CONSERVATION AND CULTURAL TOURISM: CONFLICTS AND SOLUTIONS

Marion Harney

University of Bath, United Kingdom
m.harney@bath.ac.uk

In order to conserve and protect the values and authenticity of cultural property we must first recognise; "that the management of complex systems demands attention not to one variable but to many, and that there will always be uncertainty about how changes in one variable will affect the whole" (Brown 2005).

The conflict between mass cultural tourism, economic growth, increasing visitor access and conservation creates an awkward tension between keeping the vitality of places while conserving vulnerable historic fabric and immaterial heritage, which is subject to decay, and degradation.

The economic benefits of cultural heritage tourism as a resource are undeniable. In the UK in 2017, inbound tourism to the UK experienced a sustained period of growth, with record numbers of overseas visitors (23.1m) for the January-July period, up 8% on 2016 and up 9% in volume terms. Heritage tourism generated £16.4 billion in spending by domestic and international visitors; repair and maintenance of historic buildings directly generated £9.6 billion in construction sector output, and provided employment for 278,000 people[1]. The influx has particularly been felt among the must-see tourist attractions around the UK, with Stonehenge experiencing a strong uplift in visitors driven by overseas tourists', with total visitor numbers to Stonehenge in 2017 reaching a peak at approximately 1.58 million visits[2].

However, there are severe environmental impacts on tangible and intangible cultural inheritance at many sites to the extent that emerging evidence indicates that ever-increasing visitor numbers threaten historic monuments and important cultural landscapes.

The National Trust and English Heritage, the UK's largest conservation charities experience visitor numbers in excess of 227 million visits per year to cultural heritage sites[3]. The conflicting core remit of conservation and access increasingly compromises the aesthetic and historic integrity of the cultural inheritance they manage. National Trust membership has risen year-on-year to over 5.2 million with annually c.26.6 million visitors to pay-for-entry properties and c.200 million to the countryside in 2017 (National Trust 2018). English Heritage, which cares for over 400 historic monuments, buildings and places saw numbers rise by 10% in 2017 alone to more than 10 million visitors (Historic England 2017).

As foremost custodians of heritage places in the UK, the National Trust and English Heritage commit to protecting, restoring, enhancing and managing the cultural assets in their care, and in 2017 National Trust spent £138m on conservation, including a record £100m on its historic houses and gardens and English Heritage over 16 million during 2016-17 (National Trust 2018). However, a commercial remit to generate income from membership and pay-for-entry visits is essential to maintain levels of conservation, maintenance and staffing for the long-term, and there are risks associated with managing this success and increasing access generally, principally at vulnerable sites and historic cultur-

al landscapes, particularly where new infrastructure is proposed to service the needs of increasing visitor numbers. The inherent conflict between income generation, increased access and conservation creates a near-impossible tension for these charities and those who manage World Heritage and other cultural sites whose primary responsibility is to protect the historic environment. Failure to find a balance between commercial viability and managing visitor numbers is now a major challenge facing heritage sites.

As long ago as 1991 the English Tourist Board warned that "There is a danger that as numbers grow so too do resulting impacts on the heritage property and the surrounding area. In the case of short-term success of the attraction in achieving greater numbers (this) might turn into long term failure as the heritage assets that serve to promote visitations become damaged or degraded" (English Tourist Board 1991: add page).

A comparative analysis of the sustainable future for the significant iconic pilgrimage sites of Stonehenge, and Avebury, UK, with El Camino de Santiago, Spain as both are processional pilgrimage sites, have monument destinations within extensive landscape settings and have spiritual value for some. There is now "general archaeological consensus that this entire part of Wiltshire, from the huge earthworks at Avebury and Silbury Hill, stretching down the Avon to Woodhenge and Durrington Walls, and taking in the strange features known as the cursus and the Stonehenge Avenue (parallel earthwork ridges running for several kilometres) as well as scores of barrows (or burial mounds) constituted an integrated 'sacred landscape'" (Self 2014).

This comparison will enable critical reflection and analysis of mitigation strategies for alleviating threats to the transmission of material and immaterial heritage, including an exploration of conservation and traditional practice, interpretation and education strategies, and branding and marketing approaches. The methodologies developed for visitor management and sustainable tourism challenges and opportunities are addressed by specific objectives in both the Stonehenge and Avebury Management Plans and can be applicable to other cultural heritage sites, including El Camino de Santiago, responding to the contemporary challenge of achieving sustainable consumption of cultural inheritance and manageable tourist levels.

Stonehenge and Avebury are static cultural heritage sites of pilgrimage and ritual containing the most sophisticated prehistoric stone circles in the world. They also have a dense concentration of surviving related prehistoric monuments and associated Neolithic and Bronze Age ceremonial, burial and settlement landscapes[4]. Inscribed as a single cultural landscape World Heritage Site in 1986 they are both popular 'must see' tourist destinations with Stonehenge attracting around 1.58 million visitors a year and Avebury approximately 300,000, although Avebury is open access making it is difficult to accurately quantify numbers[5]. Both are covered by one WHS Management Plan with management of different aspects of the sites shared by English Heritage, National Trust and a number of other stakeholders.

The old town of Santiago was designated as a World Heritage site in 1985 and El Camino de Santiago, Spain was declared the first European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe in 1987. Subsequently inscribed as a serial World Heritage Site in 1993, the Routes of Santiago de Compostela, Camino Francés and Routes of Northern Spain are a network of four Christian pilgrimage routes. They include a built heritage of historical importance created to meet the needs of pilgrims, including cathedrals, churches, hospitals, hostels and even bridges. The site includes outstanding natural landscapes as well as a rich intan-

gible cultural heritage[6]. El Camino de Santiago is a dynamic site that before inscription in 1985 attracted 690 visitors; however since inscription the route has witnessed numbers of international 'pilgrims' rising exponentially to in-excess of 300,000 in 2017[7]. The entire heritage complex has become an icon of regional identity and has contributed to the Spanish Government's strategic actions of marketing tourism as one of Galicia's main economic activities.

Although World Heritage inscription is not a statutory designation there are national, regional and local levels of protection in place for cultural heritage and a Management or Masterplan for the sites to protect their key attributes, and Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is now a minimum requirement for all World Heritage sites. The OUV for the Route of Santiago de Compostela is evidenced in its authenticity and integrity as a largely intact survival of "an extensive interconnected network of pilgrimage routes in Spain whose ultimate destination is the tomb of the Apostle James the Greater in Santiago de Compostela, in Galicia. The Route has preserved the most complete material registry of all Christian pilgrimage routes, featuring ecclesiastical and secular buildings, large and small enclaves, and civil engineering structures. The wealth of cultural heritage that has emerged in association with the Camino is vast, marking the birth of Romanesque art and featuring extraordinary examples of Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque art and bears outstanding witness to the power and influence of faith among people of all social classes and origins in medieval Europe and later"[8].

Despite various levels of protection and management regimes, the impact of successful tourism strategies that promote and encourage huge visitor growth at these cultural properties is challenging and threatens their tangible and intangible values and this has become a critical theme in the management of cultural sites.

The Cultural Diversity and Heritage Diversity section of the Nara Document on Authenticity, states that, "it is important to underline a fundamental principle of UNESCO, to the effect that the cultural heritage of each is the cultural heritage of all" (ICOMOS 1994). The principal dilemma for heritage organisations is how to effect this principle without compromising the conservation, integrity and authenticity of the place and the visitor experience itself. There needs to be positive change through promoting sustainable tourism, satisfying visitor expectations and managing their impact without destroying cultural identity, or the aesthetic and historical value of the heritage asset that the Nara Charter sets out to protect. The International Tourism Charter, commenting on the dynamic interaction between tourism and cultural heritage states "domestic and international tourism continues to be among the foremost vehicles for cultural exchange (…). It is increasingly appreciated as a positive force for natural and cultural conservation (…) when managed successfully" (ICOMOS 1999). However, if we are to halt the challenging, negative aspects of mass tourism and the devastating impact it can have on tangible and intangible heritage assets and their spirit of place we must change the tendency for tourism organisations to promote cultural artefacts as commodities to be sold and consumed. The economic benefits of cultural tourism as a driver must be replaced by an alternative positive, symbiotic and more balanced approach which changes the type of tourism to be more culturally and environmentally sympathetic and gives greater weight to the detrimental impacts of ever-increasing national and global tourism.

Managing this 'success' of attracting ever-increasing visitors relies on educating and promoting sustainable consumption of heritage to protect an historic environment under

pressure to meet contemporary conservation challenges and opportunities. This means resolving the issues between conservation and user groups that respect the range of values inherent in historic places. If we are to maintain and transmit the tangible and intangible heritage we must develop sustainable strategies to ensure that our shared cultural heritage survives the threat of rampant consumerism.

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation defines sustainable tourism simply as: "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities"[9].

How can this be achieved?

Despite this well-intentioned vision statement evidence suggests that mass tourism is not currently sustainable and significantly impacts tangible and intangible heritage to the extent that ever-increasing visitor numbers threaten the future of the cultural asset and traditional lifestyles and significantly contributes to the erosion of cultural heritages. Balancing the conflicts between conservation and user groups that respect the range of values inherent in most historic places is now imperative, as it is apparent that "If the contemporary use of heritage assets results in the depletion or degradation of such resources, then they clearly cannot be passed on to future generations" (Fyall, Garrad 2010: add page).

While it could be argued that at Avebury and El Camino, the condition of the tangible heritage is generally good, it is questionable whether this can be said of Stonehenge with a national newspaper recently asking "has English Heritage ruined Stonehenge" (Self 2014). Access to the stones has been restricted since 1977 as a result of serious erosion and deterioration of the fabric as a direct result of visitor impact. Visitors are no longer able to touch the stones, but must view them from a short distance away[10]. The site was also criticised as being 'over-loved' and 'lacking magic' in a survey of conditions at 94 leading World Heritage Sites. The study by 400 conservation and tourism experts for National Geographic ranked Stonehenge 75th in the list of destinations and declared it to be 'in moderate trouble'. Researchers said that the 5,000-year-old monument was being degraded by large numbers of people on the site and the proximity of two busy roads. One judge wrote "Massive numbers of tourists cycle through the site on a daily basis, making for a crowded, noisy environment. Condition of the site is protected by fencing (...) but the visual sightlines are disrupted. It does not appear that local populations benefit from the tourist development of the site" (Milmo 2006).

English Heritage has introduced timed tickets in an attempt to alleviate the overcrowding issue and on a more positive note one of the offending roads has been removed and National Trust has begun a programme of grassland reversion of the sacred landscape. This will continue and be extended if the proposed tunneling of the other intrusive road goes ahead and the landscape setting returned to its original function as a pilgrimage route.

As the commentary from Will Self above and personal experience testifies (Self 2014), the intangible aspects associated with experiencing Stonehenge in particular have been significantly diminished. Historically, pilgrims to these sites would have had an authentic immersive spiritual or religious experience, emotionally engaging with the spirit of place which is inextricably linked to the built environment and the natural heritage. However,

to manage the immaterial we must preserve the authenticity and integrity of the material and these different levels of authenticity in both places have been compromised suffering a loss of significance that can be linked to marketing, presentation, interpretation and cultural use.

In the case of Stonehenge and El Camino, the requirements and expectations for different demographic groups are often in conflict, causing tension between those seeking a religious or spiritual experience in peace and tranquillity and those whose interests are purely secular and who want to visit the site for other reasons. For some of the 'pilgrims' at El Camino their sole ambition is to complete part of the pilgrimage route and have the experience by whatever available means, walking, running, car, coach or bike which have a physical and metaphysical impact on the quality of the experience and the environment. For other pilgrims the experience is more authentic, immersive and prolonged. Using a 'pilgrim's passport' for accommodation en-route they participate in walking at least 100km or 200km if using a bike, collecting a certificate of accomplishment for their pilgrimage when reaching the final destination of Santiago de Compostela. Travelling the cultural landscape route of El Camino currently appears to offer a more acceptable sustainable alternative to mass tourism attracting a wide range of travellers from diverse cultures willing to engage with 'slow tourism' and the multi-cultural phenomenon of the pilgrimage as cultural encounters connecting people and places. There are overcrowded sections of the route and there is evidence of consumption of the tangible heritage in unsuitable reuse adaptations and interventions in the architectural heritage, degradation and erosion of paths, and inappropriate transformation of parts of the cultural landscape. However, it is still possible to experience the intangible qualities of the pilgrimage, probably due to a combination of the way in which the site is promoted as an ethical pilgrimage route and the individual motivation of most of the pilgrims who demonstrate a greater appreciation of the site and its intangible values. There is however branding and commercialism along the route that at present appears to largely benefit the interests of local communities with whom travellers interact and who provide hospitality, services and sustenance on their travels.

In contrast, at Stonehenge the average visitor stay for global tourists is around 45 minutes, a mere stop-off en-route to the next iconic cultural destination. To cope with the massive influx of people at Stonehenge the new visitor infrastructure including a £27 million visitor centre with cafe, retail outlet, toilet blocks and car parking have had a devastating effect on the site's spirit of place and its landscape setting. Most of the cultural tourists arrive at the centre by coach, walk through the visitor centre, board a bus for the 2km shuttle to the monument, walk around the stone circle, and return to the visitor centre and make a purchase in the dedicated souvenir shop before boarding their coach for the next cultural destination. Stonehenge has been the victim of museumification and is a tangible manifestation of the rampant commercialisation and banalisation of cultural heritage. These practices are clearly unsustainable.

Issues to consider at strategic level
While the 'pilgrim' to heritage sites may benefit from less infrastructure, the impact and degradation of monuments and their sites remain are largely similar. The resulting management issues of environmental damage, accessibility, capacity to read the site and the

detrimental impact on the intangible aspects are a direct consequence of unsustainable practices such as prioritising the economic benefits of mass tourism over the preservation of precious irreplaceable heritage assets. Those responsible for conserving cultural properties must consider the notion of an ethical sustainable approach for tourists' needs without excessive infrastructure and services, the impact of which is discussed below.

Overcrowding at heritage sites not only affects the 'lived experience' but also uncontrolled over-capacity results in damage to historic fabric and unacceptable adaptation of landscape elements. Hard surfaces, widening of paths and heavily used areas have resulted in irreparable wear and tear and the creation of new routes to assist with visitor flow that are inconsistent with original routes or intention. There have been insensitive adaptations and additions to historic fabric and other compromises to meet access requirements. Signage has proliferated and obtrusive and inappropriate interpretation have all had a direct impact and harmful effect on cultural inheritance.

Increasingly, through the creation of new activities and the like, visitors to sites are being encouraged to spread into the wider landscape and while in principle this seems like a viable solution some of the activities themselves cause further damage. Distributing visitors afield inevitably leads to an increase in the overall detrimental impacts through the demand for additional infrastructure such as catering and toilet facilities and other environmental impacts (UNEP 2001). UNESCO have compiled a list of factors affecting the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties, consisting of a series of 14 primary factors, encompassing each a number of secondary factors, including threats posed by interpretative and visitation facilities (UNESCO 2008).

Possible mitigation strategies for protecting significance, integrity and authenticity of cultural property.
Having outlined some of the key problems and concerns that face vulnerable heritage sites, several mitigating measures may be undertaken by implementing management strategies and appropriate actions. Fundamentally it is essential that those responsible recognise that cultural inheritance is a finite non-renewable resource and that sustainable tourism requires the fundamental theoretical and practical problems and issues to be resolved. This can be accomplished by adopting a value–added approach with Value not Volume as a sustainable model.

To prevent the inexorable consumption of heritage assets it is vital that every site has a Conservation Management Plan. Conservation is the careful management of change and a designed values-based approach to the conservation process through the CMP can proactively and holistically manage the whole heritage site with the aim of protecting significance. This will ensure that there is a key set of conservation principles in place that gives a clear over-arching conservation philosophical framework that everyone involved in the management of the site understands.

The understanding of significance and value is key to any CMP. What makes a site distinctive, special, rare, influential or unique underpins and informs the complex management and decision-making process and supports the policy aims, objectives and conservation philosophy to be agreed for the site. Historic England has condensed this range of values to produce a set of Conservation Principles in an attempt to explain and codify the values that underpin the significance of a place. These have been distilled into a shortlist

of four: evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal. Evidential value is defined as the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity; historical value as the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present; aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place; and communal value is 'the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it'. The National Trust takes a similar approach to Historic England, talking about meanings and values: scientific and technical, aesthetic and spiritual (Harney 2014).

These frameworks represent a positive initiative to structure an analysis of key values so that a rationale and policy for proposed works for protection and conservation can be formulated. Value and significance is based on an understanding of the site, derived not just from research and surveys, but from consultation and a wider dialogue with those to whom a place matters. The key values attributed to a site then lead to the formulation of a Statement of Significance in which consideration will be given to threats and vulnerabilities but also to opportunities and capacity to conserve and enhance its significance and maintain those values. Views as to who values the place and why, together with issues and constraints, opportunities and capacity for change are all site-specific and all help to form a vision statement and determine the conservation approach to be taken. Any work undertaken subsequently will be designed to restore, preserve, conserve and/or enhance that significance and should respect its history and the values inherent in the site (Harney 2014).

The Nara Document on Authenticity was a watershed moment in modern conservation history in attempting to put in place a set of internationally applicable conservation principles that moved the principles enshrined in the Venice Charter (ICOMOS 1964) from those of universal international absolutes, toward acceptance of conservation judgments as necessarily relative and contextual. The Nara document recognised that "All judgments about values attributed to cultural properties as well as the credibility of related information sources may differ from culture to culture, and even within the same culture. It is thus not possible to base judgements of values and authenticity within fixed criteria. On the contrary, the respect due to all cultures requires that heritage properties must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which they belong" (ICOMOS 1994).

The Nara document on Authenticity states: "In a world that is increasingly subject to the forces of globalisation and homogenisation, and in a world in which the search for cultural identity is sometimes pursued through aggressive nationalism and suppression of the cultures of minorities, the essential contribution made by the consideration of authenticity in conservation practice is to clarify and illuminate the collective memory of humanity" (ICOMOS 1994).

In the section on *Cultural Diversity and Heritage Diversity* the document states: "Cultural diversity exists in time and space, and demands respect for other cultures and all aspects of their belief systems. In cases where cultural values appear to be in conflict, respect for cultural diversity demands acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the cultural values of all parties" (ICOMOS 1994).

In recognising these values heritage policy makers, local authorities and site managers entrusted with the governance of cultural heritage sites have a responsibility to formulate an interventionist strategic vision for future sustainable by collaborating with the tourist providers to develop plans, mitigation strategies and participative processes to resolve

the conflicts and tensions that exist between traditional life in local communities and catering for larger visitor influxes. This must involve the host community and indigenous people in planning for conservation and tourism (ICOMOS 1999). The key is to manage the cultural, social and economic aspects of the site so that tourism and conservation activities benefit the local community, including consideration of their natural and cultural context and adopting a multi-disciplinary approach to more local issues such as accessibility, accommodation and transportation to balance the expectations of users and communities (ICOMOS 1999). The strategic vision should embrace the tourist industry and develop alternative approaches to marketing, branding, interpretation and education strategies that promote the experience in more sustainable ways. It may prove difficult but long-term strategies must be developed by working together with international, national and local heritage agencies and other stakeholders responsible for managing the sites and visitors to the sites to formulate policies and implement plans to encourage the slower consumption of heritage. This may be achieved through longer stays, reducing the number of people moving through the site, exploiting the areas of interest nearby, multiplying the number of focus points to enable wider dispersal and working closely with and engaging local communities to diversify the offer without compromising identity, integrity, authenticity or harming the spirit of place.

The plan must be able to manage these tensions by sustaining and benefitting the local economy, enabling the local community to maintain their traditional buildings and way of life, while responding to the accommodation and service needs of visitors. This may be achieved through subsiding traditional practices and agricultural activity to benefit the local economy, putting legislative measures in place to control activities along the cultural route to prevent inappropriate change of use and maintain landscape character and authentic practices for aesthetic and conservation purposes. These actions will aid the retention of local identity and cultural practices and preserve the connections between places and communities. This approach has multiple benefits in protecting the heritage value and integrity of the historic environment, and preserving the spirit of place, authenticity and integrity of the experience for the resident and visitor alike.

Conservation architects and other multi-disciplinary heritage and local authority professionals and practitioners should also be at the core of developing mitigation strategies that will manage the balance between protection, preservation and management. They too can assist local communities to develop sustainable approaches to conservation practice by increasing their awareness of the value of their architectural heritage, imposing limits on transformation projects and advocating design quality for interventions and adaptations. Wherever possible professionals should encourage and enable the sustainable adaptation and reuse of existing and abandoned buildings to fulfil tourist-related functions in order to maintain the integrity and authenticity of traditional buildings. Local communities servicing visitor requirements also have a key role to play in developing sustainable cultural tourism in order to preserve traditional ways of life and sustainable agricultural and other practices. They can help prevent the loss of cultural identity and enable participation in reaping the economic benefits of a burgeoning tourist industry by preserving the material and immaterial values and significance of the place by managing the balance between the natural and built heritage through a landscape-level approach and ensuring that there is no erosion of interrelated processes such as traditional farming and other practices which can be vulnerable to rapid change. It is essential that local au-

thorities maintain dynamic control and awareness of complex, inclusive, rural, religious, agricultural, urban and industrial systems and community values.

It is not possible to stop the increase in global tourism so if we are to reduce the commodification and erosion of cultural sites this must be done through effective education and enhancing interpretation. It should be a key priority to simultaneously entertain and educate potential tourists through different marketing strategies to change the message to visitors and manage capacity issues through targeted communication. Education, interpretation strategies and targeted information in guide books and on digital platforms can improve conservation, limit the impact of visitors and improve visitor enjoyment and flow around sites. Interpretation should not be instruction, but provocation.

Most cultural travellers have a purely transient and transactional relationship with the site and have little or no concept of the incremental damage caused by their consumption of cultural heritage. The true pilgrim may be described as the 'ideal consumer' who leaves little trace of their journey, nevertheless their engagement with the cultural route is still dynamic and transient in nature. Education is a unifying concept that can be beneficial for the future of heritage through engaging and entertaining the visitor in the interpretation process. 'Edutainment' or educational entertainment has the capacity to transform experience and can be a powerful and effective communication tool that may provide solutions by transforming cultural narratives to enhance understanding and meaning in an entertaining and informative way.

Digital technology can aid the conservation, organisation and management of sites. The use of digital communication prior to visits through websites and tourist companies need to be radically improved to educate the potential visitor by enabling engagement at different levels as well as providing basic information including optimal times and other points of interest in the vicinity to diffuse tourist visits and spread the load to other cultural sites. Research to determine carrying capacity and optimum visiting times for each site should be undertaken and communicated, and this information should include when to avoid visiting, using alternative routes and all points of interest, rather than just stating opening hours.

Mitigation strategies such as extending opening hours in an attempt to spread peak visitor times and reduce overall damage to the site and increase visitor satisfaction and experience but can also exacerbate the problem by increasing the pressure on the site and staff to constantly manage and maintain to the detriment of conservation activities. Where appropriate consider opening earlier and closing later, but there is a case to be made for limiting or restricting access using different pricing structures and admission rates such as seasonal, off-peak, early bird, discounts, timed tickets and pre-booking as mechanisms for managing visitor numbers and enhancing Spirit of Place and visitor experience.

Sensitively placed, well designed, relevant interpretation and signage appropriate for the site will assist the discerning tourist on arrival, provided it is freely accessible and explains why, how, where and what to explore across the whole site rather than concentrating the visitor in recommended, high volume areas. For example visitors to the sacred landscapes around Stonehenge could be encouraged into the wider landscape to take in other areas of archaeological interest such as the cursus and avenue or be dispersed slightly further afield to the equally impressive huge earthworks at Avebury stone circle and Silbury Hill, Wiltshire. Maps can create or exacerbate conservation issues by highlight-

ing certain areas and omitting others. Good maps which direct people to the wider landscape and other accessible areas of interest, defined walks, cyclical walks with timings and degree of difficulty also facilitate wider access and use. Seasonal maps and routes offering points of interest and events that change each year enable better conservation work and improved experiences to occur by allowing certain areas to be closed, facilitating longer periods of undisturbed conservation and remedial works.

Adopting flexible approaches to how visitors spend their time to cater for individual preferences also helps to alleviate the pressure on sites. For example, different itineraries for adults or families can offer free-flow or guided specialist interest or general tours of short- or long-length duration. Different reversible routes on different days or times of year might be developed, self-guided around only the most robust areas with an electronic device.

Branding and Marketing

The branding of iconic sites is a communication and marketing strategy that can have significant positive economic benefits or negative detrimental impacts. For sites such as Stonehenge and El Camino there is a need to rethink branding and other types of marketing strategies which result in the commercialisation and commodification of cultural property. The standing stone circles at Stonehenge and Avebury and the scallop shell of El Camino are ancient symbols, authentic to the sites they represent but these defining images can simultaneously represent expressions of cultural value or promote the place for purely economic benefit. As well as being immediately identifiable cultural icons they are also powerful marketing tools that may be exploited for branding and marketing purposes; indeed the scallop shell has been reinterpreted as a promotional logo for signage and way marking purposes. In promoting the identity of the site they reach global audiences which can have positive economic benefits for local communities or cynically symbolise the commodification of the site for commercial gain.

The UNESCO symbol for World Heritage Sites is a merchandising brand in itself that actively promotes the consumption of heritage and encourages global tourism. UNESCO estimates the financial benefit of World Heritage Sites (WHSs) to the UK to be £85 million per year (UNESCO 2016). The WHS brand is a significant marketing tool, increasing tourist numbers and spend, local employment, house prices and local economies (Historic England 2017). The act of inscription which is meant to protect the site can have positive or negative impacts depending on the severity of increased pressure in coping with increased demand and overcapacity that inscription inevitably brings. This will require developing strategies that can mitigate the damage to iconic cultural tourism destinations and balance the needs of greater access and increased visitor influx against conserving cultural heritage if we are to preserve the tangible and intangible qualities of these places for future generations.

Conservation at its most basic involves handing on to future generations what we value. Professional conservation advisors do not prevent change, but negotiate the transition from past to present in ways that minimise damage that change can cause and maximise the benefits. Conservation is thus a process which seeks both to question change and to reconcile modern needs with the significance of what we have inherited in order to safeguard the interests of future generations. Places should not be sacrosanct when capacity

for change has been identified – indeed resistance to any change or adaptation prevents new design from taking place and inhibits creativity.

However, we must address the philosophical issues associated with preserving cultural sites by identifying the aspects or constituent elements that require protection and conservation. This must take place within an understanding of cultural context and how this has evolved over time. We must ensure that we achieve the positive outcome of sustainable tourism through practical and pragmatic mitigation strategies. Sustainable tourism has been defined as "Tourism that is economically, socio culturally and environmentally sustainable. With sustainable tourism, socio cultural and environmental impacts are neither permanent nor irreversible" (Fien, Calder, White 2012). To achieve this we need to adopt a holistic attitude to sustainable development and practices by taking an interdisciplinary or trans-disciplinary approach, considering the concept of cultural landscapes in its widest context and meaning as a series of dynamic interrelated systems encompassing economy, society, and the built and natural environment, and putting people at the centre of protection and management of these complex networks to ensure they remain viable and resilient in a rapidly changing world.

Stewardship – or temporary custodianship – is an appropriate concept for protecting and enhancing the historic environment and is at the core of conservation philosophy for conservation bodies and practitioners alike. If heritage sites are to survive, best practice is to manage their changing nature by producing plans for their conservation that help those responsible for their stewardship in the decision-making process and are able to assist in solving the curatorial and conservation dilemmas that arise, especially in deciding priority, while respecting significance and sense of place.

Notes

1 Historic England 2017. Heritage is a complex and multidimensional sector with multiple economic activities attracted to and embedded within it. Using a method adapted from DCMS' Creative Industries Estimates (DCMS 2015) the Heritage Economic Impact Indicator Workbook (Ortus 2017) estimates of the net economic impacts of heritage.

2 See <https://www.statista.com/statistics/586843/stonehenge-visitor-numbers-united-kingdom-uk/> [Accessed 13 October 2018].

3 National Trust Visitor numbers to pay for entry properties increased to 26.6m (+8.5%), and the number of members up to 5.2m (+6.5%), and an estimated 200m to the Trust's free access countryside and coast properties. National Trust press release 7 Sep 2018. English Heritage had approximately 5.9 million visitors recorded at staffed sites in 2016-17, with approximately a further 5 million to unmanned attractions. There were 39.2 million overseas visits to the UK in 2017, up 4.3% on 2016, with these visitors spending £24.5 billion, an 8.7% increase on 2016; see <https://www.visitbritain.org/> [Accessed 13 October 2018].

4 See http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/373 [Accessed 13 October 2018].

5 See <https://www.visitbritain.org/> [Accessed 13 October 2018].

6 http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/669 [Accessed 13 October 2018].

7 See <https://www.editorialbuencamino.com/estadistica-peregrinos-del-camino-de-santiago/> [Accessed 13 October 2018].

8 http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/669 [Accessed 13 October 2018].

9 http://sdt.unwto.org/content/about-us-5 [Accessed 18 February 2018].

10 English Heritage permits access during the summer and winter solstice, and the spring and autumn equinox and visitors are able to make special bookings to access the stones throughout the year.

References

Brown, M.. 2005, "Heritage Trouble: Recent work on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Property", in *International Journal of Cultural Property*, 12, 1. 40-61. [online]. Available at: <http://lanfiles.williams.edu/~mbrown/Brown,%20Heritage%20Trouble,%20IJCP,%202005.pdf> [Accessed 18 February 2018].

English Tourist Board, 1991. *Tourism and the Environment. Maintaining the Balance*. London.

Fien, J., Calder, M., White, C., 2012. Add reference.

Fyall, A., Garrad, B., 2010. *Tourism Marketing. A collaborative approach*. Bristol.

Harney, M., 2014. *Gardens and Landscapes in Historic Building Conservation*. Chichester.

Historic England, 2017. *Heritage Counts 2017. Heritage and the Economy*. [online] Historic England. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2017/heritage-and-the-economy-2017-pdf/> [Accessed 13 October 2018].

ICOMOS, 1964. *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites. (The Venice Charter 1964)*. [online] Venice: Icomos. Available at: <https://www.icomos.org/charters/venice_e.pdf> [Accessed 24 April 2019].

ICOMOS, 1994. *The Nara Document On Authenticity*. [online] Nara: Icomos. Available at <https://www.icomos.org/charters/nara-e.pdf> [Accessed 18 February 2018].

ICOMOS, 1999. *International Cultural Tourism Charter*. [online] Mexico: Icomos. Available at: <https://www.icomos.org/en/newsletters-archives/179-articles-en-francais/ressources/charters-and-standards/162-international-cultural-tourism-charter> [Accessed 18 February 2018].

Milmo, C., 2006. "Trouble Stonehenge 'lacks magic'", in *The Independent*, 13 November 2006. [online] The Indipendent. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/troubled-stonehenge-lacks-magic-422736.html> [Accessed 18 February 2018].

National Trust, 2018. *National Trust responds to record visitor numbers with ambitious plans to improve visitor experience*. [online] Swindon: National Trust. Available at: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/press-release/national-trust-responds-to-record-visitor-numbers-with-ambitious-plans-to-improve-visitor-experience> [Accessed 13 October 2018].

Ortus Economic Research, 2017. *Heritage Economic Impact Indicators 2017: Technical report*. [online] Ortus. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2017/heritage-economic-impact-indicators-2017-technical-report-pdf/> [Accessed 15 May 2018].

Self, W., 2014. "Has English Heritage ruined Stonehenge?", in *The Guardian*, 21 June 2014. [online] The Guardian. Available at:<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/jun/21/from-heritage-to-heretics-stonehenge-making-history> [Accessed 18 February 2018].

UNEP, 2001. Add reference.

UNESCO, 2008. Add reference.

UNESCO, 2016. Add reference.