

"Share Your Knowledge to Enrich the List"

Frequently I have been frustrated by the paucity of historic information about a listed building provided on the Historic England Web site. So it is very interesting to read of a project they plan to launch in May this year called "Share Your Knowledge to Enrich the List" which aims to harness online volunteer input to add contributions to the information given. For more information see <http://historicengland.org.uk/listing/enrich-the-list/>

This is just one of the many changes going on at Historic England since it split away from English Heritage last April. English Heritage has become a separate trust looking after the nation's stock of historic buildings such as Dover Castle, Battle Abbey, or Ironbridge. Historic England has remained as a governmental agency and maintains the records of Listed Buildings and other Designated Sites. It retains a regulatory role and also provides an advisory service on the maintenance of old buildings among its many other activities.

If you have not looked at Historic England's website recently it is worthwhile doing so. Not just to learn about the "Share your Knowledge to Enrich the List" project but to see the many other sources of information that it is now making available. This is part of a general strategy to involve the public much more and to seek to have a two-way communication with everyone whether they are interested in specific locations or more generally interested in Heritage conservation matters.

This theme of increasing participation spreads much wider than Historic England and is one part of the strategic priorities within "Heritage 2020" a cooperative venture succeeding the "National Heritage Protection Plan 2011-15". It is a major cross-sector collaboration initiative being delivered under the auspices of the Historic Environment Forum with participation by a number of national bodies, the Heritage Alliance, the Council of British Archaeology, Historic England, the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers, the National Trust, etc. It has the aim of maximising the public benefit of the historic environment, and achieving this as far as possible through cooperation between organisations and between them and members of the public, whether they are just interested in Heritage or are proactive and could be participating contributors.

What does this mean for you and for BAS?. It almost certainly means more opportunity to access more information but also opportunities to contribute data to the national record. Whether your interest is history, archaeology, or the social and natural environment you should see some benefit.

There is obviously one big proviso. You must be comfortable and confident online and able to access information and communicate through this means if you are to really gain the benefits these new developments can bring. BAS can help those not online to some extent by recording developments in this newsletter.

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