

Archaeology Scotland website: <https://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/>  
Crea, G., Dafnis, A., Hallam, J., Kiddey, R., and Schofield, J., 2014. Turbo Island, Bristol: excavating a contemporary homeless place, *Post-medieval Archaeology*, (48/1), 133-150.  
Kiddey, R., 2017. *Homeless Heritage: Collaborative Social Archaeology as Therapeutic Practice*, Oxford University Press: Oxford.

# BODiES

## In and Out of Archaeology

It is well founded that archaeology indiscriminately has positive holistic, mental, and physical benefits for any body (Crea, et al. 2014, 136). The magnitude of engagements by archaeologists with those experiencing homelessness have been particularly felt by all involved. For example, Rachael Kiddey demonstrated how archaeology produced a therapeutic practice and tools to reinstate self-identification for marginalised communities (Kiddey 2017, 4). Illuminating the "diverse material memories" (Kiddey 2017, 23) of these communities in turn taught archaeologists about the vibrancy and multiplicity of experiences with the built environment. In this sense, community engagement with archaeology can knock our socks off! But sometimes it is equally important to put those metaphoric socks back on and retain a level of reflexivity in our working with different bodies of a community.

### Community Engagement Knocks Your Socks Off!



Figure 1: Photograph taken by author of hand holding trowel (Molloy 2024).

### Putting The Socks Back On...

Archaeology Scotland is an organisation that champions the value of community engagement with heritage and delivers projects for groups all year round. Despite nearly a century of community-centred expertise, they too continue to learn and redress the needs of groups they engage with. A recent project of theirs involved hosting those experiencing homelessness for a day of excavations. They provided the protective gear typically required for digging e.g. safety boots. However, when the participants arrived, they didn't have socks to wear with the boots.



Figure 2: Photograph taken by author of 'typical' excavation equipment (Molloy 2024).

Archaeology Scotland responded to this and quickly sourced socks for the community members to use. But this anecdote brings up the important issue that even with best intentions, we may not be able to always consider the needs of every body on site. Furthermore, what happens to the body beyond the day of digging? For vulnerable groups like this, they may not necessarily have access to showers or other amenities. This can have longer term negative impacts that would arguably outweigh the benefits (as discussed above) of engaging with archaeology.

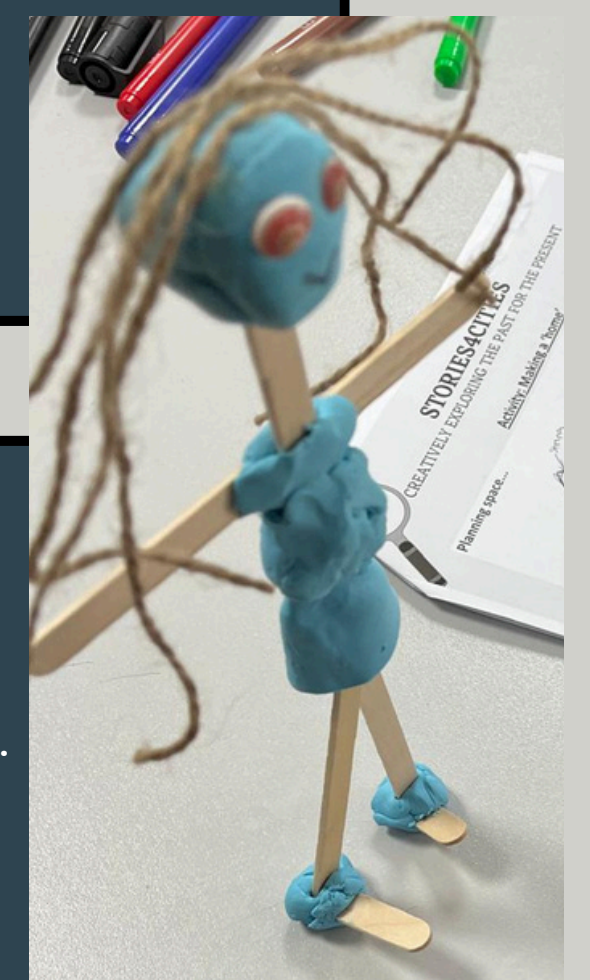


Figure 3: Photograph taken by author of body made by community member in archaeology workshop (Molloy 2024).

### Reflections

It is important to consider our interactions with **all** of our communities. Some accommodations or needs of members may intersect among groups. But, there are certainly things that we just won't think of, having not experienced other ways of living. Thinking about the experiences of these bodies both in and out of archaeology; understanding that our impacts go beyond the trench; and acknowledging that sometimes the long-term impacts may not be positive, can improve our overall engagement practices and people's experiences of archaeology. By talking and learning from one another we can positively welcome more types of bodies into the field.