

Linking Archaeology and Tourism

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Introduction

Archaeological preservation can be enhanced by better public understanding of archaeological interpretation and the nature of archaeological resources, including in many cases, their fragility. One means of improving this understanding is exposing more people to legitimate archaeological investigations. Archaeologists are beginning to open their investigations to the public, through community presentations, site visits, and popular articles, but more can be done. One area with good promise is the improvement of ties with the travel and tourism industry. Public participation activities that tourists can take advantage of, range from visits to sites with good quality Interpretation, to visits to excavations in progress, to opportunities to participate in excavations. One of the prerequisites for these activities to occur is the increase in communication between the archaeological profession and the tourism industry to provide for a broader, more direct and accurate exchange of information.

Archaeological sites, particularly those with spectacular ruins or monumental art, have drawn tourists for centuries, as they drew explorers and adventurers in even earlier times (see e.g., Fagan 1975, 1977). In some cases the intense focus of tourists on such well-known sites has destroyed or increased the rate of destruction of important components of the sites (Stirling, 1990). At many popular and well known sites the ambiance once enjoyed by visitors to these sites has deteriorated (Fagan, 1990). However, commercial tours of archeological sites continue to focus on well-known, and increasingly well-worn, sites. Yet there are many other opportunities for touring archaeological

sites, museums, and in some cases, ongoing excavations. This paper presents some sources of information about such opportunities.

Opportunities and Pitfalls

In 1984 Lester Borley, Director of the National Trust for Scotland, noted in an address to the First World Conference on Cultural Parks that a tension exists between tourism and cultural heritage. Borley characterized this tension as "creative" and tourism as presenting both a potential problem and a potential opportunity for cultural resource enhancement (Borley, 1989). Other conference speakers, from many countries, discussed tourism and cultural heritage from their own experiences and perspectives. Several common conclusions emerged from the presentations and discussions:

****the development of tourism facilities should not disrupt the lives and cultures of native populations and local residents;**

****careful planning is needed to protect the visual integrity of historic places and sites to minimize the impact of tourist facilities and programs;**

****there must be limits placed on the damage to cultural resources and, in fact, these resources must be protected from any "consumptive" use, and**

****any tourism must benefit local residents and enhance the quality of their life.**

The reasonableness, not to mention the feasibility, of these points is likely to be discussed endlessly between tourism experts and cultural resource managers.

The participants in the Conference felt that a justifiable balance can usually be struck between preservation and tourism. Essential to this balance is early communication and accurate information upon which to base decisions.

Many of the same issues exist now, nearly ten years after the World Conference. In 1992, conferences focused on issues related to cultural tourism in Nepal and Indonesia both resulted in declarations that stressed the need for better conservation of natural and cultural resources that are the tourism attraction in the respective countries. The declarations also call for better information and communication about the resources and the need for their conservation as part of the tourism message.

Communication is the theme of this article. There exists quite a lot of information about archaeology that is available for use in developing archaeological tourism, the sources of which will be described below. It is important to move beyond a simple listing, however, to begin to establish means for tourism experts, planners, and firms offering tours to communicate more widely and effectively with archaeologists, and vice versa.

There are three categories of information that could be of use to tourism professionals. These include information about:

- (1) established sites and museums available for visits;
- (2) excavations underway and available for visits; and
- (3) opportunities to participate in legitimate, scientific, excavations and laboratory work.

Visiting Archaeology

Organization of an itinerary that includes visits to archaeological museums or sites requires locating and contacting organizations with existing displays or interpretive programs. For a major part of North America, the best guide to this information is the book,

America's Ancient Treasures, by Franklin and Mary Folsom (Folsom and Folsom 1983). This volume contains descriptions of and guides to over 300 archaeological sites, museums, and parks throughout the United States and Canada.

Similar authoritative guidebooks also exist on a regional level for different parts of the United States (e.g. Lister and Lister 1983; McDonald and Woodward 1986, 1987; Noble 1991). Regional touring books about archaeological sites, are especially prevalent in the American Southwest. Such a focus is nothing new, as Raymond Thompson, Director of the Arizona State Museum, points out:

The idea that archaeology in this country must have something to do with prehistoric Southwestern Indians is still deeply rooted in the public mind. Early attitudes about the Southwest and its Indian populations, both past and present helped get this persistent idea started (Thompson 1989:222)

Archaeological tourism need not be focused so heavily on the Southwest, however. In fact, spreading the impact that accompanies tourism more widely is very desirable from the perspective of those who are responsible for the protection and preservation of heavily visited archaeological sites or areas. For example, at Mesa Verde National Park in Southwestern Colorado, tourists find themselves literally packed into ancient cliff dwellings during high visitation periods in the summer months. Public archaeological parks, sites, and museums exist throughout the United States and in many other countries as well. Focusing more attention on these as alternative tour destinations might spread the tourism impacts as well as expand the public understanding and appreciation of the breadth of archaeological remains in the United States and elsewhere.

Those who cherish their issues of the now-defunct popular journal, *Early Man*, will recall a series of features entitled, "Visiting Archaeology." These

features suggested archaeological tours, complete with possible itineraries and routes, of many parts of the United States including the Southeast, the new England coast, even the Washington, DC area, along with a few in the Southwest. One of the Southeast tours listed a range of National and State parks and museums that could be visited including sites representing the entire continuum of Native American occupation in the Southeast: Russel Cave and Moundville in Alabama; Etowah Mounds, Ocmulgee, and Kobmoki in Georgia; and Florida's Fort Walton Beach Temple Mound, Crystal River, and the Florida State Museum.

States, Tribes, and Federal agencies have archaeological sites to visit and, increasingly, interpretive programs for visitors. *The Listing of Education in Archaeology Programs* ([LEAP], Knoll 1990, 1992), includes information about such programs, along with other examples of archaeological programs and products, such as posters, volunteer opportunities, school lessons plans or curricula, and other similar materials. In Arizona, the State Historic Preservation Office helps local communities develop regional tours and highlights not only national and state parks and sites, but also small city and county parks throughout the state (Lerner 1991). One aspect of this kind of promotion was the designation of a recently held Arizona Archaeology Week theme as "Tour Archaeology."

In the United States, federal agencies that manage large portions of the country, especially in the Western States, also recently have begun to promote local and visitor tours of archaeological and other kinds of cultural resources on their land. One example of this new emphasis is the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) program "Adventures in the Past" (Brook 1992). This program promotes the protection, preservation, and interpretation of cultural resources on the 270 million acres that it manages, mainly in the Western United States. The BLM "Adventures in the Past" program provides visitors opportunities to learn about and enjoy America's past by

contacting BLM State offices to find out about visiting archaeological sites and interpretive facilities located on BLM land.

Visiting Excavations Underway

Communicating the right kind of information within the necessary time-frame becomes more difficult when dealing with actual excavations in progress, because excavations most often adhere to schedules unrelated to public visits or tourism. Yet, steps are being taken by some organizations to provide this kind of information in a timely way. Other organizations are even adjusting their schedules for excavations in order to make public visitation easier.

Archaeology magazine provides travel guides to archaeological excavations in the New and Old Worlds. What began in 1983 as a simple listing intended as a general answer to letters received by the editors asking where readers could go to visit archaeological excavations, is now two separate 16 page supplements to the magazine published in two of the spring issues each year. A recent listing included information about 160 excavations open for visitation in 41 countries (Rose 1991). Commercial travel agencies and non-profit organizations with special interests in archaeology, such as the Archaeological Conservancy and the Archaeological Institute of America, offer tourism opportunities that include visiting archaeological sites, frequently to include ongoing excavations. For 22 years the New York firm of Archaeological Tours has been offering tours of well-known archaeological sites and areas throughout the world accompanied by experts in the field. These tours, and similar ones sponsored by the Archaeological Institute of America and the American Museum of Natural History focus on well-trod, archaeological sites in the Mediterranean, Near East, and Asia, although a few are offered to Central America. Within the United States similar nationally advertised, organized tours are sponsored by the Archaeological Conservancy and the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center. The focus of these tours is the archaeology of the American Southwest.

Opportunities to visit ongoing excavations are not focused solely on tourists visiting from afar, either. With increasing frequency, local sections of newspapers feature articles on such opportunities on the local scene. The "Weekend" section of the *Washington Post*, for example, recently provided readers with a full page devoted to local archaeological programs that provide opportunities for site visits and participation in archaeological investigations. Also on the rise are opportunities to visit ongoing excavations being conducted by State, County, and Municipal archaeological and historical preservation programs, such as a pioneer program in Annapolis, Maryland (Potter 1991). Frequently these programs are provided in conjunction with statewide Archaeology Weeks.

Participation in Archaeology

Actual public participation in archaeological excavations, surveys, or laboratory work must be carried out with great care and developed in detail, making it difficult to organize and do effectively with volunteers, especially short term volunteers. Archaeological organizations, especially where they exist at the local level, and individual archaeologists are adjusting their investigations to accommodate the use of volunteers. This has resulted in more opportunities for interested members of the general public to become directly involved in legitimate, scientific archaeology more frequently than at any time in the past.

Participation in scientific investigations as a recreational experience is increasing throughout the world. A wide range of experiences, including archaeology, are being offered under the terms "ecotourism" and "environmental vacations" (Ocko 1990; Yenckel 1990). Earthwatch (Chiarelli 1991), The Crow Canyon Archaeological Center (Bell 1991), the Center for Field Research, the Center for American Archaeology, the Andover Foundation for Archaeological Research, Smithsonian Research Expeditions, and the University Research Expeditions Program are

some of the better-known organizations providing such opportunities. Public agencies, such as the Forest Service with its Passport In Time program (Osborn and Peters 1991), provide similar opportunities for volunteers to participate in archaeological investigations.

Improvements Needed

Heartening as the increased interest by the general and traveling public may be, resource managers must take action to counter the increased wear and tear on archaeological resource that this can cause. It is well to keep in mind that public support for archaeological preservation depends on public understanding of the importance of protecting the nation's cultural heritage; visits to and participation in archaeological investigations provide excellent opportunities to strengthen the public preservation ethic.

There exists much information about archaeology and archaeological resources that is not easily available to either tourists or tourism professionals. Basic among this information are the names of organizations and facilities to contract to obtain a quality archaeological experience, be it a visit to a museum, a tour of an excavation, or a volunteer experience at a dig. A sampling of this information is included in this paper; further exploration of the publications and programs mentioned here would lead to even more opportunities of various kinds. Coordination of information from local, State, Tribal, and Federal levels is needed, as well as a means of providing access to this information.

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