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Collaboration on Whose Terms? Using the IAP2 Community Engagement Model for Archaeology in Kapunda, South Australia

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In this paper we adapted the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) community engagement model and applied it to archaeological practice. The case studies are parallel historical archaeological projects undertaken near the town of Kapunda, 75 km north of Adelaide, South Australia. Whilst each project had distinctive separate aims and outcomes, they were both underpinned by a commitment to collaborative practice. The IAP2 model provided clear steps for engagement and helped mitigate problems from the outset. This opportunity to put collaborative theories into practice has resulted in genuine relationships being established between ourselves and community members, the reconnection of descendant families with their shared stories, and the revealing of other versions of the past that had been erased, consciously or unconsciously, over time. It has proved to us that academic research projects can be integrated with real collaborative practice.

KEYWORDS community archaeology, collaborative practice, community engagement, IAP2, South Australia

Introduction

In Australia, historical archaeologists have few legislative requirements to engage with communities, although of course this does not refute their ethical obligation to do so. This is in contrast to those working in Indigenous archaeology, where there are clear legal and ethical requirements for community engagement (Burke et al. 2011, 140; Greer, Harrison, and McIntyre-Tamwoy 2002). In historical archaeology community engagement is largely ‘voluntary’, although as Mackay and Johnston (2010, 55) observed, best practice models across heritage management
increasingly recognize its importance. However, working in either sector, it can be difficult to fit theories of community archaeology with the actuality of community life. As Grant alluded (2014, 142), the paradigms of community archaeological theory and descriptions of a community often do not align with their complexity and constant change.

In a methodology outlined by Moser et al. (2002), communication and collaboration underpin effective community archaeology. A key point is that, at all stages, at least partial control of project direction lies with the community (Marshall 2002, 212; Moser et al. 2002, 229). The argument’s core is that genuine collaboration is limited if archaeologists retain all control (Moser et al. 2002, 229). Some projects seem to fit this ideal, such as the long-running Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Project, United Kingdom (U.K.) (Faulkner 2000; Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Project 2015), the Community Archaeology Project at Quseir, Egypt (Moser et al. 2002; Tully 2009), and, to some extent, the Grassroots Archaeology Project in Dublin, Ireland (Duffy 2014). These projects prompted us, as two historical archaeologists researching at Flinders University, to ponder how to achieve ‘genuine’ community archaeology whilst working in either academic or cultural heritage management contexts, where there are often specific ‘non-community’ objectives to meet and time frames to adhere to. Is shared power at all levels always realistic, or even necessary, to achieve genuine community archaeology? How should archaeologists approach and engage with a community? What if the community’s interests are fractured, overtly political, racist, sexist, commercial, or non-existent?

We maintain that in certain projects, such as the two discussed here, there may be no existing community groundswell of support to drive the archaeological work, or to take control. Further, community involvement may be fragmented because the members of the community have contrasting perspectives and goals regarding how their specific ‘heritage’ — what they deem important — should be acknowledged, respected, and presented. Complicating this, community priorities may sometimes be at odds with the archaeological evidence. These factors led us to consider whether we could adopt a different model, based on community participation and engagement, which is realistic and makes it easy to involve people, yet does not concede professional objectives.

**The settings**

The two historical archaeology projects discussed here — St. John’s and Baker’s Flat — are based near the small, rural town of Kapunda in the mid-north of South Australia (Figure 1), settled after copper was discovered in 1842 and a mine established (Charlton 1971). Many migrants came to the area in search of work, including invited Cornish and Welsh miners, and a substantial number of post-Famine Irish Catholics who worked mainly as mine labourers. Prior to this, there had been few Irish Catholics in South Australia, as it was a planned, not a penal, colony, and migrants were selected on the basis of British utopian ideals, social standing, and Protestantism (Moore 1991; Nance 1978; Pike 1967). To meet the religious and
social needs of the growing Irish community in Kapunda, the Catholic Church established a church, presbytery, school, and cemetery in 1849, 5 km outside the main township. This was one of the first Catholic churches built in South Australia and was known as St. John’s. In its heyday, parishioners are said to have numbered in the hundreds, and it was the centre of perhaps the largest rural Catholic community in Australia at that time (Nicol 1983b). The buildings were repurposed for use as a Catholic girls’ reformatory in 1897 (De Leiuen 2015).

Baker’s Flat was an area of vacant land that Irish Catholic migrants occupied from the mid-1850s. Located just south of the Kapunda copper mine where many of them laboured, and 4 km from St. John’s, the Irish were notorious for paying no rent and vigorously resisting all landowner attempts to remove them. A unique settlement in Australia, more than 500 people lived there at its peak in the 1860s and 1870s.
(Charlton 1971, 18; Maloney 1936, 29; Nicol 1983a, 13–16), and it was physically and socially separate from the broader Kapunda community. The Irish of Baker’s Flat seem to have been an ‘outsider’ group, travelling to St. John’s for services, holding their own sporting activities and dances, and maintaining a range of Irish traditions, most visibly in the vernacular Irish style of houses that they built (Arthure 2015a, 172–175). St. John’s and Baker’s Flat are linked by their location and shared pasts, and also by contemporary archaeological work and a belief that the archaeologists would undertake this work with community collaboration and participation.

Today, both St. John’s and Baker’s Flat have disappeared physically from the landscape and also from the history and dominant discourses on Kapunda. Kapunda’s Cornish heritage, however, is obvious from the moment a visitor approaches the town. A 7 m tall statue of a Cornish miner stands in a prominent position, with an interpretive sign describing him as ‘a monument to the profound contribution, role and heritage of the Cornish miner in the Kapunda Mine’ (Figure 2). Cornish
miners and wealthy, male British landowners dominate Kapunda’s heritage landscape, and one could be forgiven for assuming that these were the only groups who contributed to Kapunda’s past (Charlton 1971). Given this historical narrative, it is interesting to note population numbers from the 1861 Census, which reveal that across the various Kapunda council districts there were officially 1572 English and Welsh (including the Cornish) and 1023 Irish residents (HCCDA, n.d.). Although the Cornish, English, and Welsh had greater numbers, the Irish were far from insignificant. Even so, the working Irish have never achieved the same prominence as the Cornish or British. This may have been because many were labourers, but deeper reasons include a profound belief in the separate and superior status of the dominant British power (Moore 1991; Pike 1967) and a legacy of colonial anti-Catholic sentiment (Campbell 2005; Pike 1967, 378; Press 1986, 45–46).

The projects

St. John’s and Baker’s Flat were the focus of two separate research projects during 2013 and 2014. Cherrie De Leiuen’s project at St. John’s formed a case study as part of her PhD research and focused on the reformatory phase of occupation. Her research analysed the landscape and materiality of the site in terms of gendered discourses and nineteenth-century attitudes towards female moral and sexual delinquency (De Leiuen 2015). St. John’s church was demolished in 1946 after the site’s abandonment. The local Catholic Parish bulldozed the remaining reformatory buildings in 2002 in an attempt to deter people from vandalizing the site. Although there are site histories available (for example Swann, n.d.), much of this work is speculative and relies on the same few primary sources and an enduring urban mythology. The fieldwork aimed to locate and assess any archaeological remains surviving at St. John’s, and to recover as much data as possible from artefacts and architectural features remaining in situ. Working with a Flinders University team of staff and students, Cherrie conducted pre-disturbance surveys in 2012 and 2013, and subsequently excavated three main areas: the church foundations, a structure documented as three extant cells, and a depression with surface artefact lenses (De Leiuen 2015).

Susan Arthure’s work was the subject of a Master of Archaeology thesis investigating Irish social identity at Baker’s Flat. As with St. John’s, the Baker’s Flat site had been cleared of visible building remains — this time in the 1950s by the landlord, to reduce trespass incidences. In 2013, working with the same Flinders team, Susan surveyed an area of 66 acres (26 hectares), equating to 38.4 per cent of the site, and analysed a collection of metal objects retrieved from the site by a metal detectorist over a period of 10 years (Arthure 2015a). Fieldwork at Baker’s Flat is ongoing as part of her PhD research.

Both projects relied on student volunteers from Flinders University for survey and excavation work, and the knowledge and advice of local experts.

Power, trust, and voice

A fundamental element of community archaeology is effective public engagement. This means engagement beyond superficial consultation or ‘drive-by’ research
projects characterized by archaeologists spending a short time at a site, ‘looting’ a local community for information, and never returning. In our situation, there were three main (at many times overlapping) communities of interest around Baker’s Flat and St. John’s. Firstly, there were those local Kapunda residents with a relationship with the sites because of their proximity, interest in history, religious background, or local family connections. Secondly, there was a community of genealogists across South Australia, and further afield, who could claim a link to the sites by being descendants of people who lived there. Both these groups held knowledge and the power to disclose or withhold information that could be pertinent to our work. We were very aware that they could well feel reluctant at the idea of being plundered for information by ‘academic’ outsiders, who cared nothing for local or personal interests and who might never return.

Thirdly, there was the archaeological community — academics, students, and volunteers — none of whom were from Kapunda or had any prior connection with the sites or local people. As ‘outsiders’ coming in to the town, we did not have the same depth of knowledge of the sites’ oral histories, local collections, or geographies as the other two groups. But as outsiders, we were able to tread lightly and ask questions such as: Why were some people from the list of colonial achievers in the town excluded or overlooked? How did the Irish, who made up such a large proportion of the population in the nineteenth century, essentially disappear?

By inserting ourselves into the town, there were shifts in the power balance, potentially uncomfortable ones, and especially so if community members felt disempowered, left out, spoken down to, or omitted from key decisions. The balance of power shifted in other ways also: since our projects were not concerned with the more familiar mining stories but with the Irish, locals who might have been overlooked or less vocal on mining heritage matters came forward to offer their knowledge of the town’s social history. Our primary colleagues in the community put us in contact with other people. And this led, for example, to Cherrie meeting a 93-year-old woman who related her childhood memories of St. John’s for the first time in years; it was clear that she felt a sense of pride and empowerment in relating her information and having it documented for the first time. Barton and Markert (2012), Franklin (1997), McDavid (2002), and Orser (2007), amongst others, have demonstrated the role of archaeology in providing a voice for those left out of written histories.

Jones (2013) considered that one of the issues in community archaeology and the multivocality discourse was that, if archaeologists carry out consultation without an explicit awareness of local power dynamics, their archaeological ‘intentions’ run the risk of being exclusive rather than inclusive. In other words, by giving equal weight to everyone’s voice, without understanding past and present power relationships, a further silencing of marginalized groups might unintentionally occur. In Kapunda it was important to consider such scenarios when considering the two broad groups most interested in the projects — locals and genealogists. Would they be interested in the two projects at St. John’s or Baker’s Flat or prefer us to investigate something else, such as the mine site? Should we have less focus on elucidating Irish working class women’s histories because most people do not seem interested? Is it condescending to think that archaeologists can expose a past that causes a community to
re-evaluate their history and that what they find is important? This has not been the case for Schofield and Morrissey (2007, 2013) in Malta, where archaeological investigation into the red-light district of Strait Street, which was not community-driven, has led to value and interest flowing back to the area. There, sectors of the community regained a sense of pride through the archaeological project. For the Kapunda projects, we did not want to forfeit our research aims but we were also clear about the fact that our archaeological work at these sites should be meaningful outside of academia, and that in order to do this we would have to engage effectively with the entire community of interest. So how did we do this?

What kind of community? What kind of engagement?

It is important to highlight the nuanced differences in the concept of ‘community’ in an Australian context. Often archaeologists are asked what ‘community’ they work in or with. In this situation, the generally accepted usage of the term ‘community’ refers to Indigenous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living within a particular geographical region and the specific language group or nation that has cultural and physical ownership of sites: community is primarily about country, (extended) family ties, and shared experience (Greer 2014, 63). In this context, community collaboration has led to the development of alternative heritage management strategies (see, for example, Byrne and Nugent 2004; Roberts et al. 2015). In this paper, we recognize the primacy of Indigenous control of knowledge, access, and participation in a post-colonial setting following Atalay (2006, 2007, 2010, 2012), Greer (2014), McGhee (2012), Nicholas (2006), Smith and Jackson (2008), Smith and Wobst (2005), and Tipping (2013), who all advocate moving the discipline toward a decolonized practice. Australian archaeologists have increasingly considered Indigenous communities to be principal stakeholders, with the right to control information and access, suggesting that new practices of respect have superseded past colonial practices of dispossession. The increasing pervasiveness of the term ‘community engagement’ used in the Indigenous archaeological context exemplifies this transformation, as does the code of ethics of the Australian Archaeological Association (2012).

Our Kapunda case studies, and ‘the community’ that we refer to, are principally non-Indigenous. The sites are located on Ngadjuri land (Warrior et al. 2005) but are in the domain of historical archaeology, on nineteenth-century colonial sites. The projects, as historical archaeology, explore local issues of multivocality, conflicting and multiple sources of evidence, and concern with postcolonial perspectives. However, issues of knowledge power and control differ between historical and Indigenous archaeology.

Taking into account the methodology and philosophy around non-Indigenous community archaeology, we looked for suitable models, including the community engagement models used by Australian government agencies. In these instances, government policies or changes are the drivers for community engagement and consultation (Cavaye 2004). It was clear to us that in order to engage genuinely with any community (see, for example, Bergin’s (2015) account of the Gnowangerup...
community archaeology project) we would need to move beyond simply providing information about our projects’ intentions to local people. Thus, from the outset, we aimed to use a community engagement model that would take into account both ours and the community’s needs and desires, and that would enable us to mitigate any misunderstandings.

We took the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) community engagement model,1 which is widely used across all levels of government in Australia (for example, Australian Emergency Management Institute 2013; Department for Families and Communities 2009; Department of Sustainability and Environment 2005; Department of the Premier and Cabinet 2014; Local Government Association of South Australia 2008), and adapted it for use in our archaeological work. IAP2 is not a traditional form of consultation, like a public meeting, advisory committee, opinion poll, or a call for written submissions (Carson and Hart 2005). Rather, the IAP2 spectrum is conceptualized as a five-phase linear sequence, with each successive phase characterized by an increasing degree of community influence on decision-making: Informing, Consulting, Involving, Collaborating, and Empowering citizens (Table 1). Each phase is associated with clear goals and promises to the community, thus minimizing ambiguity about the purpose and nature of the participation (IAP2 Australasia 2015). Most adaptations of IAP2 (for example, the model for the City of Charles Sturt 2006) retain this linear configuration, but the five phases of community engagement can also be visualized as an ongoing recursive process that rotates repeatedly as new challenges arise and new partners and stakeholders are recruited into the process.

Although there is a considerable body of work on community archaeology (see, for example, Moshenska and Dhanjal 2011) such studies do not intend to be prescriptive, and it may be difficult to align practice with theory. Further, both students and professionals conducting community engagement may need appropriate education and training not typically offered by traditional undergraduate or postgraduate level university curricula (see, for example, Sutcliffe 2014, 110). Both of us had worked for government agencies previously, and it was apparent to us that the key to effective community consultation was having clear but adaptable processes to follow. The IAP2 model uses simple steps for engagement and can apply to a range of situations.

Applying the IAP2 model for community engagement

Our commitment to community engagement was founded in the belief that it results in better decisions and outcomes, and more than that, we wanted to be transparent and share power. We based our approach on explicit goals and clear promises, offering a model that can perhaps help archaeologists and the communities they work with to define their relationships regarding heritage activities rather than operating within ‘silos’.

Community involvement at Kapunda was tempered by the fact that, for us, our results had to be assessible pieces of rigorous academic research. While this is obviously true for most academic projects, it constituted an agenda which was...
arguably outside that of the community. Even so, we believed that, within these parameters, there was room for some degree of collaboration, and certainly for open information and knowledge sharing. We also aimed to ensure that all participants were given adequate opportunity for involvement and to plan activities that took into account age, physical, or other barriers.

Another reason for adopting the IAP2 model was to harness community knowledge. Sharing knowledge has the potential to lead to different research avenues, answers and explanations, creative collaborations, and better planning. Engagement with communities can also foster a more holistic understanding of past experiences and social conditions. McDavid’s (1997, 2002, 2004) work at Levi Jordan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application of the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum</th>
<th>Inform</th>
<th>Consult</th>
<th>Involve</th>
<th>Collaborate</th>
<th>Empower</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The goal</td>
<td>Provide the public with clear and relevant information to assist them in understanding the project and the intended outcomes. Pitch information to a wide audience and potential stakeholders.</td>
<td>Obtain public feedback at the start of the projects to help with analysis, approaches, and/or decisions. Meet with the community and interested parties. Discuss what is non-negotiable.</td>
<td>Work directly with the community to ensure their opinions, concerns, and aspirations are heard and considered. Involve community in planning and shaping project outcomes.</td>
<td>Partner with the community or individuals to work through problems and decisions together. Community-driven partnerships are formed.</td>
<td>Place future projects in the hands of the community. Community builds their own networks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise to the community</td>
<td>We will keep information accessible, clear, and updated. We will provide our contact details and respond to your enquiries.</td>
<td>We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how community input influenced decisions. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals. We will let you know what you will ‘get’ out of the projects.</td>
<td>We will work to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in our work. We will provide feedback and acknowledgment on how public input influenced our decisions.</td>
<td>We will work with you to formulate your own projects. You retain control and ownership of the sites. We will maintain regular contact and visits. We will share our research results.</td>
<td>We will implement what you decide. We will help you and be available to consult. We will maintain the relationships that we have formed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outputs and outcomes</td>
<td>Media coverage: print, online, and radio.</td>
<td>Open days; public and private meetings, presentations.</td>
<td>Excavation teams organized in the ‘world café’ style to facilitate discussion and networking. Linking stakeholder groups.</td>
<td>Plain English book, newsletter and journal articles, theses produced and distributed, assistance with local research projects.</td>
<td>New interpretive signs for mine site. New networks formed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IAP2: International Association of Public Participation.
Plantation presents one example of such collaboration in historical archaeology, where she incorporated descendant community knowledge into the archaeology’s interpretation and public presentation, and compiled oral histories to present alternative views of both African American and white descendants.

In applying the IAP2 model, we moved across the entire spectrum, finding that each participation level built on the previous one. Below we describe each category of the IAP2 model, outlining the overarching purpose of this methodology, with examples of usage in our projects.

**Inform**
The *Inform* category is essentially one-way communication. It is about providing balanced and objective information to build knowledge and increase understanding of issues. For the Kapunda projects, we used the media to get stories into print in state, local, and Catholic newspapers, in addition to participating in several radio interviews. Susan maintains a blog called *Don’t Forget Your Shovel* (Arthure 2015b), which provides an online commentary on the Baker’s Flat research. Our intent, to present accurate information in a way that was easily understood and relevant to the target audience, and to provide our contact details so that interested people could follow up, underpinned the *Inform* stage. This led to individuals from outside the Kapunda community providing critical information that would otherwise have remained unknown. We conceptualized our projects individually with specific outcomes in mind, but our collaborative approach meant that community members saw no real difference between the work at St. John’s and Baker’s Flat. As a result, we worked on both projects interchangeably.

**Consult**
The *Consult* category moves up the spectrum and is a two-way process that involves getting feedback and ideas. In government projects, it is usual to consult through public meetings, workshops, or web-based consultations. Whilst it is essential to be clear about how community input will inform or influence the project, it is also critical to provide timely feedback to the community. The goal is to build upon communications from the *Inform* stage and actively seek community views on alternatives or decisions. The project owner retains responsibility.

For the Kapunda projects, we found that what we did at the *Inform* level, through media and web information, directly influenced our activities at the *Consult* level. We began by working with a local historian and the Catholic archivist to gain knowledge and insights into local history. Whilst we had planned to let the general public know about our research through the media, a story about St. John’s in the *Southern Cross* Catholic newspaper and about Baker’s Flat in the *InDaily* online newspaper led directly to several descendants of the Irish migrants contacting us. This in turn led us to run three informal open days at St. John’s and Baker’s Flat, where we brought groups of people together on site to better understand the archaeology and each other. Blog comments resulted in linking several genealogists together in the common cause of Baker’s Flat. We also gave presentations at
meetings and open days of the Genealogy SA Irish group to harness their knowledge and networks (Figure 3).

For every activity we were careful to manage community expectations by ensuring that there was a shared understanding of the archaeological work’s purpose, what exactly was being done and what everybody would ‘get’ out of it, as well as what was non-negotiable.

**Involve**
The *Involve* category is the first one in the IAP2 framework where there is more active participation from community members. At this level, they are involved in planning and decision-making, and they help to shape the project’s process. At a government level, active participation can take the form of workshops, focus groups, or the World Café technique which aims to create a discussion environment that feels like a café, where people talk in small groups about topics of interest.

We adapted the World Café technique for the St. John’s excavation by organizing small groups of people to excavate together. These included the parish priest, high school students, the local ghost tour operator and his colleagues, the Flinders University excavation team, and even the elderly Catholic archivist, who (while he did not get into a trench) was actively involved in supervising the process. This technique allowed a large diverse group to participate, and facilitated the cross-pollination of ideas and knowledge sharing. It also provided a tangible connection to the archaeology and, importantly, to the process of archaeology (Figure 4). The idea of excavation and the immediacy of a connection to the past motivated people, regardless of the site’s nature. The St. John’s experiential element was, for Kapunda, novel, interesting, and attracted a much wider community of interest,
including locals who had never been to the site previously. This was particularly apparent when we located an unexpected structure. This event generated numerous opinions, comments, and phone calls, resulting in additional site visitors and stories in the May 2013 editions of the *Southern Cross* and *Barossa Herald*, all of which we interpreted as an increased sense of ownership for all those involved.

**Collaborate**

At the *Collaborate* stage, the goal is to partner and share with the community to develop an understanding of all the issues, work out alternatives, and identify the best solutions. Although responsibility for final decisions usually remains with the lead organization (i.e. the body that holds overall responsibility for the project, in this case Flinders), there is the capacity for sharing responsibility with community members. For collaboration to be successful, however, projects require high levels of mutual trust. We have endeavoured to build strong and honest relationships with Kapunda community members. We explicitly framed our contribution in the spirit of community/collaborative regional research rather than as contributors of specialized information. We positioned our relationships as mutually beneficial, not as mining a community for information or dispensing research findings as a charitable act (Agbe-Davies 2011; Little 2007, 7–9). One of the tangible results so far is a request from the Kapunda Catholic parish for Cherrie to produce a plain English book on the archaeology of St. John’s. Overall, the archaeological evidence

**FIGURE 4** Excavation in process at St. John’s with Nuriootpa High School and Flinders University student volunteers (working), local historian Peter Swann pointing out a feature to Cherrie (standing)
has helped to re-shape community interest and become a current shared value, as well as a source of pride for some.

**Empower**

At the *Empower* stage, responsibility for all decision-making in a project passes to the community. It is unusual to reach this stage in any sector, but we believe that there can be some elements of it in all projects. With the Kapunda projects, our work at the *Inform* and *Consult* stages connected people from St. John’s and Baker’s Flat so that they could form their own networks. As a result, the ghost tour operator combined forces with the archivist and the parish priest to organize a search for missing graves in an abandoned nineteenth-century cemetery, calling in our expertise to carry out surveys. At the South Australian Mining History Group Conference in Kapunda in 2014, the local historian and Susan jointly presented a paper titled *Uncovering the Irish Story of Baker’s Flat*, the first time that the historian had presented a paper in his hometown (Arthure and O’Reilly, 2014). Conference attendees, whose expertise was mainly in mining history, expressed great interest in this broadening of Kapunda’s mining history.

Perhaps an intangible and unplanned success was connecting descendants from Baker’s Flat and St. John’s. These people were unable physically to locate the sites listed on their ancestors’ birth certificates, as they are no longer clearly visible. By ‘locating’ the sites and providing tangible physical evidence that they could see, feel, and experience, they connected to their family histories and each other. At the informal open days, for example, we were able to interpret the sites for these descendants, showing them where houses and the reformatory were and using artefact surface scatters to explain the types of household items that people would have used. These insights and conversations in some way ‘legitimized’ their family trees, assisted in ‘bringing to life’ people that had previously only existed in photographs and records, and enabled those involved to form their own informal social group where they continue to share information.

Further, the local Council is currently implementing a tourism development plan for the historic mine site and, until recently, has focused solely on the mine. Because of our community connections, the Kapunda Mine Site Working Group approached us about contributing to the public signage on the topics of St. John’s and Baker’s Flat. This has resulted in a broader story about the mine, and the Council is going to install signs in early 2016 at the mine site.

**Benefits gained and lessons learned**

The St. John’s and Baker’s Flat projects have provided tangible, physical points of reference for descendant communities, offering an alternative discourse on the town’s settlement. We have developed productive relationships and partnerships with the community, which goes some way to changing the perception of academia from something remote to something open, accountable, and willing to listen. This type of engagement enables local communities and interest groups to make the most of their relationship with academics, whether by exposing school students to a
profession they had not previously considered, or enabling a group to negotiate access to archaeological data or reports.

In terms of lessons learned, we started work in Kapunda expecting to be able to have open and honest discussions about the projects and challenges encountered. This was certainly our experience, but we acknowledge that it was because of the respect and openness we received from community members. Overall, we comprised a very eclectic gathering of people and interests, but our common thread was valuing heritage as part of a broader expression of identity and culture. From our Kapunda experiences so far, we offer five lessons learned.

The first is that communities may think that heritage is not as well protected or funded as it should be. A project’s funding (or lack of funding) must be clear from the outset, as should the details of what the project can and cannot accomplish. This helps to mitigate community expectations. For example, after the excavation at St. John’s, some Kapunda residents expressed disappointment when the site was backfilled. Cherrie had not publicly explained the project time frame, so many expected an ongoing series of digs, with the use of increasingly sophisticated equipment. Clarifying funding limitations from the start would have helped to avoid misunderstandings.

Secondly, communities are generally willing participants in local heritage projects where they will have a chance to contribute their knowledge and influence outcomes. In fact, allowing community integrative research may be the only way to progress towards inclusive regional histories. The excavations at St. John’s, the open days and survey at Baker’s Flat all allowed knowledge and opinion sharing, and the opportunity to come to decisions together.

Thirdly, projects that do not align with community perceptions or expectations can cause frustration. Although individuals were keen for us to uncover more of Kapunda’s Irish and Catholic history, this was not the case for all. Some community members, for example, told us that Baker’s Flat had been a dirty and troublesome place, and that it would be far better to explore the mine site or the nineteenth-century heritage buildings. In these situations, it helped that we were from a university — when we explained our research, people either understood our objectives or dismissed us gently as ‘academic cranks’. Either way, their frustration diminished, and we believe this was because we took the time to inform.

Fourthly, archaeologists are expected to offer leadership because of our particular expertise, but not to ‘gate keep’ or close off opportunities that communities want to pursue. Communities may look to us for support, facilitation, and advice — this is a responsibility and a matter of respect to follow through. Communities also expect archaeologists to deliver what they promise: providing a copy of a thesis three years down the track is inadequate. It is important to negotiate or commit to other tangible outcomes. For these projects, this included things like assistance with new signage at the mine site, joint public presentations, and working with community members to locate missing graves.

Finally, our fifth lesson: communities are disappointed when projects (particularly excavations) are over, or they see neglected places. If we dig a hole in the ground, fill it in, leave, and never return, this is not community engagement. It is critical that we communicate timelines and the ‘back of house’ work that we need to do, give progress
reports, and touch base regularly. This also forces us to keep the research relevant — by having to justify or explain it over and over again to different communities.

Conclusion

Overall, all concerned appeared to perceive the St. John’s and Baker’s Flat projects as successful. We believe that what helped to make these projects successful from the outset was the deliberate application of the IAP2 model for community engagement. Here, the communities were not a passive ‘general public’ or audience for the archaeology, but actively engaged in the process of investigation. The process was inclusive, and results have included returning and legitimizing a forgotten history, and reconnecting people to their shared stories with tangible archaeological evidence. Importantly, our research aims and outcomes were enhanced, not conceded by using the IAP2 model. These research projects deliberately moved beyond the scope of archaeologists as contributors of specialized information about ‘the community’s past’, and instead aimed at maintaining mutually beneficial and meaningful community relationships.

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Note

1 The IAP2 model we used is analogous to Participatory Action Research (PAR) models used elsewhere, which emerged from different political and scholarly traditions. For discussions of PAR in community archaeology, see the previously cited work by Atalay (2012) and McGhee (2012).

References


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