

The National Monuments Record

News and events

The National Monuments Record (NMR) is the public archive of English Heritage. It includes more than 7 million archive items (photographs, drawings, reports and digital data) relating to England's historic environment. 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

Online resources from the NMR

PastScape

PastScape is English Heritage's online catalogue of archaeological and architectural monuments. The application is refreshed regularly with new data from the NMR's main monuments database: new thematic additions from enhancement projects are signposted on the What's New page of *PastScape*. Recent updates include the completed dataset of Second World War military airfields and related features with more than 1,100 new records, prompted by public interest in these modern military landscapes; 5,000 edited and improved existing records of monumental crosses, with tighter monument-type indexing in line with improved thesaurus definitions; and 40 new maritime records relating to shipwrecks caused by the great storm of 1703, the main source for which is a compilation of contemporary accounts by Daniel Defoe, better known as the author of *Robinson Crusoe*.

As well as adding new monument data resulting from feedback from *PastScape* users, the search tips and FAQ sections are being amended and some search mechanisms have been improved to make the site more user-friendly. *PastScape* can be accessed at www.pastscape.org.uk

ViewFinder

ViewFinder is an online picture resource drawing on the NMR's national photographic

collections. It contains more than 30,000 images, with a programme to add more each year. The Alfred Newton & Son collection of 3,900 photographs was added recently. Alfred Newton was a professional photographer who set up in Leicester in 1882; his son Sydney Newton continued the business until about 1950. The bulk of the material covers Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and the West Country, though other counties are also represented. The collection is best known for its unique coverage of the construction of the Great Central Railway and the surrounding villages between 1898 and 1907. (Much of the material relating to Leicestershire and to the railway itself is held by the Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland Record Office.) A selection of historic images from this collection has recently been published under the title *Railways and Rural Life*, by S W A Newton and the Great Central Railway (English Heritage with the Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland Record Office; price £17.99). *ViewFinder* can be accessed at www.english-heritage.org.uk/viewfinder

A signal box on the Great Central Railway at Grendon Underwood, Buckinghamshire, photographed by Sydney Newton. AA97/05277
Photographed: 1905.



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NMR cataloguing

Rupert Potter Collection

Research has proved that a recently catalogued collection of 295 prints was taken by Rupert Potter (1832–1914), a non-practising barrister, amateur photographer and father of Beatrix. Rupert Potter and his wife Helen shared a keen interest in the arts, and counted amongst their friends several politicians and authors as well as artists such as Sir John Everett Millais.

Several prints show scenes associated with Beatrix Potter's life. She was born on 28 July 1866 at 2 Bolton Gardens, Kensington, and one

Scaffolding erected around the church of St Martin in the Fields, Trafalgar Square, for the coronation of George V. The scene was photographed by Rupert Potter: OP03608 Photographed: 2 June 1911.



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photograph shows the view across the square from the window of this house. Others show views around the family's holiday home, Ees Wyke, at Near Sawrey in the Lake District. In later life, Beatrix purchased land in the village, including the house at Hill Top.

The majority of the photographs were taken in Greater London and show a wide variety of scenes, from construction work in progress at the Royal Automobile Club in Pall Mall to scaffolding being erected in Trafalgar Square in preparation for the coronation of King George V in 1911. Other prints show a number of parades around the capital, new housing developments in north London, and the construction of the city's tramway. Scenes of animals and visitors at the Regent's Park Zoo illustrate the elegance of Edwardian costume.

'London Past and Present' album

The 'London Past and Present' album contains 44 sepia photographs of London scenes, mainly in Westminster and the City of London, and probably taken in the 1870s to early 1880s.

Several of the photographs are of particular interest and importance. These include two

views of Covent Garden Market at work with stacked boxes, people, porters and horse-drawn carts. Other rare photographs show the Law Courts formerly attached to Westminster Hall, demolished after the new Royal Courts of Justice were opened in 1882; the old Madame Tussaud's building of 1884, which burnt down in 1925; and Buckingham House on Pall Mall, which housed the War Office from the later 19th century until its demolition in 1908 to make way for the Royal Automobile Club.

Ralph Whitlock Albums

This pair of albums contains 224 photographs of town and country scenes in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire taken in about 1890 to 1910. The albums show street scenes, houses, farm buildings, mills, town and market halls and cottages. There is good coverage of building details such as chimneys, shop fronts, doorways, inn signs and cupolas.

Ralph Whitlock was not the photographer, but a respected author on rural matters, folklore and customs. It is thought that he was given the albums because of his reputation as a writer.

For further information about any of these catalogued collections please contact Michael Russell on 01793 414828.

NMR outreach

A varied programme of workshops, tours, lectures, weekly classes, and events is designed to help participants make the best use of NMR resources for work, research or personal interest. Short introductory tours to the NMR Centre are available, and for those wishing to explore the resources in more detail, study days are organised on a number of different themes.

For further information, please contact Elaine Davis, tel: 01793 414596; email: elaine.davis@english-heritage.org.uk

Right: *PastScape*: RAF Bicester, Oxfordshire, was first opened for use by the Royal Flying Corps in 1917. AA003353 Photographed: 2000.



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