

# HERITAGE COUNTS

The State of the  
WEST MIDLANDS'  
Historic Environment  
2006



Nuns with children dressed as monks and nuns in the garden at Polesworth Abbey in Warwickshire



# HERITAGE COUNTS 2006

## WEST MIDLANDS

*Heritage Counts 2006* is the annual survey of the state of England's historic environment. The report identifies the principal trends and challenges facing the historic environment, with particular focus in 2006 on the role that communities play by valuing, caring for and understanding England's historic environment. This report is one of nine separate regional reports and has been prepared by English Heritage on behalf of the West Midlands' Historic Environment Forum. It should be read in conjunction with the national *Heritage Counts 2006* report, available at [www.heritagecounts.org.uk](http://www.heritagecounts.org.uk).

History matters, and a popular new campaign recently launched by the historic environment sector aims to prove this. The campaign demonstrates the importance of history in our everyday lives by encouraging celebration of our shared past.

People from all backgrounds in the West Midlands participate in, and engage with the historic environment in great numbers. Through all kinds of projects and initiatives, communities recognise the important role that history has to play in shaping the places where they live and in providing real benefits for local people.

*Heritage Counts 2006* showcases a wide range of heritage-led projects and shows how they can be a catalyst for community participation with real educational and economic benefits, as well as raising awareness of the historic environment. It is important that we learn from these initiatives and build on their successes. In particular, what worked, why and how were they successful; but perhaps more importantly who was involved, and how did they benefit? This will be our challenge for the future.

The historic environment provides a link to our past, enhancing our understanding about how communities have changed throughout history. The projects illustrated in *Heritage Counts 2006* demonstrate that the historic environment can create a sense of ownership and belonging, and reinforce community identity. History does matter: pass it on!

TIM JOHNSTON  
CHAIRMAN  
WEST MIDLANDS HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM

**H** HISTORY  
MATTERS  
PASS IT ON

**IMAGES OF ENGLAND** This year the Images of England project is celebrating completion. The project, begun in 1999, aimed to create a 'point in time' photographic record of every listed building in England at the start of the 21st century. Each of the images has been posted on the website alongside its 2001 listed building description to create what is one of the largest free-to-access digital image libraries in the world. It can be found at [www.imagesofengland.org.uk](http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk). Approximately 69 percent of listed buildings in the West Midlands can be found with images on the website. David Morphew from Leamington Spa in Warwickshire has been an *Images of England* volunteer since 2002. He has taken more than 1,000 images for the project across the West Midlands region. The featured image shows Dicks Lane Bridge on the Stratford-on-Avon Canal.



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# IN THE REGION

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## Key developments over the past 12 months in the West Midlands' historic environment sector.

**Taking Part.** Provisional results of the Taking Part Survey published in July 2006 showed that about 66 percent of adults in the West Midlands had attended at least one type of historic environment site during the last 12 months.

**Heritage Protection Review.** The national Heritage Protection Review is nearing completion and will inform the forthcoming White Paper on Heritage from the Government. The review is intended to examine the new ideas of a single national list, unified designation and more flexible management of historic sites. A pilot scheme at Kenilworth Castle is trialling the use of Heritage Partnership Agreements (HPAs) as an alternative management regime to the existing heritage consent systems.

**Historic Environment Strategy.** The Historic Environment Forum has begun to develop a Historic Environment Strategy for the West Midlands, to articulate the regional historic environment sector's aims and objectives for the coming years whilst also providing a joined-up and consistent approach to the strategic management of the region's heritage.

**Historic Environment Champions.** There are 30 English Heritage Historic Environment Champions in the West Midlands representing 25 of the region's 38 local authorities. The key role of Historic Environment Champions, mostly elected members of local authorities, is to promote the historic environment at a local level.

**Inspired!** The English Heritage campaign to highlight the plight of historic places of worship and raise awareness of the funding deficit that they face, was launched regionally at St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury in June.

**Buildings at Risk.** The regional launch of the 2006 Buildings at Risk Register took place at Upper Spon Street in Coventry in July. In 2006, there were 193 buildings on the register in the West Midlands representing 15 percent of the national total. A total of 17 buildings were added to the register and ten buildings were removed as repairs have been undertaken or beneficial uses have been found for them.

**Monuments at Risk.** A Scheduled Monuments at Risk study was completed in August 2006 for the West Midlands, and a database has been created showing, amongst other key indicators, risk levels for each of the region's monuments, as well as their current condition and principal vulnerability.

**Regional Economic Strategy.** Advantage West Midlands has launched the review of the Regional Economic Strategy. English Heritage, the Historic Environment Forum and the Regional Cultural Forum are engaging in the review process over the next year, with the updated Strategy due for publication in 2007.

**Regional Spatial Strategy.** Partial review of the Regional Spatial Strategy continues and formal responses from English Heritage were submitted on the phase of the review that dealt with the Black Country 'sub-region'.

**Local Development Frameworks.** Two local authorities (Lichfield District and Stafford Borough) in the West Midlands were amongst the first nationally to reach the formal examination stage for their new style Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). LDFs are intended to outline the spatial planning strategy for the local area as part of the two-tiered Local Authority planning system introduced in 2004.

**Housing Market Renewal.** Characterisation of historical significance in the region's Housing Market Renewal Areas is ongoing in both the North Staffordshire and the Birmingham & Sandwell areas. This work will help to enable informed change that recognises and builds upon local distinctiveness. English Heritage is working closely with regeneration agencies in North Staffordshire by chairing an advisory group that includes Advantage West Midlands, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and RENEW North Staffordshire, a partnership organisation responsible for the delivery of Housing Market Renewal.

**Ironbridge.** At the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site a strategy group is developing plans to take forward the World Heritage Site Management Plan. Also at Ironbridge, the Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Telford and Wrekin has recognised the value of the historic environment and the Iron Bridge Gorge as a key driver for regeneration. Local Strategic Partnerships are responsible for developing and driving the implementation of LAAs and bring together the different parts of the public, private, business, community and voluntary sectors to work together at a local level.

# DEFINING COMMUNITIES

*Heritage Counts 2006* will be of assistance to those with an interest in, and a responsibility for the management and care of the West Midlands' historic landscapes, buildings and places. This year's theme, *Communities and Heritage*, will look at what is valued by communities, and the ways in which communities appreciate their local historic environment. It will then go on to look at how communities participate in and engage with the historic environment, and how the historic environment can contribute to regeneration, economic growth and sustainable development in the West Midlands.



What do we mean by communities? How are they defined, and how are they measured? The fact that the word 'communities' is plural might give a clue to its meaning. An individual may feel part of one community defined in terms of where they live, ethnicity, faith or even social class, whilst at the same time feel a sense of belonging with another community, defined in terms of their work or key interests.

'A Force for Our Future' (Department for Culture, Media & Sport, 2001) argued that the historic environment can be an important means of establishing pride in where people live and bringing communities together in a shared sense of identity.



Re-enactors at Weoley Castle

## WEOLEY CASTLE, BIRMINGHAM

At Weoley Castle, a medieval fortified manor house in south Birmingham, renewed enthusiasm from the local community has been fostered thanks to a partnership between Birmingham City Council and Groundwork, the environmental regeneration charity. Partnership working and the involvement of the local community has arrested the deterioration of this local landmark through a programme of essential repairs to the stonework. The site is now safe to visit and is open at weekends, and various events have been held there as part of National Archaeology Week including historical re-enactments and guided tours. Local community members have also worked with the police to minimise damage to the monument. Continuing community engagement in the project will ensure the sustainable use of this valuable historic environment asset, demonstrating the importance of communities in providing a future for such sites.

However, the existence of different communities means that there is potential for conflict of interest. This can be due to disagreement over how, why and which parts of the historic environment should be conserved. It then becomes the role of organisations, such as elected local government, to mediate. In this sense they become agents of place-shaping, a role that includes building and shaping local identity, representing and maintaining the cohesiveness of communities and resolving disagreements (Lyons Inquiry into Local Government, May 2006). The historic environment contributes to these aims in a positive way, by providing a focus for community participation.

*Heritage Counts 2006* looks at what communities value, and the extent to which they are participating in and engaging with the historic environment. The role of the historic environment in regeneration in the West Midlands will be examined, and how this generates increased prosperity in the region. The report will look at how the historic environment is helping to make our communities sustainable.



# WHAT COMMUNITIES VALUE

Communities see value in different things, and this is evident through the lively debate within the historic environment sector about how historic assets should be managed. It is therefore vital that local communities have a say in the management of the historic environment. For example, at Kenilworth Castle, the local community has been involved in developing a management agreement for the site as part of the Heritage Protection Review. This approach will ensure that historic sites are cared for in a way that allows their continued use by the communities who value them both as an educational resource and as symbols of community identity.

Organisations involved in the historic environment sector need to be aware of the hopes and aspirations of the communities they represent, and this means directly involving communities in the decision-making process. In Wolverhampton, the City Council has launched a voluntary scheme that saw local community and amenity groups working on the selection criteria to be used for the designation of buildings, parks, gardens, and archaeological sites of local historic or architectural interest. These groups continue to be actively involved in undertaking research and making suggestions for inclusion on the local lists. A number of individuals have learned new skills, and have enhanced their understanding of the planning process. The project has

successfully engaged local people in the historic environment, providing an effective way of feeding back to the council what they value and care for in their local area.

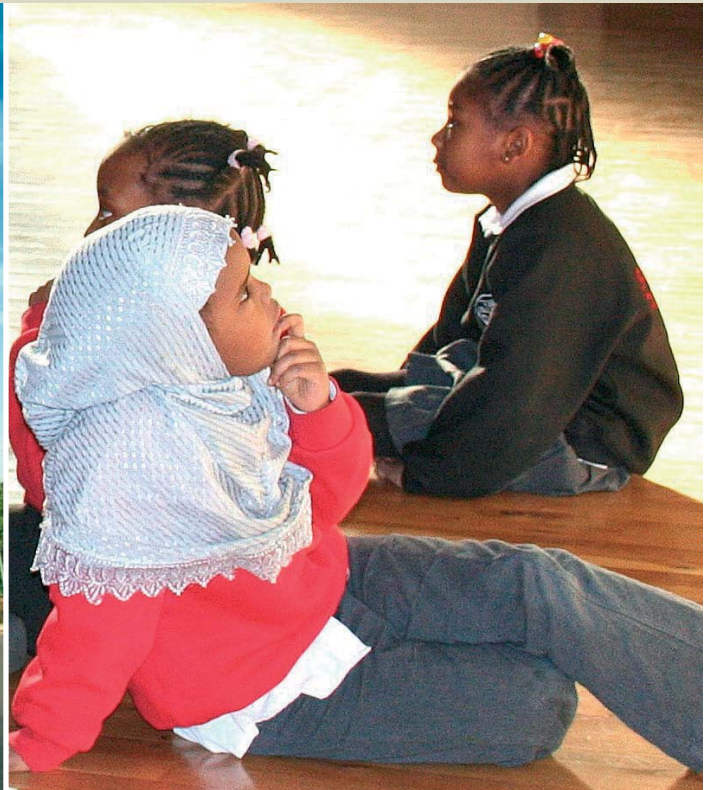
The value of places can be enhanced through increased understanding. In another project managed by Wolverhampton City Council and funded in part by English Heritage through a capacity building grant, the residents of an inner city area are being encouraged to explore local historic environment issues in a variety of ways. An appraisal was carried out by pupils and parents of Graisle Primary School in association with the TARA Consultancy, a community consultancy that employs local people who receive specific training to undertake projects. Various activities took place at the school, such as stained glass window design and building a giant Monopoly board based on the local area, and an exhibition was produced which appeared at a national conference hosted by Wolverhampton University. The project has already led to the appointment of a dedicated Heritage Project Officer to drive future conservation-led regeneration in the area. This type of research can help communities to further understand the value of local history even in areas where it might previously have been assumed that there are few sites of historic interest, enhancing a sense of local ownership and identity.

The identity of communities is shaped in part by the historic environment, not just through key public and community buildings, but also through private and commercial buildings. This is particularly true in the post-industrial areas of the West Midlands where entire communities may have previously associated themselves with particular industries that are now only identified by their buildings. Retaining key buildings therefore becomes vital for the communities who identify with them, but to do this the future of those buildings must be secured. Restoration of historic buildings must be carried out hand-



**Left:** Duncan Nimmo, Chairman of the Wolverhampton History and Heritage Society outside one of the buildings he nominated for inclusion on the Wolverhampton Local List. The building is the former Bilston Health Clinic designed by Lyons, Isreal and Elsom, 1937-38.  
**Right:** Monopoly Board at Graisle Primary School.

**Left:** Bilston Town Hall and the Rev Chris Thorpe, Vicar of St Leonard's Church in Bilston, Chairman of the Heart of Bilston group who campaigned to save the Town Hall. **Right:** St John's and St Peter's Church, Ladywood.



in-hand with the development of robust plans for their continued sustainable use.

This was the approach used at Bilston Town Hall; a grade II listed building in a conservation area that was designed by Bidlake & Lovatt in the 19th century. A 3-step approach was taken in the repair, restoration and re-use of this landmark building. The 'Heart of Bilston' (a group that has campaigned for the re-use and restoration of the Hall) – as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) supported Bilston Townscape Heritage Initiative – has supported and worked with the council in the implementation of the project. This has ensured community guidance from an early stage. This exemplifies the benefits of open dialogue between communities and elected local government, not just to secure the future of historic environment assets, but also to provide an opportunity for those communities to inform and guide the decision-making process.

Pubs, local shops, churches and other historic buildings often represent a focal point that communities identify with. A survey carried out by the Diocese of Hereford in 2005, 'shows that in 85 per cent of the communities in the geographical area covered by the Diocese, the most rural in the Church of England, the church was felt to be an important partner in social and cultural life'. This hints at the role the rural parish church has to play in strengthening community cohesion, but also highlights the need for our faith buildings to adapt if they are to have sustainable futures, particularly where congregations are declining. Faith buildings may need to be rendered more relevant to communities and this can often be done through collaborative working and careful design, ensuring adaptive re-use where appropriate. At St John's and St Peter's

Church in Ladywood, Birmingham – an inner-city church that was suffering badly from the ravages of time and pollution – restoration and redevelopment of the building was carried out in a way that made it fit to serve the needs of both the congregation and local communities. By establishing the Ladywood ARC (Arts, Religion and Community), there is a scheme in place through which the church is open to the whole community, thus contributing to its sustainable future.

A sustainable future has also been ensured for Polesworth Abbey near Tamworth – as featured on the front cover – thanks to the efforts of the vicar, Father Philip Wells. With the assistance of Heritage Lottery Fund grant aid, community-based projects at Polesworth are providing a valuable resource for local schoolchildren, as well as a new and viable use for the Abbey site. 'Monks and Nuns at Polesworth' is an activity packed educational day held at the abbey, which gives children the chance to experience what life might have been like for the Benedictine nuns who lived there up until the mid 16th century. With the remains of the original 14th century gateway still standing, as well as a small section of the cloister wall, Polesworth provides a stunning backdrop for another Polesworth Abbey project: The 'Sensory Garden', opened in June 2006 by the Mayor of North Warwickshire, which provides a stimulating experience for blind and partially sighted people in what used to be the abbey cloister.

These examples demonstrate the value that communities see in our faith buildings, but also emphasise the benefits of adaptable management of historic assets in order to maintain sustainable and continued use.



# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Provisional results of the Department for Culture Media and Sport's Taking Part survey show that about 66 percent of adults in the West Midlands have attended at least one type of historic environment site during the last 12 months. This includes visiting historic towns and landscapes, buildings and places of worship open to the public and archaeological sites. The communities of the West Midlands are demonstrating an enthusiasm for the historic environment simply by visiting historic sites. From watching popular television programmes such as Restoration and Time Team, to visiting sites on Heritage Open Days or during National Archaeology Week, communities are participating in the historic environment in a variety of ways. Indeed, the West Midlands is home to this year's winning building from the BBC's Restoration Village series: Chedham's Yard in Warwickshire. Heritage Open Days, co-ordinated by English Heritage and the Civic Trust, see thousands of buildings of all ages, styles and functions throughout England open their doors free of charge and have been very successful in promoting participation in the historic environment.

In the West Midlands, The Gateway Gardens Trust is organising visits to historic parks and gardens through its 'Opening the Gates' project. The Trust will work with over 10,000 people from groups who might not normally have the opportunity to visit historic parks and gardens such as minority ethnic communities, children with special needs and the elderly, and has attracted 90 percent funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project has also received a £10,000 grant from the Commission for Racial Equality and a capacity building grant of £25,000 from English



## APNA GHAR (OUR HOME)

In 2006, English Heritage worked in collaboration with Foursight Theatre and Black Country Touring on a project to develop a community performance

inspired by the stories of South Asian women from Sandwell. A group of local British Asian women were trained to gather stories within their communities and put together a performance based on the testimony of women who had migrated to the area from the 1950s onwards. The theme of the piece was the meaning of "home" and the struggle to make a home in a new environment. The project engaged the Asian community in collecting and interpreting their connection to the historic environment, and sharing their story across communities through performance art. The production was staged in a disused Victorian school building in Wednesbury with a range of interior and exterior period locations. Foursight Theatre used a core group of professional actors but also involved individuals from the Asian community as performers.

Heritage. Projects of this nature contribute to achieving the Government's Public Service Agreement target to increase by 3 percent the proportion of people from black and ethnic minority communities, from lower socio-economic backgrounds and with a limiting disability, attending designated historic environment sites by 2008.

'Journeys', an English Heritage partnership project with the Well-Being Workshop and SureStart in Balsall Heath in Birmingham, encouraged mothers to increase their understanding of the history and culture of the West Midlands, and to recognise the contribution that different cultures have made to the built environment. SureStart supports antenatal and postnatal mothers and their families in less affluent areas, and aims to provide services in childcare, early years education, health and employment. By visiting historically and culturally significant sites, the group experienced places outside their immediate area, and the cultural environment of different communities.



Left: Heritage Open Days. Right: SureStart mums on a trip to a Burmese Buddhist Peace Pagoda in Birmingham.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engagement in the historic environment goes beyond simply visiting historic sites. The sector depends heavily on the contribution made by volunteers, indeed the sector would not survive without them. In a project led by British Waterways, volunteers from the Worcester and Birmingham Canal Society are carrying out survey work and record gathering, and are learning how to collate and archive their findings. The volunteers are contributing to a greater knowledge, understanding and appreciation of waterways heritage and the results of the project are supporting improvements in the management, protection and sustainability of the canal. By harnessing the skills and enthusiasm of communities, the objectives of a genuine research agenda have been realised at the same time as providing training that has helped the volunteers develop professional, sustainable skills in assisting with the management of the canal.

This example demonstrates the importance of the role played by volunteers and members of the community not just in making our historic environment assets accessible and understandable, but also in contributing to research and knowledge that will enhance the value of those sites for the future. Near Broadway in Worcestershire, the Young Archaeologists Club has been undertaking a research project with the support of 'Awards for All' (funded by the

National Lottery), to examine a cropmark site of probable Roman and prehistoric enclosures. Worcestershire Archaeology has been able to train the youngsters in archaeological techniques such as finds processing, analysis and curation. Not only has this proved an excellent opportunity for those taking part to learn new skills and increase their understanding of the site, it has also provided the County Historic Environment Record with valuable data. Local residents were invited to an exhibition held in June 2006, which raised awareness of the historic environment near to where they live. A reconstruction illustration produced as part of the project was exhibited and will continue to be used for educational purposes on completion of the project.

The English Heritage outreach programme aims to actively engage different communities in the historic environment in creative ways, and the archaeology being unearthed on the site of the Elizabethan garden at Kenilworth stimulated two exciting projects in 2006. The first is a project with the Carers Centre in Coventry, in partnership with The Herbert Museum and Art Gallery. Working with Birmingham jeweller, metal worker and textile artist Rita Patel, a group of Asian Elders are creating a touring craft exhibition using Kenilworth Castle's garden design as inspiration. Their design work will be influenced by historical records of the Elizabethan garden as well as their own experiences, memories, culture and heritage. In another project young people from Kenilworth Youth Centre are working with a professional film maker to create a DVD film about the castle, garden excavation, and ghostly goings-on! They are also working with a web designer to create a website about life in Kenilworth, with emphasis on the castle and the impact it has on their community. These projects serve to illustrate the role of the historic environment as a driver for community cohesion, creativity and engagement.



**Left:** Worcestershire Young Archaeologists Club on a fieldwalk at Broadway, Worcestershire. **Right:** The Asian Elders with their work, Kenilworth, Warwickshire.

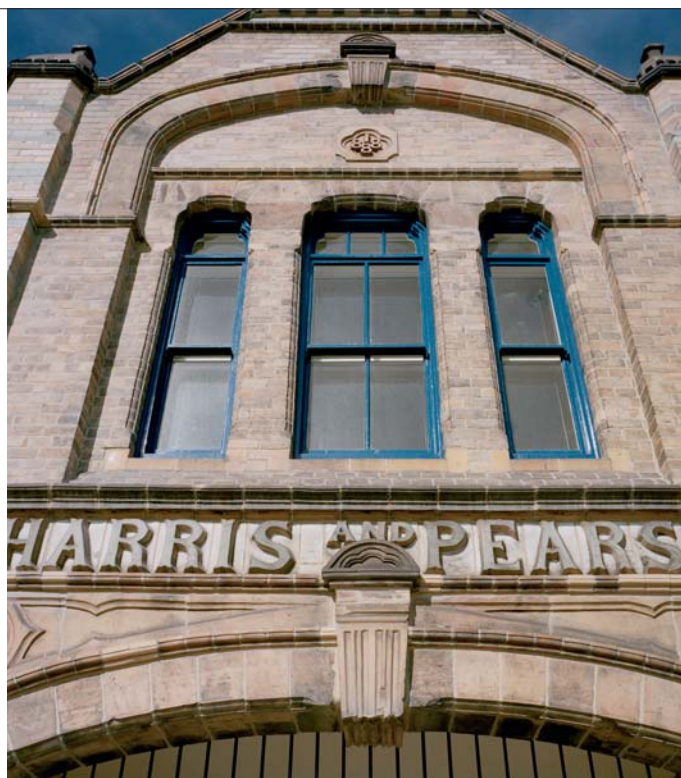


# COMMUNITY REGENERATION

In the West Midlands, economic, industrial and scientific development historically goes hand-in-hand with cultural expression; through art, crafts, architecture, planning and design. The region provides numerous examples of this, from the industrial heartlands surrounding Birmingham, Coventry and Stoke-on-Trent, to the furthest rural reaches of the Herefordshire and Shropshire Marches. The Government's emphasis on creating sustainable communities seeks to ensure that economic growth in the region will happen in such a way so as to safeguard the communities' needs. The historic environment can be used to bring communities together, but historic environment assets can also be used to achieve economically and socially sustainable communities. Sustainable communities need *cohesion*, and the West Midlands frequently demonstrates that the historic environment can provide the 'bond' for this cohesion to occur.

The celebrated regeneration of Birmingham's Bullring shopping area has revitalised the retail heart of the city centre. Sensitive planning and an ambitious re-structuring of Birmingham's street pattern have re-affirmed the place of St Martin's Church at the heart of the now bustling market and retail area. St Martin's is an elegant Victorian grade II\* listed church which was extensively refurbished in tandem with the construction of the new Bullring. Not only has the building been revitalised but St Martin's role as a focal point for shoppers, local residents, tourists and visitors has brought new life and support for St Martin's community activities, an opportunity the congregation has seized. Twenty people have been trained as tour guides, whilst projects such as youth support, counselling, employment advice and a mental healthcare project run by 35 volunteers, have cemented the church's role as a community hub in the midst of Birmingham's thriving retail centre.

Historic environment assets can contribute to regeneration not just as part of wider schemes for redevelopment, but can also lead that process, contributing to a sense of place. The shops on Worcester Street in Wolverhampton, a shopping parade built in 1909, have been the subject of a restoration and regeneration project thanks to a partnership between Wolverhampton City Council and Focus Home Options, a housing association. With funding from English Heritage as part of a Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme, properties along the street have been restored as residential and commercial units, and their position close to the city centre means that



## HARRIS & PEARSON OFFICE BUILDING

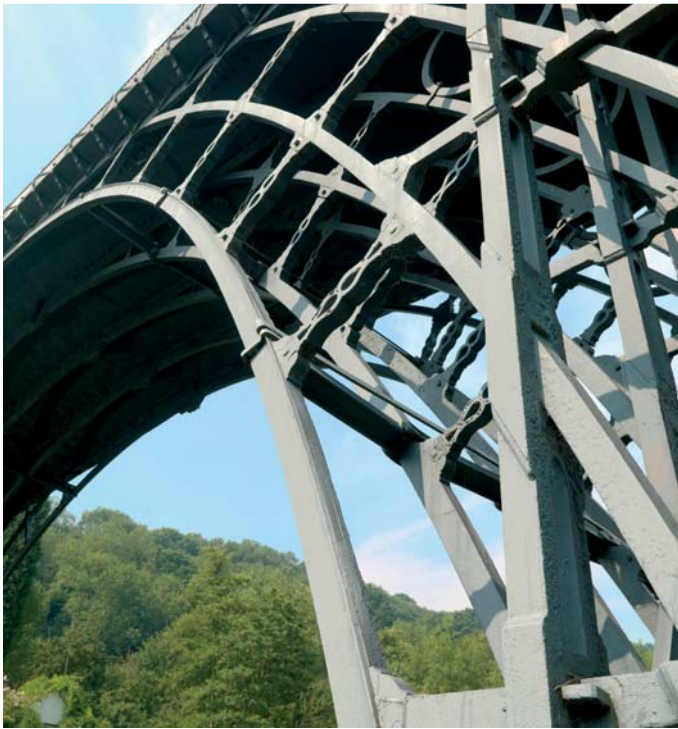
The late 19th century Harris & Pearson office building in Brierley Hill, Dudley was originally constructed as a showcase for the range of products available from the company, a local brick and ceramics manufacturer, and provides us with an excellent example of how industrial legacy can enhance the quality and character of the local area. The West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust (WMHBT) recognised the importance of the building and with the assistance of the Heritage Lottery Fund, took action, and rescued this grade II listed building that was in a very poor state of repair. They formulated and implemented a detailed plan for the restoration of the building, and in the summer of 2005 the future of the building was secured when it was sold as offices.



St Martin in the Field's Church and Selfridges in the Bullring



**Left:** Worcester Street Shops, Wolverhampton. **Right:** Storyteller Des Quarrell telling 'Myth Stories' at Whittington Castle, Shropshire. **Bottom:** The Iron Bridge at Ironbridge, Shropshire.



regeneration. Through the LAA the Local Strategic Partnership is developing 'an innovative and effective multi-agency funding package for works to preserve the fabric of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site which recognises the contribution of the World Heritage Site to the economic, cultural and environmental well-being of the Borough and the Region'. The LAA highlights partnership working as a valuable tool for maximising the impact that the historic environment has on local prosperity and community cohesion.

In rural areas the historic environment is often at the heart of regeneration. Whittington Castle near Oswestry has become a focal point for the local community who have formed a Trust and have taken on the lease of the castle. They are now responsible for general upkeep and maintenance of the site. Grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage and Shropshire County Council amongst others, have funded the production of a Conservation Plan for the site, and are now supporting a programme of restoration and the provision of improved visitor facilities and access. The castle will continue to be used for wedding receptions and other events such as Monumental Myths, a project run by the oral tradition charity Myth Stories in partnership with Sandwell Local Education Authority. With the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, children from the West Midlands' urban areas visited Whittington Castle, as well as nearby Old Oswestry Hill Fort, to hear myths and legends about the sites' histories. The castle has become a focus for economic and community regeneration in the village. Through active community participation in and engagement with conservation, management and learning, the historic environment can provide communities with a sense of local ownership which is key to achieving sustainable, prosperous and diverse societies.

their renovation will contribute to the overall regeneration of Wolverhampton City Centre.

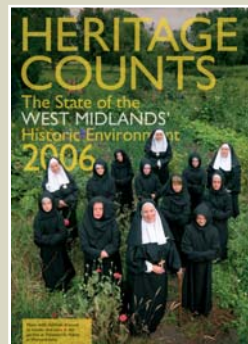
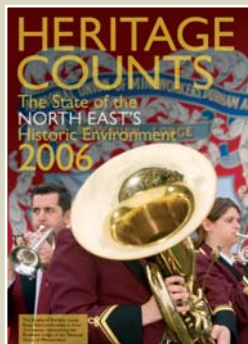
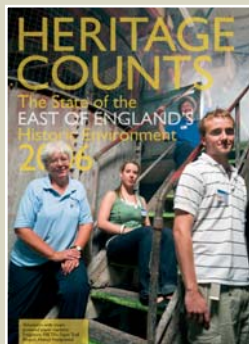
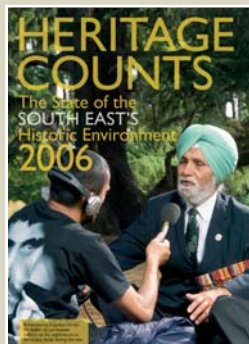
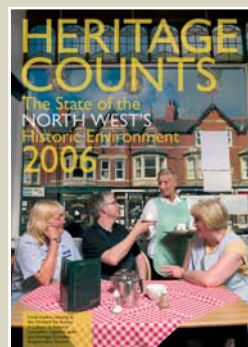
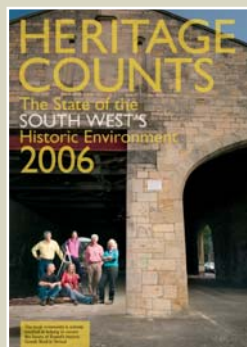
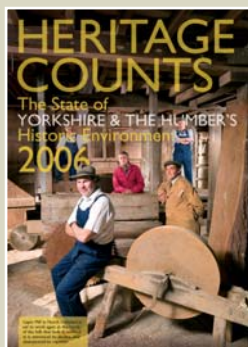
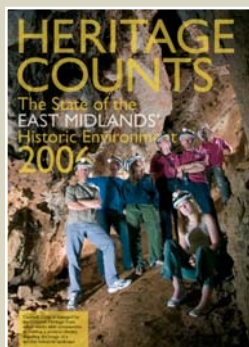
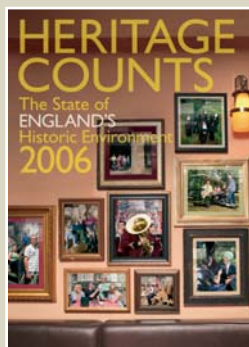
Heritage-led regeneration and economic growth rely on the forging of effective partnerships between public and private agencies and organisations, and communities. Communities need to be involved in the processes associated with regeneration in order for schemes to be successful. The Ironbridge Gorge in Shropshire has long been a focus of historic interest in the region, and is the only UNESCO World Heritage Site in the West Midlands. As a key part of the Borough of Telford and Wrekin Council's 'transformation' agenda within their Local Area Agreement (LAA), the site's importance has been further acknowledged as a potential contributor to local



## KEY INDICATORS

As in previous years, *Heritage Counts* will this year be supported by the website [www.heritagecounts.org.uk](http://www.heritagecounts.org.uk) which will carry all of the information in this report, as well further indicators, analysis and case studies from the region.

- In July 2006, the West Midlands had 30 Historic Environment Champions, representing 25 (66%) of the West Midlands' 38 Local Authorities.
- Provisional results from the DCMS Taking Part survey, based on the first three quarters (July 2005 – April 2006) show that about 66% of people in the West Midlands have attended at least one type of historic environment site during the last 12 months.
- In 2005, 3,343,000 people visited Historic Properties in the West Midlands, representing 6% of the total number of visits nationally.
- From April 2005 to June 2006, 1,093 Educational visits were made to English Heritage properties in the West Midlands by schools and other educational organisations.
- Around 300 properties in the West Midlands took part in Heritage Open Days 2006 from 7th to 10th September. Heritage Open Days is England's largest voluntary cultural event when thousands of buildings of all ages, styles and functions open their doors free of charge. Many of these places are normally closed to the public, while others usually charge for admission.
- There were 193 Buildings at Risk in the region in 2006, which represented 15% of the national total. There were 17 new entries on the register, whilst 10 buildings were deemed no longer 'at risk'. This represents a net increase of 7. The West Midlands Metropolitan area recorded the greatest increase of entries on the register in the region.
- English Heritage has a rolling programme of surveys underway in each of the English regions to systematically assess the condition and vulnerability of all Scheduled Monuments and to establish priorities for action and monument management. Preliminary results in the West Midlands have shown that of those monuments surveyed, 409 monuments (approximately a quarter of those surveyed) were deemed to be at a high level of risk.
- Virtually all archaeological work in the region is undertaken as part of development proposals. Local authority archaeological advisors appraise every planning application and make recommendations on requirements for preservation, or for an appropriate level of recording if preservation is not feasible. In 2005, development-based archaeological research was carried out on 571 sites as part of planning proposals, which included desk-based assessment, evaluation, excavation, a watching brief and/or building recording.
- There is no single register of Landscapes at Risk. However, it is calculated that nearly half of all parkland recorded in 1918 had been lost by 1995 as a result of agricultural development, conversion to golf courses and other changes. Three of the region's Local Authority areas are in the UK top ten for parkland loss in that period: The County of Herefordshire Unitary Authority recorded the highest loss of parkland (3,686 hectares) and Stratford-on-Avon District recorded the second highest loss of parkland (2,477 hectares) in that period.
- The West Midlands is home to one UNESCO World Heritage Site: The Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site in Shropshire
- In April 2006, the West Midlands had 34,363 listed buildings, of which 607 were listed grade I, and 2,162 were listed grade II\*.
- There were 1,474 Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the region in August 2006.
- There are 6 Registered Historic Battlefields in the region.
- There were 749 Conservation Areas in the West Midlands in 2006. Conservation Areas are designated by Local Authorities as areas of special architectural or historic interest.
- There were 152 Registered Historic Parks and Gardens in the West Midlands region in 2006.
- In 2005/06, about 53,100 planning applications were decided in the West Midlands by local planning authorities, some 3,800 more than the previous year. 2,800 applications for listed building consent were decided, and 300 conservation area consents were determined.



#### The West Midlands Heritage Counts Editorial Board 2006:

Paul Taylor (English Heritage), Dr Mike Hodder (ALGAO), Elizabeth Turner (British Waterways), Rex Carson (Heritage Lottery Fund), Judy Vero (West Midlands Amenity Society Association).

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