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Turbo Island, Bristol: excavating a contemporary homeless place

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SUMMARY: This paper provides an assessment of the excavation of an apparently ordinary space in Bristol (UK) in 2009. Although the space appears unremarkable to most passers-by, it is unusual in being a place used routinely by many of the city's street-drinking and homeless community. Homeless people were 'colleagues', involved in excavation, finds processing and interpretation. The collaborative nature of this project goes further than merely attempting to represent social groups who have traditionally been excluded from heritage practice and interpretation — it lays methodological foundations for praxis.

INTRODUCTION

'Who owns the past?' proves to be a difficult question in countries and contexts where marginalization prevails or where its legacies remain active. Collaboration in archaeological work has been used in some cases to facilitate a more inclusive narrative of a shared past leading to projects that recognize multiple perspectives, and where the experts hand over (or 'translate') power to the community.[1] Here we present an example of what Zimmerman, Singleton and Welch refer to as 'translational archaeology',[2] the archaeological excavation by a team including homeless people, of Turbo Island — a homeless place in Bristol (UK).

Although previously described elsewhere,[3] it is worth briefly revisiting how this project came about. Whilst working for the Peoples' Republic of Stokes Croft (PRSC), an arts-based community organization based directly opposite Turbo Island in Bristol, co-author Kiddey met homeless people (including co-authors Dafnis and Hallam) as they travelled between *The Big Issue* office,[4] the Post Office (on Stokes Croft) and Jamaica Street homeless hostel. Initially the contact was mundane, consisting of homeless people trying to sell a *Big Issue* or 'tapping' (asking for) cigarettes. These informal daily meetings meant Kiddey came to know some homeless people well.

The political aims of PRSC include encouraging a self-help attitude to community life. A general mantra often used by PRSC is 'don't wait for the council to clean the streets, do it yourself! Take pride in where you live'. As a result, the opportunity arose for Kiddey to invite homeless people to join her in PRSC's activities. This approach might be termed 'direct action support working', and falls neatly within both current initiatives in occupational health to promote wider engagement[5] and ethnological perspectives on the value of 'work'.[6] Those homeless people who wanted to get involved and undertake small tasks (such as making planters for guerrilla gardening projects) did so of their own free will and at no cost, resulting in an emergent sense of trust and facilitating dialogue about the nature of homelessness, its causes and characteristics. In these early encounters, conversations typically revolved around places, routes, people and things, leading Kiddey to consider taking an archaeological approach to contemporary homelessness, to see what it might look like within the archaeological

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record. Equally, homeless people we met were intrigued by the opportunity to 'be archaeologists' for a few days, and keen to do an 'archaeology of homelessness'.

It was for these reasons that a team comprising archaeologists, homeless people and other marginalized people on the street, for example, street drinkers, worked with others including local community police officers on the excavation of Turbo Island, which was the culmination of a wider field survey of contemporary homelessness in Bristol. The model we developed for Turbo Island (which was applied subsequently at a similar collaborative excavation of a homeless site in York) might not work everywhere, though numerous examples are now emerging of excavations involving people with learning difficulties and young offenders enjoying the unique combination of social and intellectual benefits which archaeological practice provides.[7] Here we describe only the excavation, other aspects of the project having been published previously.[8] We begin with a history of the site and its wider context.

BACKGROUND

Stokes Croft is situated on the east side of Bristol city centre, just north of the new Cabot Circus retail development (Fig. 1). It is part of a conservation area that encompasses Turbo Island, a small tract of land on the junction of Stokes Croft and Jamaica Street (Fig. 2). In planning terms, Turbo Island could be considered a 'SLOAP' or 'Space Left Over After Planning'.[9]

The early history of this area is well documented. Stokes Croft has been around for at least 800 years and specifically refers to the 600m-long street that bears the name. The road was most likely named after John Stoke, Mayor of Bristol three times between 1364 and 1379, and the owner of the land until his death in 1382.[10] Before then it was known as Berewykes Croft. The *Annals of Bristol*, 1618, describe a deed of 1579 which referred to the area as 'a field containing one little lodge and a garden', while the city paviour received sixpence in 1618 'for mending holes at the Stokes Croft stile' which formed part of a footpath through the area. John Rocque's map of *c.* 1750 shows

FIG. 1
View of Stokes Croft, Bristol (photograph, J. Schofield).

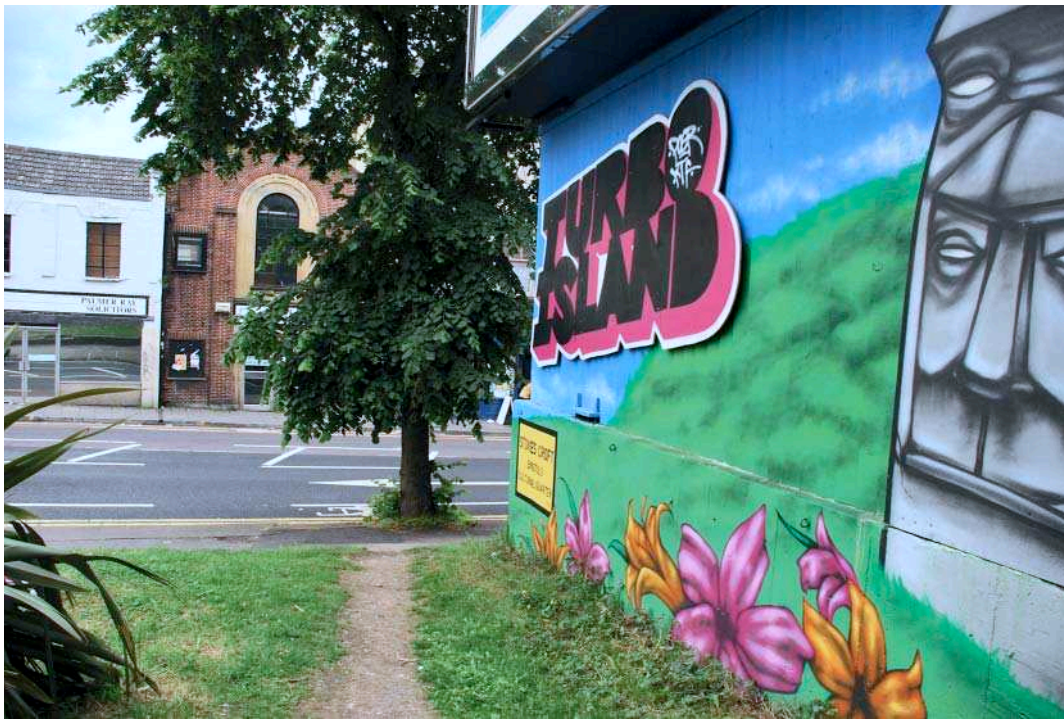

FIG. 2
View of Turbo Island (photograph, J. Schofield).

partial development of the Stokes Croft area, with houses accompanied by long garden plots. Using map regression and other historical and oral sources one can trace how the area has developed from the time of Rocque's map, when it was of largely agricultural character, to the centrally located urban area that exists today.

The houses in this area have been shops or places of work since at least 1842, and remained so until the area was damaged by enemy bombing in 1940.[11] The 1885 Ordnance Survey map clearly shows three houses on the Island itself, these being Nos 71, 73 and 75 Stokes Croft. One of the shops on Turbo Island was a shoe shop, the owner of which was a Mr Holdcroft, whose surviving son John was interviewed for this project. John described how the Holdcroft family occupied No. 75 Stokes Croft, and were present when a 500-kilo bomb struck the adjoining wall of Nos 73 and 75 Stokes Croft:

> The siren went at 7pm. I had gone up to Thomas Street to visit my friend, while my mother and father were at home. Ten minutes from the siren sounding, a major raid had begun and I was told to stay at my friends' house, with my mother and father in the basement of our home [75 Stokes Croft]. The bomb hit Parsons Butchers [73 Stokes Croft] and hit the partition wall. Mrs Parsons was killed and my parents were badly injured. The incendiary bombs had hit the lower part of the building, which was still standing. After the all-clear had sounded, the debris from the bomb was moved to one side to allow the cars and trams through.[12]

The Ordnance Survey map of 1950 shows the area as a ruin. During a road-widening scheme in 1961, the three bomb-damaged buildings were demolished, leaving a 'gap' site from which Turbo Island evolved.

Since 1994, when advertising hoardings were placed on the site, Bristol City Council has not allowed any permanent structure to be built, suggesting that drivers' sightlines might be obscured at what has become a busy road junction. PRSC is currently petitioning Bristol City Council to enable it to buy the land so the area can be regenerated. According to local businessman and director of

PRSC, Chris Chalkley, Turbo Island is central to rejuvenating the wider area due to its prominent position and value as 'green space' within a densely developed city location.[13] Turbo Island is now owned by Insite Poster Properties Ltd, an advertising company. The fact that the land holds little or no 'development' value, combined with its contested nature, has contributed to it becoming a 'homeless place'.

The Stokes Croft landscape has therefore changed significantly over recent times, from its earlier historic rural and peri-urban character, to a shopping area, bomb site and now a homeless place and SLOAP. Despite its lack of development this is a landscape valued by the local community for its distinctive urban character, in which Turbo Island is the only green space. We argue that Turbo Island's current role, as a meeting place for the homeless and street-drinking population, is relevant to its history and to the history of the wider area. Two years on from the excavation described here, Turbo Island is no longer a 'non-place'[14] characterized only by an advertising board. It has received planning permission to become a 'vertical' garden. We argue that alongside other 'community events' which have taken place on Turbo Island, the archaeology project has directly contributed to Turbo Island becoming 'a place' — or more specifically, many places — in the minds of local people and planners. As Lefebvre says: 'Space appears as a realm of objectivity, yet it exists in a social sense only for activity — for . . . walking, riding on horseback . . . travelling by car, boat, train, plane or by some other means'.[15] 'Other means' in this case includes walking through the street like a zombie and experiencing the street whilst intoxicated. It is this later or contemporary (and alternative, unconventional, anti-) history that this project set out to explore, through archaeological excavation of the most prominent and best-known landmark in this area — Turbo Island — and involving the very people who have given it 'special' status.

OBJECTIVES

Central to the Turbo Island excavation was the opportunity it provided to utilize heritage concerns, such as those laid out in the European Landscape Convention, that recognize that landscape (and we argue heritage more broadly) 'is a key element of individual and social well-being and that its protection, management and planning entail rights and responsibilities for everyone'.[16] Specifically, we wanted to encourage participation and co-operation from the local community, something that was done by advertising locally (Fig. 3). Posters were placed in areas frequented by the homeless community, such as the 'Bear Pit' (a sunken subway in Bristol city centre and a gateway to Stokes Croft), around Turbo Island, under some of Bristol's railway bridges and at local soup kitchens and services for homeless people. Community police officers were also approached and invited to join the excavation.

In addition to investigating historic uses of a contested, neglected and largely deprived area of Bristol, the intention was also to draw specifically on the 'expert' knowledge of our homeless colleagues, and to explore their perceptions of this landscape. Voices of homeless people are usually absent from local heritage discourse,[17] and Kiddey and Schofield sought to redress this by adapting their normal approaches to excavation by translating the status of 'experts' to their homeless colleagues; in other words, prioritizing engagement with homeless people over their own ownership of the archaeological process. They wanted to see how archaeological approaches and practices might be developed and if necessary, adapted, to be inclusive of 'non-archaeologists'. The past does not belong to archaeologists and Kiddey and Schofield wanted to ensure that *anyone* who wanted to participate in any stage of the investigation, from excavation, recording, finds processing, curating an exhibition to the publication of results, was facilitated to do so. Interestingly, despite staff at local services and businesses that work with homeless people being invited to join or visit the excavation, not one member of staff from the Compass Centre (Jamaica Street), *The Big Issue* office, the Bristol Specialist Drug and Alcohol Service or The Wild Goose café (a Christian café for homeless and vulnerable people) attended the excavation. This was the source of some disappointment for the team as a whole. However, by prioritizing collaborative approaches, the team hoped to develop methodologies that might be extended to working archaeologically with other socially excluded or marginalized groups (recognizing that all such groups have their very specific needs and expectations).

METHODOLOGY

The methodology followed the standard model for conventional archaeological investigations. Following a brief desk-top study conducted by co-author Kiddey and a few homeless colleagues (key findings of which were outlined above), a surface collection was conducted of the entire area

FIG. 3
Advertising for the Turbo Island excavation.

of Turbo Island, including within the foliage of a large bush in the centre (Fig. 4). Collection used a grid comprising metre squares from which all artefacts were collected and separately bagged. On the basis of both this surface collection and the need for representative coverage of the Island, two of the trench locations were chosen. The location of the third trench (and the first to be excavated) was decided by recently ex-homeless colleague, Andrew Dafnis. Dafnis had heard that Bristol's largest crack den was located close to Turbo Island with access via a tunnel from the Island, and used this as the basis for siting Trench 1. The trenches were excavated stratigraphically. Excavation was overseen by Cassie Newland of the University of Bristol, who guided and supervised those unfamiliar with excavation techniques to ensure the project retained archaeological integrity. Newland also took responsibility for drawing plans and sections.

Before excavation began, non-homeless members of the team had hoped most homeless colleagues would become directly involved in excavation, in part because they felt this was the method that would be most familiar to people new to archaeological work. However, as the rain poured down it became apparent that, with nowhere for them to dry and clean off, many homeless people were understandably reluctant to get unnecessarily wet, although some dug despite the consequences! Those who did not participate in the physical act of excavation nevertheless contributed by interpreting finds as they were recovered and offering possible explanations for finds that would

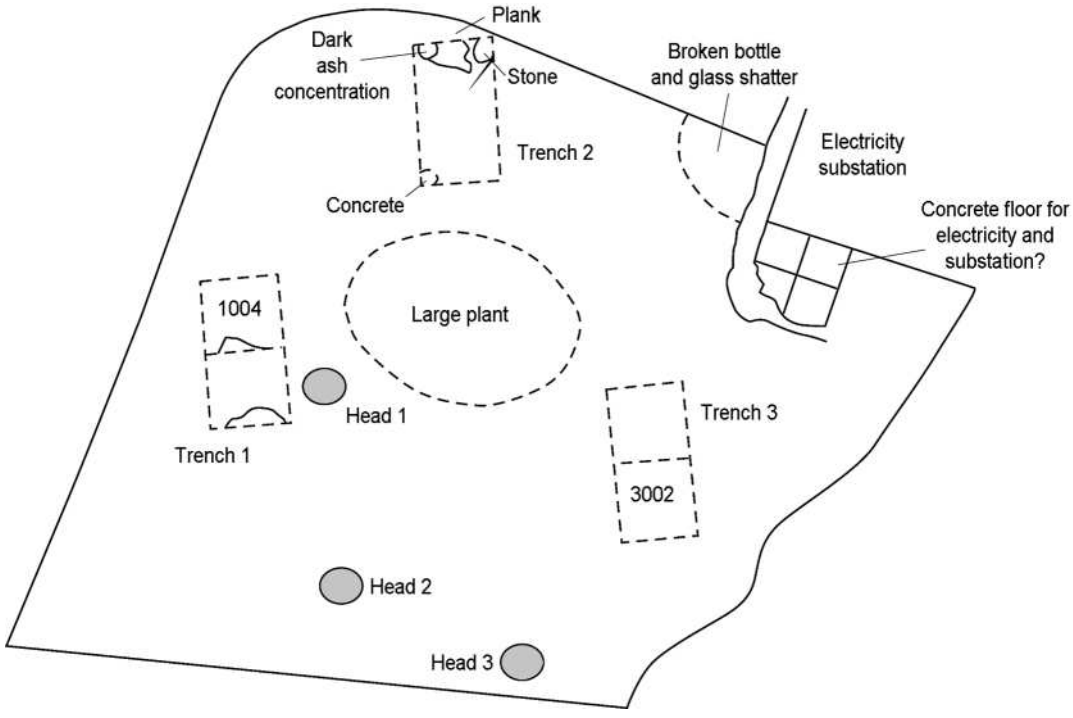

FIG. 4
Turbo Island: general map of the survey area (graphics, H.R.S. Williams).

otherwise have remained ambiguous. Everyone participated in post-excavation work, including finds cleaning, processing and identification. Many homeless colleagues were keen to visit the university laboratories and work alongside students to prepare finds for analysis and to begin to identify themes and objects for display at the planned exhibition.

Homeless colleagues aided interpretation of finds in several ways. Initially this took the form of on-site discussions of, for example, the distinction between an ordinary cigarette lighter and a cigarette lighter that had most likely belonged to a crack cocaine user based on the presence of a rubber band wound around the body of the lighter and analysis of burn marks (Fig. 5). Another example of homeless knowledge both aiding understanding of the site and contributing to a greater understanding of homeless culture more widely was the abundance of sweet wrappers (Fig. 5). Archaeologists attributed this to their low cost and the lack of preparation necessary before consumption. However, homeless colleagues reported that an added reason for their proliferation was related to drug use, as sweets are easily digestible; this makes them attractive to heroin addicts, whose digestive systems are often in poor condition. Additional finds from the excavation are shown in Fig. 6, including ring pulls, bottle tops and smoking paraphernalia. Cataloguing small finds took several weeks. All artefacts were documented in a spreadsheet according to trench and context number. Homeless colleagues played an active role throughout this process.

The project raised methodological challenges that we were required to address in order that everyone taking part was kept safe from harm. In developing our method statement, we felt it was necessary to brief everyone involved on basic information about working with vulnerable people, specifically people with addictions. We did not segregate the team and we all received all of the training. A more practical potential health and safety risk was posed by the possibility of finding hypodermic needles at the site. For this reason everyone involved was briefed and issued with gloves, and a process was established whereby work would stop immediately and Kiddey would then transfer used needles to a secure box. Such precautions were absolutely necessary but proved to be simple to execute.

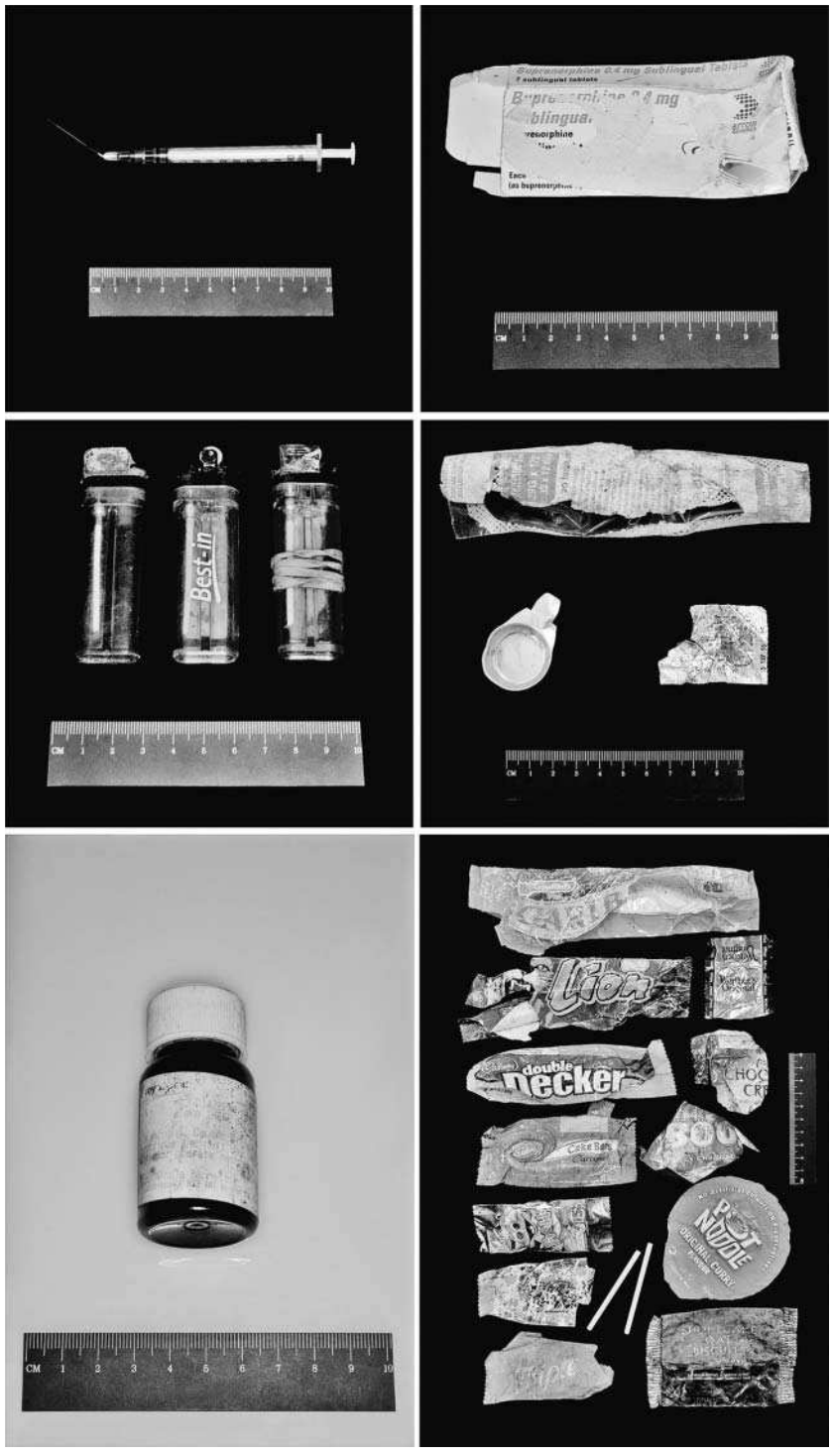

FIG. 5
Finds from the Turbo Island survey and excavations (photograph, T. Fitton).

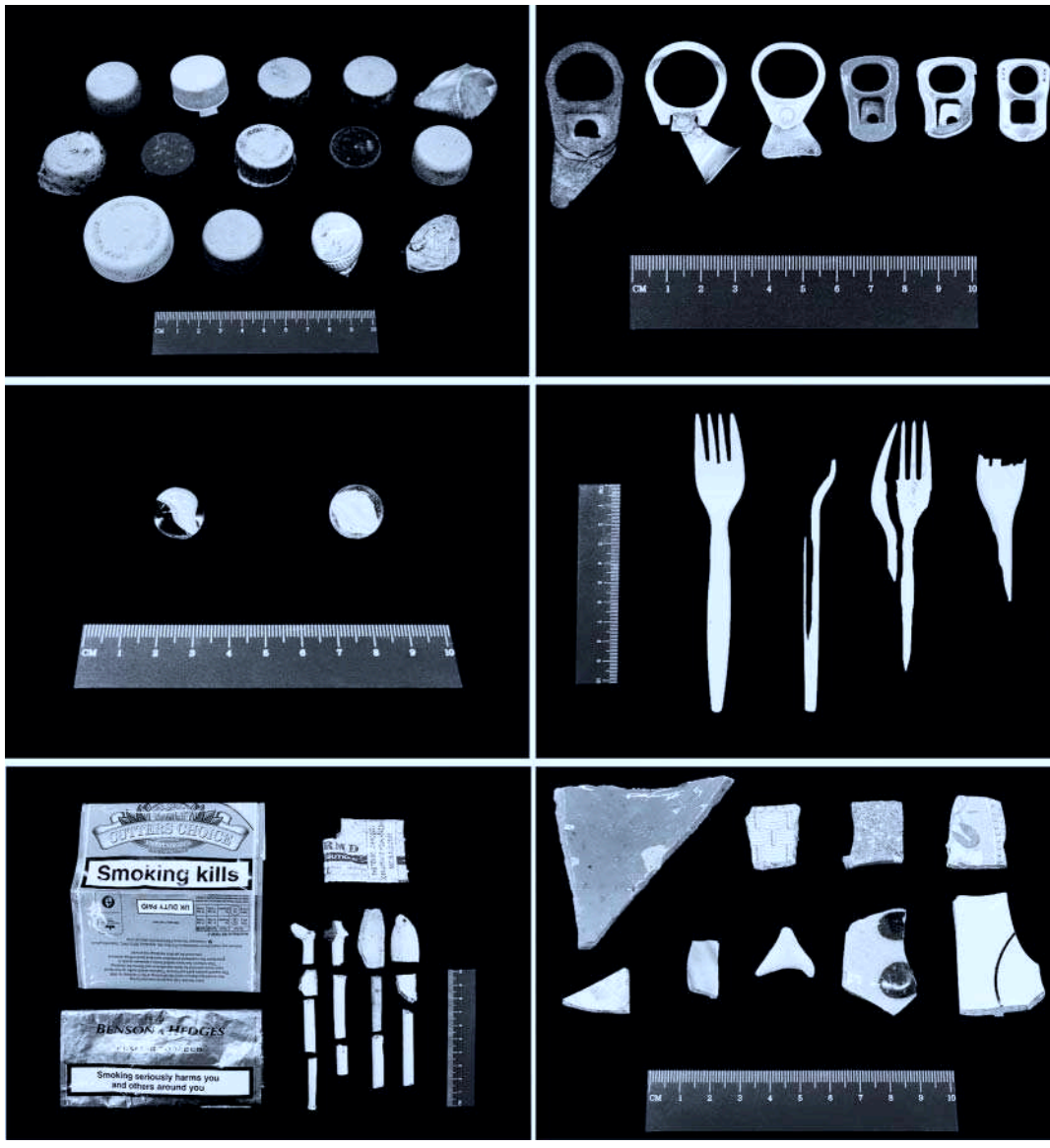

FIG. 6
Finds from the Turbo Island survey and excavations (photograph, T. Fitton).

RESULTS

Finds from the surface collection and excavation of Turbo Island were studied by Gillian Crea for her dissertation, conducted in partial fulfilment of her MA in Historical Archaeology (University of Bristol, 2010). Much of this Results section is based on the Finds Report section of this dissertation.

Finds were separated into three categories: homelessness, contemporary use (but not necessarily homelessness), and earlier history of the site. The first category might include evidence for drug-related or alcohol-related activities, miscellaneous items resulting from homelessness, and contemporary material culture related to the local population more broadly. These various categories

overlap to some degree, but they provide a framework from which to begin to analyse the collection.

During the three-day excavation, 1,063 artefacts were collected from the three trenches and the surface collection of the site. Of these 1,063 finds, 259 (24%) were found during the surface collection, and the remainder from excavation: 352 (33%) in Trench 1 (T1), 278 (26%) in T2 with the final 181 artefacts (17%) collected from T3. These collections are now described in turn.

SURFACE FINDS

Of the surface finds, the majority were everyday objects which one might expect to be present on a site frequented by street drinkers; these included cans and bottles, smoking paraphernalia and pharmaceutical drug packaging relating to mental health issues, stress and anxiety (e.g. benzodiazepine) (Figs 5 and 6). However, some items were more surprising, such as a fake zombie wound (Fig. 7)! Stokes Croft encompasses myriad cultures and has a reputation locally for being Bohemian and alternative. The zombie wound is most likely a remnant of a large social gathering called Bristol Zombie Walk, in which people dressed as zombies congregate and walk through the city, likening the modern obsession for 'buying stuff for the sake of consuming' to the mindless state of zombies. The Zombie Walk is an annual event, and Stokes Croft was the venue for this event on 31 October 2009 when local rock band 'We Are The Nines' spontaneously performed to a crowd of over 1,000, using Turbo Island as their stage.[18] What is surprising is that only one obvious remnant of the gathering was recovered.

Of the 259 artefacts collected, 24% were glass fragments. The amount of glass scattered over the surface of the Island is unsurprising, given this is a popular meeting place for street drinkers. Of these glass fragments, the majority (12% of the total artefacts; just over 50% of the glass) were of clear glass typical of spirit bottles, and some 10% were green, indicative of lager bottles. However, only 1% of the glass fragments were brown; these were suggestive of either bottled beer or 'ale', generally more expensive than lager and not the preferred drink of most street drinkers, or the remains of Methadone mixture and Methadone Linctus bottles. But the small number of brown glass fragments compared to clear and green glass may also be due to collection bias, with brown glass easier to see and therefore easier to tidy up during refuse collection.

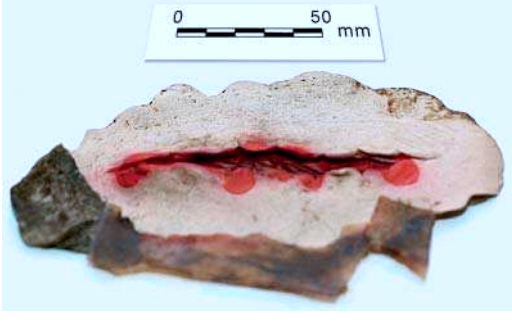

FIG. 7
Turbo Island: zombie wound (photograph, T. Fitton).

The fragments of glass were not the only evidence of alcohol consumption found during surface collection. Two 35cl spirit bottles were also found. Four of the items collected were intact empty cans: three of these had contained strong lager and one strong cider. Some 6% of the surface finds were non-removable ring pulls. Consultation with homeless colleagues revealed that the number of non-removable ring pulls can be attributed to the common practice within the homeless community of removing them so that people can check whether drinks offered them have been spiked (with drugs). The practice of spiking drinks is common amongst homeless people as a means of incapacitating someone before robbing them. Different drugs are used, such as GHB, Rohypnol (the 'date-rape' drug) and amphetamines.

Many of the items collected were paper, amounting to 11% of surface artefacts. These items were principally flyers advertising events at surrounding nightclubs. However, there were more unusual finds, such as a final demand letter from Wessex Water. The letter is indicative of the financial situation of many who live in Stokes Croft, not just local homeless people. Other 'paper' items from the surface collection were two common lavender (*Lavandula angustiflora vera*) plant labels. Although the area does look rather dilapidated, these labels are likely to have originated from the gardening work carried out by the homeless community, local volunteers and PRSC on Turbo Island in May 2009.

Items collected from the bush in the middle of Turbo Island also provided evidence for recent activities at the site, the bush providing 14% of the total surface finds. Food and sweet wrappers, alcohol cans, medicine bottles and drug paraphernalia were all present. Arguably, the most significant find from the bush was a Stericup, used for heating heroin in a hygienic way before drawing it into a syringe. The Stericup is distributed in a sterile pack

containing a Stericup bowl, handle, post-injection swab and a cotton-filter. These packs are not usually available to drug users in Bristol but are available in nearby Bath and Glastonbury.[19] Therefore the presence of this piece of equipment shows an element of transience within the drug-using homeless community.

Other finds included a brown glass medicine bottle, also collected from the bush. Homeless colleagues confirmed it was typical of a style of bottle used for mixing Methadone and Methadone Linctus, a heroin substitute. This in conjunction with the Stericup indicates heroin use at this site. Packaging for Buprenorphine 0.4mg sublingual tablets was also found, this drug being a substitute treatment for opioid drug dependence, and an empty bottle of Diazepam (a brand of benzodiazepine) tablets, these being used in the treatment of anxiety, which is a common side-effect of withdrawal from drugs or alcohol.

Considering we were excavating in December, non-homeless archaeologists were perplexed by our finding hay-fever tablets. Consultation with homeless colleagues again provided an explanation. Hay-fever tablets are often cut with crack cocaine to extend the dose. This combined with the freedom with which homeless colleagues discussed pharmaceutical and recreational drugs confirms a level of 'street' knowledge of chemistry that far outstretched that of non-homeless archaeologists, and a willingness to share that knowledge with others. Discussion of drugs — availability, quality and price — was a specific point of interest for homeless colleagues, and artefacts excavated at the site prompted conversations that highlighted a sophisticated level of alchemist knowledge.

Finally, of the 259 items collected from the surface, 8% were sweet wrappers. These sweet wrappers could also be indicative of drug use, as discussed previously.

TRENCH 1

The majority of the items collected during excavation were from T1, totalling 352 in all. The trench was located on the west side of the site. In total, eight stratigraphic layers were excavated (Figs 8 and 9), with the lowest comprising mainly ceramic fragments and pottery related to 1940 bomb damage. With that exception, the items excavated from T1 are contextually confusing, with no context having particular association with any specific period. Interestingly, homeless colleagues were intrigued far more here by historic fabric than their own material culture. A clay pipe stem is familiar to most archaeologists and often causes very little excitement when found. On this excavation, tiny fragments of beer mug and pipe stem were the subject of genuine interest, as something from 'so long ago' surviving at Turbo Island, an 'ever-present' sort of place with 'no real history'[20] in the minds of many homeless colleagues at the start of the excavation.

T1 had a higher volume of clay pipe fragments than other trenches, with the 45 fragments including the only two fragments of pipe bowl found in the excavation. One of these fragments was found under the ash layer in context [1004] and dates from the 18th century. Overall, fragments appear to range in date from the 17th to 19th centuries.

Of the finds collected in T1, 11% (39) are classified as Ceramic Building Materials (CBM). The majority came from context [1005]. With the exception of context [1006], all layers had at least one item of CBM. This dates predominantly from the 18th century, and is of similar material to many local houses constructed during the Georgian period.

This trench also had the highest concentration of pottery and ceramic material. Of the 109 fragments collected, 62% were located in this trench,

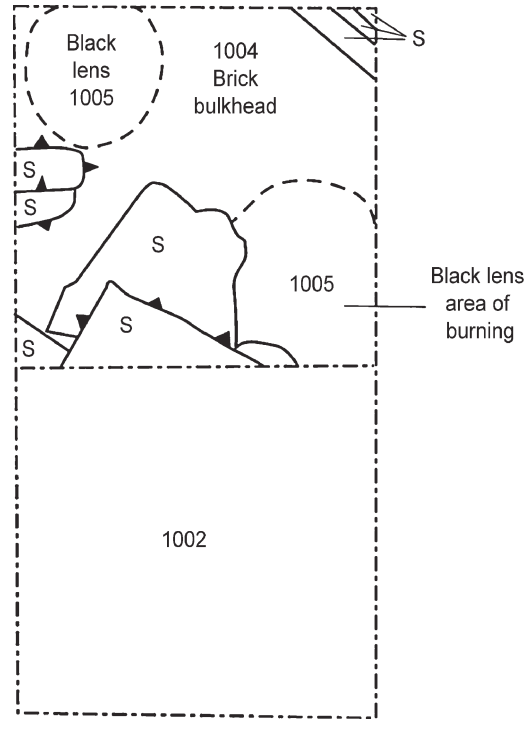

FIG. 8
Turbo Island: plan of T1 (graphics, H.R.S. Williams).

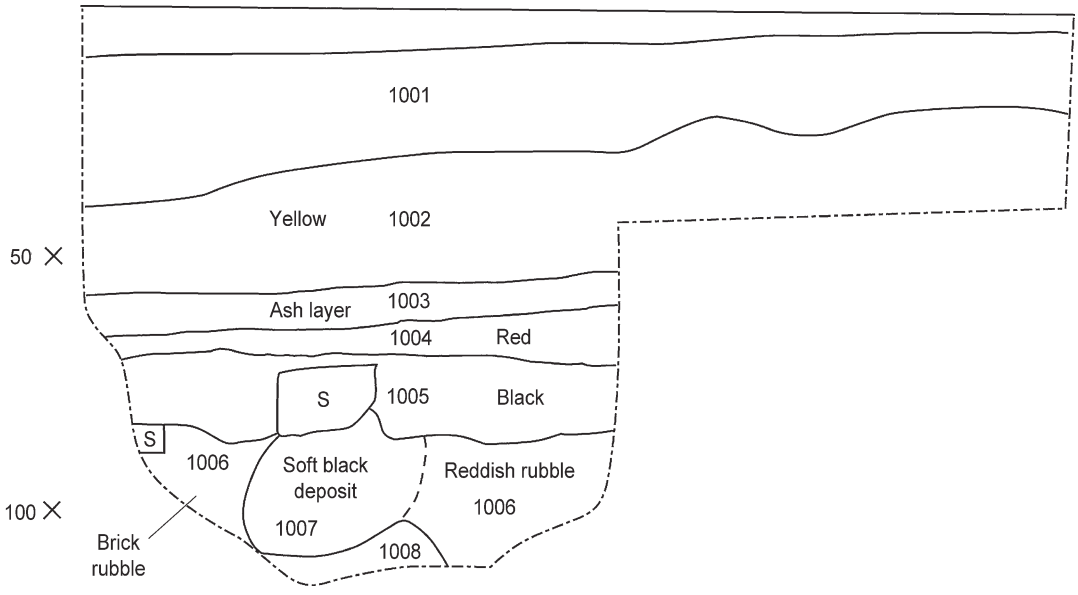

FIG. 9
Turbo Island: T1, section (graphics, H.R.S. Williams).

with the majority of the ceramic finds being 19th-century creamware. One fragment of English delftware is of particular note, dating from the 18th century and most likely part of a charger or plate. Four out of six pieces of mocha ware were also found in this trench.

The majority of finds located in contexts [1001] to [1003] were modern artefacts. Of these items many were fragments of plastic or glass. In context [1002], a hypodermic needle was recovered. This needle was identified by Dafnis as a 'groin needle' commonly used by heroin addicts during the 1980s (Fig. 5).

TRENCH 2

T2 contained 278 items, 26% of the total finds. This trench was situated behind the large bush in the centre of the Island, parallel to the exterior wall of the building abutting the site. In total, four contexts were excavated. T2 looked set to provide the highest density of artefacts from the excavation. However, time constraints meant T2 was excavated to only half the depth of T1 (for this reason T2 was not drawn in plan or section). Of the 278 items excavated in T2, 72% were modern. These artefacts have a broad range, from plastic bottle tops to toy fragments.

Artefacts recovered from T2 are perhaps more indicative than those from other trenches of the social problems that contribute to homelessness. Of the items excavated, 11% were non-removable ring pulls. As previously mentioned, ring pulls are removed from cans to enable homeless people to check whether their drink has been 'spiked'. Some 8% of the finds were plastic bottle tops, the type mainly associated with White Ace cider (a cheap white cider popular among Bristol street drinkers). A hypodermic needle cover was also recovered in context [2003].

A total of 22% of the artefacts excavated in T2 were 'historic', with the majority excavated from context [2004]. CBM comprised 10% of the excavated materials in this context, compared to 4% in [2003]. Glass was also found, most likely the Georgian pane glass commonly seen in the period houses of Stokes Croft. Of three pieces of Georgian pane glass, one was found in context [2003] and the remaining two in [2004]. Clay pipe fragments were excavated in this trench, accounting for 6% of the historical artefacts collected here. Two of the six sherds of mocha ware were found in context [2004]. Sixteen sherds of pottery were recovered in this trench, with context [2003] yielding 44% of the total.

TRENCH 3

T3 contained 181 items, 17% of the total artefacts from the excavation. The trench was situated on the south-east area of the site, near the boundary of the grassed area (Figs 10 and 11). Of the 180 items found, 63% were modern artefacts, with 41% of these in context [3001]. As in the previous two trenches, items recovered indicate intensive alcohol consumption. Some 17% of the items collected were bottle glass, 2.2% of which were fragments of brown glass. A large number of chicken bones were excavated. There are several fast-food restaurants nearby that sell fried chicken, and one homeless colleague remarked that the local night-time economy combined with the fact Turbo Island offers a low wall on which to perch and eat take-away food means that this is unlikely to relate to homeless use of the site. Co-author Hallam noted that fried chicken might well have been consumed by 'any of the clubbers and drunk people who stagger about around here after the clubs kick out. Most homeless people eat at the free places, if they eat anything'.[21]

In all, 32% of the items excavated in T3 are 'historic', with the majority of these excavated from context [3002]. CBM accounted for 25% of historical items collected, with 11% found in context [3005]. This was also the only layer excavated which had only historic artefacts. Some 6% of the artefacts excavated were clay pipe fragments.

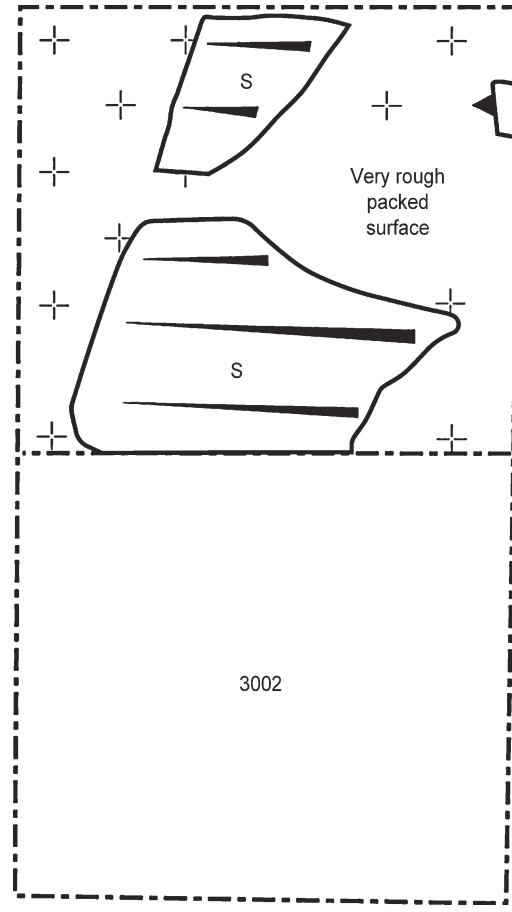

FIG. 10
Turbo Island: plan of T3 (graphics, H.R.S. Williams).

SUMMARY

The results of this excavation demonstrate two things. First, that documentation and testimonial evidence for the site's historical phase match the archaeological data recovered. Following damage to the houses and shops that existed on what was later to become Turbo Island, this was a bomb site from 1940 until 1961 when a 'gap site' was created. Arguably from that point on, and perhaps from 1940, it was a place where homeless people gathered, to talk, drink and smoke. Secondly, that this is now, and has been for some decades, a place characterized by many as an 'alternative' place and specifically a homeless place. The artefacts recovered here, some perhaps by the people who left them in the first place, tell that story; or 'those stories' as there seem to be many of them: stories of drug use (syringes), alcohol consumption (cans and bottles), illness, medication and recovery (diazepam), hygiene (the Stericup), personal safety (ring pulls) and so on.

In keeping with Harrison's observation that surface finds involve a great deal of 'messiness',[22] analysis of the Turbo Island surface finds was further complicated by their active use within homeless culture in the very recent past and the formation of the site in a busy, peri-urban location. However, the position of some earlier artefacts in stratified contexts demonstrates that these are stories that have accumulated over time. This excavation is the first to use the 'traditional' archaeological method of stratigraphic excavation on a contemporary homeless site. Together with Zimmerman *et al.*,[23] this work pioneers methodologies for truly collaborative archaeological work with homeless people, where their knowledge of homelessness is respected as 'expert' and their involvement is as colleagues rather than 'participants' or 'subjects'. In this project homeless colleagues' voices have been prioritized throughout the archaeological process, from mapping through excavation, finds processing and presentation of

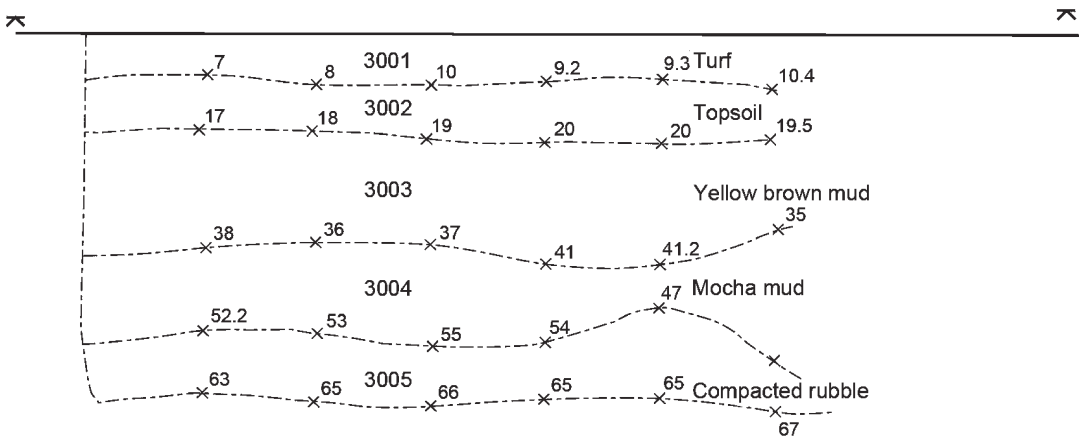

FIG. 11
Turbo Island: T3, section (graphics, H.R.S. Williams).

results (subsequent excavations in York conducted by Kiddey are yet to be fully assessed and published). As Holtorf has stated, 'the process of doing archaeology is more important than its results'.[24] What follows is an example of how the archaeological *process* can be shown to have 'redemptive and therapeutic potential'[25] and aid the development of self-esteem and confidence in people whose voices have traditionally been excluded from heritage interpretations. We argue that such social usefulness does not detract from the more traditional objectives of the discipline, but rather adds weight to the value in undertaking archaeological work.

REFLECTIONS

Here two homeless members of the project team, Jane Hallam and Andrew Dafnis, express what participation in this project (including but not exclusively relating to the excavation) meant for them. Conversations between Rachael Kiddey, Hallam and Dafnis took place in March 2011, 13 months after the excavation, when the latter had been active members of the ongoing homeless heritage team for over 18 months. Their words stand as a record of those who participated in this innovative research project, and as a political statement about the voices of collaborative research. Put simply, the voices and experiences of homeless people often remain silenced, left out or swept away from heritage interpretations of place, as though homeless peoples' engagement with and creation of places in the city are somehow less valid. This project takes a small step towards redressing this imbalance through including the views of people usually spoken of, or for, rather than listened to.

In the spirit of reflexive approaches to archaeological fieldwork, these 'diary entries' are edited from the original (lengthier) entries, but editing was undertaken in collaboration with Hallam and Dafnis to ensure their authenticity.[26] Although it is unusual to include such long and barely edited tracts of oral testimonies in an academic publication, we feel that the collaborative process by which we did this work is in some respects more significant and important than what we found. If our aim as 'professionals' is truly to involve so-called 'hard to reach' groups in archaeological work, then the onus is on those of us with 'the power of vocality'[27] to develop methodologies for making this happen. We feel it is important to hear from our colleagues at length because their reactions to, experience of and understanding of heritage is no less valid for the fact they are unaccustomed to writing for an academic journal and we feel it would not be in the spirit of the project for us to paraphrase Hallam and Dafnis.

JANE HALLAM

When I first heard about the homeless heritage and archaeology project I thought it sounded nuts! I was interested to know more about it but also quite shy because a bit of me worried what other homeless people would think if I was doing it. The time when it really clicked, when I became really interested, was when I decided to come around with you [Kiddey] one day, walking and looking at places I'd skippered [slept rough]. I saw all these

places — buildings and bushes and that — from a new angle because of the questions you asked. Like, I'd always known that some places I skippered were historic and sometimes I used to find old possessions that other homeless people had discarded; and even before I got involved in the project, I did sometimes used to lie there and wonder what had happened there all those years ago. I would think about who might have been exactly where I was a hundred years ago and sometimes I wondered into the future: would this place still be here? But I'd never thought about me being part of its history and, now I think about it, that thought was important in getting my curiosity going.

Walking around the city doing archaeology, not just normally walking around, made me remember how many homeless people used places that no one really thinks about much and I remembered how many lives have been saved by these kind of places. Some of the places I skippered might have been old and broken down or even totally derelict but they saved my life and the lives of countless other people because it was a place to go and you could tuck yourself in at night. In a way, the buildings that get called abandoned buildings weren't abandoned at all really because someone was living there, sleeping rough, which is funny when you think about it.

I've always been interested in archaeology and history but walking through it, making a journey through the old buildings and talking about the places at the same time made it more interesting than what it would be if I was just reading a book in the library. I mean, it's good to read books about history but it's not as real as when you're actually pointing at things you can see in front of you. I think you get more detail, you know, more of those little things that books don't tell you. I've definitely gained confidence and self-esteem from being part of our team and Jude [my probation officer] said she's noticed a big change in me; said I seem happier and I am definitely that. I've learned a lot from the project but also I think we've taught each other new knowledge — between the classes, we've built some bridges because it's not all the higher class telling us what is what. It's like when we spoke at the conference in Leicester [Postgraduate Conference in Historical Archaeology], after we did our talk, that lady [Prof. Sarah Tarlow of Leicester University] said, 'you've made me think'. Well, that made me think a lot because I knew she was important in the archaeology world; she's written all these books about it, and so for her to say to us that we'd made her think . . . it made me feel really good. It made me think maybe I could have a go at writing about my life like a journey — from kid's homes and childhood abuse to Stonehenge and the Battle of the Beanfield and being a New Age traveller all over Europe, to homelessness and addiction and it has a positive end, my story, because I've come right out the other side and getting into archaeology has helped that. I don't use drugs these days and I'm only drinking a couple of cans at night, not all day like I was. It's quite a story really and if I wrote it down it could be helpful to other people who are stuck in their lives and it would be something good to leave for my kids. I never would have dreamt that people like that [Sarah Tarlow] would have even spoke to people like us but after the conference when we were all having a drink with the other people who were there it was like there was no difference between the classes at all which is a nice thought. I left Leicester thinking maybe I could write a book which is a crazy idea to most people I know. In fact, I mentioned the idea to my neighbour when we got back from Leicester and he said 'are you really that bored?' and I said, 'it's not because I'm bored! I want to write a book to have something of my own to get stuck into'.

I think the opportunities that this project has offered us should be more widely available — there are so many incentives to realize there is more to life than drugs and drink (which most people do because they're bored or because they're trying to block out how bad life is) and there's this wealth of information that I never even knew about before. Because it's practical, it gets you out and about and it makes learning much better than if you were just sitting behind a desk at college. Because the way we do archaeology involves walking about, talking and seeing things, you start to see places with this new knowledge in your mind that makes it seem not the same old places, same old people. When you're an archaeologist looking at these places, it gives you incentives. I think school trips would be better if they were more like the way we go around places — going to places and learning about them while you're actually there. This kind of learning makes it easier to get involved and it isn't even just suitable for school trips, it's good to do whatever age you are. I've even written the prologue for my book!

ANDREW DAFNIS

Everyone's interested in the past, aren't they? What made our project really good was we were looking at and digging up the past of the environment where we were living, and then able to tell other people in the community about our area. No one really knew what Turbo Island was in the past even

though people had various ideas on it. It was fascinating. And getting the police involved was good too because they weren't moving people on, they were getting to know everyone — the police got to see people in a different light. They didn't see them as alcoholics or druggies when we did the excavation — they were working with us. In fact, it changed the way I have a relationship with the police, all of them, not just the ones that was on the dig with us. The police know now that I'm not up to anything and working with them on the excavation gave them a chance to get to know people like me as individuals and the other way round.

[The project] put a lot of homeless people in a different environment from what they'd normally be in. I enjoyed going up to the university and cleaning finds because I would never go there or meet people like that usually because there's a barrier — I just wouldn't normally come across those types of people. I think it changed their perspective on homeless people too because we weren't sat down on a corner; we were all learning different things. It gives you more confidence — when you're on the streets, you're completely out of society, totally. The only people you really communicate with are people in the same situation, other than authorities. Eventually you do lose the ability to communicate with normal people other than asking for money or selling them [a *Big*] *Issue*. I enjoy going to conferences because you're put in positions where you're not judged and you're actually enjoying yourself! You're gaining knowledge and information about things you wouldn't normally have access to. There's only so much you can get from books in the library and it's just one person's point of view, like a gospel. I like going to places where you can talk with people who are actually interested in archaeology; it means you get more than just one point of view and that makes you think. It's interesting. I'm quite ill and I have to go to hospitals and see doctors a lot. I can deal with them people with more confidence now because before I used to think they were too intelligent for me to communicate with, but I see them as more normal since meeting and speaking with more of them kind of people.

DISCUSSION

No one is arguing that our extensive collection of Special Brew cans and broken cigarette lighters should be maintained and preserved by the British Museum in perpetuity. The significance and success of this project lies in the *process* by which we worked. By overlaying the 'authorized view' of the heritage landscape of Bristol with a landscape perceived by homeless people, we actively 'place' homelessness 'on the map'. Homeless people relate to and have emotional attachment to their physical surroundings as much as anyone and by ensuring these valid perspectives are recorded and interpreted by homeless people, we all move a little closer towards a more inclusive view of our shared 'cultural heritage'. This is also therefore heritage 'as a social process'[28] or as 'social action'.[29] Our finds might be 'rubbish' to some, but the process of doing archaeology in this way has proved useful and empowering.

Recent developments in heritage policy, such as the European Landscape Convention[30] and the Faro Convention on the Value of Heritage to Society,[31] have made explicit that landscape is something 'perceived by people' and that 'everyone' should have the right to freely participate in cultural heritage and the 'ongoing process of managing and defining' what this consists of.[32] Through approaching homeless people on the street and asking them whether they would be keen to work as archaeologists we have come to this outcome — a co-authored paper in a peer-reviewed journal that gives voice to two people who were, until recently, homeless. Together, we have learned about the process of engaging marginalized people in archaeology and heritage work. For example, our working methods had to be adaptable and we had to be flexible, prepared to change the way we worked to accommodate the very specific needs of our co-workers. We are developing new ways to include other groups of people who have traditionally been marginalized by the heritage industry or 'left out' due to the work involved being considered patronizing, impossible or irrelevant.

CONCLUSIONS

We would argue that the archaeological excavation of Turbo Island by a team of people from a wide variety of backgrounds, who brought with them a range of life experiences, skills and knowledge, has been successful in a number of ways. Primarily, two homeless people who chose to get involved with the project at the start (Dafnis and Hallam) remained core members of the Turbo Island team and were co-curators of an exhibition, 'A History of Stokes Croft in 100 Objects'. Both Jane and Andrew report feeling happier in themselves as a result of having worked as archaeologists and we argue that this is a valid outcome of heritage work, much of which involved re-visiting and in some cases, coming to terms with, features of the homeless landscape that were painful, or reminiscent of traumatic parts of their lives. In

short, the heritage 'act' allowed them to see difficult situations of the recent past with which they identified personally, in context, as part of a wider history of place, people and politics. In this sense, we feel archaeology can be shown to have been helpful to Dafnis and Hallam in finding a pathway from the social isolation experienced by homeless people, if not the physical state of 'being homeless'. As Andrew Dafnis states, he feels more confident speaking with medical experts as a direct result of having mixed socially with people from a variety of social and educational backgrounds and this positively enhances his experience of hospitals. This might not relate to the traditional aims of the archaeological discipline but practical, socially useful outcomes are increasingly important academic results, as well as providing real value to those involved with the project.

Secondly, those members of the Turbo Island team who are fortunate not to have been homeless learned much about the culture of homelessness as well as experiencing profound challenges to preconceptions. They were routinely 'surprised' by specific knowledge their homeless colleagues displayed (e.g. in terms of pharmaceutical drugs, their chemical components, pharmacological characteristics and ways in which these could be adapted for 'street use'). They were equally surprised when homeless people relayed information about sites of archaeological or historical interest in comparison to the site we excavated. Conversations between archaeologists, students and homeless people concerned the English Civil War, Stonehenge and Hadrian's Wall. Debate was fluid, including hypotheses and polite theoretical disagreements, postulations on why one theory could not be supported over another in just the same manner as at a university seminar. Why the non-homeless participants should be surprised that homeless people take an interest in archaeology and gather knowledge about it can only be explained through closer examination of the popular cultural stereotype of homeless people — as 'at fault', 'lazy', 'lost causes', people to be pitied.

In attempting to construct 'an archaeology' of contemporary homelessness, we hope to place homelessness — as a culture, depersonalized except where individual people have chosen to share their perspectives — in a place that makes it approachable to a wider, more general audience. Everyone has 'past' and heritage and homelessness has existed, as 'landlessness', pauperism and vagrancy, for many centuries. We have to consider what kind of post-medieval archaeology we would be undertaking if we chose to ignore material traces of pasts and intangible heritage relating to more contemporary pasts that are uncomfortable, unsanitary — even 'illegal'? Archaeology is of interest to a variety of people and made 'familiar' through popular television programmes, museum displays, films and community projects. Yet homelessness, familiar in every town and city in Britain, remains an enigma to most people. We hope that by looking at homelessness with homeless colleagues working as archaeologists and presenting our findings in a truly collaborative way, we can start to facilitate dialogue between homeless people and those in decision-making positions, thus debunking the notion that homeless people are somehow 'different' from the rest of us. And perhaps Turbo Island will become the place most directly associated with this development, an excavation significant not for what was found but for what happened there, beneath the surface, so to speak.

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NOTES

[1] Zimmerman *et al*. 2010.

[2] Zimmerman *et al*. 2010.

[3] Kiddey & Schofield 2011.

[4] *The Big Issue* is a professionally written magazine sold by homeless people, who keep 50% of the cover price of each issue sold; produced by the Big Issue Foundation, it aims to provide work and income for homeless and other vulnerable individuals.

[5] Bakker *et al*. 2008.

[6] Van der Horst 2004.

[7] Schofield 2011.

[8] Kiddey & Schofield 2009, 2010; Schofield *et al*. 2012. See also Graves-Brown 2011; for an example of another project that engages with contemporary homelessness, see Zimmerman *et al*. 2010.

[9] Graves-Brown forthcoming.

[10] *Annals of Bristol*, 1618, 67, <http://texts.wishfulthinking.org.uk/Latimer1700/Annals1601.html> [accessed 4 March 2014].

[11] John Holdcroft, pers. comm.

[12] John Holdcroft, pers. comms.

[13] Chris Chalkley, pers. comm.
[14] Auge, 1995.
[15] Lefebvre 1991, 191.
[16] See page 4 of the European Landscape Convention: <http://128.121.10.98/coe/pdfopener?smd=1&md=1&did=594646> [accessed 28 February 2014].
[17] Smith 2006.
[18] <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ricksphotos101/4061051581/in/photostream/> [accessed 28 February 2014].
[19] <http://www.dhi-online.org.uk/do/bath/engagement/> [accessed 4 March 2014].
[20] Pers. comms. with homeless colleagues on site, December 2009.
[21] Pers. comms. with colleague on site, December 2009.
[22] Harrison 2011.
[23] Zimmerman *et al*. 2010
[24] Holtorf 2005, 75.
[25] Buchli & Lucas 2001.
[26] For example, Hodder 2000.
[27] Lucas 1997, 41.
[28] Smith 2006.
[29] Byrne 2008; Tilley 1989, 104.
[30] <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm> [accessed 4 March 2014].
[31] <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/Identities/default_en.asp> [accessed 4 March 2014].
[32] <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm> European Landscape Convention, Article 1a, [accessed 28 February 2014].

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SUMMARY IN FRENCH, GERMAN, ITALIAN AND SPANISH

RÉSUMÉ

Turbo Island, Bristol: fouiller un lieu contemporain pour les sans abris

RESUME: Cet article traite des données relatives à la fouille archéologique, menée en 2009 à Bristol (GB), d'un lieu apparemment ordinaire. Bien que l'espace semble quelconque pour la plupart des passants, sa fréquentation par de nombreux sans-abris et par des ivrognes en font un lieu peu commun. Au cours de cette fouille, les sans-abris sont devenus des «collègues», impliqués dans le dégagement, le traitement des découvertes et leur interprétation. La nature collaborative de ce projet va plus loin qu'une simple tentative de représenter les groupes sociaux qui ont traditionnellement été exclus de la pratique et de l'interprétation du patrimoine, cette étude permet en effet de poser des bases méthodologiques pour la praxis.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Turbo Insel, Bristol: Ausgrabungen eines Platzes für gegenwärtig Heimatlose

Dieser Artikel untersucht die Ausgrabungen eines scheinbar gewöhnlichen Platzes in Bristol (UK) in 2009. Obwohl der Platz Vorübergehenden nicht weiter bemerkenswert erscheint, ist er ungewöhnlich, weil er routinemäßig von vielen städtischen Straßentrinkern und Heimatlosen genutzt wird. Heimatlose wurden zu "Kollegen", denn sie halfen bei den Ausgrabungen, bei der Säuberung und Einordnung der Funde und Interpretation. Die Zusammenarbeit in diesem Projekt führte weiter als nur eine soziale Gruppe einzubeziehen, die traditionellerweise aus dem Prozess des Kulturerbes und dessen Interpretation ausgeschlossen ist – es legte methodologische Fundamente für die Praxis.

RIASSUNTO

Turbo Island, Bristol: scavo di un luogo per senza tetto di epoca contemporanea

Questo saggio fornisce una valutazione sullo scavo di uno spazio apparentemente ordinario a Bristol (UK) effettuato nel 2009. Sebbene questo spazio sembri anonimo alla maggior parte dei passanti, è insolito per essere un luogo utilizzato abitualmente da una parte della comunità cittadina dei senza fissa dimora e dalle persone che bevono in strada. I senza-tetto sono stati coinvolti come "colleghi" nello scavo e nelle fasi di studio e interpretazione dei reperti. La natura collaborativa di questo progetto va oltre il mero tentativo di rappresentare gruppi sociali che sono stati tradizionalmente esclusi dall'interpretazione e dalla valorizzazione del patrimonio, gettando le basi metodologiche per una prassi.

RESUMEN

Isla de Turbo, Bristol: excavación de un lugar desahuciado contemporáneo

Este artículo presenta los resultados de la excavación de un espacio aparentemente ordinario en Bristol (Reino Unido) en 2009. Aunque el espacio aparenta ser normal para la mayoría de los transeúntes, el lugar es utilizado habitualmente por muchos de los habitantes de la ciudad que se dedican a beber en las calles y también por vagabundos. Muchos de ellos participaron en la excavación, en el procesado de los hallazgos y ene la interpretación. La naturaleza colaborativa de este proyecto va más allá de intentar simplemente representar a los grupos sociales que tradicionalmente han sido excluidos de la interpretación y de la práctica de patrimonio, ya que establece bases metodológicas para su praxis.

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