

## **On Shared Ground: Networks and encounters on the margins of community heritage**

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“There is something special about living in a place  
where you can come up and look down on where you live.”  
Project Participant, Cardiff, May 2014.

The ‘On Shared Ground’ project examined the connected and disconnected networks of community participation in heritage research. Working across three locations spanning three countries we worked with established groups to explore their understandings of heritage sites in relation to more marginal interpretations and use of those sites by people from the same community. In Wincobank in Sheffield, we were interested in the tensions between those seeking to conserve the heritage of a local hill fort and members of the local community who used the hill as a site for motor-biking, quad-biking and mountain biking. In Caerau in Cardiff we worked with local community organisations who had identified issues between those seeking to preserve the hill fort and church ruins on the site and those – from the local area – who were using the church as a space to ‘hang-out’ – resulting in graffiti and defacement of graves and the church itself. In Bennachie in Aberdeenshire we collated a wide range of interpretations of the space and its histories, from the historical traces of a ‘colony’ of ‘crofters’ on the side of the hill to its contemporary use as a place for walking and recreation.

This talk will reflect on the research methodologies employed during the project, in particular the use of film and visual methods to record and share experiences across and within communities. It will propose that these methods helped to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise between academics, community researchers and the project artist as well as involve community participants outside of established networks, in order to create a more nuanced reading of the heritage sites.