



# Themata 5 E-learning Archaeology, the Heritage Handbook





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# E-learning Archaeology

## the Heritage Handbook

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## A single voice? Archaeological heritage, information boards and the public dialogue

by Anders Gustafsson & Håkan Karlsson

### msco Introduction

The placement of information-boards at monuments and sites is a method of communication amongst others, but a method that during the 20th century has had tremendous success in the Swedish antiquarian context. The content of the texts on the information-boards is often the central ground for the visitor's experience and understanding of a specific monument or site. This argument can be taken even further: for some people these texts are the first – and sometimes the only – information received about the past whatsoever. This success is so profound and total that the methodological and pedagogical advantages and disadvantages of the information-boards no longer seem to be discussed – such that the information-board has become an axiomatic method. Of course, there are discussions about the content of the boards and about their technical design, but the question whether the boards are a good methodological approach or not is seldom discussed. This has contributed to a situation where the question of which epistemological viewpoint underlies this method, and the question of its history, is neglected within the contemporary context of heritage management.

#### > Animation

At first glance, it may seem peculiar to discuss the question of how information-boards (in the form of sign-posts at the roadside, and text-boards adjacent to monuments/sites) have become the prevailing method for the (Swedish) heritage management's communicative relationship to the public in connection to prehistoric monuments and sites. However, it can be stressed that the peculiar thing is instead that today the information-boards are so 'natural' and so imbedded in tradition and everyday activities of the heritage management that they are not viewed as a deliberate methodological choice. As all methods this one does of course have a specific history – a history intimately



connected to epistemological and socio-political considerations, as well as to trends in the surrounding societal context (see discussions in Module 7 on the Ethnography of Archaeological practice).

### sco Introduction Information-boards during the 20th century

The placement of information-boards at monuments and sites is a method of communication amongst others, but a method that during the 20th century has had tremendous success in the Swedish antiquarian context.

#### > Animation

The first information-boards in connection to a number of ancient monuments in Sweden were produced in the 1920s within the framework of the National Heritage Board. Because of the steady progress of the welfare-state – expressed in, among other things, the law of three-week holiday in 1951, the law of four-week holiday in 1963, higher salaries for workers, and the growth of motoring – there was an increasing need for more signs and sign-posts to control the growing streams of visitors approaching the ancient monuments.

While the sign-posts were standardised from the early 1970s, there were in parallel profound changes during the 1970s and 1980s regarding the appearance, design and content, as well as the overall number, of the information-boards placed in connection to monuments and sites. Today, as a consequence of the 1989 law concerning prehistoric monuments and sites, it is more often the case that whole prehistoric milieus, containing different sorts of monuments, receive information-boards. Today there are information-boards produced that contain texts that are more imaginative and not so 'dry' and crammed with hard facts as before. There are still no clear openings towards

**Figure 1** The first generation. Sign-post from the 1940s (no. 17) still standing guard besides the overgrown road in Torsbo, Kville parish. Bohuslän.  
Photo: Håkan Karlsson



alternative interpretations and/or broader ways of looking at specific monument/sites, but there are some attempts in this direction.

Towards this background this module will discuss the:

- > history and socio-political context of, and the material remains (artefacts) from, the axiomatic method of sign-posts/information-boards,
- > epistemological and socio-political considerations behind the method in a retrospective and contemporary light,
- > method's contribution to the communicative and unequal relationship between the heritage management and the public,
- > future possibilities of a new communicative relationship anchored in an open and living dialogue.

**sco The first generation: admonition and adult education (1925-50)**

The care of prehistoric monuments and sites began expanding in a more comprehensive and serious manner in the 1920s.

> **Animation**

The first information-boards in connection to a number of ancient monuments in Sweden were produced in the 1920s within the framework of the National Heritage Board. They were signs in cast-iron, containing the text 'ancient monument protected by law' (Sw. lagskyddat fornminne) or, alternatively, 'ancient monuments protected by law' (Sw. lagskyddade fornminnen). The main idea behind these admonition signs was undoubtedly that they should have a deterrent effect. The attitude reflected in the early sign-posts is clearly an authoritarian and monologic one where the heritage management solely refers to legal arguments of protection in the communicative relationship

to the public. There are clear parallels between these sign-posts and the different kinds of road signs that became more and more common in the traffic environment at the same time.

It is, however, obvious that during the 1920s there was still no general policy – even if this was under development – concerning how the information in connection to pre-historic monuments and sites should be handled. In any case, the actual signs go hand in hand with the appearance of the more officially organised care of ancient monuments and their surroundings during the 1920s. Thus, already from the beginning the idea of signs (and later on information-boards) seems to have developed in parallel to – and in intimate connection with – the appearance of the official care; that is praxis developed by which signs and information-boards came to constitute a 'natural' part of the care of ancient monuments and sites.

From the early 1930s the Swedish Tourist Association (Sw. Svenska Turistföreningen, STF) started to place information-boards in connection to ancient monuments. At the same time, in the mid-1930s, the National Heritage Board investigated the possibilities to place sign-posts in connection to major roads; these sign-posts would be equipped with the text 'Notable ancient monument', and would direct car-travellers to the sites.

This idea was encouraged by higher instances and during the early 1940s (1942) the National Heritage Board undertook inquiries into the provinces that, in the first hand, should be provided with the new sign-posts, namely, Bohuslän, Södermanland and Skåne. However, this project was realised only in Bohuslän.

In the case of Bohuslän, 48 monuments received the new sign-posts in 1942, and these were also complemented by the traveller's guide 'Notable ancient monuments in Bohuslän' (Sw. Märkliga fornlämningar i Bohuslän). This booklet was published in 1945, and it was based in its whole on the 48 monuments that had received the sign-posts. Thus, in the case of Bohuslän it was not until the beginning of the 1940s that the triangular signs in cast-iron – and at some places the Tourist Association's information-boards – were accompanied by sign-posts placed at the roadside.

This official outward-oriented policy – expressed in the erection of different signs and sign-posts from the mid-1920s – is a consequence of the ideas presented and effectuated by the director-general of the National Heritage Board, Sigurd Curman. During the period 1920-40 Curman's policy transformed the National Heritage Board from a, in general terms, self-absorbed activity to a modern

**Figure 2** The second generation. The Swedish Tourist Association's information-board (no. 2269/59) at Tarsleds church-ruin, Västergötland.  
Photo: Håkan Karlsson





civil service department directed towards, and well aware of, the surrounding society. It became a department based on a central leadership and a regional organisation.

In practice this transformation meant, among other things, that the care of prehistoric monuments and sites began developing in a more comprehensive and serious manner in the 1920s. The ultimate reason behind this development – and thus the reason underlying both Curman's policies and the erection of signs and sign-posts – can on a general level be sought in the socio-political context. It was a context in which the idea of adult education – as a consequence of the progress and success of the Swedish Social Democratic Party – received a more profound political scope. Not least the law concerning a two-week holiday (for everyone), which was presented in 1938, led to a situation where more people – not just the wealthy classes – could travel around to see the landscape.

> sco Exercise

#### **sco The second generation: adult education and tourism (1950-70)**

Because of the steady progress of the welfare-state – expressed in, among other things, the law of three-week holiday in 1951, the law of four-week holiday in 1963, higher salaries for workers, and the growth of motoring – there was an increasing need for more signs and sign-posts to control the growing streams of visitors approaching the ancient monuments. It is, however, interesting to note that, during the 1950s and 1960s, the initiative and command of the erection of signs and sign-posts partly shifted from the National Heritage Board to the Tourist Association. During the 1950s and 1960s (1951-70, and partly in cooperation with the National Heritage Board) the Association's road-division placed new sign-posts at the roadsides.

#### > **Animation**

At the same time the sign-post was also accompanied by the information-board – containing informative texts and not just an admonishing one – that was placed adjacent to monuments or sites. All in all, the Association placed



c. 800 sign-posts and information-boards all over Sweden. The National Heritage Board was not totally inactive during the period, since it placed c. 200 information-boards in different parts of Sweden. It is obvious that the spread of these later information-boards was dependent upon the interest on a county-level, since there is huge variation among the number of boards placed in the different counties (Register över äldre RAÄ-skyltar, Tulin). It can also be noted that the spread of the Tourist Association's sign-posts and information-boards, and the National Heritage Board's information-boards, was very limited in Bohuslän. The reason for this is probably that Bohuslän was the only province to receive the sign-post in the 1940s and that these still fulfilled their purpose; in other words there was no need for more sign-posts or information-boards in Bohuslän.

In general it can be said that the texts on information-boards erected by the Tourist Association and the National Heritage Board during the 1950s and 1960s followed a pedagogical path where the earlier authoritarian tone is abandoned on behalf of softer educational approach. Despite this, there is no question about that it is the representatives of the heritage management who acts like experts that transmits facts to a passive receiver. This situation, as we shall see, continued and strengthened also in the decades to come. During the period 1950-70 the National Heritage Board did also in parallel produce different versions of admonition signs that were placed adjacent to threatened monuments and sites. Due to the quick infrastructural developments that took place in Sweden during the 1960s, the Tourist Association and the National Heritage Board realised that they could no longer be responsible for the sign-posts placed at the roadsides. Therefore, in September 1968 the National Heritage Board, the Tourist Association, the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Forest Enterprise met and a working-party was created. The aim of the working-party was to should elaborate a plan of the prehistoric monuments and sites in each county that would be

**Figure 3** The third generation. Information-board from the 1970s at a stone-cist in Lommelanda parish, Bohuslän. Photo: Håkan Karlsson



integrated into an overall national erecting of sign-posts. It was also decided that the National Road Safety Office should be responsible for the sign-posts and that these should have a standardised design that contained the cross of St. Hans. These new sign-posts began to be produced during the spring of 1971.

During this period we can therefore see how the erection of sign-posts and information-boards becomes fully integrated into the socio-political context and its well-functioning modern administration. There are comprehensive plans for the geographical placement of the sign-posts, and their standardised design. This is at the same time as the responsibility for them is clearly defined, etc., that is, the sign-posts are here interwoven in the activities of a Social Democratic 'modern' welfare-state in full bloom.

> sco Exercise

**sco The third generation: Introduction**

While the sign-posts were standardised from the early 1970s, there were in parallel profound changes during the 1970s and 1980s regarding the appearance, design and content, as well as the overall number, of the information-boards placed in connection to monuments and sites. In the early 1970s the National Heritage Board once again – and in a grandiose way – entered the arena of information-boards. Around 1970 the Heritage Board presented a register of c. 1300 monuments and sites that should receive new information-boards. This register was a result of the earlier mentioned cooperation, and in this case the main actors were the National Heritage Board, the Tourist Association and the Road Safety Office. The responsibility for the erection and care of the information-boards was from 1972 placed in the hands of the National Heritage Board and its division for the care of ancient monuments and sites (Sw. Fornvårdsavdelning). This was at the same time as the Tourist Association wound up its activities concerning information-boards at prehistoric monuments and sites. The National Heritage Board decided to produce a type of information-board that was patterned after the information-boards that the Tourist Association, as well as the Heritage Board, had produced during the 1950s and 1960s, and in this way the 'classic' blue information-board was born.

**sco The third generation:  
the creation of information-boards**

The creation of information-boards at the Heritage Board level was a matter of a highly centralised production that aimed at a standardised national design for the information-boards and their content.

> **Animation**

This does not mean that the division at the Heritage Board wrote all texts to the information-boards, but rather, that a proposal for the text-content was obtained at the county level, and that this information was edited and produced in the form of texts for individually (text) designed information-boards; that is, the heritage managers on the regional level – who wanted information-boards – sent texts to the Heritage Board's division for production of the boards. Anyhow, it seems as if there was a wish to orientate the content of the texts on the information-boards in a positivist direction; that is, the texts were based upon the holy trinity (chronology, hard facts, and possible finds) and the communicative relationship between the experts and the public was – as before – a monologic and authoritarian one where the former upheld the interpretative supremacy on behalf of the latter. In comparison with the earlier generation of texts the gap is widened as a consequence of the scientific and positivistic direction reflected in the texts. It seems almost as if it is the short text in the museum exhibitions of the time that have been moved into the landscape.

The site/monument and the information-board constitutes a show-case in the landscape in front of which the public shall be enlightened. The unequal relationship between the two groups is also strengthened as a consequence of the anonymity of the experts – it is obvious that it is the true knowledge that speaks through the texts. In one sense it is the modern society's believe in rationality and authority that are reflected in these information-boards.

**sco The third generation:  
quantification and mass-production (1970-90)**

The division at the Heritage Board did not solely produce information-boards, but also different versions of admonition signs that were placed adjacent to threatened monuments and sites. In the mid-1970s – largely because the proposal for the text-content of boards that were intended for local placement, ran short – the division started to produce information-boards with thematic and much standardised texts. These information-boards were grounded in the principle that the content of the texts (and thus also the information-boards) should be standardised for use at specific types of monuments and sites – for instance, cairns and megaliths – in different parts of the country.

> **Animation**

Concerning the socio-political context of these information-boards, it can be concluded that during the 1970s these boards was primarily erected in cooperation with

Figure 4 The fourth generation. Information-board presenting popular legends at Dårskilds högar, Bohuslän. Photo: Håkan Karlsson



the Swedish Labour Market Board (Sw. Arbetsmarknadsstyrelsen, AMS). This cooperation – where unemployed, convicts, conscientious objectors, etc. were used as a work force for the clearing and care of monuments and sites, as well as the erection of information-boards all over the country – was undoubtedly an economically profitable one for the Heritage Board.

In this context it is, however, very interesting to note that it was the Labour Market Board that demanded that information-boards should be erected at the cleared monuments and sites if the cooperation with the Heritage Board should continue. Thus, it can be argued that indirectly it was the Labour Market Board that stood behind the comprehensive concentration on information-boards during the 1970s, and not any form of thought-out public strategy from the Heritage Board. The actual cooperation – and thus also the concentration on information-boards – was heavily influenced (with an ironical twist one can even say ‘damaged’) by the time of prosperity during the 1980s. In short, there were no masses of unemployed that could be ordered out to clear and care for prehistoric monuments and sites. Well up till the mid-1980s, the editing and production of the information-boards – both individual as well as standardised thematic boards – took place at the Heritage Board and its division for the care of ancient monuments and sites. From the mid-1980s and onwards, however, there was a centralisation of this responsibility to the county level. As a direct consequence, the Heritage Board division for the care of ancient monuments came to an end in the early 1990s after the erection of c. 1000 of the planned c. 1300 information-boards.

This development can probably be viewed because of the fact that, in the mid 1970s – in line with Curman’s ‘old’ ideas of a central leadership with a regional organisation – the direct application of the laws governing the activities of heritage management was decentralised to the level of the county administrative board and the new county museums. The policy underlying this structural change is in turn intimately connected with the ideas concerning a decentralised exercise of authority and adult education, which is the primary way of the Social Democrats to transform the political landscape.

From the mid-1970s and onwards, however, these changes created possibilities for the county museums – established from the mid-1970s – to show themselves useful, necessary and indispensable. One of the main methods to show this – and used by most of these museums – was to flood the landscape with information-boards in connection to prehistoric monuments and sites. In the background of

this flooding one can also sense a growing concurrence among the county museums – and on a general level also among the counties – about the growing masses of motoring tourists both from Sweden and abroad, a phenomenon created by the welfare-development following the Second World War.

#### **sco The fourth generation: regional flexibility and individuality (1990-)**

Thus, from the mid-1980s – when the centralised dominance of the Heritage Board division for the care of ancient monuments ceased – it was the responsibility of the county administrative boards and the county museums to decide on the design and content of the information-boards. This has led to a situation where these boards and their textual content vary greatly among the counties.

##### **> Animation**

There is no longer any centralised control or any wish to standardise the boards on a national level; instead the (county) differences among the information-boards are often used as a conscious profile. It should, however, be noted that the sign-posts erected at the roadsides (containing the cross of St. Hans) as a result of the centralised responsibility of the National Road Administration in the early 1970s, are still standardised.

Thus, the regional and local management of the heritage is still carried out within the framework of a central leadership where the National Heritage Board has the final responsibility, although today this leadership is – at least partly and in most aspects – found on a regional level. The central leadership, as noted above, no longer handles the design and content of the information-boards. The underlying political theme can still be said to be decentralised authority and adult education. It is, however, obvious that the county administrative boards – within the framework of the political climate of the 1990s and 2000s – are beginning to find a more individual role in this structure in a different way than before. Today, as a consequence of the 1989 law concerning prehistoric monuments and sites, it is more often the case that whole prehistoric milieus, containing different sorts of monuments, receive information-boards. Often one can therefore find a number of information-boards, for instance a number of thematic boards at a grave-field. In the background there still seems to be – parallel to the educational aspect – a striving to create attractive milieus for the growing streams of motoring tourists. Not least is this because the discussions concerning cultural-tourism have received higher priority on the agenda of the county administrations.

### sco The fourth generation: information-boards today

Today, there are information-boards produced that contain texts that are more imaginative and not so 'dry' and crammed with hard facts as before. There are still no clear openings towards alternative interpretations and/or broader ways of looking at specific monument/sites, but there are some attempts in this direction.

#### > Animation

These information-boards are erected at a time when the cultural heritage and the cultural heritage managers are taking on new roles in Sweden (as well as in a number of European contexts) since the heritage management sector – towards the background of righteous political claims and political policy documents – are vitalised in a number of ways. For instance, neither the heritage management sector nor the cultural heritage is, as before, expected to fulfil their duty within the limited framework of a process of nationalistic identification were the protection of a canonised – and pinned down - cultural heritage is the only central task.

There are cases in which popular legends and the recent history of the monument or site are referred to in the texts of the information boards. This is something that the earlier generations of information-boards – besides the facts concerning the year for a possible excavation – neglected. It is also obvious that the style of the language is not so 'scientific' as before, and that the form of authoritarian decrees is breaking up, parallel to the fact that the information-boards are starting to contain texts that are more uncertain in tone. In some cases there are also a subjective approach in interpretations and choice of texts through the fact that some information-boards are signed, (i.e. which persons that have been responsible for the texts).

One consequence of the ongoing changes are a number of projects and investigations that highlight the direction towards completely new approaches towards the cultural heritage, its use and its relationship to the public, as well as a new dialogue-directed attitude towards the surrounding society. In short, these changes focus the fact that the cultural heritage should not solely be protected and preserved, but rather that it should also be used by the public in such a way that the public participates in this process and that the cultural heritage thus contributes to democratic processes and a social sustainable development.

Thus, the public's commitment and engagement in and for the cultural heritage are essential to both the conservation

and the use of it. These changed attitudes tend to solve a central problem concerning the fact that until now the public have been excluded from the selection and creation of their own cultural heritage and thus also from the selection and creation of the society's collective memories. The processes of selection and creation have solely been in the hands of the expertise of the heritage management.

Despite these positive changes and developments the situation is far from unproblematic when implement these ideas in practice within different parts of the heritage management sector. This since traditional standpoints and ways of working (for instance in milieus with a traditional view on cultural heritage) are challenged by new ideas and demands and this process of change is not a simple one. However, despite these positive developments it is still the 'experts' that are addressing the 'amateurs' and the latter are anonymous, even if the tone in the texts is more open and more uncertain than before.

#### > sco Exercise

### Conclusion: From monologue to dialogue beyond the method of information-boards

In the above we have, from a Swedish perspective, focused on the history of the antiquarian information-boards and how they have developed into an unquestionable and axiomatic methodology when it comes to the mediation of information to the public at prehistoric monuments and sites. It is obvious that the content of the information boards' texts is influenced by the socio-political context and that there are changes in the content of the information-boards as well as in the communicative relationship between the heritage management and the public over time (i.e. a communicative relationship that stretches from a point of departure in prohibition and control, over public education, and scientific authority, towards attempts of dialogue and flexibility). However, on a general level the problem with the information-boards and their texts is that this methodology contradicts all forms of dialogue and openness – we seldom know who is addressed via the texts – since the method in itself is closed in a structure that requires an active sender and a passive receiver.

#### > Animation

In this structure the communicative relationship between heritage managers and the public necessarily has the form of a one-sided monologue – a monologue that creates a relationship in which a group of active senders (heritage managers) mediates their knowledge to the passive receivers (the public).

It can be argued that the actual methodology is constructed upon an authoritarian epistemological view where there exist, among other things, clear dichotomies between 'experts' and 'amateurs', 'subject' and 'object', 'interpreter' and 'interpreted', 'science' and 'society', and not least between 'past' and 'present'.

However, the question is whether this methodology can be changed if the underlying epistemological view is not changed in parallel, and the question is whether a change of the latter will not lead to an automatic change of the former. Perhaps the information-board is an antiquated method, a method that ought to be abandoned since the theoretical development has shown its obvious shortages? Regardless of whether this is the case; it is obvious that this method ought to be combined with other methods that are more sufficient for the contemporary reasonings within archaeology/heritage management. In short, if we strive for a dialogue with the public, the information-board and its text is probably not the most powerful method. It can be stressed that the texts on the information-boards – as all texts – are an open and living document that can be interpreted in various ways since they are dependent upon the reader and his or her pre-understanding, but this is not enough. It is definitely not enough if the ambition is to transform the communicative relationship between archaeology/heritage management and the public from monologue to dialogue – if the ambition is that a lone voice shall be compensated by a multiplicity of voices with different pronunciations.

#### **sco Conclusion: two crucial questions – first question**

Some investigations concerning the public at prehistoric sites have shown that the visitors instead of meeting information-boards wants to meet guides in an open dialogue. This suggests that the communicative relationship in the future should be anchored in an open dialogue and not solely in the information-boards and their one-sided and monologic texts. This raises two crucial questions:

##### > **Animation**

- 1 What is meant by dialogue?
- 2 How shall this dialogue be anchored in the practice of the heritage management's communicative relationship to the public?

Concerning the first question it is obvious that the concept of dialogue is highlighted in a number of heritage management contexts but that the concept – at the same time – has not been enough problemised. In this context it is therefore worthwhile to lift forward the Russian language-

and cultural theorist Mikhail Bachtin (1895-1975) who in a profound manner has problemised the concept of dialogue. In Bachtin's reasonings the dialogue is not viewed as a neutral exchange of ideas or as small-talk, rather it is the cornerstone for human development and a creative understanding of contexts. The condition for this positive process is a dialogue where one in the meeting of texts and other voices are continually forced to test one's own version or present one's own standpoint in a context. Central in this form of dialogue is the respect for the words of the other and a wish to listen to and to understand the point of departure of the other, to use the words of the other as means for one's own thoughts without losing the respect for one's own words. This means that what is searched for in this form of dialogue is neither consensus nor a bridging of eventual opposing ideas, rather the objective is to articulate differences and the wish to live with contradictions. In opposition to other definitions of dialogue that often focus on common value, symmetry, harmony and consensus Bachtin stresses the vague, the heterogeneous, the many-sided, the ambiguity, as well as resistance and tensions. It is also through this exchange of thoughts that the truth is constituted, a truth that continually needs to be constituted through dialogue.

Towards this reasonings the view – often seen in the context of cultural heritage management – of dialogue as a striving for consensus and bridging of opposing ideas can be criticised. The antithesis of dialogue is monologue and Bachtin stresses the negative consequences of the monologue where the many-sided becomes one-sided and where the open exchange of ideas becomes closed and when secure answers substitute the search for, and understanding of, contradictions. Here monologue is presenting itself as an authoritarian expression that does not leave any room for doubts or contradicting ideas and that needs a continually ongoing approval.

In this context he is also stressing the ethical responsibility that rests on persons that – as a consequence of their status or position – are viewed as advocates of the authoritarian word, a responsibility that must show itself in a wish to listen and take into account the feelings and ideas of the other. The parallel to the communicative relationship between the heritage management and the public is obvious. If trying to change the future relationship from monologue to dialogue it is important that the dialogue really becomes open and living. Thus, it is not enough talking about monologue or striving for consensus and the bridging of opposing ideas since dialogue also includes the

acceptance of the vague, the heterogeneous, the many-sided, the ambiguity, as well as resistance and tensions.

### sco Conclusion: two crucial questions – second question

#### > Animation

1 What is meant by dialogue?

2 How shall this dialogue be anchored in the practice of the heritage management's communicative relationship to the public?

The question is also how this dialogue can be anchored in the practice of the heritage management's communicative relationship to the public? It is obvious that the information-boards with their monologic and authoritarian texts cannot function as the main communicative method in connection to prehistoric sites and monuments. With this it is not said that the method should be totally abandoned but rather that it needs to be complemented with other activities that – in practice – have the possibility to carry out a dialogue with the public.

There are a number of paths that could be trodden trying to create an open and living dialogue. Put the elements below in the right order.

First of all, there is a need for a comprehensive analyse of who that visits prehistoric sites and monuments.

As stressed above we really don't know who are addressed via the texts on the information-boards.

Secondly, it is possible to open up these places for alternative opinions, and for instance, letting groups from the Local Heritage Movement (Sv. Hembygdsrörelsen), and other interest-groups, act in connection to the prehistoric remains.

This, for instance, through erecting information-boards (still monologic though) that stresses different interpretations of the site and its monuments, and that can focus on other things than the official archaeological viewpoints.

Thirdly, if the open and living dialogue shall have the possibility to develop it is necessary that it is prioritised. For instance, one approach can be to prioritise the guide-function at a number of prehistoric sites and monuments. This at the same time as these (archaeologically educated) guides ought to have a roll where they do not – as is the case with contemporary guides – have functions as an authoritarian expert, rather their roll ought to be more as coaches – coaches that contributes to the visitor's reflections and critical thinking.

Finally, the reasonings concerning guides can be further evolved within the framework of a structure where the open and living dialogue is permitted to be handled by the

Local Heritage Movement and other interest-groups.

In practice, it is, for instance, possible that Local Heritage Movement groups are engaged within the framework of a national guiding service where they are responsible for the guiding at sites and monuments within their geographical area and where they choose at which monuments and sites the public should be able to meet the guides and participate in an open and living dialogue. This form of guiding by Local Heritage Movement groups can also be paralleled by guiding from the official heritage management since this can lead to interesting meetings and discussions together with the public.

In general all these proposals are grounded in the idea of letting a number of interpretations and narrations be heard and that the public should have the possibility to participate in open and living discussions at prehistoric sites and monuments and thus also participate in the construction and use of the past and their heritage. It is thus time to move beyond the monologue of the information-boards and open the door for an equal communicative relationship.

#### > sco Exercise

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