

HERITAGE COUNTS 2011

NORTH EAST

Heritage Counts 2011 is the tenth annual survey of the state of England's historic environment. It is prepared by English Heritage on behalf of the North East Historic Environment Forum. This year's Heritage Counts focuses on the role of the heritage sector in looking after the historic environment and its wider impact on individuals, communities and places in the context of the Big Society agenda. Drawing on new research by The Heritage Alliance and Civic Voice it considers how heritage groups can deliver positive social action, community empowerment and open up public services. Please visit the Heritage Counts website at www.heritagecounts.org.uk for more information about the historic environment in the North East and for further details of the research.

THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND BIG SOCIETY

New research shows that the historic environment can provide the context and means for people to get involved in their local areas. Heritage groups are an important source for community input into shaping areas, with 85% of civic societies responding to planning applications. They also provide opportunities for people to take part in their community, with 50% of The Heritage Alliance members offering volunteering opportunities. To encourage more people to play a part in their local heritage, Heritage Counts presents a checklist which local heritage groups can use to widen and strengthen community involvement in their projects and groups. Please see the national Heritage Counts report for more detail.

www.heritagecounts.org.uk

HERITAGE AND THE BIG SOCIETY

Civic Voice is a national organisation for the civic movement in England. Research by Civic Voice on the scope of heritage volunteering in local civic societies found that one fifth of volunteers do so for more than one hour a day, and that five in six volunteers are aged over 55. Future priorities for the civic movement include: broadening the volunteer base, taking advantage of localism, raising local profile, campaigning, and developing a clear vision for local areas. One third of respondents felt that the Big Society would help their group or cause.

The Heritage Alliance works to support charitable and non-governmental heritage organisations. Research undertaken by The Heritage Alliance on the activities of local heritage organisations found that they already deliver a wide range of Big Society and localism objectives, including community planning (with 42% involved). 73% of those surveyed were membership organisations, with 63% supported through financial donations. Future support needs include: advocacy (81%), information sharing (81%) and research (71%).

HERITAGE COUNTS: INDICATOR DATA

www.heritagecounts.org.uk provides a comprehensive set of statistics on the historic environment in the North East. The key data for 2010/11 are highlighted below.

UNDERSTANDING THE ASSETS

Regional Assets	2011 totals
World Heritage Sites	2
Scheduled Monuments	1,378
Listed Buildings Grade I	387
Listed Buildings Grade II*	754
Listed Buildings Grade II	11,111
Registered Parks and Gardens	53
Registered Battlefields	6
Protected Ship Wrecks	1
Conservation Areas	297
Designated Collections	7
Accredited Museums	66

USING AND BENEFITING

Heritage Open Days (HODs) is the historic environment sector's flagship initiative for increasing participation. Held each September, HODs sees many historic venues open to the public which are normally closed, or admission fees waived. In 2010, the number of participating venues in the North East increased from 395 in 2009 to 402.



The Newcastle Vintage Bus Tour outside the Castle Keep on Heritage Open Days
© Aycliffe and District Bus Preservation Society



Saltwell Park on Heritage Open Days © Gateshead Council

Visit England's survey of Visits to Visitor Attractions suggests there was a 4% decrease in the numbers of visits to historic sites in the North East in 2010 compared with the previous year for properties answering the survey in both years. In total there were 2.47 million visits to historic attractions in the North East in 2010.

In 2010/11 there were 489,407 visits to English Heritage staffed properties in the North East, and 1.6 million visits to staffed National Trust properties in the North East and Yorkshire areas combined.

Since 2006/7, membership of heritage organisations in the North East has increased. English Heritage membership rose from 39,000 in 2006/7 to 50,000 in 2010/11 and National Trust membership in the North East and Yorkshire and Humber rose from 326,860 to 356,363 over the same period. Similarly, the Historic Houses Association saw an increase in North East friends membership from 686 in 2007 to 1,169 in 2010.

In 2010/11, 70.7% of adults in the North East region had visited at least one historic site in the past 12 months. This is consistent with participation levels in previous years.

CARING AND SHARING

The North East continues to have the highest percentage of grade I and II* buildings at risk in the country, with 6.3% of buildings at risk in 2011 (compared with 6.6% in 2010).

The largest heritage funding body in the North East is the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). In 2010/11 the HLF awarded grants of over £11.7 million, more than an 100% increase on the £4.9 million in 2009/10. The primary reason for this disproportionate increase was a change to the HLF's funding programmes, which had a subsequent impact on the number of applications received.

Between 2009/10 and 2010/11 there was a 2.5% decrease in English Heritage awards in the North East (from £1,152,000 in 2009/10 to £1,122,667 in 2010/11). However, since 2002/3 there has been 17.6% increase in the value of grants paid out by English Heritage in the North East (not adjusted for inflation).

Local authorities play a key role in managing the historic environment. The number of local authority historic environment staff in the North East has fallen from 44.1 (FTE) in 2009/10 to 41.1 (FTE) in 2010/11.

KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

LOCALISM AND THE BIG SOCIETY

The historic environment has always been largely maintained by the non-government sector, whether private owners, volunteer organisations, charities, local amenity groups or trusts. Their role is set to increase even further with the Localism Bill, which seeks to devolve power and responsibility to local communities to shape local areas and local services. The case studies below demonstrate some of the heritage sector's good practice in this area.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

AT NORTH SHIELDS FISH QUAY

Under the Localism Bill, people will be able to engage more in the process of shaping their local area through Neighbourhood Development Plans. North Shields Fish Quay is one of the initial seventeen vanguard schemes helping to pilot new ideas around neighbourhood planning.

The Fish Quay Conservation Area has undergone an extensive programme of regeneration in recent years, and the creation of a neighbourhood plan will help set a framework for future development in this historic area.

Work is being led by the Fish Quay Heritage Partnership (comprising local residents, businesses and politicians) which will form the basis of a new Neighbourhood Plan group with support from the North of England Civic Trust. The project demonstrates how local people are being given the power to shape their areas and how local heritage groups can engage in this process.



North Shields Fish Quay Neighbourhood Plan © North of England Civic Trust

REVITALISING BRINKBURN DENES PARK

The HLF provided funding to Darlington Borough Council to support the rejuvenation and enhancement of the historic Brinkburn Denes Park in Darlington. Work included: new entrances, bridge repairs, lighting, signage, seating, fencing and horticultural improvements.

The local community has been involved in the Park's redevelopment through a programme of consultation and the work of a local Residents and Friends Group who have helped to develop plans for the park. The project demonstrates how heritage can provide a positive focus for local people's increased power to help shape their areas.

ACTION AREAS IN NORTHUMBERLAND

NATIONAL PARK

Northumberland National Park Authority (NNPA) has adopted an Action Area approach to working with its local communities. This aims to make it easier for people to shape their local areas by giving them advice, support on project development; help with funding applications and direction to other relevant sources of support.

The approach has resulted in a number of community initiatives providing extra capacity to conserve, enhance and interpret the National Park's cultural heritage. For example, the community-run Tasset Archive Group is developing a digital archive for the area; whilst Glendale Local History Society is working with local people to research, conserve and interpret the Homildon Hill registered battlefield.

Wark Local History Group received funding to restore Victorian reading rooms at Wark Town Hall with volunteers cataloguing the original books from the library. Similarly, Glendale Churches Heritage Group, a subgroup of Glendale Alive Partnership, aims to develop heritage tourism around the ten ancient churches within the Glendale Rural Deanery, including St Gregory's at Kirknewton and St Michael's at Ingram, both situated within Northumberland National Park. NNPA has installed counters to help the group understand visitor patterns and continue to assist with the development of new interpretive media, guides and family history resources.



Blyth Battery © English Heritage

RECHARGING BLYTH BATTERY

Blyth Gun Battery was used during the two World Wars to defend the port of Blyth. It has since been developed as a visitor attraction and educational facility, with the wartime buildings restored and a new visitor centre constructed with support from the HLF and English Heritage, amongst others. Enthusiastic and committed volunteers have been key to the success of the project.

The Friends of Blyth Battery played a crucial role in developing a vision for the redevelopment of the site and are currently shaping how the story of the Battery is told at the museum through a community heritage project that will inform future interpretation. The Friends have also benefited from a training programme to develop their skills to help them maintain, conserve and research the history of the site and open it to visitors.

CULTURE TRACK

VOLUNTEERING PROJECT

The Culture Track project was led by Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums in partnership with The Sage Gateshead, Dance City, the Centre for Life, Mining Institute and Northern Stage. It aimed to increase the confidence and employment prospects of unemployed people through volunteering and shows how heritage can encourage individuals to take a more active role in society.

The project worked with 69 unemployed volunteers, each based at a local cultural venue. Of these, 67 received support to increase their employability, five completed basic skills qualifications, 14 completed NVQ level 2 qualifications, 19 secured employment and 27 moved onto further education, training or volunteering. 80% felt more ready for employment following their involvement with the project and many are still volunteering as part of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums' volunteering programme.



Volunteers on the Culture Track Programme
© Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums

ALTOGETHER ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT

Rural communities in the North Pennines have united to explore the archaeology and history of their surrounding landscape. Volunteers undertook research and archaeological fieldwork on a range of sites in their local area including pre-historic settlements, medieval buildings and farming landscapes of the 18th and 19th centuries. The groups then shared their discoveries with the wider community through presentations, guided walks and archaeology road shows. The project was led by the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership and funded by the HLF. It demonstrates how heritage can encourage people's interest in their local area.



Altogether Archaeology Volunteers at Westgate Castle (directed by Archeological Services, Durham University) © North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

RESTORATION OF FISHING

COBLE ROYAL DIADEM II

With support from the HLF, the North East Maritime Trust trained 12 volunteers in traditional boat-building skills to help them restore the Royal Diadem II fishing coble (an iconic North Eastern boat) to its former glory. Over 750 people visited the workshop during the restoration and new interpretation materials provide information about these traditional vessels and the fishing communities associated with them. The project demonstrates how heritage can be used to encourage individuals to take a more active role in their local community.

THE HERITAGE CENTRE, BELLINGHAM

The Heritage Centre in Bellingham is a volunteer-run local history museum and the community group behind the museum (the Heritage Group, Bellingham) is a registered charity. The inspiration to found the museum came from the success of an exhibition of local photographs and

postcards and the prime driver behind the museum, Dorothy Bell, was awarded an MBE in the 2009 New Year Honours List.

The museum is accredited as part of the Museum Accreditation Scheme and so meets national standards for collections management, visitor facilities and for the services it provides to its users. It has also received 'quality assured visitor attraction' status from VisitBritain, demonstrating the quality of service provided by the volunteers running the museum.

MAKING HISTORY WORKSHOPS

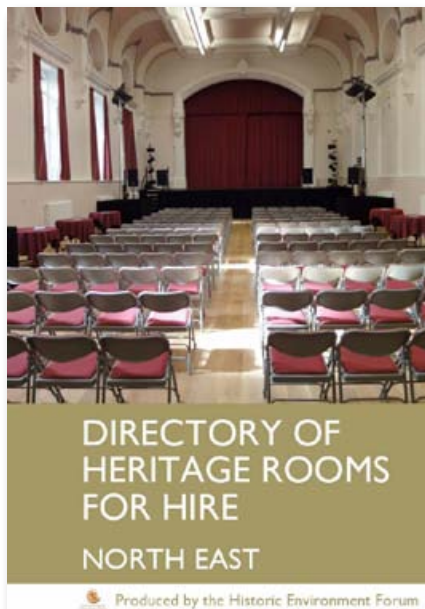
During 2011, the North East Historic Environment Forum (NEHEF) hosted a number of Making History workshops with representatives from the heritage sector and local councillors. The aim was to explore key issues and opportunities facing the heritage sector, including Localism and the Big Society. The conference reports can be downloaded from

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/imported-docs/k-o/making-history-conference-report.pdf>

HERITAGE ROOMS FOR HIRE DIRECTORY

The issue of resourcing local heritage groups was a key concern emerging from the Making History workshops. Therefore, the NEHEF commissioned research to explore how many local heritage venues (especially community-run venues) had rooms or spaces that could be hired out, to help generate income for the groups concerned. This resulted in a directory that can be used to market these venues, which can be downloaded from:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/imported-docs/a-e/directory-of-heritage-rooms-for-hire.pdf>



ABOUT THE NORTH EAST HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM

The North East Historic Environment Forum is a group of key organisations responsible for managing the historic environment in the North East who work together voluntarily in partnership.



North East Historic Environment Forum

Membership of NEHEF includes representation from:

Historic Houses Association
North of England Civic Trust
The National Trust
Heritage Lottery Fund
Country Landowners Association North East
Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers
North East Museums Hub
Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums
Museums, Libraries and Archives
Institute of Historic Building Conservation
Northumberland National Park Authority
Association of North East Councils
DCMS Officers Group
English Heritage

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