It is axiomatic of capitalist society that the concept of value must inevitably be reduced down to a single monetary index. In other words, we have come to expect that, in final analysis, economic value trumps all others. In the last couple of years we have seen this most clearly expressed in the government’s attitude to forestry. The historical reluctance of officialdom to recognise value of a more intangible kind also lies at the heart of the tension in cultural heritage management between the historic environment and the pressure placed on its guardians to exploit or ignore those assets in favour of economic priorities. Alia Wallace’s paper on Pompeii in this journal (p. 115) demonstrates the realities of what is – at best – a strained compromise between the demands of conservation and tourism. Elsewhere, heritage assets find themselves in the hands of organisations for whom their care is at best a distraction from their primary responsibilities: such is the nature of the rich but problematic architectural heritage of the London Underground, and Kate Fulcher’s paper on the conservation of the network’s tiling unpacks the inherent tensions (p. 48).

Both these papers reinforce many of the points made at the Archaeology and Economic Development Conference (21-22 September 2012) – covered here in detail by two of our editors: Hana Koriech and Colin Sterling (p. 158). The conference review provides highly relevant global context for this issue’s forum. Joe Flatman and Dominic Per-
that the language of the NPPF crystallises in a permanent shift in attitudes that is able to withstand pressure from developers, legal challenges and inevitable clashes with the government’s localism agenda.

Mike’s interview is wide ranging and touches on a number of points that find resonance with other contributors to the journal. His longstanding involvement with Stonehenge – on the subject of which he provides many tantalizing new insights and promises of results and research to come – finds an echo in Antonio Silva’s paper on the megalithic landscapes of Portugal (p. 99). Combining astronomy, archaeology, folklore and phenomenological approaches to landscape, Silva’s paper is truly interdisciplinary and seeks to find ways to understand the mental world of people who have left no written records. In this, his approach takes particular inspiration from the post-processual movement in which Parker Pearson played a seminal role, and seeks to engage with what the latter describes as the hardest question to ever answer: ‘why?’ Similarly, research by Ester Oras seeks to understand the meanings that lay behind artefact deposition in the east Baltic iron-age. As her paper illustrates, the tools with which such an investigation is undertaken – in this case terminological – can be of crucial importance for making meaningful progress (p. 61).

Elsewhere, Pamela Lofthouse presents an article on the development of the quintessential symbol of British suburbanism: the humble semi (p. 83). Her paper makes an interesting companion to last issue’s article on the allotment garden, and serves as a reminder that our heritage is all around us, no matter how familiar. A range of other exhibition and conference reviews round out another substantial and diverse collection from the cutting edge of post-graduate archaeology.

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