

ACCORD collaboration with the How Old Are Yew? Group, Castlemilk: Summary Statement of Social Value

Co-Authored by the How Old Are Yew? group and the ACCORD project.
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Introduction

The ACCORD team worked with the How Old Are Yew group based in Castlemilk, south Glasgow. Together we 3D recorded two sculptures using the technique of photogrammetry; the 19th Century 'Falstaff' sculpture in Calderglen Country Park, East Kilbride, and the 'King of the Castle' sculpture by contemporary artist Kenny Hunter. This document provides information about the context of this work. There is a brief discussion of the historical value of the sites in the context of historical social activism. The main focus of this document is to describe the social value of the monuments for the people who took part in this ACCORD project. Social value refers to a collective attachment to place that embodies meanings and values that are important to a community or communities. Quotes and opinions in this document were expressed during focus groups held at the beginning and end of the co-production process. The role of 3D recording and modelling in expressing the value of the monuments, and in creating value, is also summarised.

The How Old Are Yew group

The five individuals who took part in this ACCORD project are all members of the 'How Old Are Yew' history group which meets formerly once a month. This active group is run by the community woodland officer of Cassiltoun Housing Association. They discuss research topics focused on the archaeology and history of the Stuart estate of Castlemilk, which was occupied up until the 20th Century. They take part in local walks, museum visits, public heritage events and participate in small excavations (for example on 'Scottie's Midden' which dates to the 19th and 20th Centuries located on the estate woodland). These events were run in partnership with historian and archaeologist Mark Roberts. Finds from the excavations are on display in the foyer of the Cassiltoun Housing Association Offices which occupy the recently refurbished 17th Century stables, the only buildings which survive from the Stuart estate. This is also where the group hold their meetings and where ACCORD held their focus groups. Two of the members were originally members of the now officially defunct Castlemilk Local History Group (which was established in 1989), but which still has a very visible and active online Facebook presence (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Castlemilk-History>).

Three of the group members live locally, while two live in neighbouring districts. All expressed strong ties to the district of Castlemilk; for most of the group this was linked to childhood memories of growing up here in the 60s, 70s and 80s, except for the woodland officer whose connection to the area was expressed as purely professional.

This ACCORD project at Castlemilk grew out of discussions with Mark Roberts who was aware of the ACCORD project, and was the Community engagement officer employed by Glasgow Life (a company set up to encourage everyone to engage in culture and sport). He has worked in Castlemilk with the local community for many years.

Background to Castlemilk and environs

Castlemilk is situated to the south of Glasgow City next to Rutherglen, Simshill, Croftfoot and Carmunnock. Originally this built up area of social housing was a grand countryside estate which

dated back to the medieval period, owned by the Stuarts and their descendants. There is discordance in the available information on the dates of the original foundations of a tower and motte at Castlemilk, but it was likely sometime from the 13th to 15th Century. This developed into a grand house with substantial grounds. The land was in the Stuart family from sometime in the medieval period until 1938 when the last laird died, who also claimed descendant from the Stuarts. The year before, in 1937, the estate had been purchased by the Glasgow Corporation and from 1939/40 was used as a Childrens' Home until the late 1960s. It then lay empty for a few months until its demolition at the beginning of December 1969.

There is an entry on Canmore for the old estate (Canmore ID 44894) which describes this as having been the largest estate in the parish of Carmunnock. The Canmore entry focuses on the architectural details and refurbishments made to the building, while a fragment of medieval painted roof is also listed in the entry. Some of the objects (c.70) were recovered from the house prior to its demolition in 1969 and are now housed in the archives of Glasgow Museums. These include everyday fragments of pottery, building fragments and materials, and clay pipe stems.

One particular ornate remnant of the house was "rescued" as a result of calls from the local community (Forbes, A. *Grant to bring back estate's historic fireplace*, newscutting from *The Scotsman* 14 September 1996, held in the RCAHMS archive). This is an elaborately 19th Century carved oak fireplace which depicts the dramatic 1429 Siege of Orleans, in which two members of the Stuart family died. Until 1996 it was housed in the Strathclyde Regional Council Warehouse where it had been water damaged. Funds were raised by the Glasgow Building Preservation Trust, Glasgow City Council and Cassiltoun Trust to rehome it and it is now mounted pride of place in the refurbished Castlemilk Stables, where there are the offices of the Cassiltoun Housing Association. The ACCORD project on an earlier visit prior to the official project made a 3D model of details of the ornate oak fireplace (figure 1).



Figure 1: Snapshot of a 3D photogrammetric model made by the ACCORD project of the 19th Century fireplace from Castlemilk House, now housed in the Cassiltoun Housing Association foyer. The model was processed using Agisoft Photoscan.

However, it is Castlemilk's history of social activism which characterises peoples' definition and relationship to this suburb of Glasgow. In 1937 the land was purchased from the last surviving laird in the estate by the Glasgow Corporation to build a housing scheme to ease overcrowding and bad living conditions in the city centre. Interrupted by the war, the housing was not built until after 1954 and the first tenants did not arrive in Castlemilk until 1955 as part of what is known as the 'big flit', most of whom were from the Gorbals (another district in Glasgow City). At first it was the intention that the housing would be built away from the grand estate house and so after the death of the laird in 1938 the house was used as a Childrens' Home. However, this was closed in the late 1960s and the building demolished in 1969. Social housing has been built up within the estate gateways, but the footprint of the estate house and its immediate hinterland remains unbuilt and is a publicly accessible woodland. The social housing which was first built in the 1950s and 60s was inadequate, while in the area there was a lack of community facilities and amenities, and no good transport links to the City. By the late 70's early 80's more Tenants Associations and Various Housing Associations formed in order to improve these isolated conditions. Subsequent regeneration has been managed by these various groups and the Castlemilk East Housing Co-operative (established in 1984) which evolved into the Cassiltoun Housing Association. The background of social activism and "the regeneration story" is a thread which ran through our discussions with the How Old Are Yew group. The How Old Are Yew group have done much research on the house and have located 19th Century images of the interior and postcards of views of the estate. The Castlemilk History Facebook page is an incredible goldmine for further information, newspaper cuttings, photography and associated material related to the area's social history; the recent past and all the way back to the area's connection with Mary Queen of Scots (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Castlemilk-History/116432021792052?fref=ts>).

The People's History Group, a local reminiscence group, wrote a book entitled 'The Big Flit' published by the Workers Educational Association in 1990, which collected local peoples' memories of moving to the new schemes at Castlemilk in the 1950s (more information here). <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.238484946253425.38805.116432021792052&type=3>

The Castlemilk Local History group (now defunct) also wrote a book on the local history entitled 'The Incomplete History of Castlemilk', published by the Workers Educational Association in 1993 (More information here). <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.123778577724063.15571.116432021792052&type=3>

Significance and Social Value

At first the intention voiced by the group was to record objects which had a direct link to the Stuart estate. However, during our Focus Group conversations it was the participants' own memories of living in Castlemilk which had most personal and emotive relevance; themes repeatedly arose of "hopefulness" and "regeneration" emerging out of a background of "deprivation". Although the Glasgow suburbs have now subsumed the general area, Castlemilk's 1950s origins as an "isolated", "bleak", "dreich" peripheral housing district still influences the strong sense of community and identity, as was expressed by one member, Castlemilk's "village mentality has kept me here". A strong pride and sense of resilience in coming from and living in Castlemilk linked to this difficult

recent past, was voiced. The community of Castlemilk is still, however, very much defined within the boundaries of the grand estate walls. For the group, this more distant and unfamiliar historical past, not within living memory, linked to the Stuart estate was something to be proud of and promoted, although the group struggled to express its contemporary relevance in their own experience of Castlemilk. However, the group were interested in the objects from the house or monuments which stood in the grounds as these provided a more tangible link to this distant and thus more alien past.

Personal memories of growing up in Castlemilk also played a strong role in how people related to this place, and also explains why the more recent and contemporary heritage ended up being the focus for ACCORD. "Growing up here was just fabulous!" One member had spent some months living in the old Castlemilk House, now demolished, when it was a Children's Home. This individual remembers their time there fondly; a "fairyland" full of "fun and enjoyment". Therefore, it became clear, that personal memories and the lived experience of particular places had resonance for each individual in the group.

Therefore, two sculptures were chosen by the group to record together; one which tangibly links to the grand past of Castlemilk (an 18th Century statue of the Shakespearean character Falstaff which stood on the estate grounds), the other which links to the modern social history of Castlemilk's housing schemes since the 1950s (a contemporary sculpture made by Kenny Hunter, 1999, which is sited on the old estate boundary).

The ACCORD project monuments

The Falstaff Sculpture, 1832 (NS 65350 52702) was made by little known 19th Century sculptor Robert Forest who was based in south west Scotland. Most of his work ended up in private ownership and this particular sculpture is now in Torrence House in the grounds of Calderglen Country Park.

The interest of the How Old Are Yew group in this sculpture was because it originally stood in the grounds of Castlemilk estate purchased by Captain William Stuart c.1860s/80s, as a postcard from the time evidences (included in the accompanying archive). Given that there are very little artefacts which survive in Castlemilk as a visual presence of the grand estate house which once stood here, there was a desire to return this wandering object back to Castlemilk. A physical return of the sculpture was mooted as a future desire, but for now a virtual 3D model (particularly a 3D print) would do. Ironically, it was also noted that it has probably been in its current position for longer than it had been at Castlemilk, and it was thus questioned where the most authentic location of this sculpture should be (this is discussed further below).

King of the Castle, Kenny Hunter (artist), 1999 (NS 61448 59551) The King of the Castle sculpture was made by established and well known artist Kenny Hunter, commissioned as part of 'The Gateways Project' in Castlemilk. The Castlemilk History Facebook page gives more information:

'The Gateways and Landmarks project was part of "9 for 99": a partnership project that sought to boost the perceived image of Castlemilk through the redevelopment of 21 hectares of land and the creation of a civic square. The intention was to develop a visual identity for Castlemilk, creating a sense of place through destination sites. The implementation of "9 for 99" created 21 training places for local unemployed people and the Gateways project proved to be a foundation for a longer-term public art strategy for the Castlemilk Environment Trust. Completed 1999.'

This sculpture of a young boy with his jumper as a cape looking through binoculars to the City of Glasgow was highlighted very early on in our Focus Group conversations as an "icon" of Castlemilk,

“everyone knows it!” It “tells of the regeneration story”. Since it was erected in 1999, the artwork has enjoyed a rich and varied life – sometimes a proud Rangers supporter and other days a committed Celtic fan. This “rascal” is much loved by the local community as was clearly voiced by strangers walking past to us as we were photographing the sculpture. People were keen to tell us of the different guises and graffiti it has adorned, how it was a place to meet friends and play, and how it is a member of the community.

It is located at a road junction known as the “hole in the wall”, at the periphery of the housing schemes of Castlemilk on one of the highest braes. Here literally a hole was made (unofficially it is assumed) in the grand old estate wall so that people could exit the social housing schemes more easily on their way downhill to Rutherglen to get a bus all the way into town. This siting and the boy’s view to The City was a deliberate choice by the artist and has significance making people think of the past isolation of Castlemilk. The playful curiosity and innocence of the young superhero, made grand and imposing as a larger than life sculpture, was symbolic of a hopeful future for the community of Castlemilk; “this wee boy would not remember the deprivation”. It also sparked fun, joyful memories of growing up here.

Kenny Hunter was keen to meet the group and together we modelled the sculpture using the technique of photogrammetry.

The impact of 3D modelling and recording

Prior to ACCORD, members in the group were not familiar with 3D recording technologies, although two members were skilled photographers so were particularly keen on the application of photogrammetry. For one member it was expressed that the technology of 3D modelling “ gets my interest” rather than the history, whereas the others felt that their relationship with technology was “quite backward” and for them learning more the heritage and about themselves was of prime interest. Nevertheless, new technology has an “excitement” and “buzz” attached to it.

Additionally, the opportunity offered by 3D recording technologies for engaging and educating local young people in the history of Castlemilk was attractive to the group; good for “increasing access” and encouraging an “interactive” engagement with their local heritage. There is already popular interest in Castlemilk’s past, as evidenced by the staggering number of ‘likes’ on their Facebook page (at time of writing 2,802). They also saw it as a “useful recording tool...capturing more detail”. The aesthetic qualities and accuracy of the results, including detail of “lived” surface textures, were especially valued. The “interactive” view encouraged in depth examination. One member voiced how this was “the first time I’ve paid attention to it [King of the Castle] in detail”. It also helped to recreate experiencing these objects in their contemporary settings.

In terms of social value and significance, it was clear that taking part in ACCORD and using photogrammetry as a visualisation and recording technique for the first time enhanced the group’s relationship to their heritage; both the distant past and more contemporary. This was particularly brought to the fore when exploring issues of social value and significance in the Focus Group sessions, which highlighted the contemporary relevance of modern social history, leading to the recognition of Kenny Hunter’s artwork as a symbol of this. Co-producing the records as part of ACCORD manifested people’s contemporary lived experience in Castlemilk, and pre-existing communal feelings and attachments with this particular well-loved monument. Thus the “joint venture” of ACCORD gave the group a sense of ownership over the results, and enhanced their sense of belonging to the wider Castlemilk community.

Additionally, the group's own experience of producing models of these monuments encouraged them to find out more about the network of relationships surrounding the sculptures in the past and present (discovering their original makers and who owned them). This more tangible historical link to the past is what were what brought these objects to life for them, while meeting with Kenny Hunter was a significant moment for the group in deepening their existing personal contemporary relationships with this sculpture.

A notion of authenticity was therefore presently based and expressed in terms of their involvement and the labour input in making the 3D models *in situ*. In the case of Falstaff, it was also expressed that the result attained a sense of authenticity as a product of the labour of community members from Castlemilk. Therefore the replica in this case was deemed as a legitimate way of returning a bit of Falstaff to Castlemilk, although still enticing you to seek out and "experience the real thing". Furthermore, the group were particularly keen on printing the results in 3D, as a means of "bringing back objects lost from Castlemilk" and making the virtual results we would achieve physical reality. However, it was noted that that these prints would not replace the original "unless they looked even more identical". Experiencing the sculptures in the landscape was noted by most of the group as important (and thus a limitation of the 3D photogrammetric records), except for one person who made the point that for Falstaff it was not so important since his original landscape has now gone, built upon with social housing.

Plans for the future uses of the results include "graffiti your own" King of the Castle 3D prints, perhaps for use in schools and community centres, and a "Festival of Falstaff". The group are keen on using the technique of photogrammetry in their future work and ACCORD have provided a license of the software to enable this.

References:

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