The Public Archaeology of Treasure

edited by

Howard Williams
Peter Reavill
Samuel Clague

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The book comprises the proceedings of the 5th University of Chester Archaeology Student Conference and surveys a key selection of current debates regarding looting and the trade in antiquities, liaison with metal-detectorists past and present, public engagement with conservation processes, museum displays of items perceived to be ‘treasure’ against various legal, cultural and religious criteria, and the digital public archaeologies of treasure. Running through the chapters are critical discussions of public mortuary archaeology and (specifically) early medieval public archaeology, relating to how these items are discovered and derived, as well as how they are treated and perceived in archaeological work, heritage contexts and more broadly in our contemporary society.

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Introduction: the Public Archaeology of Treasure

Howard Williams, Samuel Clague, Natasha Carr and James Raine

Setting the stage for The Public Archaeology of Treasure*, this chapter presents the complex intersections of 'treasure' in archaeological teaching and research and archaeology's interactions with a range of different publics on local, regional, national and international scales. The chapter also identifies the global issues in heritage conservation, management and interpretation as well as the looting of archaeological sites and the illicit trade in antiquities relating to 'treasure(s)' as legally defined, popularly perceived and metaphorically articulated. Having introduced the breadth and complexity of 'treasure(s)', we survey the 2020 student conference from whence this project derived before reviewing the span and foci of the book itself.*

Will you search through the loamy earth for me?
Climb through the briar and bramble
I'll be your treasure

J. Flynn (2014)

These are opening lyrics to the Johnny Flynn song accompanying the popular television drama series *Detectorists* (2014–2017), created and written by Mackenzie Crook. The show is a light-hearted comedy focusing on two metal detectorists from the fictional Danebury Metal Detecting Club (Andy Stone played by Mackenzie Crook and Lance Stater played by Toby Jones). Over the three seasons aired to date, we track their camaraderie, relationships and petty conflicts as they seek out artefacts in the Essex countryside. We are shown treasure-hunting to be a solitary outdoor pastime. Trinkets and trifles from bygone times are seen as a desired goal for these dedicated hobbyists but also their discovery is regarded also as a mechanism for dialogue with the human past through the landscape as well as an opportunity for building sustained friendships in today's world.

Detectorists gives 'treasure' an agency and aura. It is referenced as shorthand for all kinds of archaeological artefacts uncovered from the soil: from can pulls to military buttons. Eclectic and elusive, a reward for the patient, diligent and faithful explorer, 'treasure' is also an aspiration for life that can take many forms beyond the material. Moreover, *Detectorists'* treasured things are given a quasi-preternatural agency. They might stay tenaciously concealed and never found (as with Sexred's ship-burial in series 1). Treasure might be discovered unexpected below ground after many hours of fruitless searching (following a suspicion that one of Lance's detector readings was something special he finds what is described as a 'Late Saxon Gold Jewelled Aestell' in series 2). Gold coins might be even 'miraculously' found above ground (items from a Roman hoard disturbed by ploughing and collected by magpies which finally drop from a birdsnest at the end of series 3). Treasures thus become accessible and tangible through their interaction with, and definition by, their discoverers and investigators in a specific Essex landscape. Their trade for profit is judiciously avoided by the show, but Lance Stater takes the utmost pride in his *aestel* when he photographs it on temporary display in the British Museum close to the Sutton Hoo helmet and the Lewis Chessmen where he is credited as 'finder' (*Detectorists* Christmas Special 2015).

Treasure's agency in *Detectorists* also finds voice through Flynn's aforementioned opening song in each episode. Hidden rare and precious items cry out to be found, explored, studied and shared. Ultimately, the story implies that old and buried things plea to be discovered so that their stories can told for posterity. This romantic conception of treasure manifests itself most clearly in series 3 where 'mystical wisdom' seems to motivate Lance's engagement with the landscape (see also Greene this volume). This notion also chimes closely with the choice of a 'speaking object' in series 2 (an *aestel* inspired by the famous late 9th-century Alfred's Jewel, an artefact now displayed in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford found at North Petherton, Somerset in 1693 which bears an inscription declaring in the first-person that: *Aelfred mec heht gewyrcan* – 'Alfred ordered me to be made' (Hinton 2005: 129)).[1] Lance takes his superstitions further by reflecting how, on temporary display at the British Museum, his *aestel* appeared like a 'wild animal trapped in a cage'. Subsequently, the apparition of an Anglo-Saxon monk manifests on Lance's slide during his presentation to the metal detecting group. His run of bad luck subsequently takes many forms. Fearing there is a 'curse of the gold' (having not to found anything since the *aestel*), Lance buys some ancient coins from a dealer and reburies them to reciprocate and assuage the earth itself. Thus ends his run of bad luck (*Detectorists* Christmas Special 2015).

The programme's vision of 'treasure' is made most clearly in series 3. In the final scene, Andy Stone reflects 'I don't know why we do it!'. Lance responds, expounding on the significance of metal detecting as less about the 'treasure' in itself, but the significance of the finds for a higher purpose of uncovering something truer and more direct about life in past times:

> Metal detecting is the closest you'll get to time travel. See, archaeologists: they gather up the facts, piece the jigsaw together, work out how we lived and find the buildings we lived in. But what we do, that's different. We unearth the scattered memories, mine for stories, fill in the personality. Detectorists: we're time travellers (*Detectorists* series 3, episode 6)

The misleading and romanticised nature of Lance Stater's words aside, *Detectorists* may be a 'first' in a positive and popular portrayal of the burgeoning hobby of metal detecting and its relationship with the English landscape (Keighren and Norcup 2020). In doing so, it perhaps gives direct respectability and legitimisation to an activity that is causing untold damage to the UK's archaeological heritage including funerary sites (see Daubney and Tierney this volume). Problematic dimensions of metal detecting in the programme include explicitly seeking out furnished early medieval graves (series 1) and disturbing a Roman burial site (series 2) without consideration of the ethics involved. In contrast, professional archaeologists are portrayed as unethical and inert under the pressure from developers and the planning process; this is illustrated by the site supervisor who covers up the destruction of a Roman mosaic as it would slow down a new building project (series 3). The *Detectorists* characterisation of metal detectoring is thus misleading and perhaps irresponsible, part of a broader romanticisation of both legal and illegal detecting in the UK (e.g. BBC 2022). *Detectorists* is part of a broader phenomenon across the media and popular culture in which treasure-hunting is presented as eccentric but harmless, material-focused but also life-affirming, contemplative and even spiritual. The television programme thus serves as appropriate introduction to the many challenges archaeologists face in exploring the public archaeology of treasure.

Part I: Many treasures in our world

Detectorists is but one of our contemporary society's many engagements with the archaeological record, revealing popular fascinations with the human past mediated by material culture: items often called 'treasure(s)'. Set against this background, how do archaeologists engage with the many challenges as well as the many potentials of working with the public using ideas and practices of 'treasure' and 'treasure hunting'?

Before proceeding, it is important to remember that 'treasure' is a noun referring to 'wealth or riches stored or accumulated, esp. in the form of precious metals; gold or silver coin; hence in general, money,

[1] https://www.ashmolean.org/alfred-jewel

riches and wealth'. Yet 'treasure(s)' can also be used figuratively to refer to any valuable or prized thing or quality and a place to store said items in a 'treasury' (OED Online 2022a). As a verb, 'treasure' has more specific associations: 'put away or lay aside (anything of value) for preservation, security, or future use; to hoard or store up' (OED Online 2022b). Given this mutability as a concept, 'treasure(s)' is widely used and extensively misused in archaeology and the discipline's many public educational, engagement and entertainment intersections. It is often a colloquial shorthand for any discovered ancient artefact or assemblages, and the act of their curation.

Treasure's legal definition varies across modern nations and regions. Yet, significantly, these frameworks both influence and operate in tension with popular perceptions and behaviours, including treasure-hunting hobbyists' practices and the media. For instance, in England and Wales, 'treasure' is defined in a complicated and precise fashion by the 1996 Treasure Act as principally all gold and silver objects and groups of coins over 300 years old at the time of discovery, plus prehistoric base-metal assemblages (from 2003) (see Boyle this volume).[2]

'Treasure' is thus a polysemous and mutable subset of the archaeological record and also refers to a specific set of processes and practices associated with preserving and curating in dialogue with legal definitions and procedures. Its meaning and significance fluctuate depending on context. Both archaeologists and those involved in the creation of popular culture are aware of this shifting ambiguity as well as the international fascinating and (often illicit) trade in 'treasures'. Even for fictional archaeologist Dr Henry 'Indiana' Jones Junior, who had no qualms about ransacking indigenous 'treasures', there is the firm aspiration that, once retrieved, they are acquired and installed in a museum. Indeed, such popular and stereotypical Hollywood genres evoke 'treasures' in complex, ambiguous and sometimes metaphorical and illusory fashions. Notably, in *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008) the 'treasure' of El Dorado proves (as so often it does) to be 'knowledge', but also a curse for its discoverers rather than the blessing and promise of wealth it is imagined to be (mirroring the story arcs in Ark of the Covenant in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) and the Holy Grail in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989)).

Such complex semantics are not restricted to archaeology and archaeologists in film, but to all ancient (and archaeological) treasures in our popular culture. A striking example in the history of film is the famous paraphrasing of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* by Sam Spade (played by Humphrey Bogart) when he identifies the Maltese Falcon, over which so many have lost their lives, as 'the stuff that dreams are made of' (*The Maltese Falcon* 1941). Ancient precious things are the aspirations of our many quests for fame, glory, wealth and immortality but often inevitably these desires are fragile, fleeting and failing, thus revealing our vainglories and delusions. Still, treasure punctuates and populates video games as rewards and goals in immersive fictional landscapes which often aim to replicate past times including prehistoric, ancient, medieval and early modern worlds (see Nicholson 2019; Ezzeldin 2019; O'Connor 2000). Equally, treasures populate our plays, novels, television shows as well as many genres of films via infinitely varied forms and contexts.

Treasure in the real world complements these many fictional representations. It is imagined and discovered on land and under water; its discovery is widely reported through newspapers and online media. Treasure is often our art and becomes the subject and inspiration for our art. Treasure is housed in our museums and art galleries but also our imaginations, replicated for our homes and public spaces in all manner of scales and media. Moreover, the process of its discovery is itself often a theatre of reporting and interaction between archaeologist and other agents. Thus, treasure is a phantasm across our media and not a month goes by when another story of metal-detectorists uncovering surprise finds of 'treasure' does not hit the news (BBC News 2021).

[2] For more refined details, see: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/24/section/1; https://finds.org.uk/treasure

So, ultimately, the values, significances, tensions and conflicts surrounding 'treasure' – legal, cultural, artistic, monetary among them – are all of our modern-day creation and inheritance. People today generate and recreate 'treasures' by affording material cultures of all forms, meanings, values and significance from the point of discovery or encounter through their circulation, consumption and display and sometimes through their loss, destruction and beyond. For treasure is never truly 'discovered' even if hunted for and found. Rather, material cultures are sometimes defined as 'treasures' and set up in relationship with our practices and storytelling (Shanks 2007: 273). 'Treasure' is thus loaded with rich and interleaving connotations, a source of misrepresentation and deception, commodification and fantasy, as well as a focus of fascination with rare and valuable, prized and honoured things. Treasures are about acquisition and desires to acquire. They embody aesthetics, pride, identity, faith and nostalgia in our contemporary past, as well as a complex nest of cultural and monetary values. These traditions and practices are drawn from deep-time historical traditions from the human past and our 21st-century regimes of enmeshing people and things.

Nested within these complex thought worlds is the persistent practice of 'treasure hunting'. The deliberate retrieval of many items from the soil without careful recording and reporting, destined often for private collection or sale, remains a considerable challenge given the loose frameworks in place within the UK, and particularly for England and Wales. From illegal and dubious practices to large-scale hobbyists operating with landowner's permission within the law, such ongoing practices damage the archaeological record and remove objects from their contexts, thus defusing public access and knowledge and jettisoning the possible legacy of their inheritance by future generations (e.g. Gill 2017; thePipeLine 2021a and b). Indeed, it is clear that the true scale of illegal and unreported finds can only be crudely estimated, and the looting of archaeological sites and the trade in antiquities is a worldwide blight far removed from the fond parable of *Detectorists* (BBC News 2022a; see also Gill 2010).

Yet, here lies the inherent contradiction for the public archaeology of treasure. Archaeology came into being from a long European antiquarian tradition of looting, collecting and the classification of 'treasures' of all kinds (Schnapp 1996). Hence, unsurprisingly, archaeologists have had a long-term love-hate relationship with 'treasure' in its own history, teaching and research, interactions with the media and in heritage spaces (e.g. Brittain and Clack 2007: 19–20). Often, archaeologists have avoided and denounced amateurs and criminals as 'treasure-hunters' and 'treasure-seekers', just as they have attempted to distance themselves from the imperial, colonial and nationalistic legacies in which antiquarians and early archaeologists frequently operated in relation to treasures. Yet archaeologists must own this legacy, since archaeology has invested our popular cultures with treasures, fashioned our fantasies. Indeed, some of the most enduring tropes of horror result from disturbing graves and opening chests of treasure, from Egyptian mummies to pirate gold (Brown this volume). Treasure is blessed and cursed, and works to bless and curse archaeological endeavours and archaeologists. 'Treasure' is today thus simultaneously revered and reviled by archaeologists in their public communication, engagement and education: a concept that is often ignored and never neither fully justified nor banished from use.

Despite these unresolved legal, practical and ethical issues, the interests of metal detectorists and archaeologists are sometimes unfairly characterised as in stark opposition to each other in seeking out old things in the soil and telling their stories. Collaborations between metal detectorists and archaeologists have increasingly fostered responsible and sustainable research and public engagement. This collaboration can take the public beyond the act of discovery to afford rich and detailed engagement with the human journey from prehistory to recent times, including a variety of 'time travelling' experiences facilitated by investigating items recovered (Holtorf 2017). Such projects might be achieved through a host of activities from hands-on fieldwork and finds-processing through to exposure to academic and popular publications, digital databases and social media (e.g. Hinton 2005: 1–6, 260–261; see also Hadley and Richards 2016). This rich and complex process of long-term collaboration and public engagement is illustrated effectively by many dryland treasure finds over recent decades, such as the Staffordshire Hoard (Butterworth 2019; Greaves this volume). Yet, this point also applies to wetlands. For instance, the Thames foreshore is the sinuous stage for one such successful long-term collaboration between archaeologists and amateurs. Building on antiquarian and early archaeological surveys and investigations, the long-term extensive and systematic work of the Thames Discovery Programme from 2008 exemplifies good practice. Collaborating with the Thames Mudlarks and the Portable Antiquities Scheme, the project illustrates the value of searching for 'treasures' of all kinds, from Palaeolithic flint hand-axes to relics of London's Blitz on the foreshore. This collaboration between professionals, academics and amateurs has shed light on the long-term story of human activity along the Thames from prehistory to the 20th century via a public and community archaeology programme, including fieldwork, events and activities as well as exhibitions and online resources and interfaces (Cohen 2017a and b).

Figure 1: Tweet by archaeologist Spencer Carter (@microburin) reflecting on the manifold significances of 'treasure' in public engagement (Reproduced with permission)

So, while attitudes and relationships with 'treasure' and 'treasure-hunters' are ambivalent (see Williams this volume), sometimes the term treasure and amateur treasure hunting can be positively mobilised for good by the archaeological profession, including for public engagement and in combating the looting of, and trade in, antiquities. Indeed, some archaeologists have worked hard to reclaim the term 'treasure' in positive and constructive fashions away from the commodified and fetishised associations. For example, the invaluable cultural information encoded in mundane artefacts was consciously evoked in the recent television series *The Great British Dig*, in which even humble and fragmented Romano-British pot sherds and coins are collectively referred to as 'Roman treasures' (Series 1, Episode 1, 2021). Moreover, 'treasures' can be deployed to emphasise the potential damage of climate change to archaeological landscapes and heritage assets (Rowlatt 2022). Archaeologists often continue to use 'treasure' in the colloquial sense in order to describe precious metal hoards, from the Staffordshire Hoard to the Galloway Hoard, for various publics (Fern and Butterworth 2022; Goldberg and Davis 2021; Greaves this volume). As Carter (2021) has cogently articulated, 'treasure' can be a term actively and inclusively deployed to encapsulate human stories and public engagement through the discovery and analysis of material culture from the human past for communities today (Figure 1). With critical and careful awareness of its semantic baggage, 'treasure' can be used to afford an enchantment to the quotidian and the prosaic as much as affording fresh readings of precious and rare artefacts and assemblages (see also Brophy and Williams this volume).

Part II: Reviewing the conference

The 5th University of Chester Archaeology Student Conference took place on 31 January 2020 in the lecture theatre of the Grosvenor Museum, Chester. It was complemented by an online Twitter conference on the following morning, 1 February 2020 (Figure 2). Professor Howard Williams opened proceedings, welcoming the students, staff, academics, heritage specialists and members of the public in attendance. As well as introducing the conference theme – *The Public Archaeology of Treasure* – he identified the topics of each session: what is meant by 'treasure'; how do we use it as a term; how do we combat the plundering of sites and the discovery and trade in archaeological artefacts?

Treasure meanings and treasure discoveries

The first session was chaired by Adam Andre. Final-year Archaeology student Jack Douglas presented: 'Rusty Connections: How Archaeologists Keep Up with Metal Detectorists', assessing the success of metal detecting in liaison within specific archaeological projects, using the case study of the fieldwork conducted to reveal the winter camp of the Viking Great Army at Torksey (Lincolnshire) (Hadley and Richards 2016). In addition to the benefits metal-detected finds afford to researchers, Douglas identified potential for community archaeology dimensions including the ongoing untapped potential to work with disadvantaged groups and others with specific traumatic experiences (cf. Everill *et al.* 2020). Douglas set these positive initiatives within the context of current guidelines (such as the 'Code of Conduct' of the National Council for Metal Detecting) and a long-running Portable Antiquities Scheme for England and Wales (PAS) (see also chapters by Boyle, Clarke and Reavill in this volume). However, in noting the lack of legal obligation to report items not defined as 'treasure' in the UK, Douglas highlighted how many finds will not be reported and studied and site locations and entire landscapes that are therefore being systematically robbed of their valuable archaeological resources. In other words, despite the best efforts of the PAS, nighthawking, vagaries in reporting, and large commercial rallies are among the many issues

Figure 2: The audience at the Grosvenor Museum lecture theatre for the 5th University of Chester Archaeology Student Conference, 31 January 2020

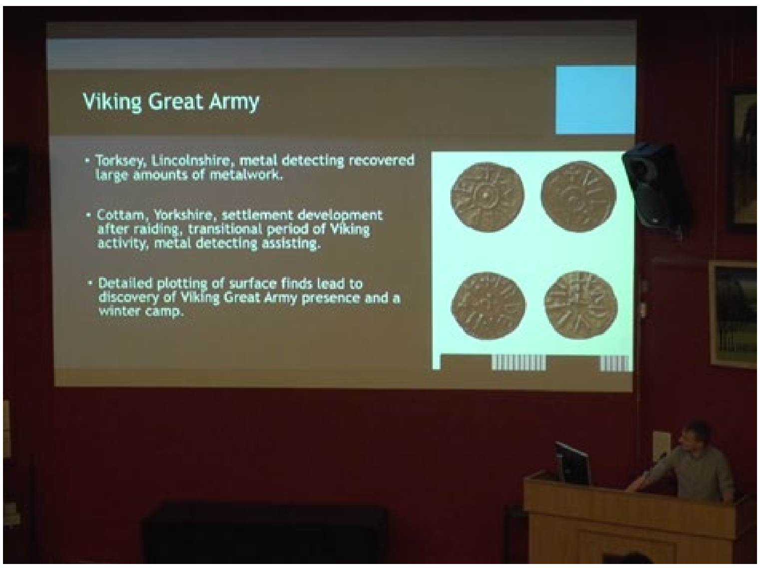

Figure 3: Jack Douglas presenting 'Rusty Connections'

fostering ongoing tensions between metal detectorists and archaeologists (Figure 3).

Tackling heritage crime and the illicit trade in antiquities

Figure 4: Jack Emery presenting 'The Theft of Culture'

Figure 5: Alfie Brear presenting 'The Heritage Crime of ISIS and the Illicit Trade in Antiquities'

Chaired by Jacob Adams, the second session explored the illicit trading of antiquities and heritage crimes committed on national and global stages. It identified key areas for the prevention of this, along with some positives that have resulted. Jack Emery presented 'The Theft of Culture: A Critical Analysis of Heritage Crime and the Illicit Trade in Antiquities'. In assessing the lack of prosecutions made against the offenders of heritage crimes. Using the Nighthawking Survey of 2006, Emery highlighted that of the 240 sites subjected to illegal metal detecting, only 26 took legal action against the offenders and attributed this to a failing of authorities in exercising heritage specific legislation. Indeed, the first prosecution of the Treasure Act 1996 was some 14 years later in February 2010 (Shelbourn 2014). Additionally, it was suggested that in comparison to larger illicit actions, smaller crimes of theft and local heritage damage are treated as of lesser criminal significance depending upon the monetary value of the crime (Figure 4). However, Emery highlighted new initiatives and how more significant crimes, as with the recent unreported discovery and distribution of the Herefordshire Viking Hoard in 2015, have now attracted prosecution, guilty verdicts and the subsequent sentencing of the detectorists (Hoverd *et al.* 2020; see also Reavill this volume).[3] Looking to the future, Emery outlined a necessity for further heritage crimes to be exposed and prosecuted more swiftly and systematically to act as a deterrent against the plundering of archaeological sites, monuments and landscapes (see also thePipeLine 2022a).

Alfie Brear next tackled the international scene, presenting 'The Heritage Crimes of ISIS and the Illicit Trade in Antiquities'. In the context of the expansion of the Islamic State (IS) from March 2013 in northern Iraq and Syria, mass looting of archaeological locales coincided with the destruction of religious sites and secular state institutions including museums (Figure 5). Brear considered how Roman temples and other ruins in Palmyra, Syria, have been destroyed by IS out of a religious opposition to

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[3] See also: https://www.algao.org.uk/england; https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/heritage-crime/tackling/; https://www.nationalruralcrimenetwork.net/best-practice/protecting-englands-heritage/. See also Paul Barford's regular blog for all issues regarding artefact hunting and the market in portable antiquities: http://paul-barford.blogspot.com/

non-Islamic idols and Western perceptions and values afforded to these sites and monuments (Isakhan and González Zarandona 2018). He also considered how Syrian and Iraqi artefacts have been plundered from museums and archaeological sites and sold by IS via the established international trade in illicit antiquities to provide a significant share of the funding for their militant campaign (for a review, see Isakhan and González Zarandona 2018). Setting this within a wider context, Brear acknowledged the need for enhanced legal protection against the purchasing, possession and distribution of such objects in Britain and the USA; he thus also highlighted how this trade has still not been effectively curtailed (see now Brodie *et al.* 2022). Brear concluded that it is crucial that the destruction of cultural heritage does not overshadow the region's humanitarian disaster, but that tackling heritage crime is a necessary part of international efforts to combat the group and their political ideology.

Debating the repatriation of cultural treasures

Chaired by Alfie Brear, the third session of the conference then shifted focus to processes of complex, sensitive but significant long-term debates surrounding the repatriation of cultural treasures housed in Western museums and art galleries. Robert Yates tackled the particular controversy surrounding the Parthenon Marbles (otherwise known as the Elgin Marbles) in his presentation: 'Boris Losing His Marbles? Politics, Political Leaders and their Effect on the Process of Repatriation' (Figure 6). Yates highlighted that while there has been a sustained and growing momentum for the repatriation of the marbles, this is unlikely to translate into their restitution to Greece because of the nature of the UK political system rather than the strengths of any of the arguments made for or against such repatriation. Specifically, the limited office periods of parties and governments means long term issues, such as repatriation, are rarely addressed to any degree that results in significant outcome. Despite this, Yates outlined the success of the United Nations (UN) in considering repatriation as a central issue which required action from its member states (see now ICPRCP 2022). France, under the presidency of Emmanuel Macron 2017–), was discussed as being the only nation to have responded and repatriated artefacts to any significant degree because of this UN initiative (Adams 2018).

Figure 6: Robert Yates presenting 'Boris Losing His Marbles?'

Figure 7: Adam Andre presenting 'Who Really Cares about the Repatriation of 'Treasures''?

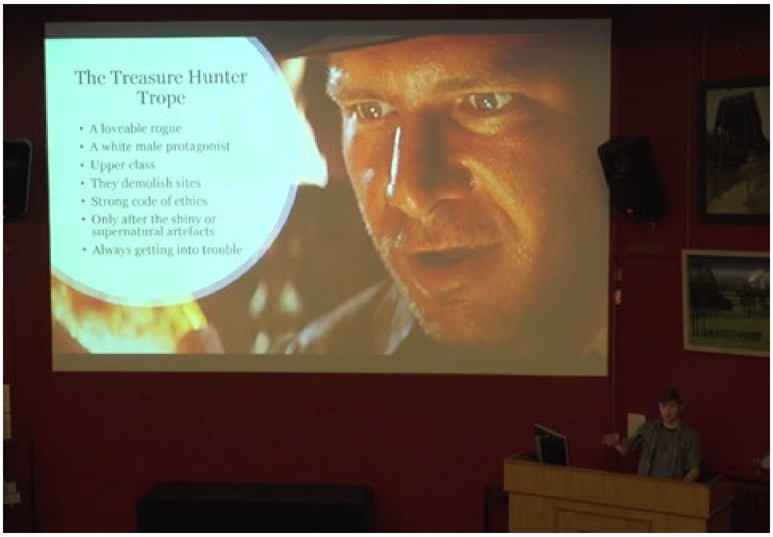

Figure 8: James Raine presenting 'Romanticising the Archaeologist'

Yates concluded his presentation by noting that whilst France's repatriations are still limited, they have exceeded the comparably poor efforts made by Boris Johnson's UK administration (2019–). A case is thus made by Yates that the influence any European leader or political party has had on the process of repatriation, despite the efforts of the UN, has been extremely limited. Will the sustained arguments for repatriation on a larger scale continue to leave national museums behind or focus only on local and regional institutions (Hicks 2020: 234)? More broadly, is the argument for large-scale repatriation fully articulated beyond the academy and museums' own crisis of identity and mission (Jenkins 2016)?

Adam Andre tackled broader issues in 'Who Really Cares about the Repatriation of 'Treasures'? by debating the moral and ethical dilemmas that come with returning 'treasures' to indigenous communities (Figure 7). Andre considered how successful genomic (DNA) analyses of human remains formerly held by museums such as the Five Continents Museum in Munich and subsequently repatriated to the Yidinji community of northern Australia affirmed a lineage to directly related ancestors. Assessing the advantages of repatriation, he illustrated how the benefits of DNA analysis. In other words, the remains are far more significant to the Yidinji than to museums and nations where the human remains were being kept (Anon. 2019). Yet, Andre however explored how the repatriation of 'treasures' may not always be of such significance and that this instance of related ancestors being returned to their descendant families is not a viable argument for repatriation on all instances. Moreover, Andre further questioned whether repatriation is always the correct moral response of heritage institutions based on past colonial circumstances of acquisition; he pointed out that returning 'treasures' may bolster nationalistic discourses and result in a reduction of access by global audiences keen to learn about other cultures and their (pre)histories (see also Jenkins 2016).

Treasure and treasure-hunting in fiction

Chaired by Jacob Adams, the fourth session explored the sensationalising of treasure through TV, film and the media. James Raine presented 'Romanticising the Archaeologist: Expectations vs Reality' with a critical reflection of how 'the archaeologist' is portrayed in film (Figure 8). He evaluated how, despite garnering an interest for the discipline, Hollywood has sensationalised the role of 'the archaeologist' by twisting it to be a profession of tomb raiders in pursuit of exceptional treasures. Raine further reflected on how archaeology is portrayed through mass media and identified a failing of such outlets in communicating the wealth and quantity of finds over the archaeological processes which lead to their discovery. Raine concluded his assessment by looking forward and identified a necessary balance of realism and escapism that film and television must take in future in presenting archaeology to combat against such detrimental sensationalised narratives (see also thePipeLine 2022b; for a different perspective, see Kobiałka 2017).

Figure 9: Kayleigh Taylor presenting 'Not All Treasure is Silver and Gold, Mate'

Figure 10: Jacob Adams presenting 'Sensationalising Treasure'

These narratives were further explored by Kayleigh Taylor in 'Not All Treasure Is Silver and Gold, Mate: The Perception of Treasure in Popular Cinema'. She explored Hollywood's depiction of the archaeologist in a critical assessment of the issues and narratives of artefacts presented as 'treasure' in film (see also Holtorf 2007; Kobiałka 2017). Taylor identified Hollywood's capitalisation of the 'treasure hunter' model for box office success as resulting in detrimental stylisations of archaeological narratives, placing adventure and value over cultural significance, thus promoting pseudoarchaeological narratives from ancient aliens to paranormal beliefs (Figure 9). Evaluating *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008) as a case study, Taylor identified how seeking 'treasures' is pivotal to the storyline. She also considered how genuine archaeological objects are subject to similar misrepresentations through tabloid headlines incorporating sensationalised taglines to attract attention. Moreover, the commercialisation brought about by the sale of film props and replicas is discussed as detrimental to public understanding of archaeological processes and the protection of cultural heritage resources. Specifically, such representations foster the commodification of genuine archaeological objects and thus their looting and illicit trading. Whilst Taylor conceded that the portrayal of 'treasure' in film has the advantage of exposing archaeology to global audiences, she highlighted that the pseudoarchaeological narratives which are conveyed must be combated by the presentation of genuine facts about the objects that are depicted. Taylor also made the case that the significance of 'treasured' objects must form part of their narratives in order to move beyond the idea of an adventurous pursuit for monetary value only.

Treasure in the media and treasure stories

Jack Douglas chaired this fifth session, opened by Jacob Adams considering 'Sensationalising Treasure: Media Reports on UK Discoveries'. Adams evaluated how mass media has framed the monetary value of 'treasure' in their headlines to entice readers, using several examples of this, ranging from local finds through to the nationally important discovery of the Staffordshire Hoard (Fern *et al.* 2019). Additionally, these reports nearly always include sensationalised adjective descriptions of the finds in their headlines, such as descriptions of 'astonishing', 'largest', 'biggest' and 'amazing' discoveries. Adams reflected on further issues with media representation of 'treasure', including a frequent lack of informed information about the finds' historical and archaeological significance, and an overall 'dumbing down' of narratives (Figure 10). Adams also recognised that such media attention, while pernicious, at least provokes interest in the human past to publics who might not otherwise learn about fresh discoveries and research (e.g. BBC News 2022b). Adams concluded by suggesting that archaeologists must in future seek to liaise more closely with media outlets to strike a balance between presenting engaging reports and archaeological accuracy.

Figure 11: Sophie Brown presenting 'Yes. Wonderful Things'

Sophie Brown (who contributes a chapter in this volume) focuses further on media portrayals of treasure, specifically regarding funerary contexts in her talk, titled: ''Yes. Wonderful Things': Media Portrayal of Tombs as 'Treasuries'. Evaluating how the tombs of Tutankhamun and the Prittlewell Prince in comparative terms have been presented in the media, Brown contrasted this with media representations of the artwork from the tomb of Seti I (Figure 11).

The final speaker of the session, Edward Antrobus (who also contributes a chapter to this volume) explored one aspect of the challenges of engaging publics with treasures in museum and heritage contexts: 'Audio Bling: Beyond Vision in Reporting and Displaying Archaeological Treasures' (Figure 12). Again, a developed version of his essay is included in this collection, focusing on the display of the Staffordshire Hoard (see also Greaves this volume).

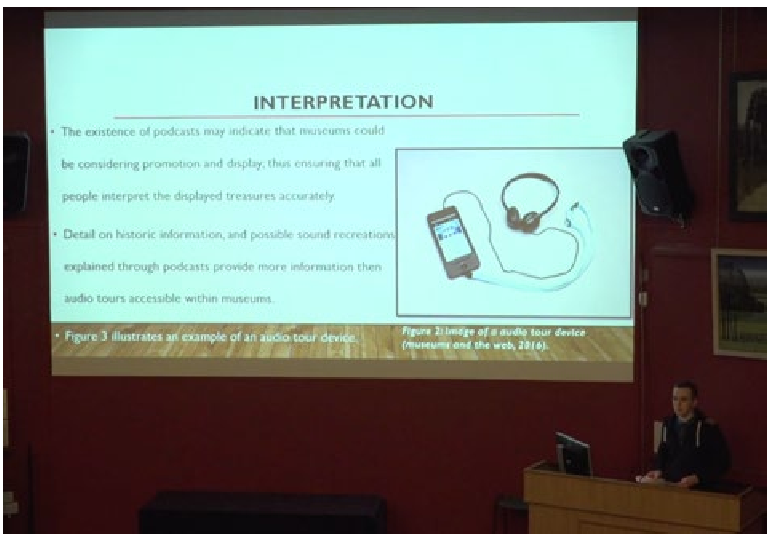

Figure 12: Edward Antrobus presenting 'Audio Bling'

Keynote speakers and discussant

The conference also welcomed the insightful contributions of Gail Boyle (senior curator of archaeology and world cultures at Bristol Museum) (Figure 13) and Adam Daubney

Figure 13: Gail Boyle presenting 'A National Strategy for Treasure?'

(Freelance archaeological finds specialist) (Figure 14). Their keynote presentations reflected and evaluated the concept of 'treasure' and the treasure process by identifying several challenges regional museums face when acquiring 'treasure' and the issue of why grave goods are not afforded the same protection as 'treasure' finds. Their talks were enriching and thought-provoking discussions that left the audience with much to think about regarding the future of 'treasure' and versions of these talks appear in refined and advanced form in this book as an interview (Boyle) and chapter (Daubney). Peter Reavill's closing discussion has been also extended via interview for inclusion in this collection (Figures 15).

Figure 14: Adam Daubney presenting 'A Field Guide to Finding Grave Goods'

The Twitter conference

Complementing and extending the day conference, for the first time at the University of Chester Archaeology Student Conferences we organised a Twitter session on 1 February 2020, supported by the catchy hashtag #blingarch (criticised by Broph this volume). Here were eight Twitter threads presenting further invaluable reflections on the public archaeology of treasure using the explicitly comedic hashtag #blingarch and subsequently curated as a Twitter Moment.[4] Six of these were developed (in part) to constitute chapters in this book and no further review is required (by Sophie Brown, Pieta Greaves, Caitlin Green, Peter Reavill, Aisling Tierney and Howard Williams). The two remaining presentations deserve further consideration here but, in combination, the digital dimension provided an invaluable extension of the conference event in regards to both themes and concepts.

As well as making invaluable contributions to the Grosvenor Museum conference discussion, Keith Westcott (Association of Detectorists) provided a Twitter presentation which show-cased his ongoing initiative to pioneer closer liaison between metal-detectorists and archaeologists through an educational and research institution. Westcott has proposed the creation of the Institute of Detectorists to facilitate ethical and approriate conduct, training and a broader archaeological education for the wider metal detecting community as well as collaborative research projects between metal detectorists and archaeologists.

[4] https://twitter.com/i/moment_maker/preview/1223569822480510981; for the conference itself: https://twitter.com/i/moment_maker/preview/1223310259424518146

Figure 15: Peter Reavill as discussant

Westcott has liaised with the PAS and has received funding from Historic England to develop this proposal.[5]

Finally, Professor Anna Wessman (University of Bergen) reflecting on what constitutes 'treasure' in the context of archaeology in Finland (see also Wessman *et al.* 2016). She identified the media frenzy surrounding some finds of precious metal artefacts and the (unhelpful) media description of such objects as 'priceless'. The term 'treasures' is regularly applied also to shipwrecks and rare and well-preserved items. Regarding how such superlatives might be avoided, Wessman proposed a more active role by professional archaeologists and academics on social media and public outreach events to explain the archaeologcial information and values associated with such discoveries beyond their monetary value.

Archiving the event

As well as via this book, the conference has been archived online. This takes the form of two Twitter Moments and a video of the conference recorded by the University of Chester's Learning and Teaching Institute technologists (see Williams 2020a and b; for a final review of all the student conferences and their proceedings, see Williams 2022).

Part III: Introducing the book

Reflecting on these shifting and conflicting meanings, values and significances for treasure in archaeology's public engagements, interactions and manifestations, this volume emphasises how archaeological education and research cannot avoid the persistent and evocative associations of 'treasure' in socio-political discourse and popular culture. This first-ever exploration of 'the public archaeology of treasure' thus offers a host of timely themes and perspectives on the public engagement with, and popular receptions of, archaeological 'treasures' by archaeological educators and researchers as well as heritage practitioners. It includes critiques of concepts and deployments of 'treasures' by professionals and academics in contemporary society and in heritage environments.

Matching the previous two volumes stemming from the University of Chester Archaeology Student Conferences (Williams and Clarke 2020; Gleave *et al.* 2020), this book's 12 chapters comprise a mixture of formats. There are three edited interviews (Boyle, Greaves and Reavill), six peer-reviewed chapters (Brophy, Daubney, Green, Greene, Tierney and Williams) and three student essays by University of Chester students evaluated by the editors.[6] The book builds directly upon the 2020 conference, with contributions from the event's keynote speakers (Boyle and Daubney), discussant (Reavill) and two of the presentations by then-final-year students (Antrobus and Brown). Further notable student contributions to the book were provided by former undergraduate student Natasha Carr who transcribed one of the interviews. Likewise, former undergraduate and subsequently Master's student James Raine evaluated a selection of

5 https://detectorists.org.uk/the-institute-feasibility-study/

6 Former undergraduates who participated in the conference, Antrobus and Brown, and former undergraduate and Master's student, and current doctoral researcher, Clarke.

the draft submissions.[7] Whilst not participating in the conference, former undergraduate and subsequently Master's student Samuel Clague joined the project as co-editor in 2021 to assist in evaluating and proof-reading the final contributions as well as co-authoring this introduction.

Rather than following the structure of the conference, the book has been arranged broadly by theme, although there exist many cross-cutting issues found throughout the volume's contents. We start with discussions of the ongoing practices and procedures, challenges and controversies surrounding metal detecting and the Portable Antiquities Scheme in England and Wales (chapters by Reavill and Clarke). These are followed by reflections on broader considerations of public perceptions of 'treasure' in the Republic of Ireland (Greene) and commercial exploitations and popular cultures of 'treasure-hunting' following a recent social media and media controversy involving Cadbury (Tierney). The book's focus then ranges across museum roles and responsibilities regarding treasure valuations and display (Boyle), before considering the potential for innovative uses of digital technology to engage and educate audiences in distinctive ways (Antrobus) and the successes and limitations of use of social media regarding 'treasure' and other material cultures (Green). A triad of chapters next tackle the ethics and public perceptions of 'treasure' specifically derived from mortuary contexts, simultaneously exploring issues relating to treasure-reporting, the illicit trade in antiquities, and the values and qualities attributed to 'treasure' in academia, the media and popular culture (chapters by Daubney, Brown and Williams). As such, these three chapters tackle further ethical and political dimensions of public archaeologies of death: the theme of the first and sixth University of Chester Archaeology Student Conferences (see also Williams *et al.* 2019; Williams 2022). Finally, the volume then tackles how archaeologists might use and misuse, challenge and subvert popular understandings of archaeological 'treasure' and 'bling' (Brophy).

An early medieval focus

Debates and discussions regarding the public archaeology of treasure cover all periods of the human past, and chapters specifically tackle themes relating to Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, later medieval and modern eras. Indeed, conceptions and perceptions of treasure from before the widespread adoption and working of metal is tackled by Brophy. Yet we must draw attention to the bias towards discussions of early medieval material culture throughout this volume because almost every chapter tackles early medieval artefacts, sites and monuments partly or primarily. This is not simply reflective of the passive biases in the expertise and interests of the editors. Arguably, it also reflects the specific contributions of stray-finds and discoveries perceived to be, or declared to be, treasure for the public education and appreciation of the early medieval past. Betwixt prehistory and the ancient world on the one side and the later medieval and modern eras on the other, the Early Middle Ages for Britain and Ireland (including a range of sub-categorisations in regard to chronology, geography and perceived cultural and political groupings, such as the Picts, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings) has long been constituted and perpetuated in the public imagination through the display and study of 'treasures'. These reveal the sophisticated and complex story of these islands and their far-flung connections from the materials themselves, their styles, and the significance and contexts of their use and reuse. They range from items called 'treasures' pertaining to the early Christian church to objects and collections shedding light on broader social, political, religious and economic dimensions of early medieval societies (e.g. Goldberg and Davis 2021). They derive from graves, settlements and stray-finds, but specifically precious-metal hoards have a pivotal role in grabbing the attention of the public: stories of discovery, investigation and challenging of popular misconceptions regarding the 'Dark Ages'. Crucial examples from recent decades include the Staffordshire Hoard (Fern *et al.* 2019; Fern and Butterworth 2022), the Galloway Hoard (Goldberg and Davis 2021) and the Watlington Hoard (Naylor and Williams 2017), as well as the recent

[7] For these welcome contributions, Natasha and James are here acknowledged by crediting them as co-authors of this introduction.

controversies and criminal prosecutions relating to the aforementioned Herefordshire (Leominster) Hoard (Hoverd *et al.* 2020), while existing collections in local, regional and national museums frame the period around precious metal and stones. As already mentioned, some of the most prominent case studies of archaeology/metal detectorist responsible and constructive collaborations relate to early medieval sites and contexts (e.g. Paterson *et al.* 2014).

The popular culture references to early medieval 'treasure' is not simply a feature of the real-world. One might cite the regularity within which 'treasure' is associated with the period in fiction as pertaining to the Early Middle Ages. For example, in the *Doctor Who* episode 'Planet of the Dead' (2009), Lady Christina de Souza steals a golden chalice from a museum in London, purported to have belonged to King Aethelstan. This is but one of a series of enduring allusions to 'treasures' and sacred artefacts in museums and collections in the long-running television programme. Likewise, on the *Archaeodeath* blog, Williams has charted how items of early medieval 'treasure' have been prominently featured in reproduction items of clothing, costume and church relics in the popular television series *The Last Kingdom* (see also Nicholls and Williams 2020).[8] While, featured less prominently in the parallel popular television shows *Vikings* (2013–2020) and *Vikings: Valhalla* (2022–), which are far more fantastical, albeit still inspired by a range of archaeological and historical themes, architectures and landscapes, treasure does appear as a focus of acquisition through raiding, gift-giving, display and disposal in hoards and graves (Williams 2019; Williams and Klevnäs 2019).[9] The archaeological discovery of 'treasure' has also recently featured in the Netflix film *The Dig* (Williams this volume).

As mentioned above, the paramount significance of Anglo-Saxon archaeology is recognisable in the aforementioned comedy drama *Detectorists* with series 1 (2014) fixated with seeking out the ship-burial of an East Saxon king and series 2 (2015) on the search for, and discovery of, a late Anglo-Saxon *aestel*. In series 3, Lance reflects on the landscape as being walked upon by previous peoples including Celts, Saxons and Vikings while Andy Stone, whilst working as an archaeologist, tinkers with a Meccano Sutton Hoo helmet in his garage (series 3, episode 1). Together, the three series of the show serve to reflect on 'contested notions of Englishness during a period of increasing political polarisation' (Keighren and Norcup 2020: 15).

The video game *Assassin's Creed: Valhalla* provides us with another recent example of how early medieval archaeology manifests in popular entertainment. The game allowing us to see the early medieval British landscape populated by archaeological sites and archaeological treasures as integral to the game-play, with actual items from the British Museum inspiring costume and the choices of items available for recovery as plunder (Cowen 2021).[10] Furthermore, the 'Discovery Tour: Viking Age' free extension pack released in late 2021 allows you to explore the world of the Vikings, designed by Ubisoft with 'input from historians and archaeologists' (Ivan 2021) and in which players 'will be able to embody different Viking and Anglo-Saxon characters' to explore 'historical events and daily life' and 'view real artifacts from the collections of Discovery Tour's museum partners' including York Archaeological Trust (Reparaz 2021).

In this context, while the 'public archaeology of treasure' is a specific and important aspect in tackling the threats and challenges with the conservation and management of sites, monuments and landscapes worldwide and across the human past, and likewise it contends with public education in combating popular misconceptions and extremist appropriations of all time periods, these issues have a particular intensity and pertinence for public archaeologies for the 'Dark Ages'. Moving forward, how we reconceptualise and use 'treasure' will have a profound impact on how we conduct and critique public

8 https://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/category/archaeodeath-on-tv-film-and-video-games/the-last-kingdom/
9 https://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/category/archaeodeath-on-tv-film-and-video-games/vikings/
10 https://twitter.com/SueBrunningBM/status/1466437639960158216; https://www.news9live.com/technology/gaming/discovery-tour-viking-age-sue-brunning-interview-132183

archaeology from portrayals of early modern 'pirate treasure' to the tombs and treasuries of 'ancient civilizations' and processes of restitution for indigenous communities. Yet, this book contends that there will be a distinctive set of challenges and opportunities for early medieval public archaeologies for the Early Middle Ages in particular (see also Williams and Clarke 2020).

Conclusion: beyond the book

This book, through the critical challenges it highlights, prompts us to reconsider how archaeologists' practices and policies, teaching and research tackle the legal and conceptual categories, social entanglements and enchantments, emotions, worths and values we afford to material culture, including items variously described as 'treasure', from the human past in our contemporary society. This field of critical investigation is not only concerned with the stories we tell about things, but how we talk about people and processes in the human past in which these assemblages were created, implicated and enmeshed. It is concerned with tackling the looting of archaeological sites and monuments as well as challenging and subverting the illicit trade in antiquities. It also extends to the practices and discourses which promote questionable and criminal activities surrounding the discovery, sale and treatment of archaeological material cultures. Likewise, 'the public archaeology of treasure' is not simply about semantics: although the pernicious commodifying vocabularies surrounding rare and precious material cultures such as 'treasure', 'treasure-hunting', 'bling' and so on are integral to the challenges archaeologist's face (see Brophy and Williams this volume). The public archaeology of treasure involves all these themes, but it also prompts us to reconsider how we categorise and implicitly value human societies and human relations in relative terms via collections of rare and precious metal things and related material cultures. The public archaeology of treasure critically explores how we implicitly and (sometimes) explicitly interpret the archaeological contexts from whence rare and precious items are derived and how they acquire meaning and value in our present.

The public archaeology of treasure thus relates to the stories we tell in today's world using these 'treasure' items, from archaeological reports to Hollywood films and video games. We advocate that the public archaeology of treasure should become a crucial theme for heritage and archaeological discourses across the globe in the next decade, prompting careful and refined re-evaluations of our theories and practices, ranging from how we regulate and liaise with amateur metal detectorists, how we engage new audiences with archaeological interpretations, how we collect, curate and display material cultures in museums, to how we talk about 'treasure' in publications and on social media. If 'treasure' has a future, in legal, cultural, national, and entangled senses of value and significance, the public archaeology of treasure must become a sustained focus of new research and public engagement.

Postscript

We began with a television dramatisation of a romanticised, almost mystical, reflection on treasure-hunting as a hobby and a means of communing with the English landscape and the human past in *Detectorists*. In contrast, we must end by reflecting on more pernicious and global dimensions to the public archaeology of treasure. Material culture from the human past has long been considered simultaneously 'cultural treasures' and symbols of ethnic and nationalistic pride and identity, and as potential 'loot' to be acquired through military expeditions and extractive economic processes to populate private collections and museum displays as well as utilised to bolster imperial, colonial and other nationalistic discourses (e.g. Hamilakis 2007; Hicks 2020). Treasure cuts both ways.

At the time of writing, attempts to decolonise museums through repatriating cultural treasures are ongoing and the focus of heated debate. For the UK, these processes regularly manifest themselves in news headlines, most recently with Glasgow City Council museums returning 49 looted items, including 17 Benin bronzes (Harris 2022). Similarly, the decolonisation of museum collections is developing elsewhere, as with Fennoscandia; recently, the 17th-century drum of Sámi man Poala-Ánde was restored to his people in Norway from the National Museum of Denmark (Anon. 2022). Such treasures are latent and actual manifestations of resurgent connections to pre-colonial pasts in a post-colonial era.

Conversely, there are violent and criminal means by which items are being taken from their museum contexts. Drawing on a long tradition of iconoclasm and looting as mechanisms of political hegemony and manipulation of the social memories of nations and peoples in modern conflict zones (see Isakhan and González Zarandona 2018: 5), new looting of archaeological material cultures and heritage sites is unfolding in Ukraine as I write. Physical violence and destruction and looting run parallel courses in modern wars; soon after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, museums and art galleries worked hard to attempt to safeguard the 'cultural treasures' of the nation from both incidental and orchestrated damage, destruction and pillaging (Akinsha 2022). This process is now in full swing with report after report revealing that part of the ongoing impact of the war is not only its humanitarian disaster but also targeted attacks on hundreds of sites of archaeological and historic significance, including churches and museums, art galleries and even Holocaust memorials (Bassett *et al.* 2022; Presse in Paris 2022). 'Treasures' have also been specifically targeted for systematic looting in what has been described as a 'cultural genocide' in Ukraine, with artworks seized in Mariupol (Sauer 2022) and the alleged theft of around 198 precious and rare artefacts, including Scythian gold, from Melitopol as well as the kidnapping of a curator (Adams 2022; Gettleman and Chubko 2022).

These circumstances remind us of the utmost significance of our debates and discussions surrounding the public archaeology of treasure. They are not abstract and theoretical, but grounded in the realities of archaeological method and practice and the fate of cultural heritage on a global scale when exploring, managing and conserving traces of past societies from earlier prehistory to the present day. Concepts and practices, laws and guidelines surrounding material culture considered variously as 'treasure' are complex, contentious, rapidly evolving, and draw in every type of archaeologist and heritage practitioner from students and amateurs to museum professionals and academics. It also reminds of our social and ethical responsibilities to tackle the thorny subject of treasures throughout our contemporary world (see thePipeLine 2022c). Together, these issues underpin the importance of this first-ever book to the 'public archaeology of treasure'. Still, more work needs to be done to raise the bar of critical evaluation of practices and narratives concerning treasure as a critical dimension of public archaeology hitherto neglected in the 21st century.

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Going with the FLO: Personal Reflections on the Portable Antiquities Scheme for England and Wales

an interview with Peter Reavill

Drawing on two decade's experience as a Finds Liaison Officer, Peter Reavill (PR) served as discussant at the 5th University of Chester Archaeology Student Conference on 31 January 2020. Exploring the benefits of, and challenges faced by, the Portable Antiquities Scheme, this interview with Howard Williams (HW) was conducted on 12 November 2021 and subsequently transcribed, revised and edited by HW with further additions and images supplied by PR. The interview builds on the themes and issues PR identified at the conference, and points towards the rapidly changing relationship between archaeologists, metal detectorists and the wider public in England and Wales, focusing on conceptions of, and both practices and processes of dealing with, 'treasure'.

Introduction

HW: Welcome, Peter! Please introduce yourself.

PR: My name is Peter Reavill and I am a public museum archaeologist specialising in the material culture (the archaeology of stuff) of the British Isles (Figure 1). I have worked for the British Museum's Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) as a Finds Liaison Officer (FLO) since 2003. I cover the counties of Shropshire and Herefordshire and I'm part of a wider West Midlands PAS team employed by Birmingham Museums' Trust. In total, there are 44 FLOs working across England and Wales, each of us is supported by both a team based at the British Museum as well as national finds advisors who are academic period specialists. At the time of this interview 59 people work on the PAS project (PAS 2022a).

The role of an FLO is to record archaeological finds that are discovered by members of the public. They are usually recovered in areas that are not normally considered archaeological sites. This work brings me into contact with people from a variety of backgrounds united by the curiosity of discovery. Often finders don't know what their find is – it is just 'a thing they want to know more about' – and they get in touch as we might be able to help. However, for me my job is more than just identification: it is about engaging people with the past and helping them learn about their discoveries. For instance, at a finds day in the museum a child brings in a box of things from their garden. They might 'only' be Victorian artefacts; they may not be rare or unusual, but to them they are all very special (a box of true treasures). This is because they've discovered them, and for me it's about how you deal with that opportunity positively and sensitively, inspiring and capturing the awe and power that artefacts have to link us to our past (Figure 2).

HW: How did you get to be a FLO: what was your background?

PR: I grew up in Kent, fascinated by the world around me. I enjoyed being outside and remember vividly taking part in the BBC Domesday Project, something I now look back on as my first experience of landscape archaeology (Wikipedia 2022). Like many of my generation, I also became an avid fan of *Time Team* which aired for the first time in 1994. It was at this point I was choosing university options to study History and made the decision to combine this with Archaeology. I went to University in Bangor (North Wales) and was lucky enough to have inspirational lecturers (Frances Lynch and Nancy Edwards) who convinced me that archaeology should be my future career. Further, and for me most importantly, through Frances' teaching I knew that the study of the British Bronze Age was where my academic passion lay.

After graduating with a Joint Honours degree in History and Archaeology, I worked as a field archaeologist on a number of excavations across Wales, Ireland and England. In 2001, I broke my ankle really badly, which meant that I couldn't do fieldwork for 12 months. So, I went inside and started to look at finds instead. This prompted me to go back to university, this time to the University of Sheffield to study on their MA in Landscape Archaeology. There, I considered how material culture is one of the key routes to understanding past landscapes and how their distributions change over time. For me, material culture takes you from the micro to the macro perspectives of the human past and it's actually where these things are placed within their landscape that tells us the most rewarding information about people and the communities in which they lived.

Figure 1: Peter Reavill with the Shrewsbury Hoard (Photograph: Peter Reavill)

My graduation from Sheffield in 2003 neatly segued with the rise of the Portable Antiquities Scheme. The PAS was originally established in 1998 as a pilot initiative and in 2003 received Heritage Lottery funding to expand into a full national project (MLA 2004). I was lucky enough to become the new FLO for Shropshire and Herefordshire.

After I was offered the job, on the train back to Kent I checked a map showing where Shropshire and Herefordshire actually were! It was then that I suddenly realised I'd taken on a massive patch which covers a large chunk of England (around 6000 km^2!) and almost all the Anglo-Welsh border. More challenging still was that vast tracts of this very rural countryside were relatively under studied from an archaeological perspective with very few large-scale excavations or research projects undertaken. Likewise, artefactually, we were very much on the periphery regarding the scale of artefacts being used and lost compared with eastern and southern England where many more artefacts are regularly found. Conversely, the frequency of discoveries in Wales is far lower. Having said that, due to the Scheme and the increasing popularity of metal detecting more broadly, the volume of reported finds and the number of Treasure cases has dramatically increased in the time I've been doing the job (Figure 3) Still, the region has a distinctive flavour to the range and quantity of its artefacts. We don't see the same types of artefact distributions in the region as we do in other places such as the south or east of England. This regionality makes the work of an FLO more challenging but it brings us back to being landscape archaeologists and where, while individual finds might

Figure 2: Working with a finder exploring a box of garden treasures. Herefordshire Museum Open Day, 2006 (Photograph: Peter Reavill)

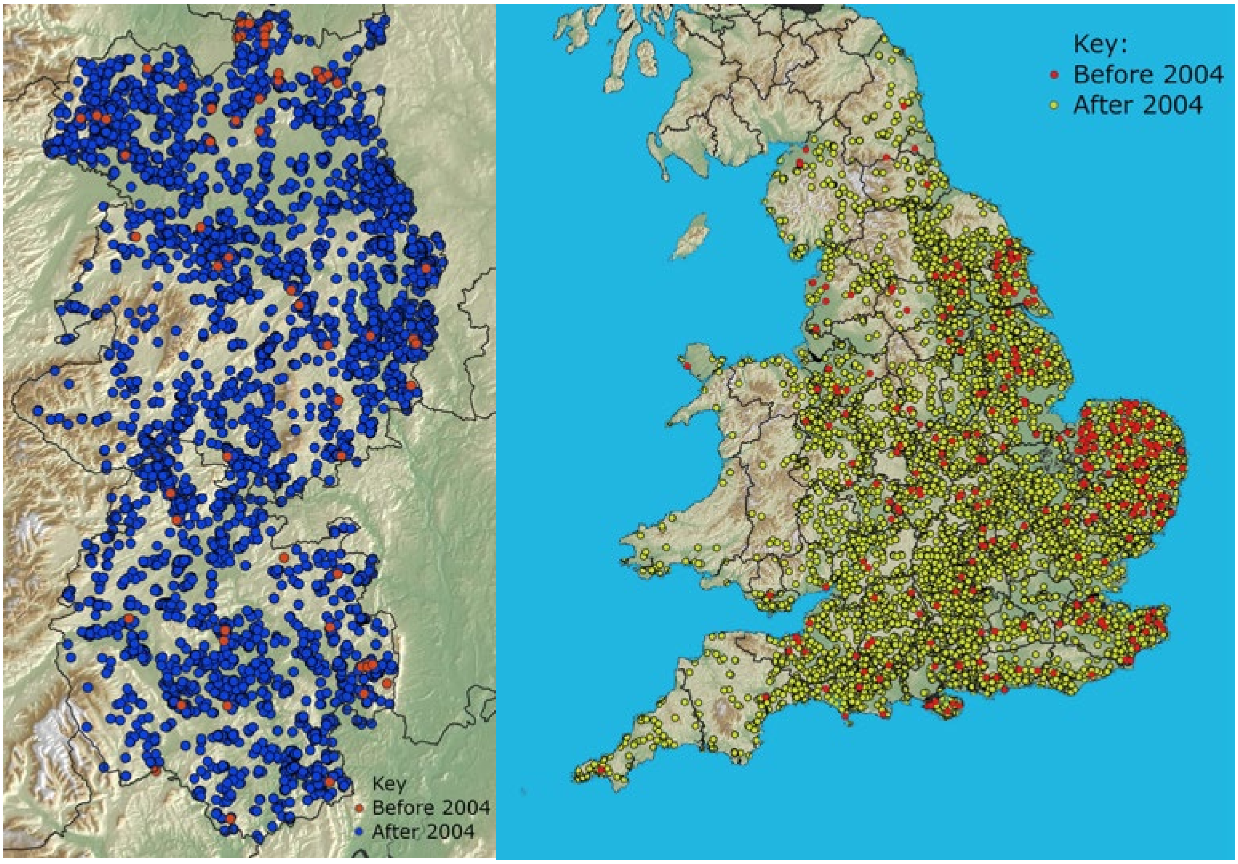

Figure 3: Right: distribution and impact of the Treasure Act on the compulsory reporting of 'treasure finds'. This map shows both the scale of the impact of the Act since PAS became a national project (2003/2004) as well as the broad distribution of finds across the English and Welsh landscape. It shows that as you travel further north and west less material is found. Left: the impact of PAS recording in Shropshire and Herefordshire – this also shows how the physical landscape both restricts and defines both active searching for artefacts as well as their original loss/deposition. Finds are concentrated in the broad North Shropshire/Cheshire plain and the river valleys of South Shropshire and Herefordshire

be lovely and/or fascinating, it is the geospatial information that is so valuable. Without a sense of space and place linked to objects, they are just shiny baubles for public museum display or private collections.

The role of an FLO

HW: So, can you clarify: how do you define yourself in the job as an FLO? You seem to be simultaneously a public archaeologist, a museum archaeologist and also a landscape archaeologist!

PR: Being an FLO is a definition or identification in its own right. I think labels are a major frustration for many. It's important to remember that, when dealing with the public, I'm often the only archaeologist that they have met. I don't mind that, of course, but I am equally trying to wear multiple hats at the same time as an FLO. The role means you take on a chameleon-like guise that takes advantage of all the opportunities available. We extract all the information we can from a find and weave it into the palimpsest of the past. FLOs reflect the narratives we construct from artefacts and share them with our various audiences in ways that enrich both their and our own understanding. Good archaeologists are storytellers.

Figure 4: Hands on pottery: working with pupils from Bitterley School, Shropshire with their fieldwalking project (Photograph: Peter Reavill)

HW: Has that identity changed over the years?

PR In a word: 'yes'. In a world of ever-decreasing public money and after a decade of austerity we have fewer public archaeologists across the entire profession. This inevitably means decreased capacity and fewer voices: equally there is more to do for those of us who are left. However, the joy of my job is that, despite the limits on resources, I get to tell the stories about people's local landscapes. It's often things like treasure which serve as the hooks that we have to hang our wares on and draw in the public interest. We are able then to link these local stories to broader narratives. In this way we complement what museums try to do (Figure 4).

Equally though, I need to be sensitive in my dealings with the public where our relationship is based on mutual trust, honesty and openness: it is from this standpoint that I am able to say things that people might not want to hear. For example, with treasure finds (which legally belong to the crown and that must be reported within 14 days of being found) I may have to tell someone that the best object they've ever discovered (or maybe will ever discover) has to be handed in and a museum might take it away from them (even though they would receive a financial reward equal to its value to be shared 50/50 with the landowner). This takes away the finder's agency and without that trust I become just the bloke from the museum who turns up and tells them what to do. It's with this tension that sometimes anxiety comes into play, and it is how this is negotiated that ensures successful outcomes. Over time this has changed as finders have become more aware of what the law says they must do, but hopefully by remaining fair and consistent the PAS has provided stable leadership. The fact I have been in post for more than 18 years has also acted as an anchor for the scheme locally. I have relationships with finders that span decades and can honestly say that some have become friends and I have seen their families grow up.

HW: Can you describe further the range and the proportions of the people who come to you with objects?

PR: As the PAS has grown in Shropshire and Herefordshire the range of people reporting finds has grown too. I used to work almost exclusively with the metal detecting communities but that is slowly changing.

When I started metal detectorists could be split into (i) individuals who go out independently, (ii) small groups of friends who go out to search land together, and (iii) larger metal detecting clubs. However, in recent years a fourth very active group has emerged: individuals who now join together online and attend commercial metal detecting rallies. At these new events, which happen weekly, you can have more than 200 people descend on a farmer's field to see what they can find. This has brought more people to the hobby but also a tension between those who detect locally to where they live and those attending pay-per-day prospecting.

The profile of finders reporting their discoveries is also changing; these groups of finders include fieldwalkers (people who search for objects without the aid of a metal detector) and mudlarks (people who search river banks, river beds and beaches), farmers and landowners, gardeners and just people

Figure 5: Above: a Middle Bronze Age spearhead, discovered by a dog walker in a springhead/dew pond near Kington, Herefordshire (Reavill 2006). Middle: part of a large assemblage of 17th- and early 18th-century pipe stems and bowls from the garden of a terraced house in Ludlow (Reavill 2017a). Below: an assemblage of post-medieval pottery (Reavill 2017b) (Not to scale)

who have found something whilst walking the dog. Again, this has changed since the COVID-19 pandemic where people have spent more time closer to where they live and also have reconnected with their locality (Lewis 2020a; Gross 2020; Walawalkar 2020).

So, my general rule is: I'll see anything as long as it's got mud on it and it has been found in England or Wales. I won't examine purchased objects (such as those from an antique shop) and I won't consider stuff from Granny's attic when they're having a clear out. In short, my focus is on 'found objects' or those with a clear history of ownership since discovery (provenance) or a known findspot (provenience) (Figure 5).

Putting this all together, if I claimed to be exclusively dealing with metal detectorists, then that would only be perhaps 600 or 700 people in Shropshire and Herefordshire. Actually, the population of potential finders we serve is far greater (the joint population of my patch was 700,000 souls at the last count).

Alongside the growth in people finding our portable past, there has been a massive loss in our capacity as a nation to respond to chance finds. Since 2012, as new levels of austerity have hit, museum archaeologists and curators with specialisms in archaeology have become a rarity due to redundancy and retirement; where new posts have been created they are most often focussed on generalist positions whose role is centred on collection management. This has meant that the role of a specialist archaeological curator and broader artefactual specialists have largely disappeared from museums across the country. During this time the PAS has remained constant and, in many places, backfilled that knowledge gap; while continued flat funding has resulted in potential now outstripping capacity.

HW: But for all these groups, your liaison role is about identification but also managing expectations and interacting with people?

PR: Yes, absolutely. One of the things that people get really upset about is having objects

Figure 6: The impact of differing soil conditions including abrasion and effect of nitrates/fertilisers on Roman coin preservation. Above: a Roman radiate (AD 260–296) recovered from the heavily ploughed acidic rich clay ploughsoil of Herefordshire (Reavill 2004). Below: a Sestertius of Trajan found in a garden at Leintwardine, Herefordshire (Reavill 2005). The two findspots fall within the same landscape and are within two kilometres of one another (not to scale)

they thought were significant or that are special to them being identified as something very modern or very common. In these instances, I need to maintain the finders trust and respect. Otherwise, the next time they find something will they come back? I try hard never to just 'fob people off'. I aim to build up a relationship with individuals and groups over time – sometimes years and decades. So, I agree, the core role of the FLO isn't just about how well you record objects or how many objects you record or how you manage your time around the many different groups. It's actually how well you build those personal relationships and levels of trust with the people you meet. This is a slow burn interaction which takes time and patience.

Challenges and barriers

HW: Over the years, what are the challenges or barriers that you have contended with as an FLO?

PR: A real challenge is getting people to take that first step towards contacting me. To enable or engage their curiosity and overcome the inertia of apathy. As I've already said, the story of the object is only as valuable as the place it was found in. The thing which breaks my heart is when a detectorist passes away and he was a metal detectorist for 30 years. His family wants to do something positive with his collection and they bring it into the museum. That collection has some stand-out stunning pieces within it that would really add to our understanding of the county's history but there might be no information about the provenience of the finds. Without that personal link of the finder, the context is lost. Unfortunately, this has happened all too frequently. Yet, by recording material as you find it, along with the exact location where you found it, you create that link (or that link is created for you), and you don't have to worry about it. Without information about findspots we just end up with a collection of nice things that are archaeologically meaningless: divorced from the landscape. For example, you might be looking at a tray of Roman finds, and they might all be from one farm in one village, and that village has no recorded Roman history apart from what is in this tray. However, without the finder's recollections or co-operation there is then no way for you to link those objects back to the landscape in any specific or precise fashion. So, that is really, really hard and when I'm dealing with detectorists because they're often in a privileged position: what they tell me is up to them. If they decide not to record that object, that is their choice – even if that means they are erasing that knowledge from the locality, the county and, ultimately, the nation.

My personal opinion is that even when finders have permission to recover the archaeological material and have followed all the legal requirements needed to search the land, failure to record and report items (outside the narrow legal definition of treasure) does constitute a form of 'theft' in cultural terms. This form of cultural theft is enshrined in the age-old English motto of 'finders, keepers, losers weepers'. Many detectorists and other finders mistakenly regard themselves as protecting (or saving) these objects by

Figure 7: a) Left: Gold Penny of Henry III (Shipley 2021); b) Right: Gold Leopard of Edward III both prior to conservation/mechanical straightening (not reproduced to scale) (Cook and Marsden 2019)

retrieving them from the soil. This can be true in one regard since artefacts that have been removed from their original archaeological context by agricultural activity such as ploughing are at risk of further deterioration from abrasion and other factors (Figure 6). However, without the proactive choice by the finder to record a discovery's location and allow a third party like the PAS to study them, this discovery is wasted forever. Collecting artefacts without recording are conscious destructive acts: it works against both academic and public understanding of the historic environment.

Another barrier is the priority given to the monetary values attributed to detected metal finds. This is linked to a further challenge of the coveting of artefacts by their finders: the fear that somebody's going to take them away, or the fear that by telling someone in authority they may lose access to the land they are searching. These are all factors that impede responsible reporting. This is made significantly worse by the media (both public and social media). Public media stories about new archaeological discoveries are most often focussed on their monetary value with stories of rare finds and their value often juxtaposed against the life changing sums of money and changes it brings to the finder's lifestyle. Recent examples of this can be seen in the reporting of the recovery of a rare golden penny of Henry III from near Hemyock, Devon (Shipley 2021, Figure 7a). The coin was sold at auction resulting in headlines reading: *I owe it to the kids; coin found by detectorist dad sold for £648,000* (Morris: 2022) or *Metal detectorist nets a fortune after finding one of England's 'first ever gold coins' in Devon field: Rare 1257 token bearing portrait of King Henry III sells to private British buyer for a world record £648,000* (Nikolic, 2022). A second example is a case of disclaimed treasure (Cook and Marsden 2019, Figure 7b) sold alongside other metal detected finds at auction and described by ITV News as: *Rare gold coin unearthed in Norfolk field nets metal detectorist 'life changing' sum at auction* (ITV News 2022). Even when the find is under investigation as potential treasure media speculation is rife. For example, when reporting the excavation of a potential nationally important Iron Age chariot burial in Wales the *Daily Mail* reports: *Iron Age chariot discovered by an amateur metal detectorist is found alongside the remains of a tribal elder and his weapons and the history fanatic could receive a £1 million reward* (Lloyd 2019). Such headlines fuel the narrative and have resulted in some of the detectorists I work with regarding their hobby as a significant source of secondary income.

HW: Are there any other main limitations or barriers affecting your job beyond the inevitable restrictions on funding and personnel?

PR: Well, I was going to say: the other major barrier is that the PAS in many ways is still a project even though we are funded by the DCMS via grant funding to the British Museum (PAS 2022b). The national funding situation means that there has been static funding for more than a decade, which means real-term cuts; meanwhile finds are reported to the PAS in ever-increasing numbers. The issue is that metal detecting is now seen as a mainstream hobby whereas 20 years ago it was still a somewhat niche and solo pursuit. Following the popularity of the television show *Detectorists* (see Williams *et al.* this volume) as well as the enhanced profile of the work of the PAS, metal detecting has acquired a degree of public recognition and respect in a fashion it never had when I started in 2003.

So, while I think the PAS has broken the barriers down and built up positive trusting relationships, we're now seeing greater quantities of material – more than we've ever seen before. To counter this underfunding, we are now in a situation where we are having to potentially limit the amount of material we record from people (PAS 2022c). For instance, sometimes we decline recording objects from certain periods that we might have done in the past. Similarly, we are not always able to fill, like for like, gaps in positions created by, for example, maternity or long-term sick leave. Therefore, the PAS is simply not funded sufficiently to fulfil its potential.

A further challenge is that FLOs work in contrasting environments. Some work within a relatively small geographical area with a dense population, accessing land rich in finds. In contrast, as mentioned above, I work across a vast district of two large rural counties. For me, it's always a balancing act in how we use our time. We cannot always do the recording we would like and all the outreach work that we would wish to do. In such circumstances, we also have to manage relations with finders who may experience a long delay between reporting and getting their objects returned to them.

There is also a barrier in respect to when finders want to meet us and the fact that we are only contracted to work occasional evenings and weekends means we cannot be as available as some finders would like. Some finders forget that detecting is their hobby for their spare time, for an FLO it is our day-job. So, some finders do not respect or appreciate that FLOs cannot be available on demand. If an FLO gets a phone call from a weekend detectorist saying 'I've discovered a hoard!' - What are FLOs expected to do?

The final challenge is that everything we do is in the public domain, so any misunderstandings are projected to a wide audience.

HW: On that last point, do you feel FLOs face threats and abuse more than other archaeologists?

PR: Often it can feel like you are putting on a suit of armour for protection because you've got to put your head above the parapet when entering a metal detecting club, attending a finds day, opening your emails or venturing online. I have experienced being shouted down in a public venue, so as an FLO I have had to develop a thick skin. Having said that, FLOs have to be true to themselves in regard to our professional behaviour and expertise.

I would say that, when I started in the job, I did some amazing training with the Suzie Lamplugh Trust focused on personal safety at work. This training session discussed how you go about your life in the world as a professional whilst also safeguarding your own space and family life. This is important since we go to a lot of out-of-hours public events often in community venues (including places – pubs – where alcohol is sold). After these events we can potentially be carrying valuable artefacts and equipment. Gender is also a key factor here, and female FLOs have many more challenges given the nature of our society. Because I'm male, I confess it hadn't previously crossed my mind that I needed to be trained to park under streetlights, carry keys out and to hand, and not to carry anything bulky so both my hands are always free. For me, that was a steep learning curve and I now share this knowledge with colleagues when possible and appropriate. So, there are all sorts of risks involved – personally, I have had physical and verbal threats both face-to-face, on the phone, and now much more frequently whilst interacting online.

As public archaeologists, we are also exposed on social media in a way that has evolved since I started with the PAS (I started in a world before Facebook and Twitter). A good example of this is during 2020 when I wrote a PAS blog-post about the image of an enslaved black man depicted on a late 17th-century seal matrix. This was discovered a decade earlier. The item was associated with a Shropshire family and their large country estate (Figure 8). This post was explicitly written in response to the Black Lives Matter campaign and reflected my own personal as well as academic opinions (Reavill 2020a). Such an article was outside my normal writing experience; I seldom engage in these subjects and it was stepping out of my comfort zone both academically and personally. I did though feel I had something important and relevant to say. The article generated relatively positive interactions in the media with follow-up interviews on local radio and in the local press. However, I had not anticipated the scale of pushback I experienced online. It amazed me that such an article would create a hostile reception amongst a minority of readers or that animosity would be so vocal. Heritage is contentious and if artefacts help us to see the world differently, then isn't that a good thing? However, directing abuse towards those that write about our past is deeply unfair.

Figure 8: The Sherrifhales Seal Matrix depicting a Black enslaved man (Reavill 2013)

Figure 9: The 1,500,000th artefact recorded on the PAS database – a Papal Bulla / seal of Pope Innocent IV from Bridgnorth, Shropshire (Reavill 2020b)

HW: You talk about the sense of pride communities can feel in their museums and the finds displayed and stored in them. Is there any evidence that the PAS website itself is being seen as a community resource in the same way as a curated museum collection might be?

PR: It depends. For FLOs, the PAS database is a living resource that we proactively curate; we often go back and edit records that we produced (say) 18 years ago in the light of new research. The database now is one of the largest archaeological datasets available in the world having more than 1,500,000 artefacts

(Lewis 2020b; Reavill 2020b; Figure 8) contained within over a million records (Lewis 2021). Most of these records contain images that are all published under creative commons licences.

With such a large dataset it is an amazing research resource. That research, to date, tends to be focussed on specific object-types, but it can be place-based, exploring particular regions or select periods (PAS nd). In recent years it has been great to personally support the work of PhD researchers working on the national dataset including the work of prehistorian Matt Knight on the deliberate destruction of Bronze Age metalwork (Knight 2021) and Reb Ellis' national study on the role of Iron Age depiction of animals and humans (Ellis 2022).

The PAS data is also integrated locally within the Historic Environment Record; in Shropshire and Herefordshire this is updated on a regular basis and I work closely with the county archaeological teams ensuring that important finds and our data is embedded within their processes. For example, the HERs enable PAS data to be considered within the planning process and be integrated spatially with the other data they hold. This has then fed into archaeological conditions for development as well as proactive projects such as aerial survey (and now LiDAR mapping) to better understand the sites from which these finds derive. This is especially true when mapped finds distributions are the only evidence for human activity within the landscape: they often indicate sites that are not conducive to aerial survey. The potential of this was the focus of a remarkable MA thesis by Charlotte Baxter (2013).

However, academics take different approaches when undertaking regional studies and period syntheses. Because of this, the potential of PAS data can be overlooked. For example, Christie and Stamper's (2012) excellent review of the state of Medieval Britain doesn't even mention PAS data as a resource in their index. Personally, at times it feels that there remains a perception amongst some academics that detector-derived data is 'tainted' or biased as a cultural resource and as such some feel that it should be excluded or marginalised. This is a shame as the one thing that the PAS shows better than anything else is that the rural landscape is far more populated and far more interesting than the urban centres. Unfortunately, the rural data is often overlooked and is more complicated to gather and analyse as shown through the recent work on rural settlements in Roman Britain (Brindle *et al.* 2016).

What the PAS hasn't been as effective at to date is the use of our data as a community resource. We did have a Heritage Lottery funded Past Explorers Project which was designed to bring more people into engagement with PAS data (Costin 2021; Heritage Fund 2014). This worked brilliantly from the point of view of engaging new volunteers and enabling self-recording (for those detectorists who record their own finds directly onto our database). Part of my role is then to edit those records for consistency and accuracy. This has been most successful in some geographical areas where we struggle to reach or by connecting with detectorists who have vast knowledge of objects and the landscape. So that can be very empowering. It also showed the potential of the data as a community resource – but like many HLF projects it is how that can be sustained once the initial capital is spent and the project staff leave. The legacy of this project now falls onto the shoulders of the FLOs who (as we have already discussed) are overstretched.

Even with all these successes the PAS as a recognisable brand is still relatively unknown and hidden. I am always amazed how many talks I give where people have no idea about what I do!

So, part of the PAS workload is to constantly introduce itself to people across the counties to explain procedures and its value. In short, the PAS data isn't dead data; there would be nothing more soul destroying than thinking that I spend all my day creating records of objects that no one would ever see again.

Treasure law and processes

HW: My next point is about the current law relating to archaeological finds in England and Wales. I appreciate that we have to work within current laws and circumstances outside of our control. Does the law adequately protect our historic environment in regard to portable antiquities?

PR: A big part of my role is defined by the Treasure Act 1996 (DCMS 2008) and I am the person locally who deals with treasure finds. I process new finds on what feels like a weekly basis. This aspect of my job is both a blessing and a curse. It means that the many 'important' objects discovered in the counties of Shropshire and Herefordshire are brought forward and have to be reported under the law. At the same time, however, the label of 'Treasure' does a huge amount of harm. As I alluded to earlier, it focuses everyone's attention on the monetary value of the find. It also elevates precious metal discoveries above all else. Under the law, a finder has a legal obligation to report an object of treasure within 14 days of discovery or after realising their find constitutes 'treasure'. That can be very straightforward if they know exactly what they have found, in which case they might call me or bring the object in to the museum. Sometimes, I have to explain that the item is covered by the Treasure Act and this can cause problems given the aforementioned '*finders keepers*' mentality of some. It might be the best thing they've ever found but it doesn't belong to them: it belongs to the Crown! The minute you start pitching phrases like 'you have to' and 'this does not belong to you', it can cause tension. This doesn't apply for every find; and negative responses don't ensue with every detectorist or finder. However, there is a strong contingent within some detectorist groups that the evaluation process works to undervalue their discoveries. Some even feel they're deliberately undervalued as a way of stopping them receiving the full market reward that they would otherwise receive. This level of entitlement and misinformation I find really difficult to contend with, including dislike of the idea that any reward must be shared evenly (50/50) with the landowner.

That tension can grow through an evaluation process which can take time and quite often you're dealing with people who do not have a huge amount of money – so a monetary reward does impact their lives. There is also a sense of disappointment that amongst so many exciting finds they've made, the museum only wants (or is able to afford) a small selection.

There is pressure on the finder and on the FLO because we're the ones who take the phone calls and who have to soften any blows; sometimes we have to take the abuse if the system isn't working the way they envision it should. It can at times be a very lonely place.

HW: What changes are coming in the law and therefore your job?

PR: The way the treasure is dealt with will change as the DCMS have undertaken a strategic review of the Treasure Act with the idea of bringing forward certain new classes of treasure (DCMS 2020). It is possible that the definitions might be based around a notion of 'significance'. At present, we don't know exactly what those classes or definitions will be. This review in part was triggered by nationally important artefacts which escaped the current classification and thus sadly have not been acquired by museums (see Boyle this volume). In those instances, there was nothing to compel the finder to report them as treasure because the discoveries did not fit into current tightly defined legal classifications.

The purpose of the treasure legislation is to capture important finds and ensure they enter into public ownership. We want the public to come forward with their finds and we want to work with them to make sure artefacts' stories about the past are available for future generations. It's about the biography of the object: it's manufacture, use and deposition as well as the wider landscape in which it had been utilised. That story continues through its discovery and display. After 18 years of working as an FLO,

Figure 10: Old friends in Shrewsbury Museum: Top-left: The Nescliffe Iron Age Spoons (Hill and Reavill 2010). Top-right: the Shrewsbury Hoard (Ghey and Reavill 2009); Bottom-right: the Myddle Doblas Hoard (Cook and Reavill 2010). Bottom-left: the Mid Shropshire Angel (Reavill 2019). Middle: 15: River Perry Bronze Age Bracelet (Reavill and Varndell 2008) and 16: Iron Age Telford Torc (Slarke and Reavill 2009) (not to scale)

I'm proud to say walking around Shrewsbury Museum is very much like going for a coffee with 'old friends'; in the cabinets are many of the objects I've recorded and seen through evaluation processes, acquisition, curation and display (Figure 10). So, I feel I've made a positive impact on the communities. Equally though, many objects that I've recorded in the past have gone back to their finders. Some of those of local, regional and national importance should, I think, have been acquired by a museum but either they were not legally defined as treasure or a museum did not have the funds to acquire them through the treasure process.

Let me give you an example as to why it should never be simply about legal definitions of treasure. One of the most beautiful objects I've had the privilege of working with is a Palaeolithic handaxe (Reavill 2010; Figure 11) found by somebody walking in a river stream at Highley near Bridgnorth. It was not classified as 'treasure' and yet it is the oldest object created by human hand that we know from Shropshire. To me, that is a treasure and it should be in public ownership.

I hope the new legislation is more beneficial for the archaeological good. In this regard, we have to strike a balance. Is it better to have the dots on maps and retain the trust of the people who are finding them? Or is it better that we have objects in museums which benefit our communities? This is the line the PAS will have to tread in the next couple of years: ultimately, we don't get to choose the legislation, once the new definitions are in place, it will be up to us within the PAS to try and navigate how to implement the rules efficiently and effectively in a fashion which doesn't put up fresh barriers to people finding things or showing us what they found. This is going to be a huge challenge.

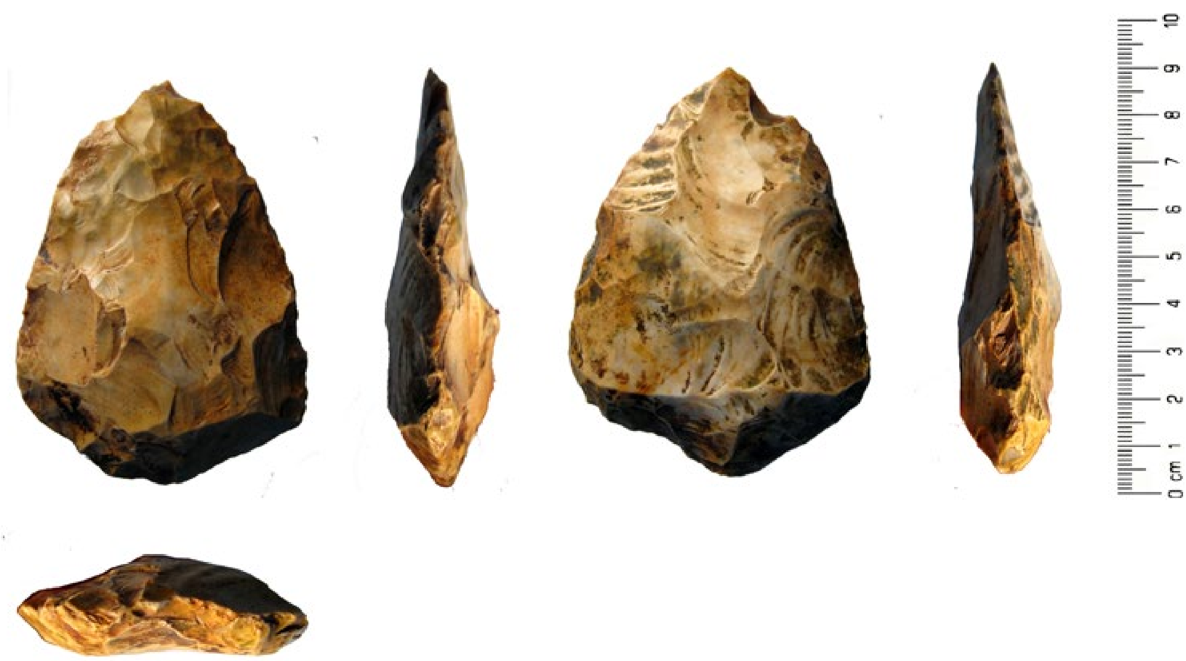

Figure 11: A unique treasure: A heavily abraded ovate/Acheulian hand axe from Highley, Shropshire recorded by PAS and now in private ownership (Reavill 2010)

HW: Will this be the biggest challenge for the PAS in the next decade?

PR: Almost definitely. However, there are other changes afoot too. The two that could have the biggest impact are: the role or dominance of commercial metal detecting rallies (and how PAS engages with them) and also a new Association of Detectorists (Atkinson 2020; see also Williams *et al.* this volume). The two of these could potentially work together effectively as the institute has the potential to help educate new detectorists in responsible behaviour and good practice. Whether this happens though will be down to the wider metal detecting community as a whole.

For the PAS, however, we will probably continue as we have done for the last 26 years to constantly negotiate between the archaeological and detecting communities as well as with the wider public. We receive criticism (and sometimes praise) from all fronts, and it's a job where you have to get your hands 'dirty' in the sense of working with groups and individuals who might not fully adhere to what all may agree is best practice. We won't be short of new challenges in the next decade.

HW: How much does heritage crime feature in your work?

PR: In the last five years societal response to heritage crime has improved and there have been several high-profile prosecutions which has shone a light onto the issue. Historic England and their partners have defined Heritage Crime as:

> Any offence which harms the value of England's and Wales' heritage assets and their settings to this and future generations and includes all offences involving cultural property (CPS nd.)

The PAS have had the greatest involvement in regard to issues relating to the theft of cultural property – from experience this most often relates to theft: either through finding or in cases of the theft of crown

Figure 12: The Herefordshire Viking hoard, golden armlet, rock crystal pendant encased within a golden cage and Trewiddle-style finger ring (Williams *et al.* 2018)

property (the owner of treasure). Many perceive heritage crime as 'victimless' and so it has been treated differently and unfortunately it is still significantly under reported.

I suppose for me I saw attitudes change amongst colleagues in law enforcement when I was part of a multi-disciplinary team that supported the investigation of a major hoard of early medieval material which was deliberately concealed from the coroner and PAS and then subsequently converted for profit by the finders and their associates (Figure 12). The potential value of the hoard has been estimated to be in excess of £12 million which is the equivalent of major money laundering and drug-related crime. After a two-year investigation those involved in perpetrating the crime were found guilty and sentenced to combined jail term of more than 23 years. This was an amazing result setting a precedent for not just the crime itself but the manner of the multi-agency investigation showing the real value of the crime against our society. However, it left a bitter taste as the investigation only revealed 30 of an estimated 300 artefacts and coins. This represents only 10% of the total find meaning we lost 90% of this amazing national important assemblage. In many ways this hoard is both a beautiful assemblage of quality early medieval finds; yet it is also a piece of archaeology which allows us to critically revise the narrative of our nation's story; specifically in the 9th century AD regarding the relationship between Alfred the Great of Wessex and Ceolwulf II of Mercia (Reavill 2017c; Williams *et al.* 2018; Hoverd *et al.* 2020; Mead 2020; Figure 13).

Figure 13: The Two Emperor coins of Alfred of Wessex and Ceolwulf II of Mercia (Williams *et al.* 2018) (not to scale)

Personally, what had the greatest impact was the heritage crime impact statement I and the archaeological team wrote. This was very much like a victim statement and gave a voice to the archaeological resource as well as the main victim – the people of Herefordshire. This allowed the prosecution, jury and judge to understand the huge impact of loss of archaeological information, not just the loss of the objects and depriving the landowner his due reward. We were able to emphasise the loss to society and the impact on the rural economy of Herefordshire, estimated to be more than £1.5 million. Hopefully we will see the impact of this trial (and others) trickle down showing that heritage crime isn't just about these rare nationally important finds, it's the pernicious smaller-scale material which the police would call 'theft through finding' that probably happens on a daily basis which erodes the archaeological resource constantly.

Figure 14: A national treasure: the magnificent Bronze Age Shropshire Marches Bulla/Shropshire Sun Pendant (Reavill and Wilkin 2018)

Treasure: a blessing or curse?

HW: Let's now discuss the concept of treasure in broader terms beyond legal definitions. Is the term 'treasure' a blessing or a curse?

PR: For me 'treasure' is both a legal concept and a social construct – it is a loaded and difficult term that just has to be swallowed or endured.

Some finds we can all agree are treasure and they are among the best objects that I've ever had the opportunity to work with in terms of their 'value' for understanding the human past and the aesthetics of the period they were made in (Figure 14). Other items that are legally treasure due to their precious metal content have negligible archaeological value – their only significance is the date they were made and where they are found.

The concept of treasure, therefore, is a fluid dynamic (or a lazy shorthand) for something that is important. We can take advantage of this as a trigger phrase for the media and for the public to draw them into a story or exhibition. But the looseness of the term and its wide use outside the construct we create can lead to unexpected and challenging results.

For me, that's the biggest problem of a 'treasure label' is that we disproportionately discriminate against the plethora of objects that we see as finds archaeologists; by saying that this top 1–2% of objects have this label treasure and that they have to be dealt with in a different and special way negates the value of everything else. A polished stone axe or a lithic find, or a single coin can have important and valuable information if their context of discovery is taken into consideration. So, for me context should be where the value lies. Treasure is blind to context and it cuts both ways in that we elevate some finds and put down others without logic or recognition of contextual or landscape associations.

HW: Do you think there's power in the mutability of the term that it can mean 'national treasure' (something valuable we recognised for its significance) or indeed 'cultural treasures' (implying something prized for its cultural and historical context) and 'personal treasures' (that it can give a window onto personal, intimate stories of the past)? Or, are those always subsumed within the monetary and the precious materials?

PR: The first question any journalist ever asks when you come out of a Treasure Inquest is: 'What's it worth?' For me this is a boring and redundant question that we deflect to explain why the find was important or significant and they might accept that and even print it ... but then with the next breath they're interested in monetary value again. It's all very much like the *Antiques Roadshow* (television programme) when no matter how much detail and interpretation of the finds there is, it comes down to the great reveal: the monetary value. That is a societal problem and it is pervasive across the heritage sector. It's all about the material value and ownership of these things and the minute you put a value on something you have a winner. Often, the finder is portrayed as the winner who has discovered a life-changing amount of money.

Unfortunately, that is the society we operate in: it's all about the money. Except sometimes, we need to realise it isn't all about money, we have the power to change the narrative, avoid the clickbait, stop falling into the same traps of thought and deed. We can control the narrative, we can lead by example, we can contextualise and reveal the societal value of the past. At heart, museum professionals and archaeologists are storytellers, we bring hidden things into the light, we have the power to kindle interest and use our passion and knowledge to improve our community's understanding of the past. In essence that is what FLOs do all the time by recording everyday treasures and making the difference to our historic environment. We each have the power to reset the narrative, we can be the change and by doing this we can mobilise these fragments from antiquity to do the greatest good for the largest number of people.

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‘An Unlikely Ally?’ Archaeologists and Metal Detectorists in England and Wales Today

Pauline Magdalene Clarke

In a recent appraisal of metal detected finds and their use in characterisation of the early medieval site at Little Carlton, Lincolnshire, Willmott and Wright (2021: 181–182) describe the detectorist as ‘an unlikely ally’ in archaeology. The relationship between metal detectorists and archaeologists has been a thorny one since the detector itself became widely available to the public in the 1960s. In England and Wales, there is less restriction on detectorists than in many other European countries, and this has seen the marked rise of the hobby and ongoing tensions as well as sustained collaborations between the archaeological community and metal-detecting organisations, groups and individuals. The Government launched a wide-ranging consultation on possible revisions to the Treasure Act 1996 and the detectorists Code of Conduct in February 2019. The responses to this were published in December 2020, and a new organisation has formed with the aim of promoting and developing metal detecting. Is there any indication that these measures will herald a new era, and that archaeologists and metal detectorists are agreeing a sustainable rapprochement?

Introduction

As this chapter was in preparation in late 2020, the long running Radio 4 soap opera *The Archers* was running a storyline about archaeologists and metal detectorists. Anglo-Saxon coins had been found on land belonging to a major farming landowner, one of the leading characters. They had been picked up from the field surface by the farmer’s son, who was initially keen to enlist the help of archaeologists at the college he was attending, driven mainly by love interest rather than any philanthropic motivations! After cursory investigation the student archaeologists conclude that there was no further archaeology to be investigated. It has to be said that the role and actions of the archaeologists in the drama portrayal were not well-drawn; there is no mention of test pits, stratigraphy or any similar standard aspects of archaeological investigations. On the other hand, the actions of the metal detectorists who subsequently find out about the site are developed in detail: they act under cover of darkness, are referred to as ‘nighthawkers’ and, after some damage is done, a plot is put in place to entrap them. This backfires when the rogue detectorists slash the tyres of the car of one of the participants in the plot. While the archaeologists are (correctly) brought in at an early stage, discussion of their work is vague, while the metal detectorists have a bigger, more prominent role in the storyline. The ‘nighthawks’ are portrayed as underhand and dangerous. The two groups are often characterised as in direct opposition: poles apart.

This is a somewhat dated stereotype of archaeology/metal-detector relationships. This may have been the way that the two parties were perceived in the past, especially at the height of their opposition in the 1970s and 1980s, when Thomas (2012a: 42) saw both sides launching ‘major offensives’. The Council for British Archaeology (hereafter CBA) published a leaflet in 1980 which stated that the detectorists sole aim was to ‘plunder the past under the guise of sport’ (Winkley 2016a: 1). Is this still the situation in the 21st century, twenty-three years after the initiation of the Portable Antiquities Scheme and forty years after the formation of the National Council for Metal Detecting? This article briefly investigates the development of the relationship between detectorists and archaeologists in England and Wales, and attempts to ascertain its current state.

The development of the hobby

The hobby of metal detecting saw a steep rise in popularity in the 1970s, following development of the technology in the Second World War and the subsequent availability to the public of affordable detectors

(Shepperson 2017). The lack of regulation at the time meant that detectorists were free to work on any site, and various attempts were made by the heritage community to highlight this as a serious threat to heritage. The Treasure Hunting Working Party was one of the first outcomes of this. Formed in 1975, it was a joint committee of the CBA and the Museums Association (Thomas 2012a: 44). This work then culminated with the launch of STOP: The Campaign against Treasure Hunting (Stop Taking Our Heritage), led by the CBA and six other organisations in 1980 (Thomas 2012a: 47, 2012b; Winkley 2016b: 187). Fearful of the destruction of known archaeological sites and the loss of information about potential sites by unregulated metal detectorists, STOP sought to contain the hobby (Winkley 2016a: 187). This was answered in turn by metal detectorists with the DIG (Detecting Information Group) campaign, which aggressively refuted the claims of archaeologists and presented the metal detectorists as responsible people who had a valuable contribution to make to historical understanding (Shepperson 2017). DIG was perhaps more successful in raising their public profile than STOP, arranging marches and demonstrations, one to present a petition to Downing Street in 1979 (Thomas 2012a: 49). STOP had the support not only of the heritage community but landowners through the involvement of the National Farmers Union (NFU) and the Country Landowners Association (CLA). It was concerned not only with issues around ownership but damage and trespass (Thomas 2012a: 47). The battle was bitter and when former Prime Minister Harold Wilson was made an honorary patron of the new National Council of Metal Detecting (NCMD), the detectorists claimed victory (Thomas 2012a: 47). NCMD was formed in 1981 to, as stated on its website, 'provide an authoritative voice to counter ill-informed and frequently misleading criticism of the hobby. It does not represent... archaeological interests' (NCMD 2021a). The language in this statement itself suggests a group of hobbyists under attack from outside parties and a distancing from archaeology.

At the time of the formation of the NCMD, the common law principle of Treasure Trove was in force, which dated back at least to the Norman period (UK Gov 2020). It stated that any coins, or silver or gold objects which had been hidden with no intention of retrieval, or alternatively with intention to retrieve them but the owner and heirs had died, making retrieval impossible, was Crown Property (UK Gov 2020). The arbitration on the validity of this was the responsibility of the Coroner. Metal objects of lesser metals such as copper alloy or lead were excluded, these became the automatic property of the finder or landowner. Trevor Austin, a metal detectorist (who also sat at one time on the Treasure Valuation Committee (TVC)) wrote that 'local museums shunned detector users' who sought to have these non-Treasure finds identified and recorded (Austin 2010: 12). The corollary is that museums and heritage organisations were denied the opportunity to see the items which were coming to light, thus missing valuable research opportunities. Austin (2010: 12) considered that they were instead diverting their resources to having metal detecting banned.

The pressure from both sides through STOP and DIG and other, less high-profile initiatives, eventually resulted in a review of the situation, out of which arose the Treasure Act of 1996, revising the medieval origin Treasure Trove regulations and making compulsory the recording of objects that came under a new classification of 'treasure' – that is, objects comprised of at least 10% (by weight) gold or silver and more than 300 years old when found; two or more objects made of metal found with the same prehistoric date; two or more gold or silver coins from the same place and ten or more coins, even of non-precious metal from the same place (The National Archives 2002). Alongside this a pilot scheme was launched which became the basis of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), now covering all of England and Wales, and employing forty Finds Liaison Officers (FLOs) as well as many other staff in support of their work (Lewis and Brown 2020: 5). The scheme aimed to promote the maximum benefit from the recording of all finds, treasure or not, to the public and the academic community by asking that detectorists voluntarily record on the publicly accessible database, either themselves or through their FLO (PAS 2021a). This was supported by The Code of Practice (CoP) for Responsible Metal Detecting which followed in 2006, ratified at the time by the CBA and the NCMD, amongst others (Daubney 2017: 788). This code reinforced the best practice that all finds are reported, in order that they can be recorded. This PAS database now contains over 1.5 million items, at the time of writing (Lewis and Brown 2020: 4).

While the number of recorded finds illustrates that some progress clearly has been made following these initiatives, it is not all good news. In a bad-tempered exchange in the pages of *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology* in 2010, archaeologist David Gill and Trevor Austin, then General Secretary of the NCMD (and a former member of the TVC), discussed the looting of objects, the responsibility for this and how the PAS had potentially contributed to the decline in reporting (Austin 2010; Gill 2010a). Austin (2010: 12) felt that metal detectorists were being classified as a homogenous body by a 'small faction of anti-metal-detector zealots' and that heritage professionals would not engage with them in helping to identify finds as they were in the main 'elitist, blinkered and prejudiced'. In his final reply, Gill (2010b: 35, 39) stated that it was doubtful that there could be a 'road to reconciliation and respectful cooperation' between the parties while 'artefact hunters... treat (archaeological sites) as sources of things to collect'. The disclosure that one third of finds are not reported to the PAS was not likely to occasion a rapprochement either (Gill 2010b: 35).

This figure was supported in a survey carried out in 2010, thirteen years after the inception of the PAS, where Thomas (2012a: 54) found that only 65.6% of the detectorists interviewed reported their finds to the PAS. Further, only 36.5% of respondents had worked with archaeologists in the field, and only a very small proportion (4.2%) of those who had not would have actually welcomed this interaction. Perhaps of more concern, of those who had worked with archaeologists 13.7% reported that it had been a poor experience, citing lack of engagement from the archaeologist's side, or downright exclusion: 'we are the enemy, unfortunately' was one comment recorded by Thomas (2012a: 55).

Winkley (2016b: 198) in a similar survey where she interviewed metal detectorists 'at work' found a slightly happier picture. A not unexpected distrust among some detectorists of 'nighthawkers' existed, as they feared that the illegal operators might remove items from their own legitimate permissions. They also recognised the potential for reputational damage to the hobby as a whole, while not necessarily focussing on the illegality of the practice. She also found a growing awareness of the need to record finds with the FLO – 'it's a real sin now if you don't' being one of the quotes she highlighted (Winkley 2016b: 201). Another point that came to light in Winkley's survey was that detectorists would often protect their relationship with the landowner from whom they have their permission to search first and foremost, even if it meant not reporting a find to the FLO (Austin 2010: 13; Winkley 2016b: 204). This sadly signals a slow and patchy adaption of the Code of Practice, as well as the tendency still of even 'good' detectorists to not declare findings or even break the law in certain circumstances.

It is worth noting too that not all amendments that have taken place since the Code was first put in place have been welcomed or indeed actioned by detectorists. The Code of Practice was revised in 2017 but was not at that stage endorsed by the NCMD, and still is not (NCMD 2021b). They were to later comment:

> NCMD never boycotted the Code but made its views known concerning a small number of issues with the wording of a few sentences in what was a politically charged arena at that particular time. In short, the NCMD felt that some of the wording needed some further work before it could be accepted. (NCMD 2020)

In their publication, 'Digging Deep' Issue 25 (Anon. 2017; NCMD 2017) the issues that they have with the revisions were discussed. Many concerns focused on battlefield archaeology, but throughout the statement there is an undercurrent of distrust with the working committee of which the NCMD were a member. 'It became clear that an assumption had been made without consultation by ... the PAS ... that the NCMD would endorse the code even before it had been properly discussed' is their summary statement (NCMD 2017). NCMD did not immediately endorse the revision, pending not only these issues but the (then upcoming) PAS Strategy review of 2020, and the review of the Treasure Act. However, by the time of writing (March 2022) the PAS website recognises the NCMD's endorsement of the Code.

The prevailing feeling through the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is one of tension between detectorists on the one hand, and archaeologists and other heritage professionals on the other. Is this situation likely to ease as we move through the third decade of the century?

The situation at present

Testimony to the adoption of the voluntary Code of Practice is the number of items recorded on the PAS database. The British Museum publishes an annual report summarising the work of the PAS. In the report for 2019, the latest available (at the time of writing), it is seen that over the year 81,602 new finds, across all periods, were recorded on the PAS database, and of these, nearly 90% were found by metal detectorists (Lewis and Brown 2020: 4). The report also notes that the FLOs were in contact with 117 metal detecting clubs throughout the year, and many of the individual find reports highlight the contribution of metal detectorists, along with messages reinforcing the importance of following the voluntary Code of Practice as well as the legally binding obligation to report possible treasure (Lewis and Brown 2020: 4, 5, 10). Further, the Report stresses that without metal detectorists, much archaeology would disappear under the plough (Lewis and Brown 2020: 3). It is noteworthy that the publication itself is in fact partly funded by the magazine *Treasure Hunting* and the Director of the British Museum, Hartwig Fischer, thanks them for making production of the report possible in his Foreword (Lewis and Brown 2020: 3 and back cover). While this can be seen as cooperation between the factions, it could also be interpreted as endorsement by the PAS of detecting.

Further, many excavations run by archaeologists utilise metal detectorists. Dr Dot Boughton, former FLO for Lancashire and Cumbria, welcomed the recruitment of a metal detectorist by archaeological units, describing the individual as one 'of the best, most responsible detectorists' (Boughton 2021). One professional dig director and academic working on a site of world importance stated that 'up to 40% of finds would be lost without the use of a metal detector' (identity withheld, pers. comm.).

On the basis of this positive approach to metal detectorists in the PAS Annual Report, it may be implied that archaeologists and heritage professionals in museum and conservation roles have reached a level of harmonious cooperation with detectorists. However, many heritage professionals still have concerns. Failure to report finds, illegal digging on land without the landowner's permission to detect on, or from a protected site, for example (often carried out by the so-called 'nighthawkers') are obvious issues. In a case in 2019, two men were convicted of stealing a Viking hoard worth over £3 million, much of which had already been sold on and is therefore lost; it is thought that it would have added new information to the history of the early medieval kingdoms (BBC News 2019). In another case in 2021, four men were convicted of detecting on protected heritage sites including Roche Abbey in Rotherham and Beeston Castle in Cheshire (Dowling 2021). Nighthawking too is often seen by detectorists as an excuse used by archaeologists to attack the hobby (Thomas 2013).

The PAS has generated and recorded spectacular success stories too, perhaps the highest profile being the discovery in 2009 by metal detectorist Terry Herbert of what became known as the Staffordshire Hoard. Herbert eventually notified his FLO of the find and the hoard was then expertly excavated and conserved (Fern *et al.* 2019: 5; see also Greaves this volume). In a recent report in the Treasure Act, more below, the finders were praised for their response (UK Gov 2020). Even in this case though, 70% of the items had been taken from the ground before the FLO was notified, losing the chance to examine the context of the deposit (Fern 2020: 39).

This illegal sale of important, unreported items persists, seen for example with the recent early medieval hoard found by detectorists in Herefordshire. Of an estimated 300 coins removed, only 31 have been recovered to date, and important information about, for example, the relationship of early kings and kingdoms has therefore been lost (Hoverd *et al.* 2020: 47). Indeed, auction houses may be present at detecting rallies, as at *Detectival*, held in June 2021, where Dix Noonan Webb auctioneers offered valuations to around 500 detectorists – this drew many disapproving comments from archaeologists, one stating: 'Around 500 #detectorists on 1,000 acres... a cultural free-for-all AKA For-profit Treasure Hunt, with no requirement to identify, catalogue and contextualise the finds' (Dix Noonan Webb 2021; Quid Agis 2021).

The idea of 'treasure' is also contentious. An important case about what constitutes treasure was driven by the discovery of the Crosby Garrett helmet. This was a rare Roman 'Sports helmet' found in Cumbria, UK in late May 2010 by detectorists (Gill 2014: 53). The helmet is not of precious metal and is therefore outside the current Treasure Act. Furthermore, on its discovery the detectorists (legally) shipped it, not to their local museum but to Christie's Auction House. It was viewed there by several archaeologists but ultimately the auction house themselves restored it in a manner designed to make it saleable, disappointingly not to museum standards of conservation (Gill 2014: 54). FLOs were not shown the find spot until three months after its discovery, and there is a suggestion that they were only notified then to add provenance to the piece, which subsequently sold into private hands for £2,281,250 later that year (Gill 2014: 54). The loss of such a rare piece without proper evaluation threw the limitation of the definition of treasure as being items of silver or gold only into the spotlight. In this case there was opportunity after its acquisition by a private individual for further study of the helmet (e.g. Breeze and Bishop 2013), but this is not always the case.

The issue of the archaeologist/detectorist relationship has been brought to the fore again by two new initiatives; firstly, the Government have carried out a consultation, seeking to identify the need to revise the Treasure Act 1996 and related Code of Practice and, secondly, a new organisation, the Association of Detectorists (AoD) has been established by Keith Westcott, with the aim of promoting best practice and representing the hobby while engaging in pragmatic debate about changes may be required or forthcoming (Archmdmag TV 2020; see also Williams *et al.* this volume; Reavill this volume).

The Government consultation was driven partly by the need to find a different way of coping with the popularity of reporting and specifically the number of Treasure cases engendered by this, but also the need to revise the definition of Treasure as exemplified in the case of the Crosby Garret helmet, amongst other important items which are being auctioned to private buyers and thus passing from the research sphere. The initial outcomes of the Government consultation were published on their official website on 4 December 2020. Of the organisations surveyed, 26.8% of known respondents (the largest group) were allied to a metal detecting organisation. Some of the responses gave cause for concern, for example some respondents stated that, should some of the proposals be adopted, they would personally be discouraged from reporting any treasure they may find, or they considered that others would be. In addition, there seems to be an underlying distrust of the work of the TVC (UK Gov 2020) in spite of it still having finders' representation on it, currently Harry Bain, editor of *The Searcher* magazine (PAS 2021b). While these responses can probably be attributed to metal detectorists (they are anonymised), other parties, perhaps archaeologists and heritage professionals, express a general undercurrent of disapproval of members of the public using metal detectors, commenting that, in their opinion, it harms the archaeological record (UK Gov 2020). A specific aim of the consultation is that archaeologists and metal-detectorists should be encouraged to work together closer than currently while exercising best practice. 'Archaeology' and 'archaeologist' were even discussed as terms but only in relation to any resultant excavation on site: the Government's response was that the finder was still entitled to a reward should they subsequently join the excavation and should not be considered as archaeologists (professional archaeologists are not entitled to reward in the course of their work). However, reaction from detectorists to the consultation on the NCMD Facebook page point to a lot of reservations, seen in these comments below:

> Reading between the lines, I can well see the time coming very soon where our hobby will be so bound up in red tape it will have had all the pleasure strangled out of it. (NCMD 2020)

> My point here is, I very much hope the new rules will not include such finds as single hammered, Roman, Saxon and similar coins as treasure, this would seriously make me consider my hobby and if to continue. I am honest and follow metal detecting rules, I register any interesting finds with my FLO and under the current rules I get to keep most of them. DCMS and all involved please don't make this great passionate hobby a hobby where we the metal dectorist (sic) just get to keep the trash. (NCMD 2020)

This maybe misunderstands that only single gold coins are included in the review, not silver, but as gold coins are perhaps a detectorist's 'Holy Grail' then even clarification of this might not ease the criticism.

In addition, the detectorists themselves are seemingly threatened internally. At present, the major force representing the metal detectorists is the National Council for Metal Detecting (NCMD) who regard themselves as 'the recognised voice of metal detecting' (NCMD 2020). It was formed in 1981 (see above) and it is worth restating that its aim is to 'provide an authoritative voice to counter ill-informed and frequently misleading criticism of the hobby' (NCMD 2020). A new organisation has recently emerged - the Association of Detectorists (AoD), who are in the early stages of constitutional development and aim in the near future to achieve chartered status, becoming the Institute of Detectorists. This is not a straightforward path: there is suspicion amongst the NCMD that the AoD are trying to introduce licensing, with fee payments, for the detectorists. Keith Westcott, founder of the Association was also recently interviewed (5 December 2020) for the *BIG Detecting Show*, an online news channel run by *The Archaeology and Metal Detecting Magazine* (Archmdmag 2020). It is obvious from the comments which were posted as the video that there is a certain amount of resistance to any intervention from a new body with the hobby. Some of the chat comments appearing as the interview progressed are reproduced below:

> archaeologists won't find stuz (sic) without detectorists

> I think that they should leave us responsible metal detectorist and NCMD members as we are... this... could leave us open to more regulations and spoil our hobby

> I don't know any detectorists that have not wanted to take part in archaeological digs it always comes across that they don't want us

> It's all about control

> Detectorists dig 90% of finds! If this was a results game then it would be Archeologists (sic) needing to be given more training (Archmdmag 2020)

The NCMD themselves are hostile to the AoD, stating on their website that: 'it is basically licensing of our hobby by the back door' (NCMD 2020). Further comments demonstrate outright hostility to archaeologists, one post on the NCMD website said archaeologists made him: 'feel like micheal (sic) Jackson in a kids home.'

These comments are not isolated, and many more examples can be offered of detectorists distrust or downright hostility towards archaeologists and heritage professionals. It is also the case that many detectorist organisations Facebook groups are closed which can be interpreted either as fear of criticism or the desire to hide – arousing further suspicion. Any move that is perceived as adding levels of control to the hobby is unwelcome in their eyes. There seems to have been an issue too with initial guidance that was provided during the recent lockdown necessitated by the spread of COVID-19, when detectorists were not allowed to go out. They asked that the NCMD lobby the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, for the ability to meet as group when the lockdown restrictions enforced by the Government as a response to the spread of COVID-19 virus eased somewhat, although many members felt that the NCMD response was slow and inadequate. The NCMD noted on Facebook on 30 May 2020:

> We have been in regular contact with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport over the last few weeks to lobby for loosening of restrictions on our hobby. We have put forward a strong case for detectorists to be allowed to attend digs in larger numbers than the new 30 people limit. (NCMD 2020)

Many members of the Council did not believe that the body had represented their interest strongly enough at the time and this has added momentum to their call to stand against the perceived threat from AoD. There seems to be gathering pressure for licensing of some kind: while this is in response to some areas being created Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), a metal detector responds that 'detectorists are being coerced' into the notification scheme (Bailes 2020). Warrington Council in Cheshire require that a permit is applied for, in person, at a cost of £29.00 per site before anyone can detect on Council owned land, whereas East Devon allow detecting but no digging in their parks and open spaces, and Wiltshire Council ban it altogether (Warrington Borough Council 2021). Thanet District Council now require that detectorists register in order to detect on the foreshore (Bailes 2020).

It is not the first time that licensing has been proposed. When STOP failed to have their call for licences rejected in 1980, they responded with the statement below, further emphasising their stance on detecting:

> now the licence... has been abolished...this will help to make it clear to the public... that it is archaeologists, not treasure seekers, who are truly interested in... our country's past (Thomas 2012a: 51)

Pressure on metal detecting is coming from elsewhere. Michael Lewis (Head of Portable Antiquities and Treasure at the British Museum) and Michael Heyworth (Chair of the Portable Antiquity Advisory Group) recently published an article in *British Archaeology* magazine, calling for specific action around metal detecting rallies (Lewis and Heyworth 2020: 30–35). Rallies raise another set of issues because they are often commercial ventures (although some organisers do donate to charity) involving perhaps hundreds of detectorists at one time (Lewis and Heyworth 2020: 31). Most rallies are seen by archaeologists as destructive and it is hard to deny this when pictures of many of detectorists are seen scouring a relatively small area of land (see Figure 1) (Lewis and Heyworth 2020: 32). Rallies on the other hand are seen as a lifeline by detectorists as they offer a chance to search without having to obtain their own permissions from landowners, and also offer a social aspect to the hobby, as well as being a way in for a new detectorist (Lewis and Heyworth 2020: 31). Detectorists who are not club members and therefore might not be aware of the CoP may comprise as many as 39.8% of detectorists at such rallies (Thomas 2012a: 58). FLOs no longer proactively engage at such rallies to record finds, as they are not seen as the optimal way of doing this, instead they proactively engage detectorists, requesting that they follow the Code of Practice and report finds to their FLO in the days following a rally. Lewis and Heyworth (2020: 31) however state that 'most (detectorists) do not' record their finds. The language used in this article belies the old divisions in some instances, with the use of words such as 'secrecy' and 'frenzy' to describe the hobby (Lewis and Heyworth 2020: 31, 32). The authors call for licencing of these events and for the organisers of rallies to ensure that the legal requirements are adhered to (Lewis and Heyworth 2020: 34–35). This feeds directly into the fears of the members of the NCMD, mentioned above. Indeed, even the title of the article 'What to do about metal detecting rallies' does not suggest that they are viewed in a positive light.

Figure 1: Metal detectorists at the King Alfred the Great rally, 2018 (Photograph by portableantiquities, licensed with CC BY 2.0)

Paul Barford is an archaeologist, who, as well as publishing academically, maintains a controversial and outspoken (with both some archaeologists and metal-detector users) blog of the subject of Portable Antiquity Collecting and Heritage Issues (Barford 2021). He is rightly critical of some aspects of the operation of the PAS, for example that HER data is formed from these unprovenanced finds (Barford 2016: 32). While he rightly has little time for rogue metal detectorists, he appears not to have time for their legitimate friends or the PAS and its FLOs either. One example of his anger against the PAS is given below on spotting an article for sale privately:

> ...here is one of this week's that I spotted on eBay in my research on the antiquities market. PASt experience tells me that I'd just get fobbed off reporting it to the portable antiquities folk again, so I feel rather demotivated and don't think I'll bother. (Barford 2019)

This is in spite of the fact that the PAS have partnered with eBay to try to eliminate the sale of illegal antiquities; sadly this seems only to apply to treasure cases (PAS 2021c). This author cannot find many comments on metal detectorists from Barford's blog which could be reproduced here but his attitude to them is summed up in this quotation, in response to the sentencing and imprisonment of a known fake coin seller – his rejoinder to a detectorist celebrating this is with the detectorist's comment below:

> Coldfeet was known as a bit of a rogue. We are pleased he has been jailed — we don't need people like him damaging the reputation of detectoring. Well, the 'reputation' of artefact hunting with metal detectors really suffers just as much from other issues that are rarely addressed by its many supporters. (Barford 2009)

Barford does however highlight an important point in the modern relationship between metal detectorists and archaeologists: the use of social media means that it is virtually impossible to conceal the location of finds, as enthusiastic people party to the discovery upload photographs within minutes; this is especially the case in rallies, where the large numbers present make this impossible to police (Barford 2016: 38). The two-week excavation of the site of the Staffordshire Hoard after its initial discovery required round the clock security to prevent looters accessing it, especially as it was within sight of a major trunk road (Fern *et al.* 2019: 8). Barford highlights too divisions within the archaeology and heritage profession as to how finds should be handled, for example in the case of the Lenborough Hoard (Barford 2016: 38). Found during a commercial rally attended by approximately one hundred people, it was hurriedly excavated on the day (after a large number of the coins had already been removed by detectorists); this is a practice that the British Archaeological Trust condemned (Rescue 2015). The pressure created by pictures of the hoard being shared on social media immediately must have necessitated quick action (Barford 2016: 38). The researcher leading the analysis of this hoard, former FLO Wendy Scott, issued a plea in her recent talk on the subject for Buckinghamshire Museums that this disturbance should not be repeated as the context was destroyed and valuable information lost (Discover Bucks Museum 2021). This further adds to the claims of damage caused by rallies highlighted by Lewis and Heyworth, above. Barford seems to be echoing the concerns of many archaeologists and others who would like to see a better regulated system of managing finds and better preserving them, although his approach to the English and Welsh system, embodied in the PAS, is often confrontational. He characterises the metal detecting community as 'hobbyists engaged in collecting artefacts for personal entertainment and profit', while the archaeologist 'treats it as some kind of ersatz archaeological evidence' (Barford 2016: 32).

Figure 2: The intact Frome Hoard under excavation (PAS 2017)

All of this is in contrast to the praise that archaeologists also award to metal detectorists. The finder of the Staffordshire Hoard has already been mentioned, although some archaeologists are uncomfortable with the fact that it was not reported for a few days after its initial discovery, and the effect that this may have had on the information that could have been obtained (Fern *et al.* 2019: 40; Gill 2010a: 7). It is of course possible that the detectorist did not appreciate the consequences of the delay. The Frome hoard of Roman coins (Figure 2), found in Somerset in 2010 by detectorist Dave Crisp, was reported immediately and so it was possible for professionals to excavate it, preserving both the pot in which it was found and the order of deposition of the coins (Anon. 2010: 12-19; Gill 2010a: 7).

Recent discovery by a metal detectorist of a Roman period lead pig east of Wrexham, North Wales, was not only reported in a timely manner but has led to the discovery of a Roman villa nearby an area in which Roman rural settlement is underrepresented. In addition, the responsible actions of the detectorist in reporting the find have been credited in the press (BBC News 2020). Likewise, the detectorist who uncovered Bronze Age horse harnesses in Scotland notified the Coroner (under Scottish Law) immediately and professional excavation allowed recovery of intact leather material which formed part of the harness, therefore allowing the exact form of the harness to be ascertained (Machemer 2020). The NCMD noted praise for the member of the organisation who found and reported them: 'Credit to the finders, the exemplary manner of their actions has been applauded by the Archaeological (sic) team involved' (Machemer 2020).

It is also generally acknowledged that metal detectorists actions contribute to the identification of possible sites. Hamerow (2012: 3) cites the discovery of 'productive' sites, that is, those yielding large numbers of detected objects in an area without other evidence for settlement, which may be the site of seasonal markets or other trading centres. Detected items may be the only evidence for such sites.

Further, Haldenby and Richards (2016) following their research into the Viking Great Army stated that 'detailed plotting of surface finds collected with a metal-detector has now been raised to a major technique of historical investigation'. Metal detectorists are invited to participate in excavations in many cases, for example at the Viking site in Repton, Derbyshire (Jarman pers. comm.). This is not universally approved even within the heritage community. For example, Moshenska (2010: 27) highlights the division within archaeology itself about the detectorists, as not all archaeologists approve of this involvement.

There remains ongoing hostility on both sides of the relationship between archaeologist and metal-detector users in England and Wales. Archaeologists do not trust metal detectorists and detectorists are suspicious of any curtailment of their hobby and freedoms. Language in the article by Lewis and Heyworth (2020: 31) suggest that archaeologists still regard some metal detectorists as 'unscrupulous' and 'secretive'. That many metal detectorists forums on Facebook are closed to members has innocent origins – they would not wish competing clubs to see which sites they are working, but this only adds to the mystique and possible misunderstanding of the hobby and its followers.

Conclusion

There seems to have been little progress in the relationship between metal detectorists and archaeologists since the NCMD formed, as necessary to protect 'the hobby'. What is apparent is that archaeologists and heritage professionals and metal detectorists see themselves as two sides of the same (hammered?) coin. As over 90% of the finds recorded on the PAS are a result of metal detectorists searching, it must be acknowledged that they are providing vital information for the archaeology and heritage community. The PAS now forms the basis of much research, for example in David Williams' study of late Anglo-Saxon stirrup-stap mounts (Lewis *et al.* 2011: 252–257; Williams 1997). However, it is clear that there is still not complete acceptance of the contribution of metal detectorists to archaeology, and valid concern over some of the less scrupulous people involved in detecting, only highlighted by recent major prosecutions. The debate is further complicated by a Treasure Act which is increasingly seen as being inadequate. The detectorists did nothing wrong (technically at least) in their handling of the Crosby Garett helmet, the fault here was that the Act did not address that specific contingency. To avoid such a situation arising in future, both a change to the current legislation and its acceptance by the metal detecting community are required. The FLO and heritage professionals will then need to be supported with the additional resources and expenditure that will be required to enact any changes which increase the reporting of finds. Estimates vary wildly, but even conservative ones give the number of active detectorists as being 10,550 while there are around 44 FLOs (some working part-time) managing the current level of finds (Thomas 2012a: 42; see also Reavill this volume). Managing the expectations too of a metal detectorist who has found a bronze figure which is valuable only for its historical worth and not as a precious metal is also challenging, when reporting may be supported by an expectation of substantial financial reward. Indeed, the real division here may be between detectorists who set out deliberately to break the Code of Practice and those who are either not aware of it or do not understand the ramifications of not following it. FLOs do hold outreach events to educate and inform, but while the actual number of metal detectorists is unknown how can outreach of this sort be all encompassing? Thomas (2012a: 42) suggests too that as archaeologists embrace community involvement in their activities, then the role of the detectorist also is part of this. Thomas takes this one step further, suggesting that until the issues are resolved and public opinion is 'with' archaeologists, funding for the profession will not be maximised (Thomas 2012a: 50). Lewis (2016: 130) would counter that the PAS represents community archaeology in 'its truest sense'.

The fear of new regulation, driven by illicit detecting (which takes place no matter what legislation is enacted (Daubney and Nichols 2019: 140)), sale of items unrecorded for research interest, and the call for rallies to be better regulated is causing increased distrust of heritage professional, if websites such as *thePipeline* (tag line - *where history is tomorrow's news*) are to be believed.

> opinion against unregulated metal detecting appears to have hardened among many archaeologists... As a result many metal detectorists, especially rally organisers..., fear the current light touch regime may give way soon to something which will be either much more expensive and onerous for them to follow, or which may licence, or even ban, their activity altogether (thePipeline 2021).

It is easy to select examples of hostility on both sides, but the fact remains that the metal detector is not truly a recognised piece of equipment wielded for the archaeologist. At the same time, the recording of over 1.5 million finds on the PAS database is an important contribution to archaeology. Long memories seem to persist on both sides, with hostile language persistently a feature of communication and the new developments in the revision of the Treasure Act and the establishment of AoD seem to be bringing these back to the fore. The language used on social media by the detectorists shows fear of control and limitation of their hobby, while archaeologists are still rightly concerned about the secrecy around the hobby and the persistent heritage crime. The law enforcement services and archaeology need to be adequately resourced to combat this, and the recording process better facilitated before any significant progress in the relationship can be made.

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Stór mo chroí - Reflections on Treasure from an Irish Perspective

Sharon A. Greene

This reflection looks at the attitudes to and history of treasure and legislation relating to it in Ireland from the 19th century to today. Folklore allows us to access opinions and beliefs among the general population of the 19th and into the 20th centuries, while the development of heritage legislation from the days of Treasure Trove to the National Monuments Act and its amendments in the independent Irish State highlights the importance of antiquities in the formation of state identity. The important legal case surrounding the discovery of the Derrynaflan Hoard in the 1980s, introduced here, reveals the reasons behind some significant differences between the legal situations in the Republic of Ireland and the UK and elsewhere when it comes to reporting discoveries of antiquities (of any material) and metal detecting.

A stór is one of many ways of addressing a loved one in the Irish language and it is often translated as 'my darling' or similar. Yet, *stór* (which has a variety of other meanings) also translates as 'treasure' and the affectionate phrase *stór mo chroí* means 'treasure of my heart'.

'Treasure' is a term that is not regularly encountered in Irish archaeology today. This is despite the fact that there is no shortage of treasure from the island, from Bronze Age gold to Viking silver, and even some Roman hoards and medieval coins. The National Museum of Ireland in Kildare Street, Dublin even has a gallery called 'the Treasury' which contains items considered by many to be the finest examples of Irish treasure such as the Ardagh Chalice, the Tara Brooch and the Cross of Cong. However, this gallery also contains an Iron Age stone head and early medieval stone cross slabs. A room at the end of the gallery is dedicated to early forms of the written word – ogham stones, wax tablets and a manuscript. The juxtaposition of these items with the more readily recognisable 'treasure' perhaps provides the first clue that the Irish archaeological understanding of 'treasure' is a bit different, and more complex, than its global English-language allusions. Specifically, in Irish use, it does not necessarily and immediately bring to mind objects made from valuable materials such as gold and silver. This chapter aims to reflect on the evolution of this 21st-century concept of treasure in an Irish context, which provides nuance upon wider debates in the UK and elsewhere.

Treasure in folklore

Between 1937 and 1939, the Irish Folklore Commission with the cooperation of the Department of Education and the Irish National Teachers' Organization, enlisted more than 50,000 schoolchildren from 5000 schools in the 26 counties of the Irish Free State to collect local folklore from friends, family and neighbours.[1] Known as 'The Schools' Collection', this material is now available online and is searchable (NFC n.d.). A search for the term 'treasure' brings up 4468 results. Upon reading some of these stories, certain themes and attitudes emerge quite quickly, providing some insight into prevailing perceptions of treasure.

Of course, some of the tales are about chance discoveries of gold or other antiquities in the course of farming or other manual labour, but there are many more stories about treasure-hunting, most of which are cautionary tales involving the 'little people'. Unlike modern ideas of fairies as delightful little characters flitting around the flowers, fairies in Irish folklore (known as the *sidhe*) are dangerous

[1] The Irish Free State, formed after the end of the War of Independence and the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in December 1921, was the name given to the Irish State from 1922–1937.

and powerful beings who live on an alternative plane to our own but who can access our world (or be accessed) via certain points in the Irish landscape. These places are frequently archaeological sites like ringforts (still often called 'fairy forts'), souterrains, megalithic tombs and the like. Such places were to be avoided, particularly after dark, and were certainly not to be interfered with in any way. This underlying belief persists in pockets of the landscape to the modern day, the most famous case in recent years seeing the re-routing of a new road in County Clare to avoid the destruction of a 'fairy bush' (Deegan 1999).

Any temptation to interfere would have had monetary motives, whether it be the clearing of the land for improved agricultural gain or intentionally searching for treasure. Many sites were accompanied by tales of lost or hidden gold, hidden treasures had usually been concealed from Vikings or the reviled Oliver Cromwell. Anyone who attempted to retrieve these treasures would either not succeed or, in the case that they did, would meet an array of potential bad consequences, including untimely death. Avoiding these devastating outcomes required outsmarting or distracting supernatural guardians: black dogs, black cats, fairies, eels, strange voices, weather events, strange men and so on (O'Reilly 1994–1995: 202–203). Your best bet was to seek the treasure after 'gold-dreaming', where the location of the treasure is revealed to the seeker in a dream on three consecutive nights which apparently allowed them to retrieve it without consequence (cf. Ní Cheallaigh 2007).

Looking at these stories, we can make a number of observations. Firstly, there is a strong relationship between treasure and monuments or other specific landscape locations. Secondly, there is a moral aspect to the tales that warned about the vanity and illusory nature of earthly wealth and the dangers of flaunting community beliefs or conventions (Ní Cheallaigh 2006: 108; O'Reilly 1994–1995: 207). Thirdly, these tales have had an important and persistent role in protecting archaeological monuments and any 'treasures' that lay within.

This would appear to be evidenced by a mid-19th-century account of a burial mound at Kilmaclenine, near Buttevant, County Cork (Ní Cheallaigh 2007: 129). The mound was opened by a parish priest who had an apparent interest in antiquities and after this initial disturbance it received the attention of 'gold-seekers', who ransacked the whole mound, after which it was used as a source of materials for local farmers (Brash 1852–53 cited in Ní Cheallaigh 2007: 129). Did the lack of reprisals for the 'scientific' breach of the mound by an authority figure encourage the treasure-hunters and remove any local inhibitions about interfering with and even removing the material of the mound? Did these activities erode community beliefs that protected the sites and their contents as much as they eroded the monument itself? The relationship between the archaeological sites and their treasures with memory and identity are explored more fully by Ní Cheallaigh (2006, 2007), but it is worth noting that the treasure is often remembered as having been concealed from Vikings, Cromwellian soldiers or other unscrupulous individuals. Perhaps this negative view of previous treasure-seekers transferred to some degree to any other potential seeker (Figure 1).

Legislation

The concept of Treasure Trove arrived in Ireland in 1861, when the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's treasury granted the Royal Irish Academy £100 per annum for the purchase of Treasure Trove articles (Ireland 1992: 123). An evaluations committee was quickly established and Treasure Trove became a feature of the Irish legal landscape.

An important early Treasure Trove case involved the famous Iron Age gold hoard found in Broighter, County Derry in 1896 (Neill 1993). The pieces were purchased by the British Museum via the antiquarian Robert Day, but a successful legal case saw Irish members of parliament have it claimed as Treasure

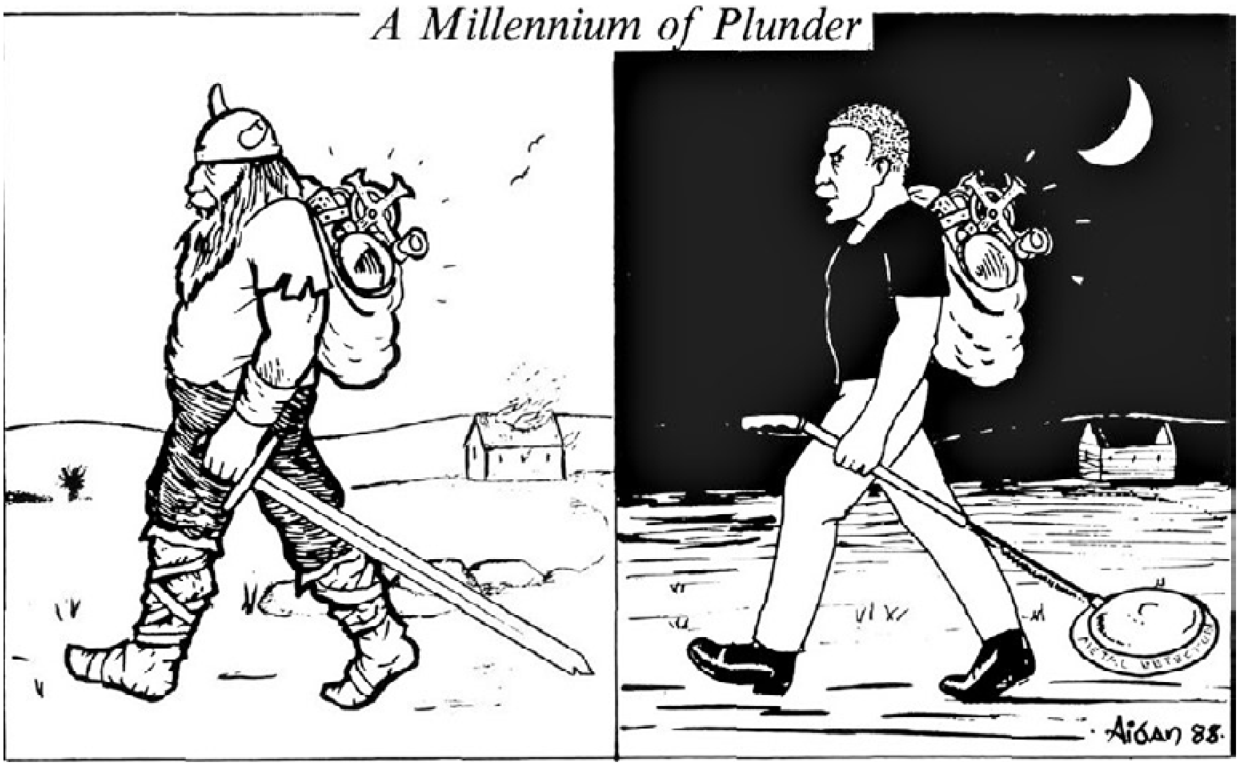

Figure 1: A cartoon accompanying a 1988 news item in *Archaeology Ireland* magazine, equating metal-detectorists with Vikings (reproduced courtesy of Aidan Walsh)

Trove. The items were returned to the Crown and given into the keeping of the Royal Irish Academy, whose collections subsequently became the genesis of the National Museum of Ireland. The hoard is now in the Treasury of the museum and the gold boat is one of the museum's most famous attractions (Figure 2).

Following independence, the new Irish Free State could not afford to eschew all aspects of former British administration, and as has been the case for many former colonies of the Empire, the legal system was based largely on that of England and Wales. The concept of Treasure Trove initially went unchallenged. There were some legislative changes made in the area of the antiquities however, most significantly the passing of the National Monuments Act in 1930. With regard to artefacts, clauses relating to unlicensed excavations and the unauthorised export of artefacts were introduced, not least because of the activities of the so-called Harvard Mission which saw the excavation of a number of key artefact-rich sites in the Irish Free State from 1932–1936 (Carew 2018: 13). This led to the 1934 statement by Hugh O'Neill Hencken and Hallam L. Movius that '(I)t is policy that the objects found during excavations should become the property of the National Museum of Ireland' (cited in Carew 2018: 13). This outcome was in contrast to the situation in the newly formed jurisdiction of Northern Ireland, where the Ancient Monuments Act (Northern Ireland) 1926 and 1937 did not give the same protections against the export of artefacts with the result that material from excavations in Northern Ireland was shipped to America (Carew 2018: 13, note 87).

The reason for the situation in the Free State was the significant political role given to Irish cultural and archaeological heritage in the formation and bolstering of the identity of the Irish State (O'Sullivan 1998). The National Museum of Ireland rapidly became a 'cultural tentacle of the independent Irish Free

Figure 2: The gold boat from the Broighter hoard (© National Museum of Ireland)

State Government' (Carew 2018: 39). The valuables displayed and stored in the museum were and still are referred to as 'national treasure', though one is just as likely to hear this term used for other cultural collections such as the aforementioned 'School's Collection' in the National Folklore Collection.

Winds of change

As in Britain and elsewhere, the appearance of affordable metal detecting devices from the 1970s onwards saw an increase in their use across the landscape, despite the legislation in place to protect sites and artefacts (Anon. 1988a; Myles 2014; Ryan 1990: 153). The legality of the ancient law of Treasure Trove was finally put to the test in 1986 with the discovery of the Derrynaflan hoard by metal detectorists (Gosling 1987: 23; Bourke 1990: 161-163; Ryan 1990). In February 1980, Michael Webb and his son, Michael Jr, dug up one of Ireland's most significant early medieval hoards, comprising a paten, a strainer and a chalice, all covered by a large, corroded metal basin, at the site of the early medieval church and monastery of Derrynaflan, County Tipperary (Figure 3). The next day, Mr Webb delivered the hoard to the director of the National Museum of Ireland along with a solicitor's letter purporting to protect any rights he might have to the hoard itself or any reward that might be forthcoming for its discovery. He was assured that he would be 'treated honourably'. The hoard, in particular the chalice which was similar to the already

Figure 3: The Derrynaflan hoard (© National Museum of Ireland)

famous Ardagh chalice, was hailed as a 'national treasure' and the Webbs were similarly lauded for finding it. A rescue excavation at the site retrieved further components from the hoard and the artefacts were sent to the British Museum for conservation (the expertise and facilities were not available at the time in the National Museum of Ireland) (Ryan 1990: 155).

Over a year later, Mr Webb received an offer of £10,000 which he did not find satisfactory and he consequently requested return of the hoard. He was then told that the hoard was the property of the State and the offer was repeated. Mr Webb commenced proceedings against the State in March 1982 and the case went to the High Court (Bourke 1990: 160).

Prior to this, in early 1980, the landowners too had made a claim to a reward and after much negotiation with the Department of Education (then the government department responsible for the National Museum of Ireland) they each received £25,000 and signed over 'all rights, property and interest' in the hoard to the Department (Bourke 1990: 160; Irish Supreme Court 1987: §12).

On 29 July 1982, Judge Blayney found in favour of the Webbs and on 10 December he held that the Webbs should either receive the hoard or its value, less the cost of conservation, i.e. £5,510,200 (Bourke 1990: 161). This ruling caused serious consternation in the archaeological community who envisaged all-out looting of monuments regardless of their supposed standard of protection (Gosling 1987: 25). Indeed, incidents of interference with sites did sharply increase in the immediate aftermath (Ryan 1990: 154).

The State had little choice but to appeal the ruling in the Supreme Court in 1987. While the original ruling had assumed the Webbs' ownership of the hoard, the Supreme court declared that it was owned by the State (Irish Supreme Court 1987: §26) on the basis that the items had been illegally recovered from protected land (the High Court had already recognised that the landowners had not given permission to search in the area of the church and digging at the site required an excavation licence under the National Monuments Act 1930) (Ryan 1990: 153). Both court rulings agreed that any royal prerogative, like Treasure Trove, had not automatically transferred to the Constitution of the Irish Free State and thence to the 1937 Constitution. However, the Supreme Court introduced a new concept. The Chief Justice, Mr Justice Finlay, judged that 'a necessary ingredient of sovereignty in a modern state... is and should be ownership by the state of objects which constitute antiquities of importance which are discovered and which have no known owner'. He specified that this should apply to 'all articles of archaeological, historical, antiquarian or cultural value or interest', implicit in which is the inclusion of artefacts other than those of precious metals previously covered by Treasure Trove (Anon 1988b; Bourke 1990: 161; Irish Supreme Court 1987: §81).

Chief Justice Finlay's ruling also addressed the question of rewarding finders of antiquities. In the case of the Webbs it was acknowledged that the original transaction (i.e. when Mr Webb handed the hoard over to the director of the National Museum of Ireland and was assured that he would be 'treated honourably') took place only because of the understanding of a reasonable monetary reward (Irish Supreme Court 1987: §71). The Webbs, father and son, received a reward of £25,000 each (Irish Supreme Court 1987: §78). The Chief Justice also ruled that it was 'desirable to have a system of reward so as to encourage finders to deliver up articles or items so found', however this must be 'counterbalanced by penalties applicable to improper excavation ... or their concealment when found' (Irish Supreme Court 1987: §81).

Apart from the fate of the Derrynaflan hoard itself (it is on permanent display in the National Museum of Ireland's Treasury), this case obviously had wider implications – not least in highlighting the inadequacy of current legislation, something noted in the Supreme Court ruling (e.g. Irish Supreme Court 1987: §80 and §98).

Efforts to update and rewrite the legislation had been ongoing for a number of years at this stage and this case happened in time to influence the National Monuments (Amendment) Act of 1987. The Amendment dealt with many of these issues, including the obligation on finders to report discoveries to the Gardaí or National Museum of Ireland and increased penalties for the improper use of metal detectors. It is now an offence not only to use a metal detector to search for archaeological objects without a licence, but also to be in possession of a detection device on an archaeological monument (Bourke 1990:164; Gosling 1987: 23). Another amendment in 1994 further specified that the State owned all archaeological objects regardless of their find circumstances and made it an offence to withhold information about discoveries or to trade unreported antiquities (Anon. 1994: 5). The penalty for violating the Act was upgraded to a more discouraging fine of up to £50,000 or five years in prison (National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994: Section 13).[2] That said, such penalties are rarely reported on in the press or elsewhere.

Treasure today

The absence of 'treasure' legislation in the Republic of Ireland is significant (as is the inclusion of all objects of archaeological interest, regardless of composition and therefore intrinsic value, under the protections of the National Monuments Act). It does not however mean that the problem of treasure-hunting has been diminished. Indeed, evidence would suggest that the problem of illegal metal-detecting and 'night-hawking' is worse than ever (Myles 2014). Specifically, this activity is fuelled by access to information and equipment online and, one could argue, normalised by the pervasive nature of British media in Ireland in the form of television, social media and newspaper media. This is because awareness that the legal situation in Ireland is strikingly different from that in the UK when it comes to metal detecting and excavation,

[2] All relevant Acts and Amendments can be read in full at www.irishstatutebook.ie

Figure 4: Information leaflet outlining the legislation around metal detecting in the Republic of Ireland and the reasons behind it; produced by the National Monuments Service and National Museum of Ireland

for example, is often lacking in public knowledge and rarely highlighted in the media.

Ministerial guidelines were produced in 2013 (Anon. 2013) and the National Museum of Ireland and the National Monuments Service have jointly produced guides to the law which are available as a leaflet and online, the latter form in particular are frequently used and shared via social media (National Museum of Ireland 2019; Figure 4). Nonetheless, there are those who see alternative interpretations to the text of the National Monuments Act that, in their eyes, allows them to continue with their hobby (Myles 2014).

Occasional discoveries that have 'made the news' are used as an opportunity to remind the public of the legal situation and the role of the Museum as the national repository (for example the accidental discovery of four large Bronze Age gold rings at Tullydonnell, County Donegal during the digging of a drain in 2018 (e.g. Cullen 2018)). However, opportunities have also been missed (Tierney this volume) and a much wider campaign is required to combat a growing lobby in favour of relaxation of the legislation around metal detecting for archaeological material (Myles 2014).

The following comment made by Nick Brannon, former Senior Inspector of Historic Monuments with the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland in 1988, still resonates: 'In Ireland, dialogue between field archaeologists and treasure-hunters is rare. The growing legacy of sites damaged by metal-detector users, of unknown and unrecorded spoils looted, is more of a barrier than a spur towards compromise' (Brannon 1988: 55). It should be noted here that archaeological legislation in Northern Ireland (Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995) has more provision than in elsewhere in the UK, such as the requirement for a licence to search for archaeological material anywhere if that search involves disturbing the ground (Department for Communities (N.I.) n.d.). (Also, while the UK situation has a more casual legal attitude, there are ongoing and increased efforts at developing relationships between metal-detector users and archaeologists).

A positive change in the intervening decades is the belated development of community and public archaeology. The strict legal impediments to excavation and artefact collection had resulted in a view that the general public simply could not (easily) get involved. However, in the last decade or so there has been a massive increase in community based archaeology projects all over the country, giving people the opportunity to get involved and giving the archaeologists the opportunity to communicate, teach and inform (Baker 2020; Doyle 2020; Duffy 2020). As Brannon (1988: 56) also said: 'It is a task for archaeologists, with the public's help, to dissuade (metal detectorists) from (knowingly committing crimes)'. He acknowledged the existence of detectorists who apply research and fieldwork to their activities and this is still the case, however, anecdotal evidence suggests that these are in the minority. There has been growing use of this technology in mainstream archaeological work, particularly in the area of battlefield archaeology (O'Flaherty *et al.* 2018; O'Keeffe and Shiels 2008: 12), but this must not be confused with the hobby of metal detecting. Whatever individual opinions may be about whether it should be possible to treasure-hunt, or to keep objects inadvertently found on their own or someone else's property, the fact is that they cannot legally do so.

Conclusion

The situation in Ireland contrasts somewhat to that in England and Wales. The existence of compulsory reporting of any archaeological material, including human remains, means that there is no need to discern the difference between a single find, a hoard or grave-goods. While the National Museum of Ireland may give a reward for reporting a discovery, there is no sense of finders being 'paid' for the artefact recovery. Reporting is considered a civic duty – and this is perhaps where the Irish relationship to 'treasure' is best explained. Archaeological artefacts are looked on ideally as 'national treasures' rather than as 'valuables' and 'rarities'; they are cultural assets that are a part of the national identity and a distinctive and highly valued history. The absence of a requirement to have a monetary value placed on them, as for declared treasure in the UK, prevents the Museum from apparently having to veer from that message.

New legislation to replace the National Monuments Act is currently at an advanced stage. Growing appreciation of the importance of heritage in the areas of education, tourism, the economy, wellbeing (of individuals and communities) and more will hopefully ensure continued and improved levels of protection and financial supports. Historically, the Irish approach to archaeological heritage (both artefacts and monuments, as discussed in relation to folklore above) might at a glance appear to have been based on superstition, but from an early stage this was also tied up with pride, identity and memory and there is now growing appreciation based on increased public participation, awareness and support.

This reflection began with an explanation of the Irish phrase '*stór mo chroí*', 'treasure of my heart'. A view that is perhaps a little sentimental (or even cheesy), but it is hoped that this reflection has shown that the Irish relationship with treasure has always been more than simply monetary and it may serve to remind us that perhaps our archaeological treasures are safer when considered something to be kept close to our hearts rather than in our pockets?

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From Golden Eggs to Trampled Treasure: the 2019 Cadbury Chocolate Scandal

Aisling E.P. Tierney

This chapter outlines what happens when chocolate marketing campaigns are conducted without ethical oversight, specifically regarding the protections to our shared cultural heritage. Cadbury's ill-conceived 2019 'Freddo's Treasure' advertising campaign riled the heritage community, the press and the public alike, resulting in a backlash against the company. The discussion will first present the context of the international chocolate industry and its symbolic relationship with treasure. Cadbury's history of treasure-related scandal is then explained alongside the heritage community's responses to the incidents. The discussion then moves to a first-person narrative account of the author's experience of exposing the 2019 Cadbury scandal. This is further contextualised with respect to the heritage sector's participation in public-facing discourse, both in traditional media venues and through social media. Finally, critical reflections on how the heritage industry can protect its own community against public backlash are presented with reference to the responsibilities and accountability of leadership in the sector. These final provocations demand introspective considerations of how heritage sector leaders can develop structures and policies that benefit the communities of practice in their care.

Introduction

The history of chocolate began with Mesoamerican cultivation of cacao. The Olmec, Pueblo, Maya and Aztec peoples processed cacao pods to make drinks and incorporated these beverages into ritual practice, for both physical and spiritual sustenance (McNeil 2009). From the 16th century, European explorers, conquerors and settlers encountered cocao. Ultimately, the cocoa bean travelled across the Atlantic and was introduced into European and African nations. As demand grew, so did the need for wage and slave labour for cultivation, alongside improved efficiencies for production on European-owned plantations (Clarence-Smith 1995). In the early 19th century, chocolate as we know it today was born when 'Dutch cocoa' was created by chemist Coenraad van Houten, who increased its sweetness and processed it into solid bars (Frydenborg 2015: 81–82, 85). From processing to manufacturing, modern chocolate making is now considered a complex science (Beckett 2008). What was once a luxury reserved for the wealthy, chocolate is now mass produced and marketed to customers across socio-economic boundaries.

The chocolate industry continues to be a hub of international innovation, intrigue and controversy. The majority of cocoa farming takes place in West African nations who export across the world, enduring the whims of global price fluctuations. In recent decades, the industry has been strongly criticised for its use of palm oil, non-recyclable packaging, and its contribution to obesity (e.g. Allione *et al.* 2011; Dauvergne 2018; Farhat *et al.* 2014). Most of the industry relies on exploitative labour practices that strain local environments through deforestation and contributes to global carbon pollution from its vast transportation network (e.g. Ingram and Chocoloney 2015; Kroeger *et al.* 2017). Most concerning, it still benefits from the child labour that it has promised to end (Bhavnani and Schneider 2015; Panjabi 2008; Schrage and Ewing 2005). Despite such shocking issues, this unsustainable commodity is in constant and ever-growing demand (Poelmans and Rousseau 2016; Squicciarini and Swinnen 2016). The industry has responded through the creation of oversight committees, ethical foundations and fair-trade promises, including the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI), the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF), and the establishment of the Consultative Board on the World Cocoa Economy by the International Cocoa Organization (see Cappelle 2009; Schrage and Ewing 2005). Organisations outside the cocoa industry also contribute to alleviating these issues (e.g. the Fairtrade Foundation), though typically these affiliations are optional commitments (see Tallontire 2006).

Chocolate remains evocative and provocative in the public imagination. Cultural symbols are leveraged by chocolatiers at times of celebration (e.g. at Halloween, see Kawash 2010). For many cultures, romantic gestures include the gift of chocolate. Valentine's Day marketing places emphasis on chocolate as a sensual delight for couples (Butler 2018). In this realm of romance, chocolate can be an aphrodisiac, a prelude to future sensual encounters, or even form part of physical intimacy (e.g. with chocolate body paint). Films such as 'Chocolat' (2000) take this convention further through its protagonist chocolatier Vianne Rocher who 'prescribes' chocolates to the men and women of her local community, causing consumers to relinquish their reservations and engage in carnal pleasures. Here, chocolate is a panacea to conservative constraint.

Perhaps the most famous fictional chocolatier is Willy Wonka. Roald Dahl's character in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964) invited children across the globe to search for golden tickets to gain entry to his secretive factory wherein rivers of chocolate flow and magical geese lay golden eggs. Chocolate firms have drawn from this iconographic source through countless chocolate and gold-themed competitions ever since. The story also pays homage to the chocolate industry's secretive nature regarding manufacturing and questionable labour practices (Fromer 2011). Even in this children's tome, the darker side of chocolate is exposed including the moralities of over-consumption and capitalistic greed.

The iconography of chocolate plays with the notion of treasure. From chocolate coins to Easter egg hunts, chocolate is imbued with religious symbolism and quests for desirable objects. The egg hunt appears to have been introduced first to the USA in the 1890s and thereafter 'Americanised' and diffused within a broad spectrum of social demographics (Barnett 1949: 65, 69; Schmidt 1994). Today, chocolate Easter eggs and bunnies form part of mass-consumerist marketing plans that exist in both religious and secular gift-giving settings (see Kay 2019). Whereas in religious settings Easter concerns the quest for spiritual enlightenment, through the eternal-life-symbolising egg, the Easter egg hunt now places a chocolate treat as the *treasured* goal. From the 19th century, chocolate coins feature in Jewish Hanukkah celebrations, replacing real coins from earlier periods (Prichep 2014). Concurrently, chocolate coins are also used often, but not always, as part of pirate-treasure-themed iconographic frameworks that perhaps echoes, more obviously, the idea of a hunt for treasure seen with Easter egg hunts (see Rennie 2013: 138–177). From Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1882) to Edgar Allan Poe's *The Gold-Bug* (1843) and James Matthew Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1904), pirates and treasure chests formed an enduring stalwart in fiction. Cinema capitalised on this thematic popularity through the 20th century, including direct film versions of earlier plays and novels. Original works were also produced, such as *Captain Blood* (1935), *The Buccaneer* (1958) and the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise from 2013 (based on a Disneyland California theme park attraction). In the late 20th century, treasure hunting became perceived as accessible (e.g. through metal detecting), family friendly and something that served as entertainment in itself (Dillenger 2012: 188). The mass-production and mass-consumerism of chocolate reflect such themes drawn from popular culture, resulting in the creation of treasure-themed chocolate treats. Within this frame of reference, chocolate is associated with the visual lexicon of treasure, another family-friendly product that embodies treasure and is itself treasured.

For the general public, chocolate is part of gift-giving traditions, festive children's treats, and adult indulgence. But, 'big chocolate' is far from such altruistic, personal or benign sentiments. The global chocolate industry is complicit in unethical practice that affects multiple nations. The realities of this industrial juggernaut are at odds with public perceptions and receptions of chocolate, making any criticism of the industry unpalatable for public consumption (see Chatterjee and Elias 2007; Collier 2010; Lopes 2016; Rowlinson and Hassard 1993; Rowlinson 2002). It is in this context of 'big chocolate' and powerful industry that I reflect on one ill-considered marketing campaign which built upon the treasure-seeking theme of chocolate in the popular imagination that placed heritage in the UK and Ireland at risk.

This story began as a personal revelation and evolved into a unified call for action across social media, thereafter covered by international press. The ensuing controversy, namely caused by a Cadbury 2019 marketing campaign aimed at children, prompts archaeologists and our colleagues in other areas of heritage to reflect on how to confront such scandals. I consider how *we*, the heritage community in its widest sense, can reflect on how we respond to frame and resolve such issues.

Cadbury heritage scandal(s)

Before we understand what happened in 2019, we need to reflect on a similar Cadbury scandal from 1984. The public were invited to purchase Don Shaw's *Cadbury's Conundrums* (1984) book, which was an integral part of 'The Cadbury's creme egg mystery' advertising campaign created by Triangle Communications. Once deciphered correctly, the book's cryptic clues led treasure hunters to certificates buried in caskets across the British Isles that could be exchanged for one of twelve decorated 22-carat gold eggs. The response from the public was both overwhelming and disastrous. Private property, cemeteries and protected historic sites were raided and damaged, causing Cadbury to end the competition prematurely (Cook 2012).

Cadbury's egg hunt followed a tumultuous period between metal-detectors and archaeologists. The dawn of the 1980s saw the creation of the *STOP: Campaign against Treasure Hunting* that brought together seven heritage organisations, including the Council for British Archaeology (CBA), to tackle issues around metal detecting (Thomas 2011: 47). This campaign countered efforts by another media-savvy organisation, the *Detector Information Group* (DIG) who successfully lobbied their position (Thomas 2011: 49). Despite some contemporaneous fieldwork collaborations, a bitter divide between legitimised archaeology and hobbyist metal detectoring emerged. Shortly after these campaigns began to wane, Tom Hassall, then president of CBA, wrote a public letter to *The Times* highlighting damage to several archaeological sites caused by the Cadbury mystery egg hunt, noting 'These sites are all scheduled ancient monuments whose protection is fragile at the best of times' (Hassall 1984: 13). Hassall chastised the ambiguity of the clues which resulted in members of the public venturing into protected sites. Furthermore, he cautioned that the campaign could lead to a long-term change in attitudes to the detriment of archaeological site preservation. His plea to Cadbury ends with 'Is it too much to hope that in future the promoters of such campaigns will not thoughtlessly let loose this form of unwarranted attack on our past?'.

In 2019, Hassall's question was answered. Yet again, Cadbury ignored heritage protection in its chocolate-marketing campaign. Despite causing a huge scandal in the 1980s, Cadbury appeared not to have learned any lessons about linking chocolate to the concept of treasure in a way that might avoid endangering archaeological sites. Fortuitously, Cadbury's most recent ill-advised campaign was uncovered before it resulted in damage to any archaeological sites.

In March of 2019, my partner returned from a trip to the shops with a small chocolate treat, a sweet surprise gifted for no particular reason. Upon opening the purple plastic Freddo's Treasure box, I observed a QR code printed on the golden foil surface. I recalled that I wanted to test my new phone's QR code reader and took the opportunity in the moment. My phone launched a browser link to the now defunct https://treasures.cadbury.co.uk/ site. At the top of the page the header text read 'Cadbury Treasure Island' set on an antique map of the British Isles. The subheader text continued with:

> Go on a real treasure hunting adventure / There's plenty of real treasure out there still to be discovered. So, what are you waiting for? Explore the UK's top treasure hotspots and see the riches already discovered on display at national sites.

Six 'Undiscovered Treasure' sites in England, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland were listed. This section of the website text is quoted here in full (*verbatim*):

- Hunt for precious rings in Fermanagh. Recently discovered deep in a bog in County Fermanagh a priceless jewel laid dormant for 3,000 years. Are you willing to get your hands dirty to discover more?

- Get your hands on gold in Mooghaun Fort. Gold ingots were unearthed 3-feet underground in Rockcorry, Mooghaun. The treasures have been valued to be worth €150 million... Probably, worth a quick check.

- Mine for Saxon gold in Chelmsford, Essex. Over 1,500 years ago, an Anglo-Saxon King buried his gold in a field in Chelmsford. Now, 1,500 years later, the treasure's fair game.

- Uncover underwater shipwrecks in Devon. A 200-year-old shipwreck emerges at low tide in the Northam Burrows. It once carried precious cargo. Who knows what else might washup from the deep.

- Dig up Viking Silver on the River Ribble. The Cuerdale Hoard is one of the largest Viking silver hoards ever to be discovered. With over 8,600 pieces of treasure unearthed, there could have been some that was overlooked.

- Unearth the fortunes of Rome in Somerset. Over 52,000 gold and silver coins were discovered by a metal detectorist in Frome, Somerset. So, grab your metal detector and go hunting for Roman riches!

Directions on what members of the public should do at the listed historic sites is unambiguous. Billed as Cadbury Dairy Milk's 'biggest launch of 2019', the £6 million campaign was designed to draw on pirate motifs such as treasure chests and pirate ships, and provide inspiration for family days out (Dillon 2019). Cadbury framed this campaign as a treasure-hunting opportunity, encouraging the public to investigate sites known to have contained artefacts designated as holding a high monetary value (i.e. treasure), and promoting the thrill of adventure and discovery paralleling aforementioned Easter egg hunting practices.

Aside from the lack of archaeological contextualisation, following the published directions could lead consumers to breaking the law. No mention is made of the Portable Antiquities Scheme, the Treasure Act (1996), the Northern Irish Historic Monuments and Archaeology Order (1995), Scottish portable antiquities and Treasure Trove systems, or the National Monuments Act (1930 and subsequent amendments) or licensing requirements for any archaeological work in Ireland. Neither guidance on how to explore responsibly nor consideration of health and safety are included. These glaring omissions are particularly worrisome in the context of dangerous bog, river and tidal sites, which pose safety issues. In essence, Cadbury prompted families to conduct potentially illegal archaeological investigations without any guidance or due diligence for their protection. Thus, the entire campaign appears to breach the UK Advertising Standards Agency's (ASA) requirement for social responsibility, rules that demand advertising materials not condone or encourage unsafe, irresponsible or illegal acts (ASA 2018).

Another section of the website entitled 'Discovered Treasure' linked to museum holdings of gold and silver objects in the British Museum, the Yorkshire Museum, Norwich Castle, the Birmingham Museum, the National Museum of Ireland, and the Ulster Museum. At the time, none of the heritage organisations named could confirm that they were made aware or consulted on the marketing campaign.

Receptions

After reviewing the 'Cadbury Treasure Island' webpage, I shared screenshots and reflections on my personal Facebook page and through several archaeological-interest groups on the platform. Later, I shared similar, if forthright, thoughts via Twitter (original tweet: https://twitter.com/IrishAshyT/status/1106895450139971584?s=20). This personal dissemination resulted in a huge response from the heritage community. The reaction was virtually unanimous in its condemnation of the Cadbury campaign, with similar critiques to those outlined above. Many drew attention to several inaccuracies on the webpage (such as typos and identification errors). Following engagement from the heritage community, the observations were noticed by a wider public audience and the press.

As the story gathered momentum, David Connolly who operates the BAJR (British Archaeology Jobs and Resources) range of online platforms requested that I write a short informative piece in response to the story (see Tierney 2019). Mr Connolly noted that a prompt archaeological response to the issue, removed from my personal social media accounts, would provide a more formal reference point for those inquiring about the issue. Concurrently, I was contacted by local BBC news services. In less than 48 hours, several national news services requested interviews for print and radio coverage (e.g. BBC England 2019; Brockwell 2019; Kavanagh 2019). In the days that followed, international press covered the story (e.g. Hsu 2019 writing for the *New York Times*). Other members of the heritage community who gathered momentum for the story using their social media platforms, notably via Twitter, were also interviewed and quoted by news providers.

Cadbury's campaign included both the UK and Ireland but the response from the Irish heritage community was muted compared to the wide scale coverage in the UK. Of the major daily newspapers across Ireland, only the *Irish Independent* covered the story through content provided via the Associated Press (Gammie 2019). The story was reported in a similar manner to the UK stories, with reference to the UK Heritage Minister rather than through responses from Irish officials or heritage bodies and made no mention of the specific differences in heritage protections in Ireland. Some heritage professionals in Ireland tweeted on the issue, such as the former Keeper of Irish Antiquities in the National Museum of Ireland (Cahill 2019). The lack of domestic engagement on the matter was noted by the editor of *Archaeology Ireland* magazine who lamented the lost opportunity to use the story to raise awareness of heritage protection issues with the public (Greene 2019: 3).

In the UK, communications from heritage professionals were largely unified, sharing the same message regardless of who delivered it: that Cadbury was culpable for encouraging the public to dig up archaeological sites, without any consideration for their safety or the protection of our shared archaeological heritage. National organisations became vocally engaged with live discussions online. This included the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, the National Trust, the CBA, the Young Archaeologists' Club, and the Metal Detectives Group. Michael Ellis (2019), then Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, also drew attention to the Treasure Act and the risk to heritage. Further afield, organisations outside of Ireland and the UK vocalised their support, such as the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA 2019).

Following pressure from the UK press, Cadbury replied to the issue two days after it was initially notified of concerns on 16 March 2019. Its responses were generic online replies, copied verbatim to commenters:

> We do not condone the breaking of regulations regarding the discovery of new archaeological artefacts & are updating our site to make this clear. Our intention was never to encourage breaking of these rules & we're grateful it was brought to our attention. (Cadbury 2019)

Cadbury's statement(s) focused on the legal aspect at the centre of the issue. No detailed response to the heritage community's concerns were made. Specifically, artefacts were mentioned, but not the risk posed to archaeological sites. Health and safety risks were not addressed. The wording carefully referred to *regulations* and *rules*, rather than referring to breaking the *law*.

Public engagement and public embattlement

Several challenges emerged from the 'Twitter-storm' and 'media-storm' that followed my initial exposure of the 2019 Cadbury treasure scandal. At first, my approach was to share my concerns with a community of like-minded people, an approach typically employed by social media users. I wanted to gauge my judgement from peers and validate my reaction to the Cadbury campaign. After flagging the issue and reviewing communications from senior members of the community, I reflected that a more formalised approach was also needed, hence my haste in writing the short piece for BAJR.

Once my opinions were made public on social media platforms, I received a barrage of replies to my original tweet. The vast majority of these were supportive comments, including many from the heritage community. However, I also received a significant volume of negative troll comments that were both defamatory and cruel.[1] One stated that I was an enemy of the UK and using the platform to attack UK traditions. Several attacked my integrity, claiming that I was a self-righteous moralising 'snowflake', comically overreacting for attention. Some claimed I was out to destroy UK business, and that I 'spread misery and pain'. Other comments were more vulgar.[2]

Critical comments also emerged from within the heritage community. Typically, these took the form of a person fixated on a singular topic enraged that the Cadbury scandal was detracting attention from their topic of preference. Here, I was faced with frequent rhetorical whataboutism: chastised for seeing success in the community's shared voice rally against the Cadbury campaign, and for not tackling other major issues in the industry dating back decades before I was born. These unrealistic expectations and demands were typically accusatory and aggressively framed.

At the time of the Cadbury scandal, Brexit politics were in the public consciousness and my Twitter profile contained an EU flag. It is likely that many of the nationalistic and xenophobic comments I received stemmed from the hate speech common to the platform (e.g. Miller *et al.* 2016) alongside my Irish ethnicity, palpably evident in my name and Twitter handle. Another likely contributing factor to the range of vitriolic trolling I received stems from misogynistic attitudes that have become part of the fabric of social media discourse (see Cole 2015; Jane 2016; Olson and LaPoe 2017).

Such observations and experiences are common to the heritage community, both online and offline (on examples of and preventative measures against harassment in archaeology, see Hawkins and Rees 2018; Meyers *et al.* 2018; Wade 2019). Cyberbullying and other forms of harassment are well documented across disciplines, including archaeology (e.g. Cook and Compton 2018: 39–40; Perry, Shipley and Osborne 2015; Richardson 2018: 66–67; Walker 2014). Recent incidents, however, demonstrate that further culture change is needed. For example, the important work of Danielle Bradford who campaigns against sexual harassment, assault and rape, was greeted at a 2019 CBA event with ridicule by some members of the audience. This behaviour was immediately rebuked by the CBA and others present, and yet Bradford continues to experience both online and offline abuse. The CBA's then Executive Director,

[1] An internet troll is a common informal phrase used, particularly on social media platforms, to describe an internet user who purposely upsets other users and often seeks to instigate arguments.

[2] Readers are welcome to review the thread of comments on my original Twitter post, but I purposefully elect to not directly link to the abusive posts in defiance of the trolls' desire for attention and as an act of self-respect to not re-expose myself to their abuse.

Dr Mike Heyworth, responded by stating that 'Archaeology matters – it should be accessible and safe for everybody', drawing attention to the CBA's Code of Conduct (Heyworth 2019). Similar guides are issued by most archaeological organisations and a growing body of fieldwork projects; however, they remain largely optional and unenforceable.

Dealing with social media trolls is unpleasant, but manipulations or attacks by professional journalists can undermine individuals' professional standing. In the case of then-PhD candidate Lisa Hill, the national press attacked her doctoral thesis and its fieldwork on a disused 1970s campsite, obfuscating Hill's overarching aims to 'reflect on the nature of archaeological practice' (Hill 2012: 253). Away from social media platforms, my engagement with journalists was mostly positive, featuring only one incident of journalistic unprofessionalism. On one BBC regional radio show, the presenter welcomed me to the 'archaeologists versus metal detectorists' debate, a misrepresentation that I swiftly corrected off-air. While on live broadcast, the presenter repeatedly tried to reframe the discussion away from Cadbury's accountability in favour of coercive attempts to force me to blame metal detectorists. I countered by explaining that lawful detectorists, such as the ones I have worked with on research excavations, are not the problem. In an effort to unsettle me and provoke an emotional outburst, she accused me of being angry. At the end of the interview, I was kept on hold for a few moments, allowing me to hear their next interviewee, a metal detectorist who had recently uncovered a hoard of Roman coins. It was apparent that the host had tried to cultivate a heated 'us versus them' debate between myself and the subsequent interviewee. I was only then aware that a different response on my part could have jeopardised the unified front presented by the heritage and archaeology community and could have tarnished my professional reputation. In this instance, I was able to draw on years of experience on radio and avoided a break in my composure despite the taxing efforts of the host.

Archaeologists are formally and informally expected to engage in public discourse. There is a perception that such engagement is for the common good and that it embodies a moral responsibility. Yet, such public advocacy for our shared cultural heritage is not without personal and professional risk. Anyone wishing to engage on public forums exposes themselves to the potential risks detailed above. The likelihood of these risks increases depending on demographics (e.g. ethnicity, gender). Currently, these risks are rarely taught formally so that they are either learned directly from lived experience or informally shared by others. In practice, social media-based public engagement (scientific communications) are fraught with real risk and little systemic protections to the individual or repercussions for the perpetrator(s).

Reflections on treasure and public perceptions

Cadbury's 2019 'Freddo's Treasure' £6 million campaign employed treasure maps, treasure chests, and themes of pirate gold. The campaign encouraged potential illegal looting of archaeological sites, flouted health and safety sensibilities, and defied UK Advertising Standards Agency regulations. Archaeologists are not similarly armed with rich resources to combat public campaigns like this. Instead, we have shared digital platforms that can be exploited to communicate against such reckless efforts, limited by our collective standings on social media platforms and the whims of journalists to appropriately interrogate the issue. The Cadbury scandal draws attention to the problematics of public understandings of what is meant by treasure, treasure hunting, and archaeology, alongside issues of social media discourses and power dynamics that facilitate online abuse. It also highlights the means by which archaeologists and other heritage professionals engage with social media to flag such issues, and the imperative to address the negative implications of this form of public engagement (see Perry 2014).

This story demonstrates the conflation of treasure and archaeology where the terms are frequently used interchangeably across social media posts and in journalistic outputs alike. Critical thinking of how we understand the value of all heritage, material culture, and archaeology, is often supplanted by an object's monetary value, particularly with regard to gold, silver and other prestige items. For example, a frequent question I received on radio concerned 'the best object I ever excavated' with further prompts to specify gold and treasure, seen as superior to other forms of archaeological finds and contexts. The radio hosts were left deflated when I mentioned built heritage surveys or decorated pottery sherds!

Likewise, there are clear misunderstandings of the place of metal detecting in heritage: its lawful practice by individuals and groups who follow (UK) national guidance and its embedded use within research excavations are overlooked in favour of an 'us versus them' combative dialogue with archaeologists. This demonstrates a disrespect towards the diversity and intentions of metal detectorists. It situates all practitioners together without distinguishing those who are law abiding and respectful of heritage, from those who loot and nighthawk. Likewise, it silences the contribution of metal detectorists to archaeological knowledge and research.

By pooling our voices, change was made in this singular case and Cadbury removed their website within two days. But what about the next succession of scandals and the generations of heritage professionals who follow? What of the risks that we expose ourselves to, without the cushion of corporate protections such as financial and legal resources? And what is missing from our disciplinary culture that still facilitates harassment from within our own community? None of these questions have easy answers. Both top-down and bottom-up approaches are needed to remedy these issues for long-term success. The 2019 Cadbury scandal positively demonstrates the power of bottom-up crowd-swell responses from across the heritage community, but it also exposes embedded top-down flaws in the systems and hierarchies of the heritage sector.

Education, outreach, social media and learning roles within the heritage sector are, for the most part, low paid or voluntary positions (see Holmes 2005; Museums Association 2017; Shaw 1994). If the value of a role is directly correlated to its salary, what does this say about the function and public service of these positions? For example, the average salaries of museum staff in these posts are lower than building management and technicians, fundraising and marketing staff, conservators, curators and collections managers (Museums Association 2017: 16, 18, 20, 22, 24). Additionally, such roles are often omitted entirely from sector salary interrogation (e.g. the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists, see Geary 2010). If a reply to the Cadbury scandal demands more public education and public engagement, we should also ask who are these practitioners, how respected are they, and how much do we invest to support their education and engagement efforts?

Given that most museums, commercial organisations, archives, and academic bodies now operate social media channels, and many expect their employees to maintain engaged social media presence, it is now incumbent of these institutions to provide training and support mechanisms for staff, students and volunteers who use these platforms. Likewise, university students and others who may engage with the media in their future careers should receive training on how to be articulate and assertive, while protecting themselves from bad actors. Together, such provisions will promote greater confidence in handling social media entanglements and holding big corporations to account by a more diffused sector of the disciplinary populace, so that media engagement is no longer the preserve of those with high appointments. This could create a more democratic and contemporary response to new media, making our engagement more relatable to the public. Codes of conduct and anti-harassment documentation marks a recent positive change but has not solved the continued instances of bullying and sexual harassment in archaeology, including on social media channels. It may be better to make these documents a normal part of fieldwork, commercial and academic archaeological practice so that they move away from being an optional aspect of our work and become part of standard expectations. Companies and organisations can invest more in training and oversight on these issues too, making training compulsory and facilitating reporting and whistleblowing that protects those most at risk, the victims.

Generally, the whole heritage sector is overly dependent on volunteer labour. Moreover, the sector underpays its staff in comparison to other sectors, and suffers from systemic inequalities, such as the gender pay gap and low diversity in staffing (Westermann *et al.* 2019). These inequalities and pressures bleed into all aspects of heritage organisations, including engagement with social media platforms. As discussed above, women and people of colour are more exposed to abuse online, at the same time as experiencing systemic inequalities in their workplaces. Therefore, in all efforts to redress problematics within the heritage sector, discourse and responses should also include tactics that resolve such systemic issues, including all forms of xenophobia and socio-cultural intolerance. In the case of the 2019 Cadbury scandal, my own experiences of harassment may have been exacerbated by my gender and ethnicity, yet I was fortunate that the heritage community offered outpourings of support and rallied against such attacks. This is not always the case, however, and there are at present no formal routes available to request support from sector leaders.

Where does the responsibility of heritage professionals end and culpability start for others? When the public responds in a way that is counter to our educational and outreach efforts, it is easy to take that as a personal failing of our sector, leading us to question how we can do more to educate better. Yet, at a certain point, we must accept that without significant investment and holistic reframing of our efforts, this is as good as it gets for public receptions, perceptions and reflections of heritage. The ebb and flow of staffing and funding priorities results in inconsistent strengths in public messaging. Additionally, researchers do not fully engage with best practice in how they communicate with the public by default, due to the low priority placed on this aspect of research outputs by both researchers and research bodies alike (Clark 2014; National Co-Ordinating Centre for Public Engagement 2016).

We should also ask who makes decisions at the top of our organisations to allow negative experiences, exploitation and inequalities to continue. For example, in June 2020, Doug Gurr was appointed director of the Natural History Museum (Bakare 2020). The appointment follows a nine-year stint as development director at Amazon, a company heavily criticised for its exploitative labour practices and 'inhumane conditions', anti-competitive practices, tax avoidance, amongst other serious problems (Armstrong 2019; Dziez 2019; European Commission 2019). Here, the question of *ethical* suitability for the role of museum director becomes more concerning as a major part of Gurr's role is to tackle repatriation of questionably or illegally acquired museum holdings: how can we truly have confidence in his ability to ethically action this given his past inability to resolve Amazon's ongoing systemic labour and legal issues? His appointment seems positioned to address financial concerns for the museum over and above other considerations. This is just one stark example that demands critical questioning of how capitalistic goals are prioritised within public services.

As a sector, we (ideologically) prioritise the public good of our work but this is not a one-way stream of effort. We must also demand appropriate funding, salaries, and top to bottom systems and policies that support these efforts, rather than laying high expectations at the feet of underpaid staff or volunteers to achieve more with less. Thus, the call to action demands that we challenge the ideology of free-market capitalism that frames every aspect of how our modern heritage sector operates. This neoliberalism places heritage at the centre of an exploitable resource strategy that at once erodes centralised funding for heritage, demands more from the very institutions it impoverishes, all the while wrestling for socio-political control of the codification and legitimisation of how we understand the past. Such grievances are, of course, far beyond the scope of this chapter.

Conclusion

The Cadbury 2019 scandal demonstrates the power of the collective voice of the heritage community to hold a large corporate entity to account. It also exposes misunderstandings and misrepresentations of metal detecting, archaeology, and the relative value placed on different categories of material culture. Most disappointingly, it highlights how the same well-resourced company can repeat mistakes from its history that jeopardise archaeological protection without any subsequent remedial efforts to prevent the issue in future. This chapter presents the fallout from one ill-judged treasure-themed campaign, but also touches on wider corporate social responsibility of 'big chocolate' and how media platforms can serve as tools of torment, education, public engagement, and crowd-sourced calls to action.

When placed alongside the chocolate industry's continued industrial-scale environmental damage and exploitative labour practices, threatening archaeological sites is perhaps a diminished concern. Yet, the 2019 Cadbury scandal serves as a vehicle that forces us to pause and reflect on what these companies represent, who and what they answer to, and if consumers can trust that multinational conglomerates have the public's best interest at heart. Holding such companies to account when they make mistakes, in this case relating to archaeology, is an ethical obligation born from a shared commitment to our shared heritage, though it is not without personal risk.

The 2019 Cadbury case offers an opportunity for archaeologists and the heritage community at large to revisit public engagement on social media platforms and consider how we encourage those that follow us to use these resources. We have a duty of care to protect ourselves and our shared heritage, to share knowledge and advise on issues as they arise. But we also must be kind to ourselves and the generations that follow and take steps to protect our mental wellbeing from harassment and trolling, and from the negative consequences of neoliberalism and systemic inequalities. It is therefore incumbent on sector leaders to provide robust facilities to support heritage practitioners who engage in public discourse. Finding a balance between public-facing action and self-care is essential for the discipline as social media has become an integral part of public life. As this story proves, the collective voice of archaeologists, museum professionals, archivists, metal detectorists, historians and more has much to offer public discourse outside the confines of any single disciplinary boundary.

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A National Strategy for Treasure?

an interview with Gail Boyle

Building upon her keynote presentation at The Public Archaeology of Treasure 5th University of Chester Archaeology Student Conference hosted by the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, on 31 January 2020, Gail Boyle (GB), Senior Curator (Archaeology and World Cultures) with Bristol Museums, reflects on her career as a museum archaeologist and her experiences of working with treasure. She explores relationships between museums and finders, the valuation process, as well as issues surrounding museum display. Throughout, GB's focus is upon the future, and she concludes by identifying key recommendations for a national strategy for museums to respond to current challenges in handling treasure from discovery to curation. The interview was conducted by Howard Williams (HW) on 9 October 2020, subsequently transcribed and edited by HW, and revised with the addition of citations and images by GB.

HW: Thank you for agreeing to augment your fascinating and inspiring presentation to the students via interview![1] Can we begin by sketching your background in museum archaeology.

GB: Honestly, I didn't set out to be an archaeologist. I could never decide if I wanted to be a historian or a biologist. For me, archaeology became attractive because it combined a way of me being able to do both and much more.

I got involved purely because I wanted to study the subject. I went out digging in the summer but also filled the rest of the time in by visiting and volunteering in a museum, and that's when I realised my drive was to work with objects and to share those discoveries. I believed my skill set was more to do with interpretation and facilitation than anything else. This relates a bit to my view of archaeology as being like a crossword: you've got some clues and some gaps! Most people use the analogy of a jigsaw puzzle with pieces missing, but for me it's not about pieces missing, it's about putting the pieces together!

So, following my undergraduate degree in archaeology and ancient history from Nottingham, I went out digging and volunteering again and was then employed at the University Museum in Nottingham. The job was to do post-excavation work. It was at that point I applied to be on the Museum Studies course at Leicester: I started a fulltime postgrad there just over two years after graduating. The course was like opening a nice version of a Pandora's Box because the first lecture was all about where museum collections came from. My passion for the subject blossomed and from that point onwards, museums were my thing.

Then, and even more so now, museum jobs were hard to get. Yet I always say if that is your dream then be tenacious! It is the persistent ones who will eventually get their careers going and that's what happened with me, alongside being fortunately in the right place at the right time. I was recently married, and I came to Bristol so I went back to volunteering at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery and then started on a part-time Manpower Service Commission contract to work on a particular project, in the hope that a permanent job would come up there. It did, and I've been there for 34 years! Of course, I must qualify that by saying that I haven't stayed all that time in the same job and that's the thing to bear in mind. I started as a 'museum assistant' working alongside an assistant curator and a curator, just after the curatorial care of the collections began to be managed separately to the field work aspect. As time went on and people left, and as the result of many restructures, I moved on and up into more senior roles. I'm now responsible for the Archaeology & World Cultures collection and manage two curators and a finds liaison officer for the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

[1] https://vimeo.com/showcase/6832804/video/393412706

Museum archaeology has developed enormously over this time. The legislation that we have to work with has changed and the standards and practices have grown (Boyle 2019). And as a result of being involved with museums and the Society for Museum Archaeology, I've gained considerable experience. I see one of my main roles now as being able to use that experience to best effect by acting in a strategic way nationally. For example, by being a member of the Treasure Valuation Committee and the Society for Museum Archaeology (SMA) and working together with the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO) and other kinds of groups, I can be active across the UK in different capacities. So, I kind of feel like my legacy will not only be my work at Bristol, but increasingly my attempts to help the sector work strategically together better for the future.

HW: That's a great introduction to you and your work. Let's now talk about the key change in museums' relationship with treasure-finds over this time. In your talk, you contrasted examples before the 1996 Treasure Act. You included examples such as the Mound 1 burial assemblage discovered famously at Sutton Hoo in 1939 which was not declared Treasure Trove (Williams this volume) and the Mildenhall Treasure which was declared Treasure Trove. Do you think that people are still confused about the definitions of treasure and the legacy of the pre-1996 legal situation regarding Treasure Trove?

GB: The word 'treasure' is so confusing for many. Most people will still tend to talk about 'Treasure Trove' which is the common law by which finds of gold or silver were dealt with before the introduction of the 1996 Treasure Act (DCMS 1996). The problem before 1996 was that the Treasure Trove definition was very specific as it only covered objects made of silver or gold and none of the associated artefacts. However, probably the most difficult part of it was that it also only covered items that were deemed to have been buried with intent to recover. So, folks might understand a chest of precious items such as gold or silver as 'treasure' as perhaps buried with the desire to recover them again but not items buried in graves. Also, none of the humbler items that were associated with gold and silver finds were considered treasure under the terms of Treasure Trove.

So, whilst the Treasure Act, which was also accompanied by a Code of Practice, has actually become more specific in what it defines as treasure, I think it can also be a little bit confusing to some people as well because there are so many different categories now (DCMS 1996). The good news is that it covers all items that are at least 10% gold or silver and at least 300 years old, as well as objects found together with them and has removed any requirement for them to have originally been buried with any intent to recover. The thing is a simpler message about what constitutes treasure is easier to remember. As an analogy, it's a bit like the complexity that some people have faced through 2020 and 2021 with the COVID restrictions and how they change! So, for treasure, it used to be just gold and silver and the intention to recover. Now you've got several different categories and not only that there have been other things added to it. A good example is prehistoric non-precious metalwork; now it can be declared as treasure if two items were found together in the same place or any item of prehistoric metalwork can be treasure if it has got any proportion of gold or silver in it! (The National Archives 2002). The Dundry Hoard, which was acquired by Bristol Museum contains several pieces of prehistoric metalwork found together, which is now enough to make them qualify as treasure in their own right even though they were also found together with some smaller pieces of gold (Adams 2013). So the definitions just get more complicated. This is why I suggested the analogy with COVID regulations: If the message is simply 'stay at home. Don't go anywhere' that's easy to understand, but the more confusing gradations of what is permitted and what is not suddenly becomes very confusing to people who are not 'chapter and verse' in the Act and can tell you exactly what-is-what.

HW: I read these regulations and feel I have a full and intimate understanding of all of the details, but then 5 minutes later I've forgotten it! So, I appreciate how confusing it is!

GB: Yes, it's a bit like using an IT system: you might be an expert for all those months working with it, but after a hiatus, you will have forgotten how to navigate the system and perhaps you've forgotten your password! Obviously, some of us have been pre-Treasure Act and post-Treasure Act and we've lived through all of that. It is also complicated by the fact that there is a clause that basically covers 'anything else that would ordinarily have been Treasure Trove'. So, there's a catch, for anything that doesn't fall into the other categories and you have to explain that. This is particularly the case for items that are under the 300-year rule. So, anything which is less than 300 years old, which may have been buried or hidden with intent to recover, such as some gold sovereigns that were found in the back of a piano, would have been Treasure Trove and is still considered to be Treasure Trove according to the Act (Richardson 2017). So, there is a catch all for those kinds of things. It's not that we've excluded all of those things, it's just not quite that specific and that is difficult for people to understand.

HW: You make clear the enforcing date was 24 September 1997 burnt into your memory since discoveries before then apply under the old law. But what of today's situation? In your talk you used the recent headlines of the Leominster Hoard to impress the duty to report as a key part of the current law (Hoverd *et al.* 2020). Can you expand on that please regarding the legal and social responsibility involved? I'm sure there are some who don't realise because they are naïve or ignorant, but in other cases there is deliberate criminal behaviour.

GB: Those people who go out searching, particularly those who use metal detectors, should be *au fait* with the duty to report because they should be operating to best practice and there are best practice documents that have been produced by sector-wide organisations. The Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales (2017) is very clear about what responsible detecting means, before, during and after the fact (PAS 2017). Probably the most important aspect is that it references requirements of finders under the law, as well accepted voluntary guidance on best practice.

The current system falls down when people are operating independently without guidelines or support. Perhaps the best analogy is when people first started using drones, there was no control or regulations. Now there are regulations and more legislation of control about how you actually use a drone. Yet I'm sure there are lots of people who are still buying drones now who won't know that regulations exist, but there are increasing controls on irresponsible uses.

With metal-detecting, if you buy a metal detector, perhaps second-hand, will you know how to use it and what the regulations and best practice are? You'll perhaps be inspired by the news or a television programme and think you can go into a field and start searching. I think there are a lot of people like that, and that's why the Leominster case was important. For one thing, it was the first time that anybody has been prosecuted in a big way for doing something illegally and breaking multiple laws and because of that it made news headlines. It wasn't just about not reporting, it was about concealing finds of treasure, it was about illegal trespass, all different kinds of things.

This will have a knock-on effect for my work in museums. Still, when somebody comes to me at the museum and says, 'Oh yeah, I've found this thing.' And I say: 'did you realise it might be treasure?' And you see in their eyes, they look at you as if to say, 'have I broken the law?' and they really do not know, then that's part of the job within the museum, and certainly for the Finds Liaison Officers to understand that there are those shades of grey. There are some people who are doing this in complete ignorance but there are also some people absolutely going out to deceive and not to report.

I recall the first time a member of the public reported an object that had been found contrary to the law to me, because it was within a month of me working at the museum as a curator. I had two metal detectorists bring me a piece of a bronze fitting. It was really nondescript, and I asked: 'oh did you find it while you were out walking somewhere?' They replied, 'No, we were out with a metal detector.', I then asked: 'okay, so where were you metal detecting?'. They explained, 'oh well, we had a look at the map, and we saw it said, 'fort or camp' and we thought 'that would be a good place to go.' So, I asked, 'where was that?' And it turned out it was a scheduled ancient monument, and they were completely ignorant to this fact. This was 30 years ago, but there are still people like that who will look at a map and think 'that's a good idea'. It is not something you come across every single day of the week. So, I can't sit in judgment too harshly on people that are not aware. I can only really disapprove of people that are genuinely intending to break the law.

HW: The Leominster case at least provides a new level of public awareness?

GB: Yes, it brings the issues into the public consciousness. So much of the media focuses on discoveries of treasure and their monetary worth. It is important to realise that the media often presents misinformation regarding the value of finds.

Not only had those who were convicted found guilty of theft and failure to report treasure as per the terms of the Treasure Act, but they will also be the subject of a Proceeds of Crime Act hearing. I think that's what was particularly significant, that there were multiple elements to that in the case, and then also the length that they were sent to prison for is quite surprising. It should be a wake-up call to people.

Let me give you another example from my experience from outside my museum role. As a parish councillor, we often get approached by metal detectorists. They want us to give permission for them to detect what they perceive to be 'public land'. And that is also something that people do not understand, which is that all land belongs to somebody, irrespective of whether it's called a common, or a park. So, if we're talking about metal detector users or other people who are searching for treasure not understanding the legislation, it would appear that neither do some of the local authorities. While my parish council does, because I'm the chair and I know all about treasure, I was aware of an incident recently where a finder brought something to the museum and told me he had been given permission by a parish council to dig on their land. I contacted the clerk and said I just need to understand: did you give permission? She confirmed that they gave permission and in writing. I had to explain that while the council had the right to give permission, they should also probably have considered that anything which was found was a parish asset: imagine if a hoard the size of the Staffordshire Hoard or Mildenhall Treasure had been found and the council had relinquished all claims to what was found because it had no written agreement about what should happen to it? Also, there are issues of liabilities, say, if somebody falls down the hole the council hasn't repaired because someone has dug a hole in that common and they break their ankle. So where does the insurance come from? My point is we are not simply talking about metal-detector users not always knowing the law: the challenges are far wider and involve landowners, local and regional organisations too.

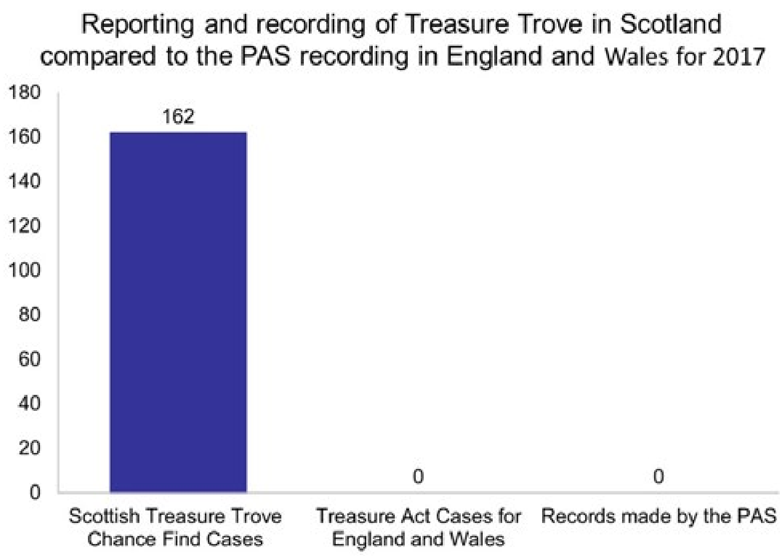
So that's what I think my next job is, which is to promote best practice, providing information to smaller local authorities, particularly town and parish councils, providing them with documentation and suggesting that this is what they do. They can't be forced to, but they need to know what best practice might look like if they were approached and just as with any other landowner, they should be aware of their rights and responsibilities (PAS 2018).

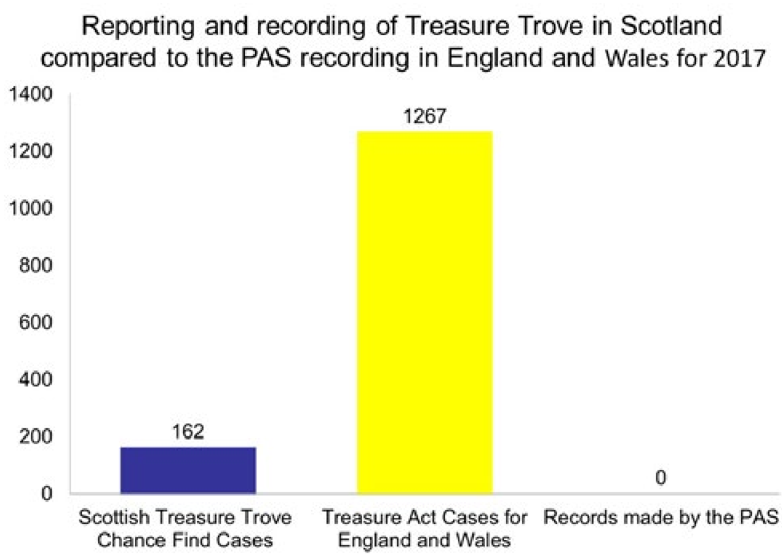
HW: Let's now discuss the reporting and recording statistics for treasure. I wonder if you could just clarify what you feel those figures tell us in relation to which pieces enter the valuation process?

GB: Proportionately, you'll find that public interest and media attention lies within a very, very small proportion of what is being found, and coming out of the ground. You will never get somebody writing in regional or national newspapers about the discovery of some pottery or 3000 flints from field walking (Figures 1–3)! It's the shiny stuff which attracts the interest and, proportionately, I would say it's the shiny stuff which also takes up more time in terms of having to be dealt with because there is a prescribed way of dealing with that. It takes a lot of time and effort on behalf of the FLOs (Finds Liaison Officers) to record this material. Their level of expertise is second to none. Now, obviously we collaborate on some of the identifications, but in terms of the time it takes in guiding finders to make reports, to dealing with coroners and museums, and all the different stakeholders involved in the treasure process, FLOs might be dealing with just one and maybe very small and relatively insignificant Catherine of Braganza cufflink commemorating her wedding to King Charles II (Partridge 2017). These are probably one of the most common things I will see in the valuation process and they have a relatively small monetary value yet will have taken up a huge amount of somebody's time to take through the process in comparison to something else which might be equally common, such as a barb-and-tanged arrowhead (Figure 4).

HW: So how does valuation work?

GB: First, a museum has to express an interest but might not do so for one of any number of reasons, such as it doesn't meet their collecting policy or they don't have capacity to fund-raise, or it is the kind of object requiring secure storage they cannot offer. In such instances, it doesn't mean an object is not archaeologically significant. For





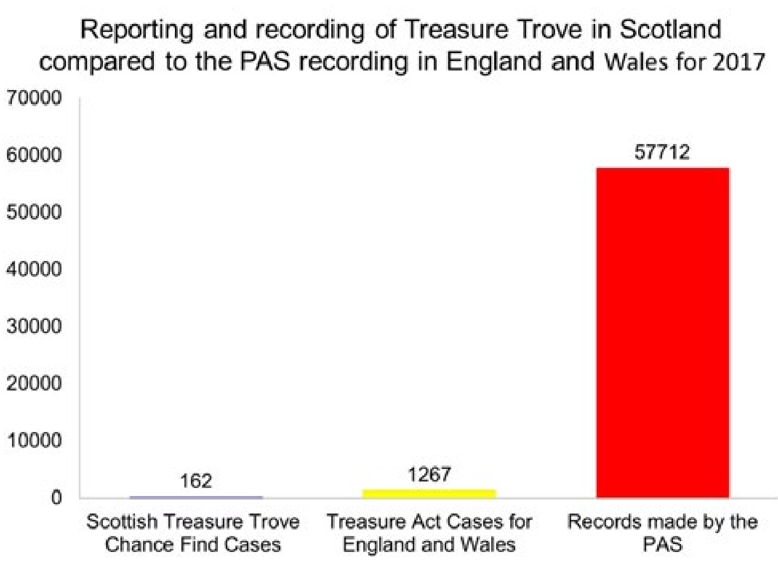


Figure 4: A post-medieval button, probably one half of a silver cufflink conventionally assumed to commemorate the marriage of Charles II and Catherine of Braganza in 1662. A type commonly seen by the Treasure Valuation Committee (© Somerset County Council; CC License BY 2.0 SOM-62E4B7; Patridge 2017)

example, a series of Bronze Age bangles were dug up in the Forest of Dean area and were brought into Bristol Museum (Adams 2014; Figure 5). The local museum did not have the capacity to collect, but they were nationally important. The BM (British Museum) stepped in. The BM is not a last port-of-call for every object like that and they clearly are not a bottomless pit in terms of funding and support. However, they were able to help in that instance.

In a nutshell, if a museum has expressed an interest in acquiring the object, it will go to inquest for the Coroner to decide whether it is treasure or not. If a museum doesn't express an interest, it's disclaimed, and it goes back to the owner and it's up to them to decide what to do with it. Object reports will be written by FLOs and/or in conjunction with experts in the field for particular kinds of objects to inform the whole process. If it's declared treasure by the Coroner, the object usually goes up to the British Museum where there is a Treasure Registrar's Department. This department will commission a provisional valuation for the object from a professional independent valuer so that the Treasure Valuation Committee can then recommend the level of reward that must be provided to the finder/landowner (see Boyle and Rawden 2020). The independent valuation is a really important thing from a museum archaeology perspective. As a

Figure 1 (previous page, top-right): Number of chance find cases of Treasure Trove recorded in Scotland for 2017 (created by Gail Boyle, 2021)

Figure 2 (previous page, middle-right): Number of chance find cases of Treasure Trove recorded in Scotland compared to the number of Treasure Act cases recorded in England and Wales for 2017 (Gail Boyle, 2021)

Figure 3 (previous page, bottom-right): Numbers of Scottish Treasure Trove and English and Welsh Treasure Act cases compared to the overall number of finds recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme in 2017 (Gail Boyle, 2021)

Figure 5: Bronze Age gold bracelets from the Woolaston hoard acquired by the British Museum (© The British Museum; CC BY 4.0 License GLO-E9EC16; Adams 2014)

museum archaeologist, I am bound by the Museums Association Code of Ethics, which says I should not do valuations on objects for members of the public (Museums Association 2015). That is something that I had to consider when I applied to be a member of the Treasure Valuation Committee because, ethically, I am not doing the valuation itself. Instead, I'm commenting on a valuation from a particular perspective that somebody else has provided and actually the reward which is determined based on that valuation is a corporate decision made by the committee and therefore not made by me as an individual.

The transparency of the valuation process is key; I am actually doing a service to museums and to the public by enabling that to happen in a transparent way and that is ethically sound and is what I should be doing. There are museum archaeologists of long standing that I've had conversations with who are still nervous about the whole process or even engaging with the valuation of treasure.

A professional valuation is undertaken. We are called to a meeting about once every six or eight weeks, usually at the British Museum. Each one of us represents a different perspective. For example, I sit with my museum hat on, there's somebody there who is an expert in coins, there are dealers representing the art and antiquities market, and we have representatives of DCMS who attend and can advise if there are certain issues we might want to ask about within the Code of Practice.

We look at every object, we handle every object, we read the reports, we make comments on the reports. We can modify the valuation figures up or down based on a collective decision. We then recommend the level of reward that should be paid out to the finder and landowner in a report that goes to the Secretary of State.

Figure 6: Medieval silver finger ring found at Alveston, South Glos. Engraved with the letters S over a W, the S is overlaid by a cross, and the W is overlaid by a circle or wheel (© Bristol City Council; CC BY-SA 4.0. GLO-237E52; Adams 2009)

The finder and the landowner may or may not agree with what the Treasure Valuation Committee has determined. They too can make representations based on what's been written in the reports and what's been provided by the professional valuer. Invariably, people always think objects are worth more than they are. Some of the difficulties with understanding the valuations derive from the fact you are valuing against hammer prices achieved at previous sales and not the commercial prices that are recorded. So, some mistakes are made by finders and or landowners who make representations because they have been finding records of things which they perceive to be similar which are not similar for one thing, or they're not comparing a hammer price with a current day commercial values, for example. And like stocks and shares valuations of some kinds of objects go up and down because the more you find, the more common they become, and potentially the less interesting they are to collectors.

The museum has to provide the money to pay the wherewithal of the reward. As soon as that is agreed, the museum is given an invoice and they essentially have three months with which to pay that money to DCMS so it can be given to the finders. If it's a large object or a very specific thing then you can be given an extra period of time to fundraise, and because clearly most museums do not have purchase budgets in order to be able to do this, they have to go out to third parties and specific funders that are set up to help. However, that also involves those funders agreeing with the valuations, and sometimes they don't. In Bristol, we often turn to the Friends of Bristol Museum & Art Gallery to provide the funds to acquire treasure items like the medieval silver finger-ring we have on show at M Shed, which was valued at £800 (Figure 6).

Figure 7 (above): The Thornbury Hoard consists of over 11,000 Constantinian coins and the pot they were contained in. Found during the digging of a fishpond in South Glos. (© Bristol Culture)

Figure 8 (below): The Thornbury Hoard was displayed with funding by Heritage Lottery Fund (© Bristol Culture)

It takes time to get that together, because, obviously the museum curator has to write the reports in order to justify why they should acquire it to those funders as well. The first time that I had to go out to several third-party funders related to a coin hoard of 11,460 copper-alloy coins (DCMS 2007; Figure 7). The Treasure Valuation Committee (I wasn't a member of the TVC at the time) valued that hoard at £40,000. I managed to raise £26,000 from third-party sources without having to go to HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund). HLF will not directly fund the purchase of an object, but they will give you a grant for an activity that involves that object, and so they might fund the display case and a programme of public engagement. So, that means you have to design a display, the graphics, and a range of activities you might be doing with an object, for example, with schools in terms of education (Figures 8–10). If you go that far then you're writing a whole project proposal and then you have to deliver it. So, it's not just about getting the money, it's about delivering what you promised to do in receipt for the money and then all the report writing to prove that you've actually spent it the way that you said you were going to spend it. The £26,000 was relatively easy to find, but the extra £14,000 cost me about a year of work to deliver the project that was required in exchange for the funding. So that is another consideration where requirements of funders come into play.

Figures 9 (above) and 10 (below): Heritage lottery funding enabled engagement activities for schools, including sessions on understanding, reading and designing Roman coins (© Bristol Culture)

Occasionally, there are standoffs with finders and landowners who still won't agree what the values of the finds are and won't accept the valuation, so the rewards can sit there in limbo. This is an issue that requires resolution in future changes in our procedures and practices.

HW: What are the disadvantages in the process, or the unethical issues involved?

GB: I think there are some disadvantages for all stakeholders but particularly, to be fair, from a finder's perspective. We (Bristol Museum) were consulted when the Treasure Act was being written and also the Code of Practice that went with it because the City of Bristol may or may not have a franchise to collect treasure over and above the Crown. So, we were a specific stakeholder in that process. I always feel, particularly where there are low valued items, that the finders are disadvantaged by the current system because, all objects go up to the British Museum for the valuation process. If they want to challenge a valuation, they may have to pay for a valuer to do that, the cost of which may outweigh the monetary value of the object. Also, more weight is carried by a valuation done by a valuer that has actually seen the object in three dimensions rather than through photographs. As Chair of the Museums' Best Practice Working Group for the Portable Antiquities Scheme, one of the things I want to do is to provide a prompt sheet for finders. So, if a finder wants to challenge a valuation, what is the information they can provide which will be deemed good evidence. They can't just say: 'I think it must be really rare, and you've got it wrong'. Instead, they have to find ways to illustrate their case, including other valued examples. I think there are lots of things that we could do to enable them to understand that. Indeed, it's actually sometimes probably not a good idea to try and engage a professional valuer at their expense. If it's a relatively low value item, they won't benefit from it and they'll lose money rather than anything else. So, I've always felt that finders are disadvantaged. Furthermore, curators also have a lot of experience at looking at objects, as do the professional valuers, but finders don't. However, those museums who do not have direct access to the items they have expressed an interest in are also deeply disadvantaged because they generally don't get to see or handle the objects themselves. That's why I think we need to do something which is an enabler for all involved to understand more about valuation. It might help us in the long run because finders might understand that those cufflinks that commemorate Catherine of Braganza's marriage to King Charles are actually worth very little in monetary value, but they might be worth a huge amount to the museum in terms of archaeological information and community engagement.

Ethically, curators should be making decisions about what they collect for the museum based on a collecting policy. For example, the Collection Development Policy for Bristol Museum says we will collect anything from the Palaeolithic period to the present day found within a set geographic area, which has been excavated in an archaeological way or has an archaeological significance. The policy also helps to identify what material you're not going to collect, such as objects made or used after a particular date. For example, Leicester Jewry Wall Museum once had a cut-off point of the Battle of Bosworth Field where everything before that date was considered archaeological and everything after that regarded as social history in terms of which department collected it. In contrast to that, in Bristol, archaeologically speaking we do collect 'modern' things but generally not contemporary artefacts of the last century. This is because we want to collect artefacts and their associated information that tell us something about the people that have lived in this space in the past, which will mean some of these will be modern or made of relatively modern materials. It also means that sometimes we will collect recent artefacts that are very rare, or conversely relatively common objects that have significance to the area or region or community. For instance, there might only have been one find of any type of Roman brooch that's ever come out of the ground in a village, and it might not be particularly rare, but it will be really important for that community. It might also be that the Roman brooch could be of use by the Learning Team. So, therefore you might want to collect it, but maybe not accession into the collection so it can be used for teaching purposes.

If an item is a piece of treasure, however, as a curator you also need to be aware that there will be a monetary value attached to it. I'm at pains to explain that, ethically, you should not be expressing an interest in an object that you will not be prepared to fundraise for to acquire. This is because you should make decisions to acquire based on your collecting policy, using your experience as a museum archaeologist, and your organisation's ability to manage the find itself and the process. If it is deemed worth collecting in light of all these things, then you should pursue its acquisition. However, if you can't, if you really think you do not have the capacity, you should be honest and say we are not able to collect for this reason and do not express an interest on the off chance that it's going to be valued at a figure lower than you imagine it to be and then pull out after it isn't. If you do that, it means that you have wasted all the time and effort of all of those people who have been involved in that process: the FLOs, the Coroner, the curators of the British Museum, the Treasure Registrars, the Treasure Valuation Committee, the provisional valuers; there is a huge amount of cost to put it through that system to suddenly say: 'we can't fundraise for that'.

The challenging situations that museums are going to find themselves in now will also be exacerbated because of the pandemic and what's going on financially and economically within museums: (1) there will likely be a reduction in specialists within museums, even more than before, so it will be difficult

Figure 11: This complete dog statue was part of a base metal Romano-British founder's hoard and as this did not fall under the current definition of Treasure was sold to a private collector at auction (© Bristol City Council; Photographed by Eve Andreski, CC BY 2.0 GLO-BE1187; Adams 2017).

for museums to make decisions competently; (2) at the moment (during lockdown) we can't get professional valuations done, so there's a big backlog of all different kinds of treasure; (3) there will potentially be museums that do not exist this time next year, and therefore who is going to collect? Does that suddenly put more pressure on the bigger museums to act in a regional capacity? And what can we do to support that? Does that therefore mean that items of treasure which are archaeologically significant will go onto the open market because nobody is able to collect? Being able to express an interest, who is going to do that, who will do the work? I think the situation we're in is going to disadvantage us in terms of being able to collect truly significant archaeological treasure items for museums.

HW: You discussed the Gloucestershire Licking dog (Figure 11). It was finally negotiated on a temporary loan, was it so (Adams 2017; Coombe and Henig 2020)?

GB: Yes, fortunately the new owner agreed to lend it to Bristol Museum. There are finds like this that sit outside the treasure definitions which are truly archaeologically significant or unique within the British archaeological record, but which for many reasons cannot be collected by a public institution. The main reason we want them to be in public institutions is because we have the ability to share and care for them appropriately. Generally, if they end up in a private collection, they become inaccessible for future research and they're not enjoyed by the wider public in the way that public institutions can enable that to happen.

HW: How do we better communicate and engage with the public?

GB: I think it's about improving the knowledge and understanding of the people who find things as well as developing the museum's skill set and its ability to negotiate donations of material. Museums can disclaim objects and finders and/or landowners can refuse to accept a reward. One of the challenges is how to impress upon people that an object valued at £15–25 might be potentially really interesting to the museum even though it is not exceedingly rare. Could finders be persuaded not to pursue a reward, and if they don't what else compensates them? For example, how are they acknowledged? In the past, we've

Figure 12: Many of the objects used by Bristol Museum's Learning team have been donated by members of the public. The stone axe being handled here was unprovenanced but is genuine (© Bristol Culture)

attached finders' names to the object label. There are fewer museum labels like that now, but it might be that we say we will always acknowledge these donations when they are displayed. There are things that you can do in terms of fostering the relationship with the finders and that is also about the curators becoming more confident about dealing with the process. More experienced individuals might be more confident in making these proposals, but we've now got a whole group of curators who aren't necessarily archaeologists who do not have this experience and with less confidence they might not engage in that process. Without naming the museum, this week I've been in correspondence with another museum that wishes to acquire an object from a finder, and they are wading their way through the valuation process. They are having to seek advice as it's something they have never been faced with before.

Sometimes you have to be quite blunt with finders, for instance by asking them 'what are your wishes for your collection when you die, or would you be prepared to donate that object to the museum?' There is a bit of training that needs to be done with curators and aside from this the ethical considerations involved often make people nervous. For instance, many museums in my experience do not challenge valuations that go through the process because they don't do valuations on a daily basis. There are things that they could challenge which are not related to the provisional valuation itself, but which might have a bearing on it. For example, if there is some information which is erroneous that's being presented to the committee and they know full well that's wrong, they should say so. I think there are many things you can do to improve everyone's confidence with dealing with process. From the finder's perspective, we need to be more honest about the costs involved in taking a relatively small value item

Figure 13: This bead-shaped ornament was the only Bronze Age item made of gold in the whole of Bristol Museum's collection until two other pieces were found at Dundry to the south of the city. F4290 (© Bristol Culture)

through the whole process and whether they should weigh that up. Also, we should be enabling those finders to be put on an equal footing in the way that they can challenge valuations if they feel they are undervalued and enable them to do that in more effective way as this would also reduce the amount of work of Treasure Valuation Committee and others have to do.

HW: I'd like to ask about the collection policy: is there untapped potential in utilising non-accessioned items for community engagement?

GB: When an item is accessioned into museum collection, it formally becomes part of a collection and in order to be able to remove it there is a very formal disposal process that you have to go through. Not accessioning an object into the collection means pretty much you can do with it what you want, and it can become, for want of a better word, disposable. It's something that can be used, it might fall apart, and you're not necessarily bound to keep it within the collection as a permanent object. We can approach finders regarding objects and ask them to donate it to the learning and handling collection, on the understanding therefore it won't necessarily last forever. Our Learning team make good use of objects like this for school sessions and have acquired a representative selection over time (Figure 12).

From a museum archaeology perspective, we often also need to use a different type of language to that used by field archaeologists and academics with regard to describing 'significance'. This is particularly important when we have to deal with the emotional or social impact on a community that a discovery can have irrespective of its archaeological significance. To give an example, two Roman villa sites have been discovered relatively recently as a result of development, one just outside the city centre in Bristol and one in Gloucestershire, both of which resulted in public outcries because they weren't going to be preserved. In Bristol, local residents were angry because they felt they hadn't been given a chance to engage with what was found (Anon. 2017). I was contacted by the local press but couldn't say anything beyond the fact the material was destined for us in the usual way. In the greater scheme of things, the site wasn't archaeologically remarkable and there were no amazing finds (Cotswold Archaeology 2017). Nevertheless for that community the fact that it was even there at all really mattered and it was therefore really significant to them and their local sense of place. The same thing happened recently in Gloucestershire where there was a big furore in the newspapers at the Roman villa's destruction but in terms of community identity and sense of space and place, that site was really important. Now that can be the same for an object, so that one gold coin, that one Roman brooch, has connotations because of its place

Figure 14: The Dundry Hoard was acquired via the Treasure process by Bristol Museum in 2012 and in doing so tripled its holdings of Bronze Age gold objects (© Bristol City Council; CC BY-SA 4.GLO-6535E4; Adams 2013)

in the community and it is the avenue to engage people with wider narratives about archaeology, history and heritage. So, there's huge amounts of value to those seemingly insignificant archaeological pieces, and I think that's what museum archaeologists need to understand when they want to acquire treasure items for their collection. There are occasions when others say: 'why does the museum want to acquire that?' And I sit down, I'll say, 'because it's the only one'. For example, we have very little Bronze Age gold found in the Bristol area (Figures 13 and 14). Similarly, Iron Age gold staters are rather common in the South East, but if one is found in the Bristol region it is really significant. So, these are considerations you might take into account when you're judging whether or not to acquire an item of treasure as a curator.

HW: How do we best display treasure in the museum? Are there issues that museums get right, get wrong, or are there ongoing discussions regarding what is best practice?

GB: Ahh shades of grey! It really depends what it is. You might have an item of treasure that is part of a larger object grouping or theme and therefore not likely to be the focus of a massive display. Whereas you could have something completely spectacular like the Staffordshire Hoard where you know that there's going to be great public interest in that collection in its own right. What we try to avoid is to just put it into a case and say, 'there's the treasure'. Instead, we try to give some social context, historical context and archaeological context. The Staffordshire Hoard, for example, wasn't from an excavated site. There was an excavation post-discovery, but it wasn't found during an ongoing controlled archaeological excavation of perhaps a Roman villa where a treasure find would be interpreted as part of the story of the whole site. Sadly, what you often see happening in the media is that people get beguiled by the idea of 'treasure'. The wrong thing to do is just go with the simple fetishizing of the object, presenting it only as a 'lovely' precious metal item when the real archaeological significance will be to do with its date, its provenance and what stories it might tell. We have to avoid using treasure as clickbait where the treasure aspect is itself the only story. We can instead use treasure as clickbait to draw people into finding out something more about the context and period it represents.

HW: The headline status of treasure and its clickbait status can be positive?

GB: Yes, but you don't want the treasure aspect to be totally dominant. Of course, there will always be spectacular finds that draw attention like the Bronze Age Havering hoard that's just gone on display at the Museum of London Docklands, or the Cheapside jewels that went on display at the Museum of London. For the Staffordshire Hoard, there are actually two displays, one in Stoke-on-Trent at the Potteries Museum, and also at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. All of these displays lead visitors into something deeper than the shiny sparkly bits.

HW: What about the word 'treasure' itself? What is your take as a museum archaeologist on the blessings and curses of how the media, and social media, deal with treasure?

GB: There are two camps. Members of the public will see the word 'treasure' and you just know they will be interested in it for that and that alone. As opposed to those of us who are archaeologists have become frustrated with words like 'treasure' because of misconceptions about its relative importance and because of all the other important material we deal with that just doesn't get the same kind of exposure. So as archaeologists, we have a different relationship with the word 'treasure' than any other member of the public. I think what really annoys experts is the media focus on monetary value that can be frustrating since it has nothing to do with a story about the human past. But if we got rid of the word 'treasure' what else could we use to capture the public imagination? Popular terms might be the 'draw' that get people interested, but the skill lies in the stories we then tell, and the broader interests we foster through enabling deeper engagement. By completely disowning these terms, we might be cutting off our noses to spite our faces. Visitor research in advance of a display of items from the Staffordshire Hoard in 2017 showed that few people in the Bristol region had heard of the hoard or understood what period it related to – they did understand the word treasure (Figure 15).

HW: What is your vision for the future of museums' relationships with treasure and how we build a national strategy?

GB: We clearly need more joined-up approaches to collecting treasure, regionally, practically and financially. The formation of strategic regional collecting networks would be a vital component of this and would also facilitate the sharing of knowledge skills and understanding required. Museum curators need to become more confident in disclaiming items that really are insignificant, and finders need to be better appraised of the process itself and especially the costs involved. Both groups need to be given access to the tools they need to better engage with the valuation and reward process, for example, there is no single easily accessible resource that enables anyone to research the potential value of an object. Whether you agree with the current legislation governing the definition of treasure or not, it is unlikely to undergo radical change for the foreseeable future, although there are moves to find ways of defining nationally significant items that are not captured by the definition at the moment. We need to find ways to enable those items that are truly significant to be collected for public benefit by providing access to the significant financial resources required to do so and to make this as simple as we possibly can – too

Figure 15: Marketing materials for a display of selected items from the Staffordshire Hoard had to pay reference to the fact that not many people in Bristol had ever heard of it or knew when the Anglo-Saxon period was (© Bristol Culture)

many objects fall out of public ownership because funding is not available to acquire them. Improving the process is one thing but backing it up with a single national well-resourced acquisition fund for treasure would be a game-changer.

HW: Thank you once again for your original presentation and the interview. Have you any concluding thoughts for future generations of museum archaeologists?

GB: Archaeology is not just about the acquisition of new archaeological knowledge and understanding because it's also a source of inspiration for all different kinds of beneficial public activity. Museum archaeologists are enablers and facilitators in this and should seek to democratise access to the resources we collect and curate for the public good and that includes working with those individuals who engage with the past in different ways to those that we choose for ourselves. Communication and agreement on best practice with regard to the treasure process is part of this – we all know it's far from perfect but it's up to us to make the best efforts we can to improve it together – with finders and with funders.

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The Staffordshire Hoard Conservation Program

an interview with Pieta Greaves

The interview with Pieta Graves (PG) presents the Staffordshire Hoard conservation program as a key case study in public outreach following a unique early medieval metal-detected assemblage which captivated a host of audiences across the UK and around the globe. The interview allowed a discussion of how the Hoard, while exceptional in many ways, provides an example of good practice in public engagement throughout the project's entire duration. The interview was conducted by Howard Williams (HW) on 6 October 2020, subsequently transcribed by Natasha Carr (NC), edited by NC and HW, and revised with the addition of citations and images by PG.

HW: May I begin by asking: how did you get into archaeology, and into archaeological conservation specifically?

PG: I initially thought I wanted to be an archaeologist but I couldn't take a strictly archaeology degree in New Zealand as the subject didn't exist as a separate programme. Instead, I took a degree in Anthropology and Geography at the University of Auckland. I worked in New Zealand afterwards as an archaeologist but then I thought about visiting the UK. I had a British passport (my father was British) and I started working in UK archaeology and found it very different. It involved watching lots of diggers and the chance of not finding things was much higher. So, I reflected on what I liked best about archaeology and this was material culture: the technology of objects' manufacture in particular. At that point, the only way to be a conservator was to do another degree, unfortunately. So, I retrained at Cardiff University for three years and was lucky enough to get a job straight away working for AOC Archaeology's Edinburgh office. I really enjoyed the great collaborative mix of the work involving both conservation but also a really strong archaeological element.

HW: I think it's really important that readers, including prospective and current students, appreciate the many stages and complex journeys involved in an archaeological career. So, how did this background lead to your work with the Staffordshire Hoard?

PG: A standard route: A conservation manager job was advertised, you had to be an accredited conservator, which requires that I had gone through a peer-reviewed accreditation process with the Institute of Conservation, this process confirms my work meets the required standards and ethics in the conservation field. The job required someone who could meet clear targets and deadlines working as part of a wider archaeological team, all things I felt I could do, so I just applied! I confess I did think: 'I won't get the job at the Staffordshire Hoard, just look at how shiny it is!' It is an exceptional find and it seemed unreal to get the opportunity to work on it.

I think it helped that I was interviewed both by a conservator and by an archaeologist and I could talk about the conservation project from both perspectives. I think the key thing about the hoard job was that it was all about meeting targets and deadlines but ensuring the conservation was really high standard, working at AOC which is a commercial unit where you have to meet all those core skills that the job required, so I perhaps had an advantage over someone who had a more museums background. So that was where I won out. And my sparkling personality! I was delighted to work on the Hoard through to the conservation work's completion and now the Hoard is published (Fern *et al.* 2019; Figures 1–3).

HW: Regarding the public outreach for the project, the Hoard was represented in a series of preliminary publications and it has been widely displayed (Leahy and Bland 2009; Fern and Speake 2014; Symons 2014).

Figure 1: A collection of the weapon fittings from the Staffordshire Hoard (© Birmingham Museums Trust)

Figure 2: The Staffordshire Hoard on display (© Birmingham Museums Trust)

Figure 3: Filigree hilt collar during conservation (© Birmingham Museums Trust)

Figure 4: Conservators at work (© Birmingham Museums Trust)

Yet the conservation team led the way throughout in regards public engagement (see also Butterworth 2019; Capper and Scully 2016). Is that typical for conservation projects of metal-detected hoards?

PG: I think the difference between this program and other archaeological finds is the scale of the find and the public interest: the public engagement elements is something which Simon Cane (who wrote the Conservation plan for The Hoard and was then Deputy Director of Birmingham Museums Trust, now Director of Public and Cultural Engagement UCL) supported and facilitated (Cane 2010). By contrast, normally when you find an archaeological assemblage it gets hidden from the public for such a long time period during conservation and no one really sees it until the results come out, and then it goes on display. It is only at this point that the public get an opportunity to come and look at it. The recently published and widely acclaimed 'Prittlewell Prince' discovery is probably a high-profile early medieval example of that. They produced a popular small book soon after discovery (Hirst 2004). However, it was only 15 years later, with the dual publication of a larger popular synthesis (Hirst and Scull 2019) and the final monograph (Blackmore *et al.* 2019), together with a press release and a new display at Southend Museum, that the public got to learn about all the fresh discoveries facilitated by sizable press coverage (see Williams 2019a; see also chapters by Brown and Brophy this volume). This was linked to a further challenge for the Staffordshire Hoard project: a fundraising element had to play a key role in engagement. This is because, when the Hoard was purchased, it was jointly acquired between Birmingham and Stoke-on-Trent City Councils. In this context, the Art Fund played a really crucial role in helping profile and raise money. Since it had been a metal detecting find, they really wanted to see it on display.

Indeed, the museums decided to make a promise that the hoard would always be on display. Having it on display, even prior to conservation when objects were still covered in dirt, allowed people to engage and learn both about the hoard and the painstaking work involved in its conservation. The conservators also relayed information directly from the other specialists working on the project, thus acting as a conduit as well as telling people about conservation at the same time (Figure 4).

Now, in Birmingham, it is also a great dimension of the museum's displays and local people love it. Yet, there's a special sense of pride for the Hoard I've experienced in the responses to Stoke's display at the Potteries Museum and we were pleased to see how the local community were very happy and willing to engage with the discovery and its conservation leading to its display (see also Williams 2019b).

HW: It is indeed a very good display and I particularly like how the Hoard is juxtaposed with the display of finds from other early medieval sites in the county, notably the 19th-century grave-finds from Stapenhill (Williams 2020a).

PG: They obviously have more of an archaeology collection on show as well, so the other things from the region, and Birmingham have almost nothing archaeological bar Egyptians but no other British archaeology on show.

HW: So how quickly did the public engagement strategy emerge? Was it planned from the start?

PG: It was one of Simon Cane's key things he wanted to deliver: both because I think he saw it as an opportunity for conservation to come out of the museum's studio, and to stop being so hidden. As a high-profile example, it's really good for conservation because we can show how we do things (Figure 4). He was always keen from day one that there was engagement, and actually the councils did other engagement activities to ensure the Hoard was prominent across the Midlands. It also mattered politically, within the complex local government of the cities and region. Put simply, everyone wanted to make sure that the Staffordshire Hoard was widely promoted and engagement with it was possible from many perspectives.

Figure 5: Gallery cleaning event in the gallery (© Birmingham Musuems Trust)

HW: So public engagement isn't just for the public, it's also for the stakeholders and the funding bodies?

PG: So yeah, the engagement was done on multiple levels. The public had to come in and pay to get a behind the scenes tour, I think it was £20 per person. Those tours were always full (Figure 5). We did them every second month and they lasted about 2 hours so they'd get a tour of the gallery and then you'd come downstairs and look through the microscopes and really get up close and personal engage with the objects. You could see far more detail. I think that's the thing about the hoard that's very difficult to get across and you hear it in people's comments: 'you look at it!', 'that's lovely!', and 'look at how shiny that is!'. However, actually in technology terms, when you look through a microscope and see the minute detail: it is only then that you fully appreciate how sophisticated the technology involved in the items' manufacture really was. I think that's what most people took away from those tours, that appreciation that they were objects beyond the bling, that they were important and they tell us other things about the Anglo-Saxons beyond that they liked lots of gold and garnets. People were always overwhelmed about the level of detail within those objects and the information this detail reveals.

HW: And so that in-person tour helped the public and specific stakeholders to understand the art and the technology?

PG: I guess some of the art work is quite obvious, but some of the art work needed explaining, so once again people think about what they're looking at, and the funders were assured we were delivering a high-quality output to specifications. But again, you ask funders for money, they might be only drawn initially by the promise of revealing shiny gold items. However, we received funding to cover some of the other scientific aspects, or to buy equipment, so explaining beyond the superficial and in person

Figure 6: HLF (now NHL) stakeholder visit (© Birmingham Museums Trust)

gave us the opportunities to explain the necessity for funding that might not otherwise be obvious (Figure 6).

HW: The immediate response to the discovery and research on the Hoard was stupendous: the newspaper reports, the fact that people were queuing for hours to see elements of the Hoard (including me, my colleagues and students). Do you feel there was a sense that this wasn't simply the garnet and gold that captured the public's imagination? Were people interested only because it was treasure or was the public fascinated also in the story of discovery, the supposed military context, the artisanship and variety of artefacts, the mystery surrounding what the artefacts all were parts of, and the period from whence they derived?

PG: People lined up around both museums, so both Stoke and Birmingham put on a display to initially help the fundraising aspect. People will tell you today if they were in that line and how long they waited to see it, like a badge of honour. 'I waited three hours in that line to see it.' It's interesting and shows the enthusiasm and affinity people felt towards the Hoard.

HW: And so, then we can talk about the in-person thing and how it was to take it beyond that broader impression, but what about the other strategies that you felt proved effective or popular?

PG: The tours cost £20 and were therefore selective. So, we also did a couple of other things in the gallery, teaming up with other events, like the Council for British Archaeology's Festival of Archaeology and things like that (Figures 7 and 8). Also, we organised events for children (although a few adults also joined in); you could sit down at a table, get a fake piece, a lump of soil, sit there with your microscope and you could clean it. In this way, you could discover what was inside; it mimicked the job of a conservator, wearing a lab coat. This proved to be really popular with children; some of them did it in 5 minutes, some took half an hour to clean back their little bit of soil and find the fake bit of sparkly jewellery on the inside. These had been all free events, and I think that was really good because some people just stopped and talked to you, some people wanted their kids to get involved, some people just left their kids there while they looked at the galleries. In summary, it was really for lots of people, but those were positive events also because they were free, taking place at Birmingham Museum (Figure 9). Indeed, the gallery contained a display dedicated to the conservation process (Figure 10).

Figure 7: Festival of Archaeology event (© Birmingham Museums Trust)

Figure 8: Talking with a Young Archaeology Club (YAC) group (© Birmingham Museums Trust)

Figure 9: The new Birmingham Gallery for the Staffordshire Hoard (© Birmingham Museums Trust)

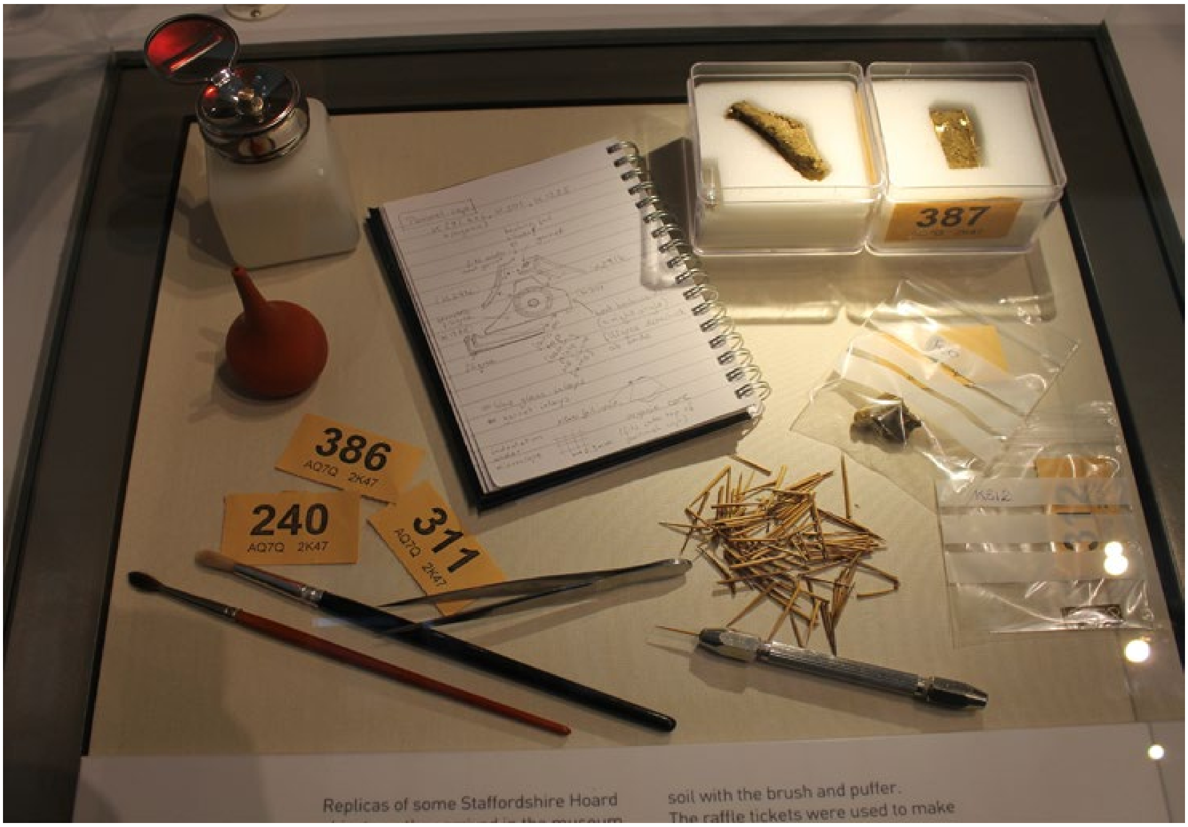

Figure 10: Conservation tools on display (© Birmingham Museums Trust)

Having said that, yes, we could have done them more widely and frequently, but still they were good events given the pressures on our schedule. We also organised events where the conservators cleaned real fragments from the Hoard in front of the public. We only did that for two days as, while popular, it proved very complicated to let people view the cleaning bits of the hoard in the public without barriers (in terms of what we could clean without risk). We fielded a lot of questions, and, since many were not confident to ask questions, they could still watch and listen to the conservators talk.

HW: I think it's important to recognise that many folks simply want to watch and listen, not everyone has an insightful question ready, but they will learn considerably nonetheless.

PG: It's hard because they probably feel they should be asking something clever or that they shouldn't bother the conservator. Of course, you're there to be bothered, that's what we want you to do. Still, I think that was a great shout for people just to come look and again it was free, just to come and see some real conservation in a gallery. I would have liked to have done more of those, but it just wasn't possible.

The other thing we did which was popular, we did a cake competition, but purely on Twitter (BM_AG 2013)! Twitter allows directly engagement with the public and we thought we'd run a cake competition inspired by the designs and forms of the Hoard. It was inspired by when someone made me a birthday cake which was in the shape of a sword pyramid. We shared images of the cake on Twitter and it was so popular. Building on this, people from all over the world sent us photos of their cakes of bits of the Staffordshire Hoard, and then we chose a winner and we sent them a little goodie bag of a book, a pencil and just some merchandise. It facilitated a wider reach beyond those who love archaeology or bits of Anglo-Saxon gold since everyone loves cake! While it reached and engaged non-archaeological audiences, unfortunately, we didn't get to taste the cakes!

HW: In terms of digital engagement more broadly, what other strategies worked? I recall you shared time-lapse photography of the conservation process on individual fragments from the Hoard, for example.

PG: I think they were popular (Staffordshire Hoard 2016a, 2016b). We only did a few of them by the end, but there were good before and after photographs which merged from one into each other. The most popular thing on those websites is the images. Before anyone reads anything, they go and look at the pictures.

HW: We've already touched on the regional pride dimension of the Hoard's discovery, investigation and display, but what of the global reach?

PG: I would say in America there are a lot of Anglo-Saxonists and medievalists. Indeed, the single biggest donation we got for the Hoard came from an American so there is always strong interest there. The international appeal was always evident, you could see that from the press and media coverage. The Hoard early on went to the National Geographic Museum in Washington and did amazingly well in terms of visitor numbers. However, it isn't just the USA and Canada: someone even came all the way from Australia to view the finds when found in 2009!

And obviously what made it a bit surreal was when Pope Benedict came and saw it and blessed the great folded cross. This was before my time, I didn't get to meet the Pope myself! He held it which is very unusual for an archaeological collection, I think (BBC News 2010).

HW: So, you had a funding issue, but it was also an education dimension and it had a global reach as well as having the local and regional interest. As a project, it sounds as if you hit every mark. And it went on

Figure 11: Front view of the Staffordshire Hoard helmet reconstruction (© Birmingham Museums Trust)

temporary display at multiple other locations too, including when I saw it at Lichfield Cathedral for a while (Fern 2019 *et al.* 2019: 368).

PG: The mixture of martial and ecclesiastical material culture facilitated the appeal to a range of audiences.

HW: Are there any other digital aspects that you thought were particularly effective?

PG: The digital dimensions of the museum displays deserve mention: the touch tables in the galleries at Stoke and Birmingham. People can blow up the images really big. It was made by Birmingham museum initially, it was part of the gallery project funded by Heritage Lottery Fund (now National Lottery Heritage Fund). Also, we selected objects that were made into videos. So, describing some of the designs, giving a bit more details about the objects. But actually, it turned out to be really popular. The program was also used when we had the Warrior Treasures tour (Leeds: 27 May–2 October 2016; Bristol: 22 October 2016–23 April 2017), which went

to the Royal Armouries, Leeds, and to Bristol Museum. It's a programme that has never broken down to our surprise.

There have been failures in public engagement too, however. For instance, I thought it might help to make replicas at a larger size to engage with groups with visual and mobility issues.

HW: Sounds like a brilliant idea. What, how could that go wrong?

PG: The replicas were not the same size nor the same weight as the originals. People really didn't like them as it just didn't give the feel of the originals. They just want to feel the real things and groups felt cheated with the larger versions. They were like, 'this isn't real', 'it doesn't really tell me anything about the original Hoard'.

We did later have some display replicas which look like the originals. However, as part of that, we end up with a few extras that you can give someone to handle which are the same weight and the same feel as the real object, to a certain point. These proved to be more popular.

Figure 12 (above): Helmets under construction in the lab (© Drakon Heritage and Conservation)

Figure 13 (right): Mark Routledge and Pieta working on the cheekpiece positioning (© Drakon Heritage and Conservation)

When you hold the pectoral cross, it's much heavier than you think it's going to be. And, when you feel just how tiny everything is, especially the filigree. The main difference with the replicas is that they were brass versus gold: we couldn't afford to make gold ones, obviously! But that was really interesting, I thought. So, I will really think more carefully in the future about making giant things again, and how, what I think people get out of them and actually what people get out of them. I think it needs a lot more testing. Actually, about are we being patronising perhaps almost?

Figure 14: Mark Routledge in one of the completed helmets (© Birmingham Museums Trust)

HW: But you see, I mean, just to defend your thought I would have imagined given that you're using microscopes to make magnify the objects, people would understand and appreciate our intent with the scale-change. Still, I see how these items failed to do what we were claiming to do: the replicas didn't provide a sense of the size and mass of the original fragments. Still, I defend the original logic behind their creation.

PG: I think it depends on the object. We're telling people why, what's so interesting about these objects, they're so detailed on a macro scale, but when we presented them with a larger version they weren't convinced.

HW: Is there anything else that you feel didn't go as you anticipated?

PG: No. With everything else, there was always a level of engagement, which was better than I thought it was going to be.

HW: I wanted to ask about the replication of the helmet. This act of reconstruction was beyond the conservation program. How did this transpire? Was it something thought up early or did it come late in the process as a sort of sort almost like a crescendo for the project?

PG: The reconstruction of the helmet took place late in the project and not part of the Historic England funded project (Figures 11–15). From the very beginning, we always thought that there was at least one helmet represented, that those crests can't be from anything else but a helmet. The cheek pieces were always controversial and not everyone agreed that's what they were. You either love it, or you hate it as a concept. And then we had all those gold foils. So, throughout the process of conservation, there was a large amount of work that had to be put together to actually make those objects more complete. They're extraordinarily fragmented. So, throughout the whole conservation process the work developed; Chris Fern and George Speake worked on the shape and size of the helmet. George has this great saying: 'it's like redesigning a house, but all you have is the wallpaper'. We didn't have the structure of the helmet: the iron elements. All we had was the decorated fragments. George drew an illustration: a watercolour of what he thought it looked like. And that's the image that's in the Staffordshire Hoard monograph (Fern *et al.* 2019: 78). And obviously George and Chris wrote it up for the monograph. There was no Historic England money to fund helmets being made so the museums decided that they would fund the making of the replicas. I think that's the important thing for the museums is that people understand the collection and the helmet was a key way of doing that.

This is a key point: even if you are specialist, trying to imagine whole artefacts from fragments is challenging. For public engagement, such as museum visitors including school groups, it's near impossible and, as a collection, the Staffordshire Hoard was difficult to understand. The museums wanted a replica centrepiece. This reconstruction really helps in this regard, it draws people into thinking from fragments back to whole items. The helmet helps envisage the society, the displays, the warfare, in which these items might have been worn or wielded. So, they felt it'd be a really great thing to facilitate understanding the Hoard.

HW: Do you agree that a helmet, perhaps more than almost all other items, brings a sense of a once-living person to life, more so than a sword or a cross?

PG: I think you're absolutely right. I think that's why it worked so well at Sutton Hoo, the helmet brings a personality of a person to life in the absence of their human remains (see also Walsh and Williams 2019; Figure 14).

The helmet was the project's opportunity to test some of the theories that George and Chris had including questions such as: what all the holes were for, how would you hang those cheek pieces. After all, George's illustration was freehand while Chris produced very technical illustrations. Those two things were never brought together to precisely identify how the foils should be positioned. Still, they fit together, thematically as well as physically to make an object. So that was part of that process and we only had to make a few changes. Ultimately, George's drawing was viable as a reconstruction.

HW: I'm aware of some criticisms of the helmet (Thompson 2020). Do you have any thoughts on this?

PG: Our main thing is that we stand behind the research. That's how it can be called a 'reconstruction' and not a 'replica'. It's a reconstruction because when presented with the evidence we have this is the most likely representation. Having worked through the making process and working with the objects, looking at all the holes and tiny details, I am confident that this is a solid reconstruction. I think for anyone who doesn't think that it works as object and want to do their own reconstruction, I think do it, absolutely. I'd be really interested to see what people came up with. Because in my mind, having now put it together twice, one for Birmingham and one for Stoke, I just don't see how you would put those pieces together in a different way. Now that the monograph and all the details are out I would be more than happy to see other explanations of the materials. But like the Sutton Hoo helmet, you have to start somewhere.

HW: There is a challenge that modern aesthetics might not fit early medieval realities.

PG: Maybe. Some of it is informed speculation on our part: for instance, we chose to give the helmet a big red crest. There are a host of other options: feathers or differently coloured horse hair. But we've gone with red because of the garnets of the hoard, and so a red-and-gold helmet would match the broader red-and-gold assemblage. Still, we cannot be certain and there are plenty of elements one could play around with.

HW: I'm aware there is a replica seax and sword in the Potteries Museum, but without a helmet, the public would find it very difficult to comprehend.

PG: If you are a reenactor, and used to wearing appropriate clothing you could image what all the fragments may look like when new. However, if you're a lone person walking into a museum, especially if you're from overseas, and you've no prior knowledge of the Early Middle Ages and the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, you benefit from the reconstructed helmet to engage with the fragments of the Hoard. So, even if there are elements that are not quite right, and it transpires we are proved wrong, that's fine. Because actually, from the museum's point of view, it's doing its job of facilitating public engagement and understanding.

HW: My next question is difficult because there'll never be another project just like Staffordshire Hoard conservation programme. What additional strategies of public engagement might we try in the future? Or we could flip it around and ask for smaller-scale projects: which effective elements are most readily transferable to other conservation projects?

PG: I think, in terms of conservation, what the hoard showed is you could have conservation that's run in parallel with academic specialist study. And I think that's what is really important that you can do these things. At the same time. I think the collaborative element of the Staffordshire Hoard project that is a key aspect of best practice. It was a really great model about how you can have things on display for the public, how you can study a collection and how you can carry conservation and the benefits that overall brings the project together. The Staffordshire Hoard project hasn't done anything wildly new, you do conservation, you've got your specialists doing a bit of engagement. But I think what it does is that it's tailored together so that the engagement happened while the conservation was taking place. And it was done multiple times in different ways.

HW: It seems that the project has also demonstrated that if the public are encouraged to engage with material culture in detail, they can readily go beyond its previous materials and brilliance to consider technology, symbolism and style. Would you agree?

PG: I think the 'bling' quality is what initially draws one to it. But visitors can learn about the amazing technologies deployed in the making of the fragments from the Hoard, challenging preconceived ideas about a 'barbarian' 'Dark Ages'. When they come and they see the hoard, they can appreciate the sophisticated craft activities involved. Building on that, they can start to think about economy and society and political ideologies in the period and so much more.

HW: I think we constantly and needlessly dumb down when people thirst for multi-layered engagement and a host of different strategies. Our fixation with terminology is another problem in this regard, when we are potentially putting up more barriers to engagement and understanding than building bridges in retiring popularly familiar terms and concepts, even if they are problematic at best. This relates, of course, to recent discussions regarding the terms 'Dark Ages' (Williams 2016) and 'Anglo-Saxon' in public engagement for the Early Middle Ages (e.g. Pitts 2019; Williams 2020b).

PG: Ultimately, I think academic arguments over terminology needs to be conducted in a better way. From the perspective of an educator, no one cares and it appears to be only a myopic obsession for academics. I think what the Hoard has delivered is an engagement program that uses archaeological terminology but also as we were there to explain, it didn't become dumbed down.

HW: I think innovative projects such as the Staffordshire Hoard show the thirst among the public for understanding the Early Middle Ages, including early Anglo-Saxon England. In that regard, is there anything else you'd want to include?

PG: The public engagement extends to the publication itself. The work is very accessible. Even if purchased in hard-copy, the heavily subsidised £45 monograph is very cheap for the quality and scale of the work it presents. Moreover, the Hoard monograph is now free to download (Fern *et al.* 2019). All the catalogue, scientific reports and images are lodged with the Archaeology Data Service and are freely available (Barbican Research Associates 2019). So, people, no matter what their background, can access our work now and in the future.

It takes away the privilege of academic study in a way as well, it gives everyone the opportunity to look at our detailed work and think about it in many forms. To reflect on the huge contrast in timing and format in which the Mound 1 Sutton Hoo ship-burial was published, and you see how far we have come in both academic research and public engagement with Anglo-Saxon 'treasure' (Bruce-Mitford 1975, 1978; Bruce-Mitford and Evans 1983). My big hope for the future is I see a Staffordshire hoard replica helmet or reconstruction helmet in a movie. That would be the moment I think we've made it into the popular consciousness. I want to see people creating art, people inspired by the Staffordshire Hoard in a range of ways. I think that's what I'd quite like to see: people assessing it, accessing it and looking to do something different with it.

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Audio Bling: Innovation and Accessibility in the Museum Display of Archaeological Treasures

Edward Antrobus

This chapter explores the potential of audio media to enhance and extend public engagement with museum treasures, using the Staffordshire Hoard as an example.

Introduction

I aim to evaluate the key challenges for the public archaeology of treasure focusing on museum displays, specifically the challenges of accessibility for the visually impaired. The Staffordshire Hoard, discovered in 2009 and now on display at The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery and Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, serves as a case study to explore some innovative methods for enriching the experiences and educational benefit of collections for museum visitors with visual impairments. This prompts broader consideration of how sensorial environments can create enriched opportunities for visitor engagements with archaeological treasures on display in museums and at other heritage contexts. This chapter addresses this topic by considering the untapped potential of audio communication in the interpretation of archaeological treasures in museums.

Debating display and accessibility

Museum displays of archaeological discoveries are a constant focus of critical attention and controversy regarding what, where, why and how they are displayed and interpreted and for whom. For archaeological treasure, including items of precious metals and rare stones, found singly or in collections, this presents particular challenges of ensuring archaeological stories are told as opposed to our imposition of ahistorical notions of rarity, economic value, aristanal skill and visual aesthetics or indeed fixating on the monetary value and reward acquired by the finders. For hoards, these challenges of heritage interpretation are amplified further, as the scale and variety of (say) coins, jewellery, and ingots readily presents a difficulty for museums to focus on the character and circumstances of deposition and the (often complex) uses, reuses and significances of those items, individually and collectively, in past societies.

The Staffordshire Hoard is a fascinating and recent case in point (see also Greaves this volume). Discovered in 2009 and reaching academic publication within a decade (Fern *et al.* 2019), this unexpected and unparalleled discovery constitutes 'the largest hoard of Anglo-Saxon gold ever found' (Birmingham Museums 2021). Its permanent display is shared between its joint owners in Stoke and Birmingham and it contains objects which provide vital material evidence regarding the Anglo-Saxon elite of the 7th century AD. How can these displays effectively communicate the story of the period from whence they came, but also delve into the complex and varied stories harboured within specific artefacts: their materials, making and meanings? More specifically still, how can museums engage visitors with a range of sensorial capabilities, and make their collections accessible in particular to those who find sound, rather than vision, their primary mode of interaction?

Accessibility and communication

Ensuring that the multiple elements of meaning, symbolism, and identity are explored in museum displays of archaeological treasures alongside broader narratives within and between archaeological periods, brings to the fore the challenge of communication, especially those with sensory impairments. The striking vivid forms, ornaments, colours and luminous character of many archaeological treasures further fixates on the visual medium.

This challenge applies to the physical displays of the Staffordshire Hoard. The museum displays at Birmingham and Stoke engage visitors with the objects themselves with clear texted captions. However, inevitably these displays are visually dominant and contain limited audio or other modes of interaction (although models of the weapons afford some tactile options). Hence, Coates (2019) makes a valid point applicable to both digital and real-world visitor experiences of the Staffordshire Hoard by saying that: 'the traditional museum experience of objects behind glass does not offer much to a person who is blind or partially-sighted'.

Meanwhile, the digital resources are rich in detail but again visually dominant (Birmingham Museums 2021). Visual impairment prevents some visitors from understanding the website, since it is primarily based on visual elements, including a digital tour of the objects within the hoard. This also applies to social media too, through which museums, heritage professionals and academics regularly disseminate information about their research and museum collections. Social media does have benefits for people with disabilities in providing an alternative venue to access information but also minimise social isolation and facilitate inclusion (McMillen and Alter 2017: 150). However, while most applications now afford the opportunity for text to be read aloud for users, this can leave images without audio descriptors difficult for the visually impaired to apprehend. Thus, digital media remains primarily a visual medium for reporting on archaeological 'treasures' which limits the interaction of the visually impaired.

Documented films at museums afford one medium that might assist the visually impaired, but again the focus is on visual communication. Audio descriptions providing voiceover explaining video presentations might be a further mechanism of engaging the visually impaired (identical to methods used in modern cinemas). However, there would be occurrences where visually impaired people are unable to access this form of interpretation, as certain museums do not have access to projectors, or screens to view the film. In any case, such voice-overs would not provide the detailed information about the artefacts and the stories behind them; these are available to those watching without visual impairments.

It should be noted that 'museums are evolving … to make a visit an enjoyable experience for all' (Coates 2019). Audio tours are a method that could be adapted to suit the needs of people with visual difficulties, by explaining the archaeological and cultural significance of the artefacts from a collection without the need for information boards. Coates (2019) explains further that museums do have tours for visually impaired people through audio description guides which involve 'trained docents leading small groups of people with visual difficulties around a museum'. Such facilities are interactive, invite participates to experience the displays, and can be a great tool for interpretation. Settings for a portable audio device carrying the recorded tour could also provide multi-language options, which allows international visitors to understand the information. However, it is also of consideration that people with visual impairments may be simply unable to visit the exhibition due to difficulties with navigating their way around the exhibition area itself, as well as difficulty finding their way around the building. Navigating within the museum may prove a hazard to themselves, for other visitors, and for the preservation of objects on display, whether it is instances where objects not protect by barriers are damaged, by people walking into each other, or the necessity to use stairs, as a result of a lift not existing in the building. In relation to safety, McConnell (2013: 21) does explain that museums do have 'staff trained in guiding, who could assist a blind visitor if necessary', allowing people to gain access to the treasure exhibition, and use audio tours to provide the information. In response to these possible occurrences, a more convenient method would need to be created that could provide detailed evidence to people with visual difficulties.

A podcast solution?

At present, podcasts provide the most versatile and viable solution to individuals with visual difficulties (see also Boyle 2019). They are fully flexible in regards to duration, structure and content, and a series of podcasts could readily facilitate access to the Staffordshire Hoard both digitally and on-site at various locations within the museum to suit visitor needs. This podcast could report what is known about an object within the collection, including what is currently displayed on information boards in the museums. Furthermore, research by Kang and Gretzel (2012: 155) explains that podcasts can contain hours of recorded information, which includes 'curators' comments, interviews with artists and scholars, conversations with experts, and even visitors' reflections. Therefore, this could be adapted for a podcast which contains interviews from people who took part in the excavation of the Staffordshire Hoard, and what the post-excavation research has revealed about the artefacts.

Podcasts have already been created which explain elements of the Staffordshire Hoard. The British History Podcast (2013a) featured Cathy Shingler, Interpretation Officer from the Stokes Museum Service, explaining the interpretation of the objects within the Staffordshire Hoard, including their uses and symbolism, and the reasons for them being deposited when and where they were found. A further example is an interview with Kevin Leahy, National Finds Adviser for early medieval metalwork for the Portable Antiquities Scheme (The British History Podcast 2013b). Leahy explained the archaeological and cultural significance of the hoard and also identified what he considered to be the most likely interpretation of its significance and deposition.

More recently, there have not been podcasts about the Staffordshire Hoard. Notably, there were no official podcasts connected to the publication of the final results. Regarding those cited above, they could readily be improved upon in association with more detailed images and audio accounts, including sounds evoking the past environments and processes linked to the items within the hoard, from the sounds of metalworking through to the sounds of their uses in battle, breakage and deposition. In short, audio media such as podcasts can be so much more than 'talking', but can world-build and story-tell using actors and re-enactors to create rich soundscapes conveying the early medieval world of the Staffordshire Hoard.

While podcasts can afford accurate information about archaeological treasures such as the Staffordshire Hoard, it could be countered that audio descriptions and commentaries fail to provide adequate authentic interpretations since they do not reveal the physical characteristics of the objects being discussed. When considering further reasons for accepting or rejecting podcast, Boyle (2017: 388) explains that the CRM (Cultural Resource Management) Archaeology Project created by the Archaeology Podcast Network 'features a number of active or previously active field archaeologists who share their opinions and experiences on different topics', which would provide an interesting listen on what professional archaeologists have to say about a particular archaeological discovery or exhibit. However, Boyle (2017: 389) also mentions that the podcast uses language that is often expert in nature, and is likely that members of the public who are not affiliated with the field of discussion might not understand what is being said. Furthermore, Proctor (2011: 29) explains that next generation technology for museum interpretation, such as multimedia tours, 'podcasts', and audio tours have all appeared with high expectations for their success, 'but have failed to transform significantly the interpretative landscape'. However, Trujillio (2019) explains that we now live in 'the era of the podcast', and this 'audio platform is proving to be instrumental for museums as they continue to cultivate audiences, as well as search for an accessible means to create connections between their collections and collective humanity'. This relates back to a key purpose of public archaeological engagement: to connect people with archaeological collections and ideas in innovative fashions and with original stories 'where it meets the world' (Moshenska 2017: 3, 13).

Podcasts which address different aspects and stories about the Staffordshire Hoard provide a largely untapped potential for public engagement. Given the additional challenges over recent years of museums being shut due to COVID-19 pandemic lockdown restrictions, the flexibility and accessibility of podcasts is enhanced even further. A host of themes can be explored, with or without requiring access to, and sight of, the artefacts themselves, including the simulation of the possible sounds of their creation, usage and destruction, and explaining the history of the specific objects within the Anglo-Saxon hoard. Thus, podcasts not only enhance accessibility, they allow people, including but not only those with impaired vision, to understand and appreciate a wealth of information without fixating on the visual character of the items themselves.

Conclusion

Using the Staffordshire Hoard as a case study, I argue that there are considerable benefits for audio tours to enhance and extend visitor engagements with archaeological treasures in the museum context, especially in the context where many museums face a particular challenge in narrating the Early Middle Ages (cf. Williams *et al.* 2020). Indeed, podcasts have a growing utility not only for those with visual impairments, but also those who simply wish to explore and learn beyond the primary mode of visual engagement, both at museums and via digital media online.

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Early Medieval Treasures Online: Strategies for Engagement

Caitlin R. Green

The use of early medieval 'treasures' in blogging and microblogging activity is examined and the author's own practice is discussed. Suggestions are made as to how public engagement can be effectively and responsibly promoted via the use of such material, along with the limitations and challenges involved. A comparison is also made between the use of such 'treasures' in physical museum spaces/media reports and blogging, as well as an assessment of the impact of different methods of engaging with and contextualising this material online.

Introduction

Since 2014, I have been writing an occasional academic blog at *caitlingreen.org* and running an academic Twitter feed under the handle *@caitlinrgreen*. The intention at the start was simply to share some brief notes on areas of my research on the blog and to disseminate links to these—alongside the occasional image or map that interested me—on the accompanying Twitter account. I had little expectation of an audience beyond a few specialists in early medieval archaeology/history and a handful of general readers. However, the past few years have seen a significant rise in engagement beyond anything initially expected, up to three million views per month on Twitter and up to 100,000 plus readers per blog post. The aim of the following piece is to briefly review my use of 'treasures' (used here in its colloquial sense of something that might be considered precious or valuable, rather than its modern strict legal sense), and especially 'early medieval treasures', in this blogging and microblogging activity. I consider how one can effectively and responsibly promote engagement via this material, whilst also identifying some of the challenges and limitations involved.

Inaccurate or contextless: 'early medieval treasures' on social media?

My own experience of engaging with the public archaeology of 'early medieval treasures' largely stems from irritation in my first few months on Twitter over the sharing of inaccurate, unattributed and uncontextualised images of 'treasure' from the 5th to 7th centuries AD. The issue of 'fake history' or 'bad history' accounts on Twitter has been raised repeatedly in recent years. In particular, there are multiple, very popular accounts sharing 'historical images' online often without attribution or context, some of which are not what they are claimed to be or are even outright fakes. Much of the wider interest in this phenomenon has focussed on accounts that share supposed historical photographs from the 19th and 20th centuries. Matt Novak drew attention to a number of examples of this material shared on popular blogs and a number of viral Twitter accounts—such as the now-suspended accounts *@History_Pics* and *@HistoricalPics* and the still-active *@HistoryInPics*, which currently has nearly 3.9 million followers—in 2013 (Novak 2013a, 2013b). This was followed up by a number of others, including Rebecca Onion for *Slate* magazine, who notably describes the posts as 'bad for history, bad for Twitter, and bad for you' (Onion 2014; Werner 2014; Coe 2017). Four chief criticisms are made by these authors of such accounts and their use of historical images. First, the pictures shared by many of the more popular Twitter accounts and blogs are often inaccurately labelled—for example, a bicycle-ambulance labelled 'World's first ever ambulance service', even though it was not—or even sometimes fake, as with supposed images of World War I dogfights. Secondly, the material shared is often predictable, repetitive and unsurprising where it is both genuine and correctly labelled, focussing on 'celebrities' such as Marilyn Monroe or 'big-name' people and events like JFK or World War II, rather than expanding their audiences' horizons. Thirdly, images are very often offered without attribution, so that general users browsing past are unable to easily find out more either about the image or the circumstances of its creation without undertaking a 'reverse image search'. Finally, the images are usually offered without significant commentary or context being provided for them.

Figure 1: A rock crystal ball pendant bound in gold, from a 7th-century double burial at Picquigny, France; now in the Ashmolean Museum (image: Kotomi Yamamura)

The situation with regard to 'early medieval treasures' is perhaps less egregious than that with modern photographs—there are few obvious fake images shared—but it nonetheless covers much the same set of concerns, albeit manifested in particular ways. In particular, contextual information in social media posts can be extremely meagre and is sometimes demonstrably false, posts can frequently fail to explain what actually makes an archaeological artefact interesting beyond its monetary worth/attractiveness (and so potentially encourage valuing them only for this and thus, indirectly, contribute to 'treasure hunting', the looting of sites, and the antiquities trade), and can even enable false narratives by not offering the wider context to some items, for example focussing on the supposedly 'Germanic' splendour of garnet cloisonné metalwork found in early medieval Britain (discussed further below). An illustration of some these aspects comes from an image that was being shared online around the start of 2015 by a now-deleted Twitter user, which showed what was said to be a gold-mounted early Anglo-Saxon crystal ball. The image (Figure 1) was undoubtedly beautiful, showing a well-lit and very fine example of crystal and gold work, the very definition of an 'early medieval treasure'. On the positive side, the image was not one of the 'celebrity' finds from this era, like those from Mound 1 at Sutton Hoo, which are shared extremely frequently on Twitter and more widely. As such, it was not the sort of predictable image mentioned above, and its broad implied dating was moreover correct if rather imprecise. However, in almost all other respects, the presentation was open to question. The photograph itself was clearly a professional image, but was shared without attribution, and a reverse-image search via Google Images revealed that it was not taken by the person sharing it (who posted under their own name). Instead, it was taken by a professional photographer named Kotomi Yamamura, who had placed it on the Flickr photo-sharing site under a Creative Commons BY-NC 2.0 license, which requires attribution if reused. The photo was also shared with a somewhat misleading description, claiming that it was an 'Early Anglo-Saxon' object, not acknowledging the fact that it was found in a 7th-century double grave at Picquigny, Hauts-de-France, France. Lastly, the image was presented with barely any context, standing alone simply as an early medieval 'pretty thing' with no way for the interested reader to find out more or understand the object as anything other than 'treasure'. Unlike in Kotomi Yamamura's original Flickr posting, there was no indication that the original could be seen in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (where it is displayed alongside 12 other objects from the same grave, AN 1909.661 A–L and i–ii, providing at least some local context for the piece). Similarly, there was no mention of the fact that it was a pendant—and thus a small object, rather than a large one as some passing readers might assume from its description as a crystal ball—nor that it fitted into a wider pattern of the usage of such bound crystal ball pendants and other rock crystal items in early medieval Europe, many of which weren't quite so 'pretty' as this item but

Figure 2: A gold solidus of the Byzantine emperor Anastasius (491–518) found on the Swedish island of Gotland (image: Gunnel Jansson SHM)

are nonetheless of considerable interest (see now, for example, Kornbluth 2015, 2019).

Blogging, tweeting and contextualising ‘early medieval treasures’

Despite the issues described above with many attempts to share this material online, there is nonetheless clearly a huge audience for images of ‘early medieval treasure’. Posts featuring famous items—such as the late 6th-/early 7th-century Sutton Hoo helmet, the gold and garnet cloisonné shoulder clasps from the same site, or the objects deposited in the 7th-century Staffordshire Hoard—regularly receive hundreds (and occasionally thousands) of ‘likes’ and ‘retweets’ on Twitter each time they are shared, whether by professional/institutional accounts or those of the wider public. Needless to say, if approached carefully and with a close eye on the issues raised above, this ready interest presents a great opportunity for archaeologists to get people engaged with the past, whilst also thinking about what these items mean, leading them on to a greater appreciation of early medieval treasures as more than simply ‘pretty things’ to be fleetingly admired.

My own way of approaching the use of such items over the past five years has been via a mixture of long-form blogs and shorter-form microblogs on Twitter which link multiple tweets together in a chain as a thread. In both cases, the aim has been to use the undoubted interest in these items as a gateway to contextualising them, whilst attempting to avoid the sort of pitfalls already noted. A brief examination of the usage statistics of my blog at *caitlingreen.org* and my Twitter feed at *@caitlinrgreen*, with over 25,000 followers, demonstrates the level of interest that exists for a more contextualised approach to such material, and particularly one that not infrequently sets the material in its wider international/global context. With regards to the blog, this has tended to average around 13,800 views per post over the last 20 posts (up to early 2020), with some of the posts occasionally attracting much wider audiences. For example, a discussion of late antique/early medieval finds originating in the eastern Mediterranean Byzantine Empire showcased multiple images of items that might be considered ‘treasure’, such as a gold solidus of the Byzantine Emperor Anastasius (491–518) found on the Swedish island of Gotland (Figure 2). The blog post sought to situate these ‘treasures’ within a wider context of a ‘global’ distribution of 5th- to 7th-century Byzantine objects that stretches from Ireland to Japan and northern Sweden to Tanzania (Figure 3), and offered detailed links to further reading and bibliography on both the treasures and the underlying trade routes—up to late 2020, this single blog post had been viewed over 100,000 times (Green 2017a). Such blogs can, however, take a long time to write, and my activity has tended to be far less frequent than is the case for some academic blogging exercises, such as Howard Williams’ *Archaeodeath* project (Williams 2019), with usually no more than one blog per month and sometimes much less. Much more frequent have been my Twitter threads, which have a correspondingly greater rate of engagement too. Whereas the blog gets up to 26,000 views per month when new posts are being published, Twitter can have a far, far greater reach—as Figure 4 shows, Twitter’s own analytics service (*analytics.twitter.com*) records up to three million impressions per month at *@caitlinrgreen*, although the average is usually more in the region of one to two million per month when it is active.

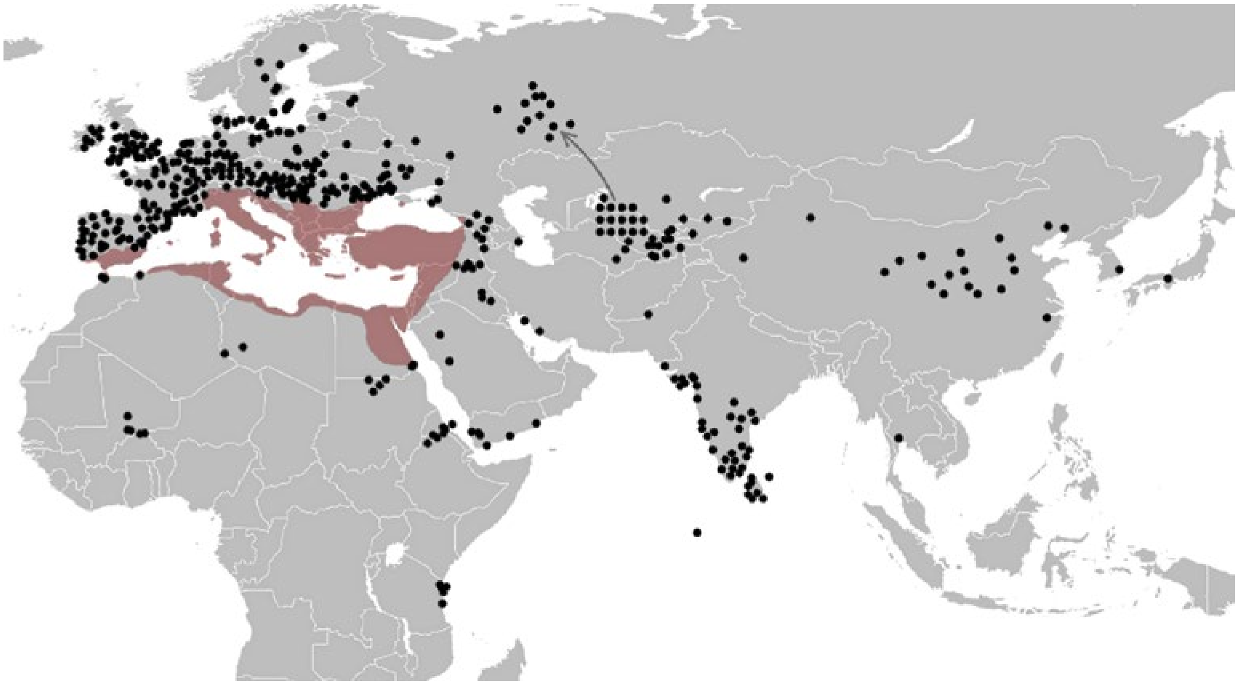

Figure 3: The distribution of Early Byzantine items and contemporary imitations found outside of the boundaries of the mid-6th-century empire, along with a depiction of the empire during the reign of Justinian, c. AD 565 (image: Green 2017)

Figure 4: Details of the report on analytics.twitter.com about the @caitlinrgreen Twitter account for October 2019

With respect to Twitter, my aim has been usually (and increasingly) to emulate the blog or even a short lecture experience in miniature on this platform. When discussing ‘early medieval treasures’, I try to meet the minimum standards indicated above of offering an accurate description of the item along with an attribution for any images used, where appropriate, and then to contextualise the material either in its immediate situation (for example, as part of a grave-group), in terms of related items, or with respect to specific aspects of its character, creation or use. For the most part, this is most easily and most successfully done via ‘threading’, allowing an argument or thread of discussion to be pursued and developed more effectively in defined steps than is possible in a single tweet with its 140 character (to November 2017) or

Figure 5: Two gold and garnet cloisonne items from the Staffordshire Hoard treasure when they were displayed at Bristol Museum (image: Caitlin Green)

280 character limit (to the present). Certainly, Twitter's own analytics service indicates that tweets that form part of such a discursive thread do significantly better than those that are stand-alone, partly due to the fact that if one adds a tweet to an existing thread, then Twitter 'resurfaces' the initial tweet in the thread along with the preceding one to account followers who are scrolling past. In general, I have found that a stand-alone tweet might hope to gather 5000 to 15,000 or so impressions, but if it initiates a thread, then the tweet can hope to gather many times more views than this, with the initial tweet of a thread on the 'global distribution' of Early Byzantine material culture that was posted on 21 March 2017 currently standing at around 625,000 views, with over 1700 retweets and 2500 likes, and tweets further down the thread themselves having up to *c.* 115,000 views each (Green 2017b).

To give a few examples of such threads and their use for contextualisation, the above image of the rock crystal pendant bound in gold from a 7th-century double burial at Picquigny, France, was the starting point for a thread posted on *@caitlinrgreen* on 28 October 2019 (Green 2019a). The first tweet identified the item, shared the image with an attribution link to Kotomi Yamamura's original Flickr posting, and noted where it could now be seen (the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford). Subsequent posts shared images of comparable items from, for example, grave 45 at Chessell Down (Isle of Wight), the probable burial of the 6th-century Merovingian Queen Wisigard, and the 5th-century burial of Childeric I, along with links for further reading pointing to Genevra Kornbluth's article on Merovingian rock crystal (Kornbluth 2015). It then moved on to briefly look at other early medieval uses of rock crystal, including for buckles and buttons from Merovingian Gaul and the Byzantine world and spindle whorls in early Anglo-Saxon/Merovingian graves. Such a presentation allows the reader to rapidly understand some of the wider context of these 'treasures', and moreover contrasts with the presentation of the same find in the physical Ashmolean Museum, where it is simply displayed in the context of its grave-group and has no easily discoverable entry in the museum's online collection database.

Another recent Twitter thread from October 2019 looked at the use of the dramatic gold and garnet cloisonné metalwork of the early medieval period that features so frequently in depictions of 'early medieval treasure' (Green 2019b). These are often offered as the quintessential 'Anglo-Saxon treasure' in online social media posts, which tend to recycle the same few images of the same few 'treasures'—usually items from Sutton Hoo or the Staffordshire Hoard—without discussing them further or contextualising them, such as by *@artinsociety* on 20 October 2020 (the garnet cloisonné shoulder-clasps from Sutton Hoo), *@CARAA_Center* on 8 June 2019 (the Sutton Hoo purse-lid), and *@bristolmuseum* on 23 November 2020 (sharing an image of a gold-and-garnet sword button from the Staffordshire Hoard under the hashtag *#WarriorTreasures* without stating its findspot). The starting point here was photographs taken by the author of the famous 7th-century Staffordshire Hoard when elements of it were on temporary display at Bristol Museum in 2016, beginning with a gold-and-garnet bird of prey (Figure 5), before going on to try and put these in their Eurasian context (see further Fern *et al.* 2019 on the hoard). Subsequent threaded tweets showed examples of this decorative style found in the 5th-century tomb of the Merovingian king Childeric (Chifflet 1655, see Figure 6); on a 7th-century Lombardic S-shaped brooch from Cividale del Friuli, northern Italy; a 6th-century disc-on-bow brooch from the Swedish island of Gotland; and other garnet cloisonné items from early medieval southern Germany, Switzerland, San Marino, Hungary and Romania, demonstrating rapidly for the passing reader how widespread the style was beyond 7th-century England and thus how it was not a specifically insular form of decorative metalwork, as might be potentially assumed from much of the online treatment of the Staffordshire Hoard and similar finds in Britain. The following tweets then offered examples of garnet cloisonné from the Crimean Peninsula and Kyrgyzstan, and even on a dagger found in an early 6th-century Silla tomb in Korea (with a link to Lee and Leidy 2013: 132–40, who discuss the latter find), demonstrating just how far east it travelled. These tweets were supplemented by links to two papers by Noël Adams on garnet cloisonné work for further reading, making the additional point that the earliest examples thus far known of such work come from Hatra, Iraq—dated to the early 3rd century AD—and Ureki, Georgia—dated to the late 3rd–early 4th century—and so emphasising that the style itself is arguably neither 'early medieval' nor purely 'Germanic' in origin, as is sometimes casually claimed online (Adams 2003, 2010). A link to the Archaeology Data Service publication of the Staffordshire Hoard objects (Barbican Research Associates 2019) and Helena Hamerow's recent chapter on garnets in early medieval England (Hamerow 2017) were then provided, highlighting the wide distribution of this material across Britain and the fact that the raw garnets themselves are thought, up to the 7th century, to have their origins in India and are thus indicative of long-distance trading in

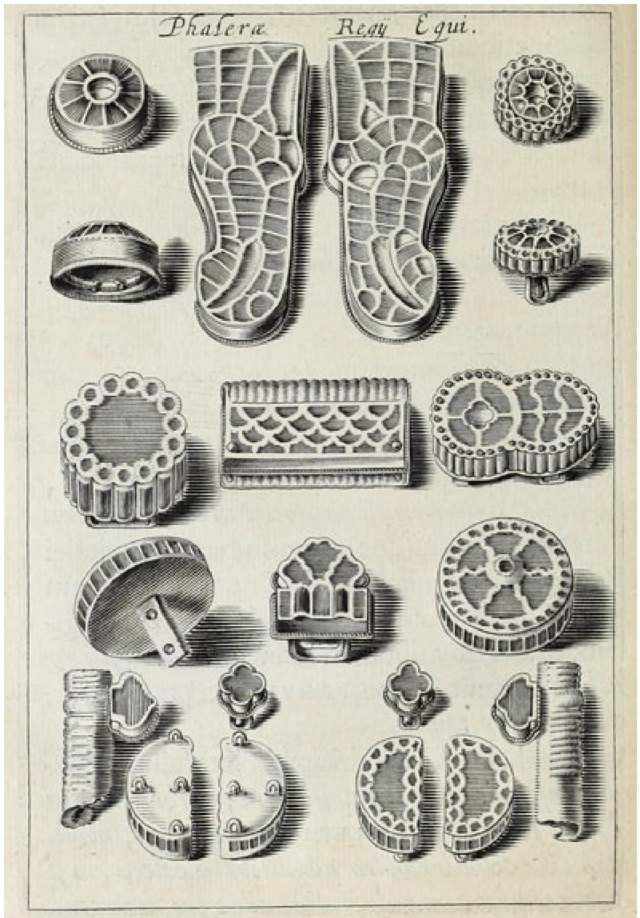

Figure 6: Some of the gold and garnet cloissoné items found in the 5th-century tomb of the Merovingian king Childeric in the 17th century (image: Chifflet 1655)

Figure 7: An early medieval glass drinking horn, dated to the late 6th/ early 7th century, probably made in northern Italy (image: The Met)

this era (see also Calligaro *et al.* 2002; Périn *et al.* 2006). Finally, the thread finished with an image of the magnificent 7th-century gold and garnet cloisonné brooch from Wijnaldum, the Netherlands, which was recently demonstrated to have been made with Indian garnets from Rajasthan (Fries Museum n.d.).

A thread on early medieval glass 'treasures' from October 2020 followed a similar model, the key for me being, once again, to try and to ensure that the 'treasure' is somehow explained (Green 2020). The initial image of this thread was of the 7th-century glass drinking-horn from Rainham, London (British Museum 1952,0204.1; see Evison 1955), which has been occasionally shared online by both individual and institutional accounts, for example via @*britishmuseum* on 13 May 2020, when it was posted without a findspot (aside from a general 'England' locale) and with no links for further reading or comparable items/additional discussion provided beyond suggesting that recycled glass was used in its manufacture (though see Freestone *et al.* 2008). In the thread posted on *@caitlinrgreen*, the glass horn was first put into the context of a selection of other glass drinking horns from early medieval Europe, including the late 6th- to early 7th-century Lombardic horn in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Figure 7 and Brown *et al.* 2000: 277–9). The thread then went on to examine further examples of early medieval glass vessels from England and the Continent, most especially 'claw-beakers', including one found in Vendel grave XII which may have been exported from Kent to Sweden (Evison 1982). There was then a brief discussion of the fact that many of these early medieval glass items offer evidence of long-distance trading: before the 7th century, they were fashioned from raw glass imported from the south-eastern Mediterranean—made in huge blocks, probably akin to the 9th-century example weighing nine tons found at Bet She'arim, Israel—and subsequently they were manufactured from imported glass that had been adulterated with potash-rich wood ash (Freestone *et al.* 2008; Van Wersch 2015). Finally, the 'claw-beakers' illustrated in the thread were noted to have arguably evolved from Late Roman beakers with dolphin-shaped appliques (with links to Evison 1982 and Evison 2008 as further reading), and the long-distance early medieval trade in Byzantine raw glass was placed in both its local and global contexts. In particular, there were brief examinations of the wider distribution of Early Byzantine and Indian Ocean/Red Sea imports in early medieval Britain/western Europe—linking through to a discussion of this on my blog (Green 2018a)—and of the evidence for Byzantine raw glass travelling not only to the far west but also to the east, where it was used to make Jatim beads in fifth- to seventh-century Indonesia (Lankton *et al.* 2008).

Needless to say, not every reader will choose to interact with the sort of additional material described above, with posts further down 'threads' usually having notably fewer views than the lead post.

Nonetheless, by offering this additional material, those who are interested have the option of reading further, and, by presenting some contextual material and analysis within the thread, it becomes more likely that such contextualisation will be effective, as opposed to simply providing a link from a standalone tweet to an explanatory blog post. Rates of 'link clicking' are relatively low even on the most popular posts—on the previously mentioned tweet about Early Byzantine global distributions, which was viewed 625,000 times, the link included in the post was only clicked around 5000 times (a 'conversion rate' of *c.* 0.8%), whereas the tweets added as a thread were each viewed tens-of-thousands to hundreds-of-thousands of times. It ought to be emphasised that it is, of course, not practical to suggest that every tweet involving an 'early medieval treasure' should contextualise the item in detail in this way—as is the case with 'long-form' blog posts, such threads take time to research and write, and I readily admit that only a proportion of Twitter posts can do this. However, it is relatively easy to at least include the find-spot, if known, perhaps share a brief word about why the item is interesting beyond it being a 'treasure' (or possibly share some comparable objects), and a link to further reading/a museum catalogue, even if such links are only rarely utilised compared to information provided in a thread.

Twitter and the display of 'treasure' in museums

Issues over use of early medieval treasures as discrete, uncontextualized and sometimes even unprovenanced 'pretty things' are not limited to social media accounts, of course, but also occur in 'real world' museum presentations of these items (Daubney this volume). In this light, it is worth noting that online blogs and microblogs can act as useful supplements to what is being offered, or can possibly be offered, in a museum context, allowing both the opportunity and space to relatively easily expand upon these displays. For example, sometimes they can offer a different perspective to the contextualisation offered in the physical museum. In the Ashmolean Museum, the aforementioned 7th-century bound crystal pendant from Picquigny is placed in its immediate grave-group context, and then within a wider set of display cases dealing with early medieval material culture, but is not situated in relation to other rock crystal objects from the early medieval period, nor with any real indication of why the item might be interesting beyond being simply 'treasure'. Such a presentation in the museum might involve considerable effort (at least in terms of the first point), bringing objects from multiple collections together, and require additional space, display materials and planning. However, on Twitter this supplementary contextualisation can be quickly achieved, not least due to the increasing availability of both images of the objects via both individual museum online collections and, especially in this case, private photographic collections such as Genevra Kornbluth's invaluable archive at *www.kornbluthphoto.com*, which not only makes her photographs freely available for non-commercial reuse but also indexes the items pictured by material, iconography, type and so forth (Kornbluth 2013). Likewise, the move in recent years to sharing academic papers freely online via sites such as *academia.edu* and *researchgate.net* allows one to quickly point casual readers to more detailed discussions that they can access without barriers.

In other instances, museum displays do not offer even this much context and information. The Collection, Lincoln (opened in 2005), is, in general, a well-conceived museum space that effectively takes one through some of the highlights of the museum stores, and is well-used by the local community and visitors to the area. As part of this, it includes several display cases that hold early medieval items. Some of these are very nicely displayed and have informative labels detailing why the items are interesting, where they came from, possible parallels and the like—for instance, their impressive collection of early medieval hanging-bowls, a gold and garnet cloisonné insect pendant that was found near to Horncastle (which it notes was an unusual modification of an earlier item), and a silver boar's head terminal that was also found in that area (Figure 8). However, as is the case in many museums both large and small, a handful of objects are displayed with only the bare minimum of information about them. For example, one case contains a collection of unrelated items including a large glass bead that has been compared to one attached to the 9th-century Trewhiddle silver scourge from Cornwall, two lovely 7th-century gold and garnet pendants (one from a Roman villa site that has produced 5th- and 6th-century 'Anglo-Saxon'

Figure 8: A silver boar's head terminal in The Collection, Lincoln, possibly from a helmet and found at Horncastle, Lincolnshire; it has tiny garnet eyes and defined tusks (image: Caitlin Green)

Figure 9: Four items in The Collection, Lincoln. The two tiny gold and garnet pendants were found at Low Toynton and Glentham, Lincolnshire; the amethyst bead was found at Riby Park, Lincolnshire, and the rock crystal item was found at Salmonby, Lincolnshire (images: Caitlin Green)

finds too), an amethyst bead, a rock crystal spindle whorl/bead, and a lovely late 8th-century silver-gilt disc-headed pin from a triple pin-set. These items are simply labelled 'Beads. Strings of colourful glass, amber and crystal beads were a popular for jewellery. Some beads may have had magical qualities', with no findspots or dating indicated, nor mention of the non-bead items (Figure 9). This situation is in many ways comparable to the presentation of objects as simply 'pretty things' to be briefly admired online with no way of finding out more, and moreover fails to emphasise how interesting some of these 'treasures' are, either in and of themselves or because they are found in interesting local contexts or made from materials that had been transported considerable distances.

If some physical museum displays are not that dissimilar from many social media posts in not providing the sort of contextualisation we might wish to see, or even sometimes basic details of the finds (and so require research and significant elaboration if they are to be effectively shared online as anything other than simply 'treasure'), in other instances the museum displays offer extremely detailed contextualised discussions. In such cases, Twitter threads allow you to effectively share the museum experience, and in turn promoting it, whilst offering an opportunity to add in extra reading and related objects that help build a picture. For example, in 2019 the Royal Cornwall Museum at Truro hosted a display of the Courtald Bag, a decorated metalwork bag made *c.* 1300–35 in Mosul, Iraq, for a noblewoman of the Il-Khanid dynasty, along with related metalwork and items from their own collections (Figure 10). The display and contextualisation was very complete and a subsequent Twitter thread that I posted on this was largely drawn from the materials on display, with the addition of a links to a blog by the British Library as further reading (Green 2019c; Sims-Williams 2014) along with two examples of 14th-century items made in the Egypt/Syria area that were exported to Britain actually in the medieval period (the wonderful enamelled and gilded glass beaker known as the 'Luck of Edenhall' and the 'Raqqa ware' pottery recovered from Grosmont Castle, Wales). The resultant thread proved very popular, being read over 200,000 times, with 500 retweets and 1545 likes.

Using treasure as a means to an end?

On the whole, I rarely use the term 'treasure' in either my blogs or on Twitter, except when talking about specific 'Treasures' (that is, specific named discoveries where the word is already part of the literature), such as the early medieval Treasure of Guarrazar and the Domagnano Treasure (cf. Williams this volume). It is not always the most helpful term, arguably supporting the excessive focus on 'treasure hunting', 'pretty' items, and monetary value in the media that other participants in this conference have highlighted. On the other hand, I cannot ignore the fact that my own Twitter threads may, to some degree unconsciously perhaps, use treasure items as a sort of gateway to more 'normal' finds, which are equally important in archaeological and historical terms but, if posted on their own, might be thought likely to elicit relatively little response. However, as part of a thread of items that might be classed as 'treasure', such finds end up being viewed tens of thousands of times. For example, a 6th- or 7th-century Byzantine coin found several inches down in a rock pool on Perranporth beach, Cornwall, which is heavily obscured by fossil accretion (Figure 11), was posted as one of several 'non-treasure' items in the above thread on the global distribution of Early Byzantine objects that featured large numbers of treasure objects and was consequently seen by many more people due to its presence in the midst of the thread, as was a copper-alloy 6th-century Byzantine coin found in southern India/Sri Lanka. Likewise, a probably 8th- to 9th-century AD oak shovel recovered from the tin streamworks at Boscarne, Bodmin (Cornwall: Figure 12), was posted as part of a thread on the Cornish tin trade from October 2019 that used an image of the fabulous Bronze Age Nebra Sky Disc from Germany—now known to have been made using Cornish tin and gold (Haustein *et al.* 2010 and Ehser *et al.* 2011)—as its start point. The same thread also included a large number of other non-treasure items such as a Bronze Age antler pick from a tin bed near Truro, Cornwall, a broken ring of Cornish tin dated *c.* 950–700 BC from Vårdinge, Sweden, and a perhaps 7th-century AD tin ingot marked with a cross from Praa Sands, Cornwall (Green 2019d).

Figure 10: The Courtald Bag, supposedly the oldest surviving handbag in the world; a decorated metalwork bag made c. 1300–35 in Mosul, Iraq, for a noblewoman of the Il-Khanid dynasty, on display in the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro (image: Caitlin Green)

It is naturally worth considering whether using treasure to engage in this way is necessarily very much more 'moral' than how newspapers often use 'Treasure! Look how much it is worth!' as a gateway to more detailed information, as in the case of a 2019 *Plymouth Herald* article on the Nebra Sky Disc, which uses a headline reading 'The £1million Sky Disc of Nebra contains gold from Cornwall' as a hook for a report that then goes into detail on the disc and recent research into its origins (Atkins 2019). Although I largely avoid the use of the term 'treasure' and the question of the value of any of the items I post, the effect is not too dissimilar. At the same time, it is also worth pondering how necessary such an approach is in those cases where the 'treasure' and its contextualisation is not the primary focus of the blog or microblog. After all, my blog posts and Twitter threads on non-treasure topics often do equally well in terms of engagement when compared to those that feature 'treasure' heavily. For example, the most popular post on *caitlingreen.org* is one entitled 'The medieval 'New England': a forgotten Anglo-Saxon colony on the north-eastern Black Sea coast', which leads with a monochrome map and includes images of only a single thing that might be remotely considered treasure in the sense used here, a 12th-century manuscript depiction of the Varangian Guard from the richly decorated Madrid Skylitzes (Green 2015a). This blog post has over 125,000 views, and was the starting point for a Twitter thread in May 2015 that was retweeted 743 times and liked 925 times (a Twitter analytics report is unfortunately unavailable due

Figure 11: A 6th- or 7th-century Byzantine coin found several inches down in a rock pool on Perranporth beach, Cornwall (image: Royal Institution of Cornwall)

Figure 12: A probably 8th-/9th-century AD oak shovel from the tin streamworks at Boscarne, Bodmin (Cornwall), on display in the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro (image: Caitlin Green)

to the age of the tweet), as well ultimately being reworked into an article for the *BBC History Magazine* (Green 2015g, 2019e). Likewise, a March 2018 blog and associated thread on an eleventh-century Chinese coin found in Britain used the copper-alloy Northern Song dynasty coin as its lead image and included very few obvious 'treasure' images, but was still popular on Twitter, being viewed over 155,000 times (although the blog itself was relatively less popular, being read only about 7500 times: Green 2018a–b).

However, in both of the above cases, the lack of an obvious 'treasure' was perhaps countered by a 'surprising' or 'interesting' title; a fairer comparison may be with discussions of 'unsurprising' non-treasure finds and topics, such as the distribution of late medieval St Nicholas tokens, Roman-era slave-shackles, or the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian finds from Ketsby DMV (Deserted Medieval Village) in the Lincolnshire Wolds, all of which have received respectable but by no means remarkable levels of engagement on either the blog or Twitter. The blog post on St Nicholas tokens was published in 2015 and has so far been read 2685 times, and the most recent Twitter thread on this topic (posted in 2019 on St Nicholas Day, 6 December) only recorded just over 11,000 impressions (Green 2015b, 2019f). The blog post on Romano-British slave-shackles and figurines also published that year has been read 3752 times, although it has proven somewhat more popular on Twitter with 169 retweets and 170 likes (once again, no Twitter Analytics figures are available)—however, it should be noted that I have regularly 'resurfaced' this post over the past few years on Twitter by adding new tweets to the thread, something that brings it back into my followers' timelines and definitely inflates these figures (Green 2015c–d). Finally, the blog post on the Ketsby DMV finds, despite their interest (this is a site with evidence for Late Roman through to Early Modern activity, including finds indicative of Middle Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian metalworking), has seen only 1584 views, with the lead post in the Twitter thread only attracting 53 retweets and 86 likes, despite being once again 'resurfaced' every so often (Green 2015e–f).

Impact and limitations

Turning to the question of impact, there are several ways that this might be measured, the most obvious being either the number of followers that the Twitter account at *@caitlinrgreen* has amassed (25,275 as of October 2020) or the number of views and impressions that blogs and tweets receive—with around 13,800 readers per blog on average (up to more than 100,000 in some cases) and one to two million impressions on Twitter in an average active month, it is arguable that the issue over academic blogging usually receiving 'relatively limited audiences' (Williams 2019: 129) doesn't fully apply in this case. As to the relative 'reach' of both methods, although Twitter impressions tend to be far greater than anything achieved by the blog, blog posts seem have a far longer 'shelf-life' than Twitter posts, seeing significant numbers of visitors for years afterwards. In contrast, Twitter threads are apt to be much more ephemeral and rapidly buried under new content, unless they are deliberately resurfaced through the addition of new tweets to the end of the thread at regular intervals (something that I try to do, as described above). Thus in August 2020, I took a complete break from Twitter and saw a more than 95 per cent decrease in impressions compared with the average fully active month, whilst in the same month blog posts from 2015–19 continued to see significant numbers of readers drawn from search engines and social media sharing not initiated by me, running at roughly the same levels as the same month the preceding year and the average for the year (around five to ten thousand or so views a month when no posts are being made). This longevity of blog posts can be further illustrated by looking at the most read posts across a whole year, in this case 2018—in that year, my most popular blog post was published in 2015 ('Medieval New England'), followed by one from 2017 (on Byzantine exports) and then one from 2016 (on camels in early medieval Europe), with posts actually written in 2018 coming in at only numbers four and six in the top ten, a similar situation to that described for other academic blogs (e.g. Williams 2019: Table 6).

With regard to the actual reading audience, this data is only accessible for the blog, which is primarily viewed by people identified as coming from the UK (*c.* 37%) or the USA (*c.* 28%), with far smaller numbers from non-Anglophone countries such as Turkey (2.26%), Germany (2.03%) and France (1.99%)—in total, 16.85% of the audience was registered as using a non-English language interface by Google Analytics, however, which is not insignificant. The majority of readers accessed the site via a mobile device (53.9%), although in real terms this makes little difference as I have disabled the default 'mobile view' option available in Blogger (the blogging service I use) so everyone sees the desktop site, which I have more control over. In terms of interaction, this is also disabled on the blog, with no comments allowed. Whilst much has been written more widely about how blogs allow and encourage reader participation and debate, comments on academic blogs tend to be rare (Caraher and Reinhard 2015; Williams 2019: 133) and I have found that these seldom add anything of value, so instead use the blog without them, something that seems thus far to have had no obvious negative impact on either engagement or reach.

In terms of the regular audience for my Twitter account, this can only be assessed informally due to the limitations of the available analytic tools, but the vast majority of my followers appear to be members of the general public, alongside a much smaller number of academics and metal-detector hobbyists, so far as they are identifiable from their Twitter profiles. Comments via replies to my tweets are enabled by default on Twitter; on the whole they confirm the above impressions of the audience, and usually consist of questions and comments relating to the materials posted. Significantly, only very rarely do these comments focus on monetary value of any 'treasure' items posted or indicate an interest in 'treasure-hunting'; more commonly, they are comments on either the workmanship of the items or the contextualisation of the pieces as presented in the threads. On the whole, as with the blog, I largely avoid getting involved in lengthy discussions on my academic account aside from answering direct and sensible questions or thanking people, something in part informed by my adjacency to the Twitter-storm over ethnic diversity in Roman Britain in 2017 revolving around a BBC cartoon and Professor Mary Beard (extensively covered by the media, e.g. Heighton 2017; Flood 2017; Faculty of Classics 2017). The latter saw a large volume of comments, some rather unpleasant, that objected to the idea of diversity in the past, despite its solid academic grounding. The resulting storm demonstrated well the anecdotal principle that by engaging with those arguing in bad faith or abusively on Twitter, one simply encourages them and boosts them in the Twitter algorithm, so that their comments are seen by more people, including one's own followers, who nowadays see not only retweets from accounts that they follow, but also their likes and other interactions (Ahmed and Papadopoulos 2019).

Looking at the question of impact in the real world, the blog itself has had some demonstrable impact in this arena, with individual blog posts and/or the whole blog cited in recent academic papers and books (for example, Fitzpatrick-Matthews and Fleming 2016; Hsy and Orlemanski 2017; Lane 2017; Rigby 2017; Simmons 2017; Morely 2018; Gabriele 2019; Mailhammer and Vennemann 2019; Ocón 2019; Pryor 2019; Minniti and Sajjadi 2019; Keene 2020; Preiser-Kapeller 2020a; Preiser-Kapeller 2020b; Rabinowitz 2020; Rees 2020). Posts from the blog have also been picked up by other publication outlets, with a blog post on the post-1066 movement of Anglo-Saxon warriors and their families from England to the Byzantine Empire (Green 2015a) being turned into an article for the *BBC History Magazine*, which was in turn covered by *The Times* newspaper and the *Daily Mail* (Green 2019c; Bridge 2019; Ibbetson 2019) and was, moreover, used as the starting point for a new Twitter thread discussing the evidence that was viewed 165,000 times. Another blog post, on the archaeological evidence for migrants from Africa in pre-modern Britain (Green 2016), also featured in the previously mentioned controversy over ethnic diversity in Roman Britain, when it was one of four articles cited by the University of Cambridge's Faculty of Classics in a statement in support of Mary Beard and the reality of ethnic diversity in that period (Faculty of Classics 2017). Further blog posts have been picked up by local press outlets and online magazines, with one on St Ia of St Ives and finds of Early Byzantine material in Cornwall being covered by *The St Ives Times & Echo*, one on the medieval coastline of Lincolnshire and archaeological finds from the coastal area being covered by the *Skegness Standard*, and a third on the potential evidence for the use of camels in Roman Britain and Europe becoming the subject of a long piece in *Forbes* magazine (Carver 2018; Gadd 2017; Bond 2017).

Evidence for the real-world impact of my Twitter account *@caitinrgreen* is less solid away from the statistics regarding followers and impressions already cited, although it is likely that the success of the various blog posts and their citation and use by interested academic researchers and other outlets stemmed from their dissemination via my Twitter account—this certainly seems to have been the case with the article for *BBC History Magazine*, at least. In addition to this, there have been a handful of citations of tweets from the account, including in an article in *The Guardian* in relation to the above controversy over ethnic diversity in Roman Britain (Flood 2017). This comparative lack of demonstrable citation and impact is unsurprising, however, as the ephemeral nature of Twitter makes any links to Twitter threads inherently unstable, and so they are much less likely to be cited in more long-lasting treatments. For example, if one 'locks' or 'protects' one's Twitter account (a common way of dealing with the occasional trolling that takes place on social media), then all links to preceding Twitter threads are automatically broken and rendered useless until that account is unlocked. Likewise, it is not uncommon to encounter academic Twitter accounts that regularly or occasionally delete previous tweets (or sometimes the entire account), especially if the account is used for discussion as well as academic outreach, with the result that old tweets are lost unless archived on a separate site, as was the case at the time of writing with respect to an intriguing account dealing with Medieval Indonesia: *@siwaratrikalpa*. If this happens to a blog, the text can often be recovered by a service such as the 'Internet Archive' (*archive.org*), but tweets are not usually archived via this method. Finally, academic Twitter users, like non-academic users, are free to change their @-name or handle at will, something that does not necessarily break links but can cause confusion. On the other hand, it is worth remembering that many supposedly static websites and blogs occasionally break citations too, one example being the British Museum website, which has broken hypertext links to its collection items at least twice in the past five years via website updates.

Conclusion

The use of archaeological 'treasures' online thus seems to mirror, in many ways, the wider issues over popular historical image-sharing accounts online, and especially on Twitter. In particular, we need to be wary of using 'early medieval treasures' as simply 'pretty things' or eye-catching, valuable objects to briefly entertain or grab attention, without providing at least some way for the interested reader to discover more about the object or understand it as anything other than 'treasure'. At the very least, we should aim to provide an accurate description and provenance, along with an acknowledgement of the source of any images where possible. Ideally, we should also aim to place the 'treasure' in some kind of context and explain *why* it is interesting, beyond its status as 'treasure', and thus offer a genuine alternative to 'bad' or 'fake history' accounts for those members of the public who are interested in the period. Blogs can be an effective way of achieving this, as can Twitter threads that link multiple tweets together to provide context and comparisons, and it is clear that both methods can have a significant impact in terms of the size and diversity of audiences that can be reached, as well as on offline media and academic studies. Of the two, Twitter threads reach by far the largest audiences, some posted from *@caitlinrgreen* being seen over half a million times, although blog posts tend to have a more stable and long-lasting readership and are more likely to be cited.

It is worth noting that the issues over the use of treasure are not confined to the online sphere nor individuals' online accounts—similar issues over the presentation of items of 'treasure' without adequate details or contextualisation can be sometimes identified in museum spaces too and in online accounts run by museums. In this context, Twitter threads and blogs can perhaps act as a useful supplement to real-world displays, enabling a relatively easy contextualisation of early medieval and other treasures, where it would be difficult or costly for museums to do this in reality (for example, requiring objects from many collections to be brought together), and enabling academic specialists to have an increased role in the interpretation of these collections for the general public. Twitter threads can also be used to share particularly effective museum displays to a wider audience and so promote them, whilst adding to the contextualisation offered by these. Finally, it can be pondered whether the use of early medieval and other 'treasures' as a gateway to more normal finds is either any more moral than the use of 'treasure' as a hook for a detailed article, as seen in some media usage, or if it is necessary—with regard to the latter point, it is noteworthy that blog posts and Twitter threads that use either treasure or 'surprising' titles do notably better than those that do not.

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Rest in Pieces: ‘Treasure’ and the Public Perception of Grave Goods in England and Wales

Adam Daubney

Grave goods are ‘treasures’ in the sense of their potential to illuminate the past, and ‘treasures’ in the sense that they were valued by the deceased or the community who buried them. Grave goods may also on occasion be ‘treasure’ in the legal sense of the term in England and Wales, for which there is the potential for financial reward if found by the public. These different perceptions of treasure create an important intersection between the profession of archaeology and the public discovery of archaeological mortuary sites, in which grave goods often become contested material. This chapter explores the ethical, legal, and practical issues that arise from the public discovery of grave goods.

Introduction

Artefacts buried with the ancient dead – commonly known as ‘grave goods’ – have played a prominent role in the public perception of archaeology for decades. To archaeologists and the public alike, grave goods are both sensational and poignant *treasures*; sensational in that they have capacity to illuminate the life of the deceased, and poignant in that they accompanied the deceased into the grave. In many respects, the widespread public use of the word *treasure* to describe grave goods is rather apt. If *treasure* is understood as ‘anything valued and preserved as precious’ (Concise Oxford Dictionary 2004), then this applies to all grave goods: each has value in its potential to illuminate aspects of the past, including the life, beliefs, and customs of the deceased and/or the deceased’s community. Only when the word ‘treasure’ becomes associated with notions of financial value or as collectable commodities does it become problematic.

Yet, for all that grave goods are widely admired as archaeological *treasures*, the protection afforded to them varies greatly across the globe. This adds a complication in the form of culturally viable laws and expectations for archaeologists dealing with such material. In England, the law protects human remains but is largely silent on the matter of associated grave goods. This results in a situation where it is possible for grave goods to be privately owned, which in turn can make the engagement of hobbyists who search for archaeological artefacts somewhat contentious.

The public perception of ‘treasure’ adds an additional layer of complexity. Spectacular discoveries of archaeological objects are frequent occurrences in England, in part owing to the popularity of hobbyist metal detecting. The fate of these objects inevitably comes down to private or public ownership. This fate is, for the most part, influenced by monetary value and the ways in which the finder and/or landowner understand the archaeological implications of the longer-term curation of artefacts. Public understanding of the issues is inevitably shaped by the heritage profession and perhaps more so by popular media. Naturally, public discoveries of ‘treasure’ are widely reported in the media where attention is usually split equally between the find and the finder. Yet, it is a strange paradox that when the media reports about treasures being ‘saved’ *for* the nation, it implies that it is *from* private ownership that the finds need saving.

This situation gives cause for reflection; does attention to ‘treasure’ arise from the lack of antiquities laws in England and Wales, or does it have more to do with the way that the word *treasure* has been (mis)used by professionals and the public alike? The situation is more complex than first appears. What exactly makes archaeological grave goods ‘treasures’ in the sense of them being worthy of protecting? Are grave goods less worthy of protection if they have become separated from the body, or if the grave has been damaged through arable cultivation?

Clearly, the issue of protecting grave goods is wide reaching and inherently complex, crossing legal and ethical boundaries as well as belief systems and popular culture. It is these difficulties in changing cultural perceptions to dealing with the dead which are addressed in this paper.

The discussion will first give an overview of legislation pertaining to archaeological human remains and grave goods in England and Wales before moving on to discuss whether the archaeological importance of grave goods is affected by processes such as ploughing.[1] Finally, observations will be made on the role of the professionals and the media in the reporting of *treasure*.

Archaeological human remains in England and Wales

Archaeological human remains are protected in England and Wales primarily by Canon law and Secular law. Canon law protects the deceased located within consecrated ground, for which a 'faculty' to exhume is required from the Church of England. Similarly, under secular law, buried human remains are protected by the Burial Act 1857 or the 1981 Disused Burial Grounds Amendment Act. In all situations, lawful excavation can only be undertaken with a licence issued under Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857.

Licences for the excavation of human remains are issued by the MoJ (Ministry of Justice). Licences currently require the licensee to make arrangements for the reburial of remains within two years of excavation, unless there are scientific reasons for retention. In the latter instance, human remains are deposited in an appropriate institution approved by the MoJ — usually the nearest accredited museum. The museum is, however, just a steward of the remains; the law surrounding the ownership of human remains older than one hundred years in the UK is complex, but in essence it is not possible to assert rights of property (DCMS 2005: Appendix 2; Garratt-Frost 1992; Sayer 2010: 58).

In addition to law, various Codes of Ethics and Best Practice Guidance notes have been published to ensure proper treatment of human remains though these were not written particularly with public discoveries in mind (BABAO 2010; DCMS 2005; Giesen 2013).

Grave goods and the law

Unlike archaeological human remains, grave goods are offered little protection under current law. In order to understand how this situation has arisen, we must first briefly explore the definition of grave goods and how it relates to the development of burial law.

The term 'grave goods' is used widely by archaeologists to signify material culture found with the deceased. While the term 'grave goods' suggests a homogenous group of material, in reality it presents a wide range of interpretative possibilities, including personal possessions of the deceased, ritual objects made for the burial ceremony, and gifts to the deceased by living communities (Ekengren 2013: 174; Härke 2014).

The practice of placing objects into the ground to accompany the deceased is visible in the territory of modern-day England from as early as the Mesolithic, though by no means did it form a continuous or homogenous tradition (Historic England 2018a). Nor is the evidence for the practice of depositing grave goods equally visible in the archaeological record; much variation exists across both time and landscape (APABE 2017; Historic England 2018b).

Although funerary remains have featured in the literature of early antiquarians from at least the 17th century, it was not until the 19th century that grave goods were given serious thought as elements of the

[1] Owing to variations in burial law, treasure legislation, and ecclesiastical jurisdiction across other parts of the United Kingdom, the focus of this paper will be England and Wales.

mortuary environment that could illuminate aspects such as economy, identity, social status, gender, religion and ritual (Ekengren 2013: 173–174). Nonetheless, by the time that the discipline of archaeology emerged more fully in the late 19th century, legislation was already in place to protect human remains in general, in addition to specific types of ancient precious metal artefacts through the law of Treasure Trove (see further below). In essence, legislation exists today to regulate the treatment of human remains in the UK, though all were formed without archaeological human remains in mind (White 2011). For this reason, the law is largely silent on grave goods.

Figure 1: Excavation of the Sutton Hoo ship burial in 1939. Still from a film made by H. J. Phillips, brother of Charles Phillips. The law of Treasure Trove stipulated that precious metal artefacts had to have been buried with the intention of recovery. Since grave goods were not intended to be recovered, they were exempt from the law of Treasure Trove. Accordingly, the finds from the Sutton Hoo ship burial, excavated in the 1930s, was not treasure (Lewis 2016). Ownership therefore rested with the landowner (Harold John Phillips, public domain, via Wikimedia Commons)

The Burial Act offers no protection to grave goods associated with human remains – an understandable situation given that it was introduced prior to the establishment of archaeology as a discipline. Given that the burial laws only concern the disturbance of human remains, technically, artefacts can be removed from a body without breaching burial laws, so long as the human remains are not disturbed (Sayer 2010: 66). This is, of course, both morally dubious and archaeologically destructive, and probably approaches the borderlines of lawfulness. In spite of the lack of definite protection under the Burial Act, the deliberate and clandestine removal of artefacts from a burial can be prosecuted under common law for the desecration of a cemetery or tomb (Hutt and Riddle 2007: 224; Sayer 2010: 66).

In contrast to the Burial Act, objects associated with human burials in ground consecrated according to the rites of the Church of England are protected (Guest 2018). The Church of England has its own legal system of control that relates to portable property connected to cathedrals, churches and other land such as burial grounds. Under this legal system of control, grave goods found on land owned by the Church of England are therefore also property of the Church of England (DCMS 2019: 32).

The protection offered to grave goods on Church of England land is, however, potentially confused by the current stipulations of the Treasure Act 1996 (see further below). Before the Act came into force, the common law of Treasure Trove required that objects had to be hidden or buried with the intent of recovery to qualify as 'treasure'. Under this definition, grave goods could not be considered as treasure (Figure 1). However, the Treasure Act 1996 – which amended and superseded the old law of Treasure Trove – removed the requirement for burial with the intention of recovery, which now results in a situation where grave goods found on Church of England are now subject to two different, conflicting legal regimes (DCMS 2019: 32).

In practice, this conflict applies to a minority of cases given that the majority of archaeological burials predate the medieval parish church system and are found in both urban and rural settings (Daubney 2018). Many are found on privately owned land, and as such the finds normally belong to the landowner. Though rare, this has the potential to result in a situation where human remains are professionally excavated and then reburied or deposited with a museum, while the grave goods enter private ownership.

Figure 2: Iron Age copper-alloy mirror from the grave of a Durotrigian type grave, which dates from c. 15 BC–AD 50/60 (Image courtesy of the Portable Antiquities Scheme; Hayward Trevarthen 2010)

In contrast, grave goods found on private land that meet the stipulations of the Treasure Act 1996 belong to the Crown. The Act gives museums the opportunity to acquire such finds if they wish to do so; if they do not wish to acquire, the find is disclaimed and returned to the finder and/or landowner (Bland 2005, 2009a). The Act includes artefacts that contain more than 10% precious metal and are more than 300 years old at the time of discovery. The Act also includes groups of prehistoric base metal hoards, groups of ten or more coins of non-precious metal from the same 'find', and groups of two or more precious metal coins from the same 'find'. The Act also offers protection for objects found in association with Treasure. Accordingly, all items found within a grave containing an item of treasure will become 'treasure' by association. The notable exclusion from the Act is, of course, human remains, which cannot legally be owned. The Iron Age mirror from Chesil, Dorset is a case in point: the 'Chesil mirror' was discovered by metal detectorists in a grave between Abbotsbury and Chickerell in 2010 (Russell *et al.* 2019; BBC News 2012). The grave also contained two brooches, an armlet, copper tweezers, coins, and glass beads, all of which were declared Treasure under the stipulations of the Act in August 2011. The value of the assemblage was set at £23,000 by the Treasure Valuation Committee. Dorset County Museum, wishing to acquire the grave assemblage, launched a public fund-raising campaign to help 'save the collection for Dorset and prevent its possible sale to an overseas buyer', which was ultimately successful.

The only circumstance where human remains and associated grave goods are afforded protection together is where they are contained within a monument designated under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, such as a prehistoric burial mound. So-called 'Scheduled Monuments' protect the entirety of the archaeological site, including any grave goods buried with human remains (Historic England 2018a; Ulph 2015).

Archaeological perspectives of grave goods

The discussion thus far has demonstrated that the law regards human remains – whether modern or ancient – as scientifically important and worthy of dignity and respect. Archaeological guidance and best practice also recognise the need to treat the ancient dead with care, as well as any associated artefacts, even though archaeological artefacts are not usually protected by law.

Guidance produced by Historic England notes that 'Human remains and the archaeological evidence for the rites which accompanied their burial are important sources of scientific information' (Historic

England 2018a: 20). Similarly, the Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England (APABE) notes that all burial sites are deserving of respect (Historic England 2018a: 19). APABE also emphasises the importance of mortuary archaeology:

> Excavated human remains, and their context (including monuments, coffins and grave goods) are an important source of direct evidence about the past, providing a range of information including evidence for: demography and health; diet, growth and activity patterns; genetic relationships; burial practice, and thus of related beliefs and attitudes. (APABE 2017: 6)

Just as there is widespread agreement about the archaeological potential of *in situ* mortuary contexts, so too is there agreement about the importance of unstratified finds from plough-damaged cemeteries. In the last twenty years – especially following the growth of the hobby of metal detecting – many professional archaeological excavations have been undertaken in response to the discovery of unstratified grave goods. This has been especially the case for the early Anglo-Saxon period (fifth to seventh centuries AD), when the furnished burial tradition was both elaborate and widespread in south-east Britain (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Professional and scientific excavation of an adult female burial dating to the Anglo-Saxon period at Long Compton, Warwickshire (PAS ref. BERK-5105C9). The burial was found by a metal detectorist. The assemblage included a copper alloy pan, a wooden box and other items of personal adornment. The assemblage was declared Treasure at a Coroner's inquest and was subsequently acquired by the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Courtesy of the Portable Antiquities Scheme/Oxfordshire County Council

Excavation often demonstrates that *in situ* graves survive in the same areas where grave goods are found in the plough-zone. Often this owes to the tendency for cemeteries to be used over multiple generations, with varying states of preservation resulting from graves being dug to different depths across the site. Unstratified grave goods are, therefore, often indicators of intact mortuary contexts. Accordingly, it can be argued that sites producing unstratified grave goods are also of scientific interest and 'deserving of respect' owing to the likelihood of *in situ* burials.

Naturally, this leads us to ask the question 'what does it mean to respect a plough-damaged burial site?' This question is more complex than might first seem. According to one set of guidance, respecting a burial site might mean not disturbing them without good reason (Historic England 2018b: 20); as such, threat from development or from further plough damage could be good

Figure 4: In 2018, a metal detectorist discovered unstratified Anglo-Saxon grave goods in a field at Scremby, Lincolnshire. Subsequent excavation led by Dr Hugh Willmott at the University of Sheffield revealed a large inhumation cemetery with burials in varying states of preservation. Some were shallow and had clearly been disturbed by ploughing, while others were at depth well below the ploughzone. Systematic metal detecting of the site helped to suggest relationships between plough damaged graves and surface finds (Photograph: Adam Daubney)

reason to excavate. Following this thought, retrieval of unstratified grave material deriving from plough-damaged graves might also be a way of showing respect, since it would constitute a last effort to gather knowledge before the finds are further dispersed or destroyed through ongoing arable cultivation. That is, of course, only if finds are systematically retrieved and recorded for public benefit.

Transformative processes

In order to explore this further it is helpful to conceptualise some of the transformative processes that occur on burial sites. This helps us to observe where loss of archaeological information occurs on cultivated land, and to what extent.

There are many transformational processes that can affect an inhumation before it is further changed through plough damage or excavation. These generally occur as natural processes or cultural processes (Schiffer 1972: 1987). Natural processes include any events and processes of the natural environment that impinge upon artefacts and archaeological deposits (Schiffer 1987: 7). This can include soil movement, animal burrowing, and erosion. Cultural transformation processes include events and processes caused by human behaviour both during and after an occupation of a site (Schiffer 1987: 7). Cultural transformation processes can result in the disturbance of a deposit, such as through modern day looting. However, it could also have occurred in the past, such as the reopening of graves, through the curation of objects into later periods, or through the digging of new graves which accidently disturb earlier ones (Klevnäs 2020; Klevnäs *et al*. 2021). Natural and cultural transformation processes demonstrate that it should not always be assumed that inhumations are 'undisturbed' contexts. Similarly, it should not always be assumed that an inhumation represents a deposit made in a single episode. Foley argued that all archaeological deposits are palimpsests that vary only in the scale at which they may be interpreted (Foley 1981: 173). Thus, some grave assemblages may be the result of a single deposition made on a single afternoon, while others can at times represent deposits made over weeks or months.

Traditionally, 'disturbance' in archaeology is often thought of as a singular event that occurs in the present generation. Thus, if an archaeologist excavates a burial, the 'disturbance' occurs once through the act of excavation. Indeed, this is the sense of the wording of both Secular and Canon law concerning burials. However, an awareness of natural and cultural transformation processes demonstrates that this understanding is problematic. Paradoxically, the subsequent analysis and storage of human remains or grave goods are rarely described in the literature on archaeological burials in England as further disturbance; rather, they are simply part of the post-excavation programme of works to comply with the burial licence.

Similar difficulties concerning the concept of 'disturbance' are also found in the general literature on plough-damaged archaeological cemeteries. If a grave is damaged through ploughing, we might consider disturbance as the act of dislodging bones and artefacts into the ploughzone. Here, the grave might be described as *having been* disturbed, or as *being disturbed* by the plough if ongoing arable cultivation is occurring. Conversely, the language often used to describe the activity of subsequent archaeological excavation usually includes the words 'rescue', 'salvage', or 'saving'.

The complexity and diversity of transformation processes is illuminated by Näser in her study of New Kingdom era burials at Thebes, Egypt, and by Kersel and Chesson in their study of Early Bronze Age cemeteries in Jordan (Kersel and Chesson 2013; Näser 2013). Näser identified two stages of ancient fragmentation: first through ancient grave robbing, and second through secondary deposition. Within these two categories there was found to exist a wide spectrum of disturbance of mortuary contexts showing that it was 'part of everyday life and the social norm of New Kingdom Egypt' (Näser 2013: 652). Kersel and Chesson extended their timeframes to include modern-day looting. They identified at least two 'lives' for Early Bronze Age archaeological artefacts: first, as associated grave goods from the past, and second, as looted and excavated artefacts (Kersel and Chesson 2013: 686). The social lives of objects in the past and the present were found to be inextricably linked and could not be divorced from one another' (Kersel and Chesson 2013: 689). Frequently, then, the grave assemblages we can observe today (particular those found in ploughsoil) are the result of multiple disturbance events occurring through multiple agents operating over a long period of time, beginning perhaps with the preparation of the mortuary site and ending with the grave assemblage resting in a museum or private collection (Kersel and Chesson 2013; Näser 2013).

Taking this view allows us to see how mortuary derived antiquities have biographies which often include ongoing processes of disturbance that move them away from the associated body, and which on occasion lead to destruction (Figure 5). Essentially, grave assemblages are palimpsests of disturbance. Taking a similar view allows us to conceptualise the role and impact of the public discovery of grave goods in England. Ploughing and other arable activities have the potential to disturb intact graves, either through partial or total damage during ploughing below the maximum depth of topsoil. Vertical displacement of human bone and grave goods then subjects the assemblage to horizontal displacement through ongoing arable cultivation. A key interpretative issue of all ploughzone assemblages is,

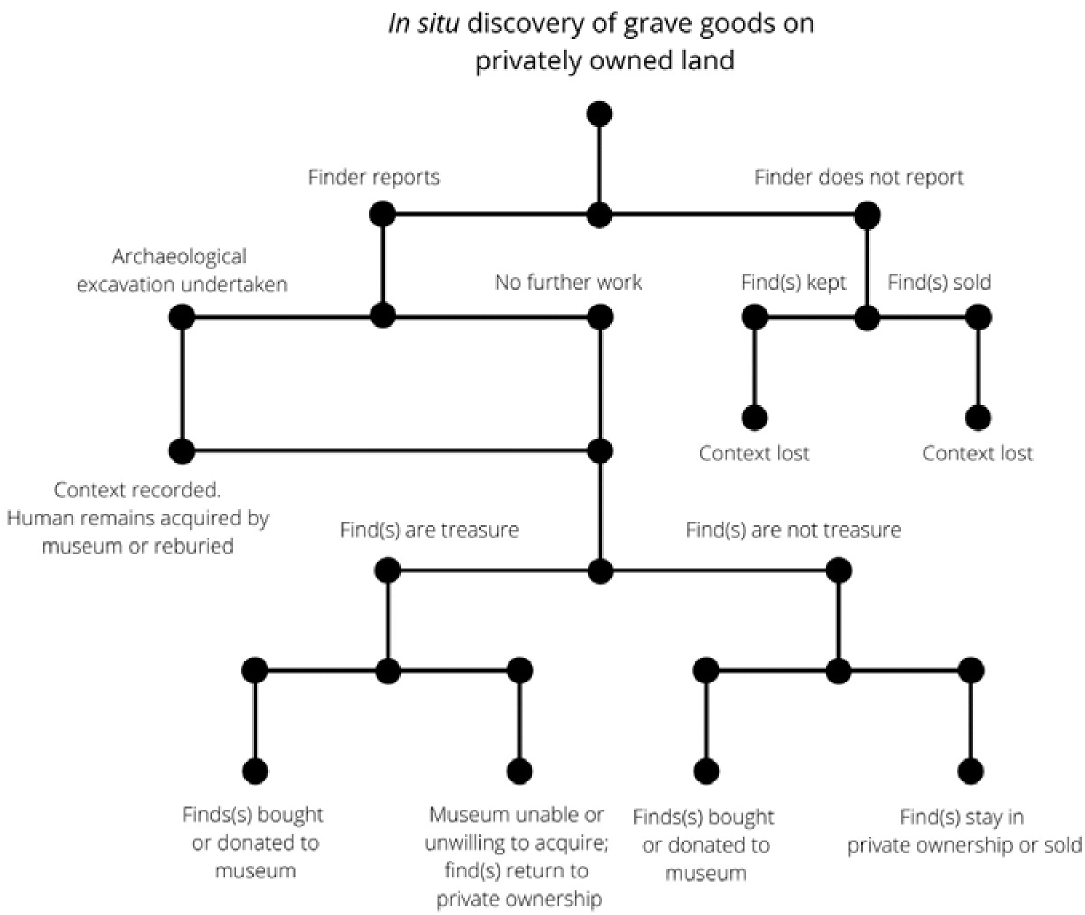

Figure 5: Different outcomes for grave goods found by the public on privately owned land

therefore, the degree to which the process of arable cultivation has spread the material away from its original place of deposition (Ammerman 1985; Spandl *et al.* 2010).

Several studies have shown that while horizontal displacement frequently occurs on arable sites, it is not something that renders the assemblage to be of no archaeological value (Reynolds 1988; Steinberg 1996). While the degree of horizontal disturbance depends on local factors, ploughing results in a halo of decreasing artefact density from the parent population (Yorston *et al.* 1990). This halo becomes increasingly confused as ploughing moves objects in different directions, with some artificial concentrations occurring where machinery reaches boundaries such as hedges or ditches (Diez-Martin 2009; Keay and Millett 1991). Nonetheless, the signature that is left can often be used to infer – and in many cases locate – *in situ* archaeological contexts (Schofield 1991).

These post-depositional transformative processes are clearly *ongoing* forms of disturbance, stemming from an *initial* instance of disturbance. Once in the plough zone, damage to the mortuary assemblage occurs through exposure to oxygen, chemical fertilisers, and from farm machinery, all of which hold potential to destroy elements of the original burial material. Systematic surface collection of grave material as part of a professional archaeological survey can therefore help to pause the ongoing processes of disturbance and damage. Removal of the objects from the plough zone halts the process of disturbance, while high level recording, conservation, and deposition of material into an accredited museum helps to preserve the informational potential of archaeological material, thus mitigating damage and ultimately destruction. Likewise, systematic recovery through hobbyist metal detecting also halts the process of disturbance to individual objects, though only where they are recorded accurately with the Portable Antiquities Scheme. Subsequent deposition of the finds into an accredited museum also helps to preserve the physical object and the information it contains. Conversely, private ownership raises several uncertainties.

Ethical and practical challenges

In essence, the public discovery of unstratified grave goods can be a net-positive activity so long as the finds are systematically recovered and recorded, and so long as no signals below the plough zone are investigated. Nonetheless, the private ownership of grave goods is a particular challenge to the management of archaeological burial sites. Even under professional archaeological excavation there is no guarantee that the landowner will not exercise their right to retain grave goods, even if the skeletal remains are reburied or deposited in a museum. The situation presented by unstratified grave goods is slightly more complex; in some cases, a grave might be disturbed to the extent that the items from one grave have been found by multiple finders (such as on a metal detecting rally) and end up in multiple ownership. In the case of an early Anglo-Saxon cemetery, for example, it is therefore plausible for part of the burial site to be *in situ*, part of it to be subject to ongoing disturbance through it not having yet been recovered from the ploughzone, part of it being recorded but still subject to damage through private ownership, and part of it being destroyed through non-recording.

The ownership of grave goods is also a particular challenge to archaeologists and museums who must respond quickly to public discoveries of *in situ* grave goods. Formal written agreements with the landowner are recommended before any excavations take place, though it is unclear how often this is adhered to in practice, especially when the time between discovery and emergency excavation is very short. While best practice recommends that a signed written agreement is in place prior to excavation, the reality is more complicated. In most cases where a burial is found *in situ*, several of the grave goods may have already been 'found' or even lifted. Consequently, some written agreements may need to be retrospective, covering finds from a grave that has already been partially disturbed. This can cause further difficulties: which objects belong to the finder/landowner, and which should go to a museum, especially if the grave has been excavated by archaeologists using public money? Indeed, this latter point presents archaeologists with an ethical or professional dilemma: do they excavate and 'rescue' what is probably already a partially damaged/disturbed burial, or do they refuse on account that some or all of the finds may end up in private ownership or perhaps even gain an enhanced value from being professionally examined and interpreted?

It may be tempting to use the model of disturbance presented above to identify a point at which a line can be drawn to separate respectful from disrespectful activity (Figure 5). Yet, to do so would be unwise; the reality of most situations is far more nuanced, and very much dependent on local context (Ferguson 2016; Thomas 2012). Indeed, careful and systematic surface collection from plough-damaged archaeological sites by hobbyist metal detectorists has often resulted in excellent data, even if the objects themselves have ended up in private ownership.

Overriding all discussions about disturbance and ownership is the simple premise that 'all the archaeological evidence' for the deceased are important sources of scientific information. The implications that arise from this are challenging and complex in equal measure. Does the private collection of unstratified grave goods show dignity and respect? Does it help preserve the scientific information about the deceased through systematic recording, or does it reduce grave goods to collectable items? Does it rescue objects from damage faced by arable cultivation, or does it just move the risk further down the line? Does it promote the burial site as an archaeological *treasure*, or the artefacts from the graves as collectable *treasures*?

One perspective that may help answer these questions is whether the actions following a discovery are made in the public interest. Indeed, this is one of the key concerns of APABE's guidance on the treatment of human remains (APABE 2017). Yet, quite what is meant by 'the public interest' is unclear, especially since hobbyist metal detectorists make up a section of the public too. Before exploring this issue further, it is first helpful to understand what 'public interest' might mean in other parts of the world.

Public interest and descendant communities

In some parts of the world where communities claim biological and/or cultural ancestry to archaeological human remains, artefacts are seen by descendant communities as an inalienable aspect of the deceased's identity. Funerary objects are often regarded just as important as bones. Artefacts retain links with the dead, and this can even be perceived to continue after becoming detached from the body (Coleman 2010: 82; Goodnow 2006: 19; Williams 2018: 2). In the case of descendant communities, this inalienability usually stems from the perceived 'identity relationship' that the objects have with the body (Coleman 2010: 82). As such, funerary objects are not simply things placed into a grave with the deceased, but rather an essential part of the deceased's identity or the identities of those who did the burying. Perhaps no better example for this can be found than in North America, where indigenous cultural property is protected through law (Roberts 2009: 34). NAGPRA (The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act 1990) 'provides a process for museums and Federal agencies to return certain Native American cultural items — human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony — to lineal descendants, and culturally affiliated Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations' (National Parks Service n.d.).

NAGPRA covers human remains and artefacts already held within museum collections, as well as discoveries of Native American cultural items on Federal and tribal lands (McKeown 2002). Similar approaches to indigenous heritage are also seen in Australia, Finland, Sweden, and Russia (Mulk 2009; Ojala 2009; Watkins 2005). This form of public interest does, of course rest on the perceptions of communities who claim ancestry to the deceased.

In England the situation is vastly different; aside from the Jewish burial ground at Jewbury, York, there have been few instances where living communities have claimed ancestry to the ancient dead (Lilley 1994; Sayer 2010, though see Williams 2007 for some contested sites). Rather, the general perception among the public regarding archaeological human remains tends to be one of scientific interest (O'Sullivan 2001; Parker Pearson *et al.* 2011). In part, the law surrounding archaeological human remains has helped to set the tone today; human remains should be treated with respect, but within this there is much scope for scientific analysis.

Archaeology also shows us varied perspectives on the treatment of the dead in the past. Impressive burial mounds reverently marked the permanent resting places of selected individuals in Late Neolithic and Bronze Age Britain, as they did in 7th-century Anglo-Saxon England (Cherryson 2007). Yet, at the same time graves were also being adapted, modified, or even destroyed to make way for contemporary concerns. Contemporary or near-contemporary grave robbing or 'grave opening', for instance, is now known to have occurred at many Anglo-Saxon cemeteries (Klevnäs 2020; Klevnäs *et al*. 2021). Indeed, further paradoxes can be seen in Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemeteries such as at Scremby, Lincolnshire, where elaborate burials of one generation were sliced through to make room for new burials perhaps little more than two generations later. At some early Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemeteries, one gets the distinct impression that the graves of people within living memory were revered, while those from a little further back in time were simply shuffled up to make room (Cherryson 2007). Here death, apparently, occurred finally with the passing of memory, not the passing of the individual.

In summary, convincing arguments about the inalienability of grave goods and the body can be made on relational, religious, and sentimental grounds, as well as through archaeological context (Whitley 2002). Accordingly, any discussion on the *perception* of English grave goods as *treasure*s must consider a range of theoretical perspectives which together emphasise that the burial *and* the assemblage have maximum research potential when seen as a whole (Ekengren 2013).

Public interest, treasure, and grave goods

The inherent conflict between public interest and private ownership is one that is often played out in the media, though it is not a conflict that is apparent at first sight. The hobby of metal detecting is a popular one in England (Hardy 2017). The law is generally permissive towards the act of searching for archaeological artefacts, and metal detecting is lawful so long as permission has been granted by the landowner and so long as the land is not protected under one of the various land-based stewardship schemes or is designated as a 'scheduled monument' (SM). Similarly, there is no requirement to report finds unless they fall under the stipulations of the Treasure Act 1996 (Lewis 2016).

Widespread concern over the potential loss of archaeological knowledge through non-reporting of items that fall outside the stipulations of the Treasure Act 1996 in England and Wales led to the creation of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) in 1997 (Addyman 1995; Bland 2005, 2009a; Lewis 2016). The scheme continues today, and through its network of Finds Liaison Officers there are now over 1.5 million artefacts recorded onto its online database. The core aim of the PAS is to advance the knowledge of the history and archaeology of England and Wales by encouraging the voluntary reporting of archaeological finds (Bland 2005: 445). In essence, PAS attempts to overcome the issue of private ownership by recording information about artefacts into the public domain, thus mitigating damage to the archaeological record (English 2013).

As might be expected, some of the 1.5 million finds discovered by the public have been spectacular, making national headlines. Discoveries such as the Staffordshire Hoard (Fern *et al.* 2019), the Ringlemere Cup (Needham *et al.* 2006), and the Staffordshire Moorlands Pan (Breeze 2012) have captured the public's imagination and have popularised archaeological artefacts to audiences far wider than what was common prior to the PAS. These discoveries have undoubtedly had the positive effect of raising public appreciation for heritage, though in some cases they have also raised the public's awareness of the financial rewards that can be gained from their discovery. Understandably, the media is often warm to the finders. Yet, in telling their stories, they have tended to create two stereotypes in the public imagination: the endearing nerd (such as the in popular television drama *The Detectorists*) or the amateur archaeologist who hits the jackpot with a find that 'rewrites history' (Malvern 2020). Both these stereotypes feed into – and shape – public perceptions of treasure. The ancient dead are, of course, some of the media's favourite stories.

In some cases, it might actually be argued that media sensationalism around a discovery has served the public interest by helping museums with public fundraising campaigns in order to 'save it for the nation', such as the Galloway hoard of Viking metalwork (NMS 2017). Yet, while the word 'save' is frequently used in public fundraising campaigns, rarely is it made explicit what the threat is. Clearly, the threat is private ownership.

Yet, paradoxically, the same newspapers that use the word 'save' also often celebrate the prospects of a member of the public financially gaining from the find. Such was the case concerning the Anglo-

Saxon grave goods found at Winfarthing, Norfolk in 2014. The assemblage included a gold necklace and pendants discovered within the grave of an early medieval female. The finder – described as a history student at the time of discovery – was cited in the *Metro* as saying that the reward from the treasure (estimated in the *Metro* to be £140,000) would 'make things a lot easier' (Nsubuga 2017). The Treasure valuation Committee valued the object at £145,050, prompting a public appeal by the Friends of Norwich Museums to raise money to 'save' it for Norwich Castle Museum.

The *Diss Express* described the gold pendant as having been 'saved for the nation', while also reporting in the same article that it was being shortlisted in the Art Fund's competition to find the 'nations favourite acquisition of the last year' (Scheer 2018). Arts Minister Michael Ellis, in describing this and other finds, said 'I am delighted we have been able to save these treasures. It is right that they are kept on public display for people to enjoy for generations'. The comments responding to this story rightly express the joy of the find being placed into public ownership. However, there is a certain irony that public funds are needed to pay a private individual in order to 'save' an object for public enjoyment. Here, decisions on best practice concerning burials were made in the public interest, even though it cost the public and benefited a private individual.

Hobbyist metal detectorists or amateur archaeologists?

Increasingly, the boundary between hobbyist metal detecting and amateur archaeologist is becoming blurred (Dobat and Jensen 2016; Lewis 2016). In part, this is a positive result of the ongoing education and training of metal detectorists and their greater involvement in community and commercial archaeological projects. This blurring has also been occurring – perhaps for a longer time – in the media, where metal detectorists are often referred to as amateur archaeologists.

The *Eastern Daily Press,* for instance, referred to the finder of the Winfarthing pendant as an 'archeologist' (sic) who 'struck treasure again'. Similarly, the *Daily Mail* described the finder as someone who is 'now an archaeologist and still uses a metal detector, mostly at weekends' (Best 2017). The finder of the Ringlemere gold cup was also an 'amateur archaeologist' (Grice 2003), as were the people behind the 50,000 'treasures' unearthed in 2003 (Akbar 2011).

The implications of the increasing desire of the metal detecting community (and, indeed, volunteers) to be seen as amateur archaeologists – or 'professional amateurs' – has implications beyond status. Under the Treasure Act 1996, 'rewards will not be payable when the find is made by an archaeologist or anyone engaged on an archaeological excavation or investigation' (Treasure Act Code of Practice, Section 81). The context of Section 81 suggests that the individual would need to be working under the supervision of an archaeologist in order to not be eligible for reward. However, the situation is increasingly blurry, especially where detectorists are contributing data to landscape research projects or are assisting on community archaeology fieldwork projects. This blurring of boundaries is not just confined to England. In 2019, a 3rd-century gold bracelet was discovered on Saaremaa, Estonia. The bracelet was found with other items, including crossbow brooches, belt fittings and silver plates. *EER News* reported on the find, stating that the finder was not eligible for reward since 'he made the find as part of an archaeological team rather than as an individual' (ERR News 2019). In defence, the finder stated that he was 'on the field trip on his own spare time'. Similar to the situation in England, rewards in Estonia are not payable to finders who are engaged in archaeological research.

The status of hobbyist metal detectorists and the payment of rewards can be further scrutinised in the light of the discussion above, which demonstrated that unstratified grave goods often lead to the discovery of *in situ* graves (Daubney 2021).

Under the current system, rewards are payable to metal detectorists who 'accidently' discover graves containing treasure, though as has been seen, all discoveries below the plough zone are avoidable if the finder simply restrains themselves from digging into context. A trawl of the PAS database and annual reports by the author in September 2020 identified 32 instances where treasure was found within a grave since 1997. Eight of these were found through metal detecting; the rest were found through professional archaeological excavation. In some cases, the finder and landowner kindly waived their right to a reward and donated the assemblage to the museum instead. Such was the case north of Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire, where in October 2014 a metal detectorist unearthed a complex Roman burial group. The find was reported to the Buckinghamshire FLO (Finds Liaison Officer) and was subsequently excavated by Oxford Archaeology. The assemblage, which included an urned cremation burial, a wooden box, a number of pottery and bronze vessels, and an iron lamp holder, was kindly donated by the finder and landowner to Buckinghamshire County Museum Trust. Yet, not all grave assemblages are donated; the Anglo-Saxon grave assemblage from West Hanney, Oxfordshire was purchased for £2750 with assistance of the V&A Purchase Grant Fund, the Headley Trust, and the Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum, while the assemblage from Winfarthing, Norfolk was purchased for £145,050.

No judgement is being made here on the acceptance of a reward; indeed, this is set out in the Treasure Act Code of Practice as an incentive for reporting (Bland 2009a, 2009b). What can be questioned, however, is whether such graves are being disturbed 'with good reason'.

Rest in pieces?

Clearly, the issues surrounding the public discovery of grave goods are complex. Ongoing discussion and mutual understandings between finders, landowners, curators, and archaeologists is essential, as is the outworking of pragmatic solutions.

Given that metal detecting is permissible in England (subject to certain restrictions), the issue appears not so much to be one of discovery, but rather how to minimise the initial disturbance done to the archaeological context, and how to maximise the informational potential of the assemblage. Concerning the minimisation of disturbance, the Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales states that metal detectorists should 'stop any digging and make the landowner aware that you are seeking expert help if you discover something below the ploughsoil' (PAS 2017). The Code of Practice is, therefore, clear on the matter of minimising the disturbance of *in situ* archaeology. However, further resources could be developed, such as ones that outline the archaeological benefits of the systematic recovery of plough zone artefacts. Toolkits, for example, could be made available to help metal detectorists carry out their searches in more professional ways and with greater potential to yield quality data that could illuminate aspects of the site without disturbing any *in situ* archaeology present. This requires not just education and resources, but also self-discipline and self-control, especially when a signal beacons the finder below the ploughzone. The successful Portable Antiquities Scheme is best positioned to continue this form of educational engagement with finders.

Concerning the maximisation of information, education is paramount in this process. Heritage professionals must clearly explain the benefits of *treasures* entering museum collections. The voice of the profession must influence the narratives of the media. Likewise, greater emphasis should be placed on the concepts of a shared past, for which we are all just custodians and stewards. A culture change is likely to have a greater impact than increased regulation of the hobby, though clearly there are gaps in the protection of antiquities that need addressing.

As has been discussed, at present only the human remains are protected, yet there is considerable evidence that the burial and the finds should be treated in its entirety – as one cohesive archaeological context. An extension to the Treasure Act 1996 to include all *in situ* grave goods may seem a logical option, but it raises the risk of further monetising mortuary contexts. Accordingly, it might well be that the addition of a condition to the Burial Licence would be the most pragmatic solution for ensuring the appropriate treatment and archiving of finds found in relation to human remains.

Clearly, there is need for more critical analysis of the threats posed to grave goods resulting from private ownership, rewards, and the antiquities trade (e.g. Williams 2019). There is something unsettling about the concept of financial gain from material excavated from human burials, especially when it results in the separation of the finds from the body into different spheres of ownership. There are no easy solutions to this problem. Further critical thought is also needed about the sale of grave goods on internet auction houses and through marketplace sites, not least because it is a global issue which includes mortuary objects such as shabtis from Egypt, jewellery from South America, and pottery from Greece; grave goods from England form just a small part of a much bigger issue.

These are global issues with very local origins. Grave goods are important evidence for the final resting places of people and communities. On the one hand the public discovery of new sites is rapidly extending our scientific knowledge of the past, yet on the other hand it can result in the disturbance of graves without good reason. Education is key to prevention, as indeed it is to the wider public perception of *treasure.*

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The Public Archaeology of Tomb Treasures in the Media

Sophie Brown

This chapter reflects on the tenacious association of 'treasure' with grave-goods in the media. Using two contrasting case studies of royal burial chambers widely reported at different times in the last century – one from Egypt, and one from the UK – the study reviews the deceptive allure but also the positive power of such attributions in communicating the stories of mortuary archaeological investigations and their discoveries.

Introduction

Public archaeology (in the broadest sense) is the study and critique of the processes of production and consumption of archaeological knowledge (Moshenska 2010: 47). This includes excavation and publications but also how archaeology is portrayed in the media and popular culture (see contributions to Moshenska 2017). Media coverage of archaeological information includes archaeological sites and monuments, new discoveries and stray finds disseminated to the wider public through newspaper articles, both in print and online, via news websites and social media. In this context, finds of 'treasure' have long attracted the most attention in the popular press. Crucially, while this will often include finds defined legally as 'treasure', the media's use of the word 'treasure' is far more liberal.[1] 'Treasure' is a word often used to describe any 'valuable' or 'rare' archaeological finds as an attempt to attract the attention of interested readers. The term has a 'draw' of its own beyond precise legal and archaeological definitions, usually focusing on the monetary value of the artefacts rather than their archaeological significance.

With this in mind, this chapter wishes to explore two cases of mortuary assemblages which have been defined as 'treasure' in popular culture. I present examples of media headlines based on the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb and the Prittlewell Prince discussing how (and if) the headlines have changed over time. This pair of examples allows us to reflect on the specific challenges of referring to the contents of ancient wealthy tombs as 'treasures' – an ethical and culturally sensitive issue on a global scale (see Letsch and Connelly 2013; Curnow 2018; El-Geressi 2019; Swann 2019) – and seeks to compare the media attention afforded to an early 20th-century world archaeology case study compared with a lowland British early 21st-century one which (like Sutton Hoo's Mound 1 before it: see Williams this volume) was explicitly characterised in the media as equivalent to Tutankhamun's tomb. The media fixation on the discovery and exploration of 'treasure' is evident in both examples and I examine whether the way the media presents artefacts as treasure has evolved over the last century. This has particular resonances with ongoing discussions regarding how mortuary-derived material cultures are specifically referred to as 'treasure' in the media and popular culture (see Daubney 2019) and my discussion thus complements the chapters by Brophy on 'bling', Daubney on 'grave-goods', and Williams on the 'Sutton Hoo treasure' in this volume.

Tutankhamun's treasure

The discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun

The discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922 in the Valley of the Kings by Howard Carter attracted media attention worldwide. His patron, Lord Carnarvon, created a lucrative exclusivity agreement

[1] In England and Wales this means any non-coin more than 300 years old and at least 10% gold or silver and any two or more coins from the same find over 300 years old with more than 10% gold or silver, and more than ten coins if less than 10% gold or silver (Darvill 2008: 467–468).

with *The Times* of London which granted the newspaper access to the excavation as it was happening whilst entitling him to 75% of all profits from the syndication of articles and photographs to other newspapers and magazines (Haag 2007: 79). Lord Carnarvon and Howard Carter fed the press small pieces of information throughout the ten years of the operation (1922–1932), providing two clear elements which are 'almost inevitably sought by British journalists form every reported archaeological enterprise': 'buried treasure/gold/wealth' and 'access to the supernatural' (Ascherson 2004: 146).

Carnarvon's exclusive deal with *The Times* fostered outrage from other newspapers as he seemingly alienated the world's press, encouraging them to pursue alternate headlines about the tomb (Haag 2007: 82). Consequently, exaggerated headlines and stories were concocted by rival outlets, alluding to the supposed 'Curse of Tutankhamun' (Haag 2007: 82). The story was inspired by an inscription from Tut's tomb – 'Death shall come on swift wings to him who disturbs the peace of the king' – which later turned out to be fabricated by a journalist (Haag 2007: 89). Even though the curse's origins were falsified, the 'curse' regularly appeals to TV shows and media headlines (Ascherson 2004).

The 'curse' of Tutankhamun supposedly affected all those who disturbed the King's eternal rest. The most notable death attributed to the 'curse' was that of Lord Carnarvon, only 5 months after the opening of the tomb (Bautista n.d.). Caernarvon, already in poor health, died of blood poisoning and delirium from a mosquito bite (New York Times 1923). Many media outlets took this, and many other unfortunate deaths of people even with minor roles involved with the tomb and its excavation as consequences of the boy king's curse. The supernatural appeal of these headlines rivalled the articles written by *The Times* focused on the 'treasures' of the tomb. Headlines appealed to curious audiences and ensured the articles were read; gripping key words such as 'curse' were utilised to pique the interest of audiences (Holtorf 2007: 299).

Buried treasure/gold/wealth: Tutankhamun's treasure described

The fabulous grave-goods from the tomb attracted considerable interest, in part because of the rumours circulated regarding the contents of the tomb being cursed. Assorted headlines repeatedly used 'treasure' as the primary term of reference, intriguing readers with equations of monetary value which, together with accompanying images 'determine the specific character, appeal and relevance of the entire story' (Holtorf 2007: 46), engaging readers before having even read the article. The images originate directly from inside the tomb (see Click Americana 2011), the photographs taken by the media and the excavators alike, the latter being sent to *The Times* by Lord Caernarvon and Howard Carter (Haag 2007: 79). The story of Tutankhamun was being told through these images, and by the snippets of information given to the press by Carnarvon and Carter, with the media taking this content and writing articles meant to capture the world's attention (see New York Times 1922). The world soon became obsessed with Tutankhamun and his 'treasures', his tomb and Ancient Egypt itself. The media coined this obsession 'Tutmania' and it was one of the first media crazes of the modern era (Masters 2014).

'Tutmania' is still evident in media headlines today as they continue to use this phrase to describe the world's obsession with the pharaoh's rich tomb (see CBS News 2006; Sooke 2019). The continuous use of the phrase 'Tutmania' and the pertinent obsession with the word 'treasure' throughout articles shows that 'newspaper journalists are inclined to try and catch the readers' interests by referring to tried-and-tested themes, even if they are clichés' (Holtorf 2007: 46).

As the publication of newsworthy headlines has evolved from printed newspapers, the way we consume media today has expanded to many different outlets. Social media is now a major source of news and its means of distribution have also changed, with Facebook and Twitter competing with the *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, CNN, the BBC and others (Alejandro 2010: 12). This competition is obvious in the way that social media icons sit below each online main headline to foster sharing via Facebook and

Twitter (among others) to facilitate readers sharing articles with their followers and friends. Social media monopolises over print media as rapid sharing around the world reaches a far wider audience.

However, headlines relating to 'curses' and 'treasure' (both in newspaper articles and on social media) can be detrimental to archaeology as they can quickly deviate the attention of the reader to fictional or fantastical stories and can often detract from the value and significance of the archaeological discoveries themselves. The articles which feature these buzzwords often do not contain much in the way of archaeological information beyond superficial details. Moreover, while 'treasure' and 'curses' offer clickbait, articles fail to challenge or qualify their misleading and/or unsubstantiated nature. The lack of archaeological information in many media reports perpetuates the dichotomy of spiritual protection by the ancient dead versus plundering for financial gain. The idea that Tutankhamun's tomb was 'sealed and undisturbed' provided a time-capsule effect. This allowed its openers to imagine being transported back in time to Ancient Egypt, and to come face-to-face with its traditions and rituals. The immensely important details of its contents were unfortunately overshadowed by the media frenzy and fixation on select iconic items: a challenge that persists to this day.

The Prittlewell Prince

The Prittlewell princely chamber-grave was remarkably discovered during excavations ahead of development by Museum of London Archaeology in 2003, and immediately hit the headlines, appearing in *The Sun* as the 'King of Bling: experts find Saxon tomb crammed with treasure' and subsequently a *Time Team* special by the similar name: *The King of Bling* (see also Brophy this volume). A road protest camp on the site was called 'Camp Bling' from 2005 to 2009 (Blackmore *et al.* 2019: 2). The research monograph and popular book were published to coincide with the display of the grave-finds at Southend Museum in 2019 (Blackmore *et al.* 2019; Hirst and Scull 2019). Despite the differences in date and character, the well-preserved and rich contents conjured shockingly similar responses in the press to the way Tutankhamun's tomb was represented in the media over seven decades previously.

The discovery of an Anglo-Saxon princely burial chamber

The burial chamber became affectionately nicknamed the 'Prittlewell Prince'. The exceptional grave was discovered during the archaeological evaluation of a proposed road-widening scheme in Prittlewell, Southend-on-Sea (Hirst and Scull 2019: 7). The excavation heralded an astonishing discovery in the form of an almost undisturbed burial chamber of an Anglo-Saxon royal or aristocratic person, presumed to be buried in a male-gendered fashion. It was made clear from the size of the chamber, as well as the quality and quantity of the grave-goods inside that this was a rare Anglo-Saxon 'princely burial': a term coined by archaeologists to describe exceptionally rich and elaborate graves thought to contain the highest-ranking members of a hierarchical society (Hirst and Scull: 2019: 11–13). The burial chamber boasted 'rare metal vessels still hanging from the walls' and other precious artefacts such as weapons, elaborate drinking vessels and the remains of a lyre (Hirst and Scull 2019: 11). The tomb displayed exciting similarities to the tomb of Tutankhamun in that both were undisturbed and equipped with items reflecting the lifestyle of the living individual and their society, whether intended to commemorate their identity as in life or to project an aspired afterlife existence. Moreover, grave-goods in each instance comprised a mixture of possessions and gifts, giving a rare insight into the practices and attitudes towards life and death in each context.

The media headlines

Just as the headlines surrounding Tutankhamun's tomb had two common themes ('curse' and 'treasure'), two other themes accrued in the telling of the Prittlewell Prince story. First, the grave was an unexpected 'oddity' and, second, the description of the prince as the UK's Tutankhamun (e.g. ITV 2019). While there are intriguing differences in how each pair of themes was manifest, there are striking similarities.

'Oddities'

The media headlines represent a common theme of 'oddity' in their titles, drawing in the reader with the 'extraordinary' location in which the tomb was discovered. This 'sensationalising' approach evoking the supposed incongruity of the present-day suburban landscape completely ignores the fact that the tomb was within an already known early Anglo-Saxon cemetery (Blackmore *et al.* 2019: 48–89; Hirst and Scull 2019: 7). Whilst the scale, richness and intact nature of the burial chamber was unexpected, the headlines misled readers into thinking the location was stumbled across. In addition, the use of the words 'pub' and 'Aldi' conjure visions of common sights around the UK, emphasising the prosaic (even specifically 'working class') character of the Prittlewell grave's present-day surroundings in contract with the lavish grave. Likewise, the rich burial was a stark contrast to the other inhabitants of the existing cemetery which contained some wealthy graves but none of comparable wealth and monumentality (Blackmore *et al.* 2019: 48–89; Hirst and Scull, 2019: 11). This information was, however, not shared within these articles, so the chamber appears as if found in complete isolation. Unfortunately, omitted information such as this detracts from the archaeological significance of the site and any understanding of the circumstance of the discovery or its context in the early medieval past. As occurs often in media reports but also heritage interpretations of high-status graves, the broader story of human societies is redacted for the focus on individual past 'celebrities' (e.g. Williams 2009; Giles and Williams 2016).

'UK's equivalent to Tutankhamun's Tomb'

The media headlines showed an extremely common theme in the media coverage of the Prittlewell Prince: the use of the phrase 'UK's Tutankhamun' or a variation of (e.g. Barrie 2019; ITV News 2019; Press Association 2019; Sharman 2019). This phrasing evokes thoughts of a lavish, gold-filled, long-lost tomb, newly discovered and opened for the world to see. In many ways, this is a fair and appropriate analogy with the Egyptian pharaoh's world-renowned tomb. Moreover, there was the precedent regarding how Sutton Hoo's Mound 1 was reported on following its discovery in 1939 (see Williams this volume). This is because the Prittlewell discovery was comparable in terms of its lavish furnishings and undisturbed character to King Tut's long-lost tomb. Yet, this comparison is undesirable as the chamber is its own unique and significant burial: the wealthiest early Anglo-Saxon burial discovered since the Mound 1 ship burial of 1939 (Hirst and Scull 2019: 11). Furthermore, the Tutankhamun analogy sensationalises and exoticises the admittedly exceptional find, robbing it of its very different archaeological and historical context.

Unlike the use of 'curse' and 'treasure' by the media to drive headlines about Tutankhamun in the 1920s, the phrase 'UK's equivalent to Tutankhamun's tomb' was actually coined by Sophie Jackson, the director of MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) during a press release as she believed the lavish burial chamber rivals the splendour of the Ancient Egyptian tomb of King Tut (Woodward 2019). This is a rare example of the archaeologist being responsible for the media's narrative and explicitly seeking out colonial and treasure allusions. The fact that Jackson was able to coin this term herself in a press release meant that the media had an eye-grabbing headline to exploit that does not detract from the significance of the discovery, but rather emphasised a well-known subject of comparison. While the analogy carries unfortunate connotations, this might be seen as a significant victory for archaeologists in some regards; they were rarely able to control the media narrative in a sustained way. The finds or 'treasures' were sensationalised through the Egyptian analogy, but the nature of the archaeological finds and their broader significance are also articulated.

The archaeological significance of the chamber is further emphasised by the focus on the 'treasures' found inside. Many articles show pictures of the artefacts, some including a small segment of archaeological information about selected image, thus providing a useful educational dimension for the readers of the articles and emphasising the archaeological value of these objects, instead of just showing 'pretty pictures' of 'treasure' or focusing on monetary value (e.g. Guy 2019; Rogers 2019).

However, we cannot ignore the public's desire to know the monetary value of these artefacts in today's capitalist economy. This can be a useful way of emphasising the exceptional and rare character of the artefacts found, even if it might detract from the grave and the artefacts' archaeological significance. This is visible in a BBC article (BBC 2019a) in which a reader asks, 'How much were the treasures found worth in today's money?', clearly showing a public interest in the monetary value of these artefacts (see also BBC 2019b). The obsession with monetary value when referring to 'treasure' in media headlines enables the public to put a 'price' on the 'treasure' being discussed, therefore emphasising the significance of a discovery in a manner in which the wider public will be able to resonate with (see Reavill this volume)!

Strangely and perhaps positively, only one headline included the word 'treasure' in reports on the Prittlewell Prince, a stark contrast to the multiple headlines including 'treasure' related to Tutankhamun. This is hugely significant as the use of the word 'treasure' often conjures images of gold, silver and precious items, which are certainly included in the burial chamber. However, the lack of use of the term moves the focus from the artefacts to the chamber itself (see Williams this volume). Although, as noted earlier, the use of the word 'treasure' is substituted by the phrase 'UK's equivalent to Tutankhamun's tomb' – yet this evokes the imagery of a lavish burial with golden treasures to be marvelled at.

Conclusion

Overall, the portrayal of public archaeology by the media has not changed significantly between the headlines on the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb and the headlines about the Prittlewell Prince. The prominent media headlines still use the same buzzwords utilising the likes of 'curse' and 'treasure' to attract public interest to the discoveries. Though the use of these words is controversial within the archaeological discipline, academics should consider that these themes attract massive interest in the subject from the wider public, reaching audiences that would not otherwise learn of these discoveries if they were only documented in an academic journal, or advertised with an 'academic approved' headline. Therefore, media headlines such as UK's 'Equivalent to Tutankhamun' and 'Curse of Tutankhamun' attract mass consumption of archaeological discoveries, disseminating a modest amount of archaeological information. Yet this is sufficient to educate the readers without boring them. While there remain ethical challenges, this media reportage at least ensures new archaeological discoveries are shared nationally and internationally.

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Destroy the 'Sutton Hoo Treasure'!

Howard Williams

This chapter presents a survey and critique of the use of 'treasure(s)' to describe the burial assemblage from the Mound 1 ship-burial at Sutton Hoo since its discovery in 1939. I argue that referring to the contents of Mound 1 as 'treasure(s)' is not merely misrepresenting, commodifying and sensationalising its funerary context and wider significance. Furthermore, the persistent use of the terms directly relates also to specific, multiple valences which assert and perpetuate a specific interpretation of the grave as a 'King's Mound'. Moreover, referring to more than the rare and high-status character of the finds, 'treasure(s)' also casts the assemblage's identity as a 'national treasure', legitimising its curation by the British Museum and valorising the benefaction of the landowner who commissioned the 1938 and 1939 excavations: Mrs Edith Pretty. Another key dimension to the use of the term is the assemblage's perceived relationship with the epic Old English poem Beowulf *and the 'treasures' it describes. As a label, 'treasure(s)' inaccurately and tenaciously sublimates the rich and complex story of the grave, the contexts of the cemetery, locality and region into a simplified simulacrum of early East Anglian/Anglo-Saxon kingship linked to religious conversion and tied to patriotic modern concepts of Englishness. I demonstrate how the use of 'treasure' reveals a nexus of Anglo-Saxonist and Germanist ideological readings of the assemblage in academic discourse and popular culture.*

Introduction

> Treasure: the word carries a seductive and dangerous semantic freight, and never more than now perhaps, since the new Treasure Act 1996 came into force, enabling artefacts with as little as 10% gold or silver content to be enfolded within its generous embrace – not to mention pots and chests and finds of all manner of other more mundane objects that might be associated with finds of precious metal items. (Webster 2000: 49)

'Treasure' as a noun refers to 'wealth or riches stored or accumulated, esp. in the form of precious metals; gold or silver coin; hence in general, money, riches, wealth' or else figurative versions of the same. It can be used more loosely to refer to a 'store or stock of anything valuable' (OED Online 2021). It also carries a more specific archaeological set of uses as Webster describes above. While meanings and uses vary between formal academic and popular contexts, this chapter aims to explore the tenacious and evolving use to describe Mound 1 burial assemblage from Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, England, UK. I argue that the 'Sutton Hoo Treasure' and references to its 'treasure'/'treasures' must be henceforth challenged because it perpetuates a constellation of misleading and problematic connotations specific to the use of this famous grave to write the story of Anglo-Saxon origins, royalty, paganism and Christian conversion set in a broader northern European context. The 'treasure' label also legitimises the assemblage's status as gifted to and curated by the British Museum: a 'national treasure'. Hence, the objection is not with the popular use of the term 'treasure' per se to refer to archaeological finds and contexts, but the specific nested associations with this particularly well-known funerary context which should be jettisoned or used only sparingly and cautiously henceforth. The chapter starts its journey in 1939 and ends with the latest iteration of popular guidebooks and heritage interpretation at Sutton Hoo.

Background

The story of the Mound 1 ship-burial at Sutton Hoo has captivated global audiences for more than three quarters of a century. While given a run for its money more recently by some fresh discoveries of hoards and grave finds of broadly comparable dates, most notably the 'Prittlewell Prince' (Blackmore *et al.* 2019) and the Staffordshire Hoard (Fern *et al.* 2019), Mound 1 has retained its preeminent status in the visual representation and popular conceptualisation of the island's early medieval archaeology and it still constitutes the richest burial from this era in terms of both quantity and quality of artefacts uncovered. As such, the burial chamber's exceptional contents of weapons, feasting gear, 'regalia' and other items made from a range of materials and drawn from across northern Europe and beyond, have been widely seen as material evidence for 'pagan' or 'convert Christian'-era East Anglian/Anglo-Saxon kingship. The grave has been widely attributed to King Rædwald of East Anglia. Simultaneously, its 1939 discovery by Basil Brown and investigation by a famous team of excavators is regularly cast a patriotic story of fortune and fortitude culminating in the finds' generous benefaction by landowner Mrs Edith Pretty under the testing circumstances of impending global war.

Set within a broader context of a 'princely' or 'royal' cemetery, part of an evolving landscape from prehistory to the present, Sutton Hoo's story has many actors, stages and props (Carver 1998, 2017). Sutton Hoo has been, for many, a microcosm of the early medieval island of Britain, specifically English origins within Anglo-Saxon kingship and Christian conversion tied to a patriotic story of a discovery: an English 'Tutankhamun', in England's 'Valley of the Kings', poignantly revealed as England's 'darkest hour' approached under threat of German invasion (Carver 1998, 2017; D'Arcens 2021). The site became a fable about not only national origin myths by encapsulating the trinity of themes of Germanic migration, Anglo-Saxon kingdom formation and Christian conversion, but also a story about mortality: life, death and the afterlife (Williams 2019; 2021). Likewise, the finds have harboured a tale about warfare and feasting, about far-flung connections and maritime journeys. The items from Mound 1, especially its iconic helmet, have become pivotal foci in these parables (McCombe 2011; Figure 1).

Both dimensions – early medieval composition and deposition of the grave-goods, and the 20th-century story of its discovery – coalesced in the 2021 Netflix film *The Dig*. Directed by Simon Stone and based on John Preston's novel of the same title, it starred Carey Mulligan and Ralph Fiennes. The film paid modest attention to the artefacts and yet dramatised, romanticised and fetishised the discovery and personalities associated with the Mound 1 'treasure' of 1939 for fresh audiences. It was indeed a rare instance where a real archaeological excavation and archaeologists as historical personages have been portrayed in detail (if not completely fairly and accurately). Thus, the finds, while referred to as the 'treasure' repeatedly in the film, were not centre-stage in any meaningful way; the story instead explored the relationship between the process of archaeological investigation and the characters' relationships with each other, with mortality, identity and nationhood. The film thus revealed Sutton Hoo's enduring and evolving place in present-day conceptions of Englishness and English origins rooted in concepts of 'Anglo-Saxonist' nationalistic and racialised discourse (Brunning 2021; D'Arcens 2021; Pitts *et al.* 2021; Williams 2021).[1]

All of these narrative elements were distilled into the emergence of the use of the word 'treasure(s)' to describe the Mound 1 burial assemblage specifically, and the entire ship-burial in less specific terms from 1939 to the present. The National Trust website has posed the question 'Where's the Treasure?'[2] and British Museum curator Dr Sue Brunning delivered a public lecture following the release of *The Dig* entitled 'Treasures of Sutton Hoo' on 5 May 2021, having previously described the chamber as 'treasure-filled' in the context of discussing the film (Brunning 2021).[3] Indeed, in the media, the ship from Mound 1 has been equated repeatedly with 'burial treasures' (BBC News 2019). A BBC News story about Sutton Hoo announcing the opening of the new viewing tower in 2021 stated that the assemblage was the 'burial treasures of King Rædwald - the 7th Century [sic] Anglo-Saxon ruler of East Anglia'; the same story describes how the 'treasures ... included a warrior's iron helmet, a magnificent sword, Byzantine silverware, gold jewellery, a lavish feasting set and a whalebone casket' (the last of which is presumably an error relating to the presence of the Franks Casket in the British Museum) and that 'the treasures are now at the British

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1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZQz0rkNajo. For the full set of my blog-posts reviewing and critiquing *The Dig*: https://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/category/archaeodeath-on-tv-film-and-video-games/the-dig/

2 https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sutton-hoo/features/the-royal-burial-mounds-at-sutton-hoo

3 https://twitter.com/SueBrunningBM/status/1384830711388069890

Figure 1: Encountering the 'Sutton Hoo treasure' at the British Museum (in this case by the author in February 2020). 'Treasure' is constituted by the artefacts on display, the accompanying text panels and the quotations from the Old English poem *Beowulf* (Photographs: Howard Williams)

Museum' (BBC News 2021). Similarly, *The Guardian* described the 'gold and jewelled treasures' in the context of discussing a new project to conserve, catalogue and digitise the photographs of Barabara Wagstaff and Mercie Lack taken in the summer of 1939 after the 'uncovering of the treasures' and their removal to the British Museum (Brown 2021). Most recently of all, the Staffordshiare Hoard and Mound 1 assemblage have been considered a pair as the two 'greatest finds of Anglo-Saxon treasure', being 'reunited' in an exhibition at Sutton Hoo: the 'two treasures' showing 'striking similarities' with each other (BBC News 2022). So, Mound 1 has continued to be read in close association with a specific use of 'treasure' and 'treasures' in the media, including a specific connection with both East Anglian kings and the British Museum (Figure 1).

How can we begin to understand this narrative and the specific and repeated use of 'treasure' to refer to the wealthiest burial assemblage ever found in British soil? While there have been detailed critiques of the 19th-century origins of Anglo-Saxon burial archaeology (e.g. Lucy 1998, 2000; Williams 2006a & b, 2007a & b; 2008; 2013; see also now Harland 2021: 41–92), there have been far fewer evaluations of the subdiscipline's 20th- and 21st-century development and the politics and popular intersections of its interpretive frameworks, methods and techniques (but see Lucy 1998, 2000, 2002; Content and Williams 2010; Dickinson 2011). There have been fewer still discussions regarding Anglo-Saxon archaeology's recent endeavours in public archaeology and heritage interpretation (Marzinzik 2011; McCombe 2011; Walsh and Williams 2019; Williams 2020a, 2020b). Filmer-Sankey (2007) offered a rare and specific intervention by exploring the shifting perception of Sutton Hoo's Mound 1 on the European stage. Subsequently, McCombe (2011) explored the 'supercharged iconicity' of the Sutton Hoo helmet as a 'treasure' of the British Museum and thus the embodiment of early Englishness set against a background of early medieval barbarian migrations and kingdoms (McCombe 2011: 258). A recent chapter by Katherine Cross (2019) has made an invaluable contribution by exploring the complex interaction of academic discourse and museum displays focusing on the British Museum's early medieval gallery more broadly. A recent thesis by Allfrey (2020) specifically tackled the enmeshing of Sutton Hoo with the poem *Beowulf* in the media and within heritage contexts, identifying their interplay in telling a story of English origins. However, to date there has been no sustained evaluation of how and why the superlatives 'treasure' and 'treasures' have found sustained favour in relation to the Mound 1 burial assemblage by researchers and heritage practitioners as well as in the media and popular culture (but see Carver 2000).

In order for the first time to sketch the origins and selective deployment of the term 'the Sutton Hoo Treasure', building upon an earlier blog-post (Williams 2015), this chapter reviews the key academic and popular literature about Mound 1 since 1939. I do these in a broadly chronological fashion, but addressing different media and authors section-by-section. Whilst pursuing this review, I have adopted a more neutral term for the contents of the burial chamber within the ship beneath Mound 1: namely the 'Mound 1 assemblage' (following Hinton 2005: 60) or else the 'burial assemblage', 'grave-goods' or 'finds'. By pursuing the troubling and tenacious entanglement of 'treasure(s)' in British early medieval burial archaeology, the academic, heritage and popular interpretations of the Mound 1 ship-burial constitutes a case study of the politics and popular culture of early medieval burial archaeology relating to both the contentious status of museum displays and broader Anglo-Saxonist ideological discourses on nationhood and race (Williams 2020a). Simultaneously, the case study reveals the widespread commodification and valorisation of early medieval grave-goods as 'art' to be extracted, acquired, traded, collected and displayed and thus downplaying their funerary context (Cross 2019; Daubney 2019).

The treasure that never was: initial academic reports

In 1939, and subsequently after the Second World War, the popular press heralded the discovery as 'treasure' and 'relics' and its monetary value was emphasised (Evans 1994; Carver 1998). This was despite the coroner's inquest which declared, despite the absence of skeletal remains, the context to have been a grave where the motive of deposition was not for eventual recovery. Hence, the discovery could not be deemed Treasure Trove under the feudal right of law under which the monarch could claim all gold and silver deliberately buried in the ground with the intention it would be retrieved (see Bland *et al.* 2017). The poem *Beowulf* was alluded to at the inquest on 14 August 1939 and referenced in the *East Anglian Daily Times* of 17 August 1939 (Frank 1992: 48–49). However, how did the archaeologists refer to the unprecedented finds in their writings in the immediate aftermath?

My survey of the key publications shows that while debates persisted regarding the grave's interpretation, the status of the grave-goods as 'treasure' was both stipulated and implied implicitly. The opening line of Kendrick's report in *The British Museum Quarterly* for winter 1939 embraced the status of the finds as treasure despite the coroner ruling it not 'Treasure Trove':

> The announcement that the Sutton Hoo Treasure and the associated finds had been presented to the Nation by the owner, Mrs E.M. Pretty, was published on the morning of Wednesday 23 August. It was one of the most magnificent and munificent gifts from a donor during his or her lifetime (Kendrick 1939: 111).

Explicitly, it was described as a treasure in the context of being a prized gift (thus a manifestation of Pretty's generosity) to the British Museum. Subsequently, Kendrick utilised the term when he described the coins as 'amongst the treasure' (Kendrick 1939: 126): it is evident that the term 'treasure' was restricted to characterising Mrs Pretty's 'gift to the nation'. In archaeological terms, Kendrick was far more measured, describing the assemblage as a 'wonderful series of Anglo-Saxon antiquities' and the rich early 7th-century ship-burial itself as simply the 'Sutton Hoo burial' (Kendrick 1939: 122) and the 'Sutton Hoo discovery' (Kendrick 1939: 135). The helmet and great gold buckle are each called 'magnificent' (Kenrdick 1940a: 113, 115), yet subsequently Kendrick regarded the Mound 1 artefacts collectively as 'grave-furniture'.

Ernst Kitzinger's (1939) contribution to the original publications revealed his knowledge of far-reaching European late Roman and early medieval hoards when discussing the Mound 1 grave-goods. Hence, he described the late Roman period hoard from Traprain Law as the 'Traprain treasure' (Kitzinger 1939: 120) and also mentions the early Byzantine 'Lampsacus treasure' (Kitzinger 1939: 125). Kitzingner thus calls the Mound 1 artefacts 'the Sutton Hoo treasure' and (significantly) implied the items derived from an 'Anglian treasury', thus explicitly asserting a royal East Anglian connection (Kitzinger 1939: 125). Moreover, it is clear from Kitzinger's account that the Sutton Hoo assemblage fills an 'Anglo-Saxon' gap on a pan-Germanic stage of 'treasures' hitherto not discovered, from the grave of Childeric onwards. From Kitzinger's perspective, rich grave-goods were indeed 'hoards' of a specific kind.[4]

The *Antiquity* editorial also explicitly used the term 'treasure' to articulate its status as a gift by the generous Mrs Pretty: 'Only very rarely is a great Treasure kept intact through the Ages and eventually made known in such a happy way as was the case at Sutton Hoo, in Suffolk...' (Crawford and Austin 1940: 1). This is followed with the explicit legitimisation of the British Museum as its custodians: 'The British Museum is unquestionably the proper home for such a remarkable treasure'. The dig itself was even called a 'treasure-hunt' discovering 'gold and silver worth a fortune' (Crawford and Austin 1940: 2). The items are also portrayed as 'wonderful' and as of 'priceless historic and artistic value' (Crawford and Austin 1940: 3) before asserting that 'the whole treasure' belonged to a king and thus was 'royal' treasure (Crawford and Austin 1940: 4).

All the key interpretative valences were therefore established within the framing of the academic research on the Mound 1 assemblage. The term 'treasure' embodied the unprecedented scale and quality of the artefacts and their international standing in relation to other 'treasures'. The finds were thus heralded for their remarkable survival but also as a 'gift' from the soil itself to Pretty and the excavators and thus onwards to the British Museum. The very manner of its deposition and survival out of the reach of potential tomb-robbers (whose shaft was discovered and shown to have missed the chamber) justified its status as 'treasure': 'For the survival of such a treasure we have to thank the deep burial in sand' (Crawford and Austin 1940: 4).

In stark contrast, Phillips opened his contribution to *Antiquity* by (misleadingly) claiming that the Sutton Hoo assemblage was exceptional in stark contrast to the 'almost universal poverty' of Anglo-Saxon graves (Phillips 1940a: 6). The *Antiquity* texts subsequently followed on from those of the *British Museum Quarterly*. Kendrick did not refer to 'treasure' in any of his contributions (Kendrick 1940a-c) although he was keen to emphasise its broader significance as a Germanic and Scandinavian discovery as much as an English one; he thus called it 'the most magnificent and costly furnitures that has ever been found in a Teutonic tomb' (Kendrick 1940c). The same motivation might be attributed here to the use of the epithet by Kitzinger (1940: 40, 58) whose contribution again describes the 'Sutton Hoo treasure' in comparison with other hoards and thus affording it a comparable pan-Germanic status and identity (e.g. Kitzinger 1940: 58). While Crawford (1940) did not deploy the term, Grimes (1940) concluded his report on the 'salvaging of the treasures of Sutton Hoo'.

Yet it is to Henry Munro Chadwick, building upon his statements at the coroner's inquest, where we find the most loaded evocation of 'treasure'. Chadwick regarded the finds of such scale and quality that it could not have belonged to anyone '... except a king' (Chadwick 1940: 76–77), explicitly citing the epic poem *Beowulf* in order to describe the 'treasures' given to the hero at the Danish court (Chadwick 1940: 77). Therefore, the attribution of the grave to a king is tied firmly to its status as 'treasure', specifically as 'pagan' as well as Germanic in character. Hence, Chadwick asserted its 'heathen splendour', again invoking *Beowulf* (Chadwick 1940: 82). Treasure buried in barrows was called 'heathen gold' in *Beowulf*, he asserted (Chadwick 1940: 84). Chadwick concluded his account with the funeral of Scyld at the beginning

[4] I owe this insight to Dr Caitlin Green.

of the *Beowulf* poem, utilising his own translation: 'Many jewels and treasures from distant lands had been brought together there...' (see below). More so even than 'Anglo-Saxon', scholars explicitly interpreted the Mound 1 artefacts as a pan-Germanic/Teutonic 'treasure', even at a time of war with Nazi Germany.

By contrast, reporting immediately following the discovery, lead excavator Charles Phillips (1940b) in *The Antiquaries Journal* eschewed the use of 'treasure', referring to the finds as 'the burial deposit', 'the objects', 'grave goods' and 'magnificent objects'. Still, he did use the subheading 'The Main Treasure' to discuss 'the area where the great richness of the objects deposited justifies the view that it was regarded as the centre of interest by the burial party', including the great buckle and the sword (Phillips 1940b: 166).

So, in the immediate reports of the discovery, already we see that while the term 'treasure' was generally avoided by the field archaeologists in detailed technical discussions, it was evoked by archaeologists, an authoritative art-historian (Kitzinger) and an influential historian in particular (Chadwick) to make a series of specific points and connections between the grave and its Germanic, pagan and heroic context as comprising items derived from an East Anglian royal treasury. First, the remarkably high-value nature of the items compared with other 'poor' early medieval graves, but specifically their discovery in a single grave rendered the term 'treasure' evocative, especially given their relatively good preservation and parallels with other rich Late Antique and early medieval precious metalwork hoards. Yet, it is notable that their status as a 'gift' to the British Museum is also explicitly asserted using the term 'treasure', together with the 'Teutonic'/'Germanic' context of funerary ritual explicitly evoked via the *Beowulf* poem, and Scyld's funeral therein specifically, to articulate the idea that Mound 1 assemblage was a 'royal treasure' in the Germanic tradition. Moreover, it is important to note that the absence of a body might have further enhanced the equation of the 'treasure' title, something which might have been avoided had any skeletal remains survived in the soil. The idea of a cenotaph not only facilitated comparisons with other 'treasures' (i.e. hoards), but perhaps also because it chimes with the section of the poem *Beowulf* where the Last Survivor mourns the loss of his people and deposits the treasure which will become guarded by a dragon which Beowulf later combats (even if Scyld Scefing's funeral was influential in thinking about the Mound 1 assemblage, see below). In short, in the immediate aftermath of the discovery, the network of associations of 'pagan'/'early Christian', 'heroic', 'royal', 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Germanic', and the implicit association with the wider pre-Christian north, were enshrined in the use of 'treasure', as is the connection with the British Museum as recipient of Mrs Pretty's generous 'gift'.

The British Museum's treasure

After the Second World War, it is possible to chart the continuation of this interpretative network even if the term 'treasure' was infrequently deployed. Specifically, the story emerged that the burial assemblage comprised East Anglian royal 'treasures' with Scandinavian rather than Continental contacts (Lindqvist 1948; Carver 2017: 29–55; see also McCombe 2011: 216–223). Maryon (1946: 28) repeatedly calls the finds 'treasures' and the collection as the 'Sutton Hoo ship treasure', while Rupert Bruce-Mitford's first edition British Museum handbook (1947) states that 'It was the richest treasure ever dug from British soil, and one of the most important historical documents yet found in Europe for the migrations of the Teutonic peoples, in which the settlement of England by the Saxons was an episode' (Bruce-Mitford 1947: 11). So, as well as the experts at the British Museum referring to it as 'treasure', the *national value* was made explicit and linked to the soil of the island of Britain. Moreover, this was still contextualised on a European stage, in which Saxon settlement is but one 'episode' in the broader set of migrations by the barbarian Teutons. Like those comments made by Kendrick soon after discovery (above), this statement would not be out of place amidst the most explicit mid-19th-century interpretations of early medieval grave-finds inspired by racial Anglo-Saxonism (Lucy 1998, 2000, 2002; Williams 2007a and b, 2008, 2013; Content and Williams 2010; McCombe 2011).

Having avoided the term 'treasure' in the subsequent discussion of the 'burial deposit' and the 'objects', 'treasure' returned when Bruce-Mitford quoted from the translation of *Beowulf* by J.R. Clark Hall, including the lines 'treasures from far' and 'lay on his breast of treasures a-many' and 'with less tribal treasures' pertaining to funeral of Scyld Scefing (although in the quoted sections of that translation the word 'treasure' was not deployed in Beowulf's own cremation and subsequent burial) (Bruce-Mitford 1947: 3940). The poem prompted Bruce-Mitford to use the term for the Sutton Hoo deposit:

> These literary accounts make it plain that the Sutton Hoo treasure was not buried in secret. They also make it plain that those who buried the treasures had no intention of recovering them later. It was these two considerations which led the Suffolk jurors in accordance with English law, to find that the gold and silver in the ship were not Treasure Trove (Bruce-Mitford 1947: 41).

Again, Bruce-Mitford asserted that the artefacts were perhaps derived from a 'treasury' and thus constituted 'family or tribal heirlooms' (Bruce-Mitford 1947: 43). Even though the term 'treasure' is avoided in the discussion of the silver and jewellery and in the guide's conclusion (Bruce-Mitford 1947: 61-62), the label is evoked once more through the citation of the *Beowulf* poem specifically and historical references to Germanic royal treasuries.

Bruce-Mitford's (1950) commentary in the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History* ran to 78 pages without using the word 'treasure' other than quoting others. He instead discussed the 'ship-burial', the 'great ship-burial', the 'burial deposit', 'objects' and 'grave-goods' throughout (e.g. Bruce-Mitford 1950: 72). Yet, despite this consistency, he lapsed into the concept of 'tribal treasures', citing *Beowulf* lines 1218–19 (Bruce-Mitford 1950: 4; see Fulk 2010: 166) and once again mentioned the likelihood that these items derived from a 'royal treasury' (Bruce-Mitford 1950: 6). Later he refers to the 'whole of the Sutton Hoo treasure' in relation to Maryon's (1946, 1947) interpretations of the items (Bruce-Mitford 1950: 61). So again, we see the enduring allure of 'treasure' despite stringent attempts to avoid it in the technical and detailed sections of Bruce-Mitford's work: the more evocative term revealing itself through connections to royalty and via the *Beowulf* poem specifically.

Bruce-Mitford's (1968) new edition of his British Museum handbook called the assemblage 'objects', 'grave goods' and as 'the burial deposit' but once again *Beowulf* was cited: 'on his breast lay countless treasures' (Bruce-Mitford 1968: 45). Also, he considered Beowulf's own funeral with the quotation: 'They bequeathed the gleaming gold, treasure of men' (Bruce-Mitford 1968: 46). It is once more explicit that the poem *Beowulf* inspired Bruce-Mitford to immediately confirm the assemblage's status as treasure after pages of moderated prose using the same lines as in the 1947 edition (Bruce-Mitford 1968: 46). 'Treasure' is not referred to again for the rest of the handbook; instead, the finds were 'discoveries' (Bruce-Mitford 1968: 73) and 'objects' (Bruce-Mitford 1968: 75). Yet, in the conclusion, Bruce-Mitford reverted to considering the finds as 'splendours' and 'a fraction of the riches that the royal treasury must have held' (Bruce-Mitford 1968: 73). Moreover, he observed that the finds were 'remarkable and splendid gifts' from Mrs Edith May Pretty (Bruce-Mitford 1968: 75).

In *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology*, Bruce-Mitford (1974) used 'treasures' in the context of *Beowulf* once more: 'The treasures, if not actually personal to a king, may legitimately be regarded as 'tribal treasures' (*þeod-gestreona*, *Beowulf* 1218-19: Fulk 2010) such as were 'distributed by him from the national treasure-store' (Bruce-Mitford 1974: 3). He returned to the idea of 'heirlooms from the royal treasury' (Bruce-Mitford 1974: 5) and tied this to the argument that the whetstone and iron stand or 'standard' constituted 'regalia' (Bruce-Mitford 1974: 7–17). The possibility of a Christian burial was never ruled out, describing them in general terms as 'grave-goods'. This makes clear that 'treasure' had no broader significance in discussion early medieval burial archaeology beyond the specific use for the artefacts found in the

Mound 1 ship-burial (Bruce-Mitford 1974: 18). Indeed, he oddly called the finds a 'hoard' when referring to the dating of the coins (Bruce-Mitford 1974: 20). Still, in general, Bruce-Mitford described the find variously as the 'Sutton Hoo burial' (as if there was only one found from the cemetery!), 'ship-burial', 'great ship-barrow' and the 'great ship-burial' (Bruce-Mitford 1974: 33, 52, 56–60).

The monumental publications by Bruce-Mitford (1975: xxxii) regarded the Mound 1 assemblage as 'the greatest single discovery in the history of British archaeology' because of its 'richness and royalty'. Yet, within the context of its storage through the Second World War, he emphasised its close proximity to other 'treasures' acquired from across the world; this allowed Bruce-Mitford an opportunity to celebrate once more the Sutton Hoo finds as 'treasures' of comparable significance and standing. Thus, he stated: 'The treasure spent the war years with the Elgin Marbles ... in a disused appendix of the London Tube system' (Bruce-Mitford 1975: 137). Moreover, Hopkirk's (1975: xxxvii) homage to Edith Pretty described how the bulk of the 'treasure' spent its first night above ground under Edith Pretty's bed. So again, 'treasure' is evoked in the context of its temporary storage, as opposed to its original funerary context of discovery. The discussion of the excavation of the assemblage included the diary entries of Phillips which described artefacts as 'furniture' and otherwise the collective term used was 'burial chamber', the 'burial deposit' and the 'complex of objects' (Bruce-Mitford 1975: 176–227) although the term 'main treasure' is used for the series of gold objects (Bruce-Mitford 1975: 194). Subsequently, the items are called 'grave-goods', 'the finds' and the 'burial deposit' (Bruce-Mitford 1975: 436-486). Later volumes use the same consistent terms (Bruce-Mitford 1978; Bruce-Mitford and Care Evans 1983).

Angela Care Evans composed the successor guidebook publication for the British Museum: *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial*. She follows the formula of calling the artefacts 'magnificent' and regarded the finds to be 'of remarkable wealth and unparalleled artistic quality' (Evans 1994: 9). Part 2 is titled 'the Ship Burial and its Treasures'. Evans called Mound 1 a 'resplendently pagan burial' and asserted that the finds represent 'a range of possessions' and 'the possessions that would have been associated with the body of the dead man'. She emphasised the connection to a single individual: King Rædwald (Evans 1994: 33). Equally, the assemblage was considered to be 'grave goods that accompanied the dead man on his journey to a shadowy Germanic afterlife...' (Evans 1994: 34–35). Later, 'treasure' made an appearance in chapter 10: 'Treasure trove?' only to explain that the 'Sutton Hoo treasure' was 'not treasure trove'. So, the 'treasure' is again Edith Pretty's and subsequently her gift to the British Museum is considered the museum's treasure! Evans then claimed the assemblage was an unusual case as 'the treasure was placed publicly in a grave accompanying a human burial and with no intention of recovery' and repeated that 'treasure as part of a human burial is rare' (Evans 1994: 94). In these popular writings, then, the Mound 1 assemblage holds a seemingly unique status as both 'grave-goods' and 'treasure'.

British Museum curator and expert in Anglo-Saxon art, Leslie Webster (1992), preferred the far more neutral description of 'male princely burial' (Webster 1992: 75) or simply 'Mound One' (Webster 1992: 80). In her 2000 chapter, she identified the conceptual challenges of the term (see above). Nonetheless, she explicitly stated that the Mound 1 regalia, feasting gear, vessels, weapons, and gold and garnet jewellery were 'treasure' (Webster 2000: 50–57). Later, Webster (2011: 271) described Sutton Hoo as one among a series of 'princely graves'. She regarded the Mound 1 assemblage as 'sumptuous' and a 'riot of gold and garnet jewellery and quantities of coins' (Webster 2011: 272). She here restricted the use of 'treasure' to the late Antique and Byzantine silver tableware as 'not only a display of royal treasure and feasting ceremony, but also an expression of *romanitas*' (Webster 2011: 268). Elsewhere, Webster deftly avoided any collective characterisation of the complex burial deposit but still described princely graves as 'lavish displays' and 'ostentatious' (Webster 2013: 63–64).

Yet caution is cast aside in a more recent popular guide by the British Museum's early medieval coin curator Gareth Williams (2011). In *Treasures from Sutton Hoo*, the book by Williams reverted to the narrative that the 'treasure' status of the Mound 1 finds is related to their gifting and curation in the British Museum. The fly leaf stated that they 'rank among the most splendid treasures in the collection of the British Museum'. The distinction between their status as 'finds' during discovery and 'treasure' in the British Museum was made explicit (G. Williams 2011: 4). Having subsequently referred to them as 'grave-goods' Williams then states: 'There are two main interpretations of why the treasures were placed in the grave' (G. Williams 2011: 19) and 'The treasure was buried within a chamber…' (G. Williams 2011: 20), and 'The treasures also included cups, and two great drinking horns….' (G. Williams 2011: 28).

Approaches to the term 'treasure' have clearly fluctuated significantly depending on author and context. In contrast to Gareth Williams, Sonja Marzinzik (2007) avoided the term consistently in her writings (Marzinzik 2007: 10, 51). While referring to the 'splendour' being reminiscent of and countering the view that *Beowulf* was a flight of fancy, she eschewed the term despite calling them 'intricate' 'grave goods' displaying 'technical virtuosity' (see also Marzinzik 2013: 104, 106).

In summary, in the British Museum's conservation, research and both its academic and public-facing publications, the label 'treasure' is avoided in many circumstances and in broad terms. However, with the exception of Marzinzik's writings, the term endured with specific uses throughout the principal reports and guide books, thus serving as an interpretative glue regarding the interpretation of Mound 1 as the East Anglian convert King Rædwald's grave, and simultaneously legitimising the assemblage in relation to its custodians (McCombe 2011: 207). Moreover, while the helmet emerged through two successive reconstructions as an icon, its significance was always tied to the 'regalia' and 'gear' of the assemblage from the burial chamber within the ship beneath Mound 1 as both 'treasure' and 'grave-goods' (cf. McCombe 2011: 218–229; Figure 1).

The world of 'treasure'

What of the wider context beyond the British Museum's archaeologists? A comprehensive review of the academic and popular literature and digital media is outside the scope of this chapter. However, it is important to note that syntheses and popular accounts occasionally, but consistently, deploy the 't-word' to refer to the Mound 1 burial assemblage. For example, writing in 1960, David Wilson describes Mound 1 as 'a monument to a great man: the treasure and paraphernalia found in the grave leave no doubt that this was the memorial of a king' and 'the unknown king has left his memorial and we can only admire the riches and glories of these East Anglian kings who numbered among their treasures the finest jewellery produced in Europe at that time, as well as riches imported from the exotic Mediterranean world' (Wilson 1960: 46). But what of popular syntheses of the 1939 discoveries?

Writing the first popular account of the Mound 1 find pitched at a US audience, Bernice Grohskopf (1970) titled her book: *The Treasure of Sutton Hoo*. In addition, the opening included an unattributed translation from *Beowulf* using the words of the unnamed Last Survivor who deposited the hoard later to be guarded by the dragon: 'Take these treasures, earth, now that no one/ Living can enjoy them. They were yours, in the beginning' (*Beowulf*: lines 2247–2248) (the bibliography cites three verse translations and one prose translation, see also Fulk 2010: 234). This selection is revealing and distinctive from the *Beowulf* evocations used to discuss the Mound 1 assemblage hitherto, since the equation is here made not with Scyld Scefing or Beowulf's own funeral following the tradition of Chadwick, but with the act of deposition of 'treasure' in the ground for later retrieval: the dragon's hoard. The treasure guarded by the dragon finds closer evocation with the Mound 1 burial assemblage, not only because of the dragon shield applique but with the idea of a coherent set of regalia and precious items from a royal hall consigned for posterity (as already framed by Maryon 1946: 26). Moreover, the analogy to dragon-guarded treasure legitimised to archaeologists its recovery and the values attributed to it by our society as an intact inheritance of a long dead people (as argued by Carver 2000: 25–26).

Unsurprisingly, the term 'treasure' was ubiquitous in Grohskopf's account, referring to its value 'estimated at more than a million dollars, but the historical value is inestimable' (Grohskopf 1970: 4), linking its status to the 'regalia of a king'. She observed that the 'story of the treasure at Sutton Hoo' (Grohskopf 1970: 5) contrasted with what little remained of the 'treasure' found in the 19th-century excavation of a ship-burial at Snape (Grohskopf 1970: 9). She then correctly described Sutton Hoo Mound 1 as a 'ship-burial' (Grohskopf 1970: 10). When digging the grave, the archaeologists found 'treasure hunters' had got there first but had missed it, this definition distinguishing 'looters' from 'the archaeologists'. They had, however, left 'never knowing that ten feet below them lay the treasure of Sutton Hoo' (Grohskopf 1970: 12). She went on to assert that 'The Sutton Hoo treasure is referred to as an outstanding 'archaeological document' for early English history. The intrinsic value of the splendid 1300-year-old hoard is minor compared with its historical value, for here is the actual regalia of an Anglo-Saxon king—his symbols of sovereignty' (Grohskopf 1970: 19). As well as conflating the grave-goods with the status of 'hoard', *Beowulf* was again quoted in verse (2758-2762), describing the dragon's hoard rather than the funerals of the poem (Grohskopf 1970: 35). She articulated a sense of its preciousness and the precarity of the 'treasure' during its excavation under challenging circumstances (Grohskopf 1970: 36-37). Grohskopf revisited 'treasure' to pose the question of its ownership. Following the 14 August 1939 coroner's inquest determining the finds belonged to Mrs Pretty, her gift to the nation is called 'the treasure' when sent to the British Museum (Grohskopf 1970: 52–53).

Drawing these uses together, Grohskopf regarded the assemblage as 'treasure' during the Early Middle Ages and upon burial, then also as 'treasure' during the process of discovery and excavation. Once more, Grohskopf described the artefacts as 'treasure' when determined legally as not Treasure Trove, during the finds' gifting to the nation, but also through their temporary reburial as it 'sank into obscurity' because of the 'outbreak of World War II' (Grohskopf 1970: 53). Thus, the London Underground became a temporary 'dragon's lair' for the items. Chapter two was called 'The Treasure' and again *Beowulf* and the dragon's treasure are cited (lines 3101–3105; Fulk 2010: 290). Oddly, here she returned to calling them the 'Sutton Hoo finds' (Grohskopf 1970: 59) but insisted upon the idea that 'the treasure represented only a small portion of a royal treasury' (Grohskopf 1970: 59-60). Quotes from *Beowulf* punctuated every item discussed and the term 'treasure' is repeated when the collection as a whole is considered and the grave's status as a royal, pagan 'cenotaph' is asserted (e.g. Grohskopf 1970: 90, 122). Grohskopf claimed that *Beowulf* persuaded the coroner that the assemblage was not Treasure Trove with lines 3165–3168 read from Beowulf's funeral (Fulk 2010: 294; but see Frank 1992 for countering this myth). Specifically for Grohskopf, the dragon's hoard captured her imagination as the analogy for Mound 1, as opposed to the funerals of Scyld Scefing and Beowulf, and this is repeatedly projected to her readers.

Grohskopf might be exceptional in her liberal use of the 't-word'. Conversely, it is worth noting that Charles Green's 1963 popular account of Mound 1 managed to navigate all 154 pages without utilising the terms 'treasure' or 'treasures' once. This was clearly a conscious choice neither to misrepresent nor glamorise the finds that, in many regards, spoke for themselves regarding their unique splendour. Green (1963) instead utilised the term 'grave-goods' throughout. So, it is in popular and specifically literary discussions that the 'treasure' status of the Mound 1 assemblage came to the fore, but in contrasting fashions: Grohskopf finds parallel in Williams, while Green mirrors Marzinzik, each poles apart in the deployment of 'treasure'/'treasures' in discussing the exceptional burial assemblage.

There is no space for a broader survey, but I sense that 'treasure' regularly appears in relation to the Mound 1 assemblage across popular syntheses of early medieval history and archaeology since 1939. Finally, it is worth noting that the academic publications about Sutton Hoo themselves were afforded the 'treasure' epithet. Werner (1992: 2) added this dimension by regarding the 'monumental' publications of the Sutton Hoo ship burial by Rupert Bruce-Mitford as a 'treasure trove' for the expert.

Martin Carver's Sutton Hoo

Given his influential fieldwork, Martin Carver successfully reinterpreted Mounds 1–4 and placed them in the context of the wider cemetery. He disseminated his findings through extensive academic and public-facing publications. Therefore, the scope and influential character of his work in shaping perceptions of Sutton Hoo over the last five decades require us to delve into the language he has used in detail.

In general terms, Carver's academic writings have continued the tradition of careful and cautious avoidance of the term 'treasure', even more so than Bruce-Mitford and in a comparable fashion to Wester and Marzinzik. This makes sense, since Carver has pioneered not only in fieldwork but in how archaeologists and the public think about furnished mortuary practices. He called Mound 1 a 'wealthy grave group which is artistically and symbolically outstanding' (Carver 1989: 150). Referring to the monument as the 'great ship-burial', Carver described the 'grave-group' as comprising of 'a range of objects, ceremonial, artistic and utilitarian which constitutes the most remarkable archaeological statement so far made about an Anglo-Saxon' (Carver 1983: 1). Carver (1985: 2-3) also defined the grave as the 'ship and burial chamber'.

In the Preface to the far-reaching edited collection *The Age of Sutton Hoo*, Carver announced that '[t]he archaeological site at Sutton Hoo, famous for its treasure, its buried ships and its early English warrior-kings, occupies a specific place in the public affection – a place at once brave and murky' (Carver 1992a: vii). 'Treasure' did not appear thereafter and had no serious place in the interim report beyond the disparaging reference to early 'treasure-hunters' (Carver 1992b: 346) but for one exception: 'Bruce-Mitford's publication, a monument in its own right, provides not only a means for the world to share the treasure, but a point of departure for new interpretation...' (Carver 1992b: 348). Therefore, as with Werner (1992), treasure was reserved for homages to previous works.

For the final academic publication of his campaign of fieldwork, the inner flyleaf regarded Mound 1's contents as the 'fabulous seventh-century treasure now in the British Museum' (Carver 2005). This was adapted in the abstract to 'the contents' (Carver 2005: xxi), where the 1939 'burial chamber' finds are described as 'spectacular'. However, nowhere in the final report is the word 'treasure' utilised in connection to the burial assemblage (Carver 2005: 177-199, 312-313, 490). Indeed, this careful avoidance of the word is revealed by the fact it only appeared in a quote from Heaney's *Beowulf* in which Scyld Scefing's burial is described as containing 'Far-fetched treasures' where Carver cautioned explicitly against too close and repeated equation between the grave and the poem (Carver 2005: 503).

In subsequent academic publications and popular writings, Carver showed how it is possible to refer to refer to the Sutton Hoo cemetery and the fabulous array of artefacts found in the Mound 1 burial chamber in evocative and detailed terms with only sporadic recourse to the term 'treasure' (Carver 2011: 923). He considered the grave-goods as a 'palimpsest' of allusions to the Roman empire, to Scandinavian heroes, to the island of Britain, to the Northern gods, to the Celtic gods, to Christ, and so forth' (Carver 2011: 926). Whilst, describing the discovery of the Mound 1 grave-goods as a 'veritable feast of golden objects' (Carver 1998: 15; Carver 2017: 17) and the excavations as 'magical' (Carver 1998: 16; 2017: 20), Carver was careful in describing the entirety of the assemblage in popular accounts. He used the word 'treasure' in only the vaguest of terms in the phrase: 'the chamber and its treasures' (Carver 1998: 17; Carver 2017: 20). Indeed, Carver was at pains to describe the full range of items found: 263 objects of gold, garnet, silver, bronze, animal, iron, wood, bone, textiles, feathers and fur' plus a 'ladybird and the crushed remains of a flowering plant' rather than fixate on those items popularly considered 'treasure'. For Carver, the grave contained 'every Dark Age object that had been imagined, and a few that had not, seemed to be represented in this burial' (Carver 1998: 18; Carver 2017: 22). Consequently, it is clear that Carver has maintained steady resistance to utilising incautious and loaded language in many of his academic as well as popular publications.

Having cautiously deployed the term in the excavation report, in select public-facing popular accounts, Carver used 'treasure' in the context of the discovery and the Coroner's inquest (Carver 1998: 21; Carver 2017: 25). Furthermore, Carver (1998: 24; 2017: 28) quoted Wright's translation of Scyld Scefing's funeral in *Beowulf* in which 'treasure' is not used but 'a heap of jewels' is deployed. The concept of 'treasure' was applied to describe the British Museum's custodianship of the assemblage is explicit in Chapter 2's title: 'The British Museum's Treasure' (Carver 1998: 25; Carver 2017: 29, 97). In contrast, when exploring the actual ship-burial itself, Carver uses 'grave goods' (Carver 2017: 135) although later he calls the items 'treasures and gifts' and a 'wonderful assemblage' (Carver 2017: 147). This attitude is enshrined in his own research project's core aim to steer '... Sutton Hoo away from the heroic age of amazing discoveries and startling finds and embarked on a scientific expedition with a new emphasis and new vocabulary' (Carver 2017: 55). So, whether conscious or implicit, Carver makes a clear distinction regarding both the nature of the argument and the intended audience before using the 't-word'.

Carver was not averse to using vivid, even romantic and nationalistic, language in his popular writings. In his concluding chapter of his popular account, he claims '*The Sutton Hoo Story* is the story of a piece of England' (Carver 2017: 174), and the Sutton Hoo burial grounds 'have together given us a dazzling sequence of life and death during the years that the English created kingdoms and became Christian' (Carver 2017: 205). The burial rites reveal a 'new heroic age' of a 'jubilant belligerence of a young aristocracy' (Carver 2017: 181), comparing the occupant of Mound 17 to 'Siegfried' (giving a flavour of Germanic legendary hero-figures). About Mound 1, Carver noted the rite as 'ship-burial' (Carver 2017: 182-183) as demonstrating a pagan investment and cultic practices deployed in the 'theatre of the dead' (Carver 2017: 184-187). Carver (2017: 195) claimed that the association of Rædwald with Mound 1 is 'by broad consent'. At the very last gasp, Carver evoked 'treasure':

> The pre-Christian age of Sutton Hoo was already an international one, and its protagonists beside the Deben did not dwell in a benighted periphery. But their legacy – mounds filled with treasure – is hard to grasp as it is huge. Staying silent until reawakened by the spade, they are easily lost to history (Carver 2017: 199-200).

Here, Carver valorised the Anglo-Saxons and the archaeological investigation of them in equal measure, with treasure as the glue. Similarly, he subsequently calls the Oseberg mound full of 'marvellous treasure in a ship, certainly the property of a woman' (Carver 2017: 202). Yet Carver (2011: 923) was not fixated on the 't-word', and frequently used the grave structure itself as the frame of reference for the assemblage, calling the 'Mound 1 chamber', full of poetic allusions to the 'pagan, maritime and autonomous' identities of a local warrior elite via the selection of grave-goods (Carver 2011: 926).

Most recently, Carver (2019: 61) described the 'Mound 1 hero', distinguishing between items of 'personal paraphernalia' as opposed to the 'more ceremonial objects outside the coffin' (Carver 2019: 62), describing items from the 'Mound 1 burial ship' (Carver 2019: 117) and the Mound 1 ship burial (Carver 2019: 333). He reconnected archaeology with *Beowulf* too in the search for the 'props' for 5th–7th-century Britain (Carver 2019: 614-615). He called Mound 1 an 'assemblage, of a richness and variety so far unsurpassed in Britain or Ireland' (Carver 2019: 339–340). Carver saw the burial assemblage as analogous to epic poetry in recording the mortuary theatrics of early Anglo-Saxon rulers retaining strong links with the 'ancestral homelands in Scandinavia while exploiting new relationships with the continent of Europe and remaining plural in its religious alignment' (Carver 2019: 340). So, 'treasure' is broadly eschewed in Carver's writings (and indeed, directly addressed and critiqued in his 2000 book chapter): he was acutely aware of its pitfalls. However, the equation of the finds with a royal 'treasury' and the possessions of a 'king', of a single man, and a pagan too, led to the consideration of the assemblage as 'treasure' in specific instances within Carver's popular writings.

Figure 2: Encountering the 'Sutton Hoo treasure' in the Sutton Hoo Exhibition Hall in 2016 (this iteration of the reconstructed burial chamber had the assemblage pushed to the side to allow groups of visitors to enter into the space. This display has now been removed (Photographs: Howard Williams)

Treasure on display

Treasure has persisted and reemerged in heritage contexts over the last 20 years. Opened in 2002 by Seamus Heaney who produced the acclaimed translation of *Beowulf* (see below), the National Trust estate at Sutton Hoo has an Exhibition Hall with a long-standing reconstruction of the burial chamber (now removed) and a screen presentation (Figure 2). There is also a 'Treasury Room' which is secure and for displaying temporary exhibitions.

Associated with the first iteration of the exhibition, the Mound 1 grave-goods are pointedly referred to in Steven J. Plunkett's associated guidebook in terms of their context as a 'furnished burial-chamber' (Plunkett 2002: 4). In the book section 'The Man in the Ship', Plunkett asks: 'In whose honour might these extraordinary treasures have been consigned to a burial ship, intended never again to be seen by living eyes'? The 'treasure' is here the fabulous array of grave-goods, not a legal or cultural status for these objects. Still, the details of the artefacts are discussed without reference to 'treasure' (Plunkett 2002: 26).

A more recent guide book, however, takes a different approach and 'treasure' is more expansively addressed. The finds were called 'glorious', and described as 'grave goods' but the discussion nevertheless refers to 'A Ship of Treasures' (Bullen 2014: 16) and 'Claiming the Treasure' (Bullen 2014: 22). Indeed, while with subtly different connotations to scale and quality, 'treasure' and 'treasures' seem to be used interchangeably. Meanwhile, the chamber's contents are called 'the Sutton Hoo treasure' twice (Bullen 2014: 23, 36). The second heading and second use of the phrase relate to the Coroner's decision of 14 August 1939 when Edith Pretty was assigned the 'treasure' by the decision that the artefacts were not a 'Treasure Trove' in a legal sense. The discussion of the headlines 'Treasure Given to Woman' and 'Saxon King's Treasure Worth £30,000' show the media's use of the term. Thus the Mound 1 items are portrayed as 'treasure; despite being declared Pretty's and not 'Treasure Trove'; indeed through her subsequent gift to the nation, the title of 'treasure' legitimised (see also Walsh and Williams 2019).

Figure 3: Encountering the 'Sutton Hoo treasure' in contrasting guises: the 1:1 grave-plan inside the the Sutton Hoo Exhibition Hall in 2022 (top-left), its outdoor parallel as part of the new ship sculpture outside the Visitor Centre in 2022 (top-right), the 'treasure' reanimated in the guise of Paul Mortimer in 2016 (middle-right), a reproduction of the Mound 1 helmet in the 'Treasury' in 2016 (bottom-right) and integrated into the wider landscape as part of an 'Anglo-Saxon royal landscape',, at Woodbridge railway station in 2022 (bottom-left) (Photographs: Howard Williams)

The latest iteration of the National Trust guidebook refers to 'an array of precious objects' (Hanks 2019: 3) and describes the 'lavish grave goods' (Hanks 2019: 8) and 'wonderful objects' (Hanks 2019: 19) from the 'the King's Mound' at Sutton Hoo (e.g. Hanks 2019: 38). Tudor-period hunts for 'treasure' are referenced (Hanks 2019: 11) but the 1939 discovery is also called a 'king's treasure' (Hanks 2019: 18) and 'truly a treasure trove' (Hanks 2019: 19), illustrating the persistent counterintuitive connotations of the 't-word'. Reference is made to the 'treasure ...buried once more, but this time in a disused London Underground tunnel with other precious objects from the British Museum' (Hanks 2019: 21). More than 'signs of incredible wealth' (Hanks 2019: 30), the back-cover extends the use of treasure to the metaphorical: referring to Mound 1 as a 'treasure trove of information'.

Online, the website for the National Trust Visitor Centre at Sutton Hoo matches the latest guidebook in describing the 'awe-inspiring Anglo-Saxon royal burial site'.[5] The established National Trust capitalised terminology asserts an interpretative authority, repeatedly calls the cemetery the 'Royal Burial Ground', replicating terminology to be found in the latest guide book (Hanks 2019). The site was described as containing the 'Great Ship Burial or King's Mound One'. King Rædwald remains the exclusive occupant for Mound 1, buried in a 90ft ship 'surrounded by his extraordinary treasures'. The website then poses the question 'Where's the Treasure?' noting that the 'King's Mound treasure' is in the British Museum...' (see also Cross 2019).[6] The 'brief introduction' section of the website uses 'The Treasures' to refer to the burial assemblage as a whole.[7] The only other reference to 'treasure' relates to the Tudor-period ransacking of the mounds by what the website describes as 'Tudor treasure-seekers',[8] while the discovery is also perceived as a 'treasure' itself, captured on camera by Mercie Lack and Barbara Wagstaff during August 1939.[9] In short,

5 https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sutton-hoo
6 https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sutton-hoo/features/the-royal-burial-mounds-at-sutton-hoo
7 https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sutton-hoo/features/a-brief-introduction-to-sutton-hoo-
8 https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sutton-hoo/features/history-of-archaeology-at-sutton-hoo
9 https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sutton-hoo/features/conservation-in-action-at-sutton-hoo

most web-pages avoid the term 'treasure', with the current website referring simply to 'precious objects'.[10] Still, the few references to the word on the website encapsulates the mutable meaning of 'treasure' for Sutton Hoo, referring to the burial assemblage but also to their state on display in the British Museum and represented in the new Netflix film *The Dig* (see above).

Figure 4: Encountering the 'Sutton Hoo treasure' through texts at the Sutton Hoo site in 2022, at the Viewing Tower (above), inside the Exhibition Hall (bottom-right), and inside Tranmer House (bottom-left) (Photographs: Howard Williams)

On site, the long-established National Trust Visitor Centre at Sutton Hoo not only included many reproduction items from the assemblage but also references to 'the king's treasures' and *Beowulf* is quoted for reference to 'Far fetched [sic] treasures...' (see McCombe 2011: 235–242; Figures 2–4).[11] The re-envisioned displays installed during the course of the COVID-19 global pandemic continue to reference 'treasure' as well as describing the ship burial as 'spectacular' and 'splendid'. Inside Tranmer House, as part of a new display about the 1939 excavations, one panel records how Peggy Piggott 'struck gold', describing how 'other treasures' followed on her initial discovery; the panel is titled 'We have found the treasure'. Another panel describes how crowds gathered at Sutton village hall hoping to catch a glimpse of the 'treasures'. In the Exhibition and Treasury building (now dubbed the 'High Hall'), the Mound 1 assemblage is described as containing 'an abundance of valuable belongings' and 'treasured possessions that mark his power'. Meanwhile, an interpretation panel associated with the new Viewing Tower opened in September 2021 records how 'the dead King has been placed inside, surrounded by abundant treasures' (Figure 4). Again and repeatedly, the 'treasure' is tied to the assertion of kingly status for Mound 1's (singular) occupant and the 'royal' associations of the site as a whole.[12]

An evaluation of the displays in the British Museum over time must be tackled elsewhere (see McCombe 2011: 230–235; Cross 2019; Williams *et al.* 2020). Still, it was worth noting that the exhibition when last visited (in 2020) described the 1939 discovery of the 'central chamber filled with treasures' and referred to the assemblage as 'magnificent treasures' from a 'spectacular Anglo-Saxon grave' with the silverware perhaps serving as 'royal treasure'. Meanwhile, Seamus Heaney's *Beowulf is* quoted high up on the display case glass: 'Far-fetched treasures were piled upon him...' and 'They let the ground keep that ancestral treasure, Gold under gravel, gone to earth...' (Figure 1).[13]

10 https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/appeal/sutton-hoo-appeal
11 As observed, December 2016.
12 Last visited, April 2022.
13 Last visited, February 2020.

More broadly, through academic, popular publications and digital media, Mound 1 assemblage is inconsistently but repeatedly called 'treasure' (see McCombe 2011: 202–203, 242–248). It can be concluded that the concept of the assemblage as 'treasure' has not simply persisted, arguably it has burgeoned in public-facing discussions of the Sutton Hoo Mound 1 ship burial and the cemetery as a whole through the 21st century thus far.

Poetic treasures

The discussion above has repeatedly identified the importance of *Beowulf* to the interpretation of Mound 1, and the identity of the grave-goods as 'treasure' has been pivotal to this connection between grave and poem. Roberta Frank claimed that 'Sutton Hoo in 1939 lit up a bit of Dark Age Britain; *Beowulf* responded, like a moth to a flame; and nothing has been the same since' (Frank 1992: 47). However, in regards to Anglo-Saxon funerary 'treasure', *Beowulf* was already long established in scholarly and popular minds. The poem's modern English translations used 'treasure' as the reference point for grave-goods, pyre-goods and for the dragon's hoard alike. So, having reviewed the archaeological and heritage dimensions of the connotations of 'treasure', we must dedicate space to addressing the aforementioned repeated specific parallels with the epic Old English poem *Beowulf* (see also McCombe 2011: 209–215; Allfrey 2020).

The desire to connect Sutton Hoo and *Beowulf* has persisted from 1939 through the media and immediate reports thereafter (Frank 1992: 48–53). Crucially, the equation of *Beowulf* with Sutton Hoo rested not on the 'pagan' status of either, but in fact on their perceived convert-Christian contexts. For Lindqvist, the status of grave-goods as heirlooms and war-booty is inspired by *Beowulf.* He described the 'Sutton Hoo treasures' but his focus is upon matching archaeology specifically to the poem by pronouncing the Uffingas as Swedes in origin (Lindqvist 1948: 133). Augmenting and legitimising the suppressed, simmering but ultimately tenacious and percolating evocations of 'treasure' in archaeological and heritage discourse is the silent bond with the poem. Thus, *Beowulf* feeds into the accepted narrative that the artefacts from Mound 1 are the 'possessions' and 'treasury' of an East Anglian kings.

Translations of *Beowulf* already established 'treasure' as the preferred perception of early medieval grave-goods long before the Sutton Hoo discoveries of 1938 and 1939. Indeed, the very origins of Anglo-Saxon archaeology have the concept of 'treasure' integrated into their fabric, consolidated by perceived connections between *Beowulf* and repeated archaeological discoveries from the mid-nineteenth century onwards (Frank 1992: 49–50). Notably, in the translation of John Mitchell Kemble (1837), where, for Scyld's funeral he translated 'there was much of treasures, of ornaments, brought from afar'... and 'Upon his bosom lay a multitude of treasures' (Kemble 1837: 2-3) and, having repeatedly referred to the dragon's hoard as 'treasure' and the dragon as its keeper (Kemble 1837: 103, 105, 112, 121-126), in Beowulf's own funeral he translated: 'they suffered the earth to hold the treasure of warriors, gold on the sand, there it yet remaineth as useless to men as it was of old' (Kemble 1837: 127). Set against this tradition, one can hardly blame 'the media' and 'the public' for wishing to regard the Mound 1 assemblage as 'treasure' from 1939 to the present: it is integrated into the long tradition of marrying *Beowulf* with archaeology!

While literary scholars have long recognised the value of the archaeological evidence to enrich scholarly and public appreciations of the poem (Frank 1992), I have not discerned any critical evaluation of the language of *Beowulf* influencing the interpretation of the Sutton Hoo finds beyond 'giving voice it (its) dumb evidence' (Frank 1992: 59) and the poem being the 'speaking partner' for Sutton Hoo's 'possibilities' (Frank 1992: 58). For example, Roberta Frank (1992: 51) quoted Wrenn's 1959 supplement to R.W. Chamber's *Beowulf* describing the 'East Anglian King's ship-cenotaph with its treasures almost intact in the summer of 1939', subsequently describing them as 'finds' and 'treasures', paralleling the funeral of Scyld Scefing and the 'hoard of ancient treasures in the dragon's mound' (Frank 1992: 52). Yet the conception of the grave was not considered by Frank in any clear sense, even though it is evidence that the equation of poem with the grave has facilitated the narrative that the Mound 1 items constitutes a 'royal' association and kingly identity, as well as a single 'collection' or 'treasury'. *Beowulf* scholarship as responded to Sutton Hoo with an extrapolation of assumptions regarding what is meant by *fraetwa* ('ornaments, treasure, armour') to mean 'gold, silver and gems', reflecting the discoveries at Sutton Hoo in a largely subconscious fashion (Frank 1992: 55- 56), but so too has the archaeological narrative benefitted from this long-term association to the present day. While Frank recognised the light that *Beowulf* shed upon Sutton Hoo's 'pagan', 'regal' and 'Scandinavian' character (Frank 1992: 56), she too makes the mistake of failign to evaluation the appropriateness of the term 'treasure' as a collective term for an array of burial deposits. Yet, there has clearly been a feedback loop by which Sutton Hoo's assemblage is constituted as 'treasure' via association with the tradition of poetic translation from the Old English into modern English. The treasure-bestowing kings of *Beowulf* find their match in grave-goods considered 'treasure' and belonging to a royal treasury (Frank 1992: 57). Perhaps this omission is because, as Frantzen insightfully observed, the very concept of treasure linked to aristocratic culture was integral to the Anglo-Saxonist discourse applied to the archaeological evidence of 'becoming English': of the origins of a nation. The notion of 'treasure' served to 'save Anglo-Saxon England from its reputation of barbarism' (Frantzen 1992: 25).

Hence, translation after translation of *Beowulf* uses the Sutton Hoo finds on their front covers and in their notes and prefaces, but also deployed 'treasure' as a way of segueing from poem to grave and back to poem. For instance, Mitchell and Robinson (1986: 131) dedicated a discussion to the 'Sutton Hoo Ship-Burial' which deferred to Wrenn in stating that Sutton Hoo sheds light on the date and genesis of *Beowulf*. They claimed that the poem and grave revealed sensibilities and aesthetics that linked the literary world to the archaeology of early medieval Britain.

Even in reference to Scyld's funeral alone, those popular translations used by archaeologists again and again use 'treasure'. For example, David Wright's (1957) translation describes Scyld Scefing's funerary boat as containing 'a mass of treasure [which] was brought there from distant parts' (Wright 1957: 27). Alexander (1972: 52) opts for 'mound of treasures' and 'treasures and trappings' on his breast. Crossley-Holland's (1982) translation of *Beowulf* described Scyld Scefing's funeral ship as being loaded 'By the mast in majesty; [with] many treasures...' and 'On his breast lay countless treasures that were to travel far, With him into the waves' domain' (Crossley-Holland 1982: 75). Bradley (1982: 412) preferred 'a great number of treasures' and 'amidships lay a multitude of treasures'. Heaney (2002: 4) went with 'Far-fetched treasures were piled upon him' and 'The massed treasure' (see also Figure 1). A similar exercise can be conducted for the dragon's hoard and Beowulf's own funeral (e.g. Wright 1957: 80-82, 91-101: Alexander 1972: 121-127, 138–150: Bradley 1982: 471-472, 475, 484, 490-493; Crossley-Holland 1982: 129-132, 140–144, 152, 154; Heaney 2002: 56-59, 69, 76-78), while Grendel's mother guarded 'treasures' too (e.g. Crossley-Holland 1982: 114), otherwise called 'treasure in abundance' (Heaney 2002: 42). These translations are ladened with displayed, exchanged, wielded, hoarded and funerary treasures, and by determined close association since 1939, so was Sutton Hoo's Mound 1!

Discussion: beyond treasure

> ...richness is not sufficient in itself to earn the epithet of treasure... A *treasure* should lie under the ground, where it can be properly guarded by dragons and rediscovered by the valiant, or the lucky (Carver 2000: 25–26).

Given Sutton Hoo has held such a pivotal place in both academic and popular discourses on early Anglo-Saxon society, kingdoms and religious conversion set in a wider European context (Marzinzik 2011:

1030; McCombe 2011), the assemblage's interpretation has far wider implications than the story of this one grave and its cemetery context. Whilst I have surveyed and evaluated the 'semantic freight' (Webster 2000: 49) of the 'Sutton Hoo treasure', it must be left for a future discussion to address how the myopic focus on Mound 1 affects and directs the wider interpretation of the cemetery and the period as a whole. Indeed, a comparative analysis with the way other early Anglo-Saxon graves and hoards are interpreted, including Prittlewell princely grave (Brophy and Brown, both this volume), the Staffordshire Hoard (Greaves this volume), and also the 'Treasures of St Cuthbert' (Durham Cathedral 2022), would be a welcome and undoubtedly revealing endeavour. Stepping back, the broader issue is not so much what we refer to the Mound 1 assemblage, but the enduring tendency to fixate upon this one grave rather than the story of the broader cemetery and its landscape context (Williamson 2008; Carver 2005; Fern 2015).

Despite the inevitable restrictions of this chapter, I have demonstrated that 'treasure' is more than just inaccurate and misleading. The Mound 1 burial chamber was never legally 'treasure' and the items which are foregrounded and most frequently referred to as 'treasure' – the collection of gold-and-garnet, silver and other items of 'regalia' – are merely elements of a larger and far more varied and complex mortuary assemblage (Carver 2000, 2005, 2019: 61). The lure of the 'treasure'/'treasures' epithets emerged from multiple causalities and interpretive (and arguably emotive) bonds to key concepts: not only its exceptional survival and monetary value, but also regarding the burial chamber as a space containing royal 'belongings' of a single late-pagan/early Christian male royal; his possessions or items selected from the East Anglian royal 'treasury'. 'Treasure' also evoked the burial assemblage's nested and shifting Anglo-Saxoninist significances – celebrating a nationalistic and racialised conception of English origins. This discourse has operated on nested levels, from the story of the locality beside the Deben estuary, to Suffolk as part of the former kingdom of East Anglia, Anglo-Saxon England, the early medieval 'Germanic' northern world and the European 'Dark Ages'. The focus and scale of the story has fluctuated and adapted as interpretations of the Mound 1 assemblage evolved and within shifting socio-economic and political contexts. The 'treasure' shifted from being seen as wholesale and direct importation of ideas and traditions from Sweden to evidence of complex connections across Europe and beyond with a more 'English origins' narrative of recent decades (Filmer-Sankey 2007; Cross 2019). Through these shifts, the 'treasure' status has endured and, indeed, flourished over time, asserting a value for 'us', for the English (and British more broadly) in today's world. The 'Sutton Hoo treasure' has become a rhetorical device, asserting also the legitimacy of Pretty's benefaction and its curation at the British Museum. Also, 'treasure' affords the Sutton Hoo assemblage an international standing, affording it with a legitimacy and 'worth' in an international museum akin to other great global archaeological funerary finds, including Tutankhamun's tomb (Brown this volume). This 'national treasure' is also linked to *Beowulf* and as Sutton Hoo has given form to the 'treasure' within the tale (Frank 1992), so Sutton Hoo has become the materialised treasure of *Beowulf* – merging visions of Scyld Scefing's funeral, the Last Survivor's treasure, and Beowulf's barrow.

The problem raised by the interpretive associations with 'treasure' is shared with contentious early medieval ethno-linguistic labels, the most debated of late being 'Anglo-Saxon' (Williams 2020b). Our task as academics and educators is to critically evaluate, critique, challenge and subvert accepted notions and their various loaded interpretations with attention to the historiographical context of their use. The end-game is therefore not to jettison these terms wholesale where they have interpretive utility and the possibility of engaging audiences beyond the academy (contra Harland 2021: 24–32; see Williams 2020b: see also chapters by Williams *et al.*, Boyle, Brophy, Brown and Reavill this volume). In any case, the problem does not reside in the term itself, but in *how* it is utilised. Hence, I find myself critiquing the term's nest of associations, not its use per se. The very emotive and popular engagement with 'treasure' can serve as an introduction to the fascination of discovery and the stories which can be told from the complex burial assemblage (see Williams *et al.* this volume). Likewise, I disagree with Cross's recent argument that the Sutton Hoo finds are 'so rich and complex that to reduce the Sutton Hoo finds to an assessment of ethnicity would have been impossibly limiting' (Cross 2019: 432–433; see also McCombe 2011: 206–207). In contrast, I argue that a nested East Anglian/Anglo-Saxon/Germanic/Teutonic identity was explicitly couched from 1939 onwards using 'treasure' as a lynchpin. Hence, a sense of Englishness set against a broader pan-Germanic, Scandinavian and Continental canvas has been fluctuating but integral to the British Museum and National Trust interpretations of the assemblage as well as academic and popular accounts of its discovery and significance. The problem does not lie so much with the utilisation of a single descriptor for the grave as 'royal', 'Anglo-Saxon', 'treasure', but the mesh of concepts binding these terms together on nested scales. Moreover, I would contend that this narrative finds new audiences within a post-Brexit Britain where the island is perceived as 'going it alone' once more.

'Treasure' is thus the crux of a cluster of associations - a tenacious interpretative mesh - linked not only to celebrating the origins of Anglo-Saxon/East Anglian kingship and the national and racial discourses surrounding that concept, but also feting Mrs Edith Pretty gift 'to the nation' as a 'national treasure' of international, pan-Germanic 'barbarian' standing and significance worthy of being curated by the British Museum. Thanks to *Beowulf*, Sutton Hoo manifests Germanic heroic convert kingship. Like the hero and king Beowulf, King Rædwald of East Anglia struts out of legend, boneless but tangible through the visage of the helmet's face-mask (McCombe 2011), perpetually at the interface between the 'barbarian' and the 'civilised' (Cross 2019: 414), crossing the threshold from the 'pagan' to the 'Christian' (Cross 2019: 419). Hence, to facilitate richer and alternative readings that combat this nationalist view and the legacy of racialised discourse in which Sutton Hoo has always been implicated, we must compose fresh accounts that pay due respect and attention to the funerary context of deposition and discovery, including fair and appropriate consideration to the wide range of artefacts therein not made of precious materials. By this I mean that we are obligated as scholars to actively reconstruct our interpretative narratives focused on *contexts* in order to compose new academic readings and public-facing narratives regarding these fabulous finds and their archaeological and historical contexts.

Conclusion

Despite a long history of caution and frequent careful avoidance of the word 'treasure(s)' for the Mound 1 burial assemblage since 1939, archaeologists have allowed Sutton Hoo's Mound 1 multi-faceted identity as 'treasure' to endure in specific prominent publication and has resurfaced for new generations in the 21st century without sufficient care or critical consideration. This situation applies to academic literature, museum displays and heritage sites, the media and popular culture. I foresee that 'treasure' will continue to be utilised as a shorthand for the spectacular burial assemblage. Yet, while purging the term might be neither viable nor necessary, public archaeologists must work to critique and reconfigure the interpretative nexus distilled on the concept of the 'Sutton Hoo Treasure' and 'the treasures from Sutton Hoo'. Positive uses to tell the stories of the grave-goods and the wider early Anglo-Saxon society are certainly possible through 'treasure' (Williams *et al.* this volume). Yet, challenging the singular and tenacious concept of the 'Sutton Hoo Treasure' when applied to early medieval material cultures and the communities and kingdoms in which these items circulated and were selectively buried in complex funerary rituals must go hand-in-hand with deconstructing the connotations of the assemblage's inheritance as 'treasure' in our contemporary society. Doing this critical work will foster the development of fresh readings of Mound 1's grave-goods in the early medieval past, in contemporary society, and for the future within academic research specifically but also popular culture more broadly. This chapter thus presents a first step in that direction and has wider ramifications for how we write about, envision and display early medieval material cultures in public archaeology and heritage contexts.

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Green Bling

Kenneth Brophy

The word 'bling' has become commonly used by archaeologists and journalists to describe things and assemblages of prehistoric to medieval date that have a degree of extravagance, notably applied to shiny metal objects with a perceived economic value and social cache. This is a lazy and unhelpful word, culturally appropriated from the world of hip-hop, that embodies a series of assumptions and stereotypes that are unhelpful in the characterisation of archaeological metalwork but to date there has been little critical reflection on the use of the word 'bling' in the world of archaeology. This chapter explores examples of the use of the word 'bling' in relation to prehistoric and early medieval metalwork, offering further critique in the form of a subversion of the term by considering the inherent 'green-ness' of many materials that we find in the archaeological record, helping break down the material categories that 'bling' might be applied to. The argument will be made that if we must use the word 'bling', then it should be done so critically and with more caution than has been shown to date by archaeologists, with the motivation of opening conversations about the past and the words we use to describe the material remains of the past. It is suggested other broad populist terms used in the media and by archaeologists and the public might undergo similar critical re-evaluation.

> Oh, Edmund... can it be true? That I hold here, in my mortal hand, a nugget of purest Green?
>
> Blackadder series 2: 'Money'

> A plated image from the '3rd hour' dangles from a chain around his neck,
> & the gilded weather in Tut's tomb opens behind my eyelids. A stone removed.
> A door ajar. A room light wounds. The boy emperor & his treasures undisturbed.
> The gold coffin inside a wooden coffin. Dismantled chariots await charioteers, & history reverses.
>
> from *Bling,* a poem by Yusef Komunyakaa

> All that glitters is not gold
>
> (traditional aphorism)

The bling thing

I might as well be up front about this. I am uncomfortable with the use of the word 'bling' in the context of prehistoric and early medieval metalwork. This is a common trope used by archaeologists and journalists, casually thrown around as a shorthand for flashy, expensive, garish displays of wealth in the past. Far from being a silly word that is used knowingly, I want to argue that in fact it embodies a series of assumptions and stereotypes around the social value of shiny things made of metal. Furthermore, this is a word that is very much rooted in the latter half of the 20th century; is this really an appropriate word to capture how such objects functioned in prehistory? This chapter offers the first critical examination of the use of the word 'bling' in relation to ancient metalwork; this is timely as the word is as problematic as the concept that is the broader focus of this book, 'treasure', with the two often going hand-in-hand.

The word 'bling' has a lot of cultural baggage tied up in ideas of snobbery, pop culture, conspicuous consumption, vulgarity, and class. The very use of this word in an archaeological context embodies an element of (inverted) snobbery, of sneering at gratuitous wealth displays, due to the cultural appropriation of a word from popular culture (itself culturally appropriated) that would appear to be more at home in the Urban Dictionary. Indeed, the word 'bling' literally is at home in the wiki-style Urban Dictionary, being defined by one contributor ('grumblord') thus:

> The word 'bling' refers to any unnecessary accumulation of metal or jewellery which impresses the simple-minded. Examples of bling-related activity include: driving a car with shiny platinum rims, arriving at a movie premiere in a hat made of glittering diamonds, or pointing at a big block of gold.... (grumblord 2007).

Those of us who have the privilege of teaching students about votive deposits and conspicuous consumption in later prehistory may now sharpen your pencil to add in one or more of these examples for next time around. Personally, I like to use the case of the band The KLF burning £1 million on a beach on the island of Jura in 1993, an act viewed by most people as offensive conspicuous consumption and very bling-y (Higgs 2012: 1–11). However, the contested nature of this act should prompt us to reflect on the fact that bling is a concept that includes preconceptions, value judgements, and emotions that go far beyond an amusing label. Indeed, using this word may cause offence and could be viewed as having racist and classist associations. This means that it is vital that archaeologists are cautious about the words they use and be alert to any unintended consequences that might result. In order to explore this problem, let us first consider how archaeologists have used this term, before returning to the origins of the word 'bling'.

The King of Bling

I am not sure when the word 'bling' became appropriated into archaeological discourse, but even before the word had the official dictionary stamp of approval in 2006 (see below), it was taken up enthusiastically by archaeologists and journalists alike. One of the earliest examples seems to have been attached to an early medieval grave found in advance of road building in Southend, Essex, in 2003, and excavated by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MOLAS). The discovery was of a single grave with a male inhumation burial inside a wooden chamber, and this grave included a lavish range of grave-goods including coins, a drinking horn, gold-foil crosses, and a copper-alloy hanging bowl. This burial chamber is now dated to the end of the 6th century AD (Hirst 2004; Hirst and Scull 2019).

From early in the life of the public narrative surrounding this grave, the word 'bling' was wheeled out. The man who was found within this richly appointed grave was nicknamed in the media, amongst other things, the 'Prittlewell Prince' and the 'King of Bling' (Williams 2019; Brown this volume). This kind of terminology has been used widely in the media and amongst archaeologists since the discovery, subsequent post-excavation developments, and occasion exhibitions. For instance, a *Time Team* special episode about the discovery broadcast on Channel 4 in 2005 was entitled 'King of Bling'. A protest camp that was set up around the time of the excavation to try to stop the A1159 road widening that caused the grave to be found in the first place was called Camp Bling (Earth First! 2009). The publication of the excavation prompted another a round of media attention, which included a rash of parallels with the discovery of the grave of King Tutankhamun (Williams 2019): as blingy as it gets. This discovery was also the feature story on the cover of *British Archaeology* magazine (July/August 2019) with the semi-serious headline 'Return of the Bling King' (Figure 1) which was prompted by the display of the objects from the grave in Central Museum, Southend. The darker side of this is the condescending association of this discovery with a budget supermarket development and in a town with a popular association with 'Essex man' that have underpinned the tabloid media coverage of this story and online comments from readers (e.g. Collins and Allen 2019; and see Williams 2019). Therefore, the deployment of the word 'bling' in relation to this burial has remained in common usage for almost two decades in various different arenas and with different motivations.

Figure 1: Cover of British Archaeology magazine July / August 2019 featuring 'The King of Bling' © CBA

In recent years, it has become more common for archaeologists and journalists to use the word 'bling'. A quick survey using online search engines on terms like 'Bronze Age bling', 'Iron Age bling', 'Roman bling', 'Viking bling', 'Anglo-Saxon bling' and so on reveal multiple examples of the use of the word 'bling' to describe archaeological and metal-detectorist discoveries in print media, social media, press releases, and popular science writing. It seems likely that one driver behind this trend is that the word 'bling' has a clickbait feel to it, being snappy and with wide cultural crossover appeal.

To take one example, searching online for 'Bronze Age bling' brings up a variety of usages from the UK, such as a 2020 UK Festival of Archaeology event for kids called 'Make your own Bronze Age bling' (CBA 2020). A story in the *Daily Mail* newspaper in 2014 about the discovery of a grave at Great Cornard, Suffolk, had the headline 'Bronze Age bling!' (with obligatory exclamation mark). The story began with the line, 'Bronze Age Brits were wearing bling around 4,000 years before today's flashy pop stars and footballers, reveals new research' (Zolfagharifard 2014): thus incorporating cultural touchstones dripping with value judgements. During reporting on the discovery of a hoard of halberds in 2012 on the island of Bute, local archaeologist Paul Duffy told the media, 'They have obviously got the money to be able to afford these halberds – which are quite 'Bronze Age bling' and quite high status – and then deposit them in the ground' (Duffy 2012). More recently, a bronze horse harness strap found at Culduthel, Highland, was described in the media as 'bronze bling for horses' (Macauley 2021). This is not just a British affectation, however. Upon reporting on the discovery of a major hoard of Bronze Age metalwork from a road-development project in the Netherlands in 2015, the University of Leiden (2015) headlined this discovery 'Bronze Age bling'. In other words, archaeologists have embraced this word as having an appeal to the public. However, as we shall see the word 'bling' comes with a lot of baggage, which may lead to unintended consequences.

The word 'bling' has crept into academic discourse as well although it is not in commonplace usage. Perhaps because of its colloquial origins, terms such as prestige goods are preferred over 'bling' (e.g. Brück and Fontijn 2013). (The things that archaeologists call prestige goods need not be shiny things – Grooved Ware pottery and carved stone balls are two Neolithic examples. Notably, these are never called 'bling' by archaeologists suggesting that shininess is an inherent property that is required for this term to be applied.) Darvill, in his widely read textbook *Prehistoric Britain* (2010: 197), wrote of Late Bronze Age metalwork and society in Britain: 'Collectively, these beautifully made items show the wealth and status of individuals and lineages, and it seems clear that many people literally wore their wealth around their necks or on their clothes. This was the original bling society'. This is a rare example that suggests that for most archaeologists there is a time and a place for bling, and that time and place is in the public domain and not the pages of academic writing.

Even the conference on the Public Archaeology of Treasure held in Chester and online in January 2020 that this book is based on was not immune from dabbling in bling. During this event two hashtags were promoted on social media - #archbling and #blingarch (Williams *et al.* this volume). Aside from that, the commonplace appearance of the word 'bling' in my social media timeline, often used by archaeologists and others in the heritage sector in response to an image of a hoard of ancient metalwork, gives me the impression that the word is going nowhere and will continue to have archaeological usage into the future. Examples on Twitter include 'Iron Age bling doesn't get any blingyer than this' (Durotriges Project 2021); 'If you wanted to historically dress to impress what bling from our collection would you bring?' (Yorkshire Museum 2020) and 'spectacular late Bronze Age bling' (Driver 2019). I have no intention of criticising or shaming colleagues for using the word 'bling', this is just a sample it took me a few minutes to collate and there are many others. Indeed, it may be that raising awareness of the potential unconscious baggage and biases that underpin the word 'bling' are all that can be done, the horse having long since bolted from the stables. To explore why this is problematic, we need to return to the roots of the word 'bling'.

The origins of bling

The Merriam-Webster dictionary has the more succinct, but essentially similar definition to the Urban Dictionary variant quoted above: 'flashy jewelry [sic] worn especially as an indication of wealth or status' (Merriam-Webster 2021) and the word itself was added to the Oxford English Dictionary in September 2006 as both a noun and adjective (OED Online 2006). The etymology of the word is unclear, with various versions of its first documented appearance to be found online. There seems to be a consensus that it is a shortened version of the phrase bling-bling, an onomatopoeic name that is suggested by two large pieces of metal jewellery knocking together to make a ringing sound. It is possible that this phrase was in use as far back as the 1960s in American television and radio advertising, but it is difficult to find concrete examples. What is clear is that the word 'bling' was widely popularised in hip-hop and rap from the late 1990s onwards, notably 'Bling Bling' by rapper BG (Baby Gangsta) of the group Cash Money Millionaires, which charted in the USA in 1998, taken from the album *Chopper City in the Ghetto* (Thompson 2009: 483). This track made it clear that the concept can include any expensive shiny metal possession, such as cars ('Bling bling / Pinky ring worth about 50 / Bling bling / Everytime I buy a new ride').

These origins suggest that bling – in an archaeological context – might be a problematic term that is rarely problematised. Mittman and MacCormack (2016: 360) have noted the assumptions tied up in the word 'bling' when used in relation to Anglo-Saxon materials suggesting metal objects are mere manufactured material adornments, with a purely functional relationship with the wearer or bearer, no more than status symbols. This runs counter to narratives that view people as having more complex entangled relationships with material culture (e.g. Fowler 2004) or that objects in themselves have agency (Gosden 2005). It is also clear that bling privileges certain aspects of the superficial appearance of objects. Thompson (2009: 483) notes that in hip-hop the reflective qualities of materials were also captured in the meaning of this word, with shininess enhanced by precious stones and metals in particular; Baby Gangsta's track articulates the primacy of conspicuous consumption in hip-hop. 'Bling, in short, illuminates an approach to visibility in which optical and even blinding visual effect has its own representational value' (Thompson 2009: 483).

Figure 2: The European Prehistory gallery at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (photo: Kenneth Brophy)

The word 'bling' was quickly popularised, initially associated with a genre of music, but in the decades since this has broadened out in terms of application and meaning, often in the print media. For instance, Garabato (2013) has suggested that the word entered popular discourse in France during the 2007 presidential election campaign where it was used to mock the dress style of one of the candidates and his wife. The same man – former President Sarkozy – was subsequently nicknamed President Bling-bling (Finan 2008), reinforcing this as a term of satirical critique. The word 'bling' has even been associated with the fashion for owning certain breeds of dogs: 'young men in shell suits parading aggressive bull breed dogs...status weapon dogs' (Harding 2013: 261–263 – a paper called 'bling with bite') which effectively weaponises bling and reinforces its classist overtones. In social and print media, and general usage, bling is now entirely normalised as a negative word applied to any ostentatious shiny garb or possession, a word much loved by the British tabloid press (e.g. Anon. 2016) and increasingly far removed from its origins. It is clear that its use in archaeology is another example of this trend.

Bling is only one of several populist, problematic concepts used by archaeologists, the public, and/or the media in relation to aspects of our discipline. The book that this chapter sits within is a study in the careful and reflexive use of another one of these words: 'treasure'. Considerations of traditions of how this word has been used in Ireland (Greene), abused in relation to chocolate (Tierney), and complex nuances in meaning (Daubney) all show a maturity in deconstructing a familiar and commonly used work when applied to archaeological material. As Boyle notes in her interview: 'The word 'treasure' is so confusing for many'; how we use words and how the public understand them matters. This is perhaps an even more urgent concern in relation to labels applied to people that could be construed as populist shorthand for cultural groupings. Terms such as 'Celts', 'barbarian', 'primitive' and 'Beaker People' are deeply problematic and loaded with assumptions and meanings that often escape any archaeological reality, and yet are still commonly used in newspapers and online. As the work archaeologists do gets promulgated ever further due to better media strategies, the impact agenda, and social media, now more than ever we need to be cautious about the words we use and be aware of how they might be consumed by the public.

Green bling

It was around the same time as the Chester conference was happening that I first began to reflect on the use of the word 'bling'. In Oxford, with a little time on my hands, I visited the Ashmolean Museum and headed to the European Prehistory Gallery. This was clearly a gratuitous display of, well, bling, consisting of a wide range of objects pre-AD 100. This included lavish displays of later prehistoric metalwork including items of gold, copper, bronze and iron, displayed on plinths and rows as if this were a high-end jeweller (Figure 2). What intrigued me that morning was that the metalwork on show was not always shiny, and indeed was often rather dull, but more strikingly, much of this bling was *green*. It struck me soon after this visit, as I wrote a blog-post on the experience (Brophy 2020), that this gallery was informative in terms of how we might subvert and even unpack the concept of bling through broadening its horizons in terms of both surface appearance but also materiality.

Figure 3: Display of jadetite polished stone axes in the Ashmolean (photo: Kenneth Brophy)

As I slowly paced around the gallery, soothed by the low hum of the museum strip lights, it struck me that once I began to focus on the green-ness of the ancient objects in the display cases, that material categories began to break down, and my focus was no longer just on metalwork. Why not call polished stone axes Neolithic bling? Shiny, reflective Jadeite polished stone axes, of the deepest green, were racked up in one of the display cases (Figure 3). In another case were wonderful ornate beads of glassy faience, in pale greens and turquoises. The more time I spent in this gallery, the more green stuff I saw, in all sorts of shades, depths, tones, and materials. Lumps of malachite (looking rather like Lord Percy's nuggets of the purest Green from the well-known episode of *Blackadder* quoted above), glassy beads, stone and metal axes, torcs, little metal things that I had no idea what they were, and a pair of bronze spoons (Figure 4). In fact, there was a lot more green bling than gold bling or silver bling or even brown bling in this gallery, and the same is true of most museum displays of prehistoric metalwork (Figure 5) because going green is a chemical reality through time.

Developing these thoughts a little, it became clear that there are different categories of green bling. There are things that were always green, right from the start. Polished stone axes from the Alps to the Lake District were sought after and defined in part by their green-ness (Pétrequin *et al.* 2011; Cooney 2015). Here green was the origin point, not the inevitable outcome. Green-ness was worth climbing the Alps for, perhaps even dying for, and countless hours of laborious polishing was required to enhance the

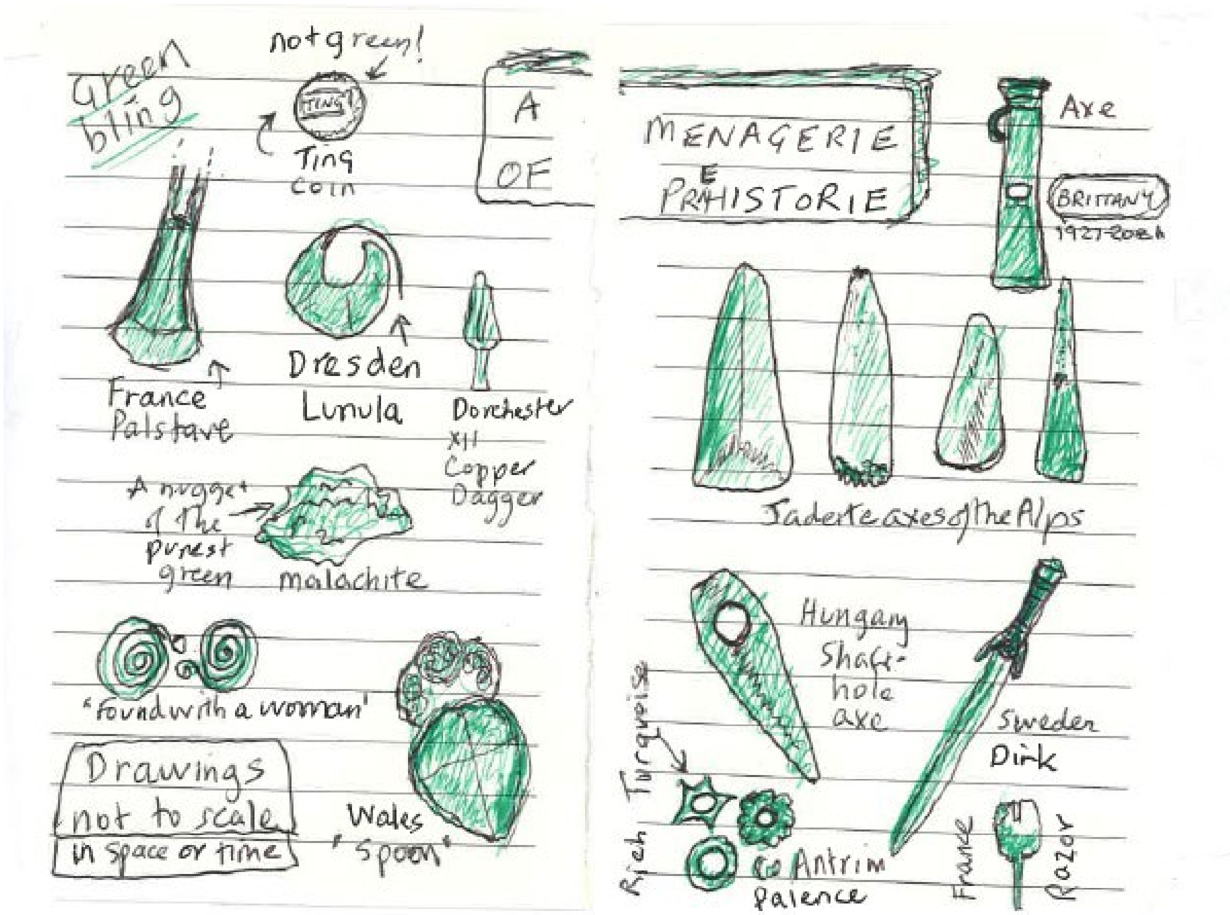

Figure 4: Green bling at the Ashmolean

green shades of the natural rock, making the surface reflective. Being green was, in this case, a property that was sought after, even desired.

However, in other cases, artefacts did not start life green, but age and site formation processes turned these objects into green things. Most green-ing happens when humans have discarded the objects, but sometimes the act of rediscovery enhances green-ness. This is because of a mixture of different chemical interactions between metal, soil, water, air and other things (e.g. body fluids in a grave). These changes can be superficial but also critical to the integrity of an object. A lot of this stuff is green with age: unlike wood, here green does not depict youthfulness and flexibility, and indeed an object becoming green may have been regarded not with frustration as it would today, but as a sign of its antiquity. Green was a side-effect, most commonly emerging out with the lifetimes of those who made, used, or wore these objects. This green-ing was and is inevitable, hard-wired into these objects at an atomic level even as they were being made, accelerating when objects go beyond the influence of humans. Yet this only really represents a return to a pre-axe or pre-dagger state. Copper ores such as malachite are green, and so the process of smelting a bronze object could be viewed an explicit attempt to de-green the material, turn it into something altogether shinier, inverting nature, but only delaying the inevitable return to green.

Metals are subject to chemical processes that superficially change the surface appearance and internally alter the composition of the object. Usually, these processes relate to the containment of the metal within

Figure 5: Display of green and brown Bronze Age axes in the Wiltshire Museum, Devizes (photo: Kenneth Brophy)

the soil and exposure to elements, and *the* elements (Scott 1990). Objects that are alloys of copper such as bronze can suffer from 'bronze disease', defined 'as the process of interaction of CuCl (Copper Chloride) within the bronze patina with moisture and air, resulting in corrosion of the underlying alloy' (Bozzini *et al.* 2017: 467). This produces a greening effect on the surface of the metal that was once thought to be an organic process of fungal growth (Mond and Cuboni 1983) as if the objects were literally growing greener. Iron objects are subject to another form of corrosion, rusting, a complex process that renders things on a spectrum of brownish-green to reddish-brown colours. Corrosion of iron objects placed in soil can be caused by various factors, notably oxidisation when coming into contact with water, an electrochemical reaction (Selwyn *et al.* 1999: 217). Corrosion continues once an iron object has been exposed to the air, for instance caused by an archaeological intervention, beginning another episode of oxidisation should the metal be allowed to dry out (Turgoose 1982).

My own experiences of green bling on excavations have been fleeting, being someone who has largely excavated pre-metal-age Neolithic sites, and not had the good fortune to recover a polished stone axe on any site I have worked on (yet). On occasion I have handled flakes of Arran pitchstone, a deep green obsidian-like material that reminds me of the glassy surface of the sea on the west coast of Scotland. During the excavation of a Bronze Age cist at Forteviot, Perth and Kinross, in 2009, the first thing that indicated to me the significance of this discovery was a shard of green within the yellow-brown backdrop of the grave interior (Noble and Brophy 2011; Brophy and Noble 2020). Reflecting on this later as I wrote this site up, it was the appearance of green in the grave that gave me a first indication of the date of the discovery, being a chronological indicator that this grave was post-Neolithic. Analysis of the green shard – the long edge of an early Bronze Age dagger – included the examination of cist contents within a CT scanning machine in a hospital. This procedure rendered the green and brown block-lifted lump of soil and Bronze Age material culture into a clinical black and white image, making the dagger's outline look like a child's bone that had suffered a 'greenstick' fracture.

Gazing into the cist, the green dagger edge looked at first like a blade of grass, almost as if the dagger were a new growth, appropriate amidst a grave that contained rich evidence for whiteness, in the form of abundant quantities of meadowsweet flowers (all parts of the plant were found including the green bits), and rounded quartz pebbles that were arranged in a halo around where the head of the deceased would have lain (Brophy and Noble 2020: 190–205). In the laboratory, the dagger was conserved to freeze its current level of green-ness in time, and this was entirely reversed (or corrected) when a replica was made for display in an exhibition

Figure 6: The Forteviot dagger upon excavation (above) and a replica made for museum display (below) © SERF Project, image prepared by Lorraine McEwan

a few years after the discovery (Figure 6). It seems that for the time being where public consumption is concerned, we like our bling to look like bling where at all possible, and not green.

Conclusion

What would the implications be if we began to use 'bling' to describe a wider range of materials from a bigger chronological range, and that the word could also be applied to green and dull things as well as golden and shiny things? Perhaps all this would do is to exacerbate the problem, spreading the baggage associated with the word 'bling' more broadly. On the other hand, if this causes us to rethink the ways and contexts within which this word might, or might not, be used, then it would be a valuable exercise in critical thinking. For me, this has been something of a thought experiment, the implications of which have not yet been played out fully.

Perhaps archaeologists cannot avoid bling. It is a pervasive term and one that crops up again and again in many different media and walks of life. In the struggle for reach and bandwidth across platforms that are competitive for short attention spans, the use of clickbait is becoming an increasing part of the arsenal of the archaeologist, for good and for ill (see Barclay and Brophy 2020). 'Bling' is a soundbite, a meme, something that might just go viral. On the other hand, like many other words before it, perhaps bling will eventually lose its sense of association with the trashy, the cheap, the opulent, the stinking rich, and become rendered banal by its common usage by square types such as academic archaeologists. It may even be that the word 'bling' itself is gradually dropping out of common usage although this is not obvious from, for instance, Google Trends. Perhaps in the future it will only be archaeologists who keep this word alive.

Therefore, if we are to continue to use the word 'bling' in archaeology, let us do this reflexively, critically, playfully, but carefully. In the first place, we must be respectful of this concept's cultural origins and take care to deploy 'bling' in tones that do not denigrate other people. The critical use of bling should be a means to open conversations about value, social hierarchy, and the relevance of concepts from contemporary popular culture to describe material culture from centuries or millennia ago, rather than a pejorative usage. The focus might also be shifted from just the shiny stuff to the inherent archaeological value of a broader range of materials and object-appearances. 'Green bling' might seem on face value a ridiculous concept, but it could become a means by which we reflect on and review how we characterise materials and convey their discovery and analysis to the public, as well as pointing the way towards other words, concepts and phrases that we need to critically re-evaluate and subvert.

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