The Heritage Panic of the 1970s and the 1980s in Great Britain

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What I will be calling the 'heritage panic' of the 1970s and 1980s was one of the few major cultural phenomena of recent British history in which historians and arguments about history have played a leading role. The 'panic' was rooted in an historical argument that the British economy and culture went into sharp decline in the 1970s because of a loss of confidence in the future, and a turning backwards in that decade to take consolation in the glories of the national past – particularly its rural and aristocratic (and, less significantly, its imperial or industrial) past.

Because this 'heritage panic' was confected very largely by historians, it carried with it its own historiography. This historiography can be divided roughly into three distinct positions. First there was the full-blooded panic position. It had both left-wing and right-wing manifestations. The left-wing manifestation is most closely connected with the literary critic and cultural historian Robert Hewison and his polemical book of 1987, *The Heritage Industry*, tellingly subtitled *Britain in a Climate of Decline*. Hewison argued that at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s a sharp cultural reaction against modernisation had taken place. Rapid commercial redevelopment of Britain's towns had led to 'a loss of a sense of location and identity', the economic crisis of the early 1970s aggravated the sense of relative decline, and the result was a sharp upsurge in nostalgia for the past, as evidenced in 1970s enthusiasms for country houses, the ethos of *Brideshead Revisited* (1976), and in general the museumisation of everything that Hewison dubbed *The heritage industry*.[1] The right-wing manifestation had preceded Hewison by some years, in the form of historian Martin Wiener's *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit*, a book of 1981 very influential in Thatcherite circles, that identified a much more deeply-rooted 'cultural conservatism' amongst the British elite that had been slowly sapping away at the foundations of Britain's economic strength since the late nineteenth century.[2] Because he traced the disease of rural nostalgia so far back, Wiener was actually a good deal more pessimistic about the possibilities of change even than Hewison – but his book nevertheless served as a convenient rallying cry for Keith Joseph and other Thatcherites seeking a cultural revolution in 1980s Britain. One reason why both left and right could share this analysis was that both worried that high levels of employment and economic activity in Britain provided by manufacturing industry could never be replaced by services – a common concern of the 1970s across the spectrum

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1 Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987), 38.

2 Martin J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 41.

– and dependence upon the 'heritage industry' (not a proper industry at all) seemed in this perspective to be a recipe for economic disaster.[3]

A second, more nuanced position was taken up, also prior to Hewison, by Patrick Wright in *On Living in an Old Country* (1985). Like Hewison, Wright diagnosed a profound crisis in contemporary Britain deriving from the 'destabilisation of everyday life'. But unlike Hewison, Wright detected a positive and democratic element in the turn to the idylls of the past – nostalgia, for Wright, was not simply a 'high-cultural imposition' but 'an expression of subjective surplus - of subjective experience which finds no realisation in the constrained and rationalised activities of much modern everyday life', producing not only fantasies about someone else's country-house past but also 'a deliberate celebration of traditional everyday life'.[4]

Finally, some years later, came the anti-panic position enunciated by Raphael Samuel in journalistic and scholarly writings of the late 1980s, culminating in *Theatres of Memory* (1994). Samuel looked more approvingly on a historicist turn which he dated back to the 1960s, which he saw as more complexly related to the modernisations of that decade, both a product and a critique, and subject to a variety of political uses. Heritage, wrote Samuel, "as it crystallized in the late 1960s, was a cultural capital on which all were invited to draw". Choosing to emphasise the democratic, dissident and utopian elements of heritage over the more deferential and commercial, he portrayed the heritage boom as a healthy, creative response to the inhuman scale of corporate capitalism as it had manifested itself in top-down planning and commercial redevelopment in the 1960s. "The new version of the national past, notwithstanding the efforts of the National Trust to promote a country-house version of 'Englishness', is inconceivably more democratic than earlier ones, offering more points of access to 'ordinary people', and a wider form of belonging."[5] Although this borrowed directly from the democratic elements of Wright's own analysis, to Wright's immense irritation, Samuel lumped Wright and Hewison together as the 'heritage-baiters' of the 'metropolitan intelligentsia', blind to the creative political possibilities that heritage

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3 On the contemporary impact of Wiener's theses, see James Raven, "British History and the Enterprise Culture," *Past & Present* 123 (1989), 178-204; Bernard Porter, "'Though Not an Historian Myself...' Margaret Thatcher and the Historians," *Twentieth Century British History* 5 (1994), 253-254; and cf. Richard Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain* (London: Pocket Books, 2010), 186-192, arguing that Wiener's theses actually offer more support to an interventionist Heathite technocracy than to Thatcherite neo-liberalism, and Wiener's own equivocal view on the political valence of his argument in Lincoln Allison and Martin Wiener, "Is Britain's Decline a Myth?," *New Society*, 17 Nov. (1983), 274-275.

4 Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country* (London: Verso, 1985), 20-23. For Wright's critique of Hewison, see Patrick Wright in conversation with Tim Putnam, "Sneering at the Theme Parks: An Encounter with the Heritage Industry," *Block* 15 (1989), 48-55.

5 Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Vol. I, Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London: Verso, 1994), 160, 237-238.

offered for a fight back against Thatcher's renewed campaign for modernisation.[6]

Perhaps because these historians developed so quickly a ready-made historiographical framework for the 'heritage panic', there has been hardly any reflection on it since the 'panic' died out in the 1990s. It has not been the topic of any sustained discussion in journals of contemporary British history, for example.[7] Surprisingly even the field of 'heritage studies' that has sprung up partly as a result of the 'heritage panic', has not examined its own originary moment. Stemming mostly from a left-wing critique of heritage, heritage studies blossomed, in Britain at least, in a period from the mid-1990s when 'heritage' was losing its nostalgic connotations and becoming associated (as Samuel had hoped) with a much wider range of popular (as well as elite) identities and commemorations – urban, local and industrial heritages, political commemorations of genocide and slavery, and on a global scale with indigenous and so-called 'intangible' heritages associated with subaltern and oppressed peoples. In this mood, heritage studies were not much inclined to dwell on its origins in *Brideshead Revisited* and the *Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady* either.[8]

This essay therefore takes us back to the 1970s and 1980s to see how the benefits of hindsight might cause us to view the heritage boom of that period differently, to referee between the arguments of Hewison, Wright and Samuel, and perhaps to add to them. The 'heritage panic' did taper off rather dramatically in the 1990s, which suggests that the panic – and the heritage boom that triggered it – are not the inevitable products either of modernity itself nor of a long-term trajectory of British culture, but historically particular to the period between the early 1970s and the early 1990s. Wiener's pessimism was misplaced, or perhaps Thatcher's modernisation programme was more successful than he expected – in either case the heritage boom did not mark an inexorable decline; and even

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6 Ibid., 260-1. For Wright's ripostes, see "Heritage Clubs Slug It Out," *Guardian*, 4 Feb. (1995), 29, and "Preface to the OUP Edition: Heritage and the Place of Criticism", in: *On Living in an Old Country*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xiv-xviii.

7 A survey of the journals Twentieth-Century British History and Contemporary British History finds almost no comment at all, though for some oblique references see Porter, "Thatcher and the Historians", and Peter Mandler, "England, which England?", *Contemporary British History* 13 (1999), 243-254.

8 Again, there is very little comment on this subject in the International Journal of Heritage Studies, which was founded in 1994 on the back of the heritage panic: see Peter Howard, "The Nature of the Times Deceas'd," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 1 (1994), 6-17; David C. Harvey, "Heritage Pasts and Heritage Presents: Temporality, Meaning and the Scope of Heritage Studies," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 7 (2001), 319-338, and Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 41-42, 57, 100, 298.

Wright, I think, exaggerated the long-term significance of a peculiar period of instability and uncertainty.[9]

Here I share Samuel's view that the heritage boom actually took off in the 1960s both as a product of and as a current of protest against the modernisations of that period. In many respects, affluence enables heritage. It affords more disposable income, more social and physical mobility, wider educational and cultural horizons. Samuel emphasised the rise of home ownership – from 29 per cent owner-occupancy in 1952 to 64 per cent in 1994 – and the more domestic, interiorised aesthetic that went with it; a postmodern shift from grand collective statements like the town hall or the council block to the quieter statements of the retrofitted loft or terrace house or street-scene.[10] To this I would add two further elements of affluence that facilitate heritage (along with a lot else) – associational life and reading. While we tend to romanticise the 'organic' associational life of the working-class community – undoubtedly in decline in the post-war period, as witness elegies such as Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1957) – we underestimate the corresponding rise of organised associational life, which as scholars of social capital have shown was booming in the post-war world. Much of this took place in local communities – allotment groups, amenity societies, voluntary work for the aged and infirm – but a lot of it manifested itself in membership in national organisations, enabling more impersonal (but not necessarily less culturally significant) forms of civic participation. The growth of the membership of the National Trust – and of the motor tourism to sites of natural beauty and historic importance that it entailed – is one measure of this, from a tiny club of a few thousand immediately after the war to 100 000 in 1960 and 200 000 in 1970.[11] The growth of this kind of associational life obviously benefits heritage only amongst a wider range of cultural activities. The same could be said of reading. My own study of publishing patterns in the post-war period showed that the number of history titles rose spectacularly in the 1960s – specifically, starting in 1960, when the number jumped by a third in one year – and reached a peak in 1970 at which point it plateaued until another jump in the 1990s. In this trend historical reading shared a pattern of growth with other non-fiction genres including politics and biography that one might associate with

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9 For Wright's own retrospective, see "Preface to the OUP Edition: Heritage and the Place of Criticism," in: *On Living in an Old Country*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xi-xviii, , esp. xi-xiv, xviii-xix, which restates in a new (and still fundamentally pessimistic) form his earlier view about 'heritage' as a phenomenon of modernity, while downplaying the specifically declinist perspectives of the Thatcher era.

10 Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 75-78.

11 For some interesting data about the correlation between affluence and National Trust membership – like many such correlations, not necessarily an argument about causation – see John Hudson, "The Economics of the National Trust: A Demand Curve for a History Club," *Scottish Journal of Political Economy* 36 (1989), 19-35.

widening cultural horizons and particularly with new educational opportunities.[12]

Samuel must also have been right, I think, to see some particular aspects of heritage that represented a rebuke to affluence as well as a product of it. The mildly anti-modern and certainly anti-industrial elements of the Sixties counterculture are well-known. But similar elements feature in not-very-countercultural circles of the same period. A lot of the influx into heritage organisations and activities must have derived from upwardly mobile families, moving from industrial to white-collar occupations, and from inner-city to suburbs or – increasingly, as planning controls impeded suburban sprawl – newly gentrifying conservation areas. While still seeking affluence, such families tended to adopt a 'cleaner', 'brighter', more playful lifestyle which might favour both environmentalism and heritage, although often in unpredictable combinations. For example, the very rapid growth of automobile ownership – from 2 million in 1949 to 17.5 million in 1980 – had the simultaneous effects of stimulating appreciation of modernity, improving access to rural heritage, and raising environmental concerns about traffic in towns.[13]

However, Samuel was not right in seeking to gloss over the 'panic' elements of the 1970s specifically. Something did happen in the 1970s, especially in the mid-1970s. One economist's study of National Trust membership found that the enormous increases registered in the 1970s and 1980s generally correlated with measures of rising affluence – disposable income, leisure time, and especially car ownership. But over time the Trust had grown somewhat faster than those measures would have predicted and the most striking disparity was registered in 1973-7 when Trust membership rose very rapidly even at a time of declining income.[14] This coincides of course with a period of great economic and political instability and with the 'crisis of confidence' in the future that most of the 'heritage panic' authors detected. But why did the unstable years of the mid-1970s seem to benefit heritage – and especially that peculiar heritage, aristocratic and rural, that so alarmed the panicers?

First, we ought to be a little cautious about assuming that the heritage boom of the 1970s was as aristocratic and rural as the panic suggested. The mildly dissident, post-material variety of heritage that Samuel identified in the 1960s was also intensifying in this same period. One can easily string together a narrative of aristocratic heritage for the mid-1970s, but one can

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12 Peter Mandler, *History and National Life* (London: Profile Books, 2002), 93-108. Wright, *Heritage and the Place of Criticism* xviii-xix, has a go at this "seeking to measure the popularity of history by tallying the sales of history books over the decades", although I think I do more than that; one might also say that summoning the authority of Agnes Heller, Hannah Arendt, and Francois Hartog on a highly abstracted condition of 'modernity' is not an adequate substitute for a well-specified argument either.

13 Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 244.

14 Hudson, *Economics of the National Trust*, 29-32.

also string together a narrative of urban heritage; in fact, a significant body of recent historiography has been doing precisely that, reflecting in my view the very different understanding of heritage's relationship to modernity prevailing since the mid-1990s than that fostered by the heritage panic of the decades preceding.[15] Disillusionment with the excesses of both collectivised and commercialised urban redevelopment in the 1960s was coming to a head in the early 1970s. The famous collapse of the Ronan Point tower block in 1968 marked the beginning of a long-term reaction against high-density council estates, the building of which had peaked in the early-to-mid 1960s. Plans to redevelop Covent Garden, Bloomsbury and Trafalgar Square, all mooted in the sunny days of the 1960s, and were successfully resisted by community-action and conservation groups in the early '70s. A spate of books defending the historic urban fabric as a democratic bulwark against what one of these books called 'corporate commercial greed' was published in the mid-'70s bearing titles such as *Goodbye London* and *The Rape of Britain*.[16] Just as John Betjeman had become an odd kind of culture hero to hippies as well as toffs in the 1960s for his celebrations of 'small is beautiful' in English culture, so in the 1970s odd coalitions of ethereal young men in striped jackets with squatters in bovver boots mounted campaigns in defence of working-class terraces in Hackney and Spitalfields against both developers and gentrifiers. You could if you wanted draw a straight line from the Covent Garden community action of the late 1960s to the successful regeneration of many inner-city neighbourhoods in the 1990s, which would give a liberal or even left-wing pedigree to the whole phenomenon – this wouldn't wish away the heritage panic of the mid-1970s but it puts it in a different longer-term perspective.[17]

However, I think it is fair to say that the aristocratic narrative did have more clout in the 1970s, and Hewison and Wright were not wrong to give it close and suspicious attention. But the significance I would attach is more conjunctural and less profound and doom-laden. Again the story is sharply and significantly concentrated in the mid-1970s. As late as

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15 There has been a mini-boom recently in the historiography of urban heritage: for some important recent contributions, centred on the University of Leicester's Centre for Urban History, see Erika Hanna, "Dublin's North Inner City, Preservationism, and Irish Modernity in the 1960s," *Historical Journal* 53 (2010), 1015-1035; Simon Gunn, "The Rise and Fall of British Urban Modernism: Planning Bradford 1945-1970," *Journal of British Studies* 48 (2010), 849-869; Rebecca Madgin, "Reconceptualising the Historic Urban Environment: Conservation and Regeneration in Castlefield, Manchester, 1960-2009," *Planning Perspectives* 25 (2010), 29–48.

16 Christopher Booker and Candida Lycett Green, *Goodbye London: An Illustrated Guide to Threatened Buildings* (London: Fontana, 1973); Colin Amery and Dan Cruickshank, *The Rape of Britain* (London: Paul Elek, 1975), 187.

17 And see the articles cited in n. 15, which relate stories different from my own London-centred one; there is considerable opportunity here to start generalising from diverse urban experiences across Britain in the period.

November 1973 Marcus Binney could write in *Country Life* that the growing popular interest in national heritage seemed to have passed the country house by.[18] But this comment was in fact a stalking horse for a fightback. Even before the election of a Labour government in February 1974, aristocratic country-house owners were forming alliances with key figures in the art and architectural establishment to publicise what they saw as their fiscal plight and to organise a political campaign for concessions, grants and public recognition of the country house as *the* greatest treasure of the national heritage. Before this period they had tended to lie low, use their backstairs political clout, and try not to lose their freedom of action by courting public attention. Now – whether out of fear or sensing an opportunity – they came out roaring. Allied with a set of 'young fogeys', some of whom had played a more radical, environmental role in the different mood of just a few years previously, their public presence was aggressive, creative and seductive – most obviously in their promotion of a very popular and influential exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum, *The Destruction of the Country House*. The exhibition's tone was elegiac and even mildly fatalistic, reflecting the mood of the V&A's director Roy Strong, who like many of the younger fogeys had played a part in the light-hearted nostalgia boom of the late 1960s but was beginning to sour on modern life and, indeed, to find refuge in the better world of Brideshead. He and his fellow travellers were surprised and heartened by the reception the exhibition got. The campaign took on an explicitly partisan complexion when the new Labour government announced plans for capital transfer and wealth taxes that would have hit art and landowners particularly hard. A Historic Houses Association was formed and collected over one and a half million signatures for a petition against the taxation of the national heritage. The style of the campaign was summed up by a clever photograph of the Earl of March seated defiantly in a room at his house at Goodwood stripped bare of all its contents – the predicted outcome of a wealth tax. By the spring of 1975 the government had conceded exemption from capital transfer tax and the wealth tax was quietly ditched. But the country house lobby went from strength to strength. New bodies were formed, less obviously hitched to the aristocracy, such as 'Heritage in Danger' and 'SAVE Britain's Heritage'. A new agitation was whipped up to save 'for the nation' the house and collections at Mentmore, conveniently near London, which the Earl of Rosebery was threatening to break up. This agitation failed, in part because Rosebery didn't want his home 'saved for the nation', but it kept

[18] Marcus Binney, "Lost to the Nation? The Fate of Great Houses," *Country Life*, 8 Nov. (1973), 1426-1428.

the country house at the centre of debates over the national heritage right to the end of the decade.[19]

Into this political maelstrom some additional elements fell serendipitously. Granada TV hardly planned the filming of *Brideshead Revisited* to coincide with the country-house agitation, but its release – and runaway success – in 1976 came conveniently after two years of almost continuous salesmanship of the country house as the pinnacle of English heritage. Likewise, Mark Girouard had been planning his book *Life in the English Country House* for years before the political tide changed in 1974, but again it added momentum to the cause when it was published in 1978. As Raphael Samuel has pointed out, some elements of the country-house mania did not really belong there but got swept up indiscriminately in the excitement. *The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady*, a runaway success when published in 1977, was actually a set of nature notes by a radical art teacher, yet it was marketed as a country-house item and certainly claimed by the country-house lobby.[20] It was, in fact, all too easy to accept the self-valuation of the country-house lobby and to view any manifestation of heritage thinking – including things that a few years earlier had been the property of a radical avant-garde, such as the vogue for Victorian popular culture and 'back to nature' fads – as a capitulation to nostalgia for the old social order. That is precisely the mistake that the authors of the 'heritage panic' made. They believed the propaganda of the likes of Roy Strong, whose foreword to *Heritage in Danger* (1976) presages Hewison's *Heritage Industry* uncannily, but as a celebration rather than a condemnation:

> In times of danger...we become deeply conscious of our heritage... [of] passionate streams of ancient pride and patriotism, of a heroism in times past, of a nostalgia too for what we think of as a happier world which we have lost. In the 1940s we felt all this deeply because of the danger from without. In the 1970s we sense it because of the dangers from within. We are all aware of problems and troubles, of changes within the structure of society, of the dissolution of old values and standards. For the lucky few this may be exhilarating, even exciting, but for the majority it is confusing, threatening and dispiriting. The heritage represents some form of security, a point of reference, a refuge perhaps, something visible and tangible which, within a topsy and turvy world, seems stable and unchanged.[21]

In retrospect we can see that the high visibility and evident popularity of the country-house lobby in the mid-1970s was something of a flash in the pan. If it was the first it was also the last public campaign of the aristocracy for recognition as custodians of the national heritage. This was probably the last moment when figures such as the Earl of Crawford, the

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19 See Peter Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 401-418.

20 Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 298-299, echoed by David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (London: Viking, 1997), 93.

21 Roy Strong, foreword to Patrick Cormack, *Heritage in Danger*, 2nd ed. (London: Quartet Books, 1978), 10-12.

Duke of Grafton, the Earl of March and the Marquess of Salisbury – all active in both the Tory party and the country-house lobby – were taken seriously inside the Conservative establishment. The 1970s of course ended with the election of a Conservative government of a very different stripe. Thatcher and her coterie were not interested in country houses, nor were they in heritage of any kind. This inconvenient fact had posed a difficulty to those 'heritage panic' authors who wished to dub the heritage boom of the 1970s as roughly Conservative. Patrick Wright had sought to deal with it by suggesting that Thatcher had fused her distinctive brand of "anti-traditional technicism" with the bourgeois and aristocratic varieties of heritage thought in her Falklands-era campaign for national greatness and "Victorian values".[22] When he was writing, however, the weight of 'tradition' within the Tory party was much greater than it is today and some compromises no doubt then appeared necessary. It could be argued that Thatcher was never very much interested in 'tradition' of the heritage variety – a point driven home forcefully recently by Richard Vinen – and although she may have needed, she did not want compromises with an older, more aristocratic Toryism.[23] The legislation brought in after 1979, to redeem the Tories' promises while in opposition to the campaigns against heritage taxation, was paltry indeed. Thatcher's principal cultural policy was the demand that the museums and the heritage agencies commercialise their operations. She didn't mind the 'heritage industry' so long as it did behave like a proper enterprise, but despised it for its privileged cultural position which threatened to drag down real profit centres. When she first met Roy Strong in 1974, she horrified him by pronouncing museums to be "dead things, piled-up lumber from Britain's past which was now holding the country back". Ultimately she chased him out of the Victoria & Albert Museum and into a long sulky retirement in his own small country house in Herefordshire.[24]

What is interesting, however, from our point of view, is that Thatcher's renewed bout of modernisation did not challenge heritage nor (unlike its 1960s predecessor) did it trigger an anti-modern reaction in favour of heritage. Generally speaking Thatcher's modernisation efforts focused not on the countryside nor even on the urban fabric but on fiscal policies, economic institutions and regulatory structures that were mostly heritage-neutral. For example, the characteristic conservative hostility to the planning system pulled the plug on most local-authority ambitions for redevelopment but left the historic-preservation elements of the planning system – which didn't cost anything – largely intact. The country-house

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22 Wright, *On Living in an Old Country*, 146-153, 186, restated in *Heritage and the Place of Criticism*, xiii, where Thatcherism is described as both "destructive of tradition and dependent on it"; my question here is how 'dependent on it'?

23 Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain*, 6-7, 186-192, 220-221, 278-284.

24 Roy Strong, *The Roy Strong Diaries 1967-1987* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997), 231.

lobby, while it did not get anything more of what it wanted in the way of targeted grants and tax concessions, was on the whole happy to bask in the collateral benefits that all wealth-holders reaped from Thatcher's transfer of the burden from direct to indirect taxation. The 'political problem' of the 1970s having been solved, as the president of the Historic Houses Association wrote in 1984, the aristocracy largely resumed their low profile and more or less abandoned efforts to gain public recognition as heritage custodians.[25] Most preferred the old strategy of keeping their freedom to use their private funds – now augmented by tax cuts – as they chose. The principal occasions for public discussion of aristocratic ownership of the national heritage come now not when aristocrats are trying to cling to it but when they're trying to flog it – that is, the sales to public museums of great works of art by the Dukes of Sutherland and Northumberland.[26]

So Thatcherism neither confronted heritage thinking nor triggered its intensification as a reaction – on the whole, it ignored the heritage – and this has caused the reactionary political valence attaching to heritage in the mid-1970s to wear off, and the wider range of associations which had been present in the 1960s to reappear. The National Trust has continued to grow and grow but no-one today seriously suggest that its growth is a sign of national malaise. Country houses remain a key portion of its portfolio but since the late 1960s, when the Trust launched Operation Neptune (to buy up coastal property), it has been turning down country houses and seeking to broaden its portfolio; today the Trust feels an acute shortage of gardens to open to the public. Its chief executive is not a 'young fogey' but a former director of the Women's Unit in Blair's Cabinet Office, and it is increasingly associated with environmental causes, not to mention the ban on fox-hunting (the most reliable indicator we have of an anti-aristocratic orientation). Thus heritage has become re-attached to environmentalism, more left-wing than right.

More powerful even than environmentalism has been heritage's renewed connection with affluence. Higher levels of disposable income and especially car ownership have, as in the 1960s, benefited heritage-oriented consumption but on a much greater scale. Today we see again the complex combinations of materialist and post-materialist interests that we noted earlier in the association between car-ownership and environmentalism in the 1960s; for example, now, in the association between inner-city regeneration, based not on 'new build' but on

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25 Michael Saunders Watson, "Historic Houses Ten Years On," in: *Historic Houses Castles & Gardens in Great Britain and Ireland* (Dunstable: ABC Historic Publications, 1984), 3-4.

26 This refers to the controversies that arose over the National Gallery's acquisition at the cost of £35 million of a Raphael (the 'Madonna of the Pinks') owned by the Duke of Northumberland, in 2002-2004, and the acquisition by the National Gallery and the National Gallery of Scotland at the cost of £50 million of a Titian ('Diana and Actaeon') owned by the Duke of Sutherland, in 2008-2009.

conservation, with the 'creative industries' and gentrification. Economic growth has hardly been held back but its character has been better harmonised with heritage values than in the modernisations of the 1950s and 1960s. A MORI survey in 1996 found that heritage values were associated with other values – such as "discerning hedonism", "intuition" and "wellbeing" (in the language of the polltakers) – which MORI considered "among the most modern on the map".[27] Again the left, by abandoning its last-ditch defence of manufacturing industry, has reclaimed some of the progressive resonances of heritage from the 1960s, associating it for example with urban regeneration, social inclusion and new jobs in the creative industries. The firm association between heritage and affluence has meant that heritage language is now less available to express anxieties and insecurities about modernity that so concerned the 'heritage panic' authors. Recessions since the 1990s have stimulated outbursts of racism and xenophobia but not many calls for a return to tradition. In retrospect, then, we can see that the heritage boom of the 1970s, which triggered such a panic on right and left, was in many ways an anomaly, almost the last hurrah of a now outmoded brand of tradition-heavy Toryism. It is, perhaps, easier to understand why 'heritage' was a natural response in the mid-1970s to recession and national insecurity, than to understand why since then it has become a natural expression of affluence and 'well-being'. To answer that question requires a more subtle and evolving understanding of 'modernity' than the literature of 'heritage panic' provided or than anything we have come up with since.

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[27] Robert Worcester, "Socio-Cultural Currents Affecting Heritage Site Consideration," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 1 (1996), 207-218.

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