

West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust

Media Release



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History in the Headstones – guided walk around historic cemetery

Sunday 3 May, 11am to 12 noon.

As part of the project to restore the former Lye and Wollescote Cemetery Chapels in Cemetery Road, Lye a series of events will be taking place during spring and summer. The first of these is a guided walk to discover more about some of the people buried in the cemetery alongside historical events and their role in shaping Lye. Learn about the man whose entrepreneurial skills led to Lye being the ‘bucket capital of the world’, why the advent of the motor car is lined with a Lye doctor and consider if the Suffragette movement started in Lye. The tour also includes graves and memorials to men lost fighting in the First and Second World Wars.

The tour is based on a new Heritage Trail being developed by local historians Jean Weston and Marlene Price and their books ‘The Lye and Wollescote Cemetery Chapels: A Victorian Cemetery and it’s Notable Burials’ and ‘The Lost Twenty Nine’.

The tour is free and starts at 11am on Sunday 3rd May from Cemetery Road, Lye, and is being led by the project’s community facilitator Carolyn Healy.

For more information contact Carolyn by email Carolyn@redkitenetwork.co.uk or call 07805 489296.

End

Notes to editors:

More about this project

More information about this exciting project for the Lye & Wollescote Cemetery Chapels building can be found at the project website www.lyeandwollescote.info

To find out more about the wider Lye & Wollescote Cemetery Chapels project please contact David Trevis-Smith, Project Organiser: email david@dts-solutions.co.uk or phone 07711 601560

About the West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust

The West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust (WMHBT) is a registered charity, established in 1985, with specialists in the field of building conservation giving their time on a voluntary basis to serve as Trustees and funds coming from membership subscriptions. WMHBT's purpose is to safeguard buildings within the West Midlands that are of historical or architectural importance. Where this cannot be achieved by simply raising awareness to the issues, WMHBT will consider carrying out a conservation project itself. As a registered Building Preservation Trust, WMHBT is able to attract grants and low-cost loans to carry out the type of rescue scheme often necessary with 'Buildings at Risk' and in this way aims to cover the deficit in funding such projects.

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in safeguarding historic buildings. WMHBT organises a range of activities, focused on the West Midlands, which include a regular newsletter; specialist talks, events and visits to historic buildings; arranging public access (as appropriate) to buildings before, during and after repair; commissioning and publishing research into historic buildings; encouraging the involvement of schools and colleges in conservation projects; and disseminating information.

The first WMHBT project was 19-20 High Street, Kinver, South Staffordshire, a timber-frame building listed grade II. In the Staffordshire volume of 'The Buildings of England' series, the late Nikolaus Pevsner states that in Kinver High Street the best houses are numbers 17-20. To have lost an important building within that range would have been a tragedy, but when the WMHBT took the building over it was in a dangerous condition,

with parts close to collapse. By that stage no-one was prepared to take up the arrears of maintenance because it would have cost more than the market value to put it right. As a result of the WMHBT project, 19-20 High Street has been transformed into a comfortable four-bedroom home and is now occupied by new owners. The high standards of the work were recognised by two awards: "The Carpenters' Award" presented by English Heritage in recognition of "the sensitivity of approach and excellence of craftsmanship"; and a "mention" by the Civic Trust for its "worthy contribution to the community".

The second WMHBT project was the grade II listed office building built as a living showcase by the former Harris & Pearson Company, firebrick manufacturers, in Brettell Lane, Brierley Hill, West Midlands. The building had been unoccupied for 13 years and was in a derelict state when acquired by WMHBT, with the costs of repair again being in excess of market value. The building was converted for modern-day use as prestigious offices and materials produced to interpret the associated heritage stories (see www.harrisandpearson.info). The project was a regional finalist in the RICS Awards, a national finalist in the Brick Awards, and was awarded a Civic Trust awards "commendation".

Both of the above projects were made possible by tremendous local community and local authority support and financial assistance from several sources, including primarily the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Architectural Heritage Fund.

About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) aims to make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities across the UK and help build a resilient heritage economy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported almost 35,000 projects with more than £5.3bn across the UK. www.hlf.org.uk.