



Banks, I. (2019) Editorial. *Journal of Conflict Archaeology*, 13(2), pp. 77-79.
(doi:[10.1080/15740773.2018.1582995](https://doi.org/10.1080/15740773.2018.1582995))

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Deposited on: 25 February 2019

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Editorial 13.2

Conflict Archaeology is a very broad church, as will be apparent from a review of the thirteen volumes of this Journal. This issue is an excellent example as the topics vary widely. They also demonstrate that not everyone involved in Conflict Archaeology is necessarily a conflict archaeologist. This issue is the result of work involving archaeologists, landscape architects, forensic scientists, dendrochronologists and medical doctors. The results are rich and underline the intradisciplinary nature of the work. Clearly, Conflict Archaeology is not the only archaeological area that benefits from the input of other disciplines, but the study of war and conflict requires a very broad range of expertise.

However, while Conflict Archaeology is a broad church, it is sometimes difficult to escape the influence of battlefields, not least because they bring a drama and sense of storytelling that is difficult to rival. When this is tied to an element of mythbusting, where archaeological evidence is used to clarify, correct, or reveal the events of a battle, it is a very powerful way to investigate the past. Certainly, there is rarely much difficulty in convincing the public that research on battlefields is important; that is sadly not always the case when it comes to preservation. Strangely, there are still archaeologists who remain unconvinced that battlefields are either important or capable of being investigated by archaeological methodologies. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but that becomes problematic when that opinion is offered as an expert opinion in planning cases. Where that expert opinion is uninformed by any involvement in fieldwork on battlefields, it becomes a real issue; the problem is that the legal system tends to view all archaeology as the same thing when it is quite clear that different areas of archaeology need different forms of expertise. The fact is that battlefield archaeology has been proven repeatedly in the field, where artefact distributions clearly represent human activity; the distributions do appear meaningful and are consistent from ploughed areas to unploughed areas. It remains to be seen whether modern ploughing techniques will change that situation, but currently the fact is that there is an extensive literature that demonstrates the events of a battle are recoverable through the distribution of material across the battlefield during the fighting.

Battlefields across the world remain under threat and continue to be impacted by modern development. When the battlefield is thoroughly investigated archaeologically, as at the battle of Lützen from 1632, the quality of information collected offsets the loss of the resource (Schürger 2015). Unfortunately, the situation at Halle in terms of the cultural resource management is rarely repeated; here, a developer was required to pay the full costs of a complete investigation. It is far less benign in the main. The battlefield of Pinkie Cleugh from 1547, the last major Anglo-Scottish battle and a key site in the development of combined arms operations, is on the Historic Environment Scotland *Inventory of Scottish Battlefields*. Its inclusion recognises the national importance of the battle and makes it a material concern in the planning process. However, being on the Inventory does not provide legal protection. As a result, the battlefield is being lost by degrees, through a death of a thousand cuts. Inadequate archaeological work has been undertaken; four small scale metal detector surveys have been undertaken, each by a different group who all differed in their familiarity with battlefield archaeology. Each used a different field

methodology, and the results are not comparable between the surveys. Despite this being brought to the attention of the planners, their response was that archaeological fieldwork had been undertaken which was sufficient. A significant part of the battlefield is becoming a housing estate with no further archaeological intervention. There is still a long way to go in trying to protect battlefields from the depredations of developments.

The first paper, which is chronologically the earliest, is a demonstration of what battlefield archaeology can do. An examination of the artefacts recovered from the 1644 Battle of Cheriton, the paper provides the first analysis of the extensive assemblage collected by amateur metal detectorists over a quarter of a century. The results of the analysis are plotted out across the battlefield, allowing a reinterpretation of the battle. The results are exactly the sort of battlefield archaeology that can be so effective at recovering the choreography of a battle and give a rebuttal to those archaeologists who would still claim that the evidence of battles does not survive to the present day. It also shows that even where recording systems used by metal detectorists are rudimentary or developed over time, as long as there is locational data, something can still be done with the material that has been collected. The metal detectorists in this instance recorded the finds by field; even that level of recording has produced usable results.

The second paper dates to the end of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century in the United States. Rather than a battlefield, the paper focuses on an Indiana fort used in the Northwest Indian War and the War of 1812 and its subsequent incorporation into a domestic structure in the late 1840s. Dendrochronology is used in combination with examination of the documentary record and of contemporary maps and photographs to build an argument that the building being studied reused timbers from the site of the fort. The project was truly multidisciplinary and shows what can be achieved with the application of a range of techniques and methodologies. The study was only possible because the house had been preserved despite extensive urban renewal over the past century; it is entirely appropriate that the project which generated the study resulted from the building becoming the headquarters of a local preservation organisation.

The final paper in this issue is a discussion of a French Resistance ambush of a German convoy in 1944. The historical accounts have been based upon the memoirs of participants in the ambush, but questions arise from these accounts. The paper investigates the events of the ambush through re-examination of the contemporary accounts, new interviews with surviving witnesses, archival research, and metal detector survey. Through this combination of techniques, the authors are able to demonstrate the real level of casualties in the ambush and are able to confirm some of the key points of the accounts of the ambush.

These three papers provide a range of approaches and will act as reference points for future work. They demonstrate the range and depth of work currently undertaken in the area of Conflict Archaeology and the strength of multidisciplinary approaches. Such papers provide a degree of comfort in a time when archaeological resources are under threat generally and where the sites through which we can study conflict are disappearing all too quickly.

References

Schürger, A. 2015. "The Archaeology of the Battle of Lützen: An Examination of 17th Century Military Material Culture." PhD diss., University of Glasgow.