Traditional approaches to understanding the heritage significance of archaeological sites focus on their scientific or 'research' value. When archaeological sites are threatened or otherwise affected by development processes, a typical conservation response is to seek to realise the research potential through investigation, analysis and reporting. Emphasis has been placed on research designs or frameworks which ensure that, as archaeological sites are investigated (and often destroyed in the process), the information that they contain can be recovered and can contribute to our understanding of history or the place itself.

A worldwide trend over the last decade recognises the broader values of archaeological sites in a social context. Perhaps through its 'mystical' nature, perhaps because of the activity itself or simply its tangible 'hands on' practice, archaeology provides eager members of interested communities with an opportunity to connect directly with their history and their heritage. If such processes and events are recognised as a social 'good', the understanding of archaeological sites in a social context and their interpretation is as critical a conservation action as the more specialist, scientific pursuit of research outcomes.

Figure 2 Remnants of an alcohol still provide an interesting insight into the activities of convict George Cribb, Cumberland/Gloucester Streets Site. (Ilias Kaltenbach)

and bigamist George Cribb apparently operated a commercial business and hotel, distilled spirits and ate off fine china. His story, though known in part from documentary records, is enriched by the thousands of artefacts recovered from his well and yard - caches of cut and sawn bone demonstrate the extent of his backyard butchery. Fragments of ceramic from Cribb’s well suggest life ways and living standards well beyond the stereo-typical perceptions of convict history.

In its later phases, the Cumberland/Gloucester Streets site also challenges the slum cliché that is pervasive in depictions of mid- to-late nineteenth-century lower classes in urban Australia. The ‘slum’ lifestyle contrasts with extensive amounts of fine English transferware, including Spode china, present at the site. By the 1880s, the close-packed residences in this part of The Rocks seem to have housed people with surprisingly modern views; evidenced by ‘moralising china’, that contrasts with the depraved society described by some commentators. Surprising social mores and practices are illustrated in the form

Figure 1 Regular public tours and school group visits at the Cumberland/Gloucester Streets Site illustrate how interpretation and storytelling has become an integral part of urban archaeology. (Patrick Grant)

The second part of the ‘archaeology’ story presented during the ‘Telling Tales’ conference briefly considered two case studies involving urban archaeological sites in Australia and examined some contemporary approaches to delivery of the outcomes of archaeological projects, so as to make them accessible to a wider community. Historical archaeologists in Australia have long trumpeted the ability of significant sites to reveal aspects of history that are not available through documentary sources. At the Cumberland/Gloucester Streets site in Sydney’s Rocks district, excavated by Godden Mackay for the then Sydney Cove Authority in 1994, the peeled-back layers of physical history provided a story about late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century convict consumers. Convict, butcher

Figure 3 Extensive caches of bones buried across the Cumberland/Gloucester Streets site provide tangible evidence of the nature and extent of Cribb’s early-nineteenth century butchery activities. (Richard Mackay)
of a bone pessary/contraceptive device, likely to have been ordered from an American catalogue. The different 'tale' revealed by the archaeology at this site has provided an enriching experience for thousands of people who have been involved. The site itself is now widely known as the BIG DIG site. The public profile of the Cumberland/Gloucester Streets site alludes to another important nexus between archaeology and storytelling. This site is a place which has attained contemporary community esteem as an important place where the act of 'archaeology' took place. The event of digging, the related public tours and community participation programs, published books, learned papers and even an education kit all form part of the social context for this archaeological place. Experience in urban archaeology over more than two decades leads me to a view that these values are equally important in a heritage sense and require as much emphasis in conservation as the more traditional 'science'. If this is the case, there is an argument to be made that approaches to research design or research framework in archaeological heritage management require rethinking and must move away from a simple axial connection between existing theory and knowledge and the physical evidence of sites and artefacts, towards a wider perspective that also acknowledges contemporary social value and community context.

If this tripartite context for archaeological heritage management is accepted, then the products of archaeology transcend new historical insights and physical conservation and must also accommodate storytelling and archaeology as an 'event'. In other words, when assessing and responding to heritage values of archaeological places, heritage practitioners may need to address overtly their interpretative potential and opportunities to use these places and their cultural resources as a venue for entertainment and community engagement. While such an approach may be antithetical to the Academy and some archaeologists, it has an intuitive appeal related to the ethical obligations that arise from the fact that directly or indirectly, large amounts of community resource are often devoted towards archaeological salvage excavations with little apparent social or public good being delivered.
The Casselden Place archaeological site, jointly excavated by a team from Godden Mackay Logan, Austral Archaeology and the Archaeology Program at La Trobe University in 2002/2003, provides a case study of contemporary community archaeology in an urban context. That is not to say the project was not conceived within a rigorous academic framework. However, largely at the insistence of the consent authority, Heritage Victoria, this central-city project which extended across many weeks and two separate excavation seasons, incorporated:

- a major media launch;
- extensive coverage over an extended period on all television channels, most radio stations and in print media;
- a structured schools program undertaken in conjunction with the Museum of Victoria;
- organised tours;
- presentation of community information through on-site signs, brochure and website;
- a program of community participation;
- a separate participation program for undergraduate archaeology students; and ultimately
- a proposed program for extensive and innovative on-site interpretation in the building that is now under construction at the site.

Approaches like these are increasingly being adopted in Australia. Tim Owen and Jody Steele's *Digging Up the Past* volume 12 provides a simple, but effective resource for introducing archaeology to primary school children. Educational resource company Astarte and Godden Mackay Logan have collaborated to produce school education kits for the Cumberland/Gloucester Streets site and the Government Camp Site in Ballarat, responding to Year 11 and Year 5 history/archaeology curricula respectively.

The Australian community retains its infectious enthusiasm for all matters archaeological. The statutory framework This is the reality of urban archaeology in Australia in the twenty-first century. The Casselden Place 'event' delivered an outcome that uses the archaeological place, relics and the processes of archaeology itself to tell tales in a way that connect people with history, across a wide spectrum of society. But there is further to go. In Australia, we have, of necessity, focused on individual sites and projects as particular 'events'. By contrast, the relatively recent school program at the Archaeological Research Centre, associated with the Jorvik Viking Centre in York, uses ongoing archaeological investigation, data gathering and artefact collection as a foundation for 'hands-on' activities linked to both primary and secondary educational objectives. Collateral educational resources, covering all manner of archaeological subject material from Vikings to the Industrial Revolution, provide direct linkages into related school curricula. There are a number of comparable projects elsewhere in the United Kingdom and in the United States of America.

**Activity 2: Layers Beneath our Feet**

**Figure 8** The recent Casselden Place excavation in urban Melbourne involved a comprehensive program of community events, commencing with a full-scale media launch and press conference. (Tony Jenner)

**Figure 9** Structured programs for participation involving both university students and community members have become a feature of urban archaeology in Australia. (Casselden Place excavation 2002, Tony Jenner)

**Figure 10** Extract from *Digging for Gold! Goldfield Archaeology at Ballarat's Government Camp Student Booklet*. Understanding archaeology in its community context provides opportunity for a different form of archaeological product as in this case something that is suitable for Year 5!
surrounding archaeological places provides stringent and demanding requirements for investigations. Together, these two factors combine to create an environment where there is a strong ethical and practical obligation on archaeologists to deliver high-quality interpretation as an integral part of archaeological heritage management.

References


Murray, T and A Mayne 2002 ‘Casselden Place Development Archaeological Investigation Works, Phases 1 and 2, Full Research Design’, prepared for Godden Mackay Logan Pty Ltd in association with Archaeology Program La Trobe University and Austral Archaeology.

