

SITES INSIGHT

A NEW PUBLICATION IN CELEBRATION OF THE NATION'S HERITAGE AND 30 YEARS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE FUND

Publication date: Monday 6 November 2006

Featuring essays from:

actors Griff Rhys Jones and Simon Callow, broadcasters Emily Maitlis and Sean Rafferty, musicians Katherine Jenkins and Nicola Benedetti, MPs David Lammy and Michael Gove, and ex-Arsenal footballer Charlie George.

In the last 30 years, the Architectural Heritage Fund has played a central role in the rescue and restoration of over one thousand of the UK's historic buildings. But to mark its anniversary in 2006, it has chosen not to look inwards, but to explore this rich, compelling, nebulous concept that we call 'heritage' and its importance to us in the UK – both now and in the future.

The AHF has enlisted the help of twelve public figures to write on places and buildings that are dear to them. The result is a collection that is accessible, thoughtful, and covers a whole range of feelings and emotions: poignant sadness at what has been lost; serious determination to renew while rescuing the past; pleas for different ways of protecting what we have; a dislike of history sanitised or cleaned up for theme parks; and occasionally a good dose of unashamed nostalgia.

Essays include:

- Actor and presenter Griff Rhys Jones' plea to separate politics from heritage institutions and for government and developers to value restoration over new building schemes
- BBC Newsnight presenter Emily Maitlis on her "obsessive/compulsive" relationship with Hyde Park – her escape from the world
- Simon Callow on the Old Vic and its many characters
- Arsenal legend Charlie George on the resonance of Highbury and why its conversion into flats is a positive move

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- Minister of Culture David Lammy MP on why heritage matters to people of all social groups, and his early relationship with Peterborough Cathedral

The 'heritage' written about by all contributors' represents an enormous range of buildings, landscapes and passions. Just as the AHF has triumphed in helping to save, and find a new purpose for, a great variety of historic buildings, *Sites Insight* proves that it is the whole canvas of UK heritage that matters and the small, familiar buildings and places are just as important as Grade 1 listed landmarks.

In looking forward, rather than back, during its 30th Anniversary, the Architectural Heritage Fund is highlighting that, in a time of global concern about the environment and our exploitation of it, there can be nothing more genuinely sustainable than the restoration and re-use of a derelict or abandoned building, bringing life to a community and ensuring that the legacy we leave for future generations is a positive one.

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Notes to Editors:

1. Extracts of some of the essays are available for use in the media
2. Pictures of contributors are available in digital format
3. Interviews on the AHF's 30th Anniversary and the *Sites Insight* project are available with Ian Lush, Chief Executive of the AHF

**For a review copy and more information contact:
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Publishing information:

Sites Insight is a lavishly illustrated hardback. It is available for £9.99 from all major book shops.

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