

**Session title: **SENSE OF PLACE IN EUROPEAN CONTEXT
– WHAT IT MEANS AND WHY IT MATTERS****

Organizers: John Schofield and Rosy Phillipson, English Heritage, UK

Time: Saturday morning

Room:

Session abstract:

It is such a familiar phrase, and one now commonly used in professional and domestic situations to describe the emotional attachment people have to the places they hold dear. This sense of place – sometimes referred to as ‘*genius loci*’ - can equate with what has been termed ‘the lure of the local’, with its concern for the familiar – the place where we live, or where we lived when we were children. It is also about rootedness, belonging, stability and identity. But these are very broad definitions and perhaps not so helpful in policy work, and developing community-based projects that seek to assess or characterise local areas. As heritage management practices increasingly take account of ‘the local’, and draw on the views and expressions of interest amongst local communities (people telling *us* what matters to *them*), the need to fully understand what is meant by sense of place, and its uses and implications, becomes arguably more important than just semantics. Sense of place has been the subject of much recent attention in the UK (including at the 2008 IFA conference). By examining this issue at EAA we intend to explore different constructions of sense of place, and examples of its application across Europe, reviewing what is meant by sense of place in European context and to discuss why, or whether, it remains useful for heritage management practice. To encourage a broad debate on these issues, and to draw on a range of experiences and examples, speakers are invited from fields including archaeology, planning/local government, geography, anthropology and art as well as from local communities. Case studies and theoretical perspectives are equally welcome.

Paper abstracts:

‘SENSES OF’ A CORNISH MINING LANDSCAPE – PERCEPTIONS OF PLACE AND INDUSTRY

Hilary Orange, University College London, UK

The tin and copper mining landscape of Botallack (West Cornwall) provides an interesting case study through which to examine local perceptions of the ‘pastness’ and the ‘nowness’ of place. Here the socio-economic shift from primary to service industry has brought with it transformations - from noise to quiet, from an emphasis on the subterranean world to the surface one, and from physical exertion to a visual consideration of the sublime - most notably the iconic ruined engine house within a ‘natural’ setting. These changing senses of place have occurred within recent history and importantly, in part, within living memory. Whilst incomers now make up a

significant proportion of the local population, there are also ex-miners and people associated with the former mining industries still living in the local area.

Research during 2008 examined local and visitor perceptions of Botallack as a post-industrial landscape, and within this research questioned meanings of the term 'a sense of place'. Themes have emerged which broadly speaking relate to concepts of home, belonging, uniqueness and atmosphere. I will question the extent to which these different meanings appear related to a feeling of 'knowing' your place or can be resultant of a more transitory heritage experience.

COMMUNITY WITHOUT PROPINQUITY: INTERPRETATION AT EUROPEAN WORLD HERITAGE SITES

Wendy Beck, University of New England, NSW, Australia and John Appleton, Archaeological Surveys and Reports Pty Ltd, Australia

There is an emerging interdisciplinary field of study concerned with senses of place, which investigates how identities can be tied to places through 'great flapping ribbons of shaped space-time' (Prachett 2000: 116). The idea of 'community' has also been connected to the idea of place, and 'spatial proximity continues to be considered a necessary condition. But it is now becoming apparent that it is the accessibility rather than the propinquity aspect of "place" that is the necessary condition. As accessibility becomes further freed from propinquity, cohabitation of a territorial place... is becoming less important to the maintenance of social communities.' (Webber 1964: 108-109). European heritage places are an example of community without propinquity. Inscription of places under the World Heritage Convention recognizes that there is a global heritage 'for whose protection it is the duty of the international community as a whole to cooperate'. For instance, most Australians are of European descent and many Australians share with Europeans specific emotional relationships to European places. Citing European World Heritage sites, we argue that it is now time for heritage interpretations to encompass these profound emotions, and we look at ways in which this might be achieved.

References:

- Prachett, T. 2000 Imaginary Worlds, Real Stories. *Folklore* 111.
Webber, M. 1964 Urban Places and the non-place urban realm. In *Explorations in urban structure*. M.Webber (ed) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

THE MANY STORIES OF LANDSCAPE – STORIES AND FOLKTALES TIED TO ANCIENT REMAINS IN THE SALO REGION

Satu Mikkonen-Hirvonen, National Board of Antiquities, Turku, Finland

This paper, *the Many Stories of Landscape*, charts oral traditions tied to the ancient remains in the Salo region. Cultural heritage in South-Western Finland is both varied and plentiful, though the most visible signs in the landscape are the hillforts and burial cairns of Bronze and Iron Age date. Social orientations are emphasized primarily in the management and preservation of the archaeological heritage – we all need our roots and local distinctiveness. My research investigates stories and tales about

ancient remains that exist in literature and interviews, and material from interviews which aims to recover stories that are still actively told today. The stories in archives were collected mainly at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Through interviews, it has been possible to examine how the stories' contents have changed (or not) as the information related to ancient remains has been more readily available since the 1950s. I have compiled a database which helps in classifying and analyzing the stories according to both their contents and chronological periods. The database functions as a basis for further research, which will focus on what the stories reveal of the landscape where the ancient remains are.

SENSE OR SENSIBILITY (JANE AUSTEN LIVED IN SOUTHAMPTON FOR A WHILE YOU KNOW)

Duncan H. Brown, Southampton City Museums, UK

Southampton is not unique (Jane Austen lived in other places too). Discussions around the development of a new museum, however, are seeking 'uniqueness', mostly to provide a marketing tool. There's tension here, between what archaeology tells us and what people want a place to be, or become. Archaeology, certainly in towns, is mostly the investigation of the ordinary. If every place was unique it would be very hard to learn about the human condition, but the similarities between settlements allow us to compare, and contrast, to interpret on a wider scale, and to understand societies both past and present. In archaeology, the search for the unique is almost self-defeating. In tourism the opposite holds true.

This paper will take a museological stance in the discussion of Sense of Place. The Museum of Archaeology at Southampton will provide the backdrop to an examination of the development of archaeology in the city, showing ways in which changing methodologies have informed differing perceptions of Southampton, both to the locals and further afield. That tension between what is desired and what we actually have will be teased to breaking point, leading to consideration of where archaeology sits in the search for Sense of Place.

EXPLAINING AND EVALUATING THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE

Gurly Vedru, Institute of History, Tallinn University, Estonia

People are connected with places and landscapes, and relations with places are different among different people. The most intimate relations are with places where one has lived, often for a long period. Personal connections and meanings have arisen in the course of time; several places are connected with ancestors adding temporal depth to these relations. My study concerns the Rebala protected area (Tallinn, Estonia), its landscapes, people and their attitude towards their surroundings. The oldest archaeological sites date to the Mesolithic where the landscape is open, with extensive views between groups of stone graves. The rise in the real estate market has now reached Rebala and people would like to sell their farms for development. The value of the landscape is now more economic and less emotional. A large number of local people consider their surrounding landscape as low in values and with no need of protection. What is the future for such areas? Is there a possibility

for compromise? What is more important: to conserve the landscape as a museum or to exhibit different processes that have taken place in the course of time? Or would it be wise to give up under the pressure of real estate agents?

MAASTRICHT-LANAKERVELD: THE PLACE TO BE?

Anne Brakman, Municipality of Maastricht, The Netherlands

In this presentation I would like to highlight the different aspects of the *genius loci* that inhabitants ascribe to Maastricht and the importance of its history in their sense of place. Maastricht boasts a city centre where both Roman and Medieval history are still visibly present while several surrounding areas within the municipality are rich in history. This offers archaeology a broad supporting basis among the local community if and when it contributes to the sense of place of the Maastrichtenaar. This can be done by making history visible, tangible and physically present. Both successful and less successful attempts at this have been made in Maastricht. By exploring what makes certain attempts successful and others unsuccessful, it is possible to find the best way of expressing history in a way that relates to people and contributes to their sense of place. This is a very important issue concerning the future development of Lanakerveld: a location in Maastricht which is soon to be developed into a new neighbourhood. How can the rich history of this location best be put into form as to make (new) inhabitants aware of it and amplify their sense of place?

VOICES OF VALLETTA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN VOICES PROJECT

Mark Casha and Rachel Radmilli, University of Malta

Mediterranean Voices was a Euromed Heritage project that dealt with Intangible Heritage in an urban context. Our research focussed on Valletta, a UNESCO World Heritage City, on the silent voices of its residents, and on their sense of place, and sense of communication. An interactive hyperlinked electronic database of images, video, text and sound was created that can be accessed through our website: www.med-voices.org. Our presentation here will discuss a documentary on Valletta: *Ilhna Beltin (Voices of Valletta)*, produced for the project and dealing with subtle and often ignored means of communication in Valletta. In a modern and rushed world, where tourism and the beautification of the City has taken centre stage, old channels of communication have largely been forgotten or overlooked. One of these is the significance attached to churchbells – which are used to announce many things from the time of the day, the time to go to pray, to announcing a funeral or other rites of passage. This documentary aims to highlight the everyday, the mundane, the ‘hidden’, and the possibly less glamorous, less popularised or less gentrified aspects of life in Valletta within living memory.

Film details:

[Title: **Ilhna Beltin (Voices of Valletta)**

Language: Maltese with English Subtitles

Running Time: 17 minutes.

Producers: Mark Casha & Rachel Radmilli, University of Malta, for the Mediterranean Voices Project. This Project is funded by the Euromed Heritage II programme.
Directed by: Edward Said, Ballottra Films.]

BETWEEN INDIGENOUS AND ROMAN WORLD: SENSE OF PLACE IN THE NORTHEAST OF THE IBERIAN PENINSULA DURING THE ROMAN PERIOD

Paula Uribe, University of Saragossa, Department of Antiquity Studies, Spain.

Is it possible to uncover the archaeological evidence that would prove the feeling of nostalgia in the Roman world? Living in a different place to where one was born, did it permit rebuilding a new sense of a familiar place or was it a mere transportation of one's previous way of life to the new location? These are the issues I will address in this paper. I will attempt to answer them through the investigation of the most important place for a person and his family: his own *house*. I'll consider the archaeological evidence of the Italic and Greek houses in the North-eastern part of the Iberian Peninsula during the Roman period, analysing their building characteristics and some imported peculiarities, and comparing them with the houses that were inhabited by their native neighbours. On the other hand, through the epigrams of the Hispanic poet Martial, we'll add an opposite case, of an indigenous inhabitant of the capital of the Imperia, Rome. Through the presentation of these cases we pretend to illustrate the rebuilding of the sense of place that was generating in the course of the migratory movements during the Roman period.