

3 Volunteer Work

Case Study – Smallcombe Garden Cemetery

The Smallcombe Garden Cemetery Conservation and Heritage Project is located in a beautifully quiet valley just a fifteen minute walk from the city centre. Originally laid out as a garden, the cemetery was operational between 1856 and 1988.

Steve Kerss, scheme Project Director and local resident, spoke of project's early days: "What began in January 2014, literally with one neighbour, Alastair Cowan, saying to me 'we must do something to conserve this extraordinary place' has grown into a city-wide effort. Crucially, B&NES Council and the National Trust (the Cemetery is a stone-throw from the NT Skyline Walk) pledged their support from the off.

One of our first tasks was to raise awareness, both of Smallcombe's beauty and its plight, so in summer 2014 one of our volunteers, Christopher Wright, a former advertising-agency director, came up with the idea of a photography competition. He said "We invited the people of Bath to walk out to Smallcombe with their cameras and capture the cemetery's magic, then we brought the best of their photographs into the city to show everybody what we were all in danger of losing."

"We were astonished by the way the city engaged with the project, and during just six days over 1,400 visitors viewed the exhibition, many of whom signed up to lend a hand. The show also told the story of the dozens of volunteers who raked the entire five-acre cemetery clear of strimmings that summer, to encourage wild flower growth. Importantly among the exhibition's visitors were six people from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). We were intending to apply for HLF funding at a later date, but the fact that they could now see with their own eyes how deeply the community

cared about preserving this part of their heritage resulted in their manager driving straight up to the cemetery with us and then recommending we submit our proposal to them as soon as possible."

The project went on to receive an HLF grant of £48,600, 'to support a two-year conservation project to ensure that this hidden social, historical and ecological gem doesn't become lost to neglect and decay'. The community raised £25,000 themselves, including a contribution from the Enhancement Fund.

Volunteers continue to be the life-blood of the project and take part in regular events at the Cemetery. They not only provide valuable labour, but learn traditional maintenance skills too. During 2015, the main focus was on the walls at the cemetery, making them safe and repairing them. Pedestrian access has also been improved, with stone steps replacing a muddy slope and a new stone stile placed within a repaired wall. To find out more or to volunteer go to: www.smallcombegardencemetery.org



Photo competition entry from Paul Wilkins

4 Management and Funding

The Fund is controlled by a Management Committee comprising 3 representatives each, from the Council, Bath Preservation Trust and the World Heritage Site Steering Group. The Fund is administered by the Bath Preservation Trust, which has appointed a part-time Fund Administrator.

5 Contacts

For further information about the Fund, or to suggest any future projects, please contact our Administrator, Ainslie Ensom at whsef@bptrust.org.uk

For general World Heritage information, please contact B&NES World Heritage Manager, Tony Crouch. 01225 477582 tony_crouch@bathnes.gov.uk

To find out more about World Heritage in Bath please go to www.bathworldheritage.org.uk

6 Call for projects

The Fund is looking for more inspiring and interesting projects to fund during the next financial year. Typically we are looking for minor enhancement work, or to help others undertake a larger project, perhaps even to help organise volunteers to do the work. Project ideas are always welcome, to ensure that the Fund continues to contribute to the enhancement of the unique World Heritage City of Bath.

Please contact the Fund Administrator by email: whsef@bptrust.org.uk

Bath & North East Somerset Council



WORLD HERITAGE ENHANCEMENT FUND

Newsletter
2016

Chairman's Introduction

The Fund has been established for seven years and it has made a real difference to Bath World Heritage Site. You would be hard pressed now to travel through the City and not find a restored street sign or milestone. The projects in this year's newsletter demonstrate just why the Fund is so strong and why it remains so valid.

Rarely today will you see a project that is funded from only one source and instead the trick is to gather together partnership contributions. The Fund often provides an up-front 'turn-key' service, where initial costs of statutory permissions are funded (such as the Shakespeare Monument), or in the case of Lansdown Crescent iron-work moulds are made.

Our contribution can give confidence to larger funders (such as the Heritage Lottery Fund at Smallcombe Cemetery) or encourage private contributions. It can help harness the considerable contribution of volunteers and it can encourage, promote and teach craft skills that are vital to conserving this unique city.

Much has been achieved but there is always more to do. We remain ever grateful for the continued financial support of our partners and look forward to delivering an even greater number of success stories.

Peter Metcalfe
Enhancement Fund Chairman

Heritage Goes Digital!

The **Heritage Trail**, created with information from Bath Preservation Trust architectural historian Dr Amy Frost, was launched in the **Official Bath App** in October 2015. The Bath App is a very successful digital marketing platform with a huge 82,400 downloads to date, making this an ideal place to embed heritage interpretation. The Heritage Trail is a snapshot of Bath's history taken through 25 famous people connected with the city and 25 renowned landmarks. Photos accompany the content and help guide people to the appropriate historical location. The Heritage Trail has already been visited in the app 2,144 times at the time of writing.

The Heritage Trail was a partnership between Bath Tourism Plus, Bath and North East Somerset Council, Bath Preservation Trust and the Bath Business Improvement District (BID), working together through the World Heritage Site Steering Group with a grant from the Enhancement Fund.

The **Social History Trail** at Smallcombe Garden Cemetery is another example of how smartphone technology is being harnessed to tell stories in a new way.

The Enhancement Fund has contributed funding to the Trail which places QR codes on stone plaques on or next to a number of graves. When scanned by a smartphone, they link to short audio visual clips about the person, giving an insight into the less well known social history of Victorian and Edwardian Bath. Nine video clips have been produced so far with locations referenced on an information board which will shortly be erected at the cemetery entrance. This link <https://vimeo.com/160478304> also works in a browser for those without a smartphone.



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1 Projects Initiated by the Fund

Since the Fund was established, a rolling programme of restoring Bath's 18th century incised and painted street signs has been underway. To date a total of 31 have been completed. Over the years, pollution, weathering and poor building maintenance have taken their toll on the signs, and left them difficult or impossible to read. The Fund's Street Name Conservation Programme has ensured that they are now both attractive and functional, removing the need for modern signage to be fixed over them. These signs form part of the unique visual identity of Bath which contributes to the architectural cohesion of the World Heritage Site.

The signs at Axford's Buildings on London Road were completed in 2015, by Bath-based stonemason, Iain Cotton, to a very high standard as the before and after photos illustrate. In 2015 signs were completed in Charlotte Street, North Parade Passage, Sydney Buildings and St James's Square, and in 2016, the signs in Queen Square, Gay Street, Trim Street and St James's Parade will be restored taking the total to 35. Sydney Buildings residents were so pleased with their new sign that they made a donation to the Fund from their Resident's Association.

The improvement works in conjunction with the London Road Partnership took a further step forward with the help of £5,000 from the Enhancement Fund toward the restoration of six stone piers at Kensington Place. Pictured here after the work carried out in 2015, the piers were cleaned, repointed, and given a 'lime shelter coat'. The railings at Kensington place were also repainted.



2 Partnership Projects

Cleveland Pools is an example of a project where the pledge of financial assistance from the Fund has helped the project successfully bid for significantly larger amounts of funding.

It also provides an example of where the Fund is asked to help with conservation work that struggles to attract donations because it is unglamorous. Such was the case with 'stripping-back' work at the listed cottage at Cleveland Pools. It is easier to raise public donations for a boat pontoon than stripping-out work!

Standing at the centre of the crescent of buildings, with an archway at ground level, the cottage was most recently a caretaker's dwelling but has stood empty for more than 20 years. It was in need of complete refurbishment, but first work was needed to remove later alterations to give an understanding of the building and enable a fully informed restoration. The Enhancement Fund allocated £5,000 for the works which were carried out last June. The work involved removing plastic-backed imitation wood panelling, and some exciting discoveries were made including a



kitchen range and a blocked doorway. Also discovered on the now-exposed stone walls is the outline of the original stair (see photograph) next to the 1960s replacement which is due to be removed.

To find out about progress and events at the Pools, and to support the project please see www.clevelandpools.org.uk.

Finials return to Lansdown Crescent

Lansdown Crescent, built in the 1790s, once boasted decorative railing finials. As with other examples in Bath, the ornate spikes at the tops of the railings were sacrificed for the war effort in the early 1940s. The railings themselves were spared in the interests of public safety as they enclosed basement areas. The finials were never replaced.

Now thanks to a £17,000 campaign mounted by the Lansdown Crescent Residents Association, restoration of 1,100 finials is underway. The Fund paid for the castings or moulds for the finials to be made, costing £1,488. So far two houses have had the work carried out, with the remainder due to be finished later this year. The project made the pages of 'The Times' recently, just as the original debate about railing removal did more than seventy-five years ago.

Demian Bellaart, a blacksmith from the Chapel Forge based in Bath cemetery, has prepared the tops of the rails for drilling. After they are fitted and painted, the finials will be largely indistinguishable from the originals. He said: "I am full of admiration for the Georgian craftsmen who made them. The railings were fitted together in such a clever way you wonder how they did it. They are as good as new 228 years after they were erected."

Christchurch bells

The Fund was approached by Christ Church in Julian Road to contribute toward the cost of restoring their bells. The bells were condemned in 2013 due to the poor condition of the bell frame and fittings, and were consequently only rung once a month in recent years. The Fund's management committee considered this case carefully, as works to church bells alone across the World Heritage Site could easily exhaust budgets. However, given the impressive fundraising campaign by the church, a contribution from the Fund of £5,000 toward a total of £115,000 was deemed appropriate.

The original bells were very loud and part of the seven-month project involved the installation of a series of soundproofing measures to prevent noise nuisance to surrounding residents. The new bells and frame were dedicated by the Bishop of Bath and Wells in December 2014, and installed in January 2015. They are now rung regularly for Sunday morning services at the neo-gothic church designed in the late 18th Century by architect John Palmer.

Find out more at www.christchurchbath.org/church-life/bells.



Photo taken from the BBC News website



Kelston Tump

Kelston Roundhill Wood, also known as Kelston Tump, is a prominent cluster of trees on the Bath skyline and a significant landmark within the landscape setting of the World Heritage Site.

The landowners had been concerned about the decline of the wood and started a programme of 'regenerative management'. This involved removing dead and decaying trees and the old barbed-wire fencing. Deer-proof fencing was installed to protect new planting, which will eventually be removed. The Fund was approached to help with the project in general and chose to fund traditional parkland iron railing fence to exclude sheep and cattle which graze on the surrounding hill sides. A grant of £1,500 was made towards the fencing and planting.

"True it is that we have seen better days"

This grade II listed memorial to William Shakespeare is located in The Dell, Victoria Park. It was originally commissioned by Bath City Council to coincide with the 300th anniversary of The Bard's birth and unveiled by the Mayor of Bath with many "speeches of tribute and approbation" according to the Bath Chronicle of 28th April 1864. The monument is little known today but the 1864 Chronicle report states that a massive crowd of around 30,000 people attended the unveiling event.

The 'votive altar' is suffering from considerable weathering, with the lettering almost totally illegible. Some previous repairs have taken place, but this monument is clearly in need of attention.

2016 marks the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death and it is also one hundred years after the founding of the Bath Shakespeare Society. The Society has applied to the fund for around a third of the cost of the restoration and re-lettering of the memorial. The Fund has also offered to meet the up-front costs associated with listed building consent in order to give the Society a clear run with their fund raising efforts. If all goes smoothly the work is expected to be undertaken during summer 2016.

