

ABSTRACTS SELECTED

HERITAGE, ETHICS AND CRIME

Stuart CAMPBELL

Good Intentions and Bad Practice; conflicting values in heritage protection

The concept of heritage crime is often summed up by the image of the experienced and professional looter, motivated by financial gain and with some level of technical knowledge. While this model may apply to high profile cases of looting this paper will concentrate on less obvious sources of harm to the historic environment, in particular that grey area where bad practice or carelessness on the part of an individual can cross the line into criminal behaviour. This paper will focus on cultural attitudes, or different cultural perceptions of harm and importance which can lead to damage to heritage being downplayed or not seen as serious on the part of the perpetrator.

Stuart Campbell has worked directly with members of the public who find objects, not least metal detector users, and will draw on experiences which are often not discussed or considered at policy level. These include a complex mix of culture and preconception which might mean a site is damaged or an object not reported, often by individuals who act with good intentions. The cultural considerations which make an individual consider the law of little importance (while not considering themselves a criminal) will also be discussed. Running through all these issues are divergent and competing perspectives of why the past is important, and how legislation that seeks to protect the past may be perceived by third parties in a wholly different light.

Stuart CAMPBELL, National Museums Scotland

Stuart Campbell works at the Treasure Trove Unit (TTU) based at National Museums Scotland, which engages with metal detector users and other finders to ensure that chance finds of portable antiquities are reported and allocated to museums. He has previously worked at RCAHMS and the Presidio Trust, San Francisco and is a Friend of the ERC funded Trafficking Culture project based at Glasgow University. At the moment the TTU is engaged on a long term outreach project with metal detector users, part of which is understanding the reasons an object might not be reported and how better to engage and communicate with finders. He recently co-edited an edition of Internet Archaeology (2013) which examined various issues around archaeology, antiquities collecting and differing public attitudes to heritage problems.