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Abstract

Cultural heritage sites – love affair or a dull history.

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This thesis is about the use of cultural heritage sites. Within the area of Western Sweden there are about 85 000 known cultural heritage sites, with roughly 4000 of those located within the Gothenburg area. Some of these sites are well known tourist attractions, but most of the sites are fairly unknown, small sites known to archaeologists and particularly interested people. The focus in the thesis is set on this group of archaeological sites, within a local environment.

Two case studies in the area of Gothenburg are presented and questions to be raised are how these sites are being used by local people and who the users are. Intentions are to investigate what recourses and possibilities sites like this might offer to present society. The thesis raises the question of what knowledge means and is inspired by the philosophy of pragmatism, why theories of pragmatists such as John Dewey, Richard Rorty and others are presented and discussed. Methods used in the thesis are *action research* as well as different pedagogical approaches like *esthetical learning processes* and *outdoor environmental education*.

The two case studies have been conducted as projects involving the local communities with schools, associations and the public. The first case study was a site at the island of Styrösö, which is part of the archipelago south of the city of Gothenburg. The project *Stora Rös 2005* was cooperation between the Department of Archaeology and the art-teaching program (HDK) at the University of Gothenburg, thus it had an interdisciplinary approach. The aim of the project was to investigate the history of the Stora Rös site, how people on the island use the site today and finally to show the results of the research, including staging and interpreting the space. The second case study was in Bergsjön, an entirely different area in another part of the city. The archaeological site of choice in the study was a Stone Age chamber grave situated in a suburban area amongst high-rise houses. An archaeological excavation took place during one week in September 2006 around the chamber grave. The purpose of the excavation was to search for traces of how the site had been used since about 1930, when people first settled in the area. The project involved 150 students ages 7-12 from the nearby school, all of whom participated in the excavation.

Who actually visits and uses small cultural heritage sites is a rather unknown and poorly investigated subject. Through the case studies a varied kind of use that might be unknown to the authorities, was revealed. Different paths, roads and traces are used as a metaphor investigating in which way cultural heritage sites might offer a resource and access to present society. *The trace of experience* discusses relationships between popular culture and archaeology including Contemporary Archaeology. *The Healthy Path* looks into the coherence between cultural heritage and issues of health. *The path of the young children* presents some examples where kindergartens have been involved in matters of cultural heritage. *The school road* leads on to a historical background of archaeology as a subject within schools and how archaeology could be used in different ways in schools today.

An overall theme of the thesis is interpretation. The concept is given an explanation and is further on discussed related towards performances, staging and stories. A main issue is these discussions are panels in the landscape and how these are to be developed.

Key words: Pedagogical methods, pragmatism, contemporary archaeology, interpretation, cultural heritage management, science and art.