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A BULLETIN OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

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Conservation bulletin

Presenting Historic Places

People have never been more interested in the past – but to capture their individual imaginations it has to be presented in new and varied ways.

The Great Tower at Ashby de la Zouch Castle as it might have looked in around 1480, drawn by Phil Kenning for English Heritage. Really engaging reconstructions, communicating buildings' uses as well as appearance, can be hugely powerful in capturing the imaginations of contemporary visitors.

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Editorial: Presenting Historic Places

People have always been fascinated by historic places – what changes is the way they want to relate to them.

In about 1130 the Lincoln cleric, Henry of Huntingdon, wrote an account of the marvels of England in which he described a place 'where stones of wonderful size have been erected after the manner of doorways, so that dorrway appeares to have ben raised upon doorway; and no one can conceive how such great stones have been so raised aloft, or why they were built there'. He called this place 'Stanenges'.

In 2007, an international competition gathered 100 million on-line votes for the 'seven new wonders of the world'. Almost 900 years after Henry of Huntingdon had written, the one UK site to reach the final stage was Stonehenge, still considered mesmerising because 'it is not clear who built the monument, nor for what purpose'. This symmetry across a millennium is an eloquent reminder that the business of visiting, marvelling at and enjoying historic places is not a new phenomenon. Our motives and motivations may have changed across the centuries, but there is something fundamental and perpetual in the curiosity that the structures of the past arouse in us.

How can we measure what it is that gives people joy or enlightenment or gentle pleasure?

From the guardians of medieval shrines to the housekeepers of 18th-century country houses and the ex-miners of modern industrial sites, there have always been people involved in the business of showing the buildings of the past. But the ways they have been shown, or 'presented' to visitors, have not stood still, underpinned by changing notions of the meaning of a place, and different views of what visitors want, or ought to take, from that experience.

This issue of *Conservation Bulletin* takes as its theme the ways in which we have recently been catering for this enduring human interest in historic places. It begins by considering the explosion in recent work on understanding visitors. How can we measure what it is in the nature of a place that gives people joy or enlightenment or gentle pleasure?

The second part of the issue looks at how our understanding of places and things has changed in recent years. If the 1970s and 1980s saw the public being introduced to the collapsing industrial infrastructure of the nation, redundant coal mines and cotton mills, what strange and surprising buildings will tomorrow's school-children be bussed off to see? Petrol stations and multi-storey car parks may well be among them.

A strong feature of recent presentation work has been a desire to trample down the boundary fence – to show places in their wider contexts. Places such as Framlingham and Helmsley castles and the abbeys at Battle and Rievaulx have each received this treatment at the hands of English Heritage. Important work has also been going in relation to the physical behaviour of historic materials – how can we keep historic interiors together and stave off the dismantling tendencies of those who would empty the books from the library into environmentally controlled show cases?

The fourth section brings together a wealth of case studies that illuminate changing practice in the present and recent past and cast an occasional torch beam into the future. Many things are unknown, but what seems inarguable is that, whatever is done to influence how it is experienced, explained and explored by our descendants, a thousand years hence some enduring urge will still lead them to beat a path to Stonehenge.

Anna Keay
Director of Properties Presentation

Conservation Bulletin is published three times a year by English Heritage and circulated free of charge to more than 15,000 conservation specialists, opinion-formers and decision-makers. Its purpose is to communicate new ideas and advice to everyone concerned with the understanding, management and public enjoyment of England's rich and diverse historic environment.

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New Understanding

Effective presentation of historic places depends on understanding not only the places themselves but what visitors want to hear about them.

Understanding our visitors: new ways of thinking

Emma Carver
Head of Interpretation, English Heritage

These are exciting times for visitor research, particularly relating to the success or otherwise of interpretation. It is no longer adequate just to know your visitor figures and their demographic profile. We need to understand why people have chosen to visit a particular site, what they know about it already, what they learnt on site and how we can improve what we offer to ensure that they come away from a visit refreshed and inspired. In some respects we are embarking on a huge sociological exercise that may at first lead to confusion as we try to analyse increasingly contrary answers. In others we are being given the opportunity to challenge our own perceptions as much as those of our visitors.

It is helpful to distinguish between the two main areas of work that are carried out under the heading of visitor research. Market research is mainly concerned with understanding how and why visitors decide to visit sites, and very broadly who they are. The methodologies we use provide a visitor profile based on geographic, demographic and economic indicators. This is then used to inform marketing and advertising campaigns designed to target particular sectors of the market to encourage them to visit a particular site. Market research tends to be based on quantitative and statistical analysis achieved through large samples. The National Trust's recent segmentation project (see Laura Irvine, pp 7–8) is a sophisticated version of this type of research.

Audience research, on the other hand, explores the response of a group of people to an experience. In our case this is about how people respond to various aspects of a visit to a site. This type of research tends to be qualitative, based on semi-structured interviews or focus groups, and may even involve accompanied visits or workshops. The results tend to be indicative rather than conclusive. The research English Heritage has recently carried out at Stonehenge and on our historic gardens used elements of both techniques with an emphasis on qualitative research.

In recent years the heritage sector has concentrated its research efforts in two particular areas. The advent of the family as a lucrative market segment in its own right has had a huge impact – most heritage and cultural attractions would now cite families as their dominant target audience. But the make-up of modern families is changing rapidly. We can no longer characterise a family as two adults with two children – today there are more lone parents, grandparents caring for grandchildren and a growing population of older parents. We also have the issue of perception. A recent survey by Tourism South East reported that 'families who had not visited a heritage attraction within the last three years believed that these types of places would be too boring for their children, wouldn't hold their interest or did not cater well for families with young children.' Clearly we still have our work cut out.

A second area of focus has been the Department for Culture Media and Sport's 'priority groups' – in our terms people who have been identified as non-heritage users but who may not be so out of choice. They are young people, people from black and ethnic minorities, people on low incomes and people with disabilities. English Heritage's efforts

Osborne House, Isle of Wight: most heritage and cultural attractions recognise families as their most important target audience.

Kenilworth Castle Warwickshire: engaging with people depends on finding out about the things that really interest them.

to improve access to its properties are driven by a government directive known as Public Service Agreement 3, the aim of which is to increase the take-up of cultural and sporting opportunities by adults and young people (over 16) from the priority groups listed above.

At one end of the spectrum this has led to the creation of outreach teams who have opened our eyes to the barriers that these groups face and passed on their ideas as to how we might overcome them. It has also provided the impetus for us to broaden our statistical range and to measure more carefully who is actually coming through the door. In wider terms the Disability Discrimination Act has had an impact on the heritage sector as a whole as we all try to deliver an equal experience for visitors, which in turn depends on our understanding of what that entails.

Market research companies today use increasingly sophisticated methods to understand visitor motivation and behaviour. The cultural sector as a whole is benefiting from these approaches, tailored to the idiosyncrasies of a particular attraction. For example, the research firm RGA recently used qualitative research methods at four of English Heritage's historic gardens to help us identify three types of visitor – *walkers*, *historians* and *horticulturalists*. These types are based on the behaviour of visitors on site and help to explain why people visit and what they hope to gain from their day. Interestingly, they also allow for change – a visitor may start as a walker but develop into an historian or horticulturalist as their interest develops.

A second example is the use of the visitor engagement map developed by market research company Morris Hargreaves McIntyre and used during the recent evaluation of interpretation at Brodsworth Hall. This entailed detailed observation of how people behaved at all points on a visitor route in order to assess the level of their engagement. A total of 540 visitors were assessed and a resulting map clearly distinguished the rooms that held visitor attention from those that did not. Both these examples illustrate the constructive ways in which we can explore how people experience a site – irrespective of their age and social background but focusing instead on their interests and propensity to be more interested.

None of this new work comes free. Both the National Trust and English Heritage have been fortunate in recent years to be able to commission the kind of high-quality research that for many years was simply beyond our financial reach. A greater focus on visitors within our organisations, and the experience to match within the consultancies with whom we work, means that we are beginning to build a reputable body of work to inform not just our own presentation projects but those of the wider sector. ■

Audience research at English Heritage's most visited site

Emma Carver
Head of Interpretation, English Heritage

With new efforts afoot to solve the visitor experience issues at Stonehenge, one piece of work that will not have been in vain is the audience research programme carried out by English Heritage, working in partnership with the National Trust, the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum and the Wiltshire Heritage Museum, in 2004/5. Our understanding of the huge range of visitors to the site will underpin the interpretation planning that will accompany the new scheme currently in development.

Stonehenge is by far the most visited property on the English Heritage estate, receiving more than 875,000 visitors in 2007. Despite the wealth of existing data available we felt that there were significant gaps to be addressed, not least in understanding the level of knowledge that visitors bring to Stonehenge prior to their visit as well as the views of current non-visitors. An extensive programme of audience research was devised and carried out between August 2004 and February 2005. The major part of the programme was conducted by MEW Research who developed the methodology and undertook the fieldwork and subsequent analysis.

The research was divided into three phases, each building upon knowledge acquired from the previous phase. Phase 1 was desk-based and designed to establish how much was already known about current and future visitors and identifying the gaps in our knowledge. Phase 2 addressed the views of current visitors, aiming to understand in particular the knowledge that they brought to the site (pre-visit) and their opinion of current information and interpretation provision. Semi-structured exit interviews were conducted on site with a random selection of 275 adult visitors (aged 16 or over). Quotas were placed upon the sample to ensure proportional representation of particular demographic groups.

We discovered that 96% of visitors claimed to have some pre-visit knowledge of Stonehenge. This was substantiated by three recurring but unprompted themes: the mystery/uncertainty of why the monument was built, the sheer age of the stones and the 'amazing' construction achievement. Interestingly, visitors did not make a clear distinction between 'theories' and 'mysteries' in their verbatim answers.

Respondents were also asked to rate 25 prompted themes and topics in terms of their level of interest. They were offered four choices – 'very interested', 'fairly interested', 'not interested' or, 'don't know'. Concentrating on the combination of 'very interested' and 'fairly interested' as an indicator of what excites visitors already, the most popular themes were:

- what the function of Stonehenge might have been (95% interested)
- the societies who built Stonehenge and neighbouring monuments – who were they and how did they live? (94% interested)
- engineering and construction of the stone circle and neighbouring monuments (92% interested)
- what else was happening in the area of Wessex during the time Stonehenge was built (91% interested)

We have interpreted these results as a direct steer that any new interpretation at Stonehenge must address the questions: 'what', 'who', 'how', 'when', and 'what is the context' of the monument? In

New audience research shows that visitors to Stonehenge want to be told much more about the story of the monument and the people who built it.

People visiting English Heritage's gardens don't want a lesson in general garden history, but they do want to know the story of this particular garden and its plants.

many ways these are the hardest to answer but they are clearly the questions we should tackle.

The aim of the final phase of research was to assess reaction to the proposed new visitor experience offered by the Stonehenge Project (as it was then formulated) amongst existing and potential visitor segments, including hard-to-reach groups. Each group was taken to Stonehenge and guided around the landscape on foot and by Land Rover by an English Heritage Stonehenge specialist. The aim was to establish and record attitude and perceptions as well as ideas about the provision and delivery of interpretation as part of the new visitor experience.

The research explored the fact that local visitors (within one hour's drive) are not well represented among current visitors to Stonehenge and established that the site is currently seen as a 'place for tourists' and therefore not welcoming to local people. We were able to discuss the barriers faced by the priority groups. Many of the issues raised relate to the social exclusion that all these groups face. The most common were lack of disposable income, lack of transport and perceived cultural barriers – the perception that 'Stonehenge is not for me' and the lack of awareness of the site as a potential visitor attraction. While interpretation can certainly help in changing these perceptions on site, these results indicate that our efforts must go towards encouraging these groups to the site in the first place.

There is one group of visitors we still do not understand very well: 60% of our visitors are from overseas. While much of the work was relevant to all our visitors regardless of their origin we recognise that in terms of interpretation this is an area for future work.

Visitors to historic gardens

Emma Carver
Head of Interpretation, English Heritage

With a number of major projects at important historic gardens in prospect, English Heritage recently recognised that it needed a better understanding of visitors to these sites. Working with our in-house Gardens and Landscapes team, we commissioned the market research company RGA Research to undertake a two-phases piece of work. Firstly, we asked them to find out from our own organisation (including our gardeners) and similar institutions what we already knew about the historic garden market. In the second phase, field work with visitors would be carried out at six sites – Audley End House (Essex), Belsay Hall (Northumberland), Down House (Kent), Eltham Palace (Greater London), Osborne House (Isle of Wight), Walmer Castle (Kent) and Wrest Park (Bedfordshire).

The field work consisted of quantitative research involving the completion of a questionnaire by 738 visitors and some qualitative work in which visitors were invited to attend focus groups and be the subject of in-depth interviews. The work carried out by RGA and results of earlier research, particularly that carried out by Joanne Connell at Stirling University (Connell 2004; 2005) allowed us to establish a number of key pointers, three of which are worth noting here.

When we asked our visitors whether they felt they had learned enough during their visit, only 63% said 'yes'. In many ways this is not surprising. Our gardens, like many around the country, are under-interpreted – more often than not they are left to interpret themselves on the grounds that the primary reason for visiting is to enjoy their tranquillity undisturbed. But here we have

confirmation that visitors would actually like to know more about what they are seeing, particularly in a garden with an historic context.

To follow on from this we invited our interviewees to rate the subject areas that most interested them. Encouragingly, their answers were almost exclusively related to the site they were visiting. Thus people wanted to know about the family who lived in the house, the plants in its garden and the history of this particular garden; they did not want a lesson in garden history or the history or science of plants.

Finally, we asked whether they held strong views about how interpretation should be delivered in a garden. While they could only comment on what they had seen on their travels rather than on specific proposals there was a general consensus that interpretation should be discreet and should not detract from the experience of being in the garden. Interestingly, plant labels are popular as are guided tours and garden events but, in sharp contrast to other historic sites, audio tours are not rated highly.

This research will underpin all new interpretation plans being produced for our historic gardens, which we hope will result in improvements to the visitor experience of this very popular sector of our estate. A fuller summary of the research will be published in 2009. ■

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An Explorer Family get involved at Stainsby Mill, a working water-powered flour mill on the Hardwick Hall Estate, Derbyshire.

Trusting in segmentation

Laura Irvine
Segmentation Project Manager, National Trust

With a remit of 'For ever, for everyone', why would it be necessary for the National Trust to think about segmentation – a process in which visitors are divided into different groups, or segments, on the basis of their shared interests and motivations? The answer is two-fold: to enable us to understand our visitors better and provide them with the experience they are looking for; and to create internal efficiencies through focusing our efforts to best effect.

Our visitors are far from an homogenous bunch. People have different motivations – from an intellectual quest, to a day out with friends and family – and different modes of behaviour – for example the difference between planning a visit, or just stumbling upon us. Because improving visitor experience was a fundamental premise of introducing segmentation to the National Trust, our approach had to be based on attributes that allowed us to differentiate those experiences. This led us to adopt what is known as 'attitudinal segmentation' in which different visitor types are clustered according to their attitude to taking a day out.

This segmentation makes little reference to age, socio-demographics, geography or income potential. Instead, it allows us to look at the level of interaction visitors want, the elements of a visit that are important to them, and how to present these in the most accessible way. We look beyond a typical National Trust property visit to gain insights into their lives, what they're thinking and feeling. We consider different types of families and how they interact with each other to derive shared satisfaction from their day out, and we recognise the varying degrees of learning and physical or social interaction that our adult visitors are seeking.

The Trust does not use its segmentation as a way of labelling people. Our membership database does not have segmentation categories appended to each individual because we know that people visit in different modes, influenced by their circumstances on a particular occasion – for example who they are with or how much time they have available.

Internally, the framework created by segmentation is pulling together thinking across departments. It is always good to focus on visitors when planning interpretation but a one-dimensional

THE NATIONAL TRUST'S VISITOR SEGMENTS

Out and About

Spontaneous people who prefer chance encounters to making firm plans and love to share their experiences with friends.

Young Experience Seekers

People who are open to challenge, in a physical or horizon-broadening sense; they make and take opportunities in their journey of personal discovery.

Curious Minds

Active thinkers, always questioning and making connections between the things they learn. They have a wide range of interests and take positive steps to create a continual flow of intellectual stimuli in their lives.

Live Life to the Full

Self-driven intellectuals, confident of their own preferences and opinions and highly independent in their planning and decision making; these people are always on the go.

Explorer Families

Families that actively learn together; the adults will get as much out of their experience as the children. To fit in the interests of all family members planning, sharing and negotiation are essential.

Kids First Families

Families who put the needs of the children first and look for a fun environment where children are stimulated and adults can relax; they're looking for a guaranteed good time.

Home and Family

Broad groups of friends and family who gather together for special occasions. They seek passive enjoyment of an experience to suit all tastes and ages.

view of 'the visitor' will produce bland, non-specific interpretation. Understanding the differences between visitor types enables us to create much more relevant, engaging interpretation. With the whole property team focusing on a specific type of visitor, the integration delivers an excellent, tailored visitor experience.

Of course this can involve hard choices. Focusing means being selective, but it has been shown that a well-designed interpretation scheme created for a specific audience is often also admired and appreciated by others; in contrast, interpretation created without a target in mind is in danger of missing the point for all audiences.

Segmentation is a long-term vision for the Trust. The great start is that, internally, people 'get it' – they recognise the character types and find it easy to work with them in mind. To date the changes range from complete reorganisation of teams and job roles to adapting wording on a brochure. Together they show how segmentation can aid planning and decision-making at any level.

Across the panoply of properties under Trust ownership, there is something for everyone; segmentation is enabling us to make the connections between real people and places they will enjoy simpler and more satisfying, meaning we can simultaneously achieve both depth and breadth of visitor engagement. ■

Understanding historic properties

David M Robinson

Head of Historic Properties Research, English Heritage

In the early 1980s, before we devolved into three-nation separatism, the Department of the Environment was responsible for close to 850 nationally important historic sites and ancient monuments. Nowadays we tend to refer to them as 'historic properties', with their management and presentation falling between Britain's three big government agencies: English Heritage has more than 400; Historic Scotland over 300; and Cadw almost 130. The significance of the individual numbers should not be underestimated, but the total figure is nothing short of remarkable. In point of fact, no other European nation has ever assembled such an extraordinary collection of archaeological sites and historic buildings in direct State care. And that is without approximately 400 houses, gardens, industrial sites and mills looked after by the National Trust and by the National Trust for Scotland. Arguably, a century and more of conservation and presentation at all of these properties, coupled with available public access to them, has played a fundamental role in today's very much wider interest in the British historic environment at large.

Although not all recent commentators would

agree, understanding (of one kind or another) has always been at the heart of the way we *conserve* these properties, and of the way we *present* them to visitors. High culture held sway under the Office (later Ministry) of Works in the early 20th century, a time which has since been criticised for the wholesale 'clearance' of medieval sites by an inspectorate of ancient monuments preoccupied with the architectural detail. Any form of controlled or research-driven archaeological excavation was a rarity. But it was also the time of enormous first-round conservation programmes, when the technical knowledge and understanding of architects and engineers played such a fundamental role. We can be thankful for the daring, and for the breathtaking ingenuity, which allowed for the saving of the north transept arcade at Furness Abbey in Lancashire, or that of the nave at Tintern Abbey in Wales, and again of the great motte and its shell keep at Clifford's Tower in York. More recently, both technical and historical understanding have been at the centre of what the National Trust describes as its largest-ever conservation programme, namely that at Ightham Mote, a late-medieval moated house in Kent. The same can be said of Cadw's work in the 1990s at the Elizabethan house of Plas Mawr in Conwy.

In the decades after 1960, archaeological method began to add considerably to what had hitherto been a largely architectural understanding of the monuments in State care. The best of the work was of considerable research interest, as demonstrated in important publications on Barnard Castle (Durham), Barton-on-Humber church (North Lincolnshire), Castle Acre (Norfolk), Ludgershall Castle (Wiltshire), Portchester Castle (Hampshire), and Jedburgh Abbey (Borders). And there is more to come. On the other hand, the worst of the period has left us with a body of poorly digested information and a still embarrassingly large backlog of unpublished material.

During the 1990s Cadw undertook a major programme of conservation on the Elizabethan town house of Plas Mawr in Conwy. Both the conservation and subsequent presentation were well informed by thorough research and understanding.

In the closing years of the 20th century, and on into the new millennium, architectural history appears to have come to the fore once again, though now with newer approaches and more holistic perspectives than those employed by the Office of Works a hundred years before. One might cite Peter Fergusson's fresh interpretations of architectural meaning at the Cistercian abbey of Rievaulx (North Yorkshire), or the new in-depth study of Chepstow Castle (Monmouthshire), led by Rick Turner, which does much to break down the traditional narrative of an exclusively military function found in almost all earlier studies of this 'fortress'. Then there is Simon Thurley's masterful account of Hampton Court Palace, which takes as its starting point the argument that such great buildings can only really be understood when set in the political and social contexts of their time; and who could disagree with this?

Nowhere has discussion of future research directions for our historic properties been more hotly debated than in the area of medieval castle studies. Exclusively military interpretations of these monuments have now all but gone away on the wind, to be supplemented (if not sometimes replaced) with wider considerations of the society which spawned them, the political and natural landscapes in which they stood, and the symbolism embodied in both their architecture and in their accompanying parkland and wider estates. Interestingly, similar approaches had been adopted by prehistorians, looking at very much older monuments (without the benefit of documentation), at least twenty years before. And in the future we can surely expect monasticism to be subjected to an equally revisionist research agenda.

As things stand, the responsibility for research and understanding rests in different areas of our various organisations, and of course in Wales and Scotland it is still supplemented by the two surviving Royal Commissions. In English Heritage, the coordination of properties research now rests with a team of historians in the Properties Presentation Department. We use 'historian' in its fullest sense, not just to refer to those whose skills rest with documentary history, but also to individuals with backgrounds in archaeology and architectural history. In the foreseeable future, we

intend to conduct all properties research programmes in line with a research agenda recently endorsed by our Research Advisory Panel. In essence, this agenda seeks to build on established methodologies, but also calls for a fresh and stronger emphasis in two key directions: the one spatial, the other temporal. The spatial theme is concerned with drawing out the now established importance of landscape context, for all monument types. In the temporal theme the emphasis will be upon the longevity of monument histories, frequently beginning and ending beyond traditionally accepted boundaries. Stonehenge, for instance, has a cultural history extending well beyond prehistory; and investigations of monastic sites cannot end with the suppression of the 1530s. In all cases, social, political and economic contexts must be considered to enrich the otherwise 'bare ruin'd choirs'.

As one concerned primarily with architectural history these days, I have certain intellectual reservations about going too far: buildings are buildings, after all, and we do need to understand them as structures in order to look after them properly. But it is the societies that they represent, from peasant to seignior, which give us our most memorable stories.

Slavery connections and new perspectives: English Heritage properties

Miranda Kaufman
Christ Church
Oxford University

'Leaving this room, we arrive in the colonial suite, inlaid entirely with rarest marble and raw silk wall coverings. At today's prices, this room would cost over £40M to decorate. And how did Sir Henry earn this sort of money? Slavery.
So if you like this room, if you even for a fleeting instant thought 'Ooh, looks nice', then you like slavery. You racist! '
'Audio guide to "Historic Hibsworth Hall"' audio-guide parody, *That Mitchell and Webb Sound*, (broadcast on BBC Radio 4 21/7/07, 18.30).

Inspired by the bicentenary of the Parliamentary abolition of the British slave trade, English Heritage recently commissioned a survey to identify links between 33 of its properties which were been built or occupied in the main era of English slave trading (*c* 1640–1840) and slavery or abolition. The intention was to establish what form any such links took and to add this to the bank of historical research on which future site interpretation can be based. Of the 33 properties surveyed, 26 were found to have some sort of link to the history of slavery and abolition.

The kinds of connections uncovered were much more diverse than the stereotype of a wealthy slave trader or colonial plantation owner building himself a country house on the profits of exploitation. In fact none of the properties were directly built from the proceeds of slavery in this

Challenging orthodoxies: Framlingham Castle, Suffolk, and its surrounding landscape at first evoke themes of medieval warfare and high culture. But the surviving poor house within reminds us of social perspectives on historic properties, all too easily overlooked in the past.

Lord Mansfield, who built much of Kenwood House, presided over the *Somersett* legal case of 1772, and the *Zong* case of 1783 – both important milestones on the road to the abolition of slavery.

way. Peter Thellusson (1737–97) who bought the South Yorkshire estate of Brodsworth in 1790 is an interesting case in point. Though he did not build a new house with his riches, his career encapsulates three ways in which a property could financially benefit from slavery: trade with the West Indies, serving the banking needs of planters and ownership of colonial properties. Estates could also benefit from slavery-derived wealth through their masters' marriages to an heiress or their holding official colonial posts. Thus, Godfrey Webster of Battle Abbey in Sussex married the Jamaican sugar plantation heiress Elizabeth Vassall in 1786, and Richard Aldworth Nevile, who inherited Audley End in Essex in 1797, had been appointed Provost-Marshal of Jamaica in 1762 – a lucrative post which is thought to have yielded £120,000.

As the exhibition 'Slavery and Justice: the Legacies of Dido Belle and Lord Mansfield' last year at Kenwood showed, places can be linked to the history of slavery in more positive and perhaps surprising ways. Lord Mansfield, who built much of Kenwood House, presided over the *Somersett* legal case of 1772, and the *Zong* case of 1783 – both important milestones on the road to abolition. Robert Henley, Lord Northington of Northington Grange in Hampshire, declared in the 1762 case of *Shanley v. Harvey* that 'as soon as a man sets foot on English ground he is free . . . a negro may maintain an action against his master for ill-usage, and may have a Habeus Corpus if restrained of his liberty.' Charles James Fox, a key parliamentary advocate of abolition, died at Chiswick House in 1806. While the comfortable position of Lord Mansfield's black niece, Dido Elizabeth Belle, at Kenwood may have been highly unusual, other black people, such as James Chappell, a servant at Kirby Hall in the 1670s, lived in English Heritage properties within the household establishment.

These are some of the more prominent examples. Not all the links uncovered were this strong, but viewed together they create a tangled web of connections to the slavery-dependent Atlantic economy. The survey has shown that research into such traditionally neglected aspects of historic houses is likely to be fruitful, besides being fascinating and long overdue. It also serves as a reminder that while investigating the role of slavery in these high-status establishments reveals tales of exploitation, it also uncovers stories of affection and human sympathy. ■

Unlocking the potential of oral history

Virginia Arrowsmith
Curator (Collections Access), English Heritage

'I'm not sure that I can tell you very much . . . '. So begin many of the people who have recorded oral history interviews for English Heritage over the past 25 years. Such self-effacing introductions in fact belie the enormous potential of oral testimony to inform our understanding of historic buildings and collections.

In what is now a remarkable sound archive of nearly two hundred recordings are the recollections of a fascinating range of people who have lived in, worked on, owned or managed the historic sites now in the care of English Heritage. The accounts provide exciting new perspectives on the past, enabling us to establish a deeper contextual understanding of our properties and collections.

Oral histories offer not only beautifully detailed insights into the ways in which buildings and landscapes have been used and altered in living memory, but offer engaging human perspectives on them as homes, workplaces and leisure spaces. Recollections of past lifestyles and routines provide a richness of personal detail and emotional depth rarely matched in the documentary record. Written archive sources provide only glimpses of the lives of those who in fact played vital roles in the daily management, maintenance and presentation of historic buildings during the 19th and 20th centuries; as servants, tenants, craftsmen and tradesmen as well as visitors and guests.

Louie Walton, housemaid at Brodsworth Hall 1936–8, recalling her experiences in service for the oral history programme. ©Tony Walton

The interactive relationship between historic buildings and their local communities is also only hinted at in documentary sources. Oral accounts, by contrast, reveal an ingrained sense of place, a connection borne out of the intimate interactions of people with the environments around them and an irrefutable sense of shared 'ownership'. This level of familiarity also underpins one of the great strengths of oral testimony: its potential to inform us of the intangible and the apparently insignificant. Small details too mundane for the documentary or photographic record are uniquely recounted in the oral record, and provide essential 'clues' in piecing together the bigger picture.

For this reason, oral histories can frequently provide a wealth of information on historic interiors, with their complex chronologies and inevitable idiosyncrasies. Oral accounts of particular decorative schemes and room layouts, as well as uses of furniture and equipment, have been enormously valuable in informing new display and interpretation schemes at sites including Dover Castle, the Royal Observer Corps bunker in York, Brodsworth Hall and Prudhoe Castle. Oral history testimony is also now included as standard in the English Heritage guidebooks series.

Oral histories often generate correspondingly rich archives. Family photographs, diaries and letters all complement the verbal accounts into which they are woven and enable us to piece together the jigsaw of past use and appearance of historic sites. Informal and amateur photographs offer fascinating visual insights into people's daily lives at work and at home. As a result, they provide us – often incidentally – with crucial new sources of datable evidence on historic interiors and architectural features, which can thereby directly inform our display policies.

Disregarded for many years as a dubious historical source, oral history is enjoying a new-found credence both as a method/means of engagement and as a valuable source of socio-historical information. Its potential to inform our presentation of historic properties and collections is enormous, but (perhaps) most exciting of all is the opportunity it presents to recognise the contributions of the people whose lives are inextricably bound up with the histories of our sites.

The oral history archive, which includes a loan collection, is held at the English Heritage office in York. All enquiries should be addressed to virginia.arrowsmith@english-heritage.org.uk

Women at work in the Brodsworth Hall kitchen around 1910. English Heritage (courtesy of Jeanne Brewin)

Presenting England's maritime historic environment

Mark Dunkley
Maritime Archaeology Team, English Heritage

Maritime archaeology has long struggled to achieve recognition beyond headline-grabbing stories of shipwrecks and treasure. English Heritage's presentation of underwater heritage sites therefore aims to provide educational, outreach, visitor management and presentational benefits to both specific stakeholders and to the wider public. Our starting point is a belief that England's maritime and marine heritage should be available to everyone, not just those fortunate enough to be able to dive.

In 2002 the responsibilities of English Heritage were extended dramatically, to include archaeological sites of all types from the low-water-line out to the 12-mile limit of the UK Territorial Sea around England. Presentation of (usually submerged) maritime sites thus became an organisational responsibility and we were set the considerable challenge of helping people appreciate – and even gain access to – the marine historic environment.

Until recently, there was no national programme for providing interpretation panels or outreach resources in relation to maritime archaeology. Information boards had previously been installed for a handful of shipwreck sites designated under the Protection of Wrecks Act at places such as Ramsgate, Salcombe and Hastings, but most of these are now outdated and in a poor state of repair. English Heritage has therefore undertaken an audit to identify designated wreck

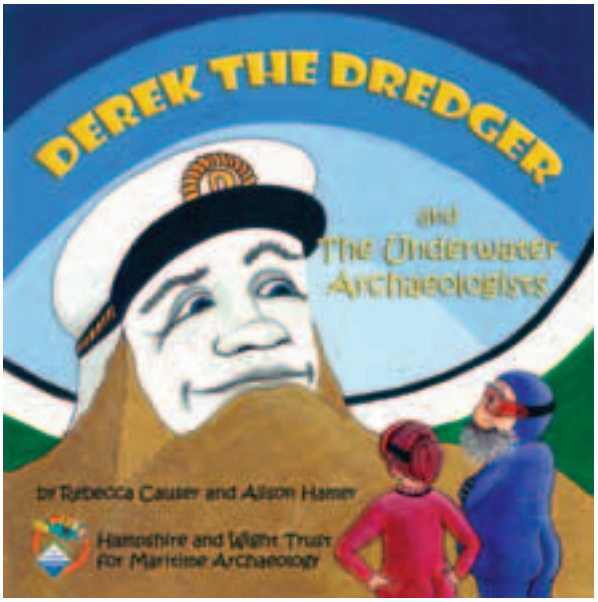
sites where new interpretation panels would have the biggest impact on coastal users, as a result of which a programme to determine priorities will begin later this year.

Local authorities and other organisations have, with our advice, also provided information and interpretation for intertidal designated wreck sites, such as the beached collier at Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, and the wreck of the *Amsterdam*, a Dutch East Indiaman beached near Hastings, East Sussex, in 1749.

Sometimes the nearby presence of a staffed historic building has provided a welcome opportunity for fuller interpretation of a maritime site. At Yarmouth Castle, on the Isle of Wight, English Heritage has included displays about the adjacent 16th-century 'Yarmouth Roads Wreck' in a new interpretation scheme. Opportunities exist for similar displays at Deal Castle in Kent, overlooking the treacherous Goodwin Sands on which five designated wreck sites are located, and at Garrison Walls on the Isles of Scilly where the historic property again overlooks many wreck sites, four of which are designated.

However, the offshore location of most maritime sites means that there will never be more than limited scope for their local interpretation. We are therefore starting to use online interactive-mapping to provide wider access to maritime archaeology, accompanied by downloadable site reports and 3D visualisations of both wrecks and submerged archaeological landscapes. Virtual access to such sites provides not only research and educational opportunities but also helps owners and managers to develop their own conservation and interpretation strategies.

Panoramic interpretation of the wreck sites of Yarmouth Castle, overlooking the Solent. Nigel Corrie © English Heritage



Heritage learning: presenting maritime archaeology to younger children through literacy.
© The Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology

English Heritage has also been able to support the publication of a range of leaflets, booklets and monographs designed to make maritime archaeology even more accessible. One recent publication, *Derek the Dredger,* describes the relationship between an offshore industry and underwater heritage. The book, which supports the National Curriculum at Key Stage 1, was funded through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) and may be the first in a series aimed at younger readers.

Real educational benefits can be realised by introducing maritime archaeology in such terms. With our support and that of the ALSF, the Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology (www.hwtma.org.uk) have recently developed a cross-curricular schools outreach programme for Key Stages 2 and 3, complete with teaching resource boxes and associated classroom materials. It is hoped that such initiatives will inspire the next generation of maritime archaeologists! ■

Visit **www.english-heritage.org.uk/maritime** *for our on-line resources;*
for more information about the ALSF visit:
www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/aggregates/index.htm

Putting cars in context: presenting the heritage of the motor age

John Minnis
Senior Architectural Investigator, English Heritage

English Heritage is currently engaged in a major national research programme looking at the influence of the motor car on England's buildings over the last 120 years. Very few historic buildings designed for the motor car are open to the public at present, and the most common form in which visitors currently come across them is in the re-creation of rural garages in museums – providing a popular setting for the display of historic cars, formerly shown devoid of any wider context. The re-creation frequently takes the form of a selection of period accessories – petrol pumps, oil dispensers, enamelled signs for motoring products and tools with a rudimentary garage backdrop.

At the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu, however, a complete garage has been recreated. The Beaulieu example is notable in that most of its artefacts came from a single garage, William Tucker & Son, West End Garage, Wedmore, Somerset. However, no attempt was made to achieve a precise re-creation of the original interior of that garage. The building that houses the objects is entirely generic, although typical of 1930s garages. Another example of a garage based on a single source is the Webber's garage at the Milestones Museum, Basingstoke, Hampshire, purportedly an exact replica.

In most other cases, however, the exhibits that form the 'historic garage' are assembled from a number of sources. Frequently, there is no indication of the original location of the items. There is a substantial collector's market for automobilia: petrol pumps and iron signs are often uprooted from their original position and sold within that market. This raises some interesting questions as to the validity of the objects concerned once this happens. To what extent is the significance of the artefacts compromised by their removal from their original location? Does an exhibit such as a garage interior that fails to reproduce its original layout when moved to a museum location lose much of its value as evidence?

It can be argued that the items concerned are seldom unique to a single location. They are standard mass-produced proprietary products that could be found in garages throughout Great Britain. However, any industrial building loses much of its significance when its machinery is stripped out. The number of garages retaining methods of petrol dispensing and tools and equipment from more than 50 years ago is now extremely small and where such fittings exist *in situ*, every attempt should be made to retain them.

One place where this has been done is the Colyford Filling Station in east Devon. Here a picturesque filling station of 1928, replete with half-timbered gable, has kept its five Avery Hardoll pumps installed in the 1950s. It has been extended in matching style to form a filling station museum that includes many designs of inter-war pumps and other exhibits, including a re-creation of the interior of a country garage. Another is Wells' Garage, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, built in 1925, which is a remarkable survival with its pre-war interior almost intact.

With the much more complete understanding of such places which the English Heritage research project will produce, we will be in a much better position to identify where the best examples of historic garages survive, and to provoke discussion about their preservation and presentation to the public. The result will surely be a surge in the informative presentation of these products of the greatest agency of change affecting the lives of ordinary people in the last century: the motor car.

Wells' Garage, Hitchin, has a genuine 'time-warp' quality with much pre-war machinery and equipment retained. Power for the machinery and lighting was supplied by a Petter oil engine, still *in situ* and in working order, together with some of its associated line-shafting. Alun Bull © English Heritage

Presenting the medieval castle: problems and possibilities

Robert Liddiard
University of East Anglia

Castles are some of the most well-known and evocative symbols of the Middle Ages to have come down to us. They are familiar to all those who have an interest in the past, their history is often vibrant and action-packed, yet their interpretation and presentation to the public is far from straightforward.

The problem of presentation is particularly acute at present because, over a period of several years, scholars from a variety of backgrounds have questioned some of the fundamental assumptions about medieval castles with which we are all familiar. The most prominent part of this 'new thinking' is the idea that castles were not necessarily provisioned with battlements, portcullises, arrowloops and so on for military purposes, but as part of a noble style of building that reflected the aristocratic rank of the owner. The great castles of the realm should not be thought of as part of a strategic network of military fortresses but, rather, country houses in all but name.

It could be thought that questioning the military role of the castle is ultimately disappointing from a presentation point of view – the promise of battering rams and boiling oil is arguably what entices visitors through the gate – but the new thinking on castles presents many potential opportunities and challenges.

The remains of great halls, accommodation blocks, sleeping quarters and so on that can be seen at castle sites reflect the ordering of medieval society and offer considerable scope for the investigation of social relations and attitudes to lordly authority. Castles are not just about soldiery, but as great houses have wider stories to tell, be it from the point of view of the female servant who worked in the kitchen to the peasant who paid his dues at the castle gate. What went on beyond the castle gate is of importance too. Castles were rarely isolated features in their landscapes and were often associated with wider schemes of 'design', where gardens, parks and pools of water not only sustained a wide range of foodstuffs such as deer and wildfowl, but also enhanced the visual setting of the castle buildings. Relating this wider context to the general public is the challenge for the future.

English Heritage Properties Presentation has already made great strides forward. Most visitors gain information about castles from on-site presentation and the re-launched 'Red Guide' guidebook series (25 titles to date) has been commissioned with a full awareness of recent academic thinking. It should be remembered, however, that those castles with substantial masonry and deserving of such a guide are very much in the minority and so a programme to upgrade interpretation boards at those lesser sites that do not have a permanent custodian is a very welcome move. The future promises much, too. The ongoing project on the interior of the great tower at Dover promises to break new ground in the presentation of such buildings and the work of placing monuments within their contemporary landscapes continues.

Castles are complex buildings that in many respects defy easy categorisation. That their complexity is now at the heart of discussions surrounding presentation to the public is not simply welcome, but also a fairer reflection of what these buildings meant to people at the time.

Carisbrooke Castle, Isle of Wight. Were such places military fortresses or country houses? © Robert Liddiard

Presenting the later history of medieval buildings

Andrew Hann
Senior Properties Historian, English Heritage

Presentation of classic medieval buildings – among them castles and monasteries – has traditionally focused almost exclusively on their medieval heyday, with little sense that they may have had a later history other than one of gradual decay. This neglect of post-medieval phases is somewhat surprising given that many of these sites played a prominent part in later events, and their current state often reflects the use to which they were put by succeeding generations. Many castles, for instance, owe their ruined state to deliberate slighting by the Parliamentarian army at the end of the Civil War, while many monastic sites can only be understood today with reference to the Reformation and its aftermath. In fact, most of these buildings continued in active use long after the Middle Ages. Some were converted into stately mansions, others became prisons, courthouses or poorhouses, many others were deliberately preserved as scenic ruins.

Every medieval building thus has a long and often chequered post-medieval history that needs to be told. As the great landscape historian W G Hoskins noted, each building, like the landscape in which it is set, is a repository of historical knowledge. From the moment of its construction it has been constantly changing, the activities of each succeeding generation etched into its surfaces, one on top of the other. What we see today can be likened to a document whose original text has been largely erased or overwritten, leaving only faint impressions still visible. Even if only to make sense of these surviving fragments the visitor must acquire some understanding of the subsequent history of the site.

This need to provide a proper spatial and chronological context lies at the heart of English Heritage's current research and interpretation philosophy. Such new approaches seek to look beyond the core period of site activity, picking out a series of key moments in a building's history. For instance, at Framlingham Castle in Suffolk the new exhibition focuses not only on the founding of the castle by Roger Bigod, and fluctuating fortunes of the family over the following centuries, but also its association with Mary Tudor, and its fascinating (and long) later history as poorhouse. Much has also been done to explore and explain the post-medieval fortifications at many castle sites such as Berwick-upon-Tweed and Tynemouth Castle in Northumberland. Current work at Dover emphasises its role as a fortress for more than a thousand years, from Henry II's Great Tower to the Secret Wartime Tunnels. At many monastic sites, too, efforts have been made to explore their later history as Tudor country house (Muchelney Abbey, Somerset and Netley Abbey, Hampshire) or picturesque eyecatcher in an eighteenth century landscaped park (Haughmond Abbey, Shropshire).

Berkhamstead Castle, Hertfordshire. Castles are tangible reminders of the medieval past and their presentation represents a considerable challenge.
© Robert Liddiard

Attempting this more holistic approach to site interpretation throws up a number of challenges, not least in confronting visitor expectations. The aim must always be to tell them something new and fascinating about the later history of the site, while also providing a full account of its medieval form and function. Getting the balance right can often be difficult. In some cases later uses of the site may have left little physical evidence on which to anchor the interpretation. Conversely, for some properties the sheer volume of material, both physical and archival, relating to post-medieval activities may be in danger of overwhelming the story about the original character and function of the site – which may be of equal or even greater significance. The challenge is to ensure that we strike the right balance in our interpretation of medieval sites in the future, and give their post-medieval history the prominence it properly deserves.

The abbot's hall and adjoining rooms at Haughmond Abbey, Shropshire, were converted into a private residence after the Dissolution by Sir Edward Littleton, and preserved as a picturesque ruin by later owners.
John Goodall © English Heritage

Recapturing contexts

Historic places are not just about bricks and mortar – equally important are the collections they house and the landscapes of which they are a part.

Conservation research: investing in the future of collections

David Thickett
Collections Conservation Team, English Heritage

Like many of those responsible for historic houses (and unlike most museums) English Heritage does not look after historic objects just because they are perceived to be unique or exceptional examples of their type. The collections relate to the places in our care and are, wherever possible, displayed within them.

As anyone who has lived or worked within a historic building knows, it is much more difficult to control the environment here than within a modern museum. The conditions are more aggressive and to have any chance of preventing damage to precious things, a sound and sophisticated understanding of what an object can withstand is essential. The usual standards that govern the environment in modern museum buildings (including those required for loans) are simply not appropriate or applicable in historic buildings. To address this English Heritage has developed a series of performance guidelines for collections in historic buildings with University College London, which will be published shortly.

To inform the future care of objects in historic houses, English Heritage is targeting research in the following areas:

SILVER: English Heritage cares for large collections of silver on open display, which have usually been treated with a protective synthetic lacquer. Understanding the lifespan of such lacquers is crucial as every time the objects are cleaned a small amount of the silver is removed and this can cause significant loss of fine detail over time. Laboratory experiments have determined the decay curve for the lacquer and measurements on the Portuguese silver centrepiece at Apsley House in London have shown that in its particular case the lacquer will need to be replaced every sixteen years.

TEXTILES: Textiles such as silk can deteriorate rapidly on open display. Doctoral research (with the Textile Conservation Centre) is investigating the relative effects of different environmental factors, such as light exposure, fluctuating relative humidity, high relative humidity and pollutant gases to tell us what causes most long-term damage. This will help improve our environments and extend the time that silk can be displayed.

IRON: We have significant holdings of archaeological iron that can disintegrate rapidly if exposed to ambient air. This happens because the minerals formed during burial react with moisture in the air and expand, cracking the iron apart. The expansion rate at different relative humidities has been measured and shows that by keeping the air dry, below 30 per cent relative humidity, will almost stop the reaction.

SMALL FINDS ON DISPLAY: English Heritage is returning hundreds of archaeological collections for display on their sites. This can place objects in aggressive environments and the first of a series of high-performance display cases to protect the vulnerable objects from these environments has been designed and extensively tested. We are also about to begin work with the universities of Warwick and Ghent on better coatings to protect archaeological metals.

CLIMATE CHANGE: The environments inside historic buildings will be heavily affected by changes to the outside environment – more so than within many modern buildings. We will be investigating the impact of various models for future climate change on indoor environments and collections housed in historic buildings. This research will begin in October 2008 in collaboration with the University of East Anglia, Historic Royal Palaces and the National Trust. Predictions indicate that these environments will become more conducive to mould growth and an increase in mould has been observed over the past three years.

Portuguese silver centrepiece displayed at the highly polluted Apsley House in London. Cleaning and lacquering of this object took almost two person years in 1995.

Environmental standards and the presentation of historic properties

May Cassar
Professor of Sustainable Heritage, University College London

Effective presentation of historic properties in which objects are shown *in situ* relies upon a combination of curatorial, interpretation and conservation expertise. Crucial to preventive conservation (pre-emptive measures undertaken to prevent damage to historic artefacts) is the application of environmental standards, specifying acceptable levels of light, moisture and other environmental factors that can cause objects to deteriorate. Specifying a narrow band of relative humidity and temperature standards is usually associated with the preventive care of museum and gallery collections and not historic collections in their original settings. What, then, is the role of environmental standards in presenting historic properties and what needs to change if they are to become a constructive part of the process of displaying historic properties to the public?

The individual character of historic properties can be very diverse. English Heritage's 'Secret Wartime Tunnels' at Dover Castle demonstrate how difficult it is to apply traditional museum environmental standards to historic properties. It is simply not reasonable or helpful to expect subterranean tunnels in chalk cliffs to demonstrate the same environmental characteristics as a museum gallery.

In an effort to address this issue, English Heritage launched a project to develop realistic environmental standards for its historic properties in 2004. Six high-level guiding principles were developed with the English Heritage project team:

- Involve all relevant disciplines in environmental decision-making
- Think about the relevance of the choice of standards to the circumstances
- Manage the environment as though collections and structures are equally important
- Work as much as possible with what the climate, the weather and the changing seasons have to offer
- Develop a positive attitude to renewable energy sources
- Remember that the whole heritage, both natural and cultural, needs stewardship.

From these principles, an objectives-based approach to environmental standards was developed, involving a novel methodology based on performance (asking what the role and importance is of the objects in question) instead of the blanket adoption of prescriptive standards. This methodology has four key stages:

- Definition of institutional objectives
- Statements of significance and function of the property
- Performance requirements including site description, presentation, interpretation, display, storage, conservation and care issues, comfort of occupants, solution concept and control strategies
- Achieving and maintaining an acceptable solution, including fabric and infrastructure improvements and maintenance. This methodology has been applied to six different case studies, demonstrating that objective-based standards can address the performance requirements of individual historic properties:
- Environmental management in a refurbishment project at Brodsworth Hall, South Yorkshire
- Developing procedures appropriate for a property used for private hire for events at Chiswick House, London
- Preventive and passive measures to moderate the effects of the environment on historically sensitive building fabric at the Chapel of St Leonard, Farleigh Hungerford Castle, Somerset
- Environmental control for a museum-type exhibition at Ranger's House, Blackheath
- Developing environmental controls for storing archaeological and historic material in a building not constructed for this purpose, the Royal Garrison Artillery Barracks, Dover Castle

Anti-aircraft room, Secret Wartime Tunnels, Dover Castle.

- Multidisciplinary decision-making for environmental control in the Secret Wartime Tunnels, Dover Castle.

The challenge has been to develop standards that are at once scientifically credible and responsive to the management needs of a property. This approach not only recognises the physical character and conservation requirements of the property, but it also responds to the presentation approach of any property – which might require very different environmental management responses. By dealing with both the scientific and cultural issues, environmental performance standards shed their purely technical appearance and become a tool that can be used by a range of disciplines engaged in the presentation of a property.

The new standards are due to be published in October 2008, when they will also be available from www.english-heritage.org.uk ■

Risk management

Amber Xavier-Rowe
Head of Collections Conservation, English Heritage

Like many individuals and institutions responsible for historic houses and buildings, English Heritage has in its care a huge range of portable objects. In our case this comprises more than 500,000 items across a bewildering range of object types, including archaeology, fine art, decorative art, natural history, ethnography and social history, books and archives. They are located at 137 sites ranging from large and small historic properties to purpose-built museums and stores. Many items are in secure storage, among them countless boxes of archaeological small finds, but a great deal – from Old Master paintings to domestic tea services – are shown on open display in historic rooms.

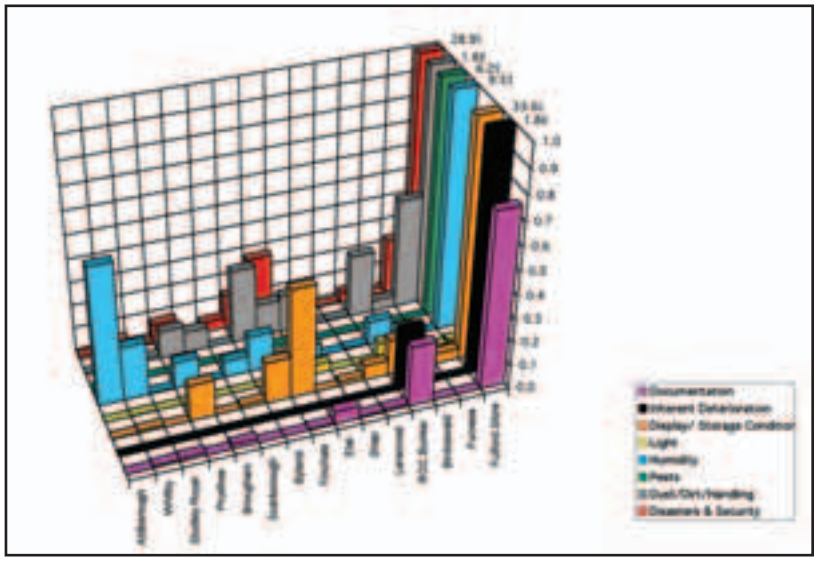
Maintaining, and indeed increasing, access to collections while ensuring they remain in an acceptable condition is a major challenge. The logistics of caring for a dispersed collection combined with an ambitious programme of improving the presentation of our properties places considerable pressure on limited resources. To help square this circle, the Collections Conservation team at English Heritage has developed a risk and condition audit that identifies which collections are most vulnerable to damage and the work that is needed to mitigate these risks. On a local, regional and national scale this allows for the prioritisation of time and funds across many sites.

The audit methodology is based on linking condition to cause of damage (Taylor 2005). It is designed in two parts: a condition survey and a risk assessment. In the condition survey recent damage is recorded for a randomly selected sample of objects. The cause of damage is then identified using a standard list of terms known as damage factors (see Table 1).

The risk assessment is structured around eight risk factors that replicate the damage factors used in the condition survey. It uses a set of questions to site staff to assess whether a particular collections-care system is in place. If a system has been implemented and maintained the potential of a risk factor causing damage is largely reduced. If a risk question receives a 'no' then a solution and cost is recorded.

In order to rank the risk factors across sites in a geographical area, a weighted score is multiplied by the percentage of the total collection at that location and by its significance. This has been undertaken for 15 of 41 sites in English Heritage's North Territory (see graph). Surprisingly, the risks identified at the object store at Fulford in York scored far higher than those to objects on display at some of the most remote sites because of the size of the collection and its national significance.

To date 10,113 items, representing all of the principal object types, have been examined and the audit will be completed by August 2008. A resulting set of site and territory reports will then be used to inform annual budget allocations, building maintenance priorities and collections conservation work programmes. In turn, a national overview report will highlight the long-term solutions and investment needed to ensure sustainable access to the collections.



Graph of risk and damage factors ranked for 15 sites in English Heritage's North Territory.

Risk/Damage Factors	Examples
Dust, Dirt and Handling	Dust on an object as a result of insufficient conservation housekeeping; physical damage resulting from inappropriate handling, such as chips, scratches or losses.
Light	Fading of dyes and paints, yellowing of supports, embrittlement.
Incorrect Humidity	Cracks, splits, distortion arising from low and fluctuating relative humidity (RH); corrosion, mould growth due to high RH
Pests	Damage and soiling by insect pests, birds, rodents and bats.
Display/Storage Conditions	Tarnishing of silver as a result of inappropriate display case materials; crushing caused by overcrowding in storage; Abrasion caused by an inappropriate support.
Documentation	Incomplete or missing documentation, no identifying number marked on an object. A lack of documentation for some objects, eg archaeology or natural history specimens can mean a loss of research value. This can be symptomatic of poor collection care and may result in further neglect.
Disasters	Fire, flood, theft or vandalism.
Inherent Deterioration.	Some materials deteriorate because of their composition rather than the conditions in which they are kept. Examples include photographs and plastic.

Table 1: Risk and damage factors.

Now that it has been developed the audit methodology has the potential for assessing risks to other large collections. For example, we have been trialling it on groups of objects for which conditional exemption from inheritance tax has either been received or is being applied for – a monitoring role that English Heritage carries out on behalf of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. Results indicate that the audit is flexible enough to work within the private domestic setting. It also encourages an efficient monitoring visit and provides objective evidence of the level of risks.

Only by assessing the risks to historic objects in historic settings in this intelligent way can we safeguard the most vulnerable and so ensure that, long into the future, the table can still be set for tea.

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Taking on the insect pests: preventing damage to objects on open display

Dee Lauder
Collections Conservation Team, English Heritage
David Pinniger MBE
Consultant entomologist

Historic houses and objects displayed within them are a paradise for insects. Old insect damage can often be seen in house timbers, carpets, books and clothing. More often than not it is still occurring to collections in these environments and this is likely to continue. With a changing climate, for instance, there has been a noticeable increase in clothes moths and the challenges of preventing damage to collections on open display will only become greater.

In recent years pest damage in English Heritage properties has been reduced to a very low level compared to the ravages wrought in the past. The preventive conservation programme called Integrated Pest Management (IPM) has been developed to cover all our properties housing collections. So far 62 sites including major houses, stores and small museums have an IPM

Chimney cleaning: high catches of clothes moths and larvae trapped in the fireplace of the Wellington Room at Walmer Castle, Kent, indicated a problem. The fire-place was cleaned with startling results and the pest numbers caught in the following years decreased dramatically.

programme in place. Key to effective IPM is good housekeeping, building maintenance that addresses chimney cleaning and damp ingress, pest identification and monitoring. Knowing your enemy is also crucial and the pest identification poster supported by English Heritage is a valuable tool for all staff and is also used by most museums and historic houses in the UK.

Our trained staff have recently started using a new English Heritage pest-monitoring and recording scheme. This enables us to pinpoint pest problems and take action before collections are damaged. The system is clear and simple to use and is now being adopted by other museums and heritage organisations. When infestations are discovered, non-chemical treatments are used such as freezing, heat and suffocation (low oxygen) methods.

In the future, accurate pest data will enable us to assess the effect of any environmental change and develop new ways to combat pests ensuring that collections can be safely displayed in our properties.

The ossuary, St Peter's Church, Barton: reuniting people and place

Kevin Booth
Senior Curator, English Heritage

Excavations at the wonderful Saxon church of St Peter, Barton upon Humber, between 1978 and 1984 recovered articulated skeletal remains from almost 3,000 individuals. The bones date from the late 10th to the mid-19th centuries, and are an internationally recognised resource for archaeological research. However, they are also the mortal remains of thousands of human beings, and addressing the question of what should be done with the collection raised fundamental questions about the relationship between people and place.

Working in line with established guidance for the treatment of human remains (English Heritage 2005), English Heritage sought to address the problem of how to combine sensitive treatment of the bones with the continued provision of research access to the collection. The agreed approach was to create a purpose-made ossuary, or bone depository, within the church itself, sensitively designed within the disused organ chamber. The scheme was realised in close consultation with the Church of England, and funded in partnership with the South Humber Bank Initiative, a regional regeneration project seeking to develop the tourist potential of North Lincolnshire.

Principles for the retention, research and display of human remains have been outlined in a number of professional and ethical guidelines. The creation of the ossuary at St Peter's brought a series of issues more directly to the public mind, challenging moral and religious sensitivities at the local level in a manner not so immediate when human remains are studied within a normal museum environment. With the return of the bones, and the associated publicity, came discussion on the ethical value of excavation and research. The expectation of many people that the bones would be reburied had to be treated carefully. There were also questions concerning access

St Peter's, Barton upon Humber. Projects focusing on burial archaeology were completed by local school children during a series of hands-on sessions lead by consultants VKP Heritage.

to people's ancestors, the display of human material and the future use of space within the ossuary.

It was recognised that the success of the ossuary depended not just on the completion of the physical space, but also required the informed consent and acceptance of the population of Barton. This has been achieved partially through a new exhibition (opened 2007), which uses selected skeletons to help explain the church, its population and its excavation. This in itself required some ethical consideration, for while the display of human remains is not uncommon and is broadly accepted, the exhibiting of skeletons in their local context, and especially within a church, is exceptional.

Beyond the exhibition, English Heritage sought to be open about the past and future treatment of the bones – to engage the community by demonstrating the potential of the assemblage and also to encourage a sense of respect and pride for the town's ancestors. A collections access programme, run by the curatorial, education and outreach teams, took burial archaeology into the local schools with 240 children discussing how they would wish to be buried and remembered. An open day was held at the church, bringing the community face to face with human remains, and a talk was given to the local Civic Society.

The culmination of the project was a requiem service held at St Peter's to mark the return of the dead. The service, specifically for the people of Barton, was conceived and planned by the Revd David Rowett, Priest in Charge. As he said in his sermon, the service 'was about keeping a promise. Not the promise which the archaeologists made thirty years back that our dead would return, but one made to each and every one of these people at their funeral service that they would rest in peace.'

The ossuary succeeds through offering first-rate storage and continued access to the bones. But more than this, re-uniting the deceased population with their church adds to the power of the building. It has generated within the local community a renewed sense of pride in the church and an understanding of the archaeological significance of their ancestors. In so doing it has offered the museum and archaeological professions a working example, a template, for the long-term deposition of human remains. ■

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Monuments and landscapes: making the links

Paul Barnwell

Kellogg College, Oxford University

Monuments do not simply appear in the landscape. Nor are they separate from it. They form part of it, make use of it, and have often shaped it. Those statements are as relevant to prehistoric stone circles as to 19th-century country houses. Despite their truth and simplicity, monuments have traditionally been presented in isolation, detached from the landscape.

In the public sector interpretation traditionally stopped at the modern site boundary, even if that was only created when the monument was taken into state care, and even if it divided the historic site. Few people looked at what lay even immediately on the other side of the Ministry of Works fence, or to the wider landscape beyond, save perhaps to note what it was that a castle defended. Fewer thought about the view towards the site, about how its original creators and early residents and visitors approached and perceived it, how it was seen from different points in the surrounding landscape.

This was encouraged by the fact that it was only the monuments themselves which were taken into care. The National Trust and private owners of country houses, who often manage land surrounding their monuments, sometimes took a wider view. Even then, though, the dominant paradigm saw monuments largely as trophies, standing out from the generality of the landscape, which was seldom seen as interesting or historically important. Abbeys, castles, country houses, stone circles were all isolated from their setting, presented as exemplars of monument types in the same way as butterflies were pinned to cards.

As appreciation of the significance of the wider historic environment has grown, greater attempts have been made to see monuments in their surroundings. It is also now better understood that many sites were built for multiple purposes, requiring a complex relationship with their setting. Many castles were lordly residences, with gardens, parkland for roe deer and hunting parks, as well as defensive structures; they were constructed to please the senses as well as to repel attackers. Monasteries provided seclusion for monks but also formed the centres of farming and industrial businesses that required easy transport and communications. Sites were chosen carefully, and the landscape altered to create pleasure

grounds or water supplies for industry. Centuries later, such manipulation of the land is still the framework for the countryside, often providing specialised habitats for flora and fauna.

Tracing the stories embedded in the landscape around monuments is part of unravelling the stories of the monuments themselves. While it seldom requires detailed archaeological recording, it needs an educated eye conditioned, for the historical period, by a deep appreciation of the culture of the times at which the monument was built and modified. Looking out from the monument, it may involve understanding the activities pursued by previous generations under the windows, and how our ancestors perceived and used natural features or the structures of yet earlier ages. Looking towards the monument can reveal how both the approach and the monument itself were constructed to create views to impress and draw on the visitor, and how the site may have been altered over the centuries to create an eye-catcher from new angles as the use of the surrounding landscape changed.

At a more mundane level the landscape contains evidence for the ways of life of those who were economically dependent upon the monument: the market place and town; the estate village, tenant farms and hunting or shooting grounds; industrial remains. All were interdependent visually, culturally, economically and socially, as they often still are today when the monument attracts visitors who bring money into the local economy.

Making the links between particular monuments and their landscapes is about finding the individual stories of places and communities. It can enrich the experience of visitors, enthusing them as they see sites and their setting through the eyes of cultures other than our own.

Making the links helps sustain the monument and the wider historic environment, as the presentation of new forms of understanding starts the 'heritage cycle', in which people value the local historic environment, leading to better care being taken of it and further enhancement of public enjoyment.

Making the links is also good for the environment and for the local economy as visitors are encouraged to explore the locality, to stay longer rather than to use fuel driving to another attraction, and to spend more of their money in nearby cafés, shops and markets. Making the links enables the historic environment to play a part in creating a more sustainable future.

Helmsley, North Yorkshire. Unusually, the town sits beside the castle rather than at its gate. The distinctive earthworks were at least partly designed to provide views into one of the hunting parks on the far side of the castle.

The Yorkshire Country House Partnership: 'Work & Play'

Christopher Ridgway, *Castle Howard*
Allen Warren, *University of York*

Founded in 1999, the Yorkshire Country House Partnership (YCHP) is a unique collaborative research venture between the University of York and ten of the great houses of Yorkshire. It has just completed a second large-scale project which came to fruition in a series of simultaneous, interlinked exhibitions in 2007.

'Work & Play' highlighted life on the Yorkshire country estate, and followed on from the success in 2004 of 'Maids & Mistresses', which focused on the role of women in Yorkshire country houses. Six houses participated in these displays (Brodsworth Hall, Burton Agnes, Burton Constable, Harewood House, Sledmere House, and Temple Newsam), offering an outdoor and an indoor focus on the topic, including a series of free guides, which incorporated an outdoors trail around the grounds and wider estate landscape.

The aim of these exhibitions, which received Heritage Lottery Funding support, was to convey the idea that the estate is a populated, working community structured around the big house. One of the clearest ways of understanding this social structure was to follow the outdoor trails, which led to an astonishing array of buildings in each locality. Stables, churches, war memorials, pig sties, ice houses, schools, cottages, orangeries, farms, police stations and pubs, all testified to this sense of small communities whose daily patterns of work, leisure, learning, faith, and discipline were manifested in these vernacular buildings, many of them of architectural distinction.

These exhibitions also challenged the idea of unchanging rural tranquillity: for example at Brodsworth and Temple Newsam extensive mining disfigured their landscapes while at the same time raising vital revenues for each estate. Such a juxtaposition of cows and collieries forced one to realise how, for some estates, industrial ventures existed alongside the traditional structure of agriculture. Indoors, at three of the houses there were displays of maps, paintings, photographs and archival material chronicling in more detail the lives of landowner and labourer alike, and recording the balance between a landscape that was ornamental and productive. An extra component at Brodsworth was an oral history programme, whereby the recollections of local people helped feed into the interpretation of the estate and its relation to neighbouring communities.

A gamekeeper on the Burton Constable estates, *c*1860 – one of the many figures who have come to light through detailed investigation of estate records and archives in the various houses in the Yorkshire Country Houses Partnership. Courtesy of the Burton Constable Foundation

Although the exhibitions and related programme of seminars finished at the end of 2007, further work continues with graduate students at the university engaged in research on particular estates. For the houses the project has also marked a step change in how they present themselves to their visitors. The house as architectural structure (and all that it holds inside in the way of collections and archives) is no longer seen in isolation from the surrounding landscape and local population. These entities are now understood to be deeply integrated, not only in the past, but also today, for these houses are still significant sources of employment and commercial activity.

The YCHP has just launched a five-year development plan outlining new areas of research; among these is the topic of 'War and the Country House' with exhibitions planned at the houses for 2012, and a PhD, part-funded by English Heritage and the Dept of History, University of York; other projects in various stages of development include a collaboration with the Centre for the Study of Historic Irish Houses and Estates at NUI Maynooth, on Anglo-Irish relations, the case of Yorkshire; and a project on country-house sculpture in collaboration with the Attingham Trust. The next biennial YCHP seminar is scheduled for early in 2009. For further details on any of these projects or on YCHP in general please consult www.ychp.org.uk, or contact Christopher Ridgway (cridgway@castlehoward.co.uk) or Allen Warren (ajw9@york.ac.uk), co-Chairs of YCHP.

Approaches: past, present, future

The ways we present historic places are changing fast – but with a single aim: to allow people to make better connections with their shared past.

Interpretation, entertainment, involvement: historic site presentation c 1983–2008

Charles Kightly
Historical and interiors consultant

Sites

In the early 1980s, the typical historic site was either a ruin surrounded by manicured lawns, with interpretation confined to the odd metal wall-label ('The Great Hall'): or a country house viewable only by guided tour, with the visitors reverently shuffling round the state-rooms. Ruin exteriors have perhaps changed least since then, though the lawns have usually lost their 'Keep off the Grass' signs. Very few are in themselves presented differently: for instance English Heritage's Wigmore Castle, Herefordshire, now refreshingly displayed as a tree-covered romantic ruin, a condition exceptional in England but almost the norm elsewhere in Europe.

Historic site interiors have seen far greater changes, particularly during the last ten years. Bare rooms with scraped walls are increasingly unacceptable, as (though still common, especially in privately owned sites) is furnishing with a few random time-blackened antiques. One of the most important realisations, indeed, is that historic furniture did not look old when its original owners knew it: so that to include battered antiques in allegedly recreated interiors is (at the least) misleading. Hence the widespread trend towards furnishing with as-new replicas.

In a few places, too, efforts have been made to dispel the 'dripping walls and flaming torches' view of historic interiors, by at least suggesting their original colourfulness and (comparative) comfort. A pioneer is Plas Mawr, Conwy (opened 1997), where Cadw made the brave and successful decision to recolour the extravagant plasterwork – over a protective shelter coat – and replicate some of the furnishing textiles. Where original wall-surfaces have been destroyed, complete interior decorative schemes have been recreated as new, including the '13th-century ashlaring' in Pembroke Castle gatehouse, the rooms of the 'Medieval Palace' at the Tower of London and the colour washing and wall hangings at multi-period Nantclwyd House, Ruthin.

Going further still, the re-creation (or at least evocation) of entire communities has also been a notable development of recent decades. Unlike pre-existing open-air museums featuring trans-planted original buildings (such as St Fagans,

A recreated room of c 1690 at Nantclwyd House, Ruthin, with replicated 'Kidderminster-stuff' wall-hangings, portraits and a re-coloured ceiling.

Avoncroft and the Weald and Downland) these Iron Age, Saxon, Viking and medieval 'settlements' have been new-built with varying degrees of accuracy. Among the more ambitious is the late-medieval Flemish fishing village of Walraversijde, near Ostend, largely constructed using original bricks from the site. This was a British-designed and partly British-built enterprise, like several other major historical site presentations in western Europe during the last quarter century.

Interpretation

Britain has also played a leading role in site interpretation. Wordy book-on-a-wall graphic panels, beloved by academics but often ignored by visitors, have progressively lost favour, particularly in countries – among them Wales and Belgium – where the text must be produced in more than one language. The detailed information they contain is now recognised as better presented in the high-quality illustrated guidebooks produced, for example, by Cadw and English Heritage. Instead, increasing use is being made of colour-coding, iconic images and (especially in Belgium, home of Tintin) cartoons.

The production of such panels has been made infinitely easier (and cheaper) by the same computer technology that also gave birth to that most striking recent development in site interpretation, the computer interactive. Varying in quality from the ingeniously excellent to the merely cosmetic, these interactives were until very recently regarded as indispensable to any modern presentation. Now their ubiquity is waning, due partly to maintenance problems and partly (with computer games in every child's pocket) to their loss of novelty value. Simpler and cheaper mechanical interactives ('lift the lid to see the rat'), however, remain popular.

Another new arrival, the audio tour, has developed from a simple cassette commentary to far more in-depth CD or down-loadable presentations, often spoken by characters from the past. Not always popular with older visitors, audio headsets and wands have now been joined by ambient sound, and the less intrusive push-button audioposts, pioneered for example by Cadw at Caerwent Roman Town and Blaenavon Ironworks.

The site as entertainment

Britain's leadership in site interpretation sprang in great measure from one phenomenally successful site: the Jorvik Viking Centre, which opened in 1984. It has since attracted 15 million visitors, and effectively founded the British heritage interpretation industry. Employing time-car rides and other fairground techniques to evoke the sights, sounds and (famously if questionably) smells of the past, Jorvik has been very widely imitated, sometimes by its original designers. Its descendants include overtly commercial British attractions (like 'The Canterbury Tales') and more serious interpretations like Ename Abbey in Belgium and English Heritage's Whitby Abbey.

Alongside many other all-singing, all-dancing technological features, most of these Jorvik-based sites people their presentations with dummies. But however expertly produced, a dummy is a dummy, and attempts to enliven figures by animatronic techniques have largely proved ineffectual, both because of their cost and their tendency to decline into farce.

Live interpreters

Many presenters have therefore chosen to bring their sites to life, at least periodically, by using real people. This was initially facilitated by the 're-enactment boom' that followed the foundation of the Sealed Knot in 1969–70, and has since diversified into re-enactments of almost every period from the Iron Age to the current flavour of the month, the Second World War. The use of re-enactors for 'living histories' – which may mean anything from a few ladies demonstrating weaving and crafts to a full-scale occupation of the site, with bangs and crashes – is currently very widespread, but may be declining. For though re-enactors are cheap, because they are volunteers doing it for fun, they tend for the same reason – rightly or wrongly – to have their own views about how things should be done.

Re-enactors (of the expert and meticulously clothed variety) at Oakwell Hall, West Yorkshire
© Gareth Parry

Sites which can afford them may therefore prefer to employ paid costumed interpreters who, like re-enactors, range from the expert and meticulously dressed – as for instance at Hampton Court – to the embarrassingly amateurish, attired in tinsel and mum's polyester curtains. Like the volunteer re-enactors, however, they still fulfil the vital role of person-to-person engagement with visitors.

Involvement

The principal aim of most recent developments in interpretation is not only to entertain but also to involve visitors, and make historic sites relevant to ordinary people ('hard-to-reach groups', to use current jargon, being an especially sought-after target). Increasingly, therefore, it is the servants rather than the masters, the kitchens rather than the state rooms, which are now being highlighted. Provided that historical integrity is never, ever, compromised by marketing, enhanced and broadened public interest in historic sites is surely an end worth pursuing.

Radical approaches of recent years, have they worked?

Anna Keay
Director of Properties Presentation, English Heritage

We at English Heritage, along with many others, have over the last decade or so striven to try new things, to be more imaginative and inventive in how we show historic sites. Two places where new approaches were tried in the 1990s were Wigmore Castle in Shropshire, where a medieval castle was deliberately consolidated in all its overgrown tumble-down glory, and Brodsworth Hall in South Yorkshire, where a stately Victorian house was not 'restored' to its hey-day splendour, but left in a faded and fallen state. Both inspire as concepts, but do they work as realities?

New visitor research at Brodsworth has posed the question directly of those who come. The results have shown that visitors are intrigued and fascinated by the presentational approach at the house, when they understand it, but that many of them wander through much of the house unaware of it, perhaps feeling that the housekeeping regime might be a little lax. Many visitors to Wigmore Castle are similarly perplexed, enjoying the natural beauty of the site but concerned that it seems to be neglected by its custodians. On my own first visit to Wigmore a new member of staff responsible for grounds maintenance intercepted me on the approach to explain that a catastrophe in maintenance had obviously occurred as the site was covered in brambles. Dismay turned to disbelief when I explained 'it's meant to look like that'.

These two examples are reminders of the pitfalls of 'high concept' approaches. They can work very well in abstract terms and be realised successfully, only to founder in the final analysis on the simple issue of their communication to visitors. For English Heritage the lessons from both Wigmore and Brodsworth are that a compelling presentational concept needs strong accompanying explanation to become more than just a bright idea.

English Heritage's decision to consolidate Wigmore Castle in all its overgrown tumble-down glory needs careful explanation if visitors are not to interpret it as careless neglect.

Costumed and live interpretation at Historic Royal Palaces

Chris Gidlow
Live Interpretation Manager, Historic Royal Palaces
David Souden
Head of Access and Learning, Historic Royal Palaces

In the properties in the care of Historic Royal Palaces, particularly Hampton Court Palace and the Tower of London, costumed live interpretation is integral to what we offer visitors – and now, what they expect. Palaces have always been places of spectacle, beauty, majesty and pageantry, and we are proud to continue that tradition. *Showmanship* is one of our underlying principles, alongside *guardianship*, *discovery* and *independence* of spirit.

Historic Royal Palaces has developed a range of standard interpretative activities including a daily programme of costumed interpretation with larger-scale special events for holidays and

The young Princess Elizabeth makes her way through the crowd of onlookers at the Tower of London. She has been imprisoned by her sister Queen Mary for being implicated in Protestant plots against the Catholic Queen. Visitor feedback confirms the effectiveness of this style of storytelling using costumed interpreters at the main sites of Historic Royal Palaces. © Historic Royal Palaces

anniversaries. This has become a major undertaking since its introduction in 1992 and is intended to attract visitors, give them an enjoyable experience and to present curators' research in engaging ways. It was also in its original conception to be a primary interpretative tool since historic spaces were presented with minimal use of text panels and other media. The sites would be 'brought to life' with real people, showing how the palaces were used and inhabited.

Our style of costumed interpretation has evolved to incorporate a mixture of methodologies, and includes living history and experimental archaeology through the costumed kitchen presenters at Hampton Court. We still want to present research in engaging ways, attract new visitors, encourage return visits, and give visitors enjoyable and entertaining experiences. Our ambitions now extend further. Costumed interpretation has the added advantage of providing visitors with a friendly and approachable point of contact, helping orientate visitors and control crowds, while offering a sociable and active complement to other interpretative media. This also addresses different learning styles. Visitors can explore the human stories within the palaces as we present multiple interpretations, meanings and motivations. Many costumed presenters also provide formal education sessions to school-age visitors and increase the value and attractiveness of a day out for children.

We are now in a position to build on our extensive experience of costumed interpretation whether in the first person – being in character – or the third person – guiding – and move into new territories. Instead of being in an essentially passive experience, visitors will now themselves take centre stage by constructing their own experience, making their own adventure, facilitated by live interpreters. This allows us to make best use of the interactive, flexible and inter-personal strengths of live interpretation.

The question is, does it all work? This is a costly exercise, in terms of people contracted, costumes, research and development. In-depth qualitative audience surveys undertaken in 2007 revealed that our visitors both enjoyed and learnt from live interpretation. Very many participated actively in it, valuing their learning experiences; others appreciated it as an engaging background to their visit. We have concluded that costumed interpretation and live events, when approached in systematic and rigorous ways, are integral to what we provide and offer benefits to all – as well as providing lessons from which others in the heritage world can learn.

Beyond the 'Ministry of Works' approach to site presentation

Jeremy Ashbee
Head Property Curator, English Heritage

Since the spring of 2007, English Heritage's Properties Presentation Department has contained a team of five Properties Curators. Central among their responsibilities is to advise on the philosophy of conservation of the properties. In this, they complement other existing teams, notably the Collections Curators, but since their remit includes ruins and field monuments (the overwhelming majority of English Heritage properties), their role has many more points in common with that of the 'guardianship inspectors', which was finally phased out in 2006. This places their work in a long and illustrious tradition and its literature is extensive, particularly from the early 20th century, and many of its tenets remain unchallenged today. It is now recognised that the long-established approach of 'conserve as found' actually encompassed some radical interventions which the inspectors deemed essential or invisible, but the principle of limiting physical intervention remains with us. However, other debates remain open, and the Properties Curators play an important role in taking them forward.

One of these concerns certain recurrent motifs in the presentation of ruined monuments. The 'traditional' approach, seen on a site such as Minster Lovell Hall in Oxfordshire or Castle Acre Priory in Norfolk, is characterised by mown grass, gravel paths, a discreet and small amount of signage (principally to identify buildings and give essential instructions), and a complete absence of vegetative cover on the masonry. This approach famously brings both advantages and disadvantages, and the arguments about them have run for years. Its principal benefits lie in the legibility of the historic fabric, with architectural details and masonry breaks visible (if not intelligible) to all; the relative ease of conservation (since vegetation would need to be removed before a wall might be inspected and conserved), and a more general perception that good order prevailed. The critics of this approach have made play mainly with aesthetic arguments – that the bare masonry of a ruin can appear ugly. Thus in 1921, H Avray Tipping could describe recent works to Farleigh Hungerford Castle as embodying 'the icy touch of the mechanistic age' (*Country Life*, 25 November 1921) or two decades later, James Lees-Milne called the Ministry of Works' conservation of Hailes Abbey 'the worst example I have yet seen of wanton sacrifice of aesthetic considerations to mere archaeological pedantry…' (National Trust, file 9907618). These writers were both criticising the technical details of the re-pointing, but were chiefly concerned at the loss of a softening cover of plants. But the argument against the clearance of cover might also appeal to historical precedent:

Minster Lovell Hall, Oxfordshire: the traditional way of presenting ruined sites to the public – neatly mown grass, minimal signage and a complete absence of vegetative cover on the masonry.

that the pre-conservation phase of a monument's life might have a cultural value of its own, representing the monument as it was when visited by Jane Austen, illustrated by Turner or Girtin, commemorated by Wordsworth, or even actually contrived by Capability Brown.

The debate is often finely balanced. The conservation of Wigmore Castle (see p 27), with full attention to ecology, minimal intervention to the fabric, and to the picturesque qualities of vegetation sounds appealing on paper, but the experience of visiting the site can be troubling – with little interpretation of the works which created the present site, it can look unkempt, and to a student of castles, its 'evidential value' is minimal.

Guiding principles

Bronwen Riley
Managing Editor: Guidebooks, English Heritage

Mobile phones, iPods, PDAs, computer interactives … how can the traditional guidebook compete with such an array of visually and aurally sophisticated gadgets? Where do guidebooks fit in and how have they adapted to keep up with the times in the past few years?

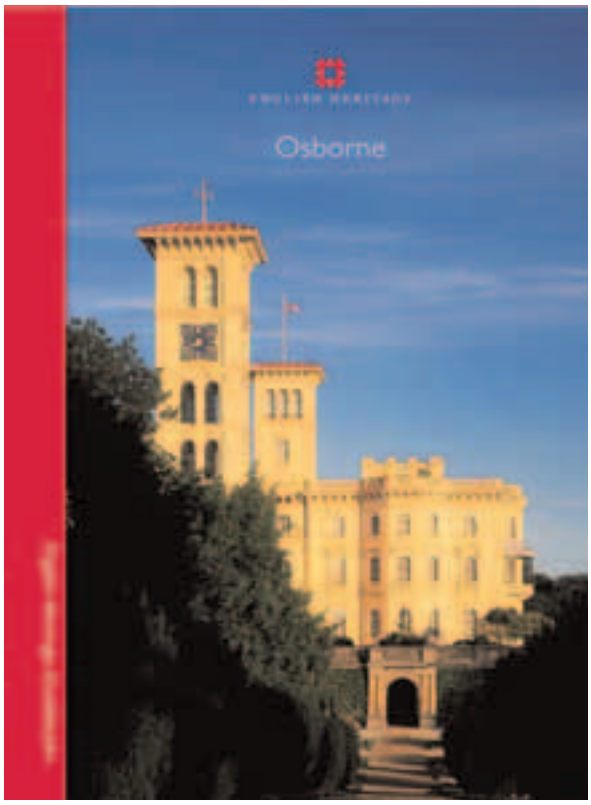
Opinions differ as to whether other means of interpretation will usurp the guidebook's role as an onsite guide. At Historic Scotland, Andrew Burnet, Publications and Information Manager, thinks that such a function at key sites may dwindle, thanks to all the other interpretative material on offer. At smaller sites, however, where there is not so much else available, the guidebook remains the key tool for onsite interpretation. At Cadw, National Trust and English Heritage, on the other hand, the latest formats all play up the guidebook's role as a key element in the tour of a site. Cadw makes its fold-out covers work as mini-guides, while the National Trust has introduced improved orientation drawings and mini-plans on spreads, similar to those used in the English Heritage Red Guides.

Where a range of interpretation is on offer, then the guidebook is perhaps under less pressure to be a 'one size fits all' and can be aimed at a particular market. Provided that it is still attractive as a souvenir of a visit, with excellent photography and illustrations and an appealing cover, then the content can be reasonably in-depth: it can be both guide and souvenir.

How has content changed and adapted? With a relatively generous budget and small number of sites, Cadw has been able to stick to its founding principle that the academic rigour and authority of the old Department of Work's blue guides should be maintained. But now there is pressure to have bi-lingual guidebooks, and to make the content more focused on people and more sensitive to the Welsh point of view. Historic Scotland is similarly compelled to produce guides in Gaelic, especially as the language has been accorded the same status as English. The Scottish National Trust already produces a separate Gaelic guide to Culloden. Guidebooks are caught in a web of political sensitivity – which strain of Gaelic should be used; is it discriminatory to produce a separate version in Gaelic or Welsh, which only a minority can read?

In contrast to Cadw, English Heritage at first went down a more populist route and stood accused of a morbid fixation on naughty monks and latrines. Re-launched in 2004 as the Red Guides, the guidebooks have an ambitious aim to be more academically rigorous yet still appeal to the average visitor and be attractive souvenirs.

Historic Royal Palaces had a makeover at roughly the same time (2005) but with a different outcome. Its new guides are more strongly influenced by magazines, with pull-quotes, a range of heads and sub-heads and busy layouts. The National Trust standard square-format guides have also recently undergone a radical re-think and design, with more pull-quotes and fluid layouts, more gobbets of information. While the focus has



Osborne – one of English Heritage's new Red Guides that attract modern audiences yet retain the academic rigour of the old 'blue guides'.

been on boiling down the information to fit key interpretative themes on self-contained spreads, there is also new emphasis on orientation.

Engagement is the buzz word at the Trust with the largest amount of investment in time and resources directed towards the website. While big scholarly books on aspects of the Trust's properties will continue to appear, the feeling is that some of the more scholarly content and catalogues, which previously appeared in large guidebook format, will increasingly migrate to the web.

Design is certainly seen as key and can play tricks on people's perceptions. The old blue guides certainly looked official and with few if any illustrations and sober layouts, they were, and sometimes still are considered, to be more worthy and academic than the attractively produced full-colour guides of today. Yet, if read dispassionately, not only are they visually dull but they are also often, quite frankly, badly written, and much less informative than many present-day guides.

What is refreshing is that guidebooks are still seen as a real bedrock of interpretation, despite the multiplicity of resources that are now available for introducing people to the sites in our care. New gadgets may come and go, technology becomes outdated quickly, but reassuringly the guidebook, although it may change in shape and form, remains a true constant in site interpretation across the board – at once the most informative and the most profitable interpretative tool on offer. ■

About the house: changing approaches to the Queen's House

Pieter van der Merwe
National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

In the Queen's House at Greenwich, the National Maritime recently bucked the national trend by abandoning historically re-presented interiors in favour of a more flexible approach.

After more than a century in school use, Inigo Jones's Queen's House was restored to its 1660s form and opened to the public as part of the National Maritime Museum in 1937. In 1990, after further renovations, the Museum re-presented the House with the upper floor partly refurnished, largely 'in reproduction'. The change unsurprisingly reaped specialist criticism of principle and practice, tinged with some distaste for popularisation of an architectural icon.

Widening the House's attraction was certainly the Museum's aim: Mrs Thatcher's budgetary axe had recently forced it to charge entrance fees, focus on 'customers' and thus in market practice (overtaken in 1997 by an equally *dirigiste* 'inclusivity' principle) expand its user constituency. The 'furnished-House' phase lasted for nearly ten years, proved popular and certainly increased visitor numbers, albeit modestly: even today, some return and complain at not finding it still in that state. Overall it became more generally comprehensible, its school-level educational appeal greatly increased, and it launched into continuing success as a venue for corporate and private hire. There were disadvantages, however, which became increasingly apparent a few years on.

'A frontispiece in the midst' (Inigo Jones): The Queen's House and flanking wings of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, seen from the Royal Observatory in Greenwich Park, with the Old Royal Naval College, the Thames and the Canary Wharf towers beyond.

The first was inflexibility, becoming stasis. Vibrant reproduction wall fabrics began to fade and, while they remained suitable background to 17th- and early 18th-century oil paintings, the Museum's supply of these – though large – did not allow much evident change. Works after about 1750 and showcases holding other objects (a feature until the 1980s) did not fit the furnished *c* 1670s look at all. Effective but 'authentic' artificial lighting, especially of pictures and in the winter months, also proved near impossible. By about 1996 the Museum realised that, though worthwhile, the experiment had become a presentational cul-de-sac. Resources had also shifted to the massive Heritage Lottery-funded redevelopment of the main Museum galleries (completed in 1999), with a new site needed to mount a 'Time' exhibition for the Millennium. This was the spur to end the House's furnished phase and think again. From December 1999 it held the year-long 'Story of Time' show, though not before infrastructure improvements had been carried out, including the ingenious insertion of a lift to meet disability access requirements.

Thereafter, it became clear that the House's best new role within the overall Museum strategy was to be the principal showcase for its fine art of all periods – primarily its 4,000 paintings – and for temporary art exhibitions. This required no physical changes: fixed 1990s reproduction elements like fire surrounds remain in place, for example, but lighting has been improved, with better interpretation of the House itself within the context of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site (inscribed by UNESCO in 1997). Wall colours are sympathetic but not 'authentic' and there is no period furnishing, original or in reproduction.

This has so far proved a sound and flexible arrangement, fitting well with both the Museum's ongoing Tudor and Stuart schools programme in the House – and its use for corporate and private hire. Since its re-launch in 2002 with a 16th-to-20th-century portrait exhibition ('A Sea of Faces'), the House has hosted both traditional shows and smaller events in the Museum's 'New Visions' commissioned contemporary art programme. The 2008 offering – particularly appropriate given that marine painting in England started when Charles II gave the van de Veldes a studio there – is the first major exhibition in twenty years of the Museum's Netherlandish paintings, entitled 'Turmoil and Tranquillity: the sea through the eyes of Flemish and Dutch masters, 1550–1700' (from 20 June).

The House and its role will undoubtedly continue to be a focus of debate and some change. During the London Olympics, it will (according to plans at time of writing) be centre-stage between the equestrian show-jumping arena on the Museum lawns and the cross-country course in Greenwich Park, to the south – a situation that clearly raises both issues and opportunities. By then, however, a proposed re-working of the Museum's relationship with the Park may also support re-presenting the House in a more south-facing way, as recent work by Gordon Higgott suggests was Jones's original intention. No-one, however, should doubt the Museum's understanding of the significance of his early masterpiece, or its commitment to the House's appropriate care and use. ■

AV in the interpretation of historic places

Dirk Bennett
Interpretation Manager, English Heritage

The use of audio-visual (AV) displays in interpreting historic buildings is on the rise. English Heritage's use of them in a series of recent representations highlights where such technology can work best.

In the world of historic buildings presentation 'AV' tends to be used as a short-hand term for any high-tech communication media directed at the senses of sight and hearing. It ranges from simple stills with voiceover to highly sophisticated animations and computer-generated imagery – and it grows ever more elaborate as the capabilities of the technology increase and its cost diminishes.

Computer-generated animations of King John's siege of Framlingham Castle in 1216 tell the story to an audience brought up in a multi-media age.

Life in a 19th-century country house: the cook and the first kitchen-maid preparing food in the kitchens – part of the new AV installations at Audley End House in Essex.

Creative approaches

English Heritage has implemented a variety of AVs over the past few years, among them the following:

Audley End – A series of short films installed in the rooms of the service wing, showing servants at work here during the 1880s. Projected directly onto the walls, the figures inhabit the spaces, and describe their duties and cares in service (5 minutes per segment, no seating, on site, transcripts available).

Battle Abbey – The events of the year 1066, culminating in the Battle of Hastings, dramatically retold through the voices of a 21st-century narrator and a contemporary witness of the events. The film includes animated sections of the Bayeux Tapestry, computer generated re-creations of the Battle of Hastings itself and footage of re-enactments (10 minutes, seating available in purpose-built theatre, includes subtitles).

Carisbrooke Castle – Jupiter, an animated donkey, guides the visitor through key episodes of the castle's history. Aimed at families on holiday, the film draws visitors into the wider history of the site through a friendly and familiar character. It includes animation, material shot on site, re-enactment footage, stills and material from image and videobanks (10 minutes, seating available in old guardhouse, includes subtitles).

Eltham Palace – Put together from family home videos this short cinema presentation shows the Courtald family enjoying themselves in the gardens at Eltham Palace, so giving a sense of the house when occupied (11 minutes, seating available in the house, music, captions and inter-titles, no narration).

Framlingham Castle –The history of the castle from its foundation to its later life as a poorhouse is retold in an animated film, specifically commissioned for the project. Aimed at the affluent family audience who frequent the castle, the animation is designed to appeal to children and to artistically aware adults. (3 minutes, no seating, video terminal, 'captions' on screen).

Royal Observer Corps Bunker, York – A history of the Cold War, told through a collage of documentaries and government instruction films from the 1950s (11 minutes, seating available, within bunker, subtitles available on request).

When does an AV presentation work best?

Our experience shows that interpretation through an AV presentation works best in the following circumstances:

- when a dramatic, dynamic event, such as a battle, is being explained
- when it can bring to life processes of work, common to social and industrial history
- when relatively recent history is being covered, so contemporary film footage that it can use, from newsreel to home-shot ciné film
- when children are a key part of the audience, as it can use strongly graphic or animated material to stimulate them.

Important considerations when planning a successful AV are:

- being clear about the target audience; trying to cater for all will risk watering down the initial concept and make the final result less coherent and unsatisfactory for everyone.
- being clear about the objective of the AV – is its purpose to be an introduction to the site, to add atmosphere, or to describe one particular aspect, event or personality?
- realistic consideration of the physical environment, including the limitations in terms of providing cabling, fittings, housing and electricity.

Above all, as the presented examples show, any treatment has to be right for its specific purpose – a 'one size fits all' approach seldom works.

Responding to the spirit of each individual place and its surroundings, AV can be so much more than the history of the site and has a crucial part to play in its interpretation and presentation.

The shock of the new: contemporary art and historic places

Martin Allfrey
Head Curator (Collections) English Heritage

Historic places are often inspirational and thought-provoking; they touch our emotions and fire our imagination. While traditional forms of interpretation are of course essential to gaining an understanding of a site, contemporary art can add enormously to the quality of the experience and enjoyment of a visit. Carefully chosen works add another dimension to a site; they attract new audiences and encourage visitors to see historic properties in a fresh light.

English Heritage has been working in partnership with Arts Council England in the North East since 1993. The first joint initiative was the creation of the Gymnasium Art Gallery and Fellowship programme at Berwick-upon-Tweed. The old gymnasium in the barracks had long-since ceased to be used for the physical training of soldiers. With funding from the partners, it was repaired and transformed into an artists' studio and flexible exhibition space.

The fellowships, offered annually to three professional artists, are open to visual practitioners from the UK and abroad and they are intended to give artists a period of time when they can focus on developing their work while living in and responding to this extraordinary border town, with its turbulent history and dramatic coastal setting.

Spurred on by the success of the Berwick Gymnasium Gallery, English Heritage was keen to embrace the art world again in 1996, the Year of Visual Arts. Major installations were commissioned for the ramparts around the town at Berwick and Belsay Hall was transformed into a contemporary living space by artists and designers. 'Living at Belsay' was to become the first of five thrilling contemporary art exhibitions.

It was the late fashion designer, Jean Muir, who first spotted Belsay's affinity for contemporary art. The hall, completed in 1817, is a building of strict geometry and awe-inspiring solemnity. Since coming into state care in 1980, it has remained unfurnished, due to the wishes of its last owner. This presents an opportunity to treat Belsay in a different way; commissioning artists to breathe life into its vast, empty interiors, which are the perfect setting for showing art and design.

From the first exhibition in 1996 the roll call of artists, architects and designers has been impressive. Alongside luminaries such as Thomas Heatherwick, Tom Dixon, Lord Foster and Stella McCartney have been young and emerging artists who have launched their careers through the associated Belsay fellowship programme.

Belsay's success is widely acknowledged but what really singles it out from other historic venues where contemporary art is displayed, such as Compton Verney, is that the property itself is inextricably linked to the installations. Belsay, with its uncomfortable memories and decayed interiors, is not the backdrop – it is the subject. By encouraging artists to draw on Belsay's rich historic seam, the installations form a new type of interpretation, a lens through which to experience the complex history of the site as well as an expression of contemporary concerns, ideologies and viewpoints.

The introduction of contemporary art to historic places can provide a new chapter in their history. Places like Belsay served a culturally dynamic role in the past; they were the physical embodiment of the taste and ambition of their owners and often at the cutting edge of design. By working with contemporary artists today, something of the innovation and vision that pushed the boundaries to develop sites in the past is maintained and nurtured.

The Pillar Hall at Belsay was the dramatic backdrop for this figure of a bride dipped in silver. It was created by fashion designers Viktor and Rolf, to represent a moment frozen in time and was one of the highlights of the 2007 exhibition 'Picture House'.

Free sites unlocked: facing the challenges at free and unstaffed properties

Sue Barnard
Interpretation Officer, English Heritage
Susan Westlake
Properties Historian, English Heritage

What do Baconsthorpe Castle, Bratton Camp and Binham Priory have in common? These are three of the free and unstaffed English Heritage properties that have received new on-site interpretation as part of the Free Sites Project. Established in 2005 and supported by the organisation's Development Fund, this dedicated programme has been charged with devising interpretation at some of the 225 unstaffed sites in English Heritage's care.

Interpretation at free sites used to be limited. Competing with paying sites for budgets, they were not always given the attention they deserved. This deficiency was initially addressed through a 'minimum standards' programme, which aimed to provide a single basic information panel at each site, usually with one illustration. However, this proved woefully inadequate, especially at larger and more complex properties, and so a more ambitious programme was initiated, involving an annual budget of £80,000–90,000 and two full-time members of interpretation and research staff. Since 2005 41 properties have received new schemes, including Halliggye Fogou in Cornwall, Croxden Abbey in Staffordshire, Skipsea Castle in Yorkshire, Houghton House in Bedfordshire and Cantlop Bridge in Shropshire.

The priorities for new work are properties that have poor levels of existing provision and at which visitor numbers are thought to be high. In addition, sites are selected where we are able to communicate the findings of recent research, such as at Wayland's Smithy, Oxfordshire. Here, the results of a radiocarbon dating programme, which has led to new ideas about the sequence of activity at the long barrow, underpinned interpretation installed in 2007.

Unstaffed sites present particular challenges for interpretation. Guidebooks and hand-held audio tours cannot easily be distributed, and there are usually no indoor spaces for displays or exhibitions. To address these issues, a combination of on-site display panels, downloadable audio tours and improved on-line interpretation has been developed.

A design identity was commissioned early in the project to provide a house style using a palette of subtle colours that are sympathetic with the historic nature of the properties. Recognising the importance of images, we often use reconstruction paintings to communicate effectively the missing parts of the buildings or site. Because we cannot display objects we have, where possible, commissioned new photography of related collections. With a variety of plans, maps and other illustrations, these combine with new text to create lively, visually appealing and informative interpretation for our visitors.

We are working closely with Antenna Audio to develop new downloadable audio tours, which provide an alternative medium for information. Accessed through the website, these reach new audiences and can be downloaded onto an iPod or similar device to enhance a visit to a property. As well as narrated tours, we use the voices of experts, as at St Paul's Monastery, Jarrow, where Professor Rosemary Cramp, the archaeologist who led excavations there, brings the Anglo-Saxon site to life. Tours for Baconsthorpe Castle, Houghton House, Maiden Castle, Netley Abbey and Titchfield Abbey are already available through the 'Free Sites Unlocked' page of the English Heritage website (**www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.10612**), which also provides historical background, images and sources of further information for other unstaffed properties.

Plans are now under way for a further three years for the Free Sites Project. As well as continuing to address individual properties, the team is starting to look at groups of sites on Dartmoor and the Isles of Scilly. Although English Heritage's unstaffed properties present new challenges, they also offer exciting chances to develop new and innovative ways to tell the stories of these often remote and remarkable historic sites.

Visitors at Wolvesey Castle, Winchester, where new interpretation panels have recently been installed.

Real coal mine, real miners

Peter Walker
Keeper and Mine Manager, Big Pit National Coal Museum, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales

What makes the underground tours at Big Pit so successful and what happens when the supply of real miners runs out?

The new exhibition galleries at Big Pit – the former working colliery at Blaenafon in South Wales – largely funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, have won universal acclaim, and a £100,000 cheque from the Judges for the Gulbenkian Prize 2005, for their intelligent and thought-provoking use of people-based interpretation. But as good as our new exhibitions may be, it is still the underground tour of the genuine mine workings that provides the most lasting and endearing of memories. And of the 160,000 visitors that come to Big Pit every year 95 per cent of them experience the underground tour.

> 'Big Pit offers an exceptional emotional and intellectual experience. It tells the individual stories of its community better than any museum I have visited.'
> Sir Richard Sykes, Chairman of the Judges for the Gulbenkian Prize 2005

As you stand at the top of the mineshaft kitted out in helmet and cap lamp the realisation that this is no Disney-like simulation starts to strike home. And it's not just the hole in the ground that is authentic either – these 'costumed interpreters' are the real thing and they have the blue scars and personal experiences to prove it.

To the advantages of first-person interpretation in an authentic setting we add the telling of an emotive story that is within living memory. This in particular means that the visitors will bring their own personal perspectives and prejudices to the story and regardless of what these may be, they inevitably and naturally lead to a more profound engagement with the subject.

What adds to that engagement and encourages empathy with the miner's story is, of course, the miner himself. I'm sure that Baroness Thatcher never realised it but it turns out that the South-Wales miner was ready-made for an alternative career in tourism. Friendly and garrulous, with a ready and very natural line in witty repartee, the miner-turned-guide imparts the content of the tour with a frank honesty that is very refreshing in these PC-conscious days. The truth, of course, is infinitely subjective, but what you will hear from a Big Pit miner is what he truly believes, rather than the scripted and rehearsed inventions of the period interpreter.

Imperfect they may be, but tours such as these are perhaps the best example of the ongoing shift in many museums to people-based interpretation, following the recognition that visitors are often more interested in people than they are in objects. That's certainly been our experience at Big Pit, where praise for the dedication and enthusiasm of our staff has dominated visitor surveys for the last 25 years. Currently we employ nearly 40 former miners but given the current state of the British coal industry, how much longer can we carry on like this? Well, we can record our existing guides as much as we like but we have to accept that when the supply of ex-miners runs out in about 15 years' time a visit to Big Pit will be subtly different. I'm sure the guides will still be as friendly and garrulous but instead of 'I' or 'we' did this or that, it will by then have become a case of 'they'.

That said, as you travel through the mineshaft with your helmet and cap-lamp you will still be entering a real coal mine and your guide won't be an employee of Cymru Disney. He (or she) will still be a real person who will give you a glimpse into the hidden world of the miner, and hopefully put a smile on your face!

At the Big Pit Museum at Blaenafon, if you aren't smiling going down you'll be smiling coming back up!

Historic Scotland's Stirling Castle Palace project

Chris S Watkins
Head of Major Projects, Historic Scotland

Following three years of extensive research, archaeological investigation and survey work Historic Scotland are about to commence the next phase of their £20m project to conserve and reinstate some of Stirling Castle's magnificence lost during the military adaptation of the castle in the late 18th century.

Having completed the conservation and restoration of James IV's Great Hall in 2001, including the re-creation of its oak hammer-beam roof, site works will soon commence on James V's mid-16th-century Renaissance Palace.

Built high on the Castle rock and to the south of the Castle's inner close, the Palace incorporates the vaults of earlier structures and completes the composition of a court of honour as conceived by James IV. Commissioned by James V for himself and his French wife, Mary of Guise, the Palace comprises two sets of Royal Lodgings, each containing three main apartments linked by a gallery and built around a central courtyard known as the Lion's Den. The three main external elevations are richly decorated with an enigmatic collection of full-length statues set on balusters within shallow cusped niches. The statues, carved by French masons, depict the Planetary Deities, Virtues and the Liberal Arts. Designed to impress and to proclaim James's authority, the elevational treatment and choice of subjects for the statues draws strongly on the architecture and design of Northern Italy and France.

Internally the King's and Queen's Lodgings were intended to be richly decorated and hung with tapestries from James's large collection. The ceilings in some of the apartments were originally adorned with large carved-oak antique medallions, 32 of which still survive and are known collectively as the Stirling Heads.

The main apartments forming the Lodgings still exist in their original configuration, complete with window openings, carved fire surrounds and stone mouldings. The original timber floor-beams, recently dated to the 1530s, and some early doors remain in their original locations, but the oak ceilings, shutter-board windows, plasterwork and decorative schemes have now all gone after 250 years of military occupation.

Historic Scotland's proposal, following extensive research undertaken by their own staff and a team from Glasgow University, is to re-create the sumptuous interiors, including the coffered ceilings, with newly carved and painted oak medallions, the plasterwork and painted decoration, the wall hangings and furnishings including a new set of seven tapestries known as the 'Hunt of the Unicorn'.

As part of the presentation of James V's 16th-century palace at Stirling Castle, Historic Scotland has commissioned a sumptuous new set of tapestries known as the 'Hunt of the Unicorn' (detail). © Historic Scotland

The original Stirling Heads will be exhibited in a new gallery on the upper floor of the Palace alongside interpretation of the statues and the findings of the recent research into their iconography.

The new tapestries, based on a set in the Metropolitan Museum, have been funded largely by donations from the Quinque Foundation. The West Dean Tapestry Studio in Sussex started weaving them in 2001 both in their own studio in Sussex and in a temporary studio at the Castle. Four of the seven have been completed and are on display at the Castle. The final three will not be ready until 2013, two years after the main project opens to the public.

Kenilworth garden

Anna Keay
Director of Properties Presentation, English Heritage

The ruined might of Kenilworth Castle in Warwickshire has been an inspiration to its visitors for well over three hundred years. Harder to imagine now is the splendour and magnificence of the castle in its roofed and decorated heyday. All this is set to change with work now under way to bring back to life one of the wonders of the castle's glory days – the Elizabethan garden.

In July 1575 Elizabeth I arrived at Kenilworth for a glittering two-week visit, the guest of her long-time suitor, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. The occasion and the castle were described in detail by one of Dudley's entourage, who noted in particular that the garden the Earl had created there was 'fit to be called paradise'. Following extensive archaeological investigation and archival research, English Heritage's £2 million project to re-create this extraordinary garden will be completed in 2009.

Lying to the north of the 12th-century keep, the garden covers about an acre. Divided into four even quarters of planting, edged with a raised terrace, it was adorned with 'porphyry' obelisks and painted heraldic beasts. The largest single structure was the extravagant and avant-garde Renaissance aviary, adorned with faux jewels and filled with exotic birds. In the middle of the garden a great white marble fountain flowed with water, and this – along with all the other features – is now being carefully re-created from the contemporary descriptions and comparative material.

Re-creating Kenilworth's Elizabethan garden is not just an essay in garden archaeology. It is an attempt to reinvigorate a castle and remind us that it was once more than a ruin – a place of style and splendour, politics and personality.

Hans Vredeman de Vries's design for a formal garden, c 1583. The new garden at Kenilworth will bear many similarities to this unrealised scheme, including the central fountain, enclosed arbours, geometric plant beds and sand-covered paths.

Bringing a medieval palace back to life. English Heritage is planning to re-present rooms in the keep of Dover Castle to evoke their appearance at the end of the 12th century.

Dover Castle

Anna Keay
Director of Properties Presentation, English Heritage

The keep, or Great Tower, at Dover Castle is one of the most impressive royal buildings anywhere in Britain. It was the most lavish creation of King Henry II, our own 'Alexander of the West', and the greatest castle-builder of his age.

In an ambitious new project, part of a site-wide interpretation strategy, English Heritage will re-present this building to evoke its appearance at the end of the 12th century. In so doing we are attempting a re-presentation feat never tried before. The age and status of the rooms makes it a particular challenge. The extraordinary survival of the original 12th-century fabric and room volumes presents a genuinely unique opportunity.

A research programme delving into the material culture of northern Europe in the 12th century has been amazingly fruitful and through it we are bringing together the best of scholarly thinking. Exciting new work on the purpose of the building, and its relationship to the shrine of St Thomas a Beckett at nearby Canterbury, is enabling us to interpret the purpose of the whole structure in a new and unexpected light.

The intention is to use this research to inform the complete re-dressing of a series of interiors within the Great Tower, including the rooms inhabited by the king himself, and to open these together with a new interpretative introduction to Dover as a medieval palace. In bringing to life one of England's most dramatic and fascinating historical periods, we hope to give visitors a surprising and delightful glimpse of the Middle Ages.

Attingham Re-Discovered

Sarah Kay
Project Curator, National Trust

Rediscovering Attingham: uncovering details of an 1807 *trompe l'oeil* wallpaper scheme on the first floor of the house.

Like those of most historic houses, Attingham's fortunes have risen and fallen. The house has had extravagant expenditure lavished upon it, has survived periods of decline, neglect and even bankruptcy, and has been revived and resuscitated. 'Attingham Re-Discovered' is the latest chapter in its revival.

Built by George Steuart in 1785 and altered by Nash in 1805–7, Attingham Park, in Shropshire, is a vast, austere, late-Georgian mansion. Yet, since it was first handed to the National Trust in 1947, visitors have only been able to see a comparatively small proportion of its rooms, making its development and historic use difficult to grasp and giving a sense that much seemed to be hidden behind closed doors.

In addition, many of the rooms that *were* shown had become rather soulless and had lost a convincing feel of ever having been lived-in. Over recent years, greater visitor expectations and increasing transparency in the way the Trust shows and explains its properties to visitors made it clear that improvements were needed. In 2006, *Attingham Re-Discovered* set out to meet this challenge. The project has essentially a three-fold aim:

- to improve the way that existing rooms are presented (both in terms of historical accuracy and atmosphere) and interpreted to visitors
- to extend the visitor route into 'new' areas
- to encourage our supporters to enter into the curatorial and conservation debates.

The proposals for the house's re-presentation and re-decoration are based on seven years of archival and physical research by internal and external advisers.

The scope of the project is vast and has been set out in a phased programme which currently spans six years but will probably take ten to complete. Attingham is in the fortunate and rare position of not having to apply for external funding in order to realise the plans. This is not necessarily, however, a straightforward advantage. It is important to move slowly and carefully and not rush decisions, as change can be a risky business. Too many changes can so easily destroy the intangible spirit of the place. There are difficult curatorial and conservation decisions to be made and a major challenge is maintaining an overview of the presentation of the house and ensuring that any proposed changes in a given room will sit comfortably and convincingly with the rooms on either side.

A key part of the project brief is to provide as much interpretational and educational benefit as possible by carrying out 'conservation in action'. Visitors can see the conservation work being carried out, are encouraged to *engage* with it and then return to view progress. Temporary interpretation panels are being used to set out the *aim* in each room, to reveal a '*hidden' secret*, such as a decorative detail, to explain a technical or historical term under *Did you know?* and to put the visitor in the curator's shoes by asking *What would you do?* Thus the project is not just a one-way street – visitors are invited to feed back their reactions and comments to the restoration proposals (and the costs), which are then taken into account in the conservation debates, and will eventually show whether we have done an effective job of interpreting the work. This transparency is quite new and challenging for the Trust and means that the project really is, in more than one sense, a journey of discovery.

Conservation Principles and the presentation of English Heritage sites

Jeremy Ashbee
Head Property Curator, English Heritage

The publication of English Heritage's *Conservation Principles* in April of this year, after an extensive consultation, now presents us – and the wider sector – with the parameters within which the debates about conservation are likely to run in the future. It draws on many developments over the

last decades, such as the emergence of the Conservation Plan process, and though much of the document has a clear precedent in existing practice, the way it is articulated contains important departures from the most recent previous legislation and Planning Policy Guidance. Though by no means limited to the English Heritage estate, the document has potentially radical implications for the ways that our sites will be presented in the future.

Those aware of the existing philosophy of 'conserve as found', inherited from the Office of Works, Ministry of Works and successor organisations, have been struck by the tenor of some of the later sections of *Conservation Principles*. Here it is acknowledged that those responsible for the historic environment are not charged merely with managing the effect and consequences of inevitable change, but in some circumstances may take active measures to bring physical change about. It is even permissible to use terms like 'restoration', once felt to be completely alien to the conservation philosophies of Britain. The document clearly sets out that the test for whether such an intervention should be considered lies in the depth of understanding which underlies the proposal, a clear articulation of the relevant 'heritage values' of a site and of its wider context (under the headings 'Evidential', 'Historic', 'Aesthetic' and 'Communal') and how these values will be affected by a change, and finally by a commitment to maintain what will be created after those changes have been carried out.

Not surprisingly the application of these tests to schemes carried out in the past, and to more recent proposals, can be a sobering process. For example, the removal of the first floor of the poorhouse at Framlingham Castle, to re-create the volume of a medieval Great Hall, or of the two 1788 side wings to Chiswick House, both in the mid-20th century, would fail the important test that the heritage values of the removed elements should be minimal. They have also arguably diminished the long-term sustainability of the site (though in the case of Chiswick, they did address a pressing immediate problem of dry rot in the wings), and have undoubtedly created historically anachronistic ensembles, with juxtaposed elements that never co-existed before.

A 2003 proposal to introduce a roof on Clifford's Tower, York, would have been problematic because of poor information about the historic roof form (extensive documentary and pictorial research produced very little evidence for the form of the medieval roof or a replacement of the 17th century). It might, however, have been more acceptable in terms of the heritage value of affected areas: much of the physical impact would have been limited to fabric reconstructed over the course of the 20th century. For many arguments about heritage value, there needs to be a strong element of professional judgement, and wide consultation within local communities and beyond. A new roof at Clifford's Tower would inevitably have removed the current view from the wall-walk into the internal courtyard: this view is frankly not dramatic or aesthetically pleasing, but is undeniably informative about the proportions of the historic building, and has been a feature of the site since the late 17th century.

Conservation Principles poses challenging questions for curators. For example, could we consider putting a new roof on Clifford's Tower in York when we know so little about the form of the original one?
© English Heritage

Much of the challenge of the near future is (in my opinion) to advance further out of an era of a 'house style' of conservation and presentation (inherited from the Ministry of Works), into a new paradigm in which the peculiarities of each individual site, past and present, lie at the heart of what we decide to do with it. The existence of *Conservation Principles* ensures that this approach is not purely pragmatic, or entirely at the whim of the individual curator or inspector. But it requires all those involved to make the most detailed interrogation of the site, and to articulate this clearly in debate with other interested parties. The marshalling and articulation of this evidence, for English Heritage sites, is now the responsibility of a new team of Properties Curators.

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment is available at **www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.13556**

The New Interactive Heritage

In an anarchic digital world, how does English Heritage make sure its audiences have access to reliable and authoritative heritage information?

e-heritage – authority and empowerment in presenting the historic environment

Nigel Clubb
NMR Director, English Heritage

Today, heritage organisations face endless competition for audiences of historic environment information, through user-generated free websites and on-line encyclopaedias, such as Wikipedia. Many people want to interact with, update and even re-engineer official web content. This includes personalising it for their own benefit and that of their on-line communities, far removed from the identity and brand of the original provider.

Opponents argue that it is becoming more difficult to distinguish between author and audience, the latter no longer a passive recipient of expert mediation, or between the authoritative and the highly personalised or the important and the trivial. These trends present challenges for an organisation such as English Heritage in its role an expert adviser on the historic environment. Will the Google-generation – those born since 1992 – be able to distinguish between the different types of content on offer and recognise, or welcome, expert mediation? To what extent will the heritage professionals and researchers of the future establish behaviours similar to that of the more general audience?

To add to the anxiety, the next decade seems set to bring us a more intelligent (Web 3.0) world where users determine the appearance and content of websites by combining 'mash-ups' – and in which organisations will be unable to control the fate of their information other, perhaps, than by facilitating conversations with their users.

In this confusing new digital world, organisations such as English Heritage and local authorities have to remain authoritative in the way they present information about the historic environment; for example, statutory lists cannot be allowed to become a wiki, although there must be scope for on-line communities and individuals to share their own perceptions and experiences.

The articles below set out some of the new ways in which English Heritage and its partners around the country will be engaging electronically with wider audiences. This is an explicit obligation in the Heritage Protection Bill.

The researcher of the future.
Source: Information Behaviour of the Researcher of the Future: *A Ciber Briefing Paper, UCL for the British Library* and JISC, January 2008

Tell me what you want – what you really, really want: audience development and online resources

Victoria Fenner
Head of Programme Development, National Monuments Record, English Heritage

In a world where technology is changing at lightening speed, one of the biggest challenges for those developing e-heritage resources is to ensure websites catch and hold the users' attention.

We cannot anticipate how everyone and anyone may want to view and use our data; what we can do is make educated guesses, based on gathering as much information as we can about current users. The most effective way to gather information is to ask users to register to use the website. For example, with the *Images of England* website (www.imagesofengland.org.uk), it is possible to tell how many registered users belong to each audience segment and to measure changes over time. The downside, of course, is that we can't tell how many users were put off because they had to register. Useful information is also provided by focus groups, a feedback option on the website and annual and spot questionnaires.

A survey of 89 heritage, archive and picture-library websites carried out in 2006 by English Heritage showed that only 21 per cent of the websites included registration. When attitudes to registration were tested at a series of focus groups,

many participants said they would be willing to register if they gained some additional benefit from doing so – for example the ability to save searches between sessions.

Marketing can be effective in increasing the depth of current audiences but it can take time to create an association in people's minds between your website and what they want. Since the NMR started a co-ordinated communications programme in 2005, web usage has increased steadily – for example the number of user sessions in 2007/8 grew by a record 82 per cent.

Reaching out to groups who have not yet engaged with your online resource can be more challenging. Some audiences need greater degrees of synthesis and interpretation to maximise their engagement with what is on offer. *Heritage Explorer* (www.heritageexplorer.org.uk) is English Heritage's solution to making archive materials available online for teachers in a usable and approachable way (see also below).

Usability testing can be invaluable in identifying potential barriers to access. Historic environment professionals appreciate simple and effective search mechanisms, clear messages and good presentation just as much as those searching the web for personal interest.

Getting your audience to your website is only part of the battle; there is a need to constantly remind them that it is there and relevant. Following contemporary trends, such as social networking and the desire on the part of users to contribute to content, can also help to meet constantly evolving expectations.

Usability testing in progress: finding out what people really want from the online National Monuments Record.
© UserVision

The *Heritage Gateway* partnership

Cat Cload
Heritage Gateway Project Manager, National Monuments Record, English Heritage

Until now, access to historic environment information in England has been fragmented, with statutory records and archives held at a national level and detailed information held locally. This has long been a cause of frustration for professionals and the general public.

A new driver for change is the government's programme of Heritage Protection Reform. This acknowledges how effective management of the historic environment will depend at a local level on historic environment records (HERs) and nationally on the proposed unified register of designated heritage assets. There is also a need to move away from exclusive 'top-down' perceptions of heritage and towards greater public engagement.

English Heritage, in partnership with the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation, is developing the *Heritage Gateway* to provide a single point of access to historic environment information for England.

Since March 2008, the *Heritage Gateway* has provided integrated access to a growing range of datasets. At a national level it already searches the entire content of *Listed Buildings Online* and of the NMR's *Images of England*, *Pastscape*, *Viewfinder* and Excavation Index resources. At a local level it provides online access to the historic environment records for Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk, Somerset and the City of York, with a further ten

Heritage Gateway: a single point of access to historic environment information for England
© English Heritage

being added during 2008/9. In due course, the new unified register will also be included in the *Heritage Gateway*, along with further material from the NMR archives

The *Gateway* should not only offer diverse data and wide-ranging source information, but some degree of interpretation to users. Usability testing has also demonstrated the need to redevelop the search interfaces to make them more intuitive for all types of user.

Looking further ahead, English Heritage is consulting its colleagues within and beyond the sector about their access requirements to the statutory information in the proposed new register. We are similarly talking to the Department of Communities and Local Government about the best ways of building creative synergies between the *Heritage Gateway* and the new *Planning 360* website that aims to streamline the planning process – a bold vision and an important step in ensuring that the historic environment remains at the heart of sustainable communities.

On-line education in the 21st century – The English Heritage response

Catherine McHarg
Education Officer, National Monuments Record, English Heritage

There has been a technological revolution in the way that teachers gain access to information and how they present it to their pupils.

Major changes are the introduction of interactive whiteboards (IWBs) and access to broadband internet connections. Government statistics show that the percentage of teachers confident in the use of information and communication (ICT) in the classroom rose from 65 per cent in 1998 to 90 per cent by 2004. In 2007 it was estimated that more than 90 per cent of all primary schools and 50 per cent of secondary schools had IWBs. This increase in the use of new teaching media has created a demand for digital resources to populate them.

The National Curriculum stresses the importance of ICT in the classroom. Recent changes to the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum also place greater emphasis on the teaching of heritage issues and local history. In response, English Heritage set out to create an educational resource designed specifically for teachers and learners. The result is the new website *Heritage Explorer – Images for Learning* (www.heritageexplorer.org.uk).

There are very few sites where teachers can find reliable resources based on heritage, architecture or archaeology. *Heritage Explorer* breaks new ground by encouraging teachers to base their lessons on the historic built environment on material searched from English Heritage's enormously rich databases.

The website has been designed with input from teachers themselves. At present it covers Key Stages 1–4 (5–16 year olds), but later it is planned to include specific resources for 16+, GCSE, A-Level and Higher Education.

Heritage Explorer has so far focused on two main resources. 'Images by Theme' are selections of around 25 images grouped into curriculum-based topics that include Tudor buildings, abbeys, castles and 1930s architecture.

'Teaching Activities' comprise an image supported by a teaching idea and associated worksheets, notes and whiteboard downloads. Each activity asks a curriculum-related key question. Close linking to relevant curriculum topics is seen as essential by teachers because all their lessons have to meet specific learning aims and outcomes.

As the site develops additional content will be added to provide fresh and relevant material in response to new educational and technological initiatives.

Heritage Explorer: providing teachers with archive materials online. © English Heritage

The Heritage Protection Bill

Peter Beacham OBE, *Heritage Protection Director*

The Heritage Protection Bill

The government published its draft Heritage Protection Bill in April. It contains the major package of reforms of the heritage protection system in England that have been the subject of extensive public consultation over the last few years, and gives legislative form to the policies announced in last year's White Paper *Heritage Protection for the 21st Century*.

The draft bill is very comprehensive, and if enacted it will repeal almost all of the substantive legislation on which our current system of heritage protection is based. The key reforms are:

- The creation of a unified national designation system by the merging of the current listing, scheduling and registration regimes and their extension to cover the marine historic environment and sites of early human activity without structures.
- The establishment of a single register for nationally designated assets, which will contain all existing listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks, gardens and battlefields, designated historic wrecks and world heritage sites.
- The delegation to English Heritage from the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport of decision-making on national designation applications.
- A new heritage asset consent that merges the current listed building consent and scheduled monument consent regimes, to be administered by local authorities.
- The establishment of heritage partnership agreements – statutory management agreements that allow long-term strategic management and prior consent for agreed works.
- A statutory duty on local authorities to establish and maintain, or have access to, a historic environment record.
- The merger of conservation area consent with planning permission.

The strengthening of local management of the historic environment through restoring control over unlisted buildings in conservation areas, reinforcing the duty of local authorities to enhance as well as preserve the character and appearance of conservation areas, and the introduction of some control of demolition of locally designated buildings outside conservation areas.

Other miscellaneous provisions that will be included in the full bill will include widening English Heritage's grant powers.

The draft Bill has generally been widely welcomed by the sector and beyond. It is now receiving pre-legislative scrutiny by the DCMS Select Committee: their report is expected later this summer. Meanwhile, the government has signalled its intention to introduce the full Bill into Parliament in the next Parliamentary Session 2008–9: it is currently included in the draft Queen's Speech. If enacted to that timetable, implementation would be expected to commence from 2010 onwards.

Such a fast track for the Bill means that the task of preparing for implementation of reform is increasingly urgent. English Heritage's Heritage Protection Reform (HPR) Implementation Team, led by the Head of Implementation, Sarah Buckingham, is already hard at work on the various different strands of English Heritage's implementation programme. The programme is now engaging colleagues right across the organisation as one of English Heritage's top corporate priorities for the 2008–11 period. The government has already signalled that English Heritage's funding settlement for 2011–2014 will reflect the progress that we have made in introducing reform, so it is vital that HPR messages are familiar to everyone working in the heritage sector and beyond. We have just completed a series of briefing seminars across the country and have spoken with more than 800 English Heritage colleagues about the Heritage Protection Bill and the implementation programme.

The main components of the implementation programme are:

- Engagement with government in the production of secondary legislation to support the new Act.
- The preparation, with government, of policy and guidance including the preparation of the new PPS to replace PPGs 15 and 16.
- Evolving a new programme of strategic designation to be the subject of widespread public consultation later this year.
- Developing an effective programme of training and capacity building for the sector in partnership with others.
- Promoting the widespread adoption of heritage partnership agreements by local authorities.
- Developing the necessary infrastructure to deliver the new system.

HPR Implementation can only be effective if we construct it on two sure foundations. The first is partnership with the sector: English Heritage is charged by government with leading the implementation programme, but we shall do so by ensuring full engagement all round. The second is the realisation that implementation will be a long haul: we believe we have resources to prepare for implementation for a start in 2010, but we are also concerned that there will need to be a long period of consolidation for at least the following quinquennium. And government will need to provide the necessary resources for both English Heritage and local authorities in the next spending round if this is to be achieved.

It is vital that English Heritage and the sector now prepares itself for the major changes we shall be seeing over the next few years. What was most encouraging in our recent briefings was the sense of genuine enthusiasm about the possibilities the reformed system of heritage protection offered us as an organisation, and the sector in general. To maintain that momentum, and to arrive at 2010 ready to start, will depend on this corporate and sectoral engagement being sustained by individual involvement through our training and capacity-building programmes. It is a genuinely exciting moment for all, not just those who work in our sector but those many more who use and enjoy our heritage.

Conservation Bulletin *is delighted to report that Peter Beacham was awarded an OBE in the 2008 Birthday Honours for his services to the historic environment. A summary of the Heritage Protection Bill is available at* www.english.heritage.org.uk

The University of East Anglia: the conservation management of this complicated group of historically significant buildings will be streamlined following the enactment of the Heritage Protection Bill.

News from English Heritage

Streets for All: Practical Case Studies

Local authorities are increasingly recognising that everyone benefits from improved streets. Local businesses report better trade; more people are encouraged to walk and cycle; the streets become safer, more sociable places. Following on from its 2004 *Save Our Streets* campaign English Heritage has now published *Streets for All: Practical Case Studies*, a collection of ten 'how-to' examples from councils that have got seriously to grips with different aspects of street clutter. Among the many featured projects are ideas for cutting down on white lines, putting signs on buildings so that poles can be removed, taking away guardrails (which, research proves, can actually make roads less dangerous), and retaining historic cobble and flagstone street surfaces.

Contact: Charles Wagner, tel: 020 7973 3826; email: charles.wagner@english-heritage.org.uk

Climate Change and Traditional Homes

English Heritage has launched a new website (www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk) for homeowners who live in traditionally constructed houses. Its aim is to help them understand the potential impacts of climate change on their properties and to show how simple building maintenance can lessen the effects of increasingly extreme weather. The site provides detailed advice on how to improve the energy efficiency of traditionally constructed houses while preserving their special character. A section on micro-generation explains how technologies such as micro-wind generation and solar thermal energy can successfully be incorporated into older buildings. Also available is advice on how historic buildings can perform better under the Part L of the Building Regulations, as well as about how to understand Energy Performance Certificates.

Contact: David Pickles, tel: 020 7485 5142; email: david.pickles@english-heritage.org.uk

Microgeneration

Hot off the press is English Heritage's latest policy position statement on *Microgeneration in the Historic Environment,* which is intended to help local authorities and property owners identify where the installation of microgeneration equipment would be likely to be acceptable. This advice will sit beneath the updated policy statement *Climate Change and the Historic Environment,* which was published in January. It also complements the detailed advice on implementing energy efficiency in traditional buildings available through the *Climate Change and Your Home* website.

Contact: Charles Wagner, tel: 020 7973 3826; email: charles.wagner@english-heritage.org.uk

New Guidance for Local Area Agreements

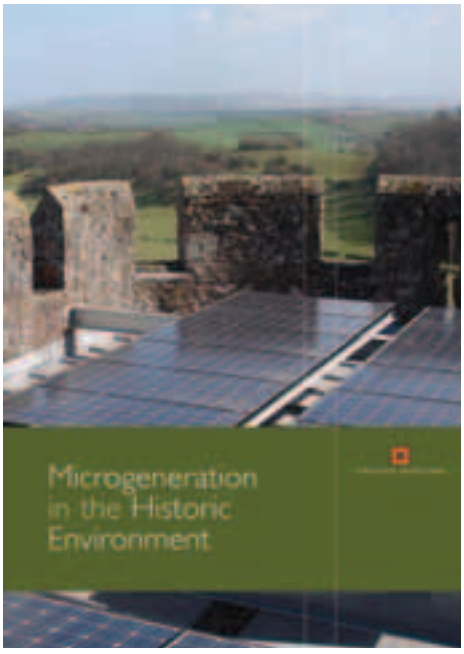
The newly constituted Local Area Agreements (LAAs) represent an agreement between central and local government about a local area's priorities for a three-year period. They consist of up to 35 targets, chosen from a list of 198 indicators, with the aim of improving outcomes for local people.

English Heritage's recently published guidance outlines how the historic environment can support local authorities within this process. It outlines some of the indicators to which the historic environment can contribute and also includes a range of case studies highlighting how that contribution might be developed. Copies of the guidance can be obtained from English Heritage Customer Services (0870 333 1181) quoting Product Code 51432, or the document can be downloaded from www.helmorg.uk

Joint English Heritage and Local Government Association conference

The historic environment is important to the way people view the area they live in. It can be a unique selling point for attracting investment; it can give people a sense of pride in their surroundings, and it can help engender a sense of community and belonging. More specifically, it can help to meet Local Area Agreement targets by:

- improving civic participation and levels of volunteering
- improving overall satisfaction in a local area



- tackling obesity and providing a source of exercise for local people
- improving the overall employment level
- reducing CO_2 emissions.

On 3 February 2009, in London, English Heritage and the LGA will be holding a joint conference to help authorities realise the economic, environmental and social benefits of their local historic environment. Further information and booking forms will be available later this year.
Contact: Owain Lloyd-James, tel: 020 7973 3841; email: Owain.lloyd-james@english-heritage.org.uk

Understanding Historic Buildings: Policy and Guidance for Local Planning Authorities

This new publication sets out the English Heritage policy on the investigation and recording of historic buildings within the English planning framework. Through a combination of written advice and case studies it shows how a specialist understanding of the significance of a historic building can inform a development proposal and assist in the decision-making process.

Aimed at local authority planning and historic environment officers, the policy and guidance has been endorsed by the Local Government Association, Planning Officers Society, Institute of Historic Building Conservation, Institute of Field Archaeologists Buildings Archaeology Group, Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers, Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies and the Council for British Archaeology. Copies of the document can be obtained from English Heritage Customer Services (0870 333 1181) quoting Product Code 51414, or it can be downloaded from www.helmorg.uk

World Heritage planning circular

DCLG recently published a draft planning circular for public consultation on World Heritage Sites. As well as providing updated policy guidance on the level of protection and management required for World Heritage Sites it explains the government's objectives for their protection, the principles that underpin those objectives, and the actions necessary to achieve them.

The circular is supplemented and supported by a draft English Heritage Guidance Note that sets out the international and national context of World Heritage Sites, considers the role of the planning system and sustainable community strategies in their protection, and explains the role and preparation of World Heritage Site Management Plans. The draft circular and guidance note can be downloaded from the DCLG website. Responses to the consultation should be sent direct to DCLG no later than 22 August 2008.
Contact: Christopher Young, tel: 020 7973 3848; email: christopher.young@english-heritage.org.uk

Heritage Counts 2008

Heritage Counts 2008, to be launched at the end of October, will place a particular focus on climate change. The key objective will be to show that there is no necessary contradiction between the conservation of heritage and energy. The publication will also challenge the perception that the heritage sector is too defensive about climate change, and will argue that it needs to be taken much more seriously in the debates over mitigation and adaptation.
Contact: Laura Clayton, tel: 020 7973 3730; email: laura.clayton@english-heritage.org.uk

HELM

Following a 50 per cent increase in unique visits to the HELM website in the past year, work has begun on upgrading it to cope with the additional capacity required as part of Heritage Protection Reforms. Guidance, case studies and information on training events are being added all the time. During 2007–8 around 1,200 people received HELM training, the 2008–9 programme is in full swing, and a special programme of HPR-related training will be delivered from March 2009 onwards.
Contact: Rosy Phillipson, tel: 020 7973 3844; email: rosemary.phillipson@english-heritage.org.uk

The National Monuments Record
News and Events

The NMR is the public archive of English Heritage. It includes more than 10 million archive items (photographs, drawings, reports and digital data) relating to England's historic environment. Catalogues are available online and in the NMR search room in Swindon. Contact the NMR at:
NMR Enquiry & Research Services, National Monuments Record, Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ
tel: 01793 414600
fax: 01793 414606
email: nmrinfo@english-heritage.org.uk
web: www.english-heritage.org.uk/nmr

The following information gives details of new web resources and exhibitions.

Online Resources from the NMR

PastScape

PastScape is the publicly accessible online version of the national database of monuments recorded at the NMR. It is regularly updated, and three recent projects – Seaside Heritage, Sporting Heritage, and Gentlemen's Clubs of London – have enhanced particular sets of monuments.

Seaside Heritage

A recent project has been undertaken to create and enhance NMR records for seaside-related buildings such as pleasure piers, seaside pavilions, winter gardens, hotels and fairgrounds. English seaside resorts form an essential part of our cultural identity and contain some of the finest and most unique entertainment buildings in Britain. Nearly 230 monument records have been created or enhanced using the latest sources, including recent English Heritage survey work and publications.

Sporting Heritage: Played in Britain

Based on the English Heritage publication series *Played in Britain* (www.playedinbritain.co.uk), a project has been undertaken to enhance NMR records for a range of sports venues in Birmingham and Liverpool. These include monuments of the 20th century or earlier such as swimming baths, golf and cricket pavilions, football grounds, bowling clubs and greyhound stadiums. England pioneered many sports that are today played throughout the world, for example football, rugby (league and union), cricket, tennis (real and lawn), hockey, billiards and snooker. As such, many of our sports venues are of considerable historical interest and architectural merit.

The Gentlemen's Clubs of London

Recent enhancement work on the exclusive (at least for women) milieu of gentlemen's clubs in London provides a glimpse into a world seemingly past. The enhancement covered not only famous clubs like the Athenaeum but also less well-known ones like the Den Norske Klub housed within the premises of the Naval and Military Club. The earliest clubs, of which one of the oldest is the White's Club, were often established in chocolate and coffee houses in the late 17th and 18th centuries. Clubs were founded for different reasons: the East India Sports Club was originally established for employees of the East India Company as a place to go while they were on leave or after their retirement from India.

These records are all publicly accessible online via *PastScape* (www.pastscape.org.uk). For further information contact: Robin Page, Projects Team Officer, tel: 01793 414617; email: robin.page@english-heritage.org.uk

The pier, Lytham St Anne's, Lancashire. (Monument Record 39248)
Photo: Peter Williams, 1999

Villa Park, Birmingham, home of Aston Villa FC, photographed from the air in 2005. (Monument Record 1261871)
© English Heritage.NMR
NMR 24010/13

NMR Archives

St Pancras Station

Photography of railway stations forms a significant part of the John Gay Collection. John Gay's photography of railway stations was undertaken during the 1960s and early 1970s, primarily for the book *London's Historic Railway Stations* with text by John Betjeman (published by John Murray, 1972). His photographs of St Pancras Station highlight the value of his work in offering a glimpse of the past – in this instance, the station before its re-launch for a new age of rail travel in November 2007.

As this collection is researched and catalogued, the photographs are made available on *Viewfinder* (www.english-heritage.org.uk/viewfinder), an online picture resource drawing on the NMR's national photographic collections.

For further information about the John Gay Collection, tel: 01793 414 600; or email: nmrinfo@english-heritage.org.uk

St Pancras Station, Euston Road, London.
Photo: John Gay, 1960–72
© English Heritage.
NMR AA062189

Exhibitions

The following exhibitions of NMR archive photographs will be shown at the Museum of Cannock Chase, Hednesford, Staffordshire.

Changing Landscapes: 9 August–12 October 2008

Coal formed the backbone of Britain's Industrial Revolution. At the height of the industry's prosperity in 1913, 2,600 pits employed 1.1 million men. Now there are only four deep mines left in operation. This collaborative exhibition between the NMR and the National Coal Mining Museum for England offers case studies of coal mines from six English regions showing landscape use and change from the industry's heyday to its demise.

A seacoaler at work, Lynemouth, Northumberland.
Photo: James O Davies, 1993 © Crown copyright.NMR AA93/02652

England at Leisure: May–end December 2008

The wonderfully evocative photographs in this exhibition explore leisure time from the 1860s up until the mid-20th century. With images ranging from Victorian ladies riding bicycles in Hyde Park to photographs of holidaying at an English seaside resort in the 1950s, this selection has something for everyone. Encompassing a mix of sports, traditional fetes and fairs, the new entertainment industry of cinema, theatre-going and other hobbies, these pictures show the new-found pleasures of a nation breaking free from the constraints of work and beginning to enjoy itself.

For further information contact either the Museum on 01543 877666 or Anne Woodward, NMR Exhibition Manager, tel: 01793 414613; email: anne.woodward@english-heritage.org.uk

Legal Developments

Demolition of a listed building without consent

Mike Harlow, *Legal Director, English Heritage*

The demolition of most buildings does not require planning permission. That is, of course, one of the fundamental justifications for the imposition of the separate consent regime of 'listed building consent'.

Some alterations do not affect the special interest and therefore do not require consent. Demolition clearly does affect the special interest, so consent is required in any event.

It is an offence to fail to obtain consent but there is a defence that, in effect, means that consent is not required in some limited circumstances. The defence applies when:

- works were urgently necessary in the interests of safety or health or for the preservation of the building
- it was not practicable to secure such by repair or temporary support or shelter
- the works carried out were limited to the minimum measures immediately necessary AND
- notice in writing justifying in detail the carrying out of the works was given to the local planning authority as soon as reasonably practicable.

If you satisfy these tests, you could potentially demolish an entire listed building without consent – a serious matter. If you do not, you may be guilty of an offence – a serious matter also! It is a knife-edge test.

> This case is cool-headed in acknowledging that safety does not require the eradication of risk.

The High Court recently ran its finger along the blade in the case of *Derby City Council –v– Anthony* [2008] EWHC 895 (QB), [2008] All ER (D) 368 (Apr). Derby Hippodrome is an early 20th-century grade II-listed theatre that had been out of use for some time and was in a dilapidated state. The owner commenced demolition works without consent in the belief that the above tests were satisfied from the point of view risk to health and safety. Derby City Council did not entirely agree with that assessment and while the works were progressing applied for an injunction to prevent further works. By that stage most of the roof had gone and significant parts of the elevations.

The engineers giving evidence disagreed on the stability of the building and consequent risk to safety. One key element of the debate was the balcony that had clearly been damaged during the works to the roof. The defendant said that it was not capable of proper analysis and hence one should assume the worst. The judge rejected this, saying one should neither assume the worst or the best case, but make an informed judgment on the facts or proper inferences from the facts.

In the judge's view, the defendant failed to establish that the building was at substantial risk of collapse 'within a timescale measured in months'. An interim injunction was ordered to prevent further works without consent.

The use of the phrase 'substantial risk' is noteworthy. Every structure has some risk of failure at any time, if only in extraordinary weather conditions. Safety cannot be guaranteed.

The judge examined the matter in a 'timescale measured in months' because that is the likely time it would take to have a listed building consent application decided. The fact that listed building consent cannot be given instantly is the reason, of course, why this defence exists in the first place.

An additional factor in the judge's decision was that the city council promised to properly police an exclusion zone around the site. This may not make the public safe against complete collapse, but it would prevent risk from falling debris. Safety is about risk to people, not risk to buildings alone.

The judge said his decision did not mean the owner should not be given consent for the building's removal on health-and-safety grounds. He was only deciding whether the works could proceed immediately or the owner be forced into making a listed building consent application.

Safety can be emotive. It is a common criticism of modern society that we often take a negative approach to safety that recoils from any risk without analysing the size of the risk and balancing it against the consequences of avoiding it. This case is cool-headed in acknowledging that safety does not require the eradication of risk.

The owner has now applied for listed building consent to demolish the remainder of the building.

New publications from English Heritage

Publishing in the digital age

Academic publishing is changing fast. Today, more and more titles are available either online or on the basis of 'print on demand' (PoD). As one of the UK's leading publishers of archaeological and architectural research, English Heritage has recently launched its own major PoD publication programme in cooperation with the digital printing company 4edge Ltd.

The quality of digital print has improved tremendously and it is now possible to produce high-resolution, full-colour books to rival traditional print runs, but at the same time at reduced prices. Using economically priced paper stock and binding, often even including foldout figures or folded maps, it has been possible to keep the price low for both English Heritage and its customers.

English Heritage's new PoD programme has two main strands: entirely new titles and reprints of important but out-of-print monographs and research reports. Details of all the available books are available from www.english-heritage.org.uk. Once selected, a printed and bound copy of any PoD title can be ordered from English Heritage Postal Sales or through a local bookstore.

New PoD publications

Bayliss, Alex, **Ramsey**, Christopher Bronk, **Cook**, Gordon and **van der Plicht**, Johannes. *Radiocarbon Dates: From Samples Funded by English Heritage under the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund 2002–4*. ISBN 978 1 905624 96 6; PC 51091; £15

Bayliss, Alex, **Cook**, Gordon, **Ramsey**, Christopher Bronk, **van der Plicht**, Johannes and **McCormac**, Gerry. *Radiocarbon Dates: From Samples Funded by English Heritage under the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund 2004–7*. ISBN 978 1 84802 004 7; PC 51409; £15

Deegan, Alison and **Foard**, Glenn. *Mapping Ancient Landscapes in Northamptonshire*. ISBN 978 1 905624 42 3; PC 51253; £40

Harding, Jan and **Healy**, Frances. *A Neolithic and Bronze Age Landscape in Northamptonshire: The Raunds Area Project*. Volume 1: ISBN 978 1 873592 99 1; PC 51176; £45. Volume 2: ISBN 978 1 848020 05 4; PC 51410; [in production, £ tbc]

Herring, Peter, **Sharpe**, Adam, **Smith**, John R and **Giles**, Colum. *Bodmin Moor: An Archaeological Survey, Volume 2: The Industrial and Post-medieval Landscapes.* ISBN 978 1 873592 62 5; PC 50100; £65

Mercer, Roger and **Healy**, Frances. *Hambledon Hill, Dorset, England. Excavation and Survey of a Neolithic Monument Complex and its Surrounding Landscape.* ISBN 978 1 905624 59 1; PC 51319; £ tbc

Payne, Andrew, **Corney**, Mark and **Cunliffe**, Barry. *The Wessex Hillforts Project: Extensive Survey of Hillfort Interiors in Central Southern England.* ISBN 978 1 873592 85 4; PC 51072; £25

PC = English Heritage Product Code
All titles are paperback unless otherwise stated

Re-published and available as PoD

Barber, Martyn, **Field**, David and **Topping**, Peter. *The Neolithic Flint Mines of England*. ISBN 978 1 873592 41 0; PC 51446; [in production, £ tbc]

Bayley, Justine (ed). *Science in Archaeology: An Agenda for the Future.* ISBN 1 85074 693 1; PC 51361; £20

Brereton, Christopher. *The Repair of Historic Buildings: Advice on Principles and Methods.* ISBN 1 85074 527 7; PC 50406; £10

Brown, Andrew. *The Rows of Chester: The Chester Rows Research Project*. ISBN 1 85074 629 X; PC 51360; £25

Cleal, R M J, **Walker**, K E and **Montague**, R. *Stonehenge in its Landscape: Twentieth-century Excavations.* ISBN 1 85074 605 2; PC 51364; hbk £60

Cocroft, Wayne. *Dangerous Energy: The Archaeology of Gunpowder and Military Explosives Manufacture.* ISBN 1 85074 710 0; PC 51359; £35

Cramp, Rosemary. *Wearmouth and Jarrow Monastic Sites.* Volume 1: ISBN 978 1 873592 93 9; PC 51089. Volume 2: ISBN 978 1 873592 94 6; PC 51090. [£ tbc]

Johnson, Nicholas and **Rose**, Peter. *Bodmin Moor: An Archaeological Survey, Volume 1: The Human Landscape to c 1800*. ISBN 978 1 848020 09 2; PC 51406; £35

Marsden, Peter. *Ships of the Port of London: First to Eleventh Centuries AD.* ISBN 1 85074 470 X; PC 51362; £25

Marsden, Peter. *Ships of the Port of London: Twelfth to Seventeenth Centuries AD.* ISBN 1 85074 513 7; PC 51363; £25

Wilmott, Tony. *Birdoswald: Excavations at a Roman Fort on Hadrian's Wall*. ISBN 1 85074 646 X; PC 51358; £50

Manchester's Northern Quarter
by Simon Taylor and Julian Holder

This book raises awareness of the wide range and varied character of the historic buildings that make up the Northern Quarter's townscape, and the forces and trends which contributed to its appearance. It also shows how the area has evolved over the last two and a half centuries, forming the historic backdrop to everyday life in a vibrant and culturally distinctive quarter of the city.

The book will have a broad appeal, both to the established urban community and to those with an interest in the city of Manchester and its buildings.

PUBLICATION DATE: August 2008
PRICE: £7.99 ISBN: 978 1 873592 84 7
PRODUCT CODE 50946 Paperback, 88pp

Weymouth's Seaside Heritage
by Allan Brodie, Colin Ellis, David Stuart and Gary Winter

Weymouth has been a popular seaside resort for more than 250 years. Likened to Montpellier and Naples for its natural beauty and healthy climate, it received the endorsement of King George III. Alongside its stunning legacy of seafront terraces, Weymouth boasts an eclectic mix of medieval town planning, harbour-side industry and former military sites, many of whose buildings have been redeveloped to serve as amenities and accommodation for residents and visitors.

As well as describing the colourful story of Weymouth's seaside history, this book demonstrates how the historic environment can play an important part in the future development of the

town – not least because Weymouth and Portland will be hosting the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games sailing events.

PUBLICATION DATE: September 2008
PRICE: £7.99 ISBN: 978 1 848020 08 52
PRODUCT CODE 51429 Paperback, 80pp

Publications may be ordered from English Heritage Postal Sales, c/o Gillards, Trident Works, March Lane, Temple Cloud, Bristol BS39 5AZ; tel: 01761 452966; fax: 01761 453408; email: ehsales@gillards.com

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