

National Monuments Record

News and events



ENGLISH HERITAGE

NATIONAL MONUMENTS RECORD

The NMR is the public archive of English Heritage. It includes around 10 million archive items (photographs, drawings, reports and digital data) relating to England's historic environment.

On the web

Access to Archives

NMR archive catalogues on the web

Catalogue entries for nearly 200,000 photographs and other archive items held in the NMR are now available over the Internet. In November 2002, catalogues for 132 collections were mounted on the *Access to Archives* site at www.a2a.pro.gov.uk. These include major

Access to Archives is a nation-wide initiative to make archives catalogues available over the Internet, and the NMR catalogues join archives data from 198 other repositories all over England. This means that searchers do not have to know where archives are held in order to access data about them: a search on 'Stonehenge', for example, reveals references in archives held in 13 different repositories from Manchester to the Isle of Wight. It also enables 'virtual' reunification of collections that have been split up: for example, part of the important collection of photographs taken by the Leicester photographer Alfred Newton is held in the Leicestershire Record Office and part by the NMR. Catalogues of both parts are now available through *Access to Archives*, so a search on 'Charwelton Station', Northamptonshire, reveals photographs of the station taken by Newton on the same occasion in 1901, some now held in Leicestershire and some at the NMR.

For more information, please contact Gillian Sheldrick on 01793 414635 or email gillian.sheldrick@english-heritage.org.uk

ViewFinder

On-line image resource for England's history

The NMR has just launched *ViewFinder*, a new on-line picture resource, in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and with funding from the New Opportunities Fund. It comprises a searchable gallery of 20,000 historic photographs supported by 60 'stories' or photo essays that help to set the images in a wider context.

Two collections are available on the site: the Henry W Taunt Collection and 'England at Work'. Henry Taunt was an Oxford-based photographer active from 1860 to 1922. He was especially interested in Oxford, the River Thames, and customs and traditions. In partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, which owns part of the collection, all 14,000 of Taunt's surviving photographs have been made available. By contrast, 'England at Work' is a thematic selection of 5,000 photographs from the



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An employee of the Great Central Railway sticking up a poster for the County Show outside the waiting room at Charwelton Station, Northamptonshire. Photographed by Alfred Newton & Son

collections such as the Nigel Temple collection of postcards of parks and gardens, the work of major 20th-century photographers Hallam Ashley and York & Sons, the Jackson Stops sales particulars collection and many smaller photographic collections. Though the images themselves do not appear on the site (though this may change in the future), users can now search for any words contained in the catalogue descriptions, including place names, subjects and people. The catalogues available at the moment cover just a small proportion of the 10 million items held in the NMR, but additional catalogues will be added at a later date.



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In addition to country houses, castles and churches, there are some more unusual listed structures such as lavatories, lamp posts and pigsties. The *Images of England* website provides a key resource for conservation officers, heritage professionals, teachers and students as well as ensuring that future generations can enjoy the heritage that surrounds us today.

A block of red-hot steel is hammered to reduce impurities at Bath Steel Works, Sheffield. Photographed in 2001 for a study of the Sheffield Metal Trades

For more information on the project, please visit www.imagesofengland.org.uk or contact Alexandra Saxon on 01793 414779 or email alexandra.saxon@english-heritage.org.uk

photoLondon

NMR takes the lead in a pioneering regional web project

The *photoLondon* website www.photolondon.org.uk was officially launched at a press event at Westminster City Hall on 3 October 2003. The NMR has led the way in establishing this cross-sectoral project to promote Greater London's public photographic collections. Opened by the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Frances Blois, with guests from funding bodies, founding institutions and the media, this was a highly successful event. Our guest speaker, English Heritage's Commissioner Loyd Grossman, said:

I'm delighted to lend my support to the *photoLondon* project. This invaluable tool unveils a smorgasbord of delights for lovers of London and of photography.

Five-rise locks and overflow channel, Leeds and Liverpool Canal, Bingley, West Yorkshire. Taken as part of the Images of England project

© Mr Alan V Whetton LRPS



NMR's extensive collections to illustrate English working life since the Industrial Revolution. Its remit is the whole country and the whole time span of photography from 1850 to the present.

These two collections are a first step in making the NMR's photographic archive collection available to everyone via the Internet. More collections will be added to *ViewFinder* as they become available.

Launched on 6 March 2003, *ViewFinder* has already attracted considerable interest. In the words of two visitors:

The concept of the project is really fantastic. I have been looking at the site and telling family members to look also. It is this sort of thing that allows me to justify spending money on a broadband connection!

This is an amazing project and a good example of the Internet providing original added value. Congratulations to all of you.

Please visit the site at www.english-heritage.org.uk/viewfinder

Images of England



Images of England, funded jointly by English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund, aims to create a 'point in time' photographic record of England's 370,000 listed buildings. Each photograph, taken by a

volunteer photographer, is matched with its list description and displayed on the *Images of England* website. Currently there are over 70,000 images available on the site, with more being added on a regular basis.

National Monuments Record

English Heritage Commissioner
Lloyd Grossman speaking at the
launch of photoLondon



As lead body, the English Heritage NMR has initiated this ground-breaking collaboration between London's libraries, museums, record offices and national institutions that hold photographs of Greater London. The site offers users an electronic gateway to 60 public collections that collectively hold over 20 million images of London, and it provides interesting exhibitions and features on the history of photography. For peers and partners, it offers a vehicle to aid communication and share expertise.

Westminster Council's cabinet member for Leisure and Lifelong Learning, Councillor Catherine Longworth, said:

The *photo*London website is fascinating and very easy to use. Anyone with access to the Internet can now easily discover where to find images of London from throughout the photographic age.

Standards

It's MAGIC!

Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside

MAGIC was the winner of the Geographic Information Systems category of the IM2002 awards, sponsored by the Ordnance Survey and the Association of Geographic Information Central Government, at IGGI (the Inter-

governmental Group on Geographic Information) in 2002.

MAGIC is a one-stop shop for information about rural land-based schemes and definitive rural designation boundaries. This information is available in one place for the first time at www.magic.gov.uk. At the formal launch on 25 July 2002, the Rt Hon Alun Michael, Minister of State for Rural Affairs, highlighted the importance of projects such as MAGIC in enabling delivery of environmental information.

Over 50 individual data sets are available, grouped into six broad categories:

- Joint Character Areas, such as Countryside Character Areas
- Classifications of Countryside, such as DEFRA Agricultural Land Classification
- Rural Designations, including English Heritage data sets such as Scheduled Monuments and Protected Wreck Sites
- Rural Schemes, such as Countryside Stewardship agreements
- Administrative Boundaries, including departmental and regional structures
- Habitat Inventories, such as Ancient Woodland.

The project has been funded by Invest to Save, a central government budget created to help government departments work together in innovative ways. Led by DEFRA's Geographic Information Unit, its partners include the Forestry Commission, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (formerly the DTLR), the Countryside Agency, the Environment Agency, English Nature and English Heritage. There are plans to widen the partnership base to other government departments and agencies as well as to provide access to the Information Society.

The River Thames at Maidenhead,
photographed in 1883 by Henry
Taunt. A set of eel bucks (fish
traps) can be seen next to the
boathouse in the foreground, with
Maidenhead Bridge in the distance



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English Heritage contributes to the project at a number of different levels. As a member of the Project Board, it is responsible for guiding the direction and management of the project. It has also supplied data sets – Scheduled Monuments, Parks and Gardens, World Heritage Sites, Protected Wreck Sites and Historic Battlefields – and has participated in the development and evaluation of the system.

Jeff West, English Heritage's Policy Director, has emphasised the benefits to English Heritage, including casework and advisory services, in having access to MAGIC as a knowledge base and in being able to share information with others. The future direction of the project is under discussion, and it is hoped that the information base will be expanded to include Listed Buildings and also other data sets from the NMR.

For further information about MAGIC, please contact the NMR Data Services on 01793 414883 or at dsu.info@english-heritage.org.uk

The Heritage Illustrated Thesaurus

The *Heritage Illustrated Thesaurus* (HITITE) was developed by English Heritage in partnership with Adlib Information Systems Ltd as a European Commission-funded project.

Through the use of direct questions and visual representations, the search mechanism presents heritage terminology in an easy-to-use way. A prototype web-based visual search mechanism has been produced that allows users to explore thesaurus terminology (in this case, the Thesaurus of Monument Types) through the 'visualisation' of a monument's characteristics, while at the same time providing conventional word search facilities. The *Heritage Illustrated Thesaurus* meets the expectations of Internet users by prompting them to answer a short series of questions based upon their perception of a monument's form and function (shape, size, number of storeys, location). The answers given to these questions create a query that retrieves a selection of thesaurus terms that the user might need, each illustrated to help identify the monument type. Once chosen, the term can then be used to search further resources.

During the testing programme, the prototype was demonstrated to a range of potential users encompassing all ages and levels of expertise.

The overwhelming approval and enthusiasm expressed by the participants indicates that the *Heritage Illustrated Thesaurus* has the potential to satisfy a large and varied audience within the heritage community and beyond.

At an end-of-project review held by the European Commission in Luxembourg in February 2003, the Project was judged to have successfully proved that the concept of accessing heritage terminology through the use of visual cues was a practical contribution to the Information Society.

For more information and to view the prototype, please visit: www.heritage-thesauri.org.uk

Outreach

NMR Outreach offers a varied programme of workshops, tours, lectures, weekly classes and events designed to help participants make the best use of NMR resources for work, research or personal interest.

Short introductory tours to the National Monuments Record Centre in Swindon are available, and for those wishing to explore the resources in more detail, study days are organised on a number of different themes. All workshops start at 10am and finish by 4.30pm.

NMR resources for local history

Thursday 10 July
Thursday 20 November

NMR resources for archaeological desk-based assessments

Evaluate a site of proposed development using air photographs, archaeological data, surveys and other resources from the NMR.
Thursday 9 October

Using air photographs and maps for local history (in conjunction with Oxford University Department for Continuing Education)

This ten-week course will explore how evidence from air photographs may be combined with map and non-spatial data from a range of sources to bring together the two essential elements of local history: people and place.
10 weeks, Wednesdays 2-4pm, starting September/October

For further details, please contact Jane Golding:
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