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# History of Neglect Labour's Record on Heritage

A Report by Jeremy Hunt MP, Shadow  
Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport

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## Summary

- Total public funding for heritage has fallen by almost 40% in real terms since 1997.
- The Heritage Lottery Fund expects its real annual income to fall by another 43% by 2012.
- The number of annual visits to English Heritage staffed properties has fallen by nearly 12% since 1999.
- With a falling budget to deal with English Heritage has been forced to halve the value of its grants to 'At Risk' heritage assets from £8m in 1999 to £4.1m last year.
- Last year, for the first time in a decade, there was a net increase in the number of buildings on the Buildings At Risk register.
- 12 Labour ministers have held some responsibility for heritage since 1997.
- The DCMS has reduced by almost a quarter the number of staff it employs to work on heritage matters over the last five years while the proportion of its total salary bill spent on heritage staff has more than halved since 1997.
- From accounting for one-sixth of the Department's budget in 1998, the share of DCMS spending which was assigned to heritage has reduced to 10%.
- Government underestimates the public's passion for heritage – 4 million people are members of heritage organisations. Since 2001 membership of English Heritage has increased by 49% while the number of National Trust members has risen by 25%.
- Government underestimates the importance of heritage to our tourism industry – between two thirds and three quarters of Russian and Chinese tourists cite our castles, historic buildings and churches at the top of the list of things to see while here.
- Conservative proposals for the National Lottery would return an extra £40 million per year to the Heritage Lottery Fund to be distributed in the form of grants to heritage organisations.

## Introduction

Heritage is all around us. It makes Britain what it is. It makes us who we are.

The physical and cultural history of a country is vital, not only telling its story but also in shaping the future development of the nation. With 28 World Heritage sites and 373,000 Listed buildings, Britain's cultural history is second to none.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately the Labour government has betrayed our past in its systematic failure to recognise the importance of a sector that is worth at least £1.6 billion to the national economy.<sup>2</sup> Clearly the government does not value heritage as highly as the hundreds of thousands of visitors who flock to Britain citing our castles, churches and historic houses as their primary reason for choosing to come here.<sup>3</sup>

Research commissioned by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in 2006 provides us with an estimate of the local economic impact of a heritage grant. Assessing ten HLF grant recipients and their role in the sub-regional economy, the researchers found that 14 sustainable jobs were created with each additional £1 million in HLF grant.<sup>4</sup>

Heritage is worth so much more than the economic benefits it entails. Caring for the historic environment undoubtedly improves quality of life. Because more than 5% of heritage assets relate to 'gardens, parks and open spaces'<sup>5</sup> it should be considered that proper preservation of our history can enhance the enjoyment that so many of us will receive from those spaces in the future.

But heritage means even more than that. The Nobel Prize winning author, Pearl S. Buck once wrote 'one faces the future with one's past'. The approach of successive Culture Secretaries has done very little to reflect those sentiments.

One of New Labour's first acts after winning the 1997 General Election was the renaming of the Department of Heritage. Chris Smith said at the time that the first request he made after being invited to take his seat at the Cabinet was the renaming of the department he was to head.

The decision to rename the department the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in itself need not have signalled a downgrading of cultural heritage. However the first Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport's comments at the time offered a glimpse of what the future would hold for Britain's heritage industry. In an article in *The Guardian* in July 1997 Chris Smith wrote:

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<sup>1</sup> *Heritage Counts 2008*, English Heritage publication, page 24

<sup>2</sup> *Hansard*, 8 October 2008, Col. 696W

<sup>3</sup> Visit Britain; cited in *Valuing Our Heritage: The Case for Future Investment in the Historic Environment*

<sup>4</sup> *The Economic Impacts of Funding Heritage*, ECOTEC research, June 2006

<sup>5</sup> *Heritage Counts 2008*, page 25

*'Heritage only described a tiny part of what we did and was backward-looking'*<sup>6</sup>

He declared that 'Cool Britannia is here to stay',<sup>7</sup> but to the inaugural Culture Secretary and his New Labour successors heritage was deemed insufficiently 'cool' to warrant a share of the spotlight being offered to its DCMS stable-mates as a thoughtful approach to our historic environment made way for headline-chasing, celebrity parties and razzmatazz.

Labour's view of heritage as devoid of contemporary relevance is ill-judged and goes some way to explaining its complete lack of leadership for the sector during its eleven years in government.

Labour were wrong to sideline heritage. Britain's heritage should be a source of enormous pride. It is the jewel in our cultural crown. Unfortunately, under Labour the jewel has been left unpolished. Indeed, the government's betrayal represents a historic injustice and one which future generations may deem unforgiveable.

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<sup>6</sup> Rt. Hon. Chris Smith, *The Guardian*, 15 July 1997, page 7

<sup>7</sup> 'Ministry of All the Talents – Opinion', *The Times*, 15 July 1997: page 20

## The Present and Future of our History

With thousands of heritage sites in England 'at risk' and a fall of nearly 12% in the annual number of visitors to English Heritage properties during the last decade one might be given the impression that the public has fallen out of love with the buildings, gardens and monuments that tell the story of Britain. But with wide support for *The Sunday Telegraph's* 'Save Our Churches' campaign, three million viewers for BBC2's *Restoration*,<sup>8</sup> and one in six of us visiting historic sites every year, an appetite for learning and experiencing our collective history remains.

Even in 2007/8, and despite a fall of nearly 12% on 1999 numbers, there were still 5.3 million visits to staffed English Heritage properties. English Heritage estimates that an additional 5 million visits to unstaffed sites took place.

### Visits to staffed English Heritage properties, 1997-2008<sup>9</sup>

	Visits (million)
1997/98	5.9
1998/99	5.9
1999/2000	6.0
2000/01	5.7
2001/02	5.4
2002/03	5.5
2003/04	5.5
2004/05	5.3
2005/06	4.7
2006/07	5.3
2007/08	5.3

Further illustrating the ongoing appeal of cultural heritage and the Government's underestimation of the strength of feeling for the sector, the National Trust now has more than 3.5 million members and 52,000 volunteers donating more than 2 million hours to the charity every year.<sup>10</sup> It is the largest conservation organisation in Europe. In fact, since 2001, membership of the National Trust has increased by a quarter while English Heritage has attracted another 49% to swell its membership to 665,000 in 2007/8.<sup>11</sup>

Seventy per cent of us visit historic sites at least once a year and about 15% visit once a month.<sup>12</sup> In a 2007 survey 92.7% of respondents agreed with the statement 'When trying to improve local places, it's worth saving their historic features'.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> 'Restoration scores high', *The Guardian*, 23 August 2003, page 23

<sup>9</sup> *Hansard*, 14 October 2008, Col. 1200-1201W

<sup>10</sup> *National Trust Annual Report 2008*

<sup>11</sup> *Heritage Counts 2008*

<sup>12</sup> *Valuing Our Heritage: The Case for Future Investment in Our Historic Environment*, page 4

<sup>13</sup> *Heritage Counts 2008*, page 56

However, public popularity does not always translate into government action. Heritage is suffering and 2007/8 was the first year in almost a decade that more heritage sites were added to the At Risk Register than were removed.<sup>14</sup>

A related problem is one of a skills shortage within the sector. The skills required to preserve historic buildings and monuments require a great deal of training and development. Unfortunately falling numbers of apprentices and trainees in heritage-related craft skills threaten to undermine future conservation efforts, or at least significantly increase the cost of protecting historic assets. A year-on-year 15% reduction in first year trainees and a 14% fall in the number of new apprentices in specialist crafts is an extremely worrying trend and requires urgent attention.<sup>15</sup>

Similarly, a shortage of trained Conservation Officers at local authority level as well as a demographic that suggests this will create more difficulties in the medium to long term compounds the problem further and warrants more serious consideration than the one evidenced by the minister's response during the Select Committee study of the draft Heritage Protection Bill.<sup>16</sup>

Discontinuation of undergraduate courses related to building conservation at the Universities of Derby, Huddersfield, Glamorgan, Northumbria and Preston will have a negative impact on the numbers of Conservation Officers available to plug the gaps caused by demography.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Hansard*, 14 October, Col. 1193W

<sup>15</sup> *Heritage Counts 2008*, page 45

<sup>16</sup> 55% of Conservation Officers affiliated with the Institute of Historic Building Conservation are over 50 and 79% are 40 and over. Memorandum submitted by IHBC to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee: *Draft Heritage Protection Bill: Eleventh Report of Session 2007-8*, House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee (22 July 2008), HC 821, Ev15.

<sup>17</sup> *Draft Heritage Protection Bill: Eleventh Report of Session 2007-8*, House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, page 11

## Heritage and the DCMS

Currently, the minister responsible for heritage on a day-to-day basis is the Minister for Culture, Creative Industries and Tourism, the newly appointed Barbara Follett MP. She is the eighth minister to hold responsibility for the sector since 1997. Added to the four Culture Secretaries to head the DCMS during that time, there have been twelve ministers in total accountable for the sector since Labour came to power eleven years ago.

By way of comparison, there have been four Ministers for Sport since 1997.

The ministers coming through the revolving door have been supported by an ever-decreasing number of staff dedicated to heritage matters. During the last five years heritage staff at the DCMS have declined from 38 to just 30<sup>18</sup> despite the number of staff employed by the department as a whole during that period remaining stable.<sup>19</sup>

Analysis of DCMS spending on salaries for staff working on heritage illustrates this phenomenon more effectively. The total spend has fallen in real terms by more than 20% since 1997. While heritage staff accounted for more than 10% of salaries in 1997, it now makes up just 4.3% of the total.<sup>20</sup>

<i>Financial year</i>	<i>Heritage staff salaries in 2007 prices (£)</i>	<i>As a percentage of total salaries</i>
2007-08	1,124,157	4.31
2006-07	1,364,310	5.33
2005-06	1,353,348	5.77
2004-05	1,235,931	5.78
2003-04	1,327,530	6.41
2002-03	1,277,922	6.49
2001-02	1,334,472	6.33
2000-01	1,363,659	5.39
1999-2000	1,495,573	6.05
1998-97	1,600,812	6.89
1997-98	1,440,411	10.50

From accounting for one-sixth of the Department's spending in 1998, heritage has been relegated from the Premier division of DCMS priorities. It now represents just 10% of the total budget.

To echo the words of Chris Smith, as 'what they do' at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has become wider and larger, heritage has got tinier.

<sup>18</sup> *Hansard*, 21 October 2008, Col. 239W

<sup>19</sup> *DCMS Annual Resource Accounts 1999-2000*, HC181, page 17 & *DCMS Annual Resource Accounts 2007-08*, HC793, page 67

<sup>20</sup> *Hansard*, 20 October 2008, Col. 108-109W

## Churches

For many of us a local church, cathedral or other place of worship represents a daily connection with the historic built environment. Churches are significant far beyond their religious pertinence. These often spectacular places of worship and their committed congregations deserve real support in maintaining and preserving the buildings for future use.

In light of the decision to exclude the Heritage Protection Bill from its 2009 legislative agenda, the government's strategy for preserving the heritage of Britain is to convert churches into gyms, restaurants and bars.

In his speech at the launch of Heritage Counts 2008, Andy Burnham stated that where congregations dwindle, churches should be put to new uses. He said 'we need to increase the secular interest in our churches'.<sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately, the Secretary of State seemed to be unaware that his grand plan to save the nation's heritage would be relevant only to the 31 churches a year that are closed for regular worship.<sup>22</sup>

The concept of promoting alternative uses for places of worship when a viable congregation cannot be found is hardly a new one. Indeed, the Heritage Lottery Fund has achieved a good deal of success on this front. For instance, in 2006 HLF gave a grant of £772,000 to St Peter's Church in Ipswich. The money was used to transform the beautiful 12<sup>th</sup> Century church into a concert venue for the community.

The Heritage Lottery Fund has also been vital in preserving churches for their original use. Since the establishment of the National Lottery, HLF has given more than £350 million to churches, cathedrals and other places of worship.<sup>23</sup> Last year alone, places of worship accounted for 15.1% of grants awarded by the Lottery distributor.

This makes the Government's raids on the National Lottery for its pet projects and to finance its Olympic budget miscalculations even more difficult to stomach. The value of the Fund's annual grants is already down by 20% on 1997 levels<sup>24</sup> with the organisation itself predicting a further 43% cut in its income by 2012.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Andy Burnham, speech at the launch of Heritage Counts 2008, 30 October 2008, London Transport Museum

<sup>22</sup> *Hansard*, 25 November 2008, Col. 1164-1165W

<sup>23</sup> Converted into today's money that investment is worth more than £400 million. (*Hansard*, 26 November 2008, Col. 2195-6W)

<sup>24</sup> *Hansard*, 11 June 2008, Col. 245W

<sup>25</sup> *Heritage Counts 2008*, page 19

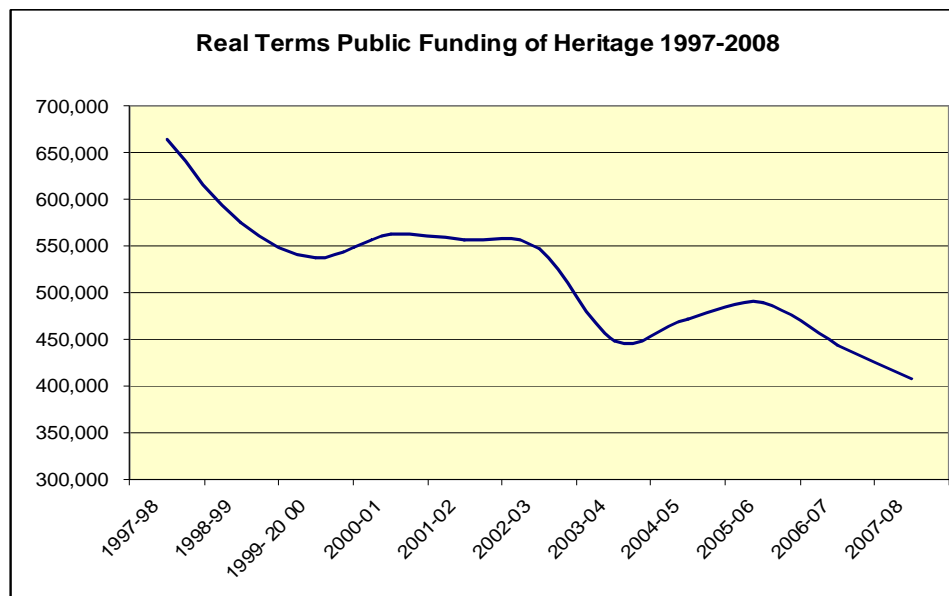
Conservative proposals for National Lottery reform could see HLF investment in churches increase by up to 13%.<sup>26</sup>

## Funding

Total public support for heritage since has fallen by 38% in real terms since 1997.

When this government came to power the Exchequer contributed £198 million, in today's prices, to a sector which was beginning to enjoy the fruits of the newly founded National Lottery. That bounty would not last and Labour pledges that the temptation to politicise the National Lottery would be resisted, fell by the wayside soon after the 1997 election.

The decision to raid the money raised for good causes in order to pay for ministerial pet projects at a stroke turned the National Lottery into the a fund to be dipped into to advance New Labour policy objectives.



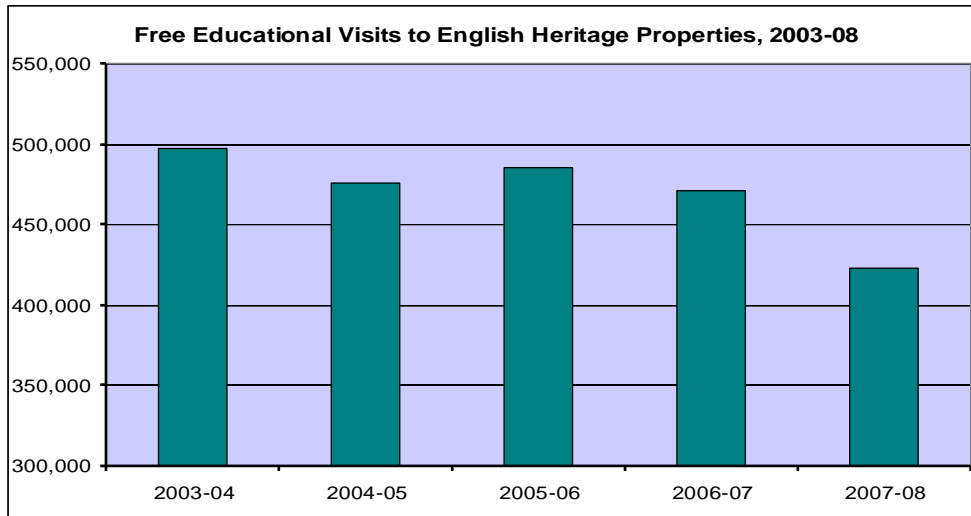
Research has suggested that funding of heritage does produce a local and regional economic multiplier effect. One such study by English Heritage found that for every £10,000 grant from English Heritage, £46,000 of additional funding is leveraged from other public and private sources.<sup>27</sup> If we take this research at face value then the £7 million real terms cut in funding for English Heritage since 2000 could have an economic impact to the sector of up to £30 million on projects and potential projects in the heritage sector.

The cuts have had an impact beyond the condition and enjoyment of our historic buildings and monuments. Also threatened is the enthusiasm and

<sup>26</sup> Based on HLF maintaining the share of its grants that it provides to places of worship at 2007/8 levels of 15.1%. For more on these proposals see page 18.

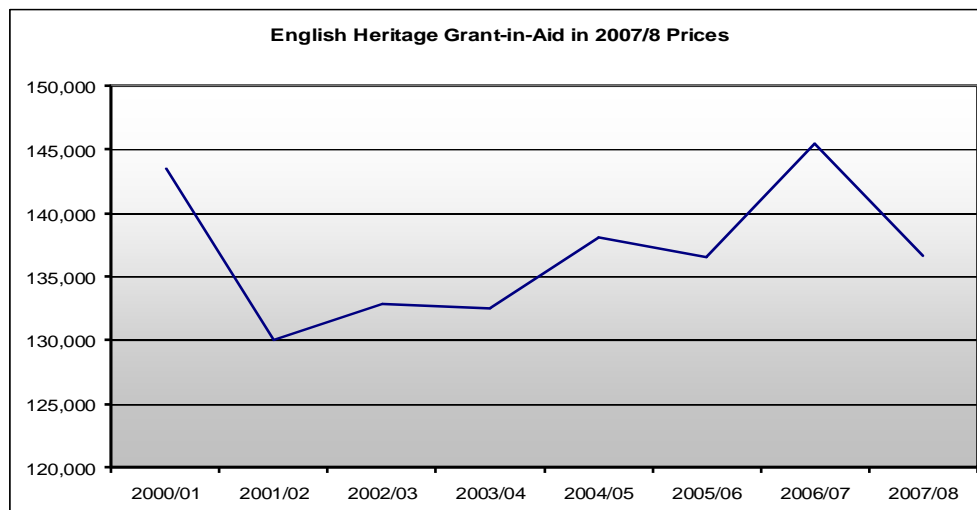
<sup>27</sup> *Heritage Dividend 2002*

passion for heritage of future generations. In the last five years, the numbers of children benefiting from free educational visits to English Heritage properties has fallen by 74,000.<sup>28</sup>



### *Funding: Exchequer*

Since 2000/01 the Government's chief heritage funding body, English Heritage has been dealt a 4.8% real terms cut to its grant-in-aid allocation. From making up more than 16% of the DCMS's outturn in 1998, spending on the historic environment now accounts for just 10% of total spending.

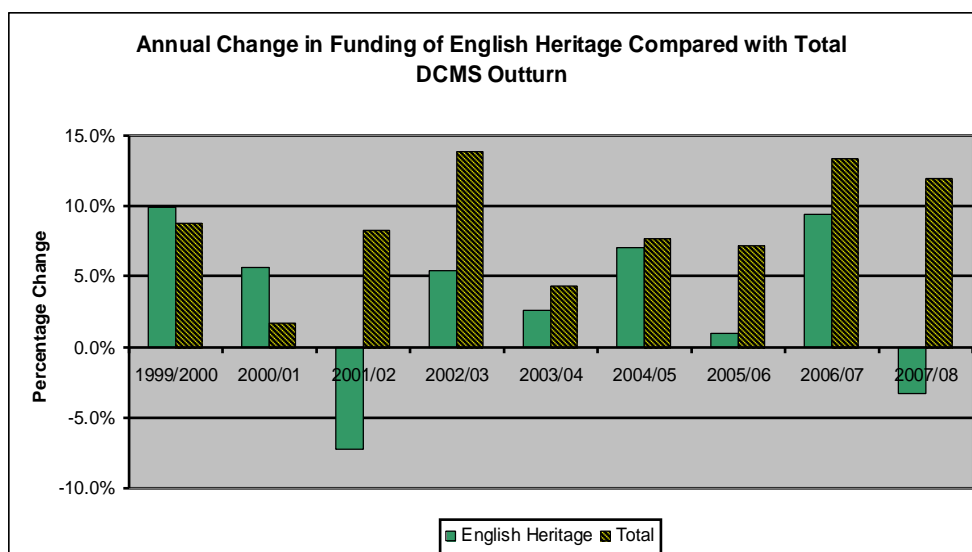


In each year since 1999 the DCMS has received a nominal increase on its budget and on seven of the nine occasions the rise has been in excess of 5%. However, in two of those years English Heritage had its grant cut.

<sup>28</sup> *Hansard*, 4 November 2008, Col. 411-412W

It is worth noting that even before the burden of the 2012 Olympics fell upon the department, English Heritage was the poor relation among the Department for Culture, Media and Sport sponsored bodies.

In none of the years since 2000/01 has English Heritage been afforded an increase in its central Government allocation in line with the budget increase handed down to the DCMS by the Treasury.



As English Heritage has felt the pinch, the degree to which it can assist Buildings At Risk has diminished. Despite the growing numbers of buildings considered to be at risk through neglect, decay or redundancy, the value of grants made by English Heritage to such sites has declined over the last decade and almost halved in real terms since 1999.<sup>29</sup>

The DCMS does not look like being any more generous to the sector over the course of the current spending round. English Heritage is budgeting for a further real terms cut of £3 million per year in the period to 2011,<sup>30</sup> whilst being handed additional responsibilities in relation to the provisions of the Heritage Protection Bill, currently at the draft stage.

### *Funding: Lottery*

The Heritage Lottery Fund is the UK's largest source of public funding for the historic environment. Since it was established in January 1995 it has made nearly 32,000 awards worth more than £4.2 billion.<sup>31</sup>

The £365 million Lottery funding for heritage in 1997 would be worth £464 million in today's prices. The government's approach to the National Lottery

<sup>29</sup> *Heritage Counts 2008*, page 30

<sup>30</sup> *Heritage Counts 2008*, page 18

<sup>31</sup> Up to 2007/8; *Heritage Counts 2008*, page 39

has seen this figure more than halve by 2007/8. Last year heritage took just £217 million from the Lottery.

Labour's decision to break the rule of additionality on which the National Lottery was founded in 1994 betrayed the heritage, arts, sports and charitable sectors that had expected so much from the establishment of an institution with the power to make 'a significant, permanent difference'.<sup>32</sup> The Major government was clear:

*'Lottery money is intended to be additional to and not a substitute for existing Government funding... Lottery proceeds should not, therefore, be used to fund projects that would normally be funded from existing Government programmes.'*<sup>33</sup>

Unfortunately, the New Labour government did not share this philosophy. We now have a situation where money is being diverted from heritage projects that would preserve for future generations so much of what is great about Britain in order to pay for footpaths and 'traffic calming schemes'.<sup>34</sup> This despite Tony Blair's 1997 statement that 'We don't believe it would be right to use lottery money to pay for things which are the government's responsibilities'.

The Government response to these concerns is typically indignant. In 2005 James Purnell, then a junior culture minister and latterly Secretary of State said:

*'We are putting in place the same framework on additionality that existed in 1993 when the original Act came into force. The only difference is that we have taken account of what the public tell us are their priorities.'*<sup>35</sup>

Labour's siphoning of Lottery income into these additionality-breaching sectors robbed the existing good causes of hundreds of millions of pounds. By the time the Millennium projects distribution channel was ended in 2001, these pet projects accounted for a third of Lottery revenue.<sup>36</sup>

With Lottery distributors like the Heritage Lottery Fund busily adapting to the new division as well as a £410 million contribution to the original 2012 Olympic budget, 2007 brought a further blow. Government mismanagement of meant that an extra £675 million of National Lottery funding would be required to plug the gaps of the Olympic budget. For heritage this would mean an additional £90 million cut in Lottery funding.

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<sup>32</sup> John Major, *The Times*, 17 September 1994

<sup>33</sup> Ian Sproat, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (*Hansard*, 16 December 1994: Col. 1301)

<sup>34</sup> Information from Freedom of Information requests, cited in more detail in *Labour's Lottery 'Good Causes': A Report by Jeremy Hunt MP*, page 13. This report can be viewed and downloaded at [www.shadowdems.co.uk](http://www.shadowdems.co.uk)

<sup>35</sup> *Hansard*, 12 June 2005, Col. 214

<sup>36</sup> *National Lottery Distribution Fund Annual Account 2006-07*, HC158, page 29

Commenting on the most current raid, Dr Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage said 'Inevitably the additional reduction in Lottery funding will reduce opportunities for inspirational projects which have transformed the historic environment over the past 11 years.'

In its most recent assessment of the availability of funds, the Heritage Lottery Fund estimates that its real income will decline from £277 million in 2007/8 to £157 million by 2012 – a fall of 43%.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Heritage Counts 2008*, page 18

## The Draft Heritage Protection Bill

The Draft Heritage Protection Bill, published in April 2008, was to be this Government's first piece of legislation in the area of heritage and was broadly welcomed by the professionals affected.<sup>38</sup> A system of more unified processes and streamlined regimes is welcome and long overdue. However, the Bill did have some problems which, given the will, could have been ironed out. The decision by the DCMS to shelve the Bill in favour of 'new priorities'<sup>39</sup> is, arguably, more down to a lack of resolve than the lack of Parliamentary time.

However the Government tries to dress it up, the absence of a Heritage Bill in the Queen's Speech speaks volumes about their continued lack of commitment to our historic buildings.

Conservatives are calling on the Government to reconsider their decision to exclude the bill from next year's parliamentary business. Whilst we may want to debate some of the details, we would be more than happy to work with the Government to ensure it got through Parliament quickly and efficiently. For the sake of the entire heritage sector, we should not wait another year for the chance to make much needed improvements to the way we protect and preserve our heritage for the future.

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<sup>38</sup> *Draft Heritage Protection Bill*, April 2008 (CM 7349)

<sup>39</sup> Andy Burnham, Building Design Online, 4 November 2008, <http://www.bdonline.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3126700>

## Heritage, Tourism and the Olympics: Missed Opportunities

Tourism undoubtedly shares with heritage the unenviable accolade of being the poor relations within the DCMS family. Its poor treatment by the Government has compounded the difficulties experienced by the heritage sector.

The relationship is circular. The £85 billion tourism industry is greatly dependent on a thriving heritage sector. In a rapidly changing global economy, the UK is seeking to attract visitors from new and emerging markets. Chief among them are Russia and China, two countries with new-found wealth. When surveyed, 72% of Russian and 66% Chinese visitors to the UK cite its 'castles, churches, monuments and historic houses... [at] the top of their list of things to visit'.<sup>40</sup>

It is worth noting that the latest UK Statistics Authority data show that in terms of spending per visitor, Chinese tourists are, on average, worth 32% more to the British economy than visitors from the US.<sup>41</sup>

But a lack of any concrete strategy for a post-Olympics tourism legacy has a disproportionate impact on heritage.

The only explicit role for heritage in the Government's Olympic legacy plans extends as far as 'two architectural reports on the history of the Olympic Park which will cover a thousand years of its history'.<sup>42</sup>

If the heritage sector is to benefit from 2012 at all therefore, it is most likely to be from increased tourist interest in the years after the Olympic Games. Unfortunately if Government has been neglectful of heritage it has been clueless on tourism.

It will cut Visit Britain's budget by 18% between now and 2012 and its current tourism strategy focuses on making more of an impact in the business tourism market and an initiative to get more tourist accommodation accredited in order to drive up quality – the third such scheme in the last five years.<sup>43</sup> Since the publication of *Winning: A Tourism Strategy for 2012 and Beyond* Britain has slipped from third to fourth in the DCMS-quoted rankings of convention locations.<sup>44</sup>

Based on its contribution to both the original Olympic budget and the subsequent raid to cover the Government's costly budgeting mistakes, it is

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<sup>40</sup> *Valuing Our Heritage: The Case for Future Investment in Our Historic Environment*, page 2

<sup>41</sup> Chinese tourists spend £983 per visit on average compared with the US visitor average of £744. Office of National Statistics, *Travel Trends 2006*, published on 23 January 2008.

<sup>42</sup> *Hansard*, 29 October 2008, Col 1113-1114W

<sup>43</sup> The previous schemes were 'Fit For Your Trip?' in 2003 and 'Fitness For Purpose: Quality Counts of 2005

<sup>44</sup> International Congress and Convention Association 'Top 20 Rankings 2007' <http://www.iccaworld.com/npps/story.cfm?ID=1577>

only right that the Government give greater consideration to the potential for heritage post-2012. This would most likely take the form of a proper tourism strategy.

## Conservative Proposals: Taking Heritage Seriously

In these times of economic difficulty and with public finances feeling the squeeze, DCMS sectors will likely have to fight tooth and nail for any funds they can lay their hands on. The National Lottery was established in order to be the means by which heritage, the arts, sports and the voluntary sector could insulate themselves against economic recession. Heritage Secretary, Stephen Dorrell said in 1994 that 'at times of public expenditure constraint there is no realistic prospect of major increases in tax-funded expenditure on these issues'<sup>45</sup>

For that reason, a future Conservative government would bring forward a National Lottery Independence Bill which would re-establish the original pillars on which the Lottery was founded. After 2012, while ensuring that outstanding grants were honoured and securing the proportion of Lottery proceeds going to the charitable sector at current levels, we would end the additionality-breaching funding streams and establish a new taxation regime for the National Lottery.

Based on current ticket sales, the heritage sector could expect to receive an additional £400 million in the decade after 2012.

Its heritage is what makes Britain unique. It is a wonderful selling point that could be used to market the country to overseas visitors much more effectively. The Secretary of State, Andy Burnham and the Minister with direct responsibility for both heritage and tourism, Barbara Follett should work with the national tourism agency, Visit Britain, heritage organisations and local authorities to develop a plan to better promote British heritage at home and abroad.

In turbulent economic times the Government should work harder to promote our cathedrals, castles and historic houses.

Britain's heritage helps tell the story of how we, as a nation, have developed and evolved into the country it is today and attracts hundreds of thousands of tourists to Britain every year but it also has such amazing potential for regenerating our society.

A wider understanding of our cultural heritage and history would help foster a sense of social cohesion and pride and teach old and young alike about the history of the rights, responsibilities and environment we all enjoy today.

Heritage and a sense of the history of the area in which we live can help forge links for newcomers to a town, city or county and invigorate communities with a sense of pride in one's surroundings.

A Conservative Government would also bring with it an enthusiasm for a sector so long overlooked by New Labour. A Government that would not

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<sup>45</sup> *The Times*, 20 August 1994

consider heritage merely as 'backward looking'. Above all, a new Government that would take heritage seriously.

## Conclusion: facing the future with a sense of our past

The Government and the succession of ministers to hold responsibility for this area over the past eleven years are guilty of allowing their own negative attitude to Britain's past inform their treatment of the sector.

Labour has spent a decade undervaluing heritage and underestimating the affection the people of Britain has for our history. In a decade in which we have and continue to face such pervasive societal challenges, it is unfortunate that the government for all its initiatives, announcements and consultations has failed to include a greater appreciation for our history in its debates about multiculturalism, the broken society, Britishness or the calls for Scottish separatism.

This is not to say that we should be proud of all the events and incidents in this nation's history. There are many things with which we are uncomfortable but we should learn to deal with them and absorb them into the collective memory and understand that all of our past, be it positive or negative has led Britain on the journey it has taken to construct the country we have before us today.

By understanding our past we can face our future emboldened and determined to confront the challenges unique to our time. It was the philosopher, George Santayana who coined the phrase 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it'.<sup>46</sup>

Tristram Hunt, the TV historian, Heritage Lottery Fund trustee and former Labour Party employee suggested as far back as 2002 – just a year after leaving his position as a Government Special Adviser – that New Labour's heart might not be in heritage. He said 'New Labour is undermining... progressive heritage'.<sup>47</sup> In the same article he went on to say:

*'While the Government might have little time for the past, every night millions of us sit down to watch history programmes on television. Millions more buy history books, visit National Trust properties, or belong to conservation and re-enactment societies. The British public culture is passionately interested in its past.'*<sup>48</sup>

Tristram Hunt is right. The Government has missed a golden opportunity. The resurgence of historical interest promoted by television programmes and books has not been linked effectively to our historical assets. As society has been in flux, heritage could have been promoted and protected but has suffered badly from Labour's own internal prejudices.

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<sup>46</sup> *The Life of Reason Volume I: Reason in Common Sense*, chapter XII (1905-06)

<sup>47</sup> 'Labour betrays heritage, and it's history', Tristram Hunt, *The Observer*, 8 December 2002, page 6

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

The Conservatives will use heritage to look back on Britain's achievements but also to lay the path for its future. It will start by reinvigorating a sector so battered by eleven years of Labour Government.

The National Lottery reforms described above would recapture the spirit of the institution envisaged in the Conservative Party manifesto of 1992. It said:

*'The National Lottery we propose to introduce can be used to restore our heritage and promote projects which will become a source of national pride.'*<sup>49</sup>

Reform of its structures, changes to the way the Lottery is taxed and an extra £400 million for heritage over the course of a decade would go some way to making the nation proud of its heritage once again.

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<sup>49</sup> *Conservative Party Election Manifesto 1992*