

FOLLOWING THE DIGGER: THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPER-FUNDED ARCHAEOLOGY ON ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

INTRODUCTION

Planning Policy Guidance note (PPG) 16 was introduced in England in 1990 (DoE 1990, Swain 1991). In summary, the guideline enshrined archaeology as part of the planning process, placing the emphasis on developers to pay for determining the archaeological impact of development and provide mitigation for its protection. This is either through changes to development or, more usually, by paying for evaluation and excavation of the archaeology and 'preservation by record'. PPG16 stemmed from a growing dissatisfaction with the destruction of archaeological remains without sufficient archaeological investigation due to inadequate planning mitigation (Thomas 1993, 146). Developer funded archaeology, under the auspices of PPG16, now represents the way in which the vast majority of archaeology is conducted in England and has been part of a radical re-organisation of the structure of the archaeological profession (Darvill and Russell 2002; Culture, Media and Sport 2006, 51). A sufficient period of time has elapsed since its implementation to be able to review some of the wider impact of the current developer funded approach to archaeology on influencing perceptions of cultural landscapes.

A number of recent reviews have emphasised the importance of PPG16 and developer funding in leading to an increasing wealth of archaeological data and as an asset to understanding past landscapes (e.g. Darvill and Russell 2002; Bradley 2006).¹ Elsewhere, there is recognition that PPG16 has led to a substantial increase in funding for rescue archaeology (Culture, Media and Sport 2006, 47). However, whilst period and regional reviews are highlighting the new data being produced under PPG16 there is little wider debate about the relationship between the process of how this data is arrived at, the variation in quality of information, and its broader implications for academic and community perceptions of cultural landscapes. There has been a substantial critique of the theoretical basis of PPG16, developer funded archaeological practice and the state of the profession in general (e.g. Graves-Brown 1997; Cumberpatch 2001, Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn 2001; Chadwick 2003; 2004), but there has been less debate about the relationship between the developer funded process and the intended 'consumers' of that archaeology: the public at large and the wider archaeological community (but see Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn 2001, 43). This paper will suggest that a key problem of the current system is its alienation of many 'cultural stakeholders'² from the processes of archaeology and from archaeological landscapes as a whole. In addition, it will suggest that current processes divorce archaeology from a wider understanding of the 'cultural landscape'. The aim of this paper is not to act as a critique of PPG16, and recognises some of the substantial benefits it offers to our knowledge of the archaeological resource. Rather, it will suggest that its potential to inform and engage with wider audiences' perceptions of their cultural and archaeological landscapes is being missed.

This paper uses some examples from the South-West Midlands of Britain to illustrate the current situation, particularly focusing on the impact of PPG16 in exploring the later Prehistory of this region, as it is perhaps in our understanding of later Prehistory that PPG16 is having the greatest impact. The region is covered by 11 different SMR authorities, within which a range of contract archaeology units work and is an area of varying landscape types and development levels making it an ideal region to explore the impact of PPG16.

THE BENEFITS OF PPG16 TO UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

What impact has PPG16 had on our understanding of past cultural landscapes? It is increasingly apparent that the implementation of PPG16 has, in many areas of England, led to an increasing number of archaeological investigations, matched by an increase in archaeological data (Darvill and Russell 2002, 53). The South West Midlands reflects this pattern, with material from a specific

archaeological time period (the 'Iron Age'), showing a dramatic increase in the number of sites investigated post implementation of PPG16 compared to the rest of the twentieth century (Moore in press-a).

The material resulting from these investigations is beginning to have a significant impact upon the understanding of archaeological landscapes. Partly because PPG16 is driven by development, rather than academic research agendas, this work is resulting in the excavation of new types of sites in areas of the landscape that have been under explored in the past. An example of this changing approach can be seen in the South West Midlands. Until the 1990s the focus in British Iron Age studies was primarily on 'hillforts' – regarded as the most important social monuments of the period. This meant that hillforts had a greater proportion of archaeological research time and fieldwork devoted to them in comparison to other sites and areas of the landscape (see Moore in press-a). In contrast, since 1990, PPG16 has shifted focus away from upland sites. Because development has instead been concentrated in lowland areas, with the expansion and developments around urban areas alongside major road schemes and pipelines (Moore in press-a), archaeological fieldwork has been focused in these areas. This has resulted in sites being found in areas where little information on the period was known previously, as well as types of site not recognised before coming to light (e.g. Moore in press-a, b). Clearly, such work represents a benefit to the archaeological community, with new and varied information informing and challenging preconceived notions of settlement patterning and social organisation for this period. This has not just been true of the South West Midlands; the benefit of PPG16 related evidence is being widely recognised as transforming concepts and reshaping narratives of later Prehistory in a number of areas of Britain (e.g. Yates 2001; Bradley 2006). In some respects, therefore, PPG16 has had a widespread and dramatic impact on our archaeological knowledge.

AGENDAS

Whilst the increase in archaeological investigation since 1990 has produced significant amounts of information in order to assess its cultural impact, the process by which that material is arrived at and its wider impact needs to be examined. One important point is to recognise how PPG16 creates its own archaeological 'agendas' and may be creating new understandings of cultural landscapes. There is an ill-conceived viewpoint that PPG16 is un-theoretical and unproblematic in its approach to the landscape. It is argued that it creates a 'random' element in archaeological investigations, free from research agendas:

"[PPG16] introduces a randomising element to the gathering of archaeological data"
(Darvill and Russell 2002, 53)

Whilst in some cases PPG16 has shifted the focus of investigation from earlier research agendas, it is too simplistic to argue that PPG16 is devoid of an agenda. In many ways it has merely shifted focus away from areas not under development pressure to areas of the landscape where development is taking place. In many places, this has meant a greater emphasis on sites which were unrecognised or deemed of lesser importance by previous research agendas. Whilst at present this shift in focus can be argued to be beneficial, in rectifying an earlier imbalance in research emphasis (Moore in press-b; Bradley 2006), it will perhaps not be long before it leads the creation of the opposite imbalance. A declining emphasis on research led archaeological fieldwork in the academic and voluntary sectors (Darvill and Russell 2002, 54) may mean that it is more difficult to rectify such an imbalance in the future.

The current developer funded approach also makes a number of value judgements about the importance of types of archaeological information (see Darvill 1993; 1995). For example, in the South West Midlands, hillforts in upland locations are usually scheduled and thus protected from development whilst most known lowland sites are not scheduled. The latter are acceptable to be excavated and recorded whilst the former are not, despite the fact that the lowland sites may be of equal importance to our understanding of the past. Frequent value judgements are therefore being made about our archaeological heritage and about which parts are expendable, yet these are rarely debated. Within such processes, archaeology is consciously but seldom overtly categorised

into high and low archaeological value – frequently on the basis of previous assessments, current research agendas and the existing Sites and Monuments Records. These are based on relatively static assertions over the value of particular elements of the archaeological landscape and are seldom flexible enough to allow for varied theoretical perspectives to influence the planning process. Yet one of the successes of PPG 16 has been to indicate the extent to which previous research agendas and models of archaeological richness have been frequently off the mark (cf. Bradley 2006). Many of the most unusual and interesting ‘sites’ have been recovered in areas where we may not have expected to find such information.

Claims that problems over the agendas raised by PPG16 are irrelevant because all archaeology is inherently ‘research’ (Wainwright 1998; Darvill and Russell 2002, 9) neglect to take this point to its eventual conclusion: that this archaeology is driven by its own set of archaeological assumptions and research agendas, which are seldom expressed or discussed by a wider archaeological (or non-archaeological) community (see Chadwick 2004). Instead, local authority archaeologists, and more recently English Heritage Research Agendas – which have not been widely open to public consultation – have driven agendas.³ The recently established research frameworks, designed to review regional archaeology, are in danger of suffering similar failings. These also tend to catalogue and list ‘sites’ whilst reinforcing simplistic theoretical narratives (“how do we find more about x, y and z”) with little remit to ask bigger questions. They stress that a discreet archaeology exists which can be objectified; it is not their role to narrate a past, or place material within wider perspectives. The overall approach is to ignore the cultural landscape as a whole, and as a sphere in which archaeologists are interpreting and negotiating, instead regarding it a set of discreet entities and resources. The ‘values’ attributed by these agendas also tend to be highly restrictive, ignoring the role of archaeology in wider perspectives of cultural landscapes (see Darvill 1993; Fowler 1993, 3)

ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF INFORMATION

Despite demonstrating the increase in material many assessments also do not discuss the nature, usefulness or quality of these investigations just that archaeological ‘events’ are taking place (e.g. Darvill and Russell 2002). In order to fully assess the impact of PPG16 greater consideration is required not just of the amount of archaeology produced by PPG16 but its variation in quality, geographic focus and its wider theoretical and cultural impact on understanding landscapes, beyond the anecdotal.

Alongside the problem of how PPG16 views landscapes is the frequently ignored issue of the varied quality of information being produced. Whilst Darvill and Russell (2002) note the number and location of archaeological investigations the variation in quality of information, and its use in creating narratives of our past landscapes, is not explored. In order to examine the extent to which variation in quality of information influences our perspective on past landscapes the archaeological information available on sites recorded as ‘Iron Age’, or having ‘Iron Age’ information, was given a quality number. This reflected the usefulness of the information in creating a narrative of the past. It rests on a number of factors, including the level and nature of investigation, the quality of work undertaken and the quality and availability of reports and information. This does not necessarily reflect the practices or quality of archaeological investigation ‘on-site’ but what has happened to that information. This represents a relatively coarse and subjective way of assessing quality of information. However, it does reflect the kind of subjective judgements archaeologists and others are required to make about the extent to which data can be ‘used’ in constructing narratives of the past. Put simply, we are likely to use information of higher quality and availability to construct our regional and national narratives as opposed to information from areas which have poorer levels of data. This does not necessarily reflect past activity or landscape use but modern variations in the availability and quality of archaeological data.

The South West Midlands offers an example of the influence of variation in quality of information on our perceptions of past landscapes. Darvill and Russell (2002, 56. illust. W18) note the distribution of investigations as a result of PPG16 in the South West region. This picture can be

paralleled with the known Iron Age sites from the region (Moore in press-a).⁴ Both distributions show a dense cluster of 'interventions' in the Bristol area; this is unsurprising considering the level of development in this area. However, assessment of the quality of information from these sites indicates there are notably few producing information of high quality. In this area at least, despite archaeological investigations as part of the PPG16 process, our knowledge of the period in the region remains lower than we might expect considering the levels of development and investigation.

The reasons for this divergence are potentially varied, including that archaeological evidence for the Iron Age does not exist in this area, that sites are poorly recognised or investigated, or that fieldwork has not been written up or published. A detailed examination of the region suggests the latter is at least sometimes the case. A number of sites exist which were only partially investigated, despite their potential rarity and significance, and which have never produced more than very basic overviews of the results. When we consider the rarity of these types of sites in a regional context, and their importance to understanding these landscapes, the importance of their absence from the literature becomes apparent. PPG16 in such cases is producing information but a lack of full publication, detailed information, and in some cases limited nature of the investigations, means that it is failing to deliver the full potential of the archaeology being revealed. Examination on a broader scale suggests certain areas continue to figure prominently in narratives of the region yet this has nothing to do with a wealthier archaeological heritage but, instead, patterns of investigation and dissemination. It should be noted that in most cases the limited impact of much of the archaeological information being produced is not the product of poor field practices. The quality of developer funded archaeology is frequently of a high standard⁵ but the dissemination of that work and the evidence relating to it frequently does not progress beyond interim reports, deposited as 'grey literature' in Site and Monuments Records (SMRs) and/or the client's and the field unit's archives (Chadwick 2004). Such a failure means that much of the archaeology being undertaken fails to figure prominently (or at all) in academic or popular narratives of the cultural landscape.

DEVELOPER FUNDED ARCHAEOLOGY: 'SITES' AT THE EXPENSE OF 'LANDSCAPES'?

A number of broader problems exist in the way PPG16 archaeology conceptualises landscapes and in the archaeological landscapes it produces. This process rests on a number of assumptions about how we understand the archaeological process and past landscapes. Current archaeological resource management rests heavily on the assumption that archaeology exists as a series of 'events' which produce a landscape of 'sites', features and points which can be defined, isolated and dealt with in part or whole (Carver 2003, 36). They are then recorded and archived with SMRs; in some cases, but by no means all, reports are published usually in local archaeological journals. The current system of different field practitioners undertaking separate archaeological investigations for different clients, even in close proximity, frequently leads to the production of disjointed elements of evidence. We are in danger of having archaeological landscapes made up of 'dots' representing archaeological evidence, often of a fragmentary nature, which are not understood as part of a whole. In many cases, each fragment of information has been undertaken at different levels of investigation, defined by varying approaches, by different units and individuals creating a piecemeal, disjointed landscape of knowledge. The environs of Bredon Hill in southern Worcestershire illustrate the problem. Gravel extraction, pipelines and road schemes have led to a relatively high number of archaeological investigations in the area prior to, and after, the implementation of PPG16. Whilst this material is useful in providing broad overviews of the location of later prehistoric activity, the nature of the investigations means it is difficult to turn this data in to meaningful archaeological landscapes. This process is in danger of what Plouvez (2002) has called "churning out little bits of stuff that only a few people see"; creating isolated elements of information which do not join together to reflect a past cultural landscape.

Such an approach to landscapes is strangely at odds with many current theoretical approaches to landscape archaeology and broader concepts of archaeology's place in management of the environment (e.g. Darvill 1993). Many current approaches to landscape archaeology argue for more integrated concepts of the landscape, examining the way people moved and experienced landscapes in past societies. Such approaches regard landscapes as a whole in which human

agency is acted out rather than as a patchwork of distinct locales (e.g. Tilley 1994; Bruck and Goodman 1999). Furthermore, others have emphasised the need to understand the changing and different perspectives of varied groups and individuals, now and in the past, on landscapes as well as exploring our own perceptions in the process of investigating archaeological landscapes (e.g. Bender 1993; Bender et al 1997).

The increasing use of technology such as GIS and the development of schemes such as Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) (Clark et al 2004) are also in danger of emphasising the importance of quantifying and objectifying landscapes – creating specific points and elements, or dividing the landscape into ‘types’. Such approaches may find it hard to discuss the boundaries between such elements or to recognise more multi-vocal perceptions and experience of landscape. Developments such as the HLC offer an opportunity to examine landscapes in more holistic ways (Clark et al 2004, 1) but are also in danger of retreating into static concepts of cultural landscape.

DOES PPG16 ALLOW US TO UNDERSTAND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES?

The brief assessment above of some elements of PPG16’s impact raises the question of what we want our management of cultural landscapes to achieve, the archaeology it should produce, and for whom (see Darvill 1993; Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn 2001). Is there an inherent benefit in excavating and recording archaeology for its own sake, as an archive for the future, or should we be constantly informing and re-understanding the cultural landscape both within the archaeological community and for a wider ‘public’?

The nature of archaeological information produced under PPG16 has already been alluded to in terms of variation in quality and quantity. However, how that archaeology is transmitted from the excavation process to a wider audience is also crucial. There is little point in archaeology taking place if it is never disseminated. PPG16 states that planning agreements should “provide for the subsequent publication of the results of excavation” (DoE 1990, B.25) and this publication should, as Lambrick (1991, 27) argued, also allow a check on the quality of archaeology being undertaken. However, frequently, dissemination via interim reports (known as grey literature) to Sites and Monuments Records (or HERs) is deemed an acceptable alternative to full publication. There are fundamental problems with the emphasis on grey literature. This material is often only available in interim reports, which are difficult to use to construct narratives of the past, and in some cases this material is never fully published (see Cumberpatch 2001; Chadwick 2004). It should also be noted that even publication through local or national journals still suffers from reaching only a relatively small audience, which even in the academic sphere is limited and negligible beyond it (Bradley 2006).

The nature of these forms of reports in understanding cultural landscapes can itself be questioned (see Pryor 1996; Hodder 1999, 173; Bradley 2006). Chadwick (1998), for example, has argued that:

“most archaeological reports have become terse statements of reductionist objectivity, written for developers, in the same dry style as engineering and other consultants’ reports”

Despite the prolonged criticism of grey literature reports and lack of widely accessible publication for the stakeholders of archaeology: developers, public, academics and so on (Pryor 1996; Chadwick 1998) this continues to be a significant problem which, it appears, is seeing little in the way of revision (Chadwick 2004; Bradley 2006). This is not to deny the good quality of many of the reports produced by archaeological units, but that in many cases reports are not being produced beyond the grey literature stage. If developer funded archaeology is to have greater support from developers, a wider public, and have a greater impact on perceptions of cultural landscapes, then traditional archaeological reports are an insufficient means of achieving this (Farley 2003, 3.4).

Archaeological reports, particularly those in grey literature form, tend to reflect the overall PPG16 approach; to treat archaeology as a quantifiable, discreet entity which can be excavated, removed and dealt with rather than as part of vibrant past and present cultural landscapes. PPG16

enshrines an archaeology which rests on a view of landscapes as an objectified archaeological resource, which can be preserved by record or in-situ. However, there has been widespread recognition that archaeology cannot be divorced from the rest of the cultural landscape as discreet separate heritage entities or a 'cultural resource' in the manner of other 'natural' resources (Darvill 1993; Hodder 1993, 13; Bradley 2006, 8).

It has also been recognised that the increasing 'professionalisation' of archaeology has led to a widespread assumption that those excavating a site do not need experience of the region, material or landscape they are engaged upon; their involvement is a scientific one, devoid of experiential input. This divorcing of practitioners from the landscape has been increased by the move towards non-territorial contract archaeological units from more locally or regionally based contractors in the 1980s (see Darvill and Russell 2002; 59-61). These elements of the developer funded archaeological approach stress that the process of archaeology is an objective, clinical act. In contrast, this approach to archaeological fieldwork has been widely critiqued (Chadwick 1998; 2003; Hodder 1999 Andrews et al 2000, 527; Lucas 2001) with recognition that neither the process of archaeology, nor the archaeology itself, are objective or exist as entities discreet from subjective decisions.

The developer funded process, therefore, is surprisingly at odds with an increasing recognition that the actual *process* of archaeology is also part of a wider cultural landscape (e.g. Bender et al 1997). Archaeology, perhaps unlike many other aspects of the cultural landscape, contains an element of 'process', of 'enacting', which is as much part of the landscape as the material it produces. As Tilley (1999) and others (Bender 1993; Bender et al 1997; Garner 2001) note, 'place' is an embodied experience and the act of archaeology is part of that process. For many, professionals and amateurs alike, enacting the process of archaeology within a landscape enables greater understanding and engagement with the landscapes, of both the past and the present, than seeing it through others' eyes - in archaeological reports or exhibitions. The disembodiment of practitioners from those landscapes, and the lack of engagement of amateurs within much of that process, is likely to further alienate both professionals and amateurs from relationships with archaeological and cultural landscapes, and the work they themselves are undertaking (cf. Hegel and Marx in Megill 2005).⁶

ALIENATING ARCHAEOLOGICAL LANDSCAPES FROM ITS 'CONSUMERS'?

The PPG16 approach to archaeology discussed above is not just one which affects theoretical approaches to landscapes or academic narratives of the past. More crucially perhaps this process is in danger of isolating past landscapes, and those who practice archaeology in those landscapes, from the public at large.⁷ As archaeological practice becomes increasingly part of the planning process and of cultural resource management, so many of the consumers of that resource are become increasingly alienated from it (cf. Karl Marx in Megill 2005, 1358). As many have noted, the consumers of the archaeological past are increasingly regarded as those who pay for the archaeological work to take place (Blockley 1995; Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn 2001, 40)— other stakeholders (e.g. academics, local societies, wider public audience, other contract units) tend to be considered only as consumers as an after thought, if at all (see Farley 2003, 3.1). Because of the contractual and often confidential nature of PPG16 work there is little in the way of public participation through involvement (see Selkirk 1997, 19), contact or discussion with archaeologist and the archaeology until it is fully in the "public realm" which in many cases it seldom reaches (Farley 2003, 3.4).

The very processes of PPG16, therefore, can create a system that divides the archaeological world, both within the archaeological community (academic/professional, consultant/curator, professional/amateur), and also from the wider public. Crucial perhaps is a lack of awareness in the wider archaeological community of how a wider public at large regards archaeology's relation and place within their broader awareness of cultural landscapes – a factor seldom considered by any branch of archaeological resource management (but see Blockley 1995, 105; Jones 2004). There is widespread acknowledgement that the public at large have a strong interest in the historic environment (English Heritage 2000, 1.4). Less widely acknowledged is Carver's (2003, 20), and

others' (e.g. Cumberpatch 2001), recognition that there is a "strong public demand for research" yet a "weak professional response to it". Many of the public, either as individuals or as part of interest groups, have a strong interest in archaeological remains and the *process* of archaeology yet have little or no involvement in the vast majority of archaeology. Many of those interest groups continue to be sidelined and alienated from the processes of heritage management. This is a problem that was recognised some time ago yet, despite recent initiatives (English Heritage 2000, 2.6), appears to have seen little in the way of being redressed (Fowler 1993; see Cumberpatch 2001; Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn 2001, 41).

If the public regard 'research', protection and understanding of the historic landscape as important, the archaeology community needs to think more about how archaeology can incorporate the 'public' in to the process of archaeology. As archaeology has become part of planning policy we need to consider more carefully how this material informs a wider audience about their understanding of the cultural landscape. As Jackson (2002) has emphasised, there is a need for the archaeology produced through PPG16 to develop its full potential as a resource for the community at large.

There have been calls for wider dissemination of this material (Pryor 1996; Cumberpatch 2001; Chadwick 2003; 2004) but little advance has been made in this area (Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee 2006, 47). As Pryor (1996) suggests, this failing of the current system is somewhat surprising considering its emphasis on developer funding; one might expect a greater desire by the developers (clients) to expect greater value from the archaeology produced. This also relates to an increasing emphasis from governments that even cultural resources should demonstrate their financial, as well as cultural, worth. The results of PPG16 need to reach a wider audience, including the developers who now predominantly finance it, emphasising their significance in reshaping our understanding of our cultural landscapes. Many are beginning to argue (Swain 2002) that we need to tell stories from this material; creating new vibrant narratives of past landscapes which engage with and stimulate a wider audience. Chadwick's (2004) suggestion that there should be greater effort made to ensure developers pay for reports is a pertinent one, although it might be suggested this go further to include production of popular/narrative accounts as well. This of course raises ethical problems; what kind of narratives might developers want to be told and to what extent would archaeological narratives be influenced by such funding (Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn 2001, 44; Graves-Brown 1997)? There is also a danger of extending developers' perceived 'ownership' of the archaeological resource by allowing them greater influence over disseminating narratives of that archaeology (cf. Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn 2001) – in some senses allowing them 'ownership' over ideas of the archaeological landscape. Archaeologists, however, may be too cautious in this area; there is little obvious sign that developers have overly influenced the nature of most reports or the interpretation of archaeological remains, although there are exceptions. It is more likely that developers may be less willing to pay more for wider dissemination of archaeological information; indeed in some cases they may be positively against it if they perceive it will result in bad publicity.

Another problem is regarding the public as a coherent entity rather than being comprised of a range of interested parties, groups and individuals who will have varying interests and perspectives on the archaeological landscapes (Bender 1993, 2; Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn 2001, 41-43). It is not just the 'local' communities that are important in their perspectives of this resource but also interested parties at a national, or even international, level who may consider elements of the archaeological resource as part of their cultural landscape. In some cases we may have to accept that the interests of some elements of that public (see Selkirk 1997) may not align wholly with the interests of the archaeological community. It remains important therefore that archaeologists explain their importance within a wider sphere. In addition, whilst the current system's apparent emphasis is on developers as the 'clients' (and 'consumers') of developer funded archaeology (Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn 2001, 41) it should perhaps be recognised that, irrespective of weakness in the planning process, the ultimate 'clients' of developer funded archaeology are the local authorities and, indirectly, the local electorate. A greater recognition of this fact at all levels and elements of the process might greatly influence the sense of inclusion by local communities

The irony of the vast amount of archaeological material being produced, therefore, is that many of the 'clients' or 'stakeholders' of the archaeology, and of the broader cultural landscapes, are being alienated from the products of that archaeology. Practitioners, both those in the field undertaking the work and other archaeologists, are often unaware of the place of that archaeology within a wider perspective of the archaeological landscape; developers are unaware of the wider importance and impact of the archaeology undertaken; local communities have little knowledge of the existence of this work or its relevance to their cultural heritage. In all respects, much of this archaeology is failing to become part of larger narratives of the cultural landscape – certainly there are very few narratives based on this material that inform wider opinion of past landscapes.⁸

How can this situation be remedied? A number of possibilities exist and some have been suggested elsewhere (Pryor 1996; Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn 2001, 44). As I have suggested, PPG16 has been highly successful in many respects and the criticism of the current approach to cultural landscape should not be allowed to overshadow its benefits to our archaeological knowledge. It seems unlikely that PPG16 is likely to be revised in any dramatic sense for some time (Culture, Media and Sport Committee 2006, 52) or that a new system of developer tax will be introduced in the near future (Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn 2001). However, some relatively small changes and implementations, which could even be established as 'best practice' within the current guidelines, might go some way to rectifying a number of the current problems.

Arguably, one of the most successful developments in archaeological resource management in recent years has been the implementation of the Portable Antiquities scheme (PAS), which saw changes to Treasure Trove law, and the instigation of Finds Liaison officers (Treasure Act 1996; www.finds.org.uk). Crucial in these changes has been the development of relationships between Finds liaison officers and the metal detecting community. In addition, a great deal of effort has been committed to raising the profile of the PAS and the implications of 'stray' archaeological finds in general through the *Buried Treasure* exhibition, local displays, guides and the internet. The *Buried Treasure* exhibition in particular displayed both the archaeological discoveries of the process and educating about the past. It also explained and informed about the legal and archaeological processes involved, emphasising for example the differences between, benefits of and reasons for, good and poor practice by metal detectorists. It could be argued that the results of PPG16 related investigations have greater recourse to funding opportunities from a combination of developers, local authorities and national bodies and, with thought and insight, the ability to provide archaeological narratives of landscape to communities. One possibility, in order to more widely publicise resulting discoveries of PPG16 and the nature of the process, could be regional exhibitions dedicated to the results of PPG16 related excavations. Well publicised and located, such exhibitions are likely to have a far greater impact than archaeological reports. Such wider publicity is also likely to act as an opportunity for developers to be applauded for good practice and where developers might see an opportunity for good publicity and good relations with local communities.

Rather than just producing academic style reports there should be consideration of producing popular reports which are more accessible. This has become standard practice for some English Heritage funded projects and is exemplified by the likes of Time Team. However, more research is needed on the readership of such reports, beyond current anecdotal evidence (e.g. Pryor 1996). The archaeological community at present has little detailed awareness of the actual impact of 'populist' archaeological reports on peoples' perceptions and narratives of their cultural landscape (but see Jones 2004).

The recent move to convert SMR to HERCs offers another potential opportunity to transform the ways in which archaeological data sets are stored and utilised (English Heritage 2000, 2.6). Current examples of good practice are emerging of how such archives can be made more accessible to interest groups, interested individuals, students and academics (e.g. Taylor 2002; see also Herefordshire SMR). In addition, the recent select committee report has emphasised the need to ensure HERCs act as a resource for a wider community of professionals and the public rather than the relatively restrictive role they have at present (Culture, Media and Sport 2006). Funding of course will remain the major stumbling approach to all these developments with

developers potentially reluctant to see the burden increasingly falling on their shoulders, as well as bringing potential ethical dilemmas (Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn 2001).

CONCLUSIONS

It is not the role of this paper to outline detailed ways of rectifying the current approach to archaeological resource management (see instead Graves-Brown 1997; Cumberpatch 2001; Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn 2001, 44) or indeed to overly criticise PPG16 and the current model; the benefits and potential of the current system should not be overlooked (see e.g. Bradley 2006). Instead, I have attempted to outline some of the ways in which current developer funded archaeological practice is in danger of alienating and undermining broader perceptions of cultural landscapes and to suggest that it may be failing in its most important task: aiding in constructing the narratives of individuals, communities and researchers of cultural landscapes. None of the above suggestions will radically alter the way in which PPG16 approaches cultural landscapes. However, there is perhaps a growing consensus between the disparate parties involved in archaeology (evident in the recent Select committee on Culture, Media and Sport (2006) report) of an increasing awareness that PPG16 must be revised to incorporate greater public involvement and awareness as well as allowing for broader impact within the academic narratives of cultural landscapes. As the recent select committee report notes, some modification, of what is for many an imperfect and alienating system (Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn 2001, 44), could be achieved with little radical reorganisation to the overall system yet may allow for far more pluralistic approaches to the archaeology of cultural landscapes.

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¹ See also the Regional Research Agendas

² 'Cultural stakeholders' denotes all those bodies and individuals with a stake in the cultural landscape.

³ See Fowler (1993) for the problems a lack of wider public consultation can lead to.

⁴ This includes sites known of/investigated prior to PPG16.

⁵ Although for discussion on this controversial point see *The Digger* and Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn (2001)

⁶ The impact of low rates of pay, poor job security and professional development in alienation of archaeologists from the archaeology and landscape has also been discussed elsewhere (Cumberpatch 2001)

⁷ See Council for Independent Archaeology and *Current Archaeology* on this debate.

⁸ Even if such material is reaching academic discussions (e.g. Bradley 2006) there are still few more popular discussions of past landscapes which utilise PPG16 related evidence (although see Pryor 1996)