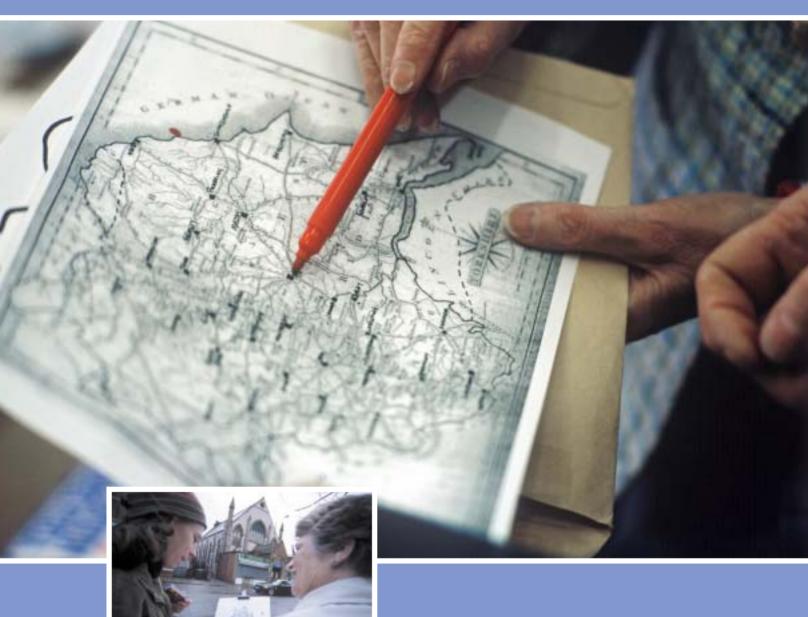
Whose Heritage is it Anyway?



Community Engagement in Heritage Management

The Castleford Conference 2005

Whose Heritage is it Anyway?

was a conference held in Castleford, West Yorkshire . .

on March 11th and 12th 2005 . . . but it was more than just a conference, it was a quiet revolution.

Castleford was the natural choice of location. It is not always seen as a 'historic town' in the traditional sense, but has nevertheless brilliantly grasped the potential for using heritage as the key to its regeneration.

The aim of the Conference was to show how positive engagement in and management of the historic environment can be achieved when communities and heritage professionals work together.

It was organised by a successful partnership of different regional agencies. Led by the **Council for British Archaeology** and funded by an **English Heritage** Regional Capacity Building Grant, the other partners were the **Yorkshire Museums Libraries and Archives Council**, **The Countryside Agency** and the **Local Heritage Initiative**. This report celebrates the significance of the Conference.

Heritage Management Issues

food for thought . . .

The message from the delegates to the heritage professionals was quite clear: sustainable heritage management should include the views, values and aspirations of local communities. Local Distinctiveness and Pride of Place are defined by communities; heritage assets are one of the key elements used by communities to shape images and values of their place. Sustainable management can be best achieved by harnessing these values and the enthusiastic inclusion of local people.

Over the two days of the conference the delegates explored the best ways to make this work in practice. The key messages can be summarised as follows:

The Need for Facilitators: A facilitator can work miracles in negotiating between the community and the heritage professionals: they can be expert, collaborative and diplomatic, seeing both sides and representing one to the other in the ultimate interest of the heritage itself.

Understanding Local Values: The relevance of a place is more than its Listed or Scheduled structures or features, environments or species: it is about the meanings local people attach to it.

Legitimising Local Values: A Statement of Significance for a Heritage asset should include all the intangible elements of local views of the place: stories, beliefs, ideas, traditions, oral history. This makes it into a tool that can be used to manage the asset in partnership with the community.

Sustainable Partnerships: It is not sustainable or justifiable for heritage professionals to manage every detail of every location themselves; what works is to collaborate with the local community in drawing up locally relevant, supported and inclusive management structures. The community then plays a vital part in recognising, defining, conserving and managing its own heritage.



On *Day One*, compere Kevin Cale introduced the purposes of the Conference:

'to explore what we actually mean by those commonly used 'fluffy' terms - Community and Heritage'

'to develop an idea of Yorkshire - our idea'

'to provide English
Heritage with the context
of all the monuments
and structures so that
they can make decisions'



'to get a holistic vision of how the different aspects of Heritage can work together - which is the key message of the Conference'.

Alison Drake, from hosts Castleford Heritage Group, welcomed delegates and urged people to get involved in their own place . . .

'I want you to be as enthusiastic as I am and our members are. We love it. We care about who we are and what our roots are.'

Starting the debate, Dawn Shelford from the Local Heritage Initiative demonstrated the *Importance of Community Heritage* by giving a checklist of the *Good Community History Project*:



An Organic Analogy . . .

"If the Conference were a fruit or vegetable what would it be . . ?"

"A pomegranate - lots of little seeds that get stuck with you . . .". "A pink grapefruit - something with a 'tingle' factor". "An onion - the base for all sorts of interesting things". "Celeriac - I really want to use it but I haven't got the recipe . . .". "A bunch of grapes - take as many bits as you want". "A good meat and potato pie - with plenty of meat in it!".

'it provides opportunities for people to get involved' it is flexible'

'it values local knowledge and 'hidden history' using techniques such as Oral History'

'it gives people a chance to learn new skills'

'it generates and harnesses enthusiasm'

'it is accessible to all, both in the making or finding of the history and in its end products - book, exhibition, play or event.'

She listed some of the great Yorkshire projects LHI has funded: they all show the characteristics listed above. Projects are useful because 'They really equip people to make a start' in Community History.

'We're valuing the heritage that people in the community want to celebrate and explore'.

Laurajane Smith, from York University's Archaeology Department, in a thoughtful and contemplative presentation, delved into Oral History. Drawing on her oral history work with Waanyi Women's History Project in Australia as well as with the Castleford Oral Heritage Programme, she examined the idea of Oral History as the 'passing on of place'.

Oral history, which has grown massively in popularity

since the Second World War, despite having been snubbed by some historians, is about memory being used to 'make sense of place'.

It is also about 'understanding emotional experiences and exploring history, rather than historical fact'.

Heritage is too often defined solely by physical objects - artefacts, buildings, structures, sites. These are how we define our national heritage identity.



But this leaves out the whole context of meaning and creates a 'second class' heritage of all the things which don't fall into these categories, such as legends, stories, oral memories, songs, etc.

'By itself, Stonehenge is just a collection of rocks in a field. What makes it mean something is the values people attach to it'.

UNESCO defines heritage as including beliefs, songs, traditions and kinship patterns as well as the physical.

Creating a 'Statement of Significance' that includes all these intangible things allows us to really get at the meaning of a place to its local community.

'Heritage cannot exist outside of people's presences and memories'.



Charles Jones from Fulford Battlefield Group gave a fast and fun presentation on What do community groups need - namely:

People - young and old! 'It's amazing how many lapsed archaeologists there are out there'. People are essential for achieving anything: you **must** involve them.

Organisation - people like to be organised, given specific tasks that bring out the best in them and give them variety.

Time - groups should be aware how time consuming it is to fill in funding applications, organise events, wait for the right expert to be available.

" We're not like **Time Team**, we don't have to rush in, dig a hole and make up a story . . . Do be kind to yourselves - it does take a lot of time to organise these things.

Support - from the official bodies such as English Heritage, English Nature, LHI, Heritage Lottery Fund, Countryside Agency, the Universities. Funding can be daunting to achieve with its complex forms and procedures.

Expertise - Groups need expertise just as much as funding, although 'Don't let the experts make all the decisions, however wonderful they are.'

Enthusiasm and Imagination - part of the People

"The only problem with the conference was that I couldn't sleep on Friday night for all the ideas whizzing round in my head!"

equation, which is why they are the most important thing. 'We need bags of confidence, bags of determination and a certain amount of bloodymindedness.'

Finally, Emma Waterton, also from York University Archaeology Department, demonstrated the huge value of a facilitator in making heritage management work. She used her work as facilitator with the Cawood Heritage Group to send some strong messages about the power and effectiveness of managing heritage sites in partnership with the community.

As a facilitator she can help to draw up key management documents for a heritage site which have the support and involvement of the local community and are therefore all the more likely to be successful.

Cawood is profiled as a case study on page 11.





Day Two reinforced the power of the facilitator role, looked further at what is meant by 'Local' and, in the absorbing Workshops, gave delegates ideas and techniques to take away.

Lorna Hey from Castleford Heritage Group spoke inspiringly on What a facilitator does.

The Heritage Group was formed in 2000 to work towards a new museum and library. A Feasibility Study recommended a *Community Facilitator* post. This was subsequently funded as a one year contract to which Lorna was appointed.

During her year, Lorna consulted and met 13 other organisations, organised or was involved in 35 different events, including the week-long *Heritage Festival*, attended 11 official events on behalf of the group, worked with 19 other organisations, supported 6 other community groups and wrote 8 funding applications!

Such a powerhouse of energy was too good to lose and Lorna's post was funded for a further two years.

She is quite clear about how it works: 'I am the employee of the group and I am their tool. I don't tell the group what to do - I develop their ideas and help them deliver.

I am not here to run the group and it's important that the group are not totally dependent upon me - funding for a worker will probably always be relatively short-term.'

However enthusiastic and hardworking a group's members, it is this extra capacity represented by a support worker that makes such activity possible.

Lorna warns 'Don't forget that a worker generates work', but concludes that 'With the right team the possibilities are endless'.

Finally Keith Emerick's keynote presentation on The importance of Local Distinctiveness sent delegates off to workshops with inspiring ideas of what the whole event was about.

Keith described the traditional tension between local and 'proper' historians that leads to the downgrading of all the things which make up the sense of a place. Local Distinctiveness has too often been left 'at the bottom of the value league table'. It is under threat from academic attitudes but also from the globalisation of heritage, in which nations compete to nominate places to be of international status. Such status depends upon success in a league table in which the purely local gets overlooked.

But 'local provides those things we need . . . the commonplace is extremely vital, for communities. Supporting the local is the only way to fully enhance and sustain the national'.

Keith gave an example of local distinctiveness in the village of *Sheriff Hutton*. When an 'expert' arrives, local people first show them all their Listed, Scheduled and categorised structures. When asked what makes their village special to them, however, they show the headstone of William Sharrow, whose son was staff sergeant to General Custer, and fought and died at the Battle of Little Big Horn. The story and its international connections are as important as the physical object in this case. The presentation ended with a rallying cry - how to preserve local distinctiveness?



- Demand participation, a voice, a say . .
- Use the examples from the workshops and from this conference . .
- Imagine something not being there . .
- Re-invent 'the Statement of Significance' and, above all .
- Be adventurous, be demanding and be responsible for your own heritage.



Lyz Turner - Seaside Radio.

Lyz's first programme for Seaside Radio was a community history one - "It made me wish that I had talked to my late father about his memories; farming people have such creativity, such skills and are so wide-ranging."

Lyz's job now is to "offer leadership, enthusiasm and getting lots of different projects going! Our project Village Voices has kick-started other work across our 6 villages: people lend photos, do interviews, then get trained themselves in recording and sound editing. There is huge enthusiasm from the community. We have some inspiring volunteers and are cascading all the training we do. I also write all the fundraising applications!"

To Lyz, community history really matters because "Everybody's got a story! There is multi-generational benefit, people listening to each other. We aren't a culture that respects our elders; we should. The project really helps communication between people."

She wants flexibility from heritage funders. "It's essential. We also really appreciate support with applications and not wasting time on ineligible applications!"

Michael Holdsworth - Wakefield Museums and Pontefract Heritage Group.

Michael took part in his first oral history project at the tender age of 10 and went on his first dig at 13! Hooked, he eventually became a weekend assistant at Pontefract Castle. Michael loved "the link with the people, the physical contact with history . . . I wanted to spread my enthusiasm to others."

In Wakefield Museums Michael is part of the front of house team, which meets visitors. Michael relishes using his knowledge to answer local history enquiries. He works hard in Pontefract Heritage Group to promote and develop the Castle as part of the town's regeneration.

To him, this is important because "It inspires people to do their own research. There's a feeling of loss of local identity to a bigger town: each town needs its group to give it back its sense of identity, because people can relate to their own heritage. It's really important to provide that resource for the public."

He wants heritage professionals to give "clear guidance" and be "more approachable" as well as "increased accountability from funding bodies."

"The Conference has been good because it has brought the community groups together with the professionals."

Louisa Matthews - sites and Monuments Record, Sheffield.

Louisa is a new arrival in Yorkshire. "Just by walking around, to the shops, the bus stop or the park, has meant I've been discovering the local history of my neighbourhood." She's impressed by one of Sheffield's best surviving timber-framed buildings, the Bishops House, as well as by industrial buildings like the umbrella factory near her house.

Louisa's job is to maintain the South Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record that holds information on archaeological sites and finds in the county. She works with local societies, giving talks and answering any questions people have regarding the historic environment.

"One of the reasons I believe community history is important is because the people who come to me for information think it is important. People often take a very personal interest in the things around them. Without them the historic environment would lose a level of meaning that is often not seen by academics or heritage professionals".

The message she has for herself and for other heritage professionals, is based on "Two things I have learned be ready for surprises, and never under-estimate the value of local knowledge".



Andrew Boyce - Architect and Bishop Wilton History Group

Andrew admits to "a natural curiosity, an interest in the built and natural environment and an interest in social history and social connections." When his next-door neighbours set up a local history group in the village, he joined, keen to preserve "the important aspects of the history of the locality, no matter how seemingly insignificant they are."

He attends group meetings and events, provides articles for the group's local history journal, and is building up a library of local history publications. For Andrew, it's important to "ensure some of the history of the village, in whatever aspect or form, remains to be enjoyed and to stimulate future generations."

Being able to understand local history means that he can communicate to others both locally and in the wider community, just how much it matters.

He hopes that other heritage professionals, will remember "that the local, the next-door, the small, the recent are just as important in heritage terms as the regional and national; the regional and national heritage flows from the local and small and not the other way round".

Greta Sharkey and Marguerite Harvey

- Castleford Heritage Group.

Greta and Marguerite know exactly what got them started in community heritage

"Meeting Alison! [Drake – Chair of Castleford Heritage Group] We're both from mining families, in the town for generations. We remember Castleford as a thriving market town and we saw it going down – there was no pride in the place and we had to get it back. Alison called a meeting and it was packed – people queued up to join."

Both work flat out on the huge annual Heritage Festival. Greta organises the schools' event, involving 1,000 children in all sorts of heritage activities. "I start in January, getting letters out to all the schools". Marguerite feels that "by getting together you can make things happen. The Group has given a boost to other community groups in the town".

Why do they do it? . . . " I had a lad of eight who didn't know what a lump of coal is . . . "

"Heritage matters because children matter. You need to show children what people have achieved in Castleford in the past ... about the mines and the potteries ... that we had clever people who worked hard."

They get great support from English Heritage "They're as keen as us – they lift us. We do need the beautiful buildings but we also need the professionals to give us time and energy."



Betty Halse - Levisham, North Yorkshire

Arriving in North Yorkshire from Nottinghamshire, history teachers Betty and her late husband set up a local history group, just as "a jolly activity for one winter." It took off, resulting in a local history exhibition.

Betty then wrote and published a history of Levisham and helped her Group create a computerised Village Archive at the Village Hall. Betty works with Kevin Cale, a community archaeologist, to keep the Group going. They have another exhibition pending and members researching different subjects. Betty raises grants for its work.

"The community is changing; a few years ago village history was common knowledge. Today people come from all over the place and the thing that binds them together is the place. The finding out brings people together. It gives them a sense of perspective about the past, stops kneejerk responses, gives us a perspective on our own lives."

Ideally heritage professionals, would "all be like Kevin! What we need is help and support, help with ICT, and sympathy with communities, no snobbery about expertise.

Finally, when you're giving money, don't just look at the project, ask who will manage it? There needs to be someone who knows it is their role."



The Great Yorkshire Map

- led by Neil Redfern

The *Great Yorkshire Map* is a giant illustrated map of the county based on JL Carr's 'Historical Map of Yorkshire', and produced at the Conference in less than five hours. The map shows the images and tells the stories of the places that mean most to the delegates.



It is a permanent record of the Conference but it also has lots of potential — as a website, touring exhibition, publication, and an activity for any community anywhere. It creates

a multi-layered Statement of Significance in a striking visual form.

Over the sessions, other people add to the places featured and the Book of Statements that accompanies the Map. As the Map becomes fuller, photographs, models, drawings and stories about the places shown add to its layers of meaning.



It can be used as a schools activity, made as a collage or textile piece; it can be used to focus just on one town, district or parish. The act of collectively recording heritage and appreciating different significance is what matters.

How to do it

Define the area you want to focus on by using blank printouts of the map. Agree the geographical boundaries. People then mark on the printout the place they have chosen. They also write a 'Statement of Significance' on a separate sheet - a few sentences about why the place is special to them. The individual maps are combined onto one map, which is overhead projected onto a giant piece of fabric like a sheet. The outline is then drawn onto the sheet, using tailor's chalk and pen, and the places added. Photos and illustrations of the stories and places are pinned on as well.



Developing an audience for Yorkshire's Heritage

- Nina Baptiste

Who 'does' community heritage — and who doesn't? The point of this workshop was to get people thinking about their own groups and experiences of community history. By the end of the Conference the groups collectively produced an Audience Development Plan template to help make sure that in future the Heritage really is everyone's. A Plan is also a requirement of Heritage Lottery Fund bids!

How to do it – the template When undertaking an Audience Development Plan you need to:

- 1. Look at your existing users find out why they use your service or join your group and find out how you can make this better.
- 2. Look at people and groups in your area who do not use or join you. Find out why and find out what would make them do so.

When working with audiences you need to:

- ▲ be clear about your aims and objectives
- record everything that you do
- identify the audience
- have a meaningful and fun project title
- identify a project manager to lead the project
- ▲ develop a clear project team
- identify staff and their roles and responsibilities
- identify an accessible location
- identify a suitable space in which to work
- ▲ identify convenient times for the project to happen
- establish a steering group to develop the work
- identify the budget including 'in-kind' contributions
- ▲ identify the equipment, both perishable & specialist
- obtain funding, identify resources, identify training
- ▲ identify and inform stakeholders
- ▲ develop a marketing plan
- deliver the project!
- ▲ undertake evaluation and ensure sustainability
- Planning is essential for success!
- be exciting and interesting and FUN this is leisure time!



Creating an A-Z of Yorkshire - Jane Walton

Taking the idea of an A-Z gazetteer, the Workshop produced an illustrated folder of Yorkshire place names from A to Z, each with images and comments on significance. Like the Great Yorkshire Map, it is a cumulative statement about a place, but also allows for stories, poems, quotations, smells, ideas, tastes which define the place. So liquorice, cricket, curry, toffee, parkin, Fred Truman, moors and mills all featured heavily, alongside actual place names and landscape features.



How to do it

On large sheets with an alphabet letter at the top, people wrote the place or cultural feature which began with that letter and which summarised Yorkshire for them. Over succeeding workshops, these were illustrated with pictures drawn or cut from magazines, and short sentences of explanation were added to the original words. Finally, the sheets were all combined into an alphabetical folder, with an introductory poem written by the talented workshop leader!

Now and Then: a Photographic Record of Castleford

- David Fanaroff

Using old photographs of Castleford, this workshop got participants to understand the content of an old photo, what factors may have influenced the photographer, how a photo relates to a map and how a modern photo can provide equally useful evidence of social context.



How to do it

A selection of old photos of the town was compared first with a map of the same date to 'locate' each image. Participants discussed the context of the photos: why street shots were taken, what sounds and smells are missing (horses – and manure! street cries, barrel organs, machinery, wheeled vehicles, etc), what they tell us about the scene and its historical context. Then participants took single use cameras with them and walked around the town, identifying the location of each old photo using the photo alone, and taking a modern view from the same angle and recording sounds and smells. These were then co-ordinated with the old images to give a portrait of change over time.



Talking of the past: Oral History

- Dawn Shelford



Oral history is a source of fascination for lots of local heritage groups: this workshop explored how a successful project is put together, what oral history actually tells us and how it can be used as one of the important tools of community history.

How to do it

Participants explored how to plan a project, what questions to use and how to plan an interview, what equipment to use and the practical experience of transcription of recording versus the merits of summaries. Inevitably with many participants having experience in this area, a fascinating debate emerged about the importance of oral history itself as a research tool. At times, people got immense pleasure and valuable experience from just interviewing other people in the group!





Cawood, North Yorkshire

Cawood is a village with an astonishing medieval survival at its heart. Nowadays this consists of a magnificent *Banqueting Hall* and the green open space that was the *Garth* or enclosed courtyard of the Castle.



The site is so significant to the villagers that when it was threatened by development some years ago they got together and bought it through the Parish Council. The site is now managed through a village steering group.

Problems began when the villagers wanted to use the Garth as a public space - they had difficulty getting permission even to bang in a tent peg for the tea tent!

English Heritage decided to involve a facilitator, Emma Waterton, from York University.

This enabled the community to start to have its say with the heritage professionals. Emma worked with the village to set up a good working partnership with English Heritage, The Council for British Archaeology, English Nature, and local metal detectorists.

Community activists Margaret Squires, Jane Dursley and Margaret Brearly say that involving Emma has "moved us forward in leaps and bounds".

Emma is clear that she works on behalf of the group, but they feel that her professional expertise, contacts and knowledge of networks have been crucial to support their enthusiasm.

A flowering of community activity has been the result: from *Mole Hill Days* excavating the molehills on the Garth, to *community history research audits* - and of course a *big summer event*.

Most significantly, the team are now drawing up a collective management agreement which will eventually state the total significance of the site - historical, environmental and archeological as

> well as social - and allow the community to take a major role in managing their own heritage in the future.

> Margaret, Jane, Emma and Margaret have a clear message to the heritage professionals: putting in a facilitator and working together "allows us to go forward . . . people want to know, use and understand what they have . . . it changes your whole view of what something is and what it means".



The A-Z of Yorkshire Poem

A is for Abbeys, Byland is one **C** is for Castleford, **D** flows the Don; **E** is for E mmerdale. Fame in the Dales **G** is for God's Own, **H**ull never pales; I is for Ikley with moor and baht'at **J** is for Jorvik, we'll fancy that; **K** is for Kippers, lovely to eat, **L** is for Liquorice - a Pontefract treat; **M** is for Museums, Maypoles and Mills, **N** is for Nidderdale, all sheep and hills; O Glorious Yorkshire, this county so grand, Its People, its Places, its Pride in the land; Queer are the folk, quiet the places, Ryedale and Ripley, wide open Spaces; T is for Tea, always the better When **U** make it with Yorkshire Wetter; V is for Vikings and Vampires of old W Is for Windmills, Wakefield and Wold; Y Is for Yorkshire, the best place to be A land full of history from A to Zee.

