you the authentic experience. I think its location helped a lot, because it's not in the middle of a neighbourhood now.*
- ST *So it's set apart from the modern settlement....*
- Urql *I think so. The car park is actually at the top of the hill and you can't really see it from the castle that much. And also I think the visitor centre is quite discreet. It doesn't dominate the landscape by any means and it doesn't draw attention to itself at all. So, I mean you can hardly see it from some parts of the Castle because of the way the hill is situated and everything. So for a while the modern world is back up the hill. You don't see it unless you really want to look at it. So you can turn your back to it and look at the loch. But it's difficult to escape from it completely, because there were bombers or I don't know military planes racing down the loch when we were there, and there are boats out there, motorboats and everything. So no matter what, unless you happen to early on a Sunday morning when everyone's asleep you just happen to be able to you know sail your boat by, that's about the only time you would get a truly peaceful experience there.*
- ST *Do you think that visiting under such circumstances would make it a more authentic experience?*
- Urql *That's difficult to say, because I mean authentic back in the time there would have been people constantly going in and out, bringing in supplies and cattle. You know, it was by no means a quiet stone retreat that the king and queen just go and kick up their heels and be the only ones for miles around. And it wasn't that way. Obviously they didn't have the noise around, you know the noise pollution of cars and the planes and everything, but to be fair it was teeming with people back then. Of course tourists are a very different story too. You get all the people, they're just there because they should see a castle darn it and sometimes that takes away from the*

experience if you're really serious about just experiencing the castle and other people just wanna have their picture taken in front of it.

ST *So you think that people go for different reasons?*

Urq1 *Yeah, absolutely. I think a lot of it depends on where they're from and how much they know and obviously someone who knows a lot more is going to do different things, might appreciate different aspects of it that the modern tourist would not. And if a tourist has seen a castle before then it's more of the same old same old. And if they've seen castles they might be disappointed with this one because it is a pile of ruins. I mean, quite honestly, you don't get to see that much of what it actually was and how it looked. But for someone who's never seen one before this could be quite exciting.*

ST *Is the fact that the Castle's a ruin an important aspect of its attraction?*

Urq1 *It's hard to say. I suppose it was. I did want my parents to see that it wasn't just the Castles in Stirling and Edinburgh that are all fixed up nicely, but you know the actual ruins. But at the same time the castles are there in Scotland that are in ruins and don't really see any visitors. Location may be in favour for this one but it's....I don't know why this one is necessarily much more appealing than others but because of its appeal it's become more widely known and therefore more people come to it, you know, it's a big circle.*

ST *You mentioned before about the fact that the Castle's out on a promontory away from the modern settlement. Talking about archaeological sites in general, does archaeology have a place in modern life?*

Urq1 *Well I think so because too many of the sites that are in modern settlements we can't get at them. That's actually the problem with the Faroe Islands the reason there's not much is there's so little useful land there that things are constantly built on top. And so there's probably lots of great stuff yet it's buried under settlements. And it's probably the same in Scotland, there's probably a lot of information we could gather but we're not going to get access to it because it is buried under buildings that only if there's a fire or someone decides to destroy it and that may be centuries from now. So I think that archaeology is important in these rural areas as it may be the only opportunity we have to take a look at these sites and to learn about them and to dig for artefacts and look for artefacts. You know to promote history too. The fact that the kings weren't just sitting in Edinburgh and Stirling but these places that now seem in the middle of nowhere to us were actually quite active at one point. They, the Orkneys and the Shetlands used to be the centre of the Viking world. And in Scotland, especially in the north there are so many abandoned medieval settlements that you know now all you see are fields but that used to be a community there used to be dozens if not a couple of hundred people living there but you'd never know it. Sometimes you feel like you're the first person to set foot there nowadays. I think that's important for people to know that the landscape has not always been as it is now.*

ST *Do you think that in general at sites you visit that that is the case, that people are made aware of this or....*

- Urql *Uhm, no, I don't think they always are. Going back to before how we were talking about the average learning about the average person quite often you don't get the feeling of how many people were actually there, how many people were coming in and out every day. The fact that they weren't just sitting by themselves but there were probably people constantly you know making quite long journeys to get to these castles for business, you know whether it was for the law or paying their taxes, whatever. Even though they're located far away they were not isolated in the sense that we see them now. And I don't think that always gets across to people. You know, even if it's just another signboard talking about how many people probably came in and out, how many people were nearby, you know. I think Historic Scotland, like I mentioned before, kind of overlooks the average person sometimes. We don't get the feeling of day to day life.*
- ST *How did the Castle and your visit compare to other sites you've visited? How does the experience compare to other sites in Scotland or further afield?*
- Urql *Lets see. The only Historic Scotland sites that I've actually had tour guides, actual people, have been at Edinburgh and Stirling [Castles]. Some of them, like at Orkney and Shetland, have audio guides which were free at that point. This one there was neither. I'm sure we probably could have paid to get audio guides in the visitor centre but again because we approached it differently from the way most people did [by boat] we had the different experience. I really don't know what information would have been available to us separately.*
- ST *How were the audio guides? Did you take one of the audio guides?*
- Urql *No I didn't. My Mom bought one of the guidebooks afterwards so we didn't have it in front of us as we were walking through but I didn't actually get a chance to look at it before she took it home.*
- ST *The guidebook wasn't bought to help you on your visit to the site but was more of a memento or a....*
- Urql *Yeah, and that's a feeling I get at a lot of the sites is the guidebook is something that you get afterwards. They don't have them up at the cash register like boom you're going to get your ticket do you want a guidebook. Usually it's after. I suppose it's that afterward people want to know more and they want a memento and the pictures and everything. So I don't think they're so much meant to help people while they're there as to give them the photos to look at. I know there idea is that they'll educate people more because they contain more information than they may have gotten at the site and all that but I honestly wonder how many people leave and actually go home and read all the text in them. They probably just look at the pictures. I mean, you may as well just sell a picture book.*
- ST *You mentioned taking photos, and the orange fencing. Was taking photos an important part of your visit?*

- Urql *Yeah, I think so. Of course that was the first time I'd been in the Highlands so.... Uhm, yeah, luckily there is still the tower so you can get up a bit and kind of uhm...there are a couple of places where if you stand you can get at least parts of the Castle but manage to overlook most of the modern sidewalks and most of the people you know where they tend to congregate and all of that. But it is really difficult to really block out all aspects of the modern world.*
- ST *Were you wanting to block out these modern aspects?*
- Urql *I think so. I may not have realised it at the time but it obviously doesn't belong there. And we're there for the Castle not for the sidewalks [laughs]. So, yeah I think I was trying to block it out quite a lot and especially as it is on such a hill it's difficult at that Castle. A lot of them you can manage to get a certain angle or something but the fact that.... It's pretty much laid out on a line, so if you wanna get the whole site you can but you're going to get all this other stuff in with it. But the layout's obviously not the fault of Historic Scotland or anyone it's just how it was.*
- ST *Is there anything that you'd change about how the site is presented?*
- Urql *Aside from actually maybe putting a little more information right there on the site about the average person in case someone doesn't get into the museum for some reason or other at least they'd have some more information. Uhm...other than that I don't know how much I would change other than update some of the signs because some of them are quite worn, sun-bleached and you can hardly read some of them. But that's just a minor thing. I guess they still do the job just not as well. Other than that... the site is decently presented. I get to be picky and of course I've also been to a lot of sites whereas people only go to one or two Historic Scotland sites and I study this so I'm a little more picky about what I'm reading about and all. For the average person I know my parents really did enjoy it, and I suppose it did give them all the information that they needed for an introductory look at Scottish Highland Castles.*
- ST *What did they enjoy about it?*
- Urql *We really didn't talk about it that much. I think they were most impressed with the inside of the museum they were able to see the film and I think once they could get a little more about the history of it, I mean it's really difficult to walk around one of these castles and truly appreciate it when you don't have the context behind it. Unfortunately the way we came in we came in the back door so to speak so we didn't get that context 'til afterwards so I'm sure that a lot of tourists just miss it altogether. You know, whether the bus tours kinda hurrying them through you know or some tourists are just so disinterested in what they're seeing that they can't fully appreciate it. I think there's enough information given that if the tourist has enough time they can appreciate it, but of course that's always the tricky part.*
- ST *Are there any other aspects of your visit that you think are important or relevant that I haven't touched upon?*

- Urql *Not that I can think of right now. Overall I'd say it was a pretty good experience and it's you know as I said I was being a little nit-picky with the changes and the way that I see what Historic Scotland did I think in general they do a pretty good job they cater to everyone and they really do have to look at the lowest common denominator I mean people who have never been to a castle and have no prior knowledge, but at the same time they have to make it interesting enough for the people who really do study this or are interested in this so they can appreciate it and not just become bored and abandon visiting these sites altogether. It's a difficult balance.*
- ST *Does it balance?*
- Urql *Sometimes I think there's room for more of, uh, the advanced information more than just 'this is the doorway where people came in. They could close the door'. Well, yes, but after you've seen a few different sites that basically have the same set-up you want to know more or you know why is this site different? How have things evolved? You know.*
- ST *How would they be able to remedy that? How would they be able to provide that information?*
- Urql *Whether it's possibly a more advanced text than...*
- ST *Text boards on the site?*
- Urql *No so much on the site because if you had to have two different signs for, you know, every area that would clutter it even more because they really did seem to take care not to have the signs intrude upon the actual castle. You know, whether it's a more advanced text, you know, a book uh, guidebook, in addition to the one they sell or have a picture book, you know, because as we were saying most people probably don't read them, and then to actually go even more in-depth. Because, you know, when I have read some of the guide books I feel some parts are really glossed over, there's so much more that could be said, and people would probably find it interesting. I mean, they're only going to go out and search for that information if they're truly interested in the subject, but if it's given to them in one place they're more likely to take it in.*

END

Location: Rough Castle Interview No.:4 Date: 8/05 No of Partic: 1

ST *I wanted to ask you what you knew about the site [Rough Castle] and the Antonine Wall before you visited?*

Aw4 *I knew nothing about the site as such. I had heard of the Antonine Wall a long time ago as being, it's in the mists of time, but being another Roman wall further north than Hadrian's. My only other knowledge of it when I was looking at maps to find directions and the Antonine Wall was marked on the roadmaps. That was basically all I knew about the Wall. I know nothing about Antonine the person at all, or virtually nothing.*

ST *Did you have any expectations of what you were going to see?*

Aw4 *Possibly I thought I was going to see a wall. Certainly not a full-scale pristine battlement or whatever I expected. I presumed as it was called a wall I presumed it would be made of stone or such like, and it wasn't. On the other site at the Linlithgow end [Kinneil Fortlet] to a certain extent I was disappointed because there was virtually no wall of any sort. There was a line that you could make out. Whoever's in charge, Historic Scotland or whoever it is has done a good job with what they've got i.e. the posts laying out what they think was the guardhouse or whatever, that sort of thing. That was good.*

Here [Rough Castle] there's obviously more of the original dyke and wall visible. As you're strolling along and up to the first height it is very reminiscent of a well laid-out golf course and such. But apart from that I thought it was quite impressive because you can still see what would have been there two thousand years ago, and you don't need to much imagination to finish it off with like the rough edges and perhaps the wooden top, the wooden barrier and the fortlets or whatever they were. Also the pits where there would have been the stakes I presume was interesting to see some of that was brought back. So there was something there and with a little imagination you could see almost the whole thing. I thought that that was quite interesting. Access was a bit awkward. But I thought that bit was good.

ST *What was good about that area?*

Aw4 *The fact that you could see basically what had been there two thousand years ago. There was still...they'd utilised the landscape in that there was a ridge there and they'd cut out the rise down the ditch and raised it higher on the other side, and you could see that. You could get a chap standing telling you this all day and you still wouldn't see it in your mind, whereas at that section [the Wall along from Rough Castle] you could see exactly, as I say with a little imagination, it's not exactly, what it was, you could see exactly what you were up against in your mind if you were A – one of the defenders, or B – one of the attackers. You know you'd see what you had to scale and what like. So that was quite good at that.*

ST *So the physical remains at that site made it easier for you to...*

Aw4 *Yes, much easier...*

- ST *So what was there, you said that you could imagine...*
- Aw4 *Yes, without too much imagination required you could see that they're bloody impressive. You know the workload that was in there creating it. But Also it must've been some site to see two thousand years ago when it was a solid line, across the country basically.*
- ST *Touching on that last point. The fact that at Rough Castle the preservation of the Wall meant that you were able to imagine the Wall. How do those ideas relate to the fort itself and the remains of the fort?*
- Aw4 *Ehm, Well you could see the outline, the footprint if you like, of the fort. I don't know if more should have been done like perhaps putting posts in like they've done at the Linlithgow end [Kinneil fortlet]. I don't know if that would have helped at all to be honest with you, because as I say the footprint, the linear markings are still there so once again use your imagination. And there are the picture signs showing you rough drawings of what it was like approximately. I don't think that you need, you certainly don't need to build a wooden fort to show you what it was like. Those pictures there do the business. You could add a bit or take a bit or whatever. I don't think you need, physically to build a fort to show people what it looked like. My only criticism, and it's not a criticism of the place, was the access. That may well be a bonus in fact, being preserved because the access isn't that easy. Once again you would have to know, you'd have to know where you were going, take a local guide with you, or perhaps the tourist information would have information on how to get there. Tourist information sites aren't always easy to find if you're a stranger never mind in the town but a stranger in the country it's going to be impossible I would have thought. In some places anyway. They're not always sited in the best places. So if we did not know we were going there we certainly wouldn't have happened across it, or wouldn't have happened across a sign to it. But once again if you bring too much tourism to it that will destroy the effect. I don't think so when I think about that because when, all the tourism at Edinburgh Castle's no destroyed it, or London Tower Bridge or whatever.*
- ST *Would the effects of that number of people be the same?*
- Aw4 *I think that if you had the numbers, presumably hundreds of thousands are going to Edinburgh Castle, and only hundreds would be going to Rough Castle. If you had the hundreds of thousands going, major infrastructure would have to be put in, and you'd probably destroy what you've got or what you're trying to show. The same scenario is people are saying there should be a toilet stop half-way up Ben Nevis. But you're going to spoil the whole effect of the thing by putting the facilities in that people think they would require. If there was....a....I'm trying to think of the word, a reception area, but it's not that. An information centre at the beginning of the wee drive, the wee road, maybe, or even further up. But I think at the beginning would be better, where you can have a toilet stop if you need one and all the rest, with maybe more information, I don't know. That might be an idea, to show you how it was, you know, on a bigger scale than the small boards you've got at the site. I don't know if that would be a help to the tourists or not, or to the archaeologists.*

- ST *You mentioned the information boards, and you mentioned them earlier as well. And the reconstruction drawings on the boards as well. And you also discussed it in terms of not requiring an actual reconstruction of a fort. What were your thoughts on the information available at the site?*
- Aw4 *Short and concise, which is probably what you need in that situation, because you don't want to be standing reading reams and reams and reams and all about his grandmother or whatever. Because it could be threatening with rain being in Scotland, and you want to get the information, with a little bit extra, the way of life or maybe there was trade through that or whatever. If it was an indoor reception area or whatever you could then go on expanding then about life in that time and whatever crops they grew and animals they farmed or whatever. But the boards, for the situation of the site as it is, I thought the boards were ninety out of a hundred. Because you don't want to be standing, especially if you've got mum, dad and two or three kids, mum might be interested, really interested. Dad might be slightly interested, and the kids probably won't. They'll probably want to hear two or three sentences, the Romans were here, the Romans did this, or whatever, and then go an run and kick a football or whatever. You've got to get that signage right, the amount of information on it. So a few wee bullet points, tra la la tra la la [mimics writing out the text], and I think they did that there, more or less.*
- ST *You mentioned the reconstruction drawings as well. What were your thoughts?*
- Aw4 *Well again that picture showed exactly, well you know a picture is a thousand words. That showed exactly what they were saying it looked like this, more or less. Probably. They don't really have the evidence as such, and it's... it was good enough for me. I was happy with it. As I say, if it had been an indoor place I could have done with a bit more information, or spent more time learning about it or whatever. But that's just a personal thing.*
- ST *If there was an indoor thing as you've mentioned, what other information...*
- Aw4 *They could expand it a bit more on life at that time. Why was it there, who Antonine was and why he built it there and didn't stop at Hadrian's Wall, which everyone's heard of. Not everyone's seen it [Hadrian's Wall] I've never seen it. So you can go into that, once again what life was like in those days we think. With maybe a few more line drawings or such. I mean you can hardly put a video screen in and show life as it was without paying lots of money for actors and all that sort of thing which is not necessary. Because people do have brains, and people going to these sorts of places have the intelligence to take a few words and a picture or two and they've got the whole picture without needing to see it re-enacted. Having said that apparently the one at Bannockburn's marvellous. What I've heard, which is a video room I think, and you see re-enactments of the Battle of Bannockburn and such like. But I don't think that's necessary at that site, even the whole Antonine Wall, I was going to say isn't as important, but it isn't as prominent as the Battle of Bannockburn where you're getting the American 'my ancestors left Scotland a hundred years ago' so I think a lot of that tourism would go to the Bannockburn one. I don't know if they*

would be interested in the Antonine Wall at all because it's not as big and famous as Hadrian's Wall.

ST *You said it's not as prominent. Do you mean in terms of people knowing about it?*

Aw4 *Yes, in the world, the Celts all left Scotland for all their various reasons in the Clearances and the Americans, and Canadians, and Australians would be more Scots than a lot of the Scots are. And their family connections and lots of stuff. And they would come and see Bannockburn as part of a tour I would imagine. They may come to see if it was added on, the Antonine Wall, but they wouldn't be coming over, I wouldn't have thought, for that purpose.*

ST *So it's not viewed as Scottish heritage?*

Aw4 *Yes, that's only my opinion. It could be included in the whole thing, you know, because long before Bannockburn the locals were fighting the Romans, they were just other locals over there with a Roman leader or whatever it might have been.*

ST *How does Rough Castle and the Antonine Wall compare to other archaeological sites you have visited?*

ST *Well I've never actually been to the one at Bannockburn, I've only actually heard about it. How does it compare? It was more difficult to access. You did need someone with local knowledge to find it. I mean I don't think, well not without great difficulty if I'd gone out to find it. I've bumped across other archaeological sites, and I've gone to other archaeological sites as well. And they were reasonably well sign-posted at an awkward spot through a few fields and whatever. Follow the arrows or whatever. Others you drive past and they're almost on the roadside, like Maeshowe and things like that. Or Skara Brae. The....Rough Castle, the site itself I thought was quite good. It's easily accessed by locals who use it as a leisure area as well as the historical side of things I think. The locals who were there when we were there were using it for leisure rather than for historical. Including a guy on his mountain bike going up and down, and he wasn't doing any harm to it as it happens.*

ST *What does the term archaeology mean to you?*

Aw4 *Archaeology is obviously the....going back in history, basically. And I personally tend to think of it as being hundreds of years ago, and certainly thousands of years ago. I don't automatically think of perhaps Victorian archaeology or such like. I do think of Medieval and beyond when I think of archaeology.*

ST *So it's further back in time?*

Aw4 *For me it's further back in time. The Dark Ages perhaps would be an interesting thing if there was some information about that. I would definitely like to know more about brochs, because there's not enough about them and why they're only in Scotland. I mean, if there's all the sea connections with Europe, with the Scandinavian countries and with Ireland*

for heavens sake, I mean a lot of the islands of Scotland are closer to Ireland than they are to Edinburgh or Glasgow or mainland Scotland, some of the islands. Why on earth was it only in Scotland these people who built brochs. And it must have been, with the brochs for instance, it must have been a time of peace when you needed years to build some of these buildings. I'd like to know a bit about that. And the Bronze Age times and whatever. Whenever we can find when the first people came up here would be interesting too.

ST *How do you normally access archaeology?*

Aw4 *Well I have a great belief in the great educator [television] if it is used properly because there are some marvellous programmes. I've learnt a hell of a lot from it. You know, natural history, history, archaeology, tra la la. I've forgotten the question [laughs]. What did you ask?*

ST *About how you normally access archaeology.*

Aw4 *Access it.*

ST *Or how do you encounter, is it through sites or TV....*

Aw4 *Yes something like that. If I had a reason to go to a place and I knew there was something interesting archaeological or historical thing there, whether it be a castle or a graveyard, then I would if I had the time I would look out and try and find that. Graveyards are marvellous places and very informative. I find. And I'm not being morbid or weird or anything like that. I mean you can follow or see local areas who had a predominance of a particular surname, you know? The older the graveyard the better because you get to see the different spellings through the ages of the areas and the names and such. Down the sides of the gravestones you've got partly the, if it's a man his trade you know if he was a farmer or a farrier or whatever. I find that very interesting. Religious history I find interesting too with the churches and such like. And I'm really annoyed I didn't go back to see Rosslyn Chapel before the book came out [laughs]. Because you can't get near the bloody thing now [laughs]. It's a fantastic place. I saw it thirty-odd years ago, and I was very impressed. Apprentice pillar and so on.*

ST *Does archaeology have a place in modern society?*

Aw4 *I would say so. I have believed for a long long time that if you don't know where you come from you don't know where you're going, in that sort of way. And it's always interesting to see how things are done in another time or another place or whatever. If we don't have archaeology and archaeologists, things would just, you'd never know what was anywhere because they'd be building motorways and blocks of office flats or whatever on top of Edinburgh Castle. They'd knock what you have down and put a highrise in it or some thing like that. And I find it very interesting to hear or see or read or whatever the likes of the Antonine Wall. I've known about it for many years and it was just that last weekend that I finally went to see it. I've never seen Hadrian's Wall yet as I say. There are many interesting things that history, archaeologically and geology, some places up in the northwest of Scotland, with the geology up there. There's a great centre up*

there that tells you about the stratification of all the rocks and minerals and what have you. I find the subject interesting.

ST *Do archaeological sites belong to anyone?*

Aw4 *I would presume....is this a moral question or....?*

ST *In any context.*

Aw4 *Yes they do belong to everyone, as far as I'm concerned, of the country. There's no way I can go over to Zimbabwe and say I belong or I have ownership on this great wall or building.*

ST *So it's a national...*

Aw4 *I would say it's a national, and particularly a local area's responsibility. But we should have the National Trust, or Historic Scotland or a body of interested and like-minded people who care about their local sites. There's no point in saying that the government in Edinburgh are looking after something in the north of Caithness or whatever, just like there's no point in somebody in London having a say on whatever a local thing is. You should have a local government connection because nobody in London or Edinburgh is going to give a hoot about a broch away up in Sutherland or. They'll phone up and 'is it still there' and aye that's fine. Whereas local people are like 'we need a wee bit of a tidy up here' so you get the local input from local people. You also get the input from the public who are going to see it, t the local people. And that can filter up or out to the higher authorities who can finance perhaps a project on it that's required, like cutting the grass or something simple. It doesn't have to be major surgery to the building, or to the site, I shouldn't say to the building.*

END

- ST *You said [before start of interview] that you've been to Skara Brae before.*
- Sk9 *Yes. I've been once before, about seven years ago, or something like that.*
- ST *Why did you come to Skara Brae today?*
- Sk9 *I'm really interested in history and it's something I had to turn my back on when I did, I did a degree in structural engineering. When I'm on holiday I always come and get back into it again. So I wanted to come to Skara Brae obviously because it's the most famous and because it's got some differences to it than the other villages. I was interested in coming back and having a look at those differences, looking at a more famous archaeological site than the ones I've been to, because the ones I've been to are a lot of unexcavated ones.*
- ST *Which ones?*
- Sk9 *Well there's one on Papa Westray, just a house called....I can't remember what it's called but it's just a house with a workshop beside it*
- ST *Is that Knap of Kowar?*
- Sk9 *Yeah. And that's, it's absolutely amazing because you just go in and wander around. And then Boardhouse [sic. Barnhouse] which is just by Stenness which is the other village they've found. And I've been on Rousay as well, which has like hundreds of sites which are all, none of them have been excavated and they're all just kind of there for anybody to just go and look at them which is great fun.*
- ST *How do these different sites compare?*
- Sk9 *This one, I mean it's got the museum, and the re-enactment. I don't know what you call it [laughs]. The one that's been built. So I wanted to see how a more, it's got a lot more information and the other ones just have information boards, you know they just have the one information board, and I wanted to see something that people have obviously spent a lot of time thinking about how to present it and what the clear way of presenting it is. And obviously people have thought about the questions that people would ask that are more in depth, you know get a wee bit more in depth information. But I was also interested to see how they dealt with the huge numbers of visitors that came here and dealt with how you have a remains like Skara Brae, but you still have thousands, I mean I don't know what the visitor numbers are here, but I was actually interested to see how they stop people jumping up and down on it and destroying it as well. So that was another reason why I wanted to come.*
- ST *What are your thoughts on that? How do you think they....*
- Sk9 *They just are quite....Well the village itself is quite restricted in what you can do and what you couldn't. And there are people up there. They just do*

it with manpower. They just have staff and they just have people up there all the time and people keeping an eye on people, and big signs saying keep out and yeah, basically they just do it with manpower.

ST *Is it the same as your last visit?*

Sk9 *I can't remember. I think it's the same because I remember my last visit we also went to the Knap of Howar, and I remember being amazed at the Knap of Howar that you could just go in. So my last visit it must have been that you couldn't go in like you can't now, and you must've looked down. One of the houses now is completely covered and you can't see into it at all which wasn't the case last time I was here. And the...I don't remember the museum, the new museum bit and the video at the front. And I also don't remember Skaill House. But it must've been here. But I really liked Skaill House, because it was informal. Normally when you go round old houses and as you go round people throw facts at you. But it is. It's interesting the museum and stuff here, with displays.*

ST *Tell me more about that.*

Sk9 *I liked the....they just gave you a wee bit more information about the thoughts of how people lived. And I liked the way that it was, they had two types of text. They had the definite information in the bold text, and guesswork in italic text, which I really like. Because one of my friends does the drawings for Historic Scotland, and I know how much guesswork goes into it. So I like it when they're honest about guesswork. I like that, because you might as well be. So I liked the way they said that this is guessing, and this is what we actually found, so this is how we've come to the conclusions about that. And I liked the way they showed the historical thinking all the way through, which often you don't get. Often you just get....such and such. I mean the other ones I have a guidebook, and a lot of the other ones my book has contradicted with the information on the display boards. And that....in a way that's nice because it causes you to think about it more and think about the historical evidence, but at the same time it's obviously it's just 'cause it's two different people coming to different conclusions. And that's quite annoying in a way. I mean my guidebook's great because she says this is guesswork, whereas the boards present it all as fact.*

ST *Do you feel that happens with these boards?*

Sk9 *Yeah, quite a lot. They are just...they do come across as fact. The drawings, a lot of people look at the drawings and think, well that must've been how people lived. Well....no! [laughs]. It's good coming here though and getting that extra bit of information, and knowing some of it's guesswork. Knowing that that's an interpretation and knowing for definite it's an interpretation. As with the board, you don't know whether....'cause there isn't anybody there, it's not clear in the way it's presented. You don't know how much of what they're saying is guesswork and how much of what they're saying is fact. Yeah. Does that make sense?*

ST *Absolutely. What about the actual site itself and the way it's presented? What are your thoughts on that, or what did you do out there?*

- Sk9 *I just went out. I didn't actually spend that much time out there. I kind of went out and wandered around, and I had this rucksack so I wasn't allowed to leave it in case I wanted to blow up Skara Brae. But it was nice. I liked the way...I wish there'd been a map when you first went in that showed you...There is, but it's on the other side. And that would've been good as you first went in. But I liked the way that it was almost cheesy as you walked along, that it was a walk back in time. And I just thought that was fun [laughs], I thought that was good. But I also thought it was good because it displayed it in a good historical context for people to understand. I liked the way there were wee display boards all around, and I liked the way that there was the museum before you went and the re-enactment before you went so that you had more of an idea of how it would have been when you did get there to have a look down in. But I didn't spend very long because it was swarming with people. So I had a look, and I've been to the other ones which are more quiet, and I had time to sit down and think about it. And those ones were, I didn't have hundreds of people.*
- ST *You mentioned the volume of people. How did that affect.....*
- Sk9 *I think it's good that so many people visit it, because I think it's good for people. But it affected it for me in the sense that you couldn't take any photographs without somebody coming in, or there was about six tour groups going around so you got millions of tours overlapping in your head. So just in terms of the peace and quiet that I like when I'm somewhere new or thinking about somewhere I couldn't get. But I think it's brilliant because there is that number of people. I mean it's almost like a contradiction in terms because it's, I think it's brilliant that there is that number of people and that people do come here and see it and think about it and think about the way people lived. And I think for people that want that peace and quiet Orkney's great, because there are about a million and one places that you can go and you will get that other level of interaction.*
- St *You mentioned the reconstruction house. Can you elaborate on that?*
- Sk9 *It was good because you could go in and touch things and really have a good look at things and a good peer around and a good, and actually by luck I was there when there was nobody else in it so it was great because you could kind of look at everything and peer into everything. I wished in a way that there had been a fire in it and there had been dim lighting, you know because the lights were very bright and the thing had been made a lot bigger for health and safety reasons. But it was good because it allowed you to have a peer and a wander and explore and use your imagination.*
- ST *Did you feel that could you do that?*
- Sk9 *Yeah. To a limited extent, yeah. To some extent you can. But you can do that on the site as well. But it was good just to see it, just to have that wander which you can't do in the village. If you could've wandered round the village then the reconstruction for me wouldn't have been as necessary. But obviously that's why the reconstruction's there. That's the thinking behind it.*
- ST *Are you planning on visiting any other sites?*

- Sk9 *I'm going to North Ronaldsay for the next two days and then I'm going back to the mainland of Scotland. So I've kind of done my exploring for the....I'm disappointed that I'm not going to get to visit more of the tombs and stuff, but I just don't have time. But you could spend months here. Months and months and months here. And you would need a car or a bicycle or something, which I don't have, because by public transport it's a headache, an absolute headache. But no I'm not.*
- ST *Is there any information you were looking for here?*
- Sk9 *I was interested in the construction, the idea of how they guessed, the guesswork at how they constructed it. Obviously these are big pieces of stone. And the guesswork about the roof. What they used to roof. And they did have a computer that was meant to tell you that but I couldn't make it work. So I don't know if it was just me being stupid or the computer being temperamental. It was like guesswork. You had to build your own roof, and I couldn't make it build my roof or tell me if I was right or wrong with my roof. It was probably the computer. So that was the guess the two pieces. And the midden, I was more interested in the midden. And I mean they told me what midden was and everything but I was interested in where that had come from, or the ideas of where that might have come from. And yeah the construction of the village I was interested in. But that's my structural engineering thing. But everywhere I've gone I've been interested in the construction of the site and not really got that information, because that's the information people, most people don't care about. It's just my background coming through.*
- ST *Have you been able to find that information, or do you mean you looking yourself?*
- Sk9 *Just me looking myself. But I haven't really seen anything that's given me any hints or anything. The one reference I found was at Stenness when it said that they reckoned the stones had been built before the ditch because that was easiest. But then my book said that the ditch had been built before the stones [laughs]. So again, anything I had....And there was something, I can't remember where I read it, but there was some information where it said that they had rebuilt stones at one of the rings and it hadn't taken them as long as they thought it would to erect it up. I can't remember where I read that but that kind of stuff fascinates me and I haven't come across it anywhere really, which for me would be good. I don't know about for anybody else [laughs].*
- ST *Have you visited the Minehowe?*
- Sk9 *I haven't, and I'd really like to go. I think I will have time to go, I'm planning on going. Actually I lied when I said I'm not going any more sites because I'm planning on going to Minehowe when I fly back from North Ronaldsay. So I plan on going there then. That'll be interesting to see, because that's a relatively newly discovered, they don't really know much about it. Is that right?*
- ST *Yeah.*
- END**

No of Partic: 1

- ST *What did you know about the Yarrows Trail before you visited?*
- Yar13 *Nothing till I came on site. I didn't know there was a Trail nearby. There's a sign on the road saying Yarrows Trail, so I knew there was a Trail there but I didn't know anything about it, or what it was about.*
- ST *What were your thoughts of the Trail?*
- Yar13 *It's good if you know what you're looking for. Because it was quite difficult to find the second site, the hut circle, and the third site, because you have to know what you're looking for to find it. And if it's not marked up, because it wasn't marked, you're not going to know it's there because you don't know what to look for. But it's a nice walk. Nice views. From most of the cairns you have spectacular views of the valleys and other things going on. Very windy, but that's Scotland for you. No, it's a good walk, not too strenuous, bit dodgy in places: nice bit of mud, but very enjoyable.*
- ST *You mentioned that a few of the sites weren't very obvious. What were your thoughts on that?*
- Yar13 *I think it probably adds something to the Trail in a strange sort of way because you have to actively look for it. And it's not like some things where you're just wandering along and oh, there it is, oh, there it is. You've got to actually look for it and you interact then with what's going on. Because you've got yourself a map to look around and your in the landscape and your playing around in it basically trying to find where it is. Which is an experience in itself.*
- ST *So that's an experience?*
- Yar13 *Yeah. As long as you want to find them. If you just want to walk the monuments it's not really that sort of walk. But you've really got to interact with it more, because people tend, I noticed with the group we were with, they kept to the path, they kept walking, following the arrows, not looking around them to see what's going on. And I think we should have taken time to explore the surrounding area to actually try and find them.*
- ST *Should have gone off the path?*
- Yar13 *Not kept to it, because we just followed the path thinking we'd bump into the monuments along the way. But we had to come into the area of the monuments and wander around a bit and find it, then carry on.*
- ST *Is that something you'd have liked to have done?*
- Yar13 *Yeah I'd have liked to have taken more time to look round. Because that's surely the point of it, experiencing it and finding things.*

- ST *What about the sites themselves. What did you think about those?*
- Yar13 *They were quite spectacular. I really enjoyed them. I liked crawling through little gaps. That was fun, 'til I almost got stuck. That would've been embarrassing [laughs]. I think I was saying [before the interview started] how it shows how monuments can be used by different people for different purposes. Not necessarily have to have a ritual thing. Because the cairns have been there for 5000 years or longer, and through that time people would have used them for different things, done different things. We see it now because you've got the stacks people have made with the stones and stuff. So that's people making their mark on that monument, and that could sort of provide an insight into how we should look at monuments in archaeology. By just taking into account that there's no generic uniform way a monument will be treated. Different people have different effects on it and alter its whole make up. Because the cairns look completely different with the towers put on top, and you can see them from much further away. More prominent to us.*
- ST *The modern towers are part of the monument....*
- Yar13 *Well they're part of the monument as they are now. 'Cause it's all part of the life of the monument. I don't think that they die or anything, because people will always interact with them, do something with them, even if it is stealing stone or whatever. It's still a part of the landscape itself. It's not like the reverence we hold for traditional buildings we have in towns or anything, it's just something made by people and people are experiencing it and using it as their own. Even now, using the Trail is giving those monuments a different meaning now for us, because we're on Trail now to look at them, and experience them.*
- ST *What meaning does the Trail give to these monuments?*
- Yar13 *I don't know. I suppose they're what you're aiming for, aren't they? You do the Trail to see them, so a sort of quasi-pilgrimagey thing going on. Making an effort to go and see them. And quite rewarding actually. I'm not sure what other significance other people put to it, but I think it's just being there really. Just going for a walk, experiencing history all around you.*
- ST *You mentioned walking the Trail, and people were sticking to the path, moving from monument to monument.*
- Yar13 *Well there's arrows on the path that point to where you're supposed to be going, so you stay on it. And you can see that everyone sticks to it. And they explore down the path and ooh, there's a path, got to follow it. But they miss out. Whereas, I reckon, we can still follow the arrows, but we don't have to stay dead on the path, because we can see the arrows from off the path. It's strange everything is sort of managed into a small space, whereas that's probably why people miss them. It's because if people came off the track, they'd be able to see where the different monuments are. Like with the hut circles, we'd have found it, because people would have come off the track and found it, and then people would have made a track round it, and it would have been much easier. But the whole linear thing of it is just...*

- ST *You said the linear thing.*
- Yar13 *You tend to focus on the line and not the surrounding landscape. And the map doesn't help. It needs to be a bit clearer. But yeah, you just stay focused on the path, and not really worry about anything.*
- ST *You mentioned earlier about going in through the monuments. You were quite positive about that. What was positive about that?*
- Yar13 *It's just, I don't know, it's just the idea of how many thousands of years it's been stood there and how many people have done the same as I've done, or anything like that. It's just, it's quite a nice feeling, because there's so much history there. I mean it's not written history, it's all sort of no one can trace it, but it's there, these people have been there, touched the stones and experienced it for themselves. Just to be, you know, a part of that, because there's definitely an air around the area that you can just feel. As if other people have been coming and going sort of thing.*
- ST *You felt that air?*
- Yar13 *Yeah. And the broch as well, I liked that, because you can go down and just that's where people lived and stuff like that. It's quite amazing.*
- ST *What about the broch?*
- Yar13 *It's just an impressive structure really, it's just, and you've got the Pictish houses nearby, or around it wasn't it? And it shows continued use, people experiencing it, lots of things going on we might never know about but we can just think about, and sort of dwell on it.*
- ST *What about the sites themselves, their condition and presentation? What were your thoughts on those?*
- Yar13 *I'm glad they weren't cleaned up or excavated because then you're not getting how they looked. Well I feel the monuments, you shouldn't have to take them down and rebuild them to how we think they looked, because they're not that [slight emphasis on 'that'] monument anymore. They're something else. I mean with archaeology we do excavate, we take things down to see what their meaning is, things like that. But we don't have to with every single monument excavate it and rebuild it as it would be in the you know Neolithic or anything, because their use and their whole life changes and they have different shape and a different feel to them now, and I think they should be left like that. Sort of a living archaeology, become part of your life not dress it up and put it back in someone else's life.*
- ST *Thinking about the other sites visited in Caithness and Orkney. What were your thoughts on those sites?*
- Yar13 *I liked the smaller cairn at Camster Cairns because that was the most complete, although there was the horrible ceiling they'd put it. No, that was the long cairn, wasn't it?*

INTERRUPTION

- ST *You were saying about Camster*
- Yar13 *They're okay [Camster Cairns], but quite disappointing really, because you can see it has tried to be preserved as it was, whereas I think it should be something else. I mean it's nice to crawl into the chamber, and have a look round, but...I don't know. I didn't like Maeshowe though. I liked the site and the inside of it, but I didn't like that it's so, well 'this is ours' [emphasis] and you're not allowed to go in it without us sort of thing, because that takes it out of our hands sort of thing. It's been there for thousands of years, and people have been in it, used it, like the Vikings have been there, but now we're not allowed to do that because it's a monument. It's been preserved how it would have been sort of thing, even with the Victorian ceiling [smiles]. I think it detracts from the whole feel of the site because it felt you must walk this way, you must stand here, and you must look at these specific things and not experience it for yourself, which I thought was a shame.*
- ST *You got that feeling?*
- Yar13 *There was a fence inside for Christ's sake. Just a fence. You know, stay this side of the fence and I'll be here and point to the things you have to look at. It's all tour guidey and annoying. I think you should be able to go in there, well keep the groups down to small groups, go in and have a look round for yourself. Experience it, not just file everybody in and go this, this, this and this. Don't touch, don't take any pictures. That's all part of experiencing these things. You don't....it's horrible. It's like going to a museum, where everything's cold and dead and stuck in cases. And you just wander around corridors and go oh that's nice, oh that's good. But I didn't like the whole tour guidey feel to it. I liked Skara Brae, but I did have issues with it. It seemed a bit....it looked like a mini golf course basically. But it was spectacular buildings and I really enjoyed being there. But it looked a bit too pristine and kept together. And you couldn't see House 7 which is the best preserved, because they had problems with the roof or something, but you can't see it. But no, it's nice walking round.*
- ST *You mentioned it was too pristine.*
- Yar13 *It was too....looked after if you know what I mean. Like someone with a lawnmower making sure the grass isn't too long. And it all seemed a bit too staged if you know what I mean. But I suppose it's part of it.*
- ST *What would you rather see? You mentioned about Maeshowe and not being allowed to do your own thing. What should happen at these sites?*
- Yar13 *In my view they should be left, because I mean it's all part of experiencing things is to explore them, and if you've got a pristine monument there's nothing to explore because it's all there. And it's ooh here I am and there's no reason to go in, 'cause all you do is stand back and go oh, that's nice. But if you actually had the chance to go down and actually have a look for the features, if there was a bit of grass growing out the walls and stuff like that, I really think that would be quite an experience. Particularly just to find something that no ones decided to restore. The re-creation of the house was interesting.*

- ST *Interesting. In what way?*
- Yar13 *I'm not entirely sure I agreed with it. I liked it inside, but it was just a bit....*
- ST *What did you like?*
- Yar13 *I liked the fact that they've built it and you can wander round. That's one of the things. But the trouble is they had the fake ham thing, which really got on my nerves. I was like hat, fake ham, why? Because they assume that this is what it would be used for, they must've put shells and feathers [adopts theatrical voice] and what not on here. That quite annoyed me. But it was nice to be able to wander around and experience it.*
- ST *Could you experience it? Is this the reconstruction?*
- Yar13 *Yeah. Well, you can use your imagination and fill in the pictures, because of the fact that they've put things in there that are guiding you to think of the site. Because then you think oh they must've done this activity here, and this activity there, whereas I think that people should be able to think for themselves, and make up their own picture about what's going on.*
- ST *Taking those ideas, how do those sites at Camster and Orkney compare to Yarrows and your experiences at Yarrows?*
- Yar13 *Yarrows wasn't presented to me. All I got was a leaflet and a map. I didn't have to read the words they put on it, I could just find the description myself. But I think I preferred it as a feature of it, because I suppose it's probably unique to this area is that how closely everything is knit in with the landscape itself. It's good the way it's been left and it's now become our little pilgrimage around, so we can continue using the area. Still experience the things that are there as they change and mould. Because nothing's ever constant.*
- ST *Coming back to your ideas about the towers on the cairns. What about that?*
- Yar13 *It's a continuation of it. It keeps it alive if you know what I mean. Whereas if you take something and try and preserve it it's still dead, there's no life to it. Because all these sort of emotions that could have been going on there have been taken out, people have cleaned it up and made it look all respectable. And sometimes it's nice you know to have a bit of a mess to look around.*
- ST *In what way?*
- Yar13 *Well as I said before I think it should all be about interaction and if you've got a garbled mess that you've got to figure out you're interacting. If you've got something laid out in front of you, you're just looking; you're not doing anything. You say oh, that's nice, and then you move onto something else and oh, that's nice as well. But if you're there, and you think, over there somewhere is a monument, go find it. Oh, okay. Is this it? No that's not it [smiles]. And then you're looking at the landscape, you're experiencing it. You're finding features that aren't the features you're*

looking for but you think they are. Then you start to reason how would you tell, then, if some finds it they'll point it out to you and you can all go over. It's just about interaction.

ST *So the interaction, it's more involved in the Trail as it is rather than the other sites you've visited?*

Yar13 *Yeah, because at the other sites it's all oh, come this way, don't touch, don't experience, just look. It's like sitting down and having a nice chocolate cake in front of you and being told oh you're not allowed to eat it. Perhaps in the shape of a cairn [laughs].*

END

Location: Tarbat Discovery Centre Interview No.: 10 Date: 15/7/05 No of Partic: 1

- ST *I just wanted to start off by asking you why you chose to visit the Centre today?*
- Tar10 *I'm generally interested in the Pictish carving, the Pictish stones. It's a bit of a weird and wonderful thing. Many more people are believing in it now but I know that I've lived before. I believe in reincarnation. I'm quite into Hindu and Buddhist philosophy. Christianity believed in reincarnation until 325AD when it was banished. And, eh, I think I was a sculptor before. Somebody else confirmed that. That was....lets say sensitive to those things. I've got a great affinity for the things [Pictish stones]. And I feel myself that I'm a Pict, and not a Celt. I don't feel Celtic. I went to Ireland and I didn't feel part of it, you know? So.*
- ST *What did you know about this place before you visited?*
- Tar10 *I'd read a wee book with all the different sites, but it's very well sign-posted as well. I actually took a wrong turning further down south and actually saw the signs and just followed them. I'd seen it in the book but didn't realise the significance of how big it was and how good it is. Obviously it is....well it's the best one I've seen, of the centres I've seen.*
- ST *Which other places have you been to?*
- Tar10 *I've been to see a lot of the different sites. I've been up to Jarlshof in Shetland. I saw Scatness briefly. I'm going up this time to Orkney to see Maeshowe, all the different things there. I'm going right round the north of Scotland, taking in any things that are reasonably amenable. Some of them, you know, are difficult to find, off minor roads. But the major ones I'll be visiting.*
- ST *You said you knew a little about the background here. Is that right?*
- Tar10 *Yeah, but it was only like three four lines in a guide. You know those wee guides of the Picts and the historical places, a little blue book. It was just one of them. They're very informative. And I've got a book called the Pictish Trail which they didn't have, I haven't been down to the bookshop here yet, but they didn't have it at is it Groam House Museum in Rosemarkie. I was there and some of the information's wrong, because it says in the guide, that little book, that there are something like 15 stones there, and I hadn't read it before I went in. And it was later when I was reading it, there's not 15 stones in the place. They must've been removed or taken away somewhere else.*
- ST *What were your first impressions when you came here?*
- Tar10 *It's very well laid out, very spacious, light but not too light. The videos are very good, the soundtracks are good, just spot on I would say.*
- ST *What sort of things were you expecting? Did you have any ideas?*

- Tar10 *No, I just follow my nose. I have no preconceptions. I just see what's in front of me and don't expect anything. That way you don't get disappointed or come to false conclusions before you've seen.*
- ST *You said that you have a personal interest. Was there any information in particular that you were looking for?*
- Tar10 *Again I've got to go down to the bookshop. I still haven't had anything authoritative saying where the Picts came from. This idea that they were indigenous but they must've come from somewhere after the last Ice Age, because that's coming about 8000 to 10,000 years ago. That's some information. I don't have access to a computer at this time but when I do get a computer I'm going to check and see if I can find anything. I'm interested in language. I speak Doric in Buchan and I've found derivatives for a lot of our language in German and Friesian and Dutch. So somewhere in the background our language, some Pictish words must remain not just in place names. And when you see those people and the way they use words, when you go to Germany, Holland Friesland, they actually think the same way as I do. The thought processes are similar. It's difficult to say. Where are you from? Aberdeen?*
- ST *Originally Aberdeenshire*
- Tar10 *Far we come fae we would say if you're really really thin you're a ruckle of beans, right? No beans is baens [sp?] in Dutch, and ruckle, I asked a boy, and he said, he was Friesian, and he said oh yeah we do have reikle. And he went to the door and said that's a reikle, it's an edge. And that's what you see, it's edges of bones. So....just similarities. There's a Doric word, or a Buchan word, potie statter [sp?]. Older speak about them, if they're in their 50s or 60s if they see somebody down the road who's in good health they'll say oh she' in a potie statter. It means like a second lease of life. And I found it in a Dutch dictionary. Potich means robust and statur means stature. So it's straight from Dutch. So if we could find out what language the Picts spoke or some insight into it we might have some idea of where they come from because you can trace it through the routes of the language. It's like bra we say, and the Glaswegians say braw. Well bra [sp?] is the Norwegian for good. Shetland's similar. It's got a lot of words you can trace back. And like Newcastle has got a different accent but the same words. I think that a good tracer would be the language if we can get back to it.*
- ST *That's something that you have an interest in?*
- Tar10 *I intend doing a wee dictionary noting a thousand basic words and doing it for all the European languages. Well, the main ones. I doubt if there's any Portuguese. Well there might be a little Spanish, but there's certainly lots of French, Dutch, Belgian and Scandinavian. I saw a Professor of Old Friese at the Friese Akademie in Leeuwart which is the capital of Friesland and he knew, or he was pretty sure that Doric had come off the same route of North Sea German at the same time as English, because the similarities. But he reckoned it had been reinforced by trade a few hundred years ago. And he was exactly right. And I had a little book across in Holland with me called Fishing in the North East and there's a part of Peterhead which is*

now part of the harbour which was an Island called Keith Inch [sp?] and the Dutch tried to buy it from us in the mid 1779. So he was spot on with what he was saying.

If I can trace back where the things have come from it'll give us a fair idea of where we actually came from. Cause I used to think that our language was kind of bastardised English and we were a bit thick in the north-east and got words wrong. But it's not. We've always had a separate language.

ST *You're talking about the north-east and the Picts. Is there a link with the north-east of the present and the Picts?*

Tar10 *I would say so, because if you look at a map of the boundaries between the different Pictish tribes there was the Ce, however that's pronounced, the line of it is exactly Aberdeenshire. And if you take a line between Forres and Nairn, that's exactly where Doric changes to Highland. It's exactly that area. So I think it's always been a distinct separate kingdom. That's one thing here, in the computer information. It kind of infers the Firths was the centre of the Picts. The Firths weren't the centre of the Picts. It seems to mention Tayside and Angus but it doesn't say anything about Aberdeenshire. I mean the Burghead bulls. I know it's Banffshire now but its in the original area. It's a very strong part of it. It kind of says a lot of the names. Pit and Pett up here but it's all over Scotland. Well, the east and up here and the Highlands.*

ST *I saw you were looking at the computer resource. What were you looking at?*

Tar10 *I just wanted to see everything there. The language, the section on language, doesn't really enlighten because it's just not known, that's the problem. The Picts were an enigma, which I hope to unravel a little bit at some point myself. To see where my roots are.*

ST *You mentioned the word enigma. Is that reflected here?*

Tar10 *Well.... They don't know what the symbols mean. You know. They keep on saying that everything's mirrors and combs. To me there's a far deeper symbolism to these. It could be this planet and the other world. One of the....the stone that I'm pretty sure that I did in a past life is the one that was found in Bressa in Shetland. When I first saw it I had a replica of it in my hand and I knew what it stood for. There is the ascension of man from pig, to a horse, and man in charge of the horse. That's his upgrading through nature. And then you've got two monks either side, or people with staffs. But you've got to remember that the ancient Egyptians are all standing holding staffs. And the mythological creatures [Pictish beast] that are there also, that nobody knows what they are, they could come straight from the Sphynx. There's a lot of ancient knowledge contained in the stones. It's not just what they saw, it's what.... You've got to think that only 100 years ago the native Americans were having vision quests and so on to the past and the future. And had all their symbolic animals. Well who's saying the Picts didn't do the same? And 3000-4000 years ago when they were building the stone circles. They were all built on lay-lines, which are underground streams. And they knew they were there. They knew a lot more than we knew today. There is an esoteric saying, that we're not*

learning anything new, just learning what we've forgotten. And I think that's very true.

ST *Do you think that's....*

Tar10 *I think so. There's been civilisations on this planet that we don't know of. You know how they speak about Atlantis and Lemuria, and it's probably going back way before that. If you dig deep enough. I mean, we think it's great to find something 1000 years old. If you dig deep enough, you'll find stuff that's hundreds of thousands of years old that's just been forgotten.*

ST *What does the term archaeology mean to you?*

Tar10 *Finding our history and where we come from. Trying to get back to source. It's everybody's job, whether they know it or not, to ascend to a higher level at some stage in your life. Whether it be enlightenment or ascension, or you know there are archetypes there are ascended masters, you know. Jesus, Krishna, all of that. And we're all trying to find out. Some people say it's just to find out what the buildings were like, but we're actually trying to get back to source. Who we are and where we're intended to go. I think that's, at a symbolic level, what archaeology is about. It's not just to find bits of gold and all the rest of it. You'd probably get a lot more information from bits of mundane things. In fact it's very true, I heard on the radio when I was across in Holland last year, I listened to the World Service all the time, that a piece of amber with a knot or mosquito in it that they'd had at the British Museum for a hundred years, they examined it was found in the north-east of Scotland, and it put the evolution of the planet back something like a million years. So we have the knowledge it's just that we can't measure it. All science is about measuring. What you can't measure doesn't exist to scientists. But until they got Kurlyen [sp?] photography about I think 50 years ago, the Russian husband and wife and they took photographs of the aura through electro-magnetic photography, that they could see that it existed. But the Hindus have known about it for 5000 years.*

ST *You mentioned that science won't accept it unless they can....*

Tar10 *They do, according to their own standards, which are flawed.*

ST *Is archaeology part of the science?*

Tar10 *Well, yes to an extent because they can only measure the age of things according to scientific methods, and according to biblical texts. But now they're finding dendrology, the tree-rings, that there's some kind of spruce in the Rocky Mountains that looks like a sickly shrub if you see it but it's the oldest tree known in the world. So we're again going back to natural things which tell us how old things are, and not man-made things like bibles, scrolls. Because history is always written by the conquerors. All we ever hear about the Picts for instance is about how....from the Romans. But the Romans could have it all wrong. It says that they beat us at Mons Graupius, but that's not to say that they actually did. There was a programme on recently by one of the Monty Python team... a fascinating programme. And he told the real history of the kings of England. How one of them was a particularly nasty character, one of the Richards, but when*

he actually investigated, he was one of the best kings they actually had. But the king that replaced him changed the history, and made him out to be, you know, like a Hitler. And it's totally untrue. But that's what we teach as history, and history is supposed to be scientific. But it's not, it's what people write down. It's all man-made for man-made purposes.

ST *You were talking about whoever succeeds writes the history....*

Tar10 *Writes the history. But that's not to say that it's fact or true.*

ST *Is there truth or fact in the past?*

Tar10 *Everybody's reality is different. Give somebody a glass of water that is half full, it's either half full or half empty, depending on your attitude. Is there any truth at the end of the day? You know, if you're getting really philosophical about it. Like the Tibetan Buddhists believe in nothing. They don't believe in God they believe there is just a void. So at the end of the day you've got to subsume all the things that you know and learn new things. You've got to renew all the time. But it takes maybe a hundred years. Some of the stuff they discovered in Egypt and took for granted for a hundred years they now know is totally wrong. So for attitudes to change it's the establishment, you've got to know away at the establishment. As soon as you get new ideas it's poo-pooed. It's like heretics were put to the stake less than 200 years ago in Aberdeen for instance. It's a difference in perception.*

ST *Coming back to your personal interest in the Picts are you moving on north?*

Tar10 *Aye, I'm going on to Tain, I think there are some stones there, I'm going up to.....the Hill o' Many Stanes, and then there are burial cairns up the valley. I was at Corrimony burial cairn. I was at the Clava Cairns, which are fantastic.*

ST *What was fantastic about the....*

Tar10 *Well to have three burial chambers on one site and three stone circles. I mean you can forget Culloden, there's nothing there, really. That energy has been there for thousands of years. Chambered cairns in the middle of summer and it's still like a fridge, even in the middle of the day. But there's something in there. I've been to stone circles, I did a course on herbalism and there was a German doctor. He was over here, a young guy, and he concentrated his psychiatric part of things, he'd already qualified as a doctor, and I took him and his mate to a stone circle at Akey Brae [sp?], Deer Abbey, and we stood on the outside and said right switch off. And we all looked in the middle and I said right what do you feel, just as an experiment, I haven't done it before. We all felt that we were being pulled forward. And we all took a step in together, and we felt as though we were being pulled back. And there were vortices within these things that you would maybe think it was your imagination, but I can see my own aura. There are things that we're starting to get atuned to again.*

ST *Are there any issues that you want to comment on?*

Tar10

Well I've done yoga and Ti chi, and various Eastern disciplines, and I certainly think there is scope for getting psychically orientated people, I'm not particularly psychic myself, but people to do meditations on the sites to see what they pick up. Because you do pick up. I find past lives in my meditations. I know that's why I was on the go in the stone age. I saw myself, I saw the clothes that I wore. I had a bronze axe, and I knew where it was. It was at Rattray Head, the sand dunes at the lighthouse. I didn't know it at the time but I saw this guy taking huge steps over this grass, and I couldn't understand what it was. It was as though I was in a helicopter and the wind was beating the grass. Then he got to the top of the ridge and I realised it was the wind hitting the sand dunes and he was walking over bent grass. And within the fortnight a revisited Rattray having not been there since I was fostered out as a kid and within half an hour of being there a storm had come up and I saw the exact sand dune being blasted by the wind as I'd seen it. Now it could be I was wanting to see it, but I don't think so. So you gain information by these pursuits that you wouldn't otherwise get. It's like the psychic people they take in to help solve murders and crimes. They same can be done at historical sites. Possibly at the outset, before, if to prove that the things buried 6 feet down but you've found one little bit why not take somebody that's maybe specialises that, not myself but somebody that can read the ground, or see back in the past and they can say what's there. And after the dig's done, see if it's effective. That's proven science, that's as scientific as you can get.

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