

The United Kingdom sometimes referred to as Britain has a long and rich history of human settlement. Traces of buildings, tools, and art can be found from periods going back many thousands of years: from the Stone Age, through the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, the time of the Roman colonization, the Middle Ages, up to the beginnings of the industrial age. Yet for most of the twentieth century, the science of archaeology—dedicated to uncovering and studying old cultural artifacts—was faced with serious problems and limitations in Britain. First, many valuable artifacts were lost to construction projects. The growth of Britain's population, especially from the 1950s on, spurred a lot of new construction in British cities, towns, and villages. While digging foundations for new buildings, the builders often uncovered archaeologically valuable sites. Usually, however, they proceeded with the construction and did not preserve the artifacts. Many archaeologically precious artifacts were therefore destroyed. Second, many archaeologists felt that the financial support for archaeological research was inadequate. For most of the twentieth century, archaeology was funded mostly through government funds and grants, which allowed archaeologists to investigate a handful of the most important sites but which left hundreds of other interesting projects without support. Furthermore, changing government priorities brought about periodic reductions in funding. Third, it was difficult to have a career in archaeology. Archaeology jobs were to be found at universities or with a few government agencies, but there were never many positions available. Many people who wanted to become archaeologists ended up pursuing other careers and contributing to archaeological research only as unpaid amateurs.

Now listen to part of a lecture on the topic you just read about. In 1990, new rules and guidelines were adopted in the United Kingdom that have changed the whole field of archaeology in that country. The new guidelines improved the situation in all three areas discussed in the passage. First, the new guidelines state that before any construction project can start, the construction site has to be examined by archaeologists to see whether the site is of archaeological interest or value. If the site is of archaeological interest, the next step is for the builders, archaeologists, and local government officials to get together and make a plan for preserving the archaeological artifacts, either by building around them, or by excavating and documenting them properly before the construction is allowed to proceed. Second, an important part of the new guidelines is a rule that any archaeological work done on the construction site will be paid for by the construction company, not by the government. The construction company has to pay for the initial examination of the site, and then for all the work carried out under the preservation plan. This is a whole new source of financial support. The funding from construction companies has allowed researchers to study a far greater range of archaeological sites than they could in the past. Last, the new guidelines provide a lot of paid work for archaeologists, work that didn't exist before. Expert archaeologists are now hired at all stages of the process—to examine the site for archaeological value, then to help draw up the preservation plan, to do the research in a professional scientific manner, and finally to process the data and write reports and articles. The increased job and career opportunities in archaeology have increased the number of professional archaeologists in Britain, which is now the highest it's ever been.

Summarize the points made in the lecture, being sure to explain how the new guidelines adopted in the United Kingdom helped to address the specific problems discussed in the reading passage.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The best way to travel is in a group led by a tour guide. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.