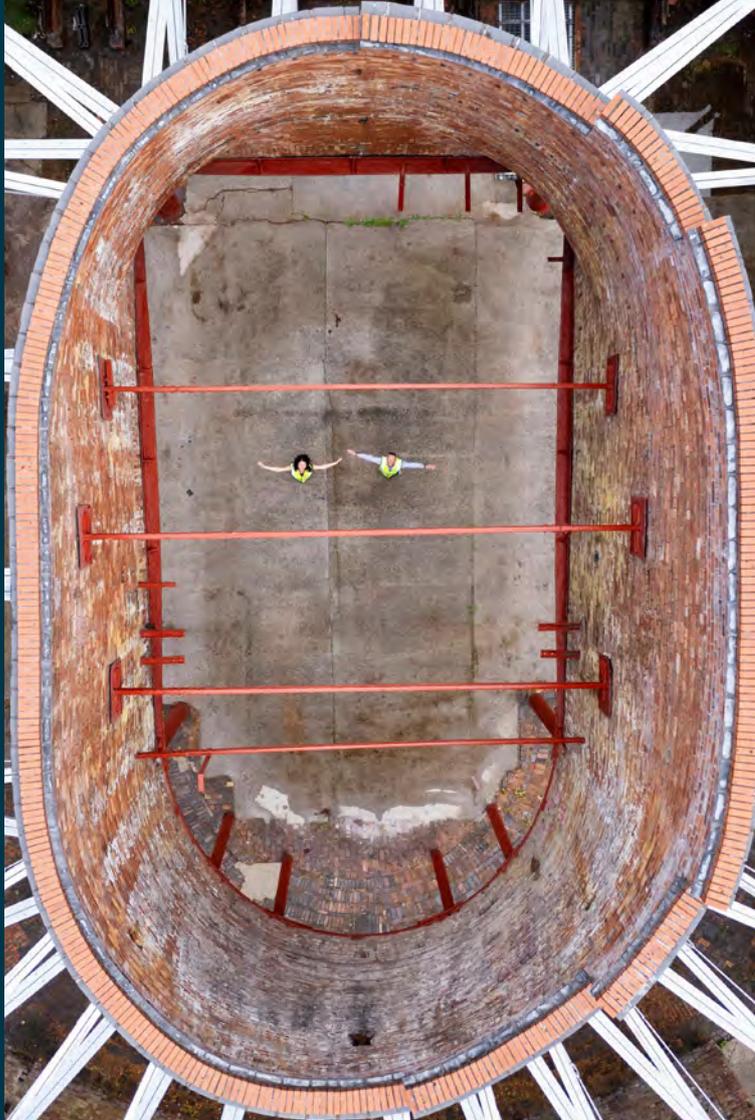




# Impact Report



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# The Historic England Foundation

From community centres to cathedrals, homes to high streets, markets to mills – our historic places matter. They are the places we choose to hold onto, the legacy we pass on and the stories we continue to tell.

We help Historic England to work with more people and organisations to discover, protect and bring new life to our shared historic environment. We're passionate about ensuring the history that surrounds us all, lives on and is loved for longer.

Whether it's funding Heritage at Risk sites, researching underwater archaeology, digitising Archive collections or training future conservation experts, our work changes people's lives.

Thanks to your support we have already been able to achieve so much. With your continued generosity, we can ensure heritage is valued, celebrated and shared by everyone.



General view of New Briggate from the south, with the Scape Leeds tower in the background

Staff member carrying out  
digitisation of an image in  
the Historic England Archive



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# Message from the Chair

**Dear supporters and friends, it is with great pride that I reflect on the initiatives and successes of the past year.**



The launch of the Historic England Foundation Patrons' Scheme marked an important milestone in growing our community of supporters, while the appointment of three new Trustees to our Board has brought fresh insights and diverse perspectives to build on the valuable contributions of existing and past colleagues.

On the following pages, you will find stories that bring the Foundation's impact to life. From championing local histories through the National Blue Plaque Scheme to adding collections of national significance to the Historic England Archive, your generosity continues to benefit people and places across the country.

I am also delighted to welcome Emma Squire CBE and Claudia Kenyatta CBE as the new Co-Chief Executives of Historic England. It is reassuring to be able to benefit from their leadership and experience at this pivotal moment, and I am excited by the vision, energy and innovation they bring to this crucial role.

As we look ahead, I am confident that the projects we continue to champion with your help will ensure England's historic places remain accessible, protected and relevant in a changing world. Together with my fellow trustees, I thank you sincerely for your continued support.

**Dr Fabian Richter**

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# Message from the Co-CEOs

**We are thrilled to begin as Co-CEOs of Historic England and to have the opportunity to work closely with the Historic England Foundation.**



The Foundation harnesses additional funding and expertise to ensure England's historic environment is protected, celebrated, and made accessible for everyone. Its work touches communities, young people, and countless historic places, and we are inspired by the passion and generosity of its supporters.

Heritage connects communities to their history and strengthens their sense of place. At a time when heritage faces significant challenges, with thousands of sites at risk, and an urgent need for climate adaptation, the Foundation's work is more important than ever. The best way to conserve historic buildings is to adapt them for modern use, rather than letting them stand

empty. By supporting projects that safeguard our historic places and make them resilient for the future, our shared history remains alive and relevant for generations to come.

Guided by our belief that heritage creates lasting personal, social, environmental, and economic value, we are committed to working with partners, communities, and policy makers to put heritage at the heart of England's future.

We look forward to what we can achieve together with the Foundation, and we are deeply grateful to all who help make this work possible.

**Claudia Kenyatta CBE  
and Emma Squire CBE**

# Our work in England

Your support enables projects across England, from the digitisation of nationally significant collections in the Historic England Archive, to recognition of extraordinary people who have made a positive impact and contribution to their communities through the National Blue Plaque Scheme.

-  Future Talent Placement
-  National Blue Plaque Scheme
-  The Historic England Archive
-  Heritage Building Skills programme



# 2025 at a glance

Our supporters are at the heart of the success of the Historic England Foundation. Your contributions enhance our impact and reach, enabling us to achieve more than we would be able to do with government funding alone.



**225**  
public nominations  
for National Blue Plaques

**11**  
Future Talent Placements  
in Historic England  
offices across  
the country



**21,415**  
items digitised

for the Historic England Archive



**21**  
youth-led History in The Making  
projects carried out across England  
enabling young people to discover,  
engage and connect with their  
local stories

**2,565**  
hours contributed

by Archive volunteers



**100%**

of Emerging Talent  
programme participants  
said the placement  
met their expectations



**129**  
historic sites removed  
from the Heritage  
at Risk Register



  
**500,000**  
people watched our online short films  
about National Blue Plaques

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# People

**We supported people and communities to thrive through heritage.**

Heritage has the power to change lives. Our work helps individuals and communities to connect with their local heritage in ways that build confidence, skills and a sense of belonging. By widening access, increasing participation and creating opportunities to get involved, we help people benefit directly from the historic environment.

We support a range of programmes and initiatives in this area of work and ensure heritage remains meaningful and inclusive.

## **Noah's story – The Future Talent Programme**

Noah's journey with Historic England began with an 8-week placement as a Listing Assistant, giving him practical hands-on experience of heritage protection within the Listing Team. After being offered a placement generously funded by the Mercers' Company, Noah has been able to develop his skills further by supporting Listing Applications, carrying out detailed research and presenting cases to the Listing Team.



Through shadowing Historic England colleagues and undertaking training across the North, Noah will see how different specialists all contribute to safeguarding heritage – capturing exactly what the Future Talent Programme aims to nurture in emerging professionals.

While Noah's experience shows how early opportunities open doors into the heritage sector, other programmes focus on equipping people with the specialist skills that turn interest into viable long-term careers.

From 2021, the Heritage Building Skills Programme has provided in-work training and apprenticeships across the North of England. Now in its evaluation stage, the programme has supported 44 trainees and apprentices across 12 specialist trades, working with 30 host firms and 9 training providers. Participants combined hands-on work on hundreds of historic buildings with recognised qualifications and professional development.

Noah (left) and other young people attending the Emerging Talent welcome event at Cannon Bridge House, London

“

**Across my three months on the Step-Up Placement, working as a Listing Project Assistant at Historic England, I have had many opportunities to develop my skills and gain new experiences... In the role I have replied to and corresponded with members of the public, developing my interpersonal skills. I have also had the opportunity to attend and partake in regional meetings, meaning I have been able to be involved with exciting conversations about current and future projects...I have really enjoyed the placement so far and I believe it is equipping me with a wide range of skills, which I will be able to take with me and use once this placement comes to an end.**

Noah - Future Talent Programme participant



Trainees in front of a stained-glass window at the Church of St John the Evangelist, Lancaster

For Hannah, a Heritage Building Skills trainee, the programme turned a long-held interest in stained glass into a permanent career in conservation. Her experience shows how investing in people and skills not only sustains endangered crafts, but ensures historic buildings continue to be cared for and passed on.

“

**The placement enabled me to realistically pursue a career in stained glass...without the support from the programme, a full-time career in stained glass would have been unachievable. I now have a full-time job in stained glass.**

Alongside building skills and careers, heritage also plays a powerful role in supporting people’s wellbeing, shaping how individuals and communities feel, connect and thrive.

Over the past three years, Historic England has built a substantial evidence base exploring the relationship between heritage, mental health and wellbeing, spanning life satisfaction, social cohesion, youth engagement, ageing, social prescribing and pride in place. Research through the Cultural Heritage Capital programme estimated the wellbeing value of living close to heritage at £29 billion per year.

In 2025, we brought this learning together, directly informing practical outcomes such as the Heritage and Social Prescribing Advice Hub which launched in March 2025. Alongside this, Project Rejuvenate has demonstrated lasting improvements in school attendance for participants, showing the importance of engagement with heritage for improving life chances.

Combined, these programmes demonstrate how targeted investment in people can deliver lasting social value through heritage. Thanks to your support, we’re protecting future access to historical spaces, heritage skills and careers, and future proofing the sector that upholds our outstanding historic environment.

Historic England Young Advisers looking toward the River Thames from the roof of Cannon Bridge House



# Place

## We protected the places that shape who we are.

Historic places are not only remembered through records and images; they also need to be cared for, adapted and kept in use if they are to remain part of everyday life.

The Heritage at Risk Register provides an annual snapshot of the condition of England's historic places, helping to focus attention where it is needed most.

In 2025, 129 sites were removed from the Register, including the 17th-century Old School Coffee House in Barnstaple. Founded in 1659 as a school for '20 poor maids', the building had stood vacant for years before being carefully adapted into affordable, sustainable housing. Its reuse demonstrates how at-risk buildings can support communities, boost local economies, and reduce environmental impact, while remaining part of daily life.



A National Blue Plaque commemorating footballer Jack Leslie, first Black footballer called to play for England



**The heritage we see all around us impacts how we feel about our local places...The best way to protect our buildings is to reuse them, turning them into places of local connection and joy. The sites that have been saved and have come off the Register this year really highlight the benefits of working together in partnership, and with communities, to create positive, sustainable change.**

Claudia Kenyatta CBE and Emma Squire CBE,  
Co-CEOs, Historic England

## The National Blue Plaque Scheme

Building on this connection between people and place, the National Blue Plaque Scheme celebrates extraordinary people in the places that shaped them, highlighting stories that might otherwise have been forgotten. In 2025, new plaques honoured theatre pioneer Esmé Church in Bradford, children's author Rev. Wilbert Awdry in Stroud, and the first black footballer selected for England, Jack Leslie, in Plymouth. Each plaque offers communities a tangible link to their heritage and an opportunity to explore, share and take pride in the remarkable lives that shaped them.

Together, these places remind us that caring for heritage is not only about how we commemorate the past, but how we preserve it for the future.

## The Janette Rosing Collection, the Historic England Archive

The Janette Rosing Collection was acquired by the Historic England Archive in 2025 through a story that begins on the Devon coast. A discovery of early photographs of the pier at Hartland Quay, which had since been lost to the sea, sparked Rosing's fascination with how places endure through images. She built an exceptional body of English topographical photographs, particularly those of views of Cornwall, including rare shipwreck images by Gibson of Penzance. Now held within the Archive, the collection has become part of a shared national record, using images of place to deepen understanding of memory and identity.



Looking down Watermouth Bay towards the sea in the distance, with sailing boats moored opposite the harbour arm, 1860-1900. Francis Bedford

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# Partnership

## We worked together to protect heritage.

Our purpose is to ensure that England's shared historic environment continues to thrive in a changing world, and our supporters are central to this. Philanthropic support helps us look beyond immediate need, strengthening the bedrock that heritage depends on, so it remains cared for, relevant and valued for many generations to come.

This includes investing in skills and talent so that historic places can be properly cared for in the future, protecting knowledge through the Historic England Archive, and supporting digital preservation that improves access and understanding.

From grant makers and corporate partners to individual donors and those choosing to leave a legacy gift, our supporters help turn day-to-day interventions into lasting impact.

In 2025, the launch of the Historic England Foundation Patrons' Scheme marked an important step in building a community united by a shared belief in the value of heritage. We were delighted by everything we achieved through the

scheme, from supporting vital conservation projects to hosting exciting, exclusive events, and we look forward with great anticipation to what 2026 will bring.

Meaningful corporate partnerships help ensure that the heritage that matters to us all continues to enrich lives, strengthen places and be passed on with care.

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**Historic England is a strategic partner for Ancestry in the UK that is part of a larger initiative to help redress the gender imbalance in how women have been represented in history. This important relationship with Historic England enables Ancestry to build credibility and trust with media and the public. Both organisations work seamlessly and collaboratively on the partnership and are committed to raising awareness of how women have not received enough recognition for their contribution to society, business, science, and culture.**

Louise Hodges, Director,  
International Communications, Ancestry



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I have much enjoyed, and value, my association with the Historic England Foundation. The Foundation gives Patrons special access and insight into a whole range of places and projects across the historic environment, from stately homes to historic high streets, neolithic sites to 19th-century industrial mills – many of which are live issues of the moment. Patrons get the chance to hear, at first hand, from heritage leaders about the latest developments and thinking in the sector; and to develop an understanding of how the historic environment is important not only for its own sake, for the way it tells country’s story, but also for how it can be a catalyst for the future.

**Above all, though, it’s fun.**

Historic England Foundation Patron

Guests at the  
Foundation’s  
launch of the  
Patrons Scheme

# 2025 highlights



General view of Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings from the south-east



Restored by Historic England, Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings, the ‘grandparent of skyscrapers’ transferred into the care of the English Heritage Trust, continuing its role as a thriving community hub and landmark of industrial innovation

Historic England, in collaboration with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Architectural Heritage Fund, opened a £5 million Heritage Revival Fund to help communities rescue and repurpose neglected historic buildings.



Redundant church's volunteer gardeners and Norfolk Churches Trust staff members



The Foundation's Patrons are given a tour of the Old Operating Theatre, London



We launched the Foundation's Patrons' Scheme, hosted at Amazing Grace, a converted historic church in London, where guests had the opportunity to tour the adjacent Old Operating Theatre.

Fort Cumberland Laboratories in Portsmouth reopened after a year-long major refurbishment to create a state-of-the-art facility for the study of the historic environment through time.



Historic England's Collections Access Manager posed with an aurochs' skull at Fort Cumberland



Jenner Hut, Dr Jenner's House, Church Lane, Berkeley, Gloucestershire

In Stroud, we unveiled a National Blue Plaque to Rev. Wilbert Awdry, the creator of the Thomas the Tank Engine stories, alongside community partners, family, schoolchildren, and a special guest, Sir Topham Hatt!



The steps leading up to the Central Summerhouse in the Hill Garden's Cruciform Pergola

Second World War "dragon's teeth" anti-tank defences in Thorneycroft Wood, Surrey were among a number of remarkable sites granted protection in 2025, with the listing attracting positive press coverage and highlighting these rare, well-preserved wartime structures.

08  
August

Historic England announced £15 million in repair grants from the Heritage at Risk Capital Fund to safeguard listed buildings and sites facing dereliction.

10  
October



Unveiling of a National Blue Plaque to Rev. Wilbert Awdry, the author of Thomas the Tank Engine

11  
November

Historic England revealed its Heritage at Risk Register for 2025. In 2025 alone, 129 sites were rescued and their futures secured.

12  
December



View from the east of anti-tank pimples, also known as a dragon's teeth, at Thorneycroft Wood

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# Thank you to our donors in 2025

Thank you to all our generous donors, including the following individuals and organisations who donated £1,000 or more to the Historic England Foundation during 2025.

Ancestry  
Benefact Trust  
Delancey  
Earls Court Partnership Ltd.  
National Archives  
Pete Waterman's Making Tracks Model Railway  
The Britford Bridge Trust  
The Mercers Charitable Foundation  
The Rochester Bridge Trust  
The Walker Trust  
The William Delafield Charitable Trust  
The Worshipful Company of Builders Merchants

And those wishing to remain anonymous.

## The Historic England Foundation Patrons

Andrew Fane  
Charles Hoare Nairne  
Alan Leibowitz  
Laurie Magnus  
Neil Mendoza  
Purnima Mookerjee  
Fabian Richter  
Jamie Ritblat  
Robert Sackville-West  
Will Stratton-Morris  
Samuel Swire

And those wishing to remain anonymous.

# How you can support



Trainee inspects parquet flooring for re-use in restoration of former police and fire station

## Donate online

We count on donations to help us deliver exciting and innovative projects across the country. To donate today, please [visit our website](#).

## Partner with us

Please get in touch to discuss opportunities on how we can work in partnership with you, your company or your foundation.

## Patrons

The Historic England Foundation Patrons' Scheme provides opportunities for those who enjoy heritage and history to forge a deeper engagement with our work, whilst joining a group of like-minded supporters. To find out more or join the Patrons' scheme [please email us](#).

## Wills

The Foundation is inviting anyone passionate about heritage to consider leaving a gift in their Will to support the work of Historic England. For decades Historic England has been protecting England's most important places and will continue to do so long into the future.

Donations left in Wills can have a lasting impact. You can support projects which equip the heritage sector's workforce throughout their career or restore 'at risk' buildings, giving them a sustainable future.

If you are interested in leaving a gift in your Will to the Historic England Foundation, [please contact our team](#).

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