

Discovery, Innovation and Science in the Historic Environment

# RESEARCH



Historic England

ISSUE 18 • SUMMER 2021

# Welcome...

## **...to this Summer issue of Research magazine.**

In this portmanteaux issue, we examine a photographic collection, built heritage, archaeology, methodologies and scientific techniques.

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the greatest challenges to have faced Britain since the Second World War. The first article 'Picturing Lockdown or Feeling Lockdown?' by Dr Annebella Pollen and Dr Paul Lowe explores an archive collection of images generated by the public that seeks to capture this tragic yet historic time-and the emotions that it invokes – for posterity.

In 'Historic Character and Good Design', David McOmish and Dave Hooley describe the positive role that historic characterisation methodologies can play in informing decisions about sympathetic change and placemaking.

Emily Hathaway and Jeremy Lake report on a project commissioned by Historic England – 'Adding a New Layer' of much-needed information about 20th-century heritage to Worcestershire Historic Environment Record.

Gill Campbell and Jen Heathcote explain the benefits for heritage in knowledge gained by 'Investing in Scientific Research'; specifically, new equipment at our Fort Cumberland laboratories.

Wellbeing is a great concern of our 21st century society, ever more so because of the extra strain of the pandemic. In 'Heritage and Social Prescribing' Desi Gradinarova looks at how we can unleash the wellbeing potential of heritage.

Lastly, with 'Coinage and Ritual Deposition' at Stanwick, Northamptonshire, Richard Henry shares with us a preview of the analysis of one of the biggest rural Roman Coin Assemblages from Roman Britain and explains what it can tell us about the economy and beliefs of the period.

**John Cattell**  
*National Head of Research  
with Historic England.*

**Front cover image:** 'Solitude' – a girl looking out of her bedroom window during the COVID-19 lockdown, one of the 'Picturing Lockdown' contributions to the photographic collection. © Mya Scott. Source: Historic England Archive, HEC01/036/01/012



We are the **public body** that **helps people**  
**care for, enjoy** and **celebrate**

England's **spectacular**  
**historic environment**

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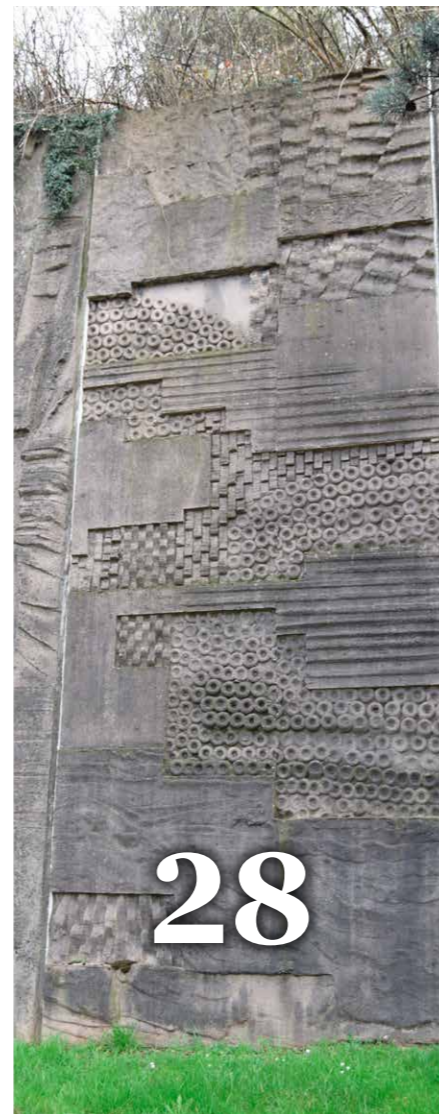
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### **RESEARCH** magazine

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Previous issues of Historic England Research can be viewed online at: <http://bit.ly/HEresearchbackissues>

ISSN: 2058-1858

Product Code: HE0059

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# Picturing Lockdown or Feeling Lockdown?

An exploration of what this public-generated photographic collection curated by Historic England tells us about the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic in England.



Above: 'Lockdown Wedding' – a couple, dressed for a wedding, with two children at their home in Bishop's Stortford during the COVID-19 lockdown. © Donna Duke-Llande. Source: Historic England Archive, HEC01/036/01/001

## About Historic England and Picturing Lockdown

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown in England, Historic England initiated a responsive photographic project called 'Picturing Lockdown'. For one week from 29 April 2020 Historic England issued a public call out to collect photographs over a week of lockdown and initiated ten artist commissions to better represent groups of people disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

The aim was to create a unique and reflective record of a week across the nation during this extraordinary moment, capturing the public experience of the COVID-19 lockdown for posterity by adding a new collection of photographs to the Historic England Archive that would spark a conversation about identity and its connection to history and place.

Historic England Public Engagement Group

## The role of photography in documenting the pandemic

Our shared social experience of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a distinctive visual character from the start, from new visual languages of official public health messaging, to spontaneous acts of creativity, from window art to street graffiti, communicating hope and rage, to representations of masking and social distancing.

The photography that has emerged, in news and press coverage, in advertisements and personal practices, has

established a new visual and social paradigm for the representation of pandemics. It transcends the previous documentation of epidemics both in sheer scale but also in the incredible variety of aesthetic forms it has taken, and in the range of authors, from professional photojournalists, to front line NHS workers, to artists and to the wider public.

The restrictions of social distancing and the enforced separation from loved ones has enhanced the value of the photograph as a form of communication and interaction

charged with emotional content as well as descriptive value. The visual vocabulary of epidemic photography established in previous events has been greatly expanded by this outpouring of visual material, creating a new and varied range of tropes on a large scale. Just as it is all but impossible to recall major historic events like 9/11 or the Vietnam War without evoking photographs, the pandemic is producing images that will shape the memories of future generations, as well as being part of the ongoing process of understanding and adjustment. >>



### The call to contribute

As a means to engage the public and to collect material for their archive, Historic England devised an open public call for photographs taken during the peak of the first lockdown as a week-long mass-participation event from 29 April to 5 May 2020. The invitation, widely circulated via social and broadcast media, asked participants to share

their experiences of lockdown, to document how they were meeting the challenges of self-isolation and social distancing, and to create 'a unique and reflective record'. In addition, ten professional photographers and artists were commissioned to produce a photograph per day alongside the five strong team of Historic England's own staff photographers.

Nearly 3,000 photographs were submitted by members of the public from all over England, of which 100 were selected for Historic England's collection. Entitled 'Picturing Lockdown', the collection was launched on Historic England's website on 15 June 2020 to widespread acclaim and significant media coverage.

In 2021, Historic England engaged the Photography and the Archive Research Centre (PARC) at the University of the Arts London to undertake an analytical survey of the collection, to identify and explore what the images can tell us about how the public experienced lockdown, and what they thought were valuable and important subjects to photograph. The

team at PARC undertook both a quantitative and qualitative review of the submissions, which included a systematic classification of the content of the images and of the text that accompanied them. This research has yielded fascinating insights into how photography is used as a descriptive medium but also more significantly how it can be used as a vehicle to

express a wide and profound set of emotions and states of being. >>

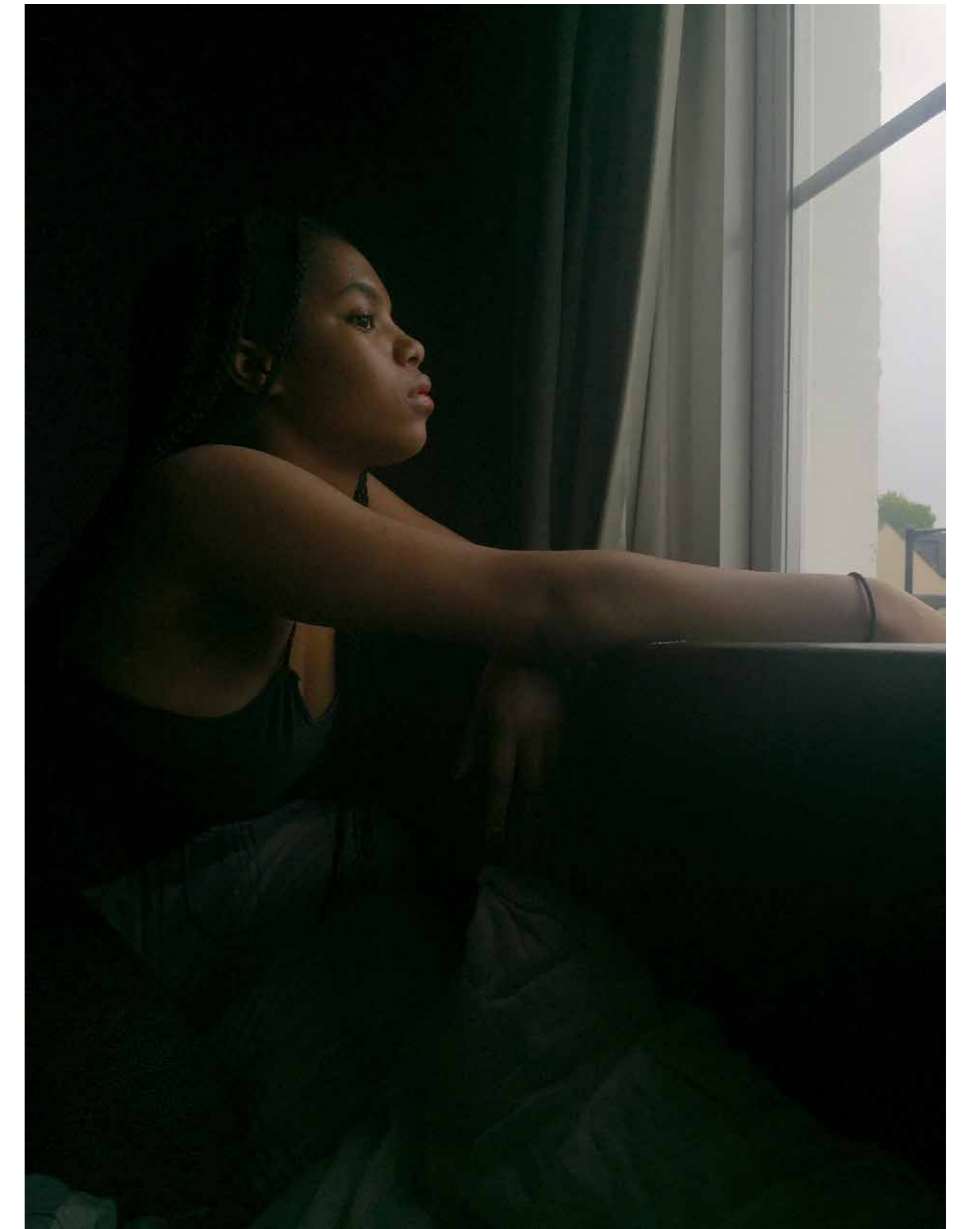
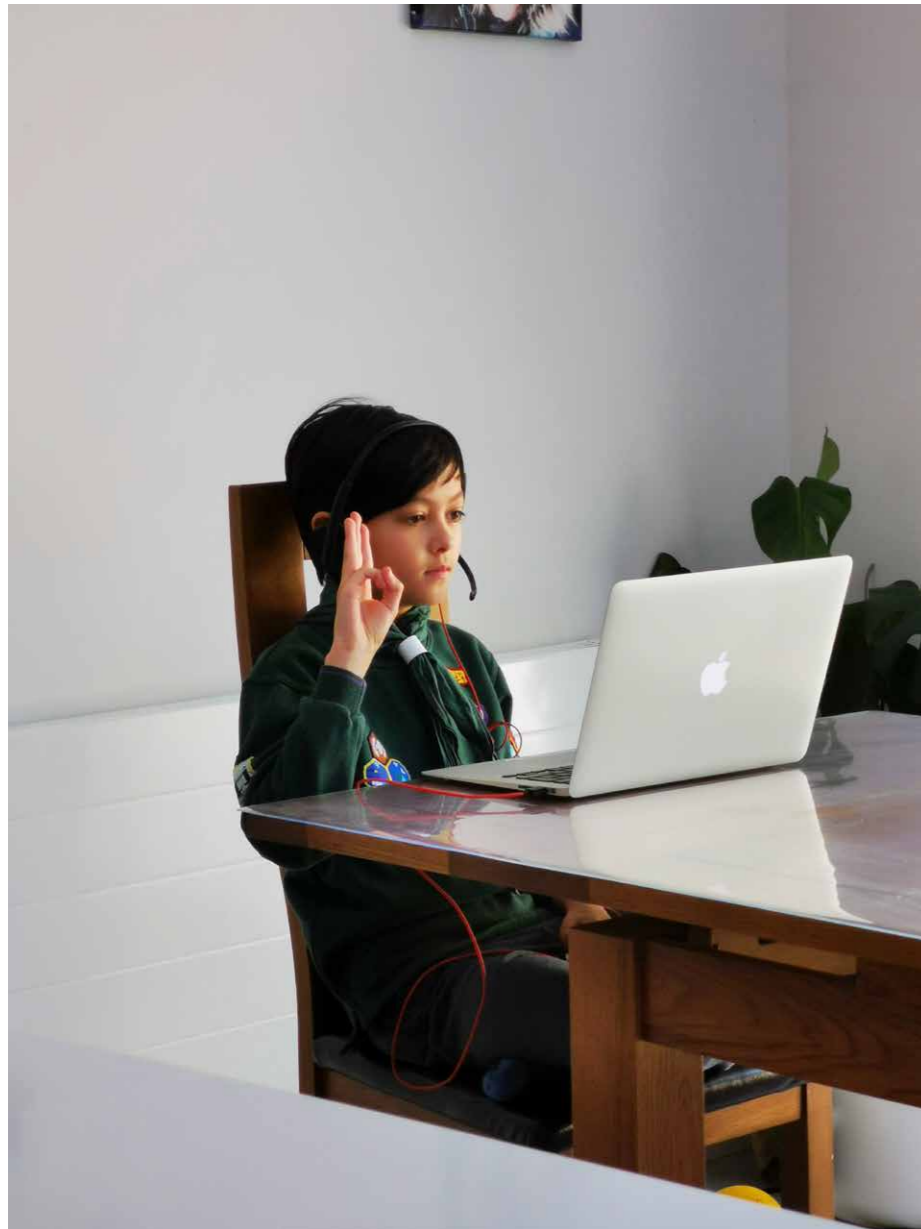
Nearly 3,000 photographs were submitted by members of the public from all over England



**Left:** 'United'. Two women talking on the telephone while looking at each other through the window of a residential care home in Bristol, during the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. © David Taylor. Source: Historic England Archive, HEC01/036/01/049

**Above:** 'Moonlit and Twilight IV' – A house on Henley Lane, Box, at night during the COVID-19 lockdown, showing windows illuminated from within. © Historic England Archive. Photographer James O Davies, DP249948





**Above:** 'Deadlines....' – a composite image of a woman at home in her kitchen during the COVID-19 lockdown. © Charlotte Nadeau. Source: Historic England Archive, HEC01/036/01/093

**Left:** Annual scout promise renewal on St George's day. By Jin Tong. 'My kids have to do their annual St George's day promise renewal online which normally happens outdoors and it's one of most important events for scouts across England'. © Jin Tong. Source: Historic England Archive, HEC01/036/01/034

**Right:** 'Solitude' – a girl looking out of her bedroom window during the COVID-19 lockdown. © Mya Scott. Source: Historic England Archive, HEC01/036/01/012

**The public response: communicating emotions**

The photographs received include depictions of scenes that are now part of the recognisable visual culture of COVID-19, from home baking and home haircuts to empty streets and Personal Protective Equipment. Particular themes and patterns emerge showing both how members of the participating public experienced lockdown but also – subtly different – how they thought that

lockdown was best communicated symbolically for a collecting project that was also, notably, a photographic competition. Dominant themes include rainbows in windows of houses and rainbows more broadly, as a collectively recognised symbol of hope, and now of the NHS. Some photographs in 'Picturing Lockdown' spell out their affective content and purpose visually – see, for example, images that message boredom

or happiness through window signage and dressed props. For others their emotional message is communicated unequivocally through the accompanying free text descriptions (each submission had the option to include a title and a 50-word narrative). These are revelatory. Vocabulary terms and their synonyms such as loneliness, sadness, depression, fear, anxiety, uncertainty, panic, worry, boredom, grief, tragedy and anger alongside gratitude,

hope, persistence, resilience, reassurance, care and love are some of the most popular words utilised, regardless of the subject of the image.

The titles given by the photographers to their images are also telling of the larger symbolic work that photographs were expected to communicate in the context of 'Picturing Lockdown'. A tendency to universalise is particularly notable: that which is

particular becomes generic. Titles mediate between the personal content of the photograph and the larger gesture it communicates. Even photographs of close family members whose names are clearly known are titled to represent 'a toddler' or 'a teenager'. Places that could be quickly located on a map become 'a closed park', 'an empty street' and so on. While some of this elaboration of symbolic content is a poetic strategy to confer relevance on a photograph

competing for selection, it is notable that the generalisations also express a desire to speak 'on behalf of'; to make sometimes personal, intimate and domestic photographs into collective or universal statements in a project that sought to capture shared experience and build national connections. Through the work of the title, conceptual links are made between the photograph as an isolated personal moment and its wider social context. >>





**Above:** Two neighbours having haircuts simultaneously in adjacent back gardens during the COVID-19 lockdown. © Historic England Archive. Photographer Alun Bull, DP234787

'Picturing Lockdown' titles and narratives are thus highly valuable as a form of data. They demonstrate not only what the photographs were **about** but also why the participating public engaged in the project, that is, what the photographs were **for**: for communicating emotion, for creating a collective experience, under conditions of isolation, through a public platform and also, for gaining recognition (the project was about connection and engagement but had a competitive element that shaped submission). Together, the photographs and the

accompanying texts show what lockdown **looked** like but also what the experience **felt** like.

Indeed, almost two thirds of the images submitted were not of people, demonstrating that the potential symbolic quality of a scene was significant. A notable proportion of photographs are, interestingly, of scenes and subjects, from sunsets to landscapes, that might not seem immediately connected to COVID-19 and more like entries to a conventional photography competition that could have been taken at other

times outside of a global pandemic. However, by their submission to 'Picturing Lockdown', and especially as emphasised in their textual narratives, all of the submissions are always **about** COVID-19, regardless of how they look. They might not depict masks or clapping but as photographs specifically taken for a COVID-19 project, they are photographs of COVID-19-related experience and feeling. Their significance – variously representing, for example, emotional concepts, such as solace, fortitude and escapism – lies outside the frame. >>

Together, the photographs and the accompanying texts show what lockdown **looked** like but also what the experience **felt** like.



**Left:** 'The New Normal'. © Carl Joyce. Source: Historic England Archive, HEC01/036/01/003

**Below:** A Lego rainbow in the window of a house during the COVID-19 lockdown. © Historic England Archive. Photographer Steven Baker, DP263445







### A valuable snapshot

Analysis of both image and text in 'Picturing Lockdown' suggests that the project might be better retitled 'Feeling Lockdown'. What lockdown looked like seems less important than what lockdown felt like; what the project was *about* and what it was *for* was primarily **emotional**. The accompanying text is essential to understanding photographs' extra-pictorial **aboutness** and what the photographs were expected to do and say. This additional material provides the individual

experience behind the collective shared symbols and the common communicative devices that are frequently used in popular photography (for example, images of nature).

Every photograph **feels** lockdown even if it doesn't picture it, making the collection a unique and incredibly valuable snapshot and sample of the English national experience at a crucial moment early in the pandemic ■

Every photograph **feels** lockdown even if it doesn't picture it

**Above left:** 'Untitled' – graffiti thanking the NHS during the COVID-19 lockdown. © Lionel Stanhope. Source: Historic England Archive, HEC01/036/01/099

**Above right:** 'Lockdown Protest' – a tongue-in-cheek recreation of John Lennon and Yoko Ono's 'bed-in'. © Richard Allman. Source: Historic England Archive, HEC01/036/01/006

**Below right:** 'I'm Bored' – hand-made letters spelling out 'I'm Really Bored' in a first-floor window of a house on Downend Road during the COVID-19 lockdown. © Lisa Malyon. Source: Historic England Archive, HEC01/036/01/007

### The authors

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Annebella has published widely on visual culture topics including a 2015 book on mass-participation photography projects, 'Mass Photography: Collective Histories of Everyday Life'.

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*Reader in Documentary Photography at the London College of Communication, University of the Arts, London, UK.*



Paul's most recent books include 'Photography Masterclass' published by Thames and Hudson, 'Understanding Photojournalism', co-authored with Dr. Jenny Good, published by Bloomsbury Academic Press, and 'Reporting the Siege of Sarajevo' co-authored with Kenneth Morriison also with Bloomsbury.

### Further information

The Picturing Lockdown Collection webpage <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/collections/photographs/picturing-lockdown/>







# Historic character and good design

How inherited character is a positive force in building distinctive, better designed, places.

## **Time, change and character**

The character of the places where we live, work and travel is inherently historic, expressed through such things as patterns and periods of building styles and materials, street and road layouts, other forms of land use and use of space – all, in combination, reflecting an area's change and development through time.

The historic character of a place is far more than its spatial patterning of material elements. It is also a cultural expression, of human responses through time to that area and its changing contexts and opportunities.

The varying historic pace of change is also significant in understanding places' present character, with periods of relative stability or incremental change interspersed with phases of rapid alteration and expansion. >>





Above left: Timekeeper's Square, Salford. © Historic England Archive. Photographer James O Davies, DP275530

Change is essential to maintain a healthy society and thriving economy, but it also requires informed management to maintain or enhance the character of places if we are to fulfil the social and economic benefits that flow from their cultural distinctiveness. In engaging with this, historic environment specialists become, in effect, biographers of the present, applying their knowledge as advisors on the sustainable management of change.

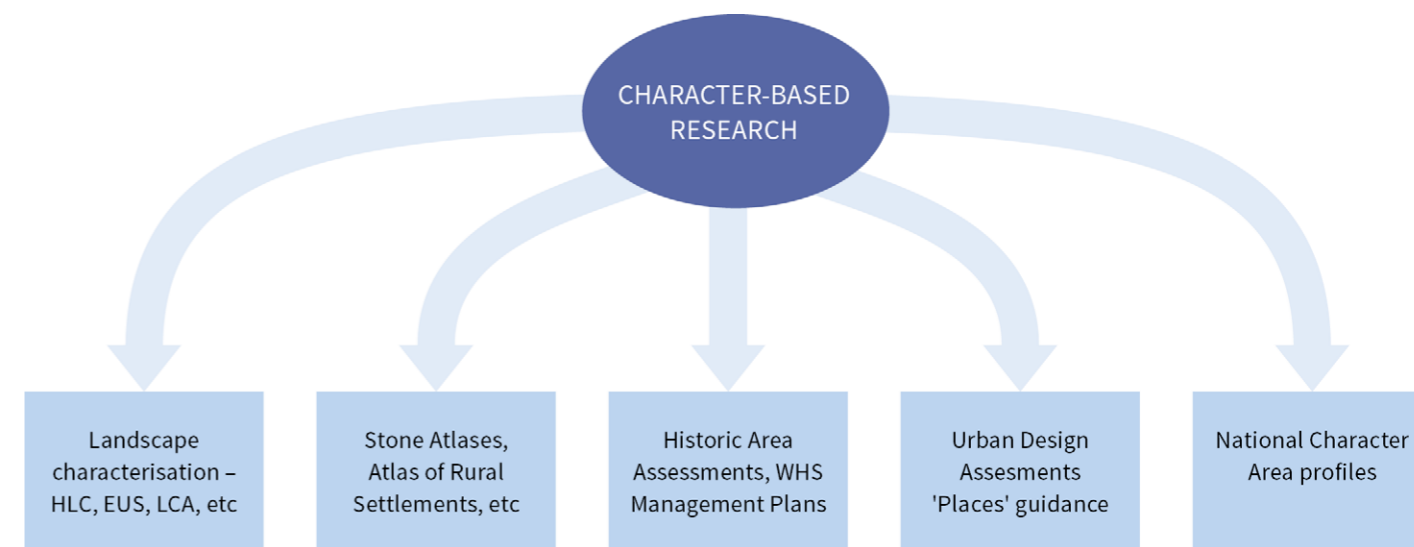
It is a key task of the planning process to assess the likely effects of proposed changes, including potential impacts on the historic character of places. The recognition that, within reason, all aspects of the historic environment matter – designated and undesignated – is firmly established in Government policy documents, such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). An understanding of the range

of values people attach to places is, therefore, key to evaluating historic character for the planning process.

What does characterisation bring to our understanding of places? Understanding and being sensitive to the historic character of a place provides a necessary complement to approaches that treat the historic environment as a collection of discrete 'heritage assets', the most significant of which may be designated. Historic character transcends consideration of such individual assets when addressing the patterning and spatial relationships resulting from people's activity across the whole of a place.

Far from any suggestion that features and areas, beyond heritage assets, lack heritage significance, characterisation brings the historic grain and context of the whole place to inform the management of its change.

characterisation brings the historic grain and context of the whole place to inform the management of its change.



Above right: Character-based research underpins all area-focussed assessments of significance and value and can inform several other assessment processes and frameworks too. © Historic England

The character of place is as much about people's perceptions of areas as it is about buildings or sites.

Understanding and being sensitive to the historic character of any place is key to ensuring that change is managed sympathetically, sometimes innovatively, to reflect and enhance the distinctive qualities of places that visitors and residents alike can acknowledge and, on occasion, cherish. It may be noted, too, that the 'historic' in historic character is not simply 'the old'. Character accommodates recent and modern development within its overall time depth and shows how it contributes to the character dynamic in a place. If we draw in character effectively when considering new development, we have more scope to manage and contextualise the effects of change when it

comes to protecting, enhancing, or (re)building places, and reinvigorating their communities.

### Recognising the importance of character

The importance of historic character has long been recognised in spatial planning and it continues to be an important guiding factor: indeed, all spatial character assessments involve a historic cultural dimension whose understanding will enhance the future-character outcomes. Consequently, character-based research (in its widest sense) can be used to assess all areas and spaces, terrestrial and marine. It may be applied to brownfield renewal or urban expansion developments as well as *de novo* settlement in greenfield locations. It is undertaken at a range of levels and scales of resolution from national down to individual settlement assessments. >>

The character of place is as much about people's perceptions of areas as it is about buildings or sites.



Previously, characterisation approaches have been used in a wide range of strategic research contexts and it is a key component in planning advice: the National Planning Policy Framework, for example, explicitly references the importance of character (importantly, not just confined to designated assets) in a number of areas including:

- Achieving sustainable development;
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres;
- Considering development proposals;
- Achieving well-designed places; and
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Similarly, the importance of understanding and factoring in the significance of character-based assessments ('cultural', 'local', 'historic') is a recurring theme in the [Planning White Paper, Planning for the Future](#). Wherever character is noted as a consideration, it has a historic dimension.

### The principal aspects of historic characterisation

The key aim of characterisation in a heritage context is to provide an assessment of the historic character of a place or area, however obvious or not that character may be to many of the area's present users. The results of such assessments can be applied to a wide range of purposes, including strategic planning, development management, Conservation Area designation, appraisal and management, and research.

It is a spatially-, and temporally-, based assessment, primarily of an area's present character and the change it reflects through time. Although it can work at a fine grain of resolution it remains focussed on areas, taking a generalised view of their character, and does not extend to detailed analyses of individual historic assets (at the level of an historic building or single monument).

The 'high-level' aim of the various characterisation programmes is to provide an enhanced understanding across the entirety of places and areas to enable better contextualised management of their historic environment.

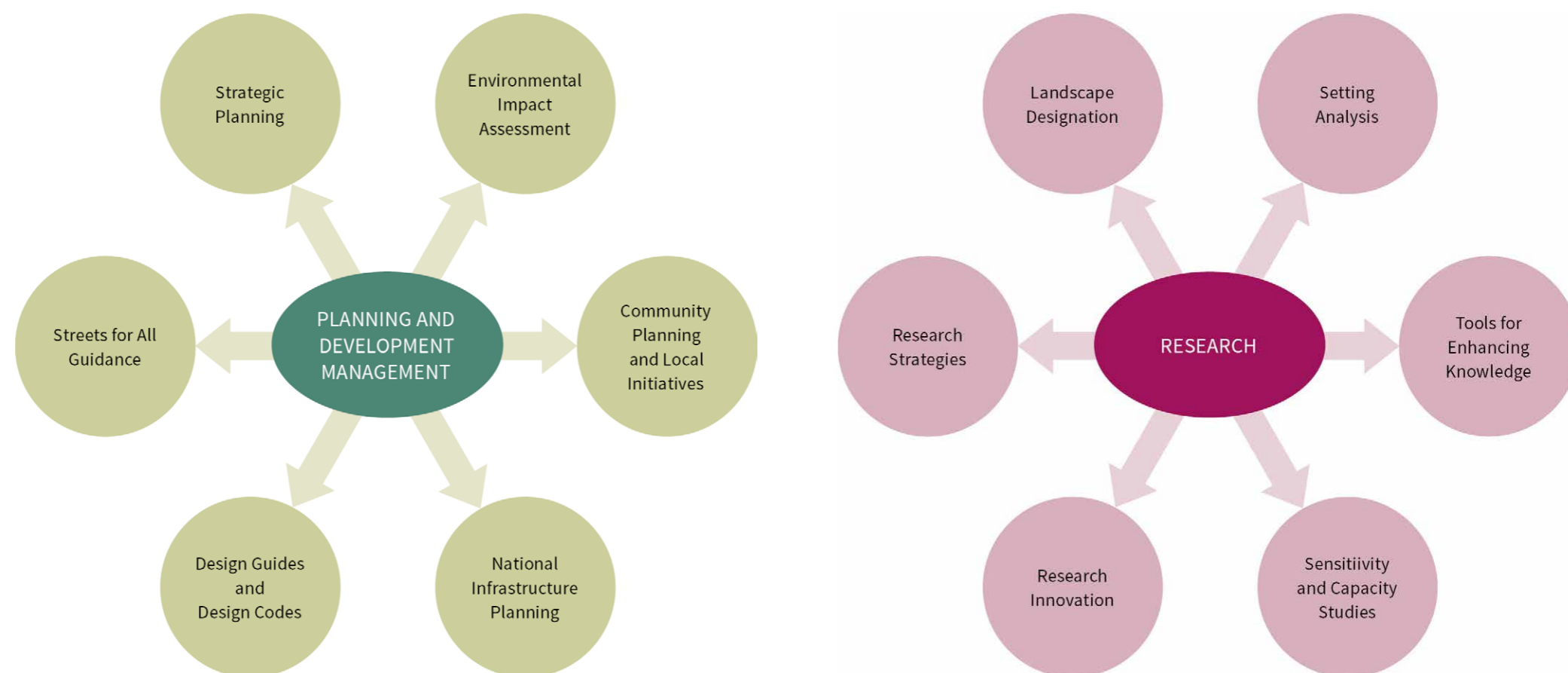
The key aim of characterisation in a heritage context is to provide an assessment of the historic character of a place or area, however obvious or not that character may be...

The intention is always that the assessment is 'neutral', treating all areas equally without ascription of values at this stage. That enables its application as an evidence base by a wide constituency of interest whose evaluations of that character will inevitably vary, from non-specialist local interest groups and individuals, heritage agencies, planning authorities, through to developers or others working in the commercial sector. Similarly, it gives the evidence base greater longevity, less affected by shifting values through time. It also aims to provide reliable baseline data that can inform the prioritisation of research to underpin rapid, informed, responses in places that are undergoing, or will soon undergo, significant change.

Consequently, we have sought to ensure that our character-based research anticipates where impacts might be most pressing, enabling us to engage positively with change and develop appropriate partnership working, mitigation and enhancement strategies, as well as providing sound advice to Government, Local Planning Authorities, and other organisations. An example is the characterisation of [North Sea port heritage](#) which was used to assess the Kasbah area of Grimsby.

The historic environment is, and always has been, dynamic. As its subject matter is comprehensive across whole areas, characterisation's **principal** aim cannot be preservation: it is about presenting the evidence to advise and guide the management of necessary change.

Our work, as part of the urban characterisation programme, for example, is directed to fill major gaps in the knowledge required to understand and identify the various emphases in the fabric and character of our towns and cities. The key principles of characterisation guide our approach to the examination of how historic activities and change are evident within today's landscape. Prominent amongst those principles is that all aspects of the landscape, no matter how modern, contribute to historic character, not just 'special' areas: the focus is on characterising the present, not reconstructing past historic character, and within that, the emphasis is on recording the time depth apparent in the present. >>



Above: Use of characterisation data in Strategic Planning, Research, and Land and Landscape Management. © Historic England



### Historic characterisation: methods

The 'core method' is, essentially, a desk-based assessment of places and landscapes undertaken using all relevant documentation including modern and historic mapping sources, aerial photographs, Google Earth/Street view, and other related research such as environmental or biodiversity characterisation studies.

The assessment is largely map-based using digital sources, focussing on the definition, grouping and classification of parcels of land which display similar character traits, with the assessor using their knowledge and expertise to bring meaning and understanding to the classification. Past land use, where identifiable, can also be factored in and the data is supported by a comprehensive database that records more detail on the character of a place and the history of its development.

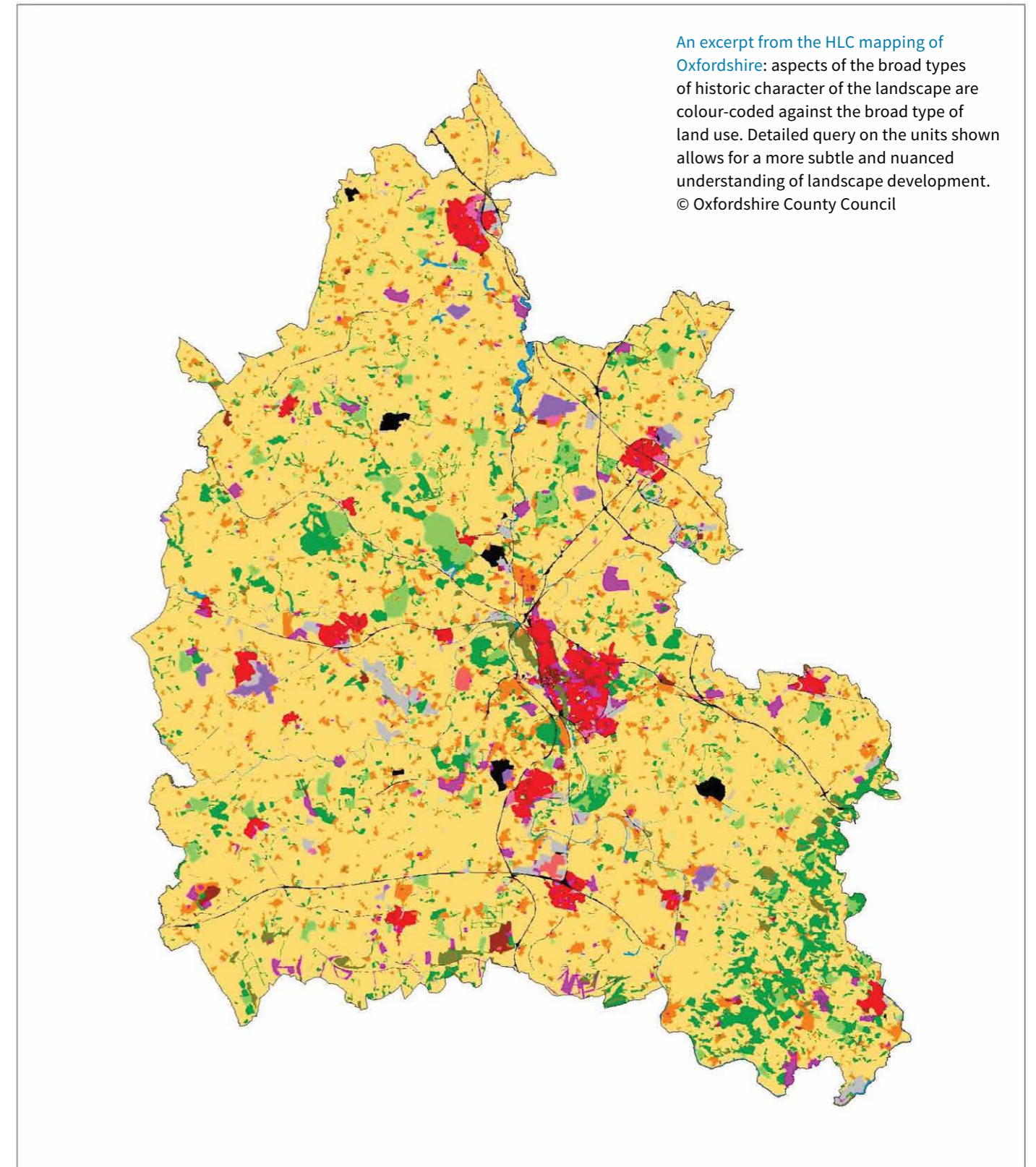
The products of this research extend well beyond the presentation of a simple map or plan and should be viewed as a 'map-based resource' which combines a variety of investigative strands and allows for the production of tailored mapping: rich supporting documentation explains the meaning behind the mapped representations.
















### What is the purpose and role of characterisation today?

At its heart, historic characterisation has always aimed to help raise people's awareness to the fact that their familiar surroundings have been shaped by the thoughts and actions of previous people in that place. Historic characterisation is inherently about people – past and present.

With some adaptation, it can provide those interested with an interpretative platform for further, more detailed, engagement, for example with [StoryMaps](#). To illustrate this see the work produced in [Bristol](#) regarding 're-planning' or the StoryMap describing [London's lost river: the Tyburn](#). >>

Historic characterisation is inherently about people – past and present.



HLC BroadType			
	Civic Amenities		Rural Settlement
	Civil Provision		Industry
	Commercial		Military
	Communication		Orchards and Horticulture
	Enclosure		Ornamental
			Recreation
			Unenclosed Land
			Urban Settlement
			Water and Valley Floor
			Woodland



**Historic characterisation: outcomes and impacts**

These sorts of approaches should certainly be used in conjunction with Historic England’s Good Practice Advice, such as [The Settings of Heritage Assets](#). There is a great deal of data that underscores the important part that ‘heritage’ plays in people’s appreciation of the places they live in, work in, or visit. An assessment of places that had received funding through the [National Lottery Heritage Fund](#) illustrated this clearly in a survey which suggested that 81% of residents reported that heritage is important to ‘me personally’. Likewise, results from the [Taking Part survey](#) indicate that ‘cities and towns with historic character’ are the most frequented heritage sites. In addition, [historic parks and green spaces](#), as well as other historic and social infrastructure, deliver [multiple health benefits for local communities and support long-term mental and physical health](#).

The outputs of historic characterisation can serve different audiences, from local communities, schools, through to those charged with delivering the demands of housing and infrastructure provision. The data can be scaled and interpreted at different levels to suit those audiences’ needs but, fundamentally, characterisation can demonstrate clearly, backed with evidence, how historic character helps define local distinctiveness and can assist the development of healthy and vibrant future places through improved, community-centred, planning decision-making. The diagram on page 25 summarises the main applied outcomes from characterisation.

Developing characterisation data, then using it, brings with it a number of challenges: the results of characterisation research should be deployed at the most appropriate scale to address the questions and issues raised by the work.

Many characterisation projects have adapted their methods to address particularly pressing issues but it may well be that new assessments are required if the

contexts shift, or if the characterisation data itself is no longer current, or needs revision. Additional queries seek clarification on how characterisation data fits together alongside other heritage considerations?

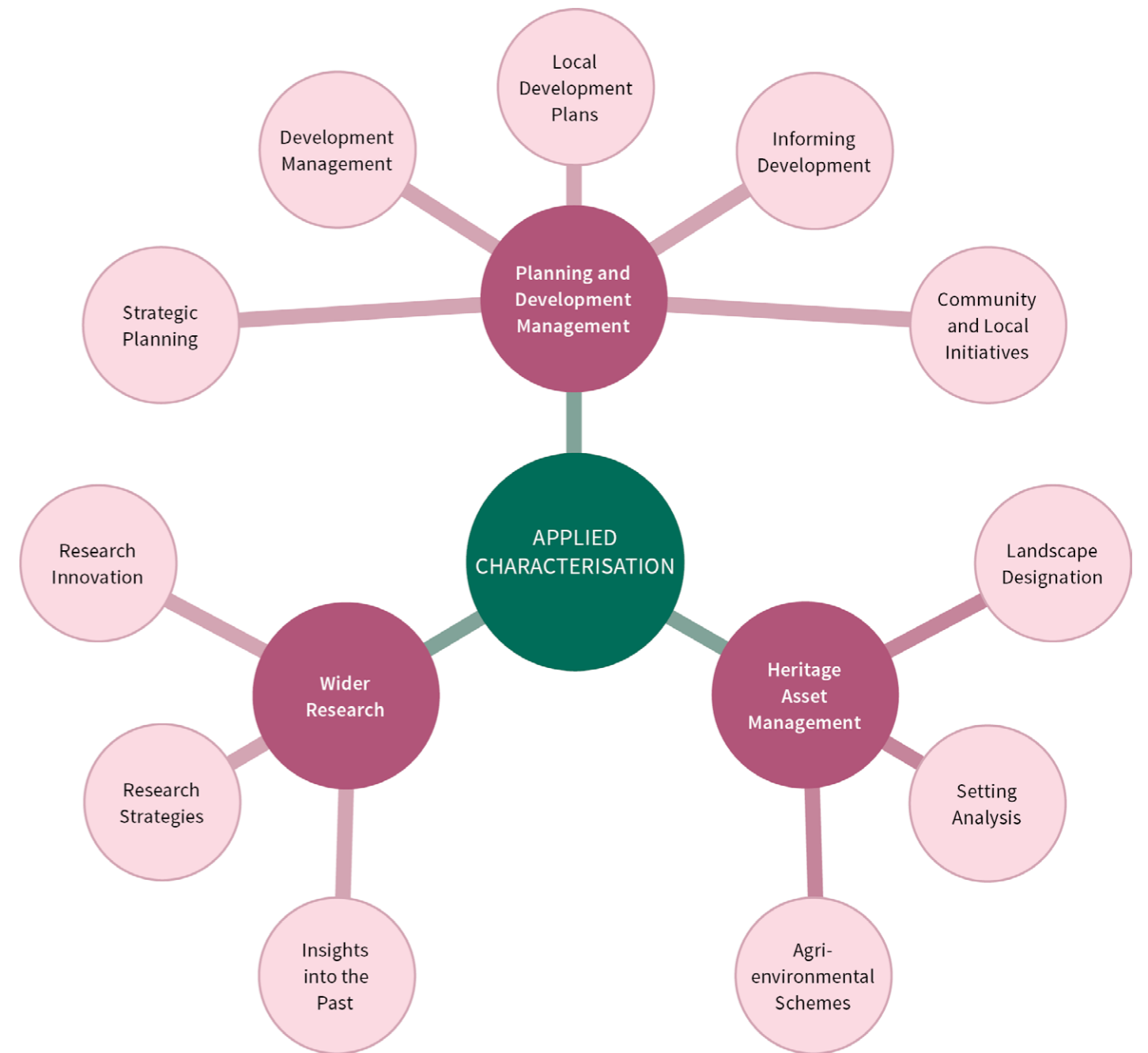
It is clear that characterisation provides an evidence-base and benchmark for assessing the setting of heritage assets, and, in turn, for examining the potential effects of change. It can also highlight opportunities for enhancement and offer engagement with the historic environment. By widening the conversation to include a broad range of constituencies of interest, it should be possible to address and disentangle many of the issues raised.

**The emerging context and application of characterisation data**

The *Planning for the Future* White Paper presents a very strong case as to why character matters. In the White Paper, the continued importance of the historic environment in helping to shape the future of development in England is recognised, observing that:

- *There is insufficient incentive within the [planning] process to bring forward proposals that are beautiful and which will enhance the environment, health, and character of local areas.*
- *Make it easier for those who want to build beautifully through the introduction of a fast-track for beauty through changes to national policy and legislation, to automatically permit proposals for high-quality developments where they reflect local character and preferences.*
- *To deliver our vision, it is important for the planning system to set clear expectations for the form of development which we expect to see in different locations. It should do so in ways which reflect local character and community preferences, and the types of buildings and places that have stood the test of time...history provides many examples of how we can do this well – including Georgian terraces and Victorian mansion blocks – and we should learn from what has worked in the past. >>*

...the results of characterisation research should be deployed at the most appropriate scale to address the questions and issues raised by the work.



Above: The applied outcomes of characterisation extend across a wide-range of themes and issues, from research through to strategic management. © Historic England



The Planning White Paper recognises the importance of the historic environment in continuing to shape the future of development in England. By extension, the assessment of historic character is an essential component in the process of helping to frame and guide good design in producing high quality homes and places. Historic characterisation's understanding is, therefore, a key element in delivering the Planning White Paper's aspirations, principally:

*Proposal 12: To support the transition to a planning system which is more visual and rooted in local preferences and character, we will set up a body to support the delivery of provably locally-popular design codes, and propose that each authority should have a chief officer for design and place-making.*

*Proposal 14: We intend to introduce a fast-track for beauty through changes to national policy and legislation, to incentivise and accelerate high quality development which reflects local character and preferences.*

Similarly, the [National Design Guide](#), revised in 2021 sets out the ten characteristics of 'beautiful, enduring and successful places'.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- the relationship between the natural environment and built development;
- the typical patterns of built form that contribute positively to local character;
- the street pattern, their proportions and landscape features;
- the proportions of buildings framing spaces and streets;
- the local vernacular, other architecture and architectural features that contribute to local character.

Characterisation will play an increasingly important role in helping to guide and deliver housing and infrastructure as demanded by emerging planning and design guidance.

The Guide gives good emphasis to the value of heritage, local history and culture:

*When determining how a site may be developed, it is important to understand the history of how the place has evolved. The local sense of place and identity are shaped by local history, culture and heritage, and how these have influenced the built environment and wider landscape.*

The [National Model Design Code](#), published in July 2021, further underscores the role that the character of places and assets fulfils in delivering sustainable development. Character, here, is regarded as 'baseline' data and an important component in the production of design codes. That itself reflects the importance of historic character, inherent within present character, in developing a 'design vision' for proposed change.

Put simply, if we are to develop housing, places and spaces that will enhance our lived experience, as well as making a contribution to solving the climate emergency, we should do so in a way that builds on and, where necessary, enhances the existing local character, and with a people- and community-centric focus too.

Hand-in-hand with this is an approach that recognises that, firstly, not all historic character is viewed positively and, secondly, that change can be radical and innovative, forming part of the historic evolution of a place for future generations to appreciate and reflect upon. Emerging methods of [landscape](#) and historic landscape sensitivity assessment should provide useful tools for managing such change through the planning process, in tandem with gathering and understanding public and professional views on particular proposals as they come forward.

The Historic England response to the report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission report, [Living with Beauty. Promoting health, well-being and sustainable growth](#) observed that:

*It is vitally important that the development of places is built on a foundation of understanding what is already there. It is only by understanding a place that you are able to shape it in ways that respects and enhances local character and distinctiveness.*

The importance of historic character in framing and guiding new development is reflected in the suite of new planning advice, including the National Model Design Code. Characterisation provides a method for assessing, and asserting, the importance of the historic environment: character-based research should be seen as complementary to other detailed advice and guidance on planning. It may also form an important component in a suite of advice provided to community-based development initiatives, or any other constituency of interest.

This, then, is the locus and rationale for historic characterisation. Its research, as well as its dissemination, is an important component in communicating and amplifying the significant roles and values of the historic environment.

Characterisation will play an increasingly important role in helping to guide and deliver housing and infrastructure as demanded by emerging planning and design guidance ■

### Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank David Radford, Jonathan Last, Owain Lloyd-James, and Sarah Newsome for reading and commenting on an earlier draft of the text.

### The authors

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David's work focuses on place-based research. He was, formerly, a Development Analyst in the Strategic Research & Partnerships team but spent much of his career as a Senior Archaeological

Investigator in Historic England's Archaeological Survey and Investigation team. David retains an overview of Historic England's programme of urban characterisation.

**Dave Hooley**  
*(Retired) Senior Archaeological Investigator with Historic England.*



Until his recent retirement, Dave Hooley was a Senior Archaeological Investigator in Historic England's Archaeological Survey and Investigation Team. After a background in archaeological

research and designation, he worked for many years with colleagues and partner organisations developing and applying approaches to characterising the historic dimension of England's landscape and seascape.

### Further information

[Historic England characterisation methods](#) web pages

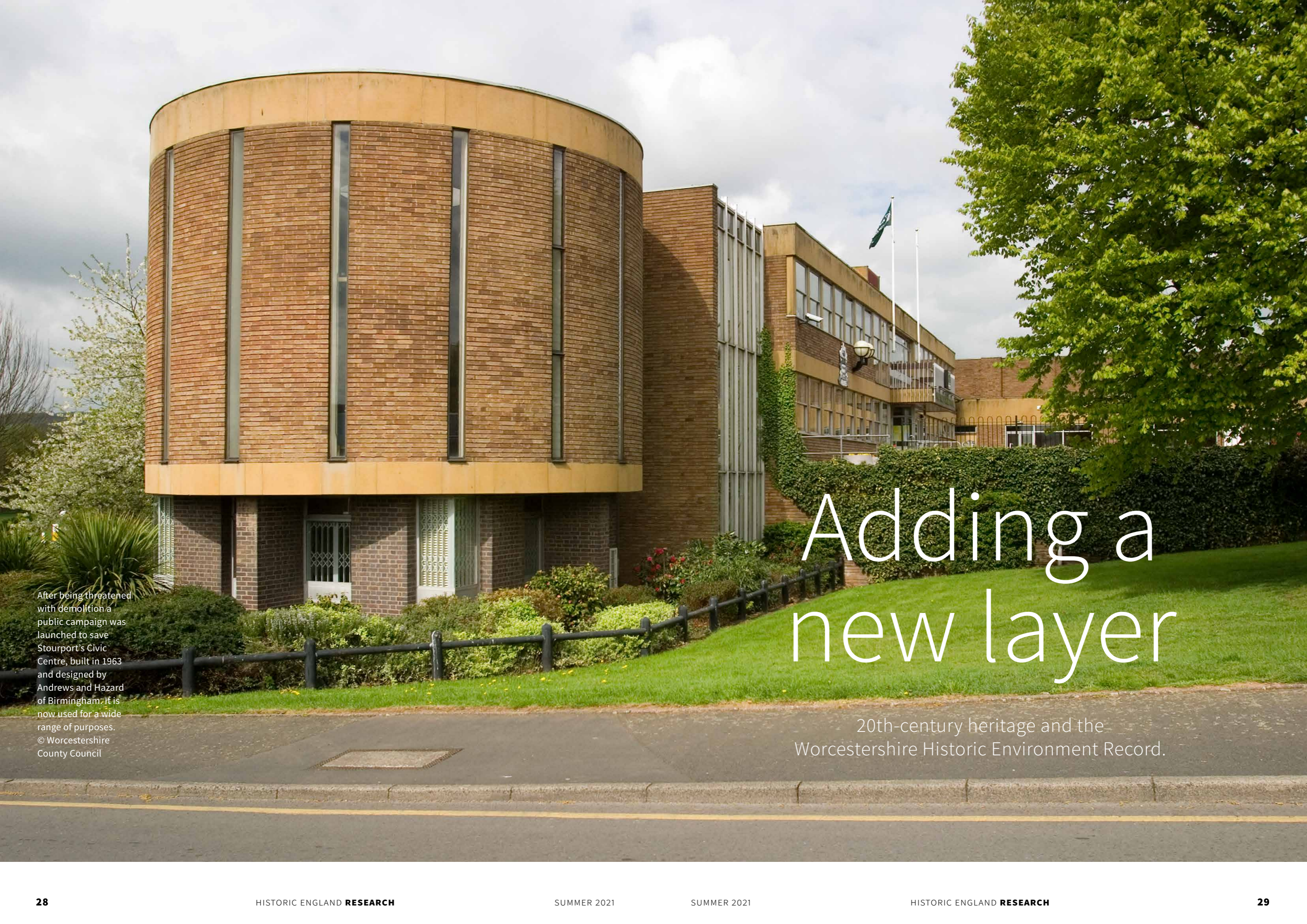
[Historic England Design in the Historic Environment](#) web pages

[UK Government Planning White paper](#)

[UK Government National Design Guide](#)

Web page only – Dave Hooley's [previous characterisation article](#)





After being threatened with demolition a public campaign was launched to save Stourport's Civic Centre, built in 1963 and designed by Andrews and Hazard of Birmingham. It is now used for a wide range of purposes.  
© Worcestershire County Council

# Adding a new layer

20th-century heritage and the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record.



many 20th-century buildings, structures and places of local or greater significance are at risk of neglect

20th-century heritage is regularly overlooked and undervalued.

It is widely acknowledged that 20th-century heritage forms a significant layer of our history. Many people, through their own experiences, or the experiences of their parents and grandparents, feel a deep connection to this period of our recent history.

There remains, however, a growing need to better understand, appreciate and assess this heritage as part of the historic environment, because many 20th-century buildings, structures and places of local or greater significance are at risk of neglect or lack of management, insensitive change or demolition. Many locally-interesting buildings are demolished without the attachment of any condition for building recording, which would have ensured at minimum, some preservation by record.

In recent years, the Twentieth Century Society, Historic England and the Gardens Trust have supported national campaigns, publications and projects which have secured high-profile listings and studies of nationally significant post-war architecture. Despite this attention, however, recognition of the wider contribution of 'everyday', as distinct from nationally significant, 20th-century heritage is regularly overlooked and undervalued. Only a very small percentage of these assets meet the criteria for national designation. However, this everyday heritage illustrates wider social, cultural, economic, political and technological changes which were facilitated, amongst other things, by a transformation in England's planning philosophy and culture, accompanied by the emergence of new building types, construction techniques and materials.

**The Twentieth Century Society** has pointed out that buildings of this period are regularly described as making a 'detrimental, or at best, neutral contribution' to an area, and that even when a structure is recognised as making a positive contribution, 'it doesn't always



benefit from the same level of research and analysis afforded to older areas'. Of course there are examples of poor and even shocking buildings that have blighted our high streets and communities, but there are many others whose architectural character is being increasingly valued by the communities that use and experience them.

For example, Stourport's Civic Centre was commissioned by the former Stourport Urban District Council and designed by Andrews and Hazzard of Birmingham in 1963. As well as hosting offices for Local Government, the centre incorporated facilities for music, dancing and leisure. Towards the late eighties and into the

nineties the venue began to see less usage and in 2011 the hall was threatened with demolition. Public protest led to the formation of a public campaign to save the centre. In 2013 it was announced that the future of the hall had indeed been secured and as of 2021 the hall is one of the primary cultural facilities in Wyre Forest district.

Managing the everyday heritage of the 20th century, and in particular assessing and considering how to retain and safeguard its value, pose new challenges and opportunities for Local Authority Archaeologists and Conservation Officers, as well as for all those involved (including through

Neighbourhood Development Plans) in considering and planning for change.

Two important questions are raised in connection with the everyday heritage of the 20th century. How can we better identify and understand our common and most distinctive recent heritage so that it can continue to play a role in our everyday lives? And how should it be managed? New ways of looking at how people experience, value and can engage with this heritage are needed and Historic Characterisation and archaeologists have played a key role in the development of ways of capturing a range of values (See Penrose, S (ed) 2007 and May, S, Orange, H and Penrose S (eds) 2012). >>

**Above left:** The inter-war period club house at Pitcher Oak golf course in Redditch, a good example of the Vernacular Revival style favoured by sports clubs. © Worcestershire County Council



20th-century heritage continues to be largely under-represented

### 20th-century heritage in Worcestershire

20th-century heritage continues to be largely under-represented on Local Lists and Historic Environment Records (HERs). It has historically been poorly represented on the Worcestershire HER, with the creation of new records reactive rather than proactive and managed on a case-by-case basis. Where more proactive recording has taken place, it has, until recently, been driven by national and thematic projects such as the 'Worcestershire Farmsteads and Landscapes' project and the CBA's 'Defence of Britain' and 'Home Front Legacy' projects. 20th-century records have historically been much better represented on the Worcester City HER – which shares a joint software platform with the County – likely driven by its shared conservation services, a history of heritage projects, including the *HER21* Project which digitised archived building applications before 1947, and accelerated rates of re-development.

### Developing new approaches to modern heritage: the Worcestershire project

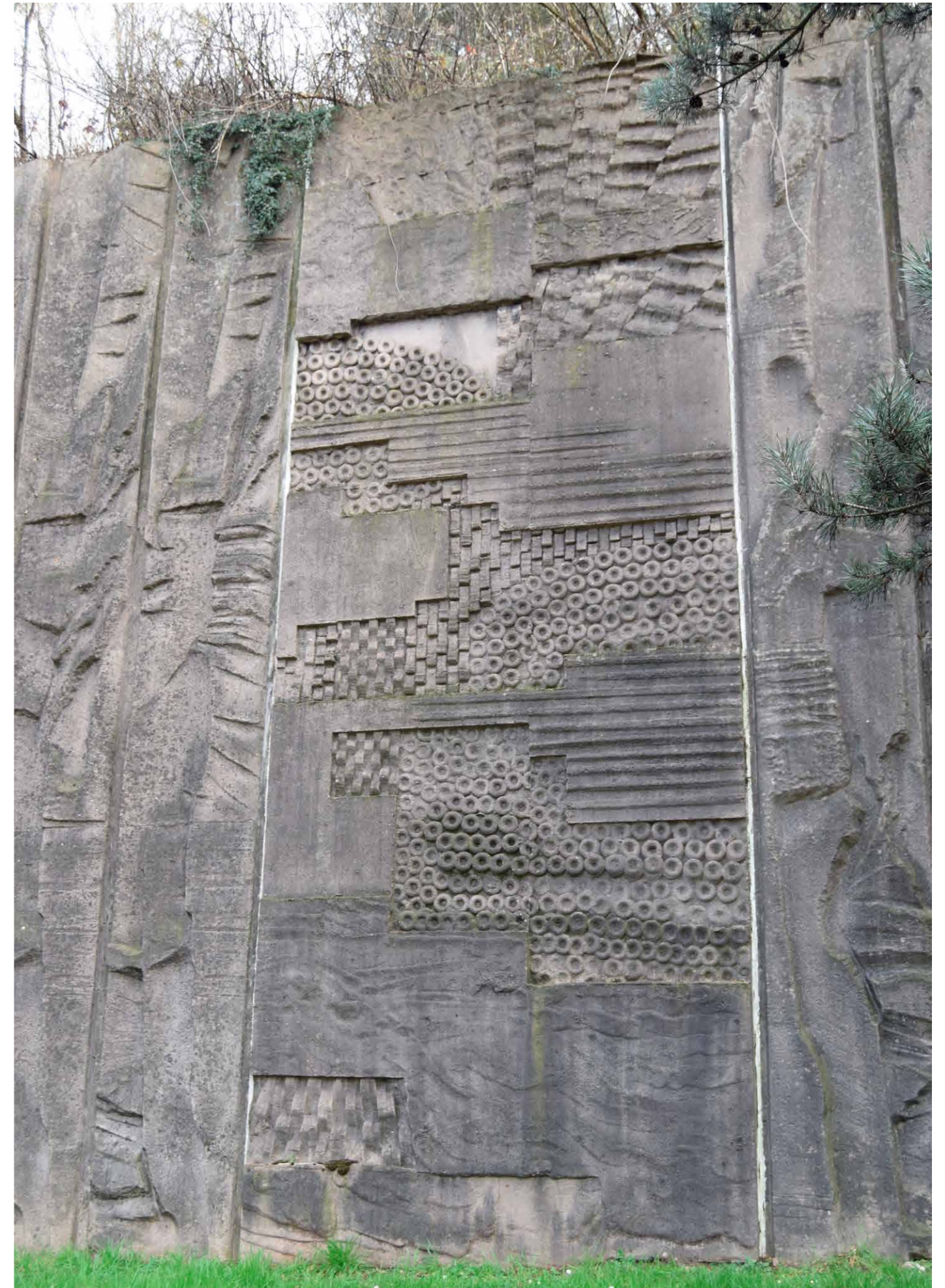
To address the issues surrounding the care of our recent heritage, Historic England commissioned Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service to develop a project to enhance understanding of 20th-century buildings and landscapes – specifically non-domestic buildings and public places – in the county, and to develop a strategy for its identification and assessment.

The 20th-century non-domestic buildings and public places in Worcestershire' project, using a combination of research, targeted field survey and consultation with both professional and public stakeholders, identified 20th-century heritage throughout Worcestershire. It also reviewed our

current understanding and existing levels of protection for 20th-century heritage assets.

The project had a number of important outcomes. It has enhanced the local evidence base by adding a new layer to the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record and by nominating candidates for inclusion on the Worcester City Historic Environment Record. The project also informed some additions to the National Heritage List for England, including Kidderminster's Retaining Wall with Sculptural Relief by William Mitchell, built between 1972 and 1973 and listed at Grade II in December 2020 and Hunnington's inter-war 'Blue Bird' Toffee Factory, of which the administration building, welfare building, boundary walls, railings and gates, were listed at Grade II in October 2019. To help raise awareness of 20th-century heritage in the county, a half-day workshop was organised for local heritage professionals and development management and strategic planners.

Consultation questionnaires for planning and heritage professionals, which among other things considered the perceived value of 20th-century heritage and the current selection criteria for buildings of later than 1850 date, was met with limited response – perhaps a reflection of current resource pressures. There was, however, consensus among the limited respondents that 20th-century buildings and public spaces can 'add value' to the character of a place and that we should safeguard the best examples into the future. Several respondents also expressed frustration with the current selection criteria for designating buildings of later than 1850 date, which was described as 'sometimes deemed to weigh rather harshly against 20th-century heritage in a national context'. >>



**Opposite page:** Concrete relief, 1973, by renowned sculptor William Mitchell, Kidderminster, a striking example of public art, now listed at Grade II <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1471502> © Worcestershire County Council





**Above left:** This recently demolished Morgan Garage in Hartlebury was first established in the inter-war period. © Worcestershire County Council

Consultation and research also raised significant questions over how uncompromising emphasis on a well preserved, high quality and substantially unaltered interior (as well as exterior) could undermine cases for the protection of 20th-century heritage assets with high historic and community value.

The fate of the recently-demolished Morgan Garage raises questions over how 20th-century heritage should be better valued and conserved. Although surviving as a well-preserved example of an inter-war

filling station, with its vernacular revival form and detail, changes to its overall footprint were considered to undermine the case for protection. There needs to be more emphasis placed on understanding how buildings such as this illustrate their historic value, and are valued by communities: this could have been secured through retention of the main range facing the road, whilst accepting the need for internal adaptation and further changes to the footprint of the remaining structure.

Perhaps the most important outcome of the project has been the publication



**Above right:** Pre-fabricated village hall, Pensax; dated 1911 and funded by public subscription. Prefabricated buildings were widely adopted in the 20th century and can add considerable value for communities in providing new places for social interaction. © Worcestershire County Council

of [guidance on the identification and assessment of 20th-century heritage for professionals](#), interested individuals and communities. Identified gaps in knowledge and potential avenues for further research have also been set out in 20th-century [‘Non-Domestic Buildings and Public Places in Worcestershire: Future Work and Research Priorities’](#), which sets out a strategy for local research within a national context. Four project case studies – ‘Redditch New Town’, ‘Kidderminster’, ‘Village Halls and their derivatives and Worcestershire’s County Farms and Small Holdings’ –

were undertaken to research aspects of Worcestershire’s 20th-century heritage in more detail.

Enhanced identification of 20th-century buildings, structures and places in the county and city HERs will support Conservation Officers, Neighbourhood Plan making bodies and Local Planning authorities to identify and protect 20th-century heritage assets of local importance as part of development management, new and enhanced Local Heritage Lists and new and updated Conservation Area appraisals. >>



**Right:** The Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady of Ostra Brama in Pitt Street, Kidderminster opened to serve members of the Polish community in 1963. © Worcestershire County Council



In October 2019, the government announced a campaign to encourage communities to nominate buildings and other heritage assets of local value for inclusion on [Local Heritage Lists](#). In support of the campaign government funding has been awarded to 22 areas to facilitate county areas to develop and/or update Local Heritage Lists. Although not one of the successful bid counties, Worcestershire's Local Authorities are committed to their development and/or enhancement and consequently it is anticipated that the county's Local Heritage Lists will continue to develop and mature to inform 'Planning for the Future'.

Enhanced identification in the HER could also provide evidence to support prospective new additions to the National Heritage list for England.

### Conclusion

20th-century heritage forms a significant layer of our history. Although easy to assume that there are countless more examples of a particular type of 20th-

century building than, say, a 17th-century timber-framed barn, this supposition does not necessarily reflect reality, given the speed of re-development and examples of locally interesting 20th-century buildings recently demolished, or at risk of re-development, highlighted throughout the course of the Worcestershire project.

There is a need to better understand the range and survival of 20th-century heritage, its significance and how it is valued by local communities. This will better inform local decision making and future listing priorities as well as any future discussions concerning the selection criteria for buildings of later than 1850 date.

As a sector we can support the proactive identification and recording of 20th-century heritage assets on County Historic Environment Records, Local Lists and Neighbourhood Development Plans. We can also provide forward thinking and structured opportunities for Local Authority Archaeologists, Conservation Officers and Communities to proactively engage in

There is a need to better understand the range and survival of 20th-century heritage, its significance and how it is valued by local communities.

dialogue and discussion as well as share information and knowledge, so that the most important physical remains of our 20th-century past can be protected and conserved into the 21st century ■

### The authors

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Initially a field archaeologist, Emily now has over 10 years' experience working as a landscape archaeologist. She leads case and

project work supporting better understanding and management of the historic environment. Specific interests include the character and development of Worcestershire's traditional farmsteads and the links between landscape, the historic environment and habitat.

Jeremy Lake FSA, MCiFA, MLI  
*Historic Environment Consultant.*



Jeremy previously held a number of roles at English Heritage and Historic England. Since leaving Historic England at the end of

2016 he has worked on a range of projects including neighbourhood plans, conservation management plans, ecosystem service assessment, settings analysis and statements of significance for heritage assets. He has recently completed Farmstead and Landscape Statements for all of England's National Character Areas and a project for Natural England looking at alternative approaches to future landscapes.

### Further information

Hathaway, E and Lake, J 2020 *Guide to 20th-century Non-Domestic Buildings and Public Places in Worcestershire*, Worcestershire County Council and Historic England.

Hathaway, E and Lake, J 2020 *20th-century Heritage in Worcestershire: Future Work and Research Priorities*, Worcestershire County Council and Historic England.

Hathaway, E and Lake, J 2020 *20th-century Non-Domestic Buildings and Public Places: National Framework for Assessment*.

Penrose, S (ed) 2007 *Images of Change*, Swindon: English Heritage.

May, S, Orange, H and Penrose S (eds) 2012 *The Good, the Bad and the Unbuilt: Handling the Heritage of the Recent Past*, British Archaeological Reports International Series 2362. Oxford.

Twentieth Century Society, 2017: [Conservation Areas Project](#)

Worcestershire Historic Environment Record via [Heritage Gateway](#)

Adding a New Layer: 20th-Century Heritage and the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record.



# Investing in scientific research

How investing in new scientific equipment for Historic England benefits the historic environment sector in the UK and internationally.



Above: The Hyde900 Archaeology Group at their Festival of Archaeology event in Winchester, Hampshire. We helped on the stall and provided posters and hands-on activities. © Historic England

## Scientific research at Historic England

The Historic England Investigative Science Team comprises 30 heritage scientists located across the country. They provide technical advice and applied research for Historic England and for the English Heritage Trust (through a Shared Service Agreement), and they support wider national capability through training, standards, guidance and innovation, thereby sustaining and caring for the historic environment.

The Fort Cumberland Laboratories, comprising [archaeological conservation](#), [materials science](#), geoarchaeology, human osteology, [archaeobotany](#), palaeoecology and [zooarchaeology](#), are at the heart of this service. Its strength lies in the unique combination of equipment, skills and resources brought together under one roof which enables multi-disciplinary investigation, reporting and presentation of sites, objects and collections.

The facility is used by our own staff and by external researchers and practitioners via partnerships and collaborative projects. We welcome recreational, vocational and professional visitors for on-site training and events and strive to find new ways to maximise the public value of our work, such as contributing to the Festival of Archaeology.

Making the results of our scientific investigations available to everyone is threaded through all that we do and has recently informed two new strands of work: upgrading equipment and supporting an international exchange programme for researchers. >>



## Investing in equipment

In 2020, we were grateful to be awarded two grants.

The first, £150,000 from the [Wolfson Foundation](#), has helped us to upgrade equipment and renovate existing infrastructure to create a large, walk-in sized, industrial strength [X-ray facility](#) that is at the centre of Historic England's archaeological assessment, analysis and conservation work. A key benefit is that the power of the equipment and configuration of the chamber will allow large, heavily [corroded objects](#) – such as those recovered from Protected Wreck sites – to be examined

The second, £109,000 from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Capability for Collections programme (AHRC Award AH/V011758/1), has meant that we can replace ageing microscopes and cameras with state-of-the-art equipment, specifically a tree-ring analytical system and a digital 3-D microscope.

## How the new equipment will benefit research

These grants will enhance research and training facilities and transform our imaging capabilities, providing virtual access to our collections and allowing us to showcase the research we do as well as what we find to new audiences.

The tree-ring system will support the programme of dendrochronology, primarily on standing buildings (up to about 80 phases/areas annually), through improved efficiency and enhancements with respect to digital recording and archiving of both images and data, thus freeing up the physical samples for emerging techniques (eg oxygen isotope dendrochronology, high-precision AMS radiocarbon wiggle-matching, conifer blue intensity dendrochronology) which are increasingly being employed on sites with samples undated through ring-width dendrochronology. The digital 3-D microscope will improve our ability

to examine objects for investigative conservation purposes, allow accurate microscopic measurement and enable the analysis of small, complex features on artefacts and environmental remains.

The 3-D digital microscope is already being used both to identify material sent into us by researchers and community groups and produce images for publications. This has included digitally recording auditory ossicles (ear bones) from Late Iron Age to Early Saxon burials from [Stanwick, Northamptonshire](#). Measuring only a few millimetres, these are the smallest bones in the body, and are a prime source of well-preserved ancient DNA. They will be analysed as part of a genetic history of Britain project, conducted by the Francis Crick Institute, London, which is examining how populations changed over this key period. Combined with other evidence, the results will also

help us to explore the diversity of the local Stanwick population and how it may have changed over time. Were the people buried in the 5th century AD descendants of the Iron Age inhabitants or were they were 'stranger[s] in a strange land' (Exodus 2:22).

As well as being good for studying DNA, ear ossicles may show signs of disease, such as chronic ear infections. They are also quite variable in form, for reasons we do not fully understand yet. This means that it is very important to make a good record of these little bones before they are analysed.

Investing in new equipment and developing our imaging capabilities not only benefits the historic environment sector in the UK. It also means that Historic England can play its part in developing a European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science ([www.e-rihs.eu](http://www.e-rihs.eu)). >>

These grants will enhance research and training facilities and transform our imaging capabilities

the results will also help us to explore the diversity of the local Stanwick population and how it may have changed over time.

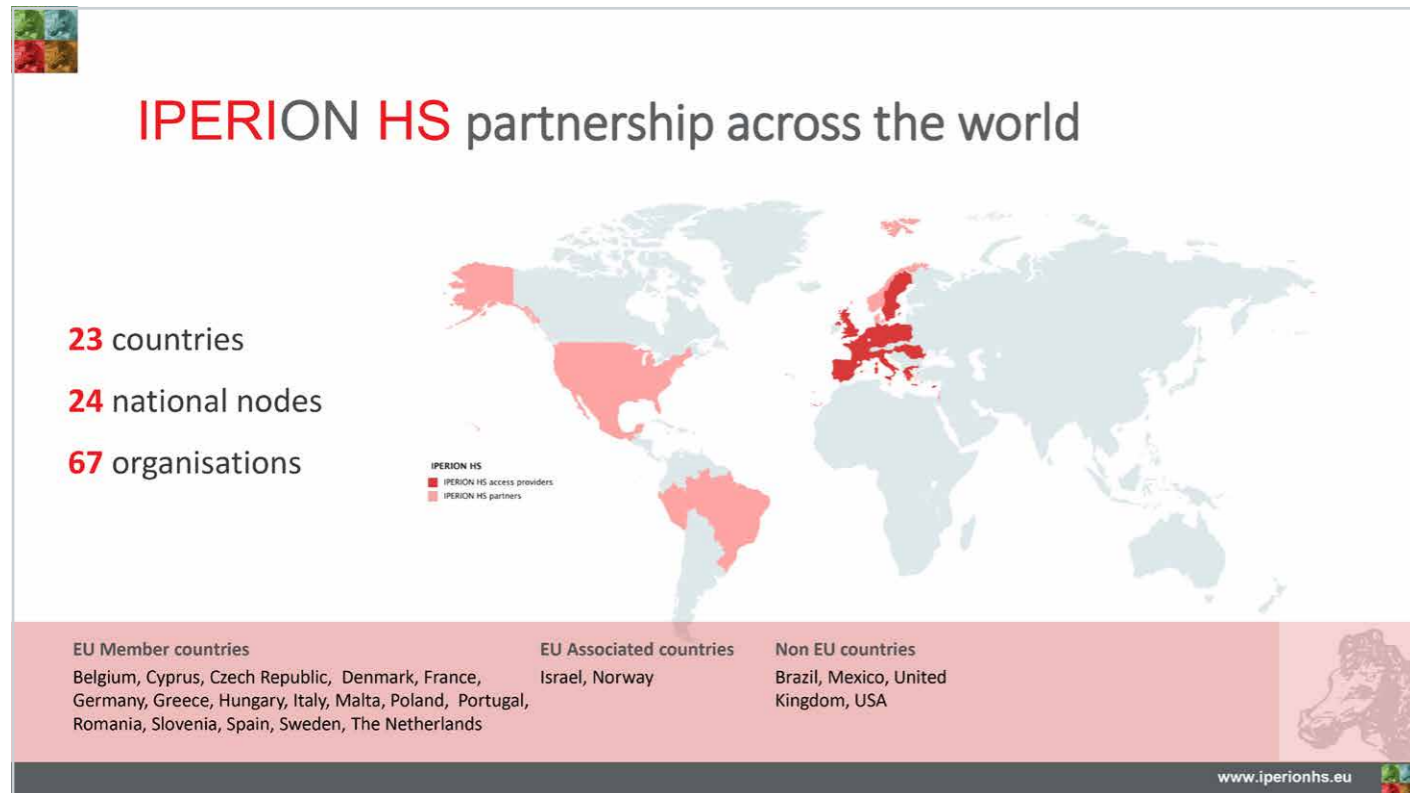


**Above:** Dr Simon Mays using an endoscope to extract ear ossicles. © Historic England

**Left:** The X-ray facility showing the walk-in X-ray chamber on the left. © Historic England

**Above right:** A stapes (stirrup) bone extracted from the ear canal of skeleton 6059 from Stanwick Quarry, Northamptonshire. Photographed using AHRC funded Keyence VHX7000 3-D digital microscope at x30 magnification (AHRC Award AH/V011758/1). © Historic England





Above: IPERION-HS: A global Heritage Science Infrastructure. © IPERION-HS project

Integrating Platforms for the European Research Infrastructure ON Heritage Science (IPERION-HS) is a new initiative funded by the European Commission as part of the Horizon 2020 programme, building on the success of IPERION-CH, which focussed on cultural heritage. It seeks to develop a connected infrastructure of research facilities across Europe and beyond, bringing together researchers in humanities and sciences. Historic England is a linked third party in the project (through University College London) and is leading on engaging the global archaeological community with the project.

The core activity of IPERION-HS is to provide funded, Trans-National Access (TNA) for researchers to scientific instruments, data, tools and knowledge outside their geographical base and core area of expertise, in order to develop competence and advance the understanding and conservation of a wide range of cultural heritage, from artefacts to archaeological sites.

Participants must be based in a different country to the infrastructure they wish to access. For example, UK-based researchers would need to visit facilities outside the UK, in any of the other 22 countries that are part of IPERION HS partnership.

The core activity of IPERION-HS is to provide funded, Trans-National Access (TNA) for researchers to scientific instruments, data, tools and knowledge outside their geographical base and core area of expertise, in order to develop competence and advance the understanding and conservation of a wide range of cultural heritage, from artefacts to archaeological sites.

There are three different platforms or types of infrastructure that researchers can access – ArchLab, FixLab, and Molab:

- ArchLab comprises physical collections, including samples, reference materials and datasets from analyses carried out by researchers based at the host institution or using the host institution's collections. Providers include the Groningen Institute of Archaeology, Netherlands, with its extensive zooarchaeology collections, and the Craft Laboratory at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, which focuses on the management and conservation of the built environment.

- FixLab includes large scientific facilities such as the LABEC radiocarbon dating laboratory in Italy and AGLAE, the Grand Louvre Accelerator for Elemental Analysis, in France, as well as mid-scale facilities with scientific instruments from Scanning Electron Microscopes to Mass Spectrometers.
- MoLab is an arrangement in which institutions provide mobile scientific equipment and related expertise which can be brought to the object, archaeological site or landscape of interest. It includes remote sensing equipment from Lidar to ground penetrating radar and imaging equipment from laser scanners to imaging methods and scanning applications for non-invasive dendrochronology. >>



Proposals for Trans-National Access can be put in at any time of the year, with evaluation happening every 5 months; the next call closes on 30 November 2021. If you are interested in putting in a proposal, there are videos on how to apply on the [IPERION-HS website](https://www.historicengland.org.uk/iperionhs). The user helpdesk ([userhelpdesk@iperionhs.eu](mailto:userhelpdesk@iperionhs.eu)) is there to answer any queries and can also help match users with heritage scientists based within the 67 organisations that make up the IPERION-HS partnership.

Funding covers researchers' time spent at the institution being visited, including travel and subsistence costs. A proposal can involve visits to, and collaboration with, more than one institution. Visits can be made by an individual (a user) or a group of individuals (a user group) and can range from a few days to several weeks. The funding also covers the host expert's time working with the users. Virtual visits are also possible.

We are looking forward to welcoming our first visiting researchers from Italy in the next few months at Fort Cumberland Laboratories. Dr Francesco Grazzi, from the Institute of Applied Physics Sesto Fiorentino, and PhD student Francesco Cantini (University of Florence) are researching **the Development of complex metal structures in Ancient Bronze and Steel** and will be accessing samples and datasets from work carried out by our materials scientists ■

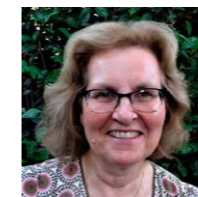
### Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Historic England colleagues Cathy Tyers, Simon Mays and Karla Graham for their invaluable help in preparing this article.

### The authors

Gill Campbell

*Head of Fort Cumberland Laboratories with Historic England.*



Gill leads the team of heritage scientists based at Fort Cumberland. She is an archaeobotanist and specialises in the analysis of waterlogged material. Her research focuses on

the utilization of plant resources in the past, the nature of biocultural heritage and the development and improvement of archaeological science practice. Current projects include the investigation of plant use at two sites: Tintagel Island, Cornwall, and Birdoswald cemetery, Hadrian's Wall.

Jen Heathcote PhD

*Head of Investigative Science with Historic England.*



Jen currently leads a team of heritage scientists at Historic England. She started out as a geoarchaeologist, later developing wide-ranging experience in applied scientific and strategic

research. Jen's research interests include environmental risks to the historic environment and landscape change, particularly wetlands.

### Further information

Archaeobotany: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/methods/archaeology/archaeobotany/>

Archaeological Conservation: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/methods/archaeology/archaeological-conservation/>

Geoarchaeology: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/methods/archaeology/geoarchaeology/>

Human Osteology: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/methods/archaeology/human-osteology/>

Materials Science: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/methods/archaeology/materials-science/>

Paleoecology: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/methods/archaeology/environmental-archaeology/>

Scientific Dating: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/methods/archaeology/scientific-dating/>

Zooarchaeology: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/methods/archaeology/zooarchaeology/>



# Heritage & social prescribing

Unleashing the wellbeing potential of heritage.

Public Health is now one of the biggest priorities of many governments and societies. The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened the wellbeing crisis and highlighted the need to address the issue. It has also demonstrated that local voluntary and social enterprise groups play a vital role in supporting communities to recover. Now it is more important than ever to encourage the heritage sector to play their part and maximise its potential to deliver wellbeing to both individuals and society.

There is growing evidence for the wellbeing benefits of connecting with the historic environment. The evidence is contained in a number of [Heritage and Society](#)

publications, in the annual [Heritage Counts](#) series, in reports such as the [Heritage and wellbeing: state of the evidence](#) report of the What Works Centre for Wellbeing (published in 2019), and in Historic England's own [Wellbeing & Historic Environment Assessment](#) from 2018.

All this evidence has demonstrated that connecting with heritage increases self-awareness, a sense of meaning and belonging, and helps people overcome loneliness and social isolation. And it doesn't stop there. The healing power of heritage spreads from the individual to society more generally and has the potential to address health inequalities and improve wellbeing on a national scale.

connecting with heritage increases self-awareness, a sense of meaning and belonging, and helps people overcome loneliness and social isolation.



Above: NHS model for social prescribing. © NHS

## Social prescribing

One mechanism to help us link heritage with health and wellbeing needs is through social prescribing. Social prescribing (as per [the NHS definition](#)) "is a way for local agencies to refer people to a link worker, who, led by an individual's specific needs and values, takes a holistic approach to the person's health and wellbeing. The link workers connect people to community groups and statutory services for practical and emotional support..."

"Social prescribing works for a wide range of people, including those:

- with one or more long-term conditions
- who need support with their mental health
- who are lonely or isolated
- who have complex social needs which affect their wellbeing."

The NHS uses the model above to demonstrate how social prescribing works – and what key elements need to be in place for effective social prescribing. >>



## Historic England and social prescribing

There are existing examples of how heritage projects and activities can successfully be used for social prescribing. [Museums on Prescription](#) was one of the first pilots in the area, but now many more heritage organisations and programmes confidently invest in developing social prescribing pathways within their projects.

[Blenheim Palace's Natural Health Service](#) and [Wessex Archaeology's Well-City Salisbury](#), to name but two recent initiatives, demonstrate that our

sector has found innovative ways to explore partnerships which allow the historic environment to maximise its wellbeing benefits and contribute effectively to improving public health.

In 2020 Historic England's Wellbeing team commissioned SQW, an independent research and consultancy organisation, to explore in depth the potential of Historic England to deliver social prescribing. [The SQW report was published in 2021](#) and made several important recommendations, including embedding wellbeing in

strategy and policy to ensure the organisation is well-placed to support effective delivery of social prescribing and developing models for implementation through pilots, collaboration and research in the area.

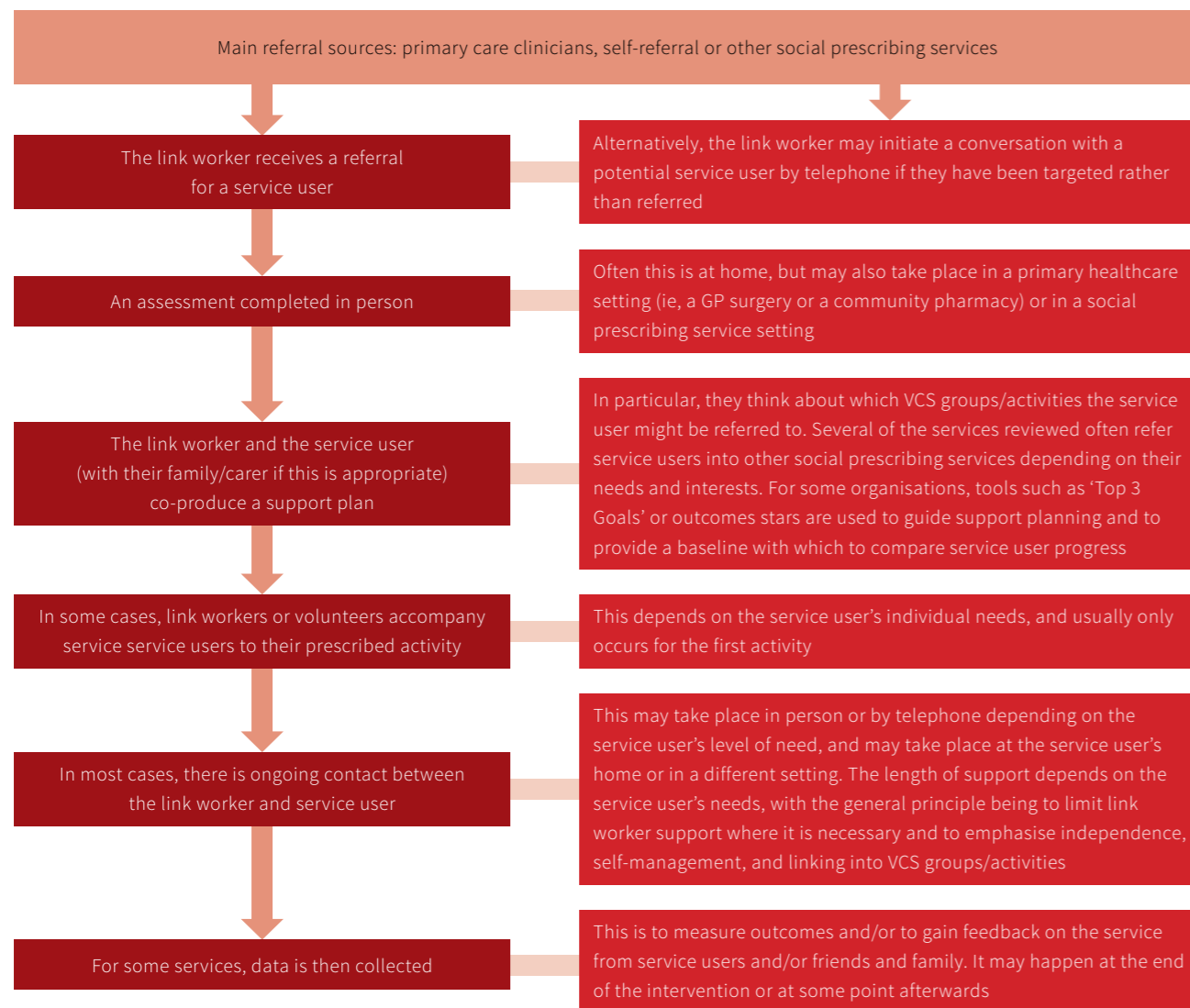
The report identified some examples of ongoing Historic England programmes with good potential for delivering social prescribing. These included [Heritage Action Zones](#), which focus on regeneration and revitalisation of local heritage areas with active community engagement and co-production

and [Enriching the List](#), which invites the public to share their knowledge and pictures of listed places, thus enriching the existing records for these significant heritage assets with their personal contributions.

Our team is already working on developing pilot wellbeing projects within those programmes - and some of them will also include social prescribing models. In Lancashire, the [Kirkham High Street Heritage Action Zone's](#) team is investing in a [Heritage, Health and Wellbeing programme](#), which will see a

heritage link worker (funded by the programme) working alongside the existing local social prescriber, employed by the NHS or the voluntary and community sector, and assisting in specialised referrals to heritage activities and initiatives in Kirkham. In this way, Kirkham will not only widen the spectrum of its social prescribing activities and meet more of its population's needs, but will also contribute into showcasing the wellbeing potential of engaging with heritage and unleashing it for the benefit of its community and the historic environment in the area.

In Cornwall, our South West [Heritage at Risk](#) colleagues are supporting the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty team, aiming to deliver the amazing [Monumental Improvement](#) project which will be implementing social prescribing in Heritage at Risk renovation work. The project, which is currently in its development stage, will be referring local people to a range of educational and wellbeing activities focused around the protection and improvement of 40 Scheduled Monuments listed on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register or classified as vulnerable. >>



**Left: The navigator link worker model.**  
Source: after Partnership Southwark, July 2019 'Review of Social Prescribing in Southwark' p6

**Below: Members of the 'Monumental Improvement' project visiting a Heritage at Risk site in Cornwall.** © Cornwall AONB







**Above, top:** An aerial view of Fort Cumberland, Portsmouth, which houses both Historic England laboratories and a respite centre for veterans. © Historic England Archive. Photographer Damian Grady, PLB\_N070043

**Below:** Veterans at the Respite Centre, Fort Cumberland, Portsmouth. © Forgotten Veterans UK



At Historic England's site at Fort Cumberland, the local section of the charity [Forgotten Veterans](#) utilised some of this fabulous location to build a [Respite Centre for Veterans and their families](#), a unique facility that has helped hundreds of veterans since its establishment in 2018. The Centre now also has its own social prescriber and receives referrals from veterans and other local communities in need.

#### **Partnership with NASP**

Following the SQW report's recommendation that Historic England should develop the ability to strategically influence developments in social prescribing, in 2020 we formed a partnership with the [National Academy for Social Prescribing \(NASP\)](#). This allowed us to establish the post of National Historic Environment Lead within the Academy (to which I am now seconded to on a part-time basis), to [become a strategic and funding partner of](#)

[the Thriving Communities Fund](#) (which supported 37 cross-sector innovative social prescribing projects across the country), and to organise the first national [Heritage & Social Prescribing webinar](#) in June 2020.

Historic England and NASP are now setting up the joint priorities for the next 3 years. These include continuing to make the case and gathering robust evidence for the wellbeing benefits of heritage, which can be achieved through research and innovation, developing and scaling up the existing provision of social prescribing within the sector and through preparing a set of social prescribing guidance for heritage organisations and link workers. We are also aiming to develop further the regional social prescribing cross-sector networks, which will help linking the existing heritage social prescribing offer with the NHS regional infrastructure. >>

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## Route to social prescribing

Social prescribing is becoming embedded in the arts, culture and heritage sector. In 2019 the [Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance](#) (national network of organisations working for the promotion of wellbeing through culture) found that 40% of

organisations surveyed were working with social prescribing and 90% would like to learn more about it. Some guidance on how to do this is provided in the diagram accompanying this article (below). The key messages here are about local connectivity, creating partnerships with those in the

health and voluntary community sectors and understanding local needs. However, social prescribing is but one of many ways that people can derive benefit through heritage and a key first step is to assess what works for each local community and organisation and what resources exist to support initiatives.

### Stage One: Develop local connections and establish interest

- Have conversations and develop **links with local stakeholders (including the healthcare sector)**, build relationships and **listen to local need (healthcare priorities), gaps (in social prescribing offers) and interest (in relation to heritage and the historic environment)** to inform an offer
- Develop **local partnerships with the VCS sector** (for referrals, delivery and support eg Age UK, Mind, Mencap) **and for evaluation** (eg universities, consultants/researcher or identifying internal capacity)
- Ensure there is **regional managerial support**
- **Deliver a taster session** to build up knowledge, test the concept and consult with audience about activities.
- Embed **co-production** (or elements of this) throughout this process
- Develop funding streams (eg internally, HLF, The National Lottery Community Fund, local authorities, arts/culture and health bodies, partners) which should be aligned, accessible and sufficient
- Promote the offer with link workers/referral organisations about activities.

Stage One will require a significant investment of time – a minimum of a year could be needed to develop a social prescribing offer. Elements of Stages One and Two may happen simultaneously.

### Stage Two: Design project and preparation

- Develop **project aims and a varied programme of activities**
- Consider who the offer will be designed for, regularity of sessions (minimum six weeks in length), recruitment methods (depending on relationships established), types of activities
- Consider **capacity** in terms of maximum number of service users, **resources** required and project cost to participants
- Consult with partners and potential beneficiaries to inform the approach and ensure that it is **accessible and inclusive**
- Consider whether the partners involved cover all of the relevant knowledge, skills and experience required
- Ensure **policies and procedures conform to best practice and legislation** (eg safeguarding, GDPR, information governance, insurance, and health and safety); maintain a **risk register**
- Consider transition and legacy for the end of the programme so this is not abrupt
- Develop evaluation metrics and approach, consider capacity, skills and resource

Stages One and Two will determine whether the pilot takes a 'pure' social prescribing approach or follows the principles (likely to be dependent on partnerships developed, methods of referral and who the scheme is targeted at).

### Stage Three: Effective delivery and evaluation

- Recruitment of team and steering group with coverage of skills and experience required – **dedicated project/volunteer coordinator is key**
- **Ensure leadership is strategic and dispersed**, agree a signed partnership agreement among all delivery partners
- Conduct appropriate training for staff, stakeholders and volunteers (eg Mental Health First Aid)
- **Promote clear offer to link workers**
- Carefully consider **duty of care** – ensure participants are aware of how they can access clinical or other support, and seek feedback on their experiences of engaging with Historic England's offer
- Ensure delivery is inclusive and accessible, encourage all to participate
- Allow **bespoke support** to meet the needs of participants (eg attendance of a friend/carer to support)
- Delivery of group sessions is recommended – ensure time is embedded for **introductions, socialising, refreshments and breaks**
- **Evaluate** following best practice
- Disseminate learnings and best practice across the sector

## A healthy dose of heritage a day...

In times when health and wellbeing are everyone's priorities, we as heritage professionals need to ensure that all we do results in public benefit – including through wellbeing delivery.

Although it is not a panacea, learning from our own history has the potential to be a timeless remedy to conflict, trauma and isolation.

If we can prescribe a dose of heritage connection to our divided society today, we have the chance to become stronger and wiser people, living in healthy places enriched by the diverse legacies of all communities that shaped the history of these places through time.

Targeted social prescribing and wellbeing heritage-based projects can address critical social and health issues in today's society. They can give vulnerable people a sense of belonging and an awareness of their own value, and they can lead them through difficult times, opening up richer, more fulfilled lives. Benefits are both personal and societal, leading to greater community cohesion and healthier people ■

**Left:** The process for establishing a social prescribing project in the heritage sector. Source: After SQW report for Historic England

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## The author

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Desi has been working in heritage, research, education and policy for many

years and is a passionate believer in the potential of heritage to bring people together and its crucial role in maintaining a vibrant and healthy society.

## Further information

Historic England's wellbeing webpages <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/current/social-and-economic-research/wellbeing/>

Sarah Reilly, Claire Nolan, Linda Monckton, 2018: *Wellbeing and the Historic Environment*, Historic England

Lauren Roberts, Holly Waddell and Alice Birch, 2021: *Social Prescribing and the Potential of Historic England's Local Delivery*: an SQW report to Historic England.

Andy Pennington, Rebecca Jones, Anne-Marie Bagnall, Jane South, Rhiannon Corcoran, 2019 *Heritage and wellbeing: state of the evidence* report of the [What Works Centre for Wellbeing](#)



# Coinage and ritual deposition at Stanwick, Northamptonshire

Analysis of one of the largest rural coin assemblages from Roman Britain.

In [HE Research 17](#), we described the impressive Roman sculpture from the excavations at Stanwick, Northamptonshire. The excavations also produced one of the largest assemblages of Roman coins from a rural site in Britain. The 3,730 coins have recently been re-examined by Richard Henry, building on work during the 1990s by John Davies. The condition of every coin has been evaluated, the catalogue has been updated and a Historic England Research Report assessing the assemblage will soon be available.

## The 1984-1992 excavations

The site was excavated by teams formerly part of English Heritage (now Historic England) in advance of gravel extraction because of the importance of the site. The area is now the Stanwick Lakes nature reserve and country park, and there are lakes where the villa and *temenos* once stood.

The excavations were led by Dr David Neal (then a field officer with English Heritage) and extended over 30 hectares (more than 75 acres). They revealed activity from the early Iron Age to the end of the Romano-British period. The enclosures and trackways established by the first century AD formed the framework for the development of a Romano-British agricultural village set between the River Nene and the Roman road between the walled towns of Irchester and Water Newton. Complex buildings including a large aisled hall and a building group set out around a walled courtyard were constructed during the third century AD. The aisled hall was incorporated into a corridor villa during the later fourth century. There were two small Roman temples or shrines, and a Bronze Age round barrow was chosen as the site of a *temenos* – an enclosed ritual precinct which became a focus for coin deposition. The sequence is described in a [Historic England Research Report](#).



Above: A selection of coins from the *temenos*. © Historic England Archive, J890282

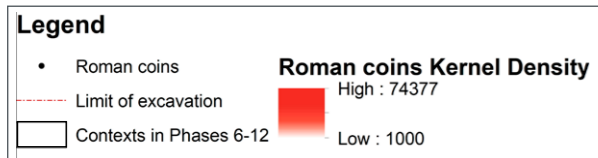
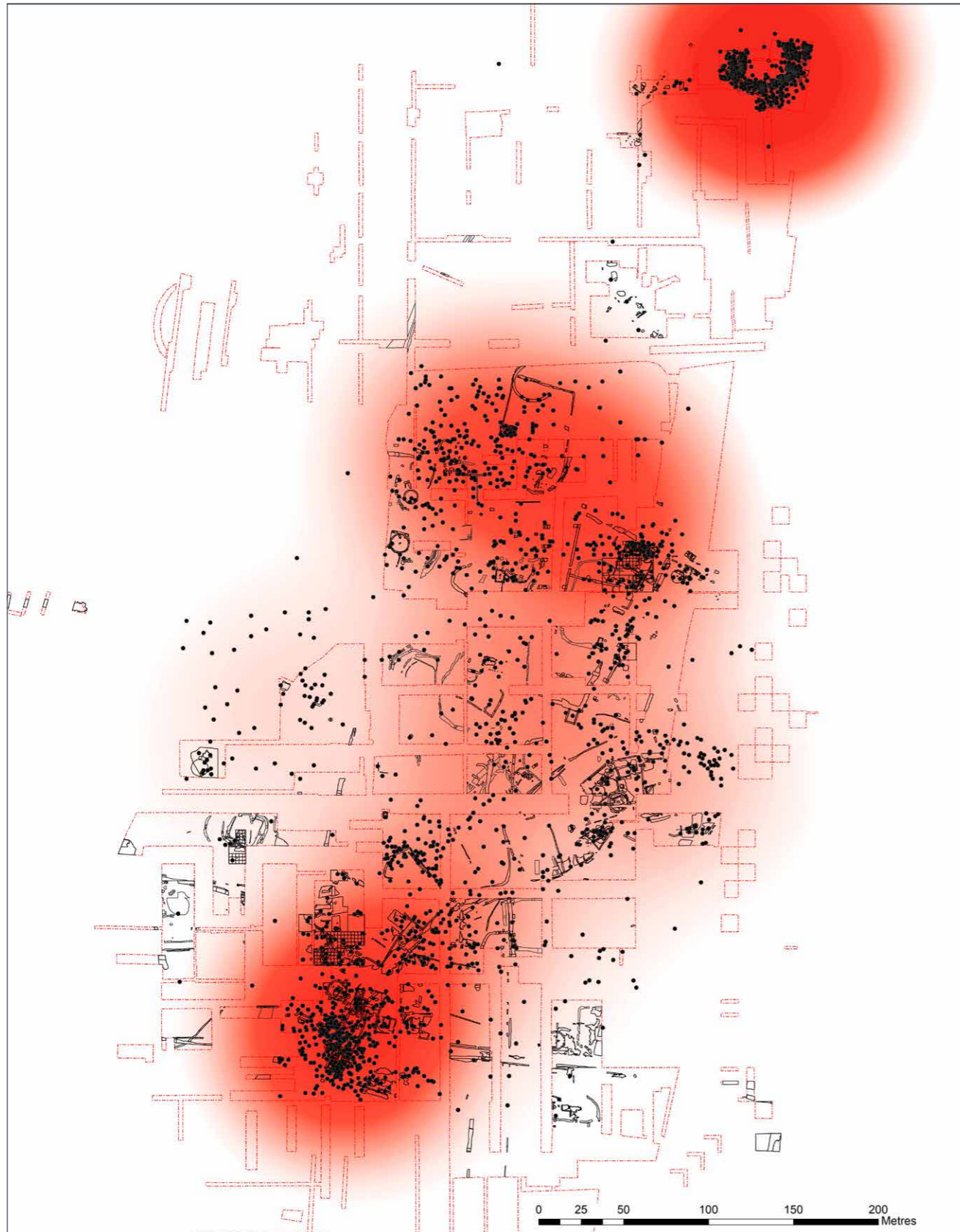
## Mapping deposition over time

The eminent numismatist Dr Richard Reece established a method of analysis which allows the comparison of Roman coin assemblages of varying sizes from different archaeological sites. The methods are described in an article in *Britannia* from 1995. He divided the coinage of Roman Britain into 21 'issue periods' based on when they were produced, and these can be used to create date profiles of coin assemblages. We can use this form of analysis both to compare Stanwick with other sites and to trace the ebb and flow of lifeways at Stanwick.

The quality of the spatial data associated with the Stanwick coins provides an opportunity to investigate coins from several areas of this extensive site and this is described in detail in the

forthcoming Historic England research report. Mapping the numismatic assemblage over time highlighted significant and prolonged deposition at the *temenos* from the first to third centuries AD as well as coin loss at the Roman village over a similar period of time. In the fourth century coin deposition at the *temenos* declines and by the late fourth century prolific coin loss occurs at the Roman villa, corresponding with the late construction of the winged corridor villa. These three areas of the site provided the bulk of the numismatic assemblage. When we compare different parts of the settlement, we can see distinct differences, with date profiles which will let us consider variations in economic activity. This also highlights those of the building groups, such as the villa, which remained in use to the end of the fourth century and probably into the fifth. >>





**Above:** The density of coins from the excavations at Stanwick. The main concentrations were recovered from the *temenos* (top), the northern part of the village including the walled courtyard (centre) and villa (bottom). © Richard Henry

**Right:** The *temenos* during excavation. The remains of the barrow mound can be seen on the right. © Historic England, IMG0069

### The *temenos*

The *temenos* was a ritual space, defined with a ditch, paths and walls. It enclosed the Bronze Age round barrow, but we don't know what else was in the centre of the enclosure as the top of the barrow was removed by later agricultural activity. There could have been a temple or shrine, but we have no evidence for this.

Despite the plough damage, the excavations established the sequence of development of the *temenos* enclosure. The earliest evidence we have is from the first century AD when a narrow ditch was constructed around the base of the barrow and a sand and gravel path encircled the mound. During the second century, the ditch was filled and a limestone surface replaced the sand and gravel walkway. A stone pier base was set at its western side. A pit was cut through the centre of the barrow; its purpose is unknown but it may have held a central feature of some kind.

In the later second or early third century a new metalled walkway was laid, with a second pier base close to the first.

These defined an entranceway, and the presence of tiles in this area suggest it was a roofed structure. A metalled road now ran west from the entrance, and probably joined a road running north from the settlement.

Further changes occurred in the later third or early fourth century when an encircling stone wall was constructed. Three interconnecting drainage channels to the east of the entranceway suggest there may have been a water feature inside the *temenos*. A thick layer of oyster shells spread outwards from the wall for up to ten metres, forming a glistening surface around the *temenos* and alongside the approach road.

The *temenos* declined during the second half of the fourth century. The entranceway superstructure appears to have collapsed or been demolished, and the changing pattern of coin deposition suggest the focus of activity moved from the west to the east of the enclosure. Possibly access to the *temenos* was now directly from the main Roman road rather than from the roadways through the settlement. >>





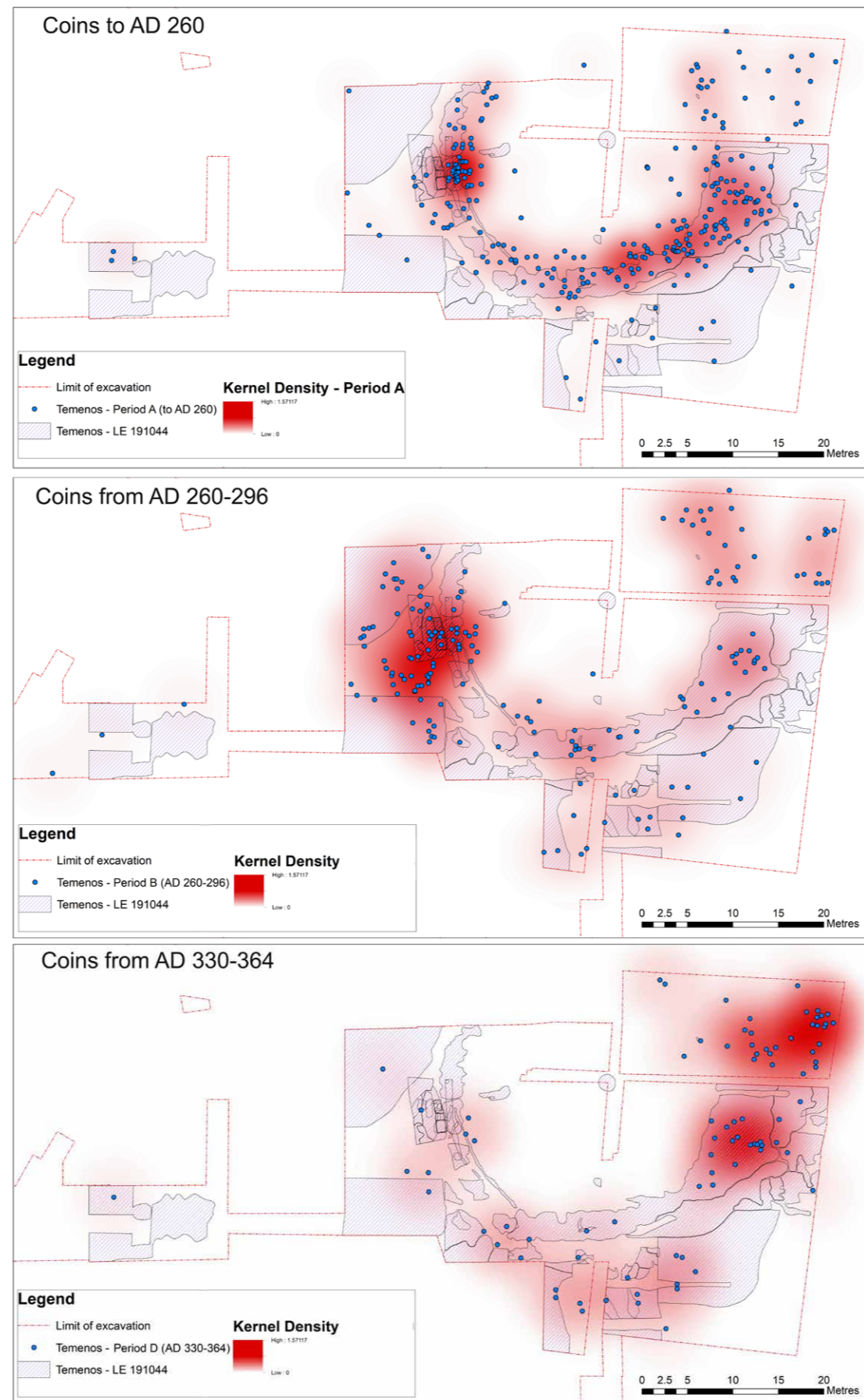
### The coin finds in the *temenos*

In total, 772 coins were recovered from within and around the *temenos*, mostly from the plough soil due to agricultural activity. The majority are copper-alloy coins struck before AD 260. This is unusual as most rural sites have larger numbers of late 3rd and 4th century coins. The quantity of coins from this feature and the quality of the spatial data allowed for detailed analysis both temporally and spatially, and we can trace the changing foci of deposition.

As at other Romano-British religious sites and temples, the coins found here were probably deliberately deposited as ritual offerings. In contrast it is likely that the majority of the coins from the villa and village were accidental losses.

The earliest group of coins includes a hoard of copper-alloy coins of Vespasian deposited after AD 72 at the southern section of the sand and gravel walkway. They consist of three *dupondii* and nine *asses* which is equivalent to almost one silver *denarius*. A soldier was paid 300 *denarii* a year. The condition of these coins suggests they were deposited within the *temenos* soon after they were struck. This hoard correlates with an increase in the deposition of coins at the *temenos*, many of which appear to be associated with the sand and gravel walkway. Recorded as part of the hoard is a mutilated *as* where the reverse of the coin has been deliberately gouged. We know of mutilated coins from a number of Roman temples and sites with a focus of ritual deposition, including Hayling Island, Bath and Piercebridge.

In contrast to the hoard, most of the coins of this date found near the western side of the *temenos* were worn (Roman coins from this period could remain in circulation for over 100 years and become extremely worn from use). This may suggest that this area of the *temenos* became a focus of deposition only after the construction of the plinths. Coins were deposited at the entranceway in prolific numbers into the first half of the 4th century. These include coins (known to archaeologists as ‘Coins of British Association’) produced in Rome solely for supply in Britain. They provide some of the earliest depictions of Britannia, the personification of the Roman province of Britain. >>



Above: The changing pattern of coin loss at the *temenos* over time. This pattern reflects the changing structural development of the *temenos* particularly the construction of the

entranceway located to the western side of the *temenos*. After its destruction the focus of deposition moved to the eastern side of the *temenos*. © Richard Henry



Top right: A silver *denarius* of Trajan © Historic England Archive, J890281



Bottom right: The hoard of *dupondii* and *asses* of Vespasian. © Richard Henry





Above: A Roman as of Hadrian. © Richard Henry

Coin deposition at the *temenos* changes drastically from AD 330, probably corresponding with the demolishing of the entranceway on the western side. Coins were now deposited at the eastern side of the *temenos* but in ever reducing numbers. This decline in deposition is significant and contrasts with the patterns of coin loss from the village and villa. Taken with the structural evidence it suggests that the *temenos* declined in importance and its use decreased, although a few coins were still deposited until the end of the fourth century. As with the re-use of the monumental sculpture described in [HE Research 17](#), this may reflect changes in religious belief at Stanwick in the later fourth century.

When comparing the coin assemblage from the *temenos* with temples in Britain the closest parallel numismatically is the Sacred Springs at Bath, where more than 12,000 coins were deposited. The assemblage from Bath allows us to understand coin supply to Britain in the first to third centuries and indicates periods of both abundant and limited supply.

Importantly, when comparing the denominations deposited at the *temenos* and the Sacred Spring at Bath, we can see variations. Higher proportions of

*dupondii* were deposited in the first century compared with Bath and *asses* continued to be deposited in higher proportions in the second century. Although this could indicate deliberate selection of particular denominations for deposition at the *temenos*, many studies have highlighted that there was geographical variation in coin supply. Therefore this is likely to show that the pool of circulating currency in Britain was far from uniform. The assemblage from Stanwick offers an opportunity to consider coin use and supply within the region in greater detail.

When comparing the coin assemblage from the *temenos* with temples in Britain the closest parallel numismatically is the Sacred Springs at Bath, where more than 12,000 coins were deposited.

By the third century the supply of copper-alloy *dupondii* and *asses* to Britain had all but dried up, and they become rare on British sites. The key denomination supplied to Britain at this time was the silver *denarius*. Where third-century *dupondii* do occur, they are usually found on sites associated with the military campaigns of Septimius Severus (in AD 208-211) along the east coast of Britain from the Saxon Shore Fort at Reculver (Kent) to the Antonine Wall (across central Scotland). These coins occur in the *temenos* in higher numbers than we would expect. It is possible that the coins indicate a connection between the settlement at Stanwick and the wider military or imperial administration, a possibility that is particularly interesting in light of Martin Henig and Penny Coombe's [suggestion](#) that sculpture excavated at Stanwick demonstrates the existence of a major shrine, indicating an official presence at the site.

### Ritual and economy

At a local level we can see significant variation in coin loss between different parts of the Stanwick landscape such as the late Roman villa and the rest of village (this is described further in the Research Report assessing the coins). Through the coins we can trace the buildings where increasing coin loss probably reflects increasing in coin use and integration into the monetary economy. The assemblage from Stanwick is nationally important and presents many research opportunities to understand changes at the site and its landscape, its role in the wider economy and, as importantly, when considered with other finds assemblages it will tell us about the lives of the people who lived there.

The coin selected for deposition at the Stanwick *temenos* inform us not just about changes at the *temenos* itself, but they provide an insight into the currency pool available to this rural area of Roman Britain and so may increase understanding of its economy. Further research into the assemblage and comparison with sites along the eastern coast of Britain could also throw light on Stanwick's possible links with the imperial administration ■

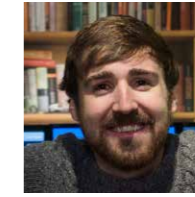
### Acknowledgements

The coins were catalogued and assessed during the 1990s by John Davies, and the recent work builds on this.

### The author

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Richard is an archaeologist with a specialism in Roman finds and numismatics who previously worked for Historic England Archaeological Projects Team.

Formerly a Finds Liaison Officer for

the Portable Antiquities Scheme and a Curator, he is currently researching material culture and the end of Roman Britain at the University of Reading. He has recently published *Hoards from Wiltshire*.

### Further information

The Research Report on the coins will be available to download from <https://research.historicengland.org.uk/>

Richard Henry 2021 *Stanwick Quarry, Northamptonshire: Raunds Area Project: Assessment of the Iron Age and Roman Coinage from Stanwick*. Historic England Research Report Series 37-2021.

The methods used to analyse the coins are described by Dr Reece in an article in *Britannia* from 1995: Reece, R. 1995. Site-finds in Roman Britain. *Britannia*, 26, 179-206.

The development of the Stanwick Iron Age and Romano-British settlement is described in Vicky Crosby and Liz Muldowney 2013 *Stanwick Quarry, Northamptonshire: Raunds Area Project: Phasing the Iron Age and Romano-British settlements at Stanwick, Northamptonshire (excavations 1984-1992)*, volumes 1 and 2. [English Heritage Research Department Report Series, no. 54-2011](#).

The sculpture from Stanwick was described in [HE Research 17](#) and is now published in the journal *Britannia* for 2021.

Penny Coombe, Kevin Hayward and Martin Henig, with Vicky Crosby, Andrew Lowerre, David Neal and Sarah Paynter 2021 *The sculpted and architectural stonework from Stanwick Roman villa, Northamptonshire*. *Britannia* 52.



