

ARCHAEOLOGY,
THE PUBLIC
AND THE RECENT PAST

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Archaeology, Politics and Politicians, or: Small p in a Big P World

JAMES DIXON

This paper will demonstrate, through recent fieldwork and political engagements in Bristol, UK, the potential for a new kind of political archaeology, not based around supporting political parties or facilitating community engagement as ends in themselves, but around creating new kinds of knowledge that can be used to influence politics and politicians at the highest levels.

INTRODUCTION: BIG P, SMALL p

The phrase ‘archaeology is a political act’¹ is oft repeated, but as with any such definitive phrase when used in academia each word of it has multiple meanings. For instance ‘is’. Well, it is not always. Archaeology *can be* a political act and archaeology *sometimes is* a political act, but this is not a universal truth. Likewise, the word archaeology can be taken different ways itself. There is academic archaeology, private sector archaeology, public archaeology, uses of archaeology in the heritage industry and so on, all intrinsically connected, but each with nuances different enough to render universality meaningless.

In this paper, I wish to put forward the possibility that contemporary forms of archaeological thought and investigation can play a role in redefining the ways in which politicians engage with ordinary people and everyday situations. Rather than limiting themselves to facilitating community engagement or lobbying politicians in relation to heritage legislation, I will suggest that archaeologists can move towards using their unique perspectives on contemporary and historic environments to change the very way in which the connection between archaeology and politics is conceived, using archaeological investigation to understand the nature of contemporary politics and feeding this back into the wider system of policy making instead of merely working within the confines of existing heritage legislation. In essence, this paper is an attempt to move archaeology beyond its heritage uses, or perhaps more accurately, to complement archaeology’s heritage applications with a use of archaeological investigation as a contemporary political tool in its own right. To begin, I will briefly explain how I will define the phrase ‘archaeology is a political act’ before moving on to demonstrate the potential for my own rather strategic definition to be applied in trying to form a new political use for archaeological thought and practice.

A political act

At the Glasgow SPMA conference 'Engaging the Recent Past' that led directly to this volume, much reference was made to the difference between 'big P politics' and 'small p politics', the former being, loosely, party politics and inter-governmental politics and the latter a more popular expression of political feeling or the effects of political decisions 'on the ground'. This seems a good place to start as it implies an insurmountable divide between politicians and ordinary people. The space of this divide is passively obtained, a given. But this is a clear falsehood as it is also the space of protest, voting, political media and many more expressions of a more messily dialectic relationship between what we may call, for the sake of argument, the top and the bottom. If we can suppose that the act of being political is more usefully conceived as one's engagement with that central space, as opposed to merely getting by with one's own kind,² we can consider in what forms such engagement might usefully exist. It is not the aim of this paper to get bogged down in political theory. Instead, we might pick up on a single reference, to Chantal Mouffe,³ as she describes her dissatisfaction with liberal ontological politics. She writes of the general liberal notion of the middle-ground as a happy compromise between competing interests and concludes that this notion is of little worth and barely political. What Mouffe prefers is a central space of conflict, in which terms, places, people, pasts and futures are actively contested and where it is the conflict itself that reveals the nature of the politics in question, not any mediated solution. This is the politics of the activist versus the activist, never the politics of compromise. It requires contest between particular positions, not the 'by committee' development of normative behaviours. This effectively removes the disconnection between people and politicians, as both must defend and promote their standpoints on an equal footing. In many ways, Mouffe's ideas coincide with existential writings, particularly from Sartre, on authenticity⁴ and the notion of any reality only being found in the conflicting ideas of those who perceive it differently. So, as the first step towards providing a working definition of the phrase which began this paper, we can take a political act to be an active engagement with other actively contested political positions although not necessarily an act of party political allegiance.

Is

Ought we to be consciously political as a matter of course? Perhaps no, as to say so would not give individuals the choice to not engage. Certainly, there are many ways in which archaeology can be or has been political, too numerous to list here and a large proportion too ponderous. How can archaeology be political in the sense described above? Simply, archaeological investigation, thought and practice can play a part in elucidating particular (potential) political positions. It is also, as will be discussed further below, in a unique position to look at the effects of political conflict on people and places over time, particularly in the recent past, although it is to be hoped that the perspectives derived from contemporary archaeologies would be applicable to all periods of history. The detail of these kinds of engagements will be returned to below as the real subject of this paper; suffice it to say that archaeology can be a very real part of activist politics – indeed it has a distinct role to play through its very nature.

Archaeology

As stated in the opening paragraph of this paper archaeology, in the broadest sense, takes many forms or, perhaps more pertinently, finds many applications beyond its primary definition as the study of the material remains of past societies. Two common applications of archaeological practice are in community archaeology and public archaeology, both diverse and nuanced in their own ways, but generally taken to be based on notions of engaging the public⁵ in archaeological investigation of places that may have some referent connection to them, principally through physical location. There is also the use of archaeological thought and method in the heritage industry, wherein archaeological interpretations of material, whether excavated or above ground, lead to chosen parts of this archaeological record being afforded relative levels of value and, ultimately, protection or conservation. Strictly speaking, however, community engagement and the application of value judgements are not primary concerns of the archaeologist. Although it is, of course, desirable that archaeologists disseminate their work in ways which are understandable and accessible, we should not go down the path of undertaking archaeological investigation primarily to interest non-archaeologists.⁶ Neither should the practice of archaeological investigation be primarily directed towards preservation or with 'heritage value' in mind. Of course, these notions often dictate where we actually end up working, but when we get there, our work ought not to be exclusively directed towards those things deemed to be of value.

While community archaeology and heritage are worthy uses of the results of archaeological investigation, this paper will seek to distance them somewhat from the kind of political action discussed above. Instead, the remainder of this paper will be concerned with the ways in which objective archaeological investigation can engage with everyday political action. Archaeology, used here, means primary archaeological investigation and, importantly, will make much of the role of the individual archaeologist in wider political engagements. It is important to stress that this definition of archaeology is intentionally different to that with which most readers will be comfortable. Stripping archaeology back to the primacy of its engagements with material culture, we are left with an archaeology that is not necessarily concerned with recording, or with preservation, or with any other meme with which archaeology has become associated. It is an archaeology that seeks to be objective without (necessarily) seeking to be scientific. We might, perhaps, see this primal archaeological action as close to a philosophical perspective on the relationships between people and things (and people and people, and things and things). I will not see archaeology here as the application of tried and tested methods, but simply as an attempt to understand how people exist with one another in relation to materials, buildings and landscapes through the observation of one with an archaeological background and training. If, for some, this essay requires a certain suspension of disbelief, it may also be read as an attempt to realise new potential in familiar materials, by consciously employing fluid, organic, multi-disciplinary methodologies and experimenting with what archaeologists can achieve without the compulsion to dig and to draw.

Archaeology is a political act

Before continuing, we can qualify the initially quoted phrase of the paper, 'archaeology is a political act'. Here, it can be taken to mean, 'archaeological practice can actively

engage in agonistic political debate'. Re-phrasing thus, we can create a space in which to discuss the ways in which an objective archaeology, in the sense of being uncommitted, dispassionate and fair and as much in relation to those constructs of archaeology as to anything else, can occasionally and momentarily place aside heritage concerns and make a contribution to a different part of people's daily lives than that which is aspirant to centrally defined notions of cultural value.

POLITICAL LANDSCAPES

In determining what role archaeology might play in the agonistic politics of daily life in the contemporary world, it is necessary to first examine what the nature of politics looks like when interpreted through archaeological investigation. Though we might rely on media reports or be biased by party political allegiances, is there a discernible archaeology of politics? That is to say, can we objectively locate and describe the causes, actions and consequences of different kinds of political engagement in the present day? In recent years there has been a series of archaeological and other projects in central Bristol that have engaged with this problem in various ways. I will discuss only my own here, but connected work has been undertaken by other kinds of writer coming at connected issues in slightly different ways.⁷

Material networks

The notion of material networks has long been a major component of archaeological investigation of the past and has found expression in many other kinds of study of the past and indeed the present. Material networks are often central to contemporary local politics, especially at the level of individuals or communities wanting or not wanting certain things in relation to what other people have. Thus, at a basic level, ongoing processes of urban decay and regeneration or gentrification are one kind of material network, albeit one in which people move in relation to material rather than the more common opposite. Internationally, we may think of the phenomenon of bidding for the Olympic Games as a bid to be at the centre of another kind of material network. At the other end of the scale, archaeologically defined and described material networks can be highly illustrative of politics in action.

In 2008 there was an event, reported locally, nationally and internationally, in which a local man in St Andrews, Bristol, chained himself to a cast-iron lamp-post in protest against a Bristol City Council (BCC) plan to remove such historic street furniture to place it in another part of Bristol, Clifton, regarded as being one of the city's more affluent areas.⁸ The reported, and widely accepted, political narrative here was of one man's stand against the local council's plans to favour the rich people on the other side of town. In investigative journalism they say 'follow the money'. With archaeology we can follow the material. Investigation of the 'other end' of this particular movement of material reveals a different story: that a group in Clifton – Clifton and Hotwells Improvement Society (CHIS) – purchase such historic material from the council with funds raised through their own activities. Indeed they have recently undertaken a survey of the historic lamp-posts in the area to identify those which needed replacing.⁹ What had been missed in the reported narrative was that the council was replacing historic

lamp-posts with newer designs that could support a higher wattage bulb in a bid to tackle crime in what they had identified as a problem area. The Victorian lamp-posts, once removed, went to a central storage yard from which the council sells them (and other dislocated historic street furniture) to raise funds for their replacement. So, in this case we see, through following a material network and investigating three different locations connected with it, a discrepancy between how that material was viewed and used in each of those locations. The result of that discrepancy, that lack of understanding of the whole network as an archaeologist might, resulted in a public protest.

In a similar vein, when material is removed or used relatively non-contentiously, we can follow where it came from or where it goes to understand in a clear way how the city works. Examples from Bristol include the redesign of the central area of the Broadmead shopping centre and reuse of much of the removed material, particularly paving bricks and large flower-pots, in Eastside Roots Community Garden at Stapleton Road station.¹⁰ We see here the use of material culture, regarded as in need of replacement in relation to one commercial vision in one place, to support another view of community cohesion in an entirely different part of town. These two examples demonstrate what archaeology can tell us about politics: that uncovering and following material networks can tell us something about how people identify themselves in relation to that material. They also start to approach the creation of a role for archaeology and archaeologists in these sorts of material-centred debates, i.e. contributing a wider perspective on the provenance, destination or materiality of such networked items, even if this wider perspective is to highlight a relative banality in the face of an assumed injustice.

Culture clash

In the Stokes Croft area of Bristol,¹¹ the last five years have seen the rise to prominence of the area's association with a particular political position: protest against adverse local council or private development of the area and in favour of the area's designation as a 'cultural quarter'. This movement, centred on the People's Republic of Stokes Croft (PRSC),¹² has a particular archaeological signature. They decorate the frontages of disused buildings, paint the bins in the area yellow with a PRSC logo, have a headquarters building and design bespoke street-furniture. A grassed over building plot within the Stokes Croft area, Turbo Island, was even subjected to archaeological excavation as part of a joint PRSC-English Heritage project investigating homelessness, an issue with which Turbo Island is connected.¹³

However, rather than simply identify and describe the physical manifestations of a dominant narrative, that of the PRSC's assertion of cultural ownership of Stokes Croft, archaeological investigation can begin to understand the different competing narratives being contested within the area, where these come from and how they connect to the material culture of the Stokes Croft area. Looking closely at Stokes Croft, we identify the dominant narrative as already described, locally driven regeneration through art and community engagement. The main opposition here, whether active or presumed, is private developers practising land-banking, owning properties but not maintaining them in the hope that the land value will rise. In this area, many of the plots of this kind can be seen to date to the mid-1970s when projected development along the M32 feeder road meant that landlords in the area stopped putting money into the upkeep of their

properties. Not only can we therefore connect the PRSC narrative to the contemporary manifestations of a piece of 1970s landscaping, we can also connect it to events like the St Pauls' Riots, widely held to be partially caused by the same kind of neglect of properties as still being acted upon in the same area.¹⁴ So far, so complicated. The other lasting legacy of the land-banking phenomenon is that the St Pauls Community, currently predominantly made up of a variety of ethnic minorities, cannot develop within St Pauls, as so much of the area is made up of land-banks and social housing that people born in St Pauls have to move away. This leads to the existence of a number of proposed developments of old, disused properties for housing in the St Pauls Area, ostensibly to allow people born locally to stay local as they grow up and leave home.¹⁵ The PRSC, as in the case of the Lakota nightclub, will make representations against such a proposal, arguing that existing buildings be put to cultural uses rather than being demolished and the site turned into housing. Enter Kingsdown Conservation Group, loosely speaking the residents association of Kingsdown Conservation Area, overlooking Stokes Croft. They also speak against the demolition of historic properties, this time arguing in favour of their retention as civic amenities, but argue further against the tolerance of homelessness, graffiti and so on, that is being promoted by the PRSC. Interestingly, Kingsdown Conservation Area was founded in 1974 after a Council for British Archaeology backed campaign against what was seen as adverse modern development in the area, the same wave of development that led to the land-banking and the St Pauls' Riots.¹⁶ Meanwhile, other cultural organisations in the Stokes Croft area express concern at the PRSC desire to regenerate the area at all, arguing that they need low rents to survive and are assisted in this by the perceived decay of the area.¹⁷

I have chosen here not to go into great depth of detail in these inter-relationships. It ought to suffice to say that such relationships are revealed by particular flashpoints, in this case the proposed development of a nightclub site and its replacement with housing. What should be clear, however, is that not only can we use particular sites or landscapes to identify a number of competing narratives and the material around which their contests play out, we can also use the time depth central to archaeological interpretation to look at the contemporary problem, opposition to a proposed development, in its historical context of being as much the product of the particular material nature of 1970s town planning and architecture as of present day opposition to changes perceived as adverse.

Lived time

Perhaps the most important aspect of this kind of contemporary archaeology, that which makes it distinct from other sub-disciplines, is the way in which it can approach time as lived. When the catalyst at the centre of an archaeological investigation is a present day protest or a planning meeting, it is possible to see how these different material conflicts and oppositions play out in scales of months, days or even hours and minutes. It may be that for the archaeologist to understand ongoing change in the contemporary environment, it is necessary to understand what happens during the length of a planning meeting or what can happen within one week of the six-month construction phase of a new building. Thinking in this way, it is possible to consider the ways in which aspects of landscape or items of material culture can become of inflated importance for some-

times remarkably short periods of time, as they are used to express political viewpoints and then discarded. It is also of the utmost worth to make use of the perspective that comes from looking at the relationships between people and things when there is no knowing what may happen tomorrow or when particular futures are projected and acted towards in the present but may never come to pass. This kind of futurity is essential to understanding the implications of contemporary acts of political engagement and has the potential to be the most valuable contribution of contemporary archaeology to the rest of the field.

ARCHAEO-POLITICS

What the case studies outlined here demonstrate, is a clear potential for the nature of politics and political action to have an archaeological signature, even if that signature is best deciphered using modes of archaeological thought and action different from those most readily accepted by the field at large.

Despite the assertion at the beginning of this paper that community archaeology projects are some way removed from the primary justifications for archaeological investigation, the examples from Bristol demonstrate that there is a potential for a different kind of community archaeology. Rather than being an outreach exercise, however, this is an archaeology of community disputes both inter- and intra-. By understanding how materials, sites and landscapes become involved in different kinds of identity forming, conflict or development, we can start to believe that archaeology has a distinctive voice to add to this level of political debate.

In the second half of this paper, I will present some thoughts on how archaeologists might work to make this distinct understanding of the nature of politics more widely known, particularly to those politicians best placed to make use of our archaeological perspectives to effect change. These thoughts are partly a call to action for those whose archaeological thoughts and lives engage with the kinds of manifestations of politics described above. It is also, however, intended to serve as a part-justification for the kinds of archaeology employed throughout this paper, suggesting that *if we can* use archaeological thought in new ways, *we might* be able to make some very real changes to people's daily lives. My thoughts here are speculative, but not, I hope, fantastical.

Politics and archaeology

As shown, archaeology is uniquely able to apply a combination of understanding the relationships between people and material and understanding the wider temporal and geographical contexts of these relationships to understanding exactly *what* the nature of this local small-scale politics is. What we see when taking almost any site or material is that when a proposal is made to alter that site or material in some way, agonistic political positions develop surrounding it. It is not (necessarily) the place of the archaeologist to intervene at this point and choose a side. Rather, the archaeologist now has a responsibility to make the results of their investigation available to all. In what form should such dissemination take place? Archaeology is also intimately connected with politics in a number of different ways, the most obvious being that between private sector mitigation excavation and the planning policy documents issued by the Department

for Communities and Local Government and its predecessors since the early 1990s, including Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 15 on the historic environment, PPG 16 on archaeology, Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 5 which superseded both PPGs in 2010 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of 2012.¹⁸ Part of the commoditisation of an idealised vision of culture based on European urban models that started during Margaret Thatcher's time as prime minister and that has been carried on by all governments since, this kind of archaeology is part of the same kind of politics that states how much access to green space and leisure facilities people should have (PPG 17), determines acceptable noise levels in development (PPG 24) or controls outdoor advertising (PPG 19). It is, essentially, access to archaeology and heritage as a cultural aspiration legislated by central government. That is, of course, fine and private sector work contributes a huge proportion of the archaeological record. But can we posit a different kind or relationship between archaeology and politics? One wherein politicians can make use of the kinds of archaeological understanding of particular political positions and politicised situations outlined above to develop more nuanced legislative decisions? In short, can archaeology make politicians approach these particular places and situations in a usefully different way?

Who knows what? Who does what?

The first thing to understand when trying to work with politicians to effect change is who does what; who is responsible for the things that concern you? It is also important to have a basic understanding of what different individuals can do. With the examples described above, the situations being described archaeologically are within the remit of the local council. A local council will legislate and manage the day-to-day running of any location. Often, those flashpoints that can be exploited by the archaeologist to reveal the nature of contemporary politics are explicitly related to local council activities, consultations or planning meetings for instance. As well as inviting representations from interest groups and individuals, such exercises will also entail the commissioning of officers' reports, which in essence detail exactly how far a proposed scheme fits with existing legislation and precedents, and expert reports, such as the various work that can be undertaken by private sector archaeology units but also including environmental reports and so on. Here, we can make out a number of different ways for the archaeologist to impact on the process. Primarily, the archaeologist can make a representation to a local council in relation to a particular matter as a member of the public. However, of more importance is for this kind of archaeological perspective to have an impact at the level of commissioned reports from officers and experts. In the case of officer's reports, this would entail attempting to make changes to both local and national legislation. Impacting in this way upon expert reports can only be achieved through similar changes in legislation or altering the way that private sector archaeology is practised. I will not dwell on the latter here, rather I will focus on the ways in which this archaeological approach to contemporary politics might feed into legislative processes at the highest levels.

It is common knowledge that one can lobby an MP on various issues or can arrange to meet with one's own MP more locally. MPs do not have a say in local council affairs but they can petition local councillors and, more importantly, can raise local issues in

Parliament in relation to national legislation. The major connection between sitting politicians and peers and representatives of archaeology and heritage interests is provided by the All-Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group (APPAG).¹⁹ This group works to ensure that the interests of archaeology and heritage are fairly represented when the need arises. In particular, they profess support for The Archaeology Forum's published statement, *Archaeology Enriches Us All*.²⁰ This document is very much part of the connection between archaeology and politics that stems from the Planning Policy Guidance documents of the 1990s and concerns itself largely with the importance of archaeology and heritage as part of education, leading informed regeneration and contributing to the tourist economy.

Practically, it is with APPAG that the power lies to effect change in the ways archaeology is routinely used by politicians and it is to APPAG to which I shall return below.

Mediator or belligerent?

I began this paper with talk of agonism, of politics being about productive argument between clear political positions, not about trying to find the safe middle ground. If archaeologists are to take the kinds of contemporary perspectives presented here and use them to change the way politicians engage with particular issues, the role of the individual archaeologist needs to be considered.

Is it, for instance, of use for the archaeologist to take the side of a particular agonistic position? I suggest not, although I will reserve the right of the individual to involve themselves in political debate in whichever way they see fit. However, in making moves to try to alter the way archaeology is used at national government level it is perhaps better to approach the issue from a direction which is amenable as a mode of thought rather than a specific response. This is not to say that the archaeologist ought to aim to take the role of mediator. Rather it is to be hoped that archaeological perspectives on contemporary politics can be used by those specifically charged with mediation or decision-making to make their actions better informed.

RANDOM ACTS OF ARCHAEOLOGY

What might these kinds of contemporary archaeological intervention into local politics look like and how might they go about trying to impact upon the way that politicians view and deal with daily life within the city? Here, I will recall some of my own experiences from recent years of where my own archaeological investigation has, either intentionally or not, impacted upon local politics and local places.

Modes of investigation

It is important that, as far as is reasonably possible within the overall bounds of objective archaeology, we allow sites and material some opportunity to dictate their own modes of investigation. In saying this, I am not advocating any sort of essentialism or vitalism in the places we seek to understand, more that the archaeologist can work to be more open to different kinds of archaeological thinking that better reflect the on-the-ground situation being considered. For example, as discussed previously, it may become of use to think as the passage of minutes and hours rather than as a chro-

nology of phases. Likewise, it may be that the material network under consideration is revealed through contemporary events, like protest or a planning meeting, rather than through the more typically archaeological observation of patterns in assembled material. In essence though, these different modes of investigation are new and useful ways of locating and connecting relevant material. I do not propose to replace traditional archaeological methods with anything new, except to say that we can connect sites and materials through their contemporary correlations as well as through post-excavation analysis or historical research.

The Bear Pit

As part of my doctoral research at the University of the West of England, I investigated the ways in which 1960s modern planning ideas had existed in the urban environment since their construction. The site central to my work in this area was St James Barton Roundabout underpass, known locally as The Bear Pit. It was a key part of the post-war redesign of Bristol, but also functioned as a clear expression of the modernist desire to separate people and vehicles. Looking at the various marks that adorned the ground in the open central space of this underpass I decided that the feature most diagnostic of the development of the area over time was its benches, largely represented by the marks showing where previous benches had been. Taking one area of this space and archaeologically recording it, a distinct stratigraphy became apparent as benches were shown to over cut each other, just as the post-holes of a much altered timber building do. The first phase was of numerous benches, generally close together and with some facing up onto the grassed verges between the underpass and its surrounding traffic. This suggests a place where a number of people are intended to come and spend time either with children playing on the verges or simply admiring the modernist vista. The second phase of bench design and placement shows fewer units, further apart and facing into the centre of the space, a clear change to the area's original social function. More recently, these benches were replaced with single-seat armchair style benches as part of the solution to a perceived problem with homeless sleepers in the area. This simple stratigraphy demonstrates the change over fifty years from a consciously social space to one knowingly anti-social.

I discussed the issue of the benches in *The Bear Pit* in *British Archaeology* in 2009,²¹ saying that the change in question demonstrated short-sightedness on the part of the local council. Within a few months of publication, a council employee had been to The Bear Pit and covered over the part of the space shown in the picture I had used to accompany the description with wood chippings. While I am, of course, prepared to accept that it may be coincidence, I use this story to demonstrate that if one publicises these kinds of archaeological interpretations of local micro-political situations, the right people are listening.

Engaging with the MP

During the course of my doctoral work, I met twice with my MP (also the MP for my study area), the Liberal Democrat Stephen Williams. The first meeting was as part of his weekly surgery and I asked him a series of questions concerning contemporary Bristol as part of a formal interview. It was at this meeting that I learnt quickly that MPs are

not keen to delve explicitly into local council affairs. Some months later, I organised a session on contemporary archaeology and Bristol for a conference run by the Regional History Centre of the University of the West of England.²² Here, Mr Williams took part in the session as a discussant. After hearing papers on my own work, the social impact of the building of the M32 and the archaeology of homelessness, he gave a summing up in which he acknowledged that deeper understanding of the ways in which people use the contemporary city, and of the agonistic politics surrounding particular sites, would change the way he thought about the particular places in the city he goes. The points he picked up on were those explicitly archaeological ones discussed earlier. Clearly there are ways of demonstrating to our elected representatives how our work can impact upon their own lives and lives of their constituents.

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A NEW APPAG

To conclude this brief foray into a different way of connecting archaeology and politics, I suggest that APPAG is central to the wider appreciation of archaeological investigation as a tool for understanding the nature of contemporary politics and, by extension, approaching particular places and situations as legislators. However, the way to achieve this is not necessarily by seeking to change the nature of professional representations to the group. Instead, I propose that we can appeal directly to local and national politicians to change the way they view the places in which they live and work so that they can approach APPAG activities with their own archaeological perspective on the world with which to challenge the heritage bias of current manifestations of the archaeology-politics relationship.

We can do this in different ways. One, as suggested above, is to take part in local political processes as an archaeologist with a particular understanding of the material conditions of local political debate. Archaeologists can make themselves heard in consultations, planning committees, public meetings and more. It is by regular expression of these new perspectives that they will become known.

Likewise, there are archaeological 'direct actions' which can move towards using contemporary archaeological perspectives to make a difference to daily life in particular, local places. These are those archaeological interventions that take place outside established political structures and include publishing, getting involved with different kinds of local action groups or simply talking to people.

As acknowledged above, this does not necessarily look like archaeology. It does not necessarily involve any of the methods usually associated with archaeological fieldwork. But that does not mean that it is not archaeology; it certainly takes advantage of a wide range of archaeological theory and legislation. Perhaps even more, that which does not look like archaeology does not mean that it is not something archaeologists could (and should) aspire to do. It might well be possible to bring archaeological perspectives into local politics as a matter of course, but this needs archaeologists to develop such approaches and disseminate them. You can start by going out and pointing at things. What could be more archaeological than that?

NOTES

1. Used in Murray 1993 and regularly repeated in conference papers.
2. As suggested by the popular image of, for instance, community archaeology as an act of local politics *in the face of* national party politics or, worse, consciously pro- or anti-government in nature.
3. Mouffe 2005.
4. Storm Heter 2006.
5. Much debate in public archaeology seeks to problematise varying definitions of 'public'. There is not room to do so in this paper.
6. Other papers in this volume will suggest that the interpretation of excavated material is of lesser importance than the bringing together of disparate individuals in a communal activity.
7. See Kiddey & Schofield 2010 (Archaeology/Heritage); Gabie 2008; Gabie (ed.) 2009; 'Artist of the Week 126: Laura Oldfield Ford', *The Guardian*, 18 February 2011 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2011/feb/18/artist-week-laura-oldfield-ford>> [last accessed 22/10/2012] (Arts); Whatmore & Hinchcliffe 2003; 2010 (Geography).
8. 'Bristol City Council reviews plan to replace Victorian street lights', *Bristol Evening Post*, 17 September 2008 <<http://www.thisisbristol.co.uk/news/City-council-reviews-plan-replace-Victorian-street-lights/article-331525-detail/article.html>> [last accessed 22/10/2012]; 'Stop Nicking My Street Furniture'. *BBC News Magazine*, 27 June 2008 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/7476990.stm>> [last accessed 22/10/2012].
9. See <<http://www.cliftonhotwells.org.uk>> [last accessed 22/10/2012].
10. Dixon 2009.
11. Comprising Stokes Croft itself and some small areas surrounding it.
12. See <<http://www.prsc.org.uk>> [last accessed 22/10/2012].
13. Kiddey & Schofield 2010.
14. Bristol TUC 1980; Simpson 1982.
15. Marti Burgess. Representation to the BCC Development Control (Central) Committee, 23 April 2008/11 June 2008. For Bristol City Council meeting agendas and public representations see <<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/item/committeecontent/?ref=wa&code=wa001&year=2008&month=04&day=23&hour=18&minute=00>> and <<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/item/committeecontent/?ref=wa&code=wa001&year=2008&month=06&day=11&hour=14&minute=00>> [last accessed 22/10/2012].
16. Priest & Cobb 1980.
17. Dixon 2010.
18. e.g. Department of the Environment 1990; Department of the Environment & Department of Heritage 1994; English Heritage 2010; DCLG 2012.
19. See <<http://www.appag.org.uk>> [last accessed 22/10/2012].
20. See <<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/archforum/enriches.pdf>> [last accessed 22/10/2012].
21. Dixon 2009.
22. The session 'Contemporary Archaeology in Bristol: Past, Present, Future?', run as part of the conference *A Second City Remembered: Rethinking Bristol's History, 1400–2000*, St Matthias Campus, University of the West of England, 23–4 July 2010. <<http://humanities.uwe.ac.uk/regionhistory/rhcnew/Events/conference%20planJuly2010final.htm>> [last accessed 23/01/2012].

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