

The East Midlands Heritage Forum's occasional bulletin highlights recent national and local developments, including this time:

- News from the national Historic Environment Forum, and from British Waterways, Heritage Open Days, Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage
- The route of the Olympic Torch and other heritage projects in the Cultural Olympiad
- A spotlight on the enterprising heritage sector of Bassetlaw in north Nottinghamshire.

Heritage Counts 2011: This year's *Heritage Counts* report shows how a diverse and vibrant voluntary sector is working with the public sector to care for the nation's local heritage.

The report shows the East Midlands enjoying a continued steady growth of popular interest in heritage. National Trust members and volunteers, English Heritage membership and educational visits, and visits to heritage attractions in the East Midlands have all shown increases since 2009/10.

However between 2009/10 and 2011 there has been a 15% decline in the number of full time equivalent historic environment staff employed by local authorities in the East Midlands, significantly more than the proportion lost across England as a whole (12%). The Heritage Forum will continue keep a close eye on staffing levels.

Accompanying the report, available at www.heritagecounts.org.uk, is a toolkit to help local groups widen and strengthen community involvement in heritage issues. This will be used at an event being planned for 28 March 2012, when the East Midlands Heritage Forum joins local partners at Northampton Guildhall for the next Northamptonshire Heritage Summit.

Heritage Counts East Midlands 2011 is available at <http://hc.english-heritage.org.uk/Hc-regional-summaries/Hc-East-Midlands/> where you can download a summary of the key facts and trends

as a PDF document. More detailed spreadsheets of regional statistics are available from <http://hc.english-heritage.org.uk/National-Report/>, where you can also find this year's national report on 'Heritage and the big society'.

National Historic Environment Forum: The Historic Environment Forum, the national equivalent of the East Midlands Heritage Forum, is now co-ordinated by the Heritage Alliance. You can keep up to date with its work, as its minutes are now available online at <http://www.heritagelink.org.uk/historic-environment-forum/>. Highlights from the last meeting (held on 15 September) are reported there.

Planning reform: Consultation on the draft National Planning Policy Framework has now closed. There is a high level of consensus among Heritage Alliance members on the key points being made – for instance, about the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' and the specific levels of protection afforded by the draft text. The national Forum has been working on preparing a 'practice guide', but CLG has advised that publication be postponed pending a review of the position of planning guidance generally.

Local authority staffing: The national Forum has written to local authority chief executives and Heritage Champions outlining the findings of the latest IHBC/ALGAO/EH survey of staff resources, which show the 15% loss in the East Midlands reported above.

Heritage Open Days: As from 1st November 2011 Heritage Open Days has been transferred from English Heritage to a partnership of the National Trust, Civic Voice and the Heritage Alliance.

Heritage Lottery Fund: HLF has published a summary of responses to the recent consultation on its strategic framework, available at <http://www.hlf.org.uk/aboutus/whatwedo/Pages/Consultationonourstrategicframeworkfor20132019.aspx>. Further announcements are planned by the

end of 2011, with a new Strategic Plan due to be published in April 2012.

Heritage at Risk: English Heritage's register for 2011 shows that whilst the scheduled monuments in East Midlands are in relatively good shape (with 7% at risk), some Grade I and II* buildings continue to be vulnerable, especially in Bassetlaw, West Lindsey and South Kesteven – visit <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/har-2011-registers/acc-em-HAR-register-2011.pdf>.

The Friends of Pleasley Pit won the 'Heritage Angel' award for 'best rescue of an industrial site'. In fact the East Midlands virtually swept the board in the industrial heritage category, with two further sites among the runners-up: North Leverton Windmill and Bestwood Colliery and Winding House in Nottinghamshire. Two churches in the East Midlands were also shortlisted for 'best rescue of a place of worship': St Peter's in Shackerstone, Leicestershire, and Good Shepherd, Woodthorpe, Nottingham.

British Waterways: On 1st April 2012 British Waterways gains charitable status and a new name: the Canal and River Trust. More on the organisation's new identity is available here: <http://www.waterscape.com/features-and-articles/news/3200/new-name-for-britains-new-waterways-charity>.

Funding directory: The Alliance has updated its *Heritage Funding Directory* (<http://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/fundingdirectory/main/fundinghome.php>), which is an invaluable resource complementing the Architectural Heritage Fund's *Funds for Historic Buildings* (<http://www.fhfb.org.uk/>).

Heritage Crime: the Alliance to Reduce Crime against Heritage (ARCH) helps local agencies work together to crack down on the whole range of crime against heritage, including theft of lead roofs and nighthawking.

Chief Insp Mark Harrison, who co-ordinates the scheme on behalf of English Heritage, has been helping local partnerships to develop across England to improve the response to heritage crime, and its prevention and prosecution.

To tackle heritage crime it is crucial to get the issue embedded in local strategies and plans. Besides local authority conservation staff, key players locally include the Community Safety Partnership (or Crime and Disorder Reduction

Partnership, usually at District level), the police force (at county level in the East Midlands), elected Heritage Champions and local heritage societies. The Crown Prosecution Service now has a co-ordinator for heritage crime in the East Midlands, based at its offices in Lincoln.

In the East Midlands rapid progress is being made in building local partnerships, with discussions well underway in Northamptonshire and in Lincolnshire, where the chief constable is the national lead for heritage crime; and initiatives are emerging in Leicestershire and Derbyshire. In Nottinghamshire the County Council commissioned a report exploring the way forward, and it is hoped that the Forum's October meeting at Retford proves to be helpful in moving things forward.

More details are available at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/advice-by-topic/heritage-crime/arch/>

New guidance on metal theft: English Heritage has published revised guidance on the theft of metal from historic buildings. The East Midlands is particularly hard-hit by the theft of lead from church roofs.

While the guidance continues to advocate like-for-like replacement as the ideal repair approach, it states that "English Heritage will consider supporting the replacement of stolen lead with an alternative material after one incidence of theft if it is satisfied that security measures are unlikely to prevent further attacks, and if the proposed alternative material is suitable in terms of technical performance and appearance." Visit <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about/news/guidance-theft-metal-churches/>.

Discovering Places: With the London 2012 Games fast approaching, the Heritage Alliance is leading a campaign as part of the Cultural Olympiad to inspire people in the UK, especially young people, to discover their built, historic and natural environment. Claire Horan runs the scheme from the Heritage Alliance and met the Forum to introduce it.

Discover Explore enables young people aged 5-11 to discover new places and reveal hidden stories. Online technology is being developed in a pilot project in Scotland which will be available next year which local organisations in the East Midlands can use.

Meet the Species centres on a programme of events showcasing biodiversity and fostering collaboration between scientists and citizens.

Walk the World helps people investigate and celebrate local connections with the 205 Olympic nations.

For further details on the Discovering Places campaign visit <http://www.discoveringplaces.co.uk/>

Olympic Torch relay: The detailed route and dates of the Torch relay has been announced – see <http://www.london2012.com/olympic-torch-relay-map>. Have a look to see if the route is coming your way – a visit by the Olympic torch gives further opportunities to reach out to new audiences and the media.

Building heritage partnerships: the Bassetlaw experience.

The heritage of Bassetlaw is in good hands thanks to an active voluntary sector and a local authority with a vision for its historic environment.

Retford has a dynamic Civic Society with a track-record of success in engaging, cajoling and supporting occupiers and owners of historic buildings in the town. On a tour of the town centre, the society described how it has facilitated work on some 50 historic properties with the agreement of owners. The society has produced a DVD and heritage trail.

The town's Majestic Theatre, built by Alfred Thraves in the 1920s, has been brought back to life and recovered much of its former character and craftsmanship, and is now a vibrant part of the local scene. The achievement is all the more impressive because the works were led, and the theatre is now operated, entirely by an army of 75 volunteers. Attention is now turning to external repairs and improvements.

Among the projects germinating elsewhere in the district are the formation of a new civic society for Worksop, and a partnership scheme for the heritage-led regeneration of Tuxford, instigated by the town council. There have been two conservation fairs in Tuxford showcasing craft skills, with a third planned for May 2012. The Worksop Priory Gatehouse Trust is planning repairs to its landmark building, and has already found a tenant for another property in its care – the district's Council for Voluntary Service.

With such an impressive range of activity, what is the secret of Bassetlaw's success? The District's

heritage is clearly valued by the local authority at the highest level. The council continues to operate a grant scheme for historic buildings, through which modest contributions of public money are able to unlock investment well beyond the size of grant. Local groups work closely with the District Council with a high level of trust, and regularly take the lead in projects with support from council staff.

The Council has focused its own leadership role where it can have the best effect, for instance in preparing sound and comprehensive management plans for conservation areas (which, incidentally, may take on renewed significance if neighbourhood plans take off). The Council also recently published clear criteria for identifying heritage assets which are not nationally designated – visit

http://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/planning_and_building/conservation_heritage/non-designated_heritage_assets.aspx. This will help ensure that planning applications, decisions and appeals take their significance into account. There has also been a positive reception for local guidance also published recently on preparing Heritage Impact Assessments, which helps applicants assess the significance of a heritage asset as required by PPS5.

Around the country the squeeze on public spending is making itself felt: for instance, like many local authorities, Bassetlaw report that storage of archaeological archives is a growing problem.

Bassetlaw is something of a beacon for other areas as they prepare to navigate the choppy waters ahead, thanks to its vigorous voluntary sector, its deep-rooted culture of partnership working and the pride which local politicians take in the district's heritage.

For further information, in the first instance contact Paul Bodenham, Policy Adviser (East Midlands) for English Heritage by emailing paul.bodenham@english-heritage.org.uk