



Illustration by Kelsey Boast

within the profession, in displaying our work to the public we must conform to a set form of ideas. All archaeology is education and therefore we should reject our image as the 'cowboys (and girls?) of science' and, with a renewed purpose to our discipline, aim to provide a comprehensive, challenging and well thought-out education.

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References

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR EVERYBODY

Kate Pretty

For some years I was the Chairwoman of the School's Committee of the Council for British Archaeology and was closely concerned with its attempts to define a framework for the teaching of archaeology in schools. At that time of educational innocence we thought of the study of archaeology in schools, and indeed universities, as requiring no particular justification, regarding a knowledge of archaeology, which subsumed prehistory, as self-evident personal enrichment for the student. Now, faced with the need to justify the study of archaeology in a utilitarian sense, both for personal growth and social investment, we may need to be harder-headed about defining the value of archaeology as an education in itself, both in schools and in higher education. To do this requires professional archaeologists and teachers of archaeology to confront their own residual guilt about potential self-indulgence and come up with a well-defined and corporate strategy about the value of a knowledge of archaeology to society as a whole, as well as to the individual within society.

One of the first questions must be -- do archaeologists agree that theirs is a valuable discipline? I think that an awful lot of them are not sure. Faced by the question, "what use is it?", surprisingly few students, teachers or professional field archaeologists can demonstrate that they have analysed why it is a consuming interest for them and why that interest might transcend the personal and be of use to others. There is an underlying feeling that personal enrichment and motivation is the basis of their own commitment, and that this is an insufficient reason for studying archaeology.

That field archaeologists enjoy what they do is patently clear: practical fieldwork in uncomfortable physical circumstances, for low rates of pay, and with no obvious career structure, must be counter-balanced by some sort of reward and job satisfaction which outweighs the drawbacks of the profession. The sense of belonging to a small-scale society, coupled with peer-group approbation, are strong incentives for remaining in this under-paid and under-rated world. To those archaeologists working within a more specifically academic environment, as teachers and research workers in higher education, schools and museums, their personal enjoyment of the subject is sometimes seen merely as the backdrop to the pursuit of education in itself. Here, being a good educationalist can gloss over the question of whether the product -- archaeology -- is worthwhile, in the interests of whether the exponent is a good salesperson of archaeology, whatever its value.

A puritan tendency to believe that whatever you enjoy cannot be good for you may be at the base of this latent self-denigration of

ourselves as archaeologists and of the subject we study. Some archaeologists have come forward to argue that "Archaeology is good for Society", though more often in the negative than in the positive, in the face of destruction and then usually over questions of public funding. Few archaeologists as yet have the courage to proclaim "Archaeology is good for You" and then to go on and substantiate it. What we need is a campaign based on "Archaeology is enjoyable and good for you and for society". Can we do it?

One question must be whether archaeology is an entity in its own right, or a discipline followed by archaeologists who have, over the past 150 years, constructed archaeology as a methodology for looking at the past through its material remains. If we understand archaeology to be an actual thing, the embodiment of all those material remains and their potential for study, in the way in which we use it when we use phrases like 'the archaeology of Wessex' or 'archaeology from the air', then this reification produces an entity which can easily be recognised by society in general, and which in itself may have some 'rights', such as the right to be protected, not exploited, to be generally or specifically owned, etc. Like the natural environment it then exists to be explained and described. We have no other generally-understood word which covers this concept of archaeology as an independent entity, although it is interesting to note that the government is now tending to use the word 'heritage' for this entity, as in the popular name adopted for the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission -- English Heritage. In the United States there is the concept of 'cultural resource'. If archaeology is seen as the physical material itself, then the value of it to society is self-evident -- it can be lost, destroyed, impaired, abused, unless it is looked after; thus a knowledge of it has some justification.

What then if archaeology is not a tangible asset, but, as the word implies, 'the study of ancient things'? Then the emphasis is laid not upon the thing -- archaeology -- but upon the practitioners -- the archaeologists -- whose activities reveal, explain and illustrate the material remains of the past. It is after all the mystique surrounding any profession, and archaeologists' own increasing professionalism, which have perhaps made it difficult to bridge the gap between society's knowledge of archaeology as a methodology and their sense of what is of value (if anything) about it. But of course archaeology is not, unlike many other professions, restricted to the professional alone. Archaeology in Britain, with its long history of amateur involvement, together with the more accessible methods of the social sciences, has been placed in an equivocal position. Many of the methods of archaeology are not highly technical, remote or demanding; many of the analogies employed in its interpretation of material evidence are familiar and anecdotal; these factors bring the methods of archaeology much nearer to society in general than do, say, the professional methods of medicine and the law, involving high technology and detailed science on the one hand and complex ethical reasoning on the other. Society has decided that, on the whole, the social results of the practice of law and medicine have their place in non-specialist education, but not a detailed study of

their methods, which are reserved for higher education. Is archaeology different? Should education in archaeology revolve around the explanation of the aggregate of material remains of the past and not involve information about how that explanation is arrived at? Or, is archaeology unusual in that both elements can be combined in a valuable educational way? It is my belief that this is one of the strongest justifications for using archaeology: both for a knowledge of the material remains, and to gain an understanding of the techniques of their recovery and interpretation in education at all levels.

This brings up another problem which has formed one of the major stumbling blocks in early attempts to increase the amount of archaeological education outside the universities. A number of those aspects of archaeological practice which are of value in educational terms, in particular excavation, with its stringent requirements for accuracy, objectivity and technical skill, may be actually detrimental to archaeology itself. I have argued elsewhere that excavation is not "child's play", while realising that as an exercise in planning, systematic recovery and analysis it is an ideal vehicle for learning and developing technical and social skills. Simulation seems to be the best answer to this, although it loses the immediacy of the process of excavation. But to protect archaeology from education at the same time as trying to introduce it is one of the more delicate aspects of the relationship.

If we restrict archaeological education to adults, i.e. to the realms of higher education, we may enhance the professionalism of the discipline, which may give archaeology a greater status in society as a whole (which would be no bad thing!). Yet already there have been attempts to argue at a quasi-governmental level, in the University Grants Committee, that archaeology is a technical education, needed on a limited scale to produce a limited number of professional archaeologists to fuel the limited number of public positions available in the outside world. In this utilitarian argument there is no scope for growth, for a larger number of graduates with an archaeological training who could open up new fields of archaeology in school education, or for leisure activities. Rather, there would be a restriction in the number of university departments and perhaps, as with medicine, veterinary medicine and architecture, a quota system for students reading archaeology, thus restricting the number of potential archaeologists very severely indeed.

If, on the other hand, we open archaeological education to schools from primary schools upwards, to give a general, non-professional archaeological education to a much wider portion of society, then we should establish a social value for a knowledge of the past through archaeology as its material remains, and for the work of the archaeologist. Like naturalists we need to be able to present archaeology as a multi-layered educational experience with something to offer at each stage. To do this we need to be able to offer part of the discipline at each appropriate level from the nine year-old stage, when time is first sorted out, to the final undergraduate stage of complex dissertation-writing, based on individual research.

However, to do this we need to be able to justify the use of archaeology as a good educational discipline and, moreover, to introduce it as an appropriate discipline to administrators whose own knowledge of archaeology is highly subjective. Those who have taught in schools know which 'buzz words' archaeologists must employ to make archaeology 'relevant' to education today, words which will provide some ammunition for headteachers trying to make their own justification to a Local Education Authority. I spent a term, two afternoons a week, team-teaching a class of 60 nine year-olds with two teachers who had no knowledge of archaeology. This was an exercise in introducing archaeology into a school where there was no formal expertise or tradition of archaeology. By the end of term the children had dealt with time, measured buildings, had a garbage project, constructed archaeological sites and excavated them, done a site survey on a motte and bailey castle, learnt to draw whole pots from a single sherd and to describe and identify them, done a graveyard survey, had a competition for noting and making a vocabulary of windows and learnt to spell *romanesque*!

Archaeology ranked next to football as their favourite activity and most of the girls put it first. No-one in that class can have remained ignorant of what archaeologists do, the value of archaeology or the complexity of its techniques. All of them got a great deal out of it, both personally and in terms of understanding society. The educational techniques of measuring, recording and drawing were being used all the time as well as the children's ability to observe, comprehend and discuss the material world. Moreover it suited children of a wide ability range because of the practical input, in a way that merely knowing about prehistory or history, with their emphasis on academic skills of reading and writing, do not. The experience convinced me that the study of archaeology has a high value as an education in itself.

I have not in this short paper dealt with the value of archaeology as a tool for explaining the past so that society can have a past beyond the events of documented history. The past can be presented by a few archaeologists for the benefit of the whole society, without that society having too much idea of how their past was constructed. In effect this is what happens now and we can see only too clearly how archaeology and archaeologists are valued as a result. We see it too, as I suggested at the start of this paper, reflected in archaeologists' own valuation of themselves. Only through a more widely educated public can we hope to have a society which values archaeology as a resource and as a discipline, and that educated public can only come if, as archaeologists, we can convince society of the value of archaeology as education.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND ITS PLACE IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Jonathan Kiscock

Introduction

Archaeologists are paying more and more attention to public perceptions of their discipline and to the role of the subject in society. Part of the debate over these issues relates to archaeology and its place in education. If archaeologists are to play a full part in this debate, it is necessary for them to be familiar with the aims and objectives of the primary school curriculum and with the teaching style now favoured by primary school teachers. This paper discusses these themes and attempts to explore why archaeology should, and how archaeology ought, to be taught in the primary school. It briefly examines the nature of historical interpretation and how this relates to contemporary teaching methods; it also considers the place of archaeological work -- including field and experimental projects -- and the value of a knowledge of prehistory within the general educational framework given to every schoolchild.

Children spend the most important years of their school life, those between the ages of seven and eleven, in primary schools. Here they acquire and develop basic literacy and numeracy skills and for the first time are exposed to a wide range of academic experiences. Hence, it is in primary schools that the foundations of all future education are laid. Primary school curricula have changed considerably over the last two decades with a child-centred, discovery-based approach replacing the teacher-focused didactic one. Primary education is now geared towards the teaching of skills. Teachers have firmly accepted a skills approach, within which they aim to develop their pupils' level of competence, rather than provide them with a store of truths. A skills approach to primary education is concerned less with the stock of factual information children acquire than with the ability of children to find out these truths for themselves, and their capacity to use and organise this stock once discovered. In other words, teachers are enabling their pupils to learn how to do something. Hence, children should be taught the past by learning how to find out about it, rather than simply by learning facts about the past.

Historical Interpretation and the Skills Approach to Learning

The past is speculative, its interpretation cannot be value-free. As the intermediary between historical sources of whatever kind and his or her pupils, the teacher can only present his or her own interpretation of these sources to them. E.H. Carr has stated: