

Whose heritage?

Stories of Britain's changing attitudes to heritage



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The Open University is creating a map featuring your ideas about heritage.

What would you save?

Why not participate by visiting open2.net and tell us about a place, object or practice that means something to your sense of identity and community. The site also features a 'how to' guide and links to the OU Creative Archive site where you'll find useful video clips ranging from the historic to country landscapes, urban environment to the seaside.

Whose heritage?

This booklet accompanies the BBC2 series in which we wish to build a sense of identity Saving Britain's Past. The series explores in the present for the future. Heritage can be Britain's changing attitudes towards heritage thought of as being made up of 'objects' and over the course of the twentieth century, 'practices'. 'Objects of heritage' are artefacts, focusing on key 'moments' that precipitated buildings, sites and landscapes. They are change and debate. The subjects of the the things we pay attention to because they seven programmes in Saving Britain's Past are still meaningful to us, not because they are a starting point for exploring some of tell great stories about the past but because the key questions and debates surrounding we use them to tell stories about ourselves. Britain's heritage that arose during the 'Practices of heritage' are languages, music second part of the twentieth century. We and community celebrations (in other hope you will be inspired to explore your words, customs and habits) which, although community's heritage and to think about intangible, help to create our collective how the decisions we make about what to social memory and bonds. We use objects of save from the past influence who we become heritage and practices of heritage to shape our ideas about who we are as nations. in the future. Heritage is not the same thing as communities and individuals.

Heritage is not the same thing as inheritance, but it does touch on a sense of what has come down to us from the past that we value and wish to pass on. In this sense, heritage has a lot to do with the ways

Casualties of war?

Cultural heritage places are, by their very nature, places that are of importance to a country's sense of morale and nationhood. So it may come as no surprise that heritage sites have often been the focus of intentional or unintentional damage in times of war.



CIRCU



After the night raid, the spires of Coventry Cathedral, 1940

The Baedeker Blitz

The 'Baedeker Blitz' or 'Baedeker raids' are terms used to describe a series of retaliatory bombing raids undertaken by the German air force on English cities. These raids were in response to the bombing of the cities of Lübeck and Rostock in March 1942 during the Second World War. In his book, Among the Dead Cities, A.C. Grayling (2006: 51) writes that Baron Gustav Braun von Sturm, a German propagandist, is reported to have said on 24 April 1942: 'We shall go out and bomb every building in Britain marked with three stars in the Baedeker Guide [the German tourist guide to Britain].' The raids appear to have been an attempt to lower British morale by attacking notable scenic cities, which otherwise had no strategic or military importance.

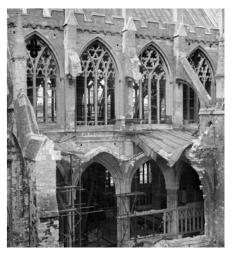
The Luftwaffe bombed Exeter. Bath. Norwich and York on successive nights from 23 to 28 April. Norwich and Exeter were targeted again on 29 April and 3 May, respectively. A second series of bombings were carried out on Canterbury on 31 May, 2 June and 6 June. This is thought to have been sparked by the bombing of Cologne by the RAF.

A number of important buildings, including the Guildhall in York and the Assembly Rooms in Bath, were destroyed or badly damaged during the Baedeker raids, in which over 1,600 civilians were killed, another 1,760 were injured and over 50,000 houses were destroyed.

The bombing raids on Bath and the other cities during the Second World War were important. They made people realise that buildings are part of our heritage and once lost are gone forever. This led to the development of the first system for listing heritage buildings in the UK, which was made possible under a provision in the Town and Country Planning Act 1947.

But this acknowledgement that buildings embody aspects of our cultural heritage was not confined to the UK. There was a global outcry over the massive destruction of cultural heritage sites during the Second World War, which ultimately led to the development of The Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (or the 'Hague Convention') adopted at The Hague (Netherlands) on 14 May 1954.

The Hague Convention specifies that signatories must refrain from damaging cultural properties in their own or other countries' territories during times of armed conflict, and makes any act directed by way of reprisals against cultural property a violation of the



Bomb damage to Exeter Cathedral

convention. The Hague Convention was later influential in the development of The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO in 1972, which established the World Heritage List.

Despite the existence of the Hague Convention, cultural heritage sites continue to be the focus for destruction during times of armed conflict and military occupation. Most recently, some have questioned whether certain actions undertaken as part of the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 should be considered a violation of the Convention. Certainly, there have been reports that much damage has been done to the ancient city of Babylon, which was used as a US military base following the invasion.

Heritage or eyesore?

The listing of postwar housing estates in Britain has attracted much controversy and public comment. To some, these buildings are not only ugly, but represent the failure of a social experiment in high density public housing. To others, they are part of the material history of the working classes in Britain, and represent some of the most ambitious architectural monuments of the twentieth century. Still others cannot accept that buildings constructed so recently could form part of the canon of the nation's heritage.

What do you think?



The Park Hill Estate. Sheffield

Built between 1956 and 1961, the estate was designed by architects Jack Lynn and Ivor Smith for Sheffield City Architects' Dept. Amidst controversy, the estate was given Grade II* listing by English Heritage in 1998. Its main architectural merits include its use of the 'streets in the sky' scheme with long deck access passages, its scale and bold use of concrete frames, and the way its landscaping makes use of its sloping site above the city.



The Barbican

The Barbican, **City of London**

The Barbican was given Grade II listing by English Heritage in 2001. Designed by the architects Peter Hugh Girard Chamberlin, Geoffrey Powell and Christopher Bon, this residential estate was built between 1965 and 1973 and consists of 13 terrace blocks, grouped around a lake and green squares built adjacent to and incorporating the Barbican complex (which features the Barbican Arts Centre, the Museum of London, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, the Barbican public library). At 42 storeys and 123 metres (404 ft) in height, the estate also contains three of the tallest residential tower blocks in London. The English Heritage listing refers to the entire complex.

English Heritage¹ notes its main claims to special architectural significance include its ambitious scale and the architectural boldness of its towers, walkways and use of concrete.

a radical departure in design from part of the twentieth century.

upon Tyne



Byker Estate

Byker Estate, Newcastle

Parts of the Byker Estate were given Grade II* and Grade II listings by English Heritage in 2007. It has also been placed on UNESCO's list of outstanding twentieth century buildings. Designed by Ralph Erskine for the Newcastle Corporation and built between 1978 and 1981, the award winning Byker Wall consists of a long unbroken block of 620 maisonettes designed with complex, textured facades and incorporating colourful brick, wood and plastic panels.

English Heritage¹ notes its main claims to special architectural significance include its community-led development; its style of 'romantic pragmatism' representing a humanising approach through the use of vernacular details and materials; its sophistication of layout and its dramatic layout exploiting its unique topography. It is seen as representing other brutalist high rise council estate buildings built in Britain in the second



Spa Green Estate

Spa Green Estate, **Finsbury, London Borough** of Islington

The Spa Green Estate was given Grade II* listing by English Heritage in 1998. Designed by the architects Jeremy Bailey, Berthold Lubetkin and Stephen James Skinner, it was constructed between 1935 and 1946.

English Heritage¹ notes its main claims to special architectural significance include its design by a major modernist architect (Berthold Lubetkin); its existence as an example of very early postwar housing; the architectural interest of its elevations and its structural innovation in the use of box frame construction designed by the renowned Anglo-Danish engineer Sir Ove Arup. This is a method of construction using concrete in which pre-constructed 'rooms' are stacked horizontally and vertically together to create an overall structural frame for the building.

Heritage – people or buildings?

One of the great heritage planning victories of the 1970s was the battle to save Covent Garden Piazza in central London. Originally the site of a flower, fruit and vegetable market dating back to the 1500s, in 1974 the market relocated to Nine **Elms and became New Covent Garden Market**, leaving the former site vacant. Plans to demolish many of the buildings and redevelop the area were fiercely opposed and eventually dropped. Although the battle to save the site was successful. some people have said the new retail and commercial incarnation of Covent Garden is like a hollow shell in comparison with the lively, rowdy marketplace it once was.

What is the relationship between heritage and people? And how can we conserve this 'intangible' heritage?



Covent Garden. London

Intangible heritage

People tend to think of 'heritage' as being of the past but intangible cultural heritage is like a living thing. It changes over time, almost imperceptibly, but it's what makes each country or community unique. To try and preserve this uniqueness, in 2003 UNESCO adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The Convention describes intangible cultural heritage as being all the different things that enrich our lives, such as language, music, theatre, religious practices and festivals, community events traditional skills. folklore about nature and the universe - the list is vast. There's lots of information on their website

www.unesco.org/culture/ about the things we should be trying to preserve for future generations. Examples of intangible British heritage include the Notting Hill Carnival, and endangered languages, such as Cornish, Manx and Welsh.



Market porter, Covent Garden Market, 1970



Notting Hill Carnival participant

Notting Hill Carnival

Active recruiting in the West Indies during the 1950s by the National Health Service and British Rail led to a wave of migration from the Caribbean to Britain. One of the areas settled by people from Barbados and Trinidad was Notting Hill Gate in west London. Riots occurred here in 1958 after serious attacks on West Indian residents by white youths. In response to these riots, in the early 1960s a carnival was held in Notting Hill as a way for the British African Caribbean community to assert a sense of pride and kinship, as well as to promote unity between British African Caribbeans and other Londoners. Today, the Notting Hill Carnival is held annually and is the largest street festival outside Brazil The Carnival, although intangible, is integrally linked to the heritage of Notting Hill.

Language and heritage

Although language is one of the key 'intangible' aspects of cultural heritage, some 3,000 languages worldwide are thought to be in danger of disappearing. UNESCO publish an Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing. It hopes the Atlas will make governments, the people using the endangered languages and the general public aware that many languages could become extinct if more isn't done to encourage their use. UNESCO also use the Atlas as a tool to keep track of which languages are being used less and which are spreading more widely around the world

You may be surprised to learn that for 2009 the Atlas lists nine UK languages as being in danger of disappearing. These include Alderney French, Guernsey French, Irish, Jersey French, Scots, Scottish Gaelic, Traditional Cornish, Traditional Manx and Welsh.



A multitude of bilingual road signs

A different class of heritage?

'The Destruction of the Country House' exhibition held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1974 told the story of the loss of some of the nation's grandest buildings. The exhibition highlighted the plight of the country house and appealed to the nation to get behind the conservation of this aspect of 'their' heritage. It conveyed its message using a huge collection of photographs of more than 1,400 lost country houses. With over 42.000 visitors, it was the most visited exhibition at the museum that year and the accompanying **BBC** documentary was watched by more than 4 million people. This was the first time that buildings had been championed as worthy of the same preservation previously given to individual works of art in a museum gallery. Public support for the conservation of country houses swelled. National Trust membership rocketed from 226.000 in 1971 to over one million in 1981. Today, approximately 700 country houses are open to the public (600 are private houses and around 100 belong to the National Trust).

Despite this heritage victory, some people have questioned whether country houses are an appropriate symbol of British heritage and nationhood. Country houses, they say, represent the inherited wealth of the British upper classes; a wealth often associated with repression and oppression at home and abroad.

What of the heritage of 'ordinary' people? Opposite are some of the places that have preserved the heritage of the 'everyday' in an attempt to redress this balance in representation.



House' exhibition held at the V&A in 1974



John Lennon's childhood home

John Lennon's childhood home, South Liverpool

At first glance, people might be surprised to know that this unassuming semidetached suburban house in South Liverpool is a National Trust property. 'Mendips', at 251 Menlove Avenue, was the childhood home of the famous Beatles singer John Lennon. He lived there with his Aunt Mimi from 1945 to 1963.

Lennon's widow. Yoko Ono. bought the property and donated it to the National Trust, who opened it to the public in 2003. The house has been restored to reflect its use and style during the 1950s, when John Lennon lived there.

The National Trust have owned Sir Paul McCartney's childhood home, 20 Forthlin Road, Allerton, Liverpool since 1995.



Miss Toward's Tenement

Miss Toward's Tenement, Glasgow

This small four-room tenant flat at 145 Buccleuch Street, central Glasgow is curated by the National Trust for Scotland. The building is in a red sandstone terrace of tenements built four floors high with two flats on each floor. The first floor apartment was the home of Miss Agnes Toward, who moved there in 1911. The four rooms leading off the central hall are small but elegant, particularly the parlour with its marble chimeypiece, rosewood piano and large rug.

The tenement, typical of those in which many Scots lived during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was built in 1892, the year that legislation required landlords to provide indoor toilets.

The National Trust for Scotland displays an exhibition about Miss Toward's life story in a separate tenement.



The Workhouse

The Workhouse. **Nottinghamshire**

The Workhouse in Southwell. Nottinghamshire was purchased by the National Trust in 1997. Built in 1824 by the Reverend John Becher, it introduced a revolutionary system of welfare that was later adopted nationwide after the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834. Workhouses provided housing for the poor, but only in return for submission to a harsh regime that was intended to achieve moral improvement. In 1929 the New Poor Law system was abolished, but workhouses such as this one continued to provide housing for the poor into the 1970s and 1980s. One room in the Workhouse has been recreated to show how it looked in the 1980s when the Workhouse was used for temporary housing.

The Workhouse is an emotive place, full of the past lives of people on the point of destitution, who now feature in the National Trust's interpretation. Archives giving insights into who lived and worked here have been researched. This interest in previously unheard 'voices from the past' has been called 'hidden history' by the late historian Raphael Samuel

A World **Heritage Site?**

The Big Pit might at first seem to be an odd choice for a World Heritage Site, but the Welsh Mining Museum sits on the edge of the Blaenavon World Heritage Site, one of several industrial sites in the UK listed by World Heritage. Blaenavon was the second such site to be placed on the World Heritage List when it was inscribed in 2000.

One of the early criticisms levelled at the World Heritage List after it was established in 1972 was that it did a poor job of representing the whole range of the world's heritage because it focused on the buildings associated with the lives of the elite social classes. The listing of industrial heritage places like Blaenavon was part of a move to broaden the range of places on the World Heritage List to make it more representative.



The Big Pit. Blaenavon

Other British Industrial World Heritage Sites

Ironbridge Gorge

The Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site is located in Telford in Shropshire. It is named for its famous iron bridge (the first of its kind in the world), built across the Severn River in 1779. It links the town of Broseley with the smaller mining town of Madeley and with what would become an industrial centre at Coalbrookdale. The site is closely associated with the birth of the Industrial Revolution. The World Heritage Site contains the remains of mines, foundries, factories, workshops, warehouses, ironmasters' and workers' housing, public buildings infrastructure and transport systems, as well as the traditional landscapes and forests of the Severn Gorge. Extensive collections of artefacts and archives relating to the individuals, processes and products that made the area so important to the history of the Industrial Revolution are also conserved within the World Heritage Site.



Ironbridge Gorge



Masson Mill, Derwent Valley

Derwent Valley Mills

The Derwent Valley Mills are considered to represent the origins of modern industrial towns. The World Heritage Site is located along 15 miles of the River Derwent Valley. During the eighteenth century, Richard Arkwright developed a new technology for spinning cotton, which led to industrial-scale production. This in turn meant many more houses had to be built for the large numbers of workers employed in the factories. The World Heritage Site contains a series of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century cotton mills and their associated workers' housing in their industrial landscape setting.

Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the landscape of Cornwall and West Devon was fundamentally transformed by the rapid growth of copper and tin mining. In the early nineteenth century, this region produced over two-thirds of the world's supply of copper. The Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site is actually several sites across the two counties. The chosen sites show evidence of underground mines, engine houses foundries, towns, ports and harbours associated with the mining industry. The history of this area is intimately linked with its mining heritage, and the technology associated with Cornish mining equipment, engines and engine houses was ultimately exported and used in mining operations throughout the world.



The pumping engine house at Wheal Peevor, near Redruth, Cornwal

An old crofters house at Rubha Coigach, Assynt, Scotland

Indigenous land rights in Scotland?

In 1992 the Assynt crofters banded together to purchase the land on which they had worked for generations, putting in place a series of developments that would ultimately lead to legislative change under the 2003 Scottish Land Reform Act. This legislation gives local communities the right to make pre-emptive bids to buy land that comes up for sale. It has led to a number of community buyouts of large areas of land in Scotland.

Crofters are tenant farmers who work small areas of land, largely on a subsistence basis. The land is often part of a large estate owned by a remote landholder. Many crofting families experienced forced relocation during the period of the Highland Clearances in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In making their appeal to raise funds for the first community buyout, the Assynt crofting community drew comparisons between their own and other indigenous land rights struggles throughout the world, and sought to get back land from which they had been forcibly ejected during the Clearances.

Indigenous land rights and heritage

In many settler societies, particularly Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada, the 1960s and 1970s saw a period of increased pressure from indigenous people. They wanted official recognition of their pre-colonial common law rights in land, and the ways in which these were illegally usurped by settlers. The 'land rights movement' saw indigenous people not just demanding recognition of their common law rights in land, they also wanted greater levels of control over the material remains of their past and requested museums and archaeologists to return or repatriate any indigenous human remains and cultural materials they held.

In New Zealand, the Waitangi Tribunal was established by an Act of Parliament in 1975. It was set up to investigate and make recommendations on claims brought by Indigenous Maori relating to actions of the Crown after 1840 that breached the promises made to them in the Treaty of Waitangi. In Australia,



A 20th-Century depiction of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, 1840



Francis Firebrace, Aboriginal artist, storyteller and political activist at the World Indigenous Land Rights celebration in London

the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act was enacted in 1976, and the Federal Native Title Act was passed in 1993. Both of these Acts recognised Indigenous Australians' rights to land, but like most other indigenous land acts, they require Aboriginal people to prove exclusive and continuous occupation of the land in question. In Canada, the key legal case relating to indigenous title is Delgamuukw v. British Columbia [1997] 3 S.C.R. 1010, in which the Supreme Court of Canada confirmed the existence of aboriginal title, and defined it as a right to the land itself, not just the right to hunt and fish on it. In the USA, the question of indigenous land rights is largely determined by treaties established at the time of European settlement.

Aboriginal title legislation varies across the countries mentioned above. But the new provisions for crofting communities to purchase land under the Scottish Land Reform Act do share some similarities with other aboriginal title legislation in the way the Act recognises common law rights to land. However, a major difference is that crofters are not required to prove exclusive and continuous occupation, and crofting communities must make an application to purchase land collectively. In the UK, Community Land Trusts provide another way in which community groups can purchase land collectively. For more information, see www.communitylandtrust.org.uk.

A multicultural heritage?

Acknowledging Britain's multicultural heritage is one way of celebrating Britain's diversity and the extensive contributions made by ethnic minorities to Britain's contemporary culture. Britain has a long history of both the migration of native-born Britons to other countries and the acceptance of immigrants from abroad.

Many ethnic minorities in Britain have occupied marginal spaces, and have adapted and reused existing places and buildings to create a sense of identity and community in a new country. Until recently, many such places have been ignored, as conservationists tend to favour those places which have been least modified. and are seen to be the most 'authentic'. However, this attitude has been changing, and places are now coming to be valued for the ways in which they embody the diverse histories of migration and change in Britain.



Formerly the Spitalfields Great Synagogue in Brick Lane, now a mosque

59 Brick Lane

London's East End has seen many migrants arrive, settle for a while and then move on, allowing new immigrants to come in and take their place. One building that reflects this changing cultural history is 59 Brick Lane. It has a complex history of adaptation and reuse and, it could be argued, this building, more than any other, embodies the East End's diverse heritage.

In the late seventeenth century Huguenot refugees fleeing religious persecution in France arrived in London. They settled in the East End and built many of the Georgian buildings that can be seen in the area today. The Huguenots wanted their own place of worship so, in 1743, they built a Protestant Church in Brick Lane. By the 1840s things had changed and the building was being used as a Methodist church.





Sundial dated 1743 built into external facade of the original Huguenot Church at 59 Brick Lane



to cover costs of central heating in the Spitalfields Great Synagogue

In 1898, when the area around Aldgate and Whitechapel became the centre of the Jewish East End, the building which had originally functioned as a Christian church at 59 Brick Lane was consecrated as the Machzike Adass, or Spitalfields Great Synagogue. Like the Huguenots before them. London's East End Jewish community had fled persecution in Europe before settling in the area. Many found work as tailors in what was known as the 'rag trade'. The Jewish community made important contributions to the cultural and social life of London. The synagogue remained in operation until the 1960s, when the Jewish community in London's East End shrank as many people moved to areas in north London.

For a short period, the building stood empty. However, in 1976, the synagogue transformed into its latest incarnation as London's Jamme Masjid, a mosque to service London's growing Muslim community. In the 1970s, like the Jewish and Huguenot communities before them. Bangladeshi people were drawn to the area around Brick Lane. Many had fled their homes during the Bangladesh Liberation War and changes to immigration laws encouraged people

Poster advertising fundraising campaign

to settle in the UK. The area had already seen some settlement of Bengali men who had travelled to Britain in search of work. The British Bangladeshi community soon replaced the Jewish community on Brick Lane.

Today, the Brick Lane Jamme Masjid is one of the largest mosques in the country, servicing the needs of over 4.000 of London's Muslims. While some have criticised modifications to the interior of the building which were necessary for this new use, others point to the remarkable continuity of religious function which the building has maintained through its two hundred and fifty year history, and the way in which these modifications demonstrate the changing cultural demographic of Spitalfields.

Each part of Britain has its own diverse histories of migration and community. Perhaps it's time for us to find out more?



Muslim men at praver in the Great London Mosque at 59 Brick Lane

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Understanding global heritage (AD281)

If you want to further your interests in heritage, and engage with some of the particular debates raised by this booklet and Saving Britain's Past in more detail, you might be interested in this course. This is a new second-level course, introducing students to the study of heritage and its function at local, regional, national and global levels. It offers a critical understanding of how heritage is created and consumed across different cultures, and the roles heritage fulfils in contemporary and past societies. It presents case studies from around the world, to explore topics ranging from the role of heritage in the construction of local identities to the deployment of heritage for nation-building by states. Challenges to international heritage frameworks led by indigenous and local communities, and responses to 'how heritage is done', form key themes across the course.

For more information visit www.open.ac.uk/Arts/ad281

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A different class of heritage?

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A World Heritage Site?

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Indigenous land rights in Scotland?

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A multi-cultural heritage?

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