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Session ID	25
Session Title	Radical Archaeology: What is it? How do we do it? Why do we need it?
Start Time	Mon Dec 16 13:30:00
Room	777/80

The delivery of the archaeological experience to society, while well-intentioned, remains largely and fundamentally undemocratic: community projects organised on a top-down basis; professional and academic archaeologists as self-imposed historical gatekeepers; and dominant historical narratives preserved by professionals and delivered to the public, with limited opportunity for personal engagement or interpretation (including ongoing inaccessibility of conferences to laypeople!) In the current climate of religious and political extremism, refugee crises, media manipulation, and climate collapse, living our lives on a historically informed basis is more important than ever.

We propose that in order for archaeology to truly serve the interests and expectations of communities, its practice should embrace a more politically-aware approach, as offered by a more radical archaeology. The definition of radical is "...of change or action: going to the root or origin; touching upon or affecting what is fundamental; thorough, far-reaching; revolutionary" (OED). This house proposes revisiting and revitalising the concept of radical archaeology, as previously outlined by the Radical Archaeology Forum, Archaeologists Against War and Archaeologists for Global Justice. Can we construct a truly democratic and participatory practice, while excluding discriminatory views? Does the layperson have every right to interpret the past subjectively, or should we impose limits?

We propose a panel discussion with speakers providing different viewpoints, and discussion from the floor. This panel intends to spark debate about the political state of archaeology today and its implications, and how we might revolutionise archaeological practice to prevent stagnation and promote socio-intellectual equality.

13:30	Umberto Albarella, University of Sheffield	Why radical archaeology	This will be a short introduction to open up the discussion about the need, purpose and meaning of radical archaeology.
13:45	Rebecca Hearne, University of Sheffield	The Archaeological Imagination: radical archaeology and mental health recovery	Participants in archaeology projects often mention archaeology's intensely real, deeply affecting, magical characteristics. Such overtly emotional dimensions are not commonly discussed or evaluated, due largely to their 'unscientific' and intrinsically qualitative nature. Expanding on what Michael Shanks termed The Archaeological Imagination (2012), this paper argues that it is the development of a subjective, emotionally and imaginatively meaningful relationship with the past as experienced through an individual's own mental landscape that may provide a new focus as to why archaeology can be such a positive and uniquely beneficial tool within processes of recovery and wellbeing. This paper explores how the archaeological imagination manifests itself in individuals; it discusses how an archaeological 'habit of mind' can be developed, and how encountering the 'magic of the past' can catalyse emotional and intellectual processes that could contribute towards mental health recovery and wellbeing. The archaeological imagination is a fundamental component of what I would like to introduce as radical archaeology: archaeological practices whereby social, emotional, and historical outcomes are weighted equally. If we are to implement the archaeological imagination into UK archaeological practice, radical archaeology needs to win recognition as a new direction for traditional practice.

14:00	Alexander Aston, School of Archaeology, University of Oxford	Against the Curio Cabinet and towards a Storied Past	Modern archaeology arose as an imperial project, an attempt to collect, catalogue and display the “facts” of the past in ways that justified and propagated hegemonic power. Powerful actors have been able to frame social narratives with claims of privileged knowledge made possible by taking physical possession of the past. Public engagement with archaeology is overwhelmingly experienced through the framework of museums, heritage sites and academic research. These institutional dynamics largely relegate archaeologists to provisioning curio cabinets in which knowledge is transmitted from an authoritative source to a relatively passive audience. We draw attention to past contexts and actors in order to explain the flow of events. Storytelling not only preserves memory, but informs action by offering a framework through which humans can understand a world of heterogenous agents that act for diverse reasons. I argue for radical pedagogies that democratise heritage, narrative practices and ecological resilience through community engagement, skills based education and sustainable design. Archaeology’s focus on material culture and long-term change give the discipline a unique advantage for understanding human social organisation as ecological processes. This perspective allows for unique insight into how skilled practices transform developmental processes and the ways in which meaning making activities coordinate social relationships. To this end I propose that archaeologist should engage in multidisciplinary efforts to develop radical educational research programs that focus upon local knowledge, heritage and ecological resilience as a means of reconceptualising value and relatedness through the stories we tell.
14:15	Caitlin Kitchener, University of York	Martyrs for the Cause: A radical archaeology built on historical radicalism	My research explores the material and spatial experiences of radicals and reformers in the early nineteenth century. Many of the people I study are from Lancashire, an area today which has low voter turnout and is (shamefully) the birthplace of the British National Party. Growing up in Accrington, the emphasis was on the industrial revolution rather than trade unionism, Peterloo, and the co-operative movement. There is a lack of connection with the county’s rich political heritage and this can be seen elsewhere in Britain too. A radical archaeology must include these stories and legacies of the fight for the right to vote, parliamentary reform, and freedom of speech and the press. Although this argument is based on one area, it can be replicated elsewhere and across broader time periods, allowing for intersections and discussions on capitalism, colonialism, and consumerism. To understand present democracy we must learn about past democracies, we must remind ourselves of the never-ending journey to democracy, we must commemorate political achievements from the past to be inspired to keep them for the present and future. To be truly radical it cannot be contained to academia nor only practiced or preached by trained, qualified, or academic archaeologists. I look to the grassroots movements of founding Hampden clubs, female reform societies, and early unions as a source of inspiration for how people who love learning about and protecting archaeology can meet, converse, and be radical archaeologists together.
14:30	Brian Broadrose, UMass Dartmouth		The primary objective of my research is to deconstruct historical discourses that disenfranchise and disempower Indigenous peoples, whose cultures, stories, artifacts, and bodies are the materials upon which non-Native careers are often predicated. Such approaches continue to be the exceptions to the normative rule despite the promise of new collaborative, respectful undertakings conducted by archaeologists and descendant groups. For instance, in the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) homeland of upstate New York (U.S) new approaches that challenge the one-way colonizing gaze of archaeology have emerged (e.g. see Kurt Jordan of Cornell University), yet the old white-man network that has dominated “Iroquoian” archaeology is still firmly in place. I argue the tools of archaeology can in fact be deployed in an emancipatory radical framework, though this requires a sustained critique of the gatekeepers of the discipline and the primary beneficiaries of archaeological research upon Indigenous peoples. In this paper I expand upon this with an overview of segregationist, academic “Iroquoian” archaeology, where annual conferences until relatively recently were a whites-only event; where so-called non-profit archaeology is instead lucrative for the politically connected; where stereotypes and essentialisms continue to be used to exclude Indigenous roles in the production of their own histories. This includes a discussion on the impact of NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act), and the role of museums/repositories in perpetuating the status quo of exclusion.
14:45	Umberto Albarella, University of Sheffield; Rebecca Hearne, University of Sheffield	Free-flowing general discussion chaired by session organisers	
15:10	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK
15:40	Umberto Albarella, University of Sheffield; Rebecca Hearne, University of Sheffield	Free-flowing general discussion chaired by session organisers	

17:00 END

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