Urgent call for volunteers to survey England’s



Pill box disappearing in to the sea on the Isle of Sheppey CITiZAN

CITiZAN, the Coastal and Intertidal Zone Archaeological Network, is the first national community-led project to tackle the alarming threat to our heritage. Today, CITiZAN is calling for an army of volunteers to help survey and monitor these nationally-important but vulnerable archaeological sites before they disappear.

One of the largest community archaeology projects in the country, taking in 5,600 miles of coastline over 500 miles of tidal foreshore, CITiZAN runs free community-based training, building a network of volunteers with the skills and systems needed to survey and monitor threatened sites. Armed with tape measures, buckets and mobile phones, volunteers create standardised records of exposed archaeological sites.

Gustav Milne, CITiZAN project leader, said: "We can’t stop the tide but we can record these incredibly important archaeological sites before they are destroyed. We are calling on local communities to join our network and help to survey their local coastal heritage sites before they are lost forever."

[quote=Gustav Milne, CITiZAN project leader]"We can’t stop the tide but we can record these incredibly important archaeological sites before they are destroyed."[/quote]

Heritage Minister Tracey Crouch said: "As someone who grew up on the coast I believe this to be a hugely important project to record the fascinating history of our coastline. The 70,000 sites that are at risk tell the story of our shared national heritage, so it's vital they are surveyed before the sea takes them. No where in Britain is more than 70 miles from the coast, so I would urge anyone to take the opportunity to get involved."

From Lindisfarne to Land's End, remains of prehistoric forests, Roman buildings, ancient salt-working sites, lost medieval ports, fishing settlements, coastal defences from both World Wars and countless abandoned boats, barges and ships lie exposed and are being washed away.

Via a web-based recording system (citizan.org.uk – live Late July) and app, a constantly evolving crowd-sourced database and interactive map of sites is being compiled. The database preserves the knowledge of these important sites forever and is a unique and valuable resource that opens the door to new research opportunities.

Hosted by MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology), the CITiZAN project has been awarded £1.4m from the Heritage Lottery Fund, enhanced by the National Trust and The Crown Estate's stewardship programme, together with support from Historic England.

Ben Greener, HLF's Historic Environment Advisor, said: "Our coastlines are an enormous hidden repository of the remains of war defences, industry and ancient settlements providing a fascinating insight into the history of this island nation. It's a huge job to record thousands of these sites before they are lost for good and the Heritage Lottery Fund is encouraging as many people as possible to don their boots and join CITiZAN at their nearest site."

The three-year project operates across England from regional centres: with MOLA in London, with partners the Council for British Archaeology in York and the Nautical Archaeology Society in Portsmouth.

Notes to editors

For more information about CITiZAN and local training opportunities and events visit the CITiZAN website. Download the IPhone and Android CITiZAN app via ITunes or Google Play. Follow updates on Facebook CITiZAN1, Twitter @CITiZAN1 and Flickr CITiZAN.

About MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology)

MOLA provides independent advice and professional services in archaeology and built heritage. With offices in London, Northampton and Birmingham, MOLA's 250 staff help to discharge planning conditions expertly and swiftly. MOLA works in partnership to develop far-reaching research and community programmes. Find out more on the MOLA website, on Twitter @MOLArchaeology or on Facebook MOLArchaeology.

About the National Trust

The National Trust cares for ten per cent (or 775 miles) of the coastline of England, Wales and Northern Ireland – including the White Cliffs of Dover, Rhossili beach on Gower and the Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland. From the wildlife rich Farne Islands to magical Barafundle beach in Pembrokeshire millions of people visit these special places every year and help us for care for them, for everyone to enjoy. For more information visit the National Trust website.

About The Crown Estate

The Crown Estate's Marine Stewardship Fund supports initiatives and scientific research that help to promote long-term sustainable management of its marine portfolio. See the Crown Estate website for more information.

About Historic England

We are Historic England (formerly known as English Heritage), the public body that champions and protects England's historic places. We look after the historic environment, providing expert advice, helping people protect and care for it and helping the public to understand and enjoy it. See the Historic England website for more information.

About the Council for British Archaeology

The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) is as an educational charity which has been promoting archaeology for all for more than 70 years, and remains the leading voice for the public interest in archaeology. Active both in Westminster and with grassroots community groups, the CBA works with professionals and the voluntary sector to safeguard the UK's historic environment and make the case to decision makers that archaeology matters. Find out more at the Council for British Archaeology website, on Twitter @archaeologyuk or on Facebook ArchaeologyUK.

About the Nautical Archaeology Society

The Nautical Archaeology Society (NAS) is a registered charity dedicated to advancing education in nautical archaeology. The NAS aims to preserve the archaeological heritage of our marine environment, with improvements to recording techniques, preservation and reporting and by encouraging members of the public, including divers, scientists and historians, to participate. Find out more at Nautical Archaeology Society website, on Twitter @NautArchSoc or on Facebook at NautArchSoc.

Further information

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