

All change!

The whole legislative framework dealing with issues of the historic environment is currently under review in one forum or another. The DCMS consultation document *Protecting our historic environment: Making the system work better* was published in July with comments due by the end of October; the ODPM (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) will shortly consult on a Planning Policy Statement 15 *Planning for the Historic Environment*, to replace PPG16 and PPG15; and the future of SMRs (to be known as HERs = Historic Environment Records) is also under consideration. What the historic environment landscape will look like after these reviews and subsequent legislation, is anyone's guess.

In the space here I can only look at the first, and that only briefly. The *ad hoc* growth of legislation over the last century or so means that there are two distinct schemes: the *Schedule of Ancient Monuments* which protects sites and structures (above or below ground), which may have no economic use, and the *Listed Building* system, applied only to individual structures, which are expected to stay in use and may need to be adapted as use changes. Some structures may be both schedules *and* listed, while other important aspects of the historic environment lie outside this framework altogether (e.g. landscapes and townscapes). As the document says, "The system is now so complex that few people fully understand all parts of it. It is not apparent that monuments, buildings and landscapes need separate regimes."

The main proposal is to create a single *List of Historic Sites and Buildings of England*, and to make it the responsibility of English Heritage. Ultimately, some duties may be devolved to local authorities. There is much to be said for a unified system. The danger is that one aspect or another may dominate the new provisions, to the detriment of the others, especially as overviews are rare. The full document can be accessed at the DCMS website (<http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/consultations/2003+current+consultations/>

HPR_Consultation.htm) to which responses can also be sent.

A prize for our time

Issues of the *London Archaeologist* are deliberately not 'themed', but an emerging trend is apparent in the current issue – the greater involvement of the public in the mostly professional world of archaeology. We can see this in Vanessa Bunton's work to support local societies, and in Lesley Smith's work to bring archaeology to people who may never have thought about it as an activity in which they could become involved. An important factor here is communication between archaeologists and their 'public', whether that be other archaeologists, members of local societies, or the general public. In this context, we are delighted to take part in a joint initiative with SCOLA to sponsor a prize for the best publication relating to archaeology in London in 2002 and 2003 (see inside front cover for details). As Ian Longworth, Chairman of SCOLA, said, "The need to communicate to a wider public the many exciting archaeological developments taking place in London could not be more pressing. Let us have a prize for the best to stimulate the effort." We heartily endorse this opinion, and encourage readers to consider submitting nominations. We hope this will be the first of a series of such awards.

Fieldwork Round-up

The *Fieldwork and Publication Round-up* for 2002 is being circulated with this issue. Please contact the Subscriptions Secretary if you have not received your copy. Our thanks go to Cath Maloney for collating the Fieldwork Round-up, and to Isabel Holroyd and Gustav Milne for the Publications section. Please let us know if there are any omissions.

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Production of the Index to Volume 9 has been delayed, but work is now in hand and we hope to be able to distribute it with an issue shortly.