

# HERITAGE COUNTS 2012

## WEST MIDLANDS

Heritage Counts 2012 is the eleventh annual survey of the state of England's historic environment. It is prepared by English Heritage on behalf of the West Midlands Historic Environment Forum. This year the theme for Heritage Counts is resilience in the historic environment. Visitors to the Heritage Counts website can download the complete research projects commissioned to support this year's report and access the full set of local statistics and maps detailing the historic environment for the West Midlands. This includes asset data, funding information, employment numbers and visitor figures. Many of these indicators were first reported in 2002, so this year also marks ten years of Heritage Counts indicators. Further analysis has been carried out on some of the key indicators to identify changes and trends in the last ten years.

## HERITAGE AND RESILIENCE

This year, Heritage Counts focuses on resilience: the ability of heritage organisations to cope with issues that affect them. Although prompted by the current economic climate, the research found that the resilience evident in the organisations studied predates the current difficulties, suggesting that resilient organisations have a long history of change and adaptation. The research identified barriers to resilience which might make it difficult for organisations to adapt to a changing climate. It looks at a sample of heritage organisations that have adapted in a range of ways, and identifies how these changes can be applied across other organisations in the sector. Please see the national Heritage Counts 2012 report for more detail.

[www.heritagecounts.org.uk](http://www.heritagecounts.org.uk)

### Birmingham Conservation Trust

Founded in 1978, the Birmingham Conservation Trust (BCT) has been responsible for a number of conservation projects, most notably the "Back-to-Backs" – a row of workers' terrace houses that is now a popular National Trust property in central Birmingham. With one full-time employee, the BCT focuses on derelict properties seen by commercial developers as too difficult to deal with. A current project is the rescue of the Newman Brothers Coffin Fitting Works building in the city's historic Jewellery Quarter.

Having identified Newman Brothers as a possible project, the BCT conducted a feasibility study and assessed the possible commercial use of the building. This led to the site being acquired by the former regional development agency, Advantage West Midlands (AWM) in 2003. The prospect that space could be used for business premises was considered particularly appealing, as was the potential for parts of the site to operate as a heritage attraction.

The extensive historic contents and archive which had survived intact, were catalogued, planning consent was granted and work began on a bid for Heritage Lottery Fund support. By 2009, this bid was nearing completion when AWM withdrew funding in the wake of the first round of funding cuts.

The BCT worked with Birmingham City Council, the Jewellery Quarter Development Trust, the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage

[www.birminghamconservationtrust.org](http://www.birminghamconservationtrust.org)

*The Tin Box Theatre Company performing at Newman Brothers in 2011. © Tin Box*

to come up with a revised plan – in less than six months. This plan incorporated the repair of the building, its opening as a visitor attraction and the use of some space for offices for the BCT itself. Having an office onsite will enable the BCT to undertake more education and outreach work, and create a dedicated volunteer base. Already, the Coffin Works have been used for community theatre performances and events associated with Heritage Open Days.



## Understanding the Assets

[www.heritagecounts.org.uk](http://www.heritagecounts.org.uk) provides a comprehensive set of statistics on the historic environment in the West Midlands. Key changes and trends are highlighted below.

	2003	2012
World Heritage Sites	1	2
Scheduled Monuments	1407	1418
Listed Buildings Grade I	600	616
Listed Buildings Grade II*	2119	2148
Listed Buildings Grade II	31124	31491
Registered Parks and Gardens	145	150
Registered Battlefields	6	6
Conservation Areas	731	775
Designated Collections	n/a	22
Accredited Museums	n/a	146

## Caring and Sharing

Grant-aid continues to be a vital support for individuals and organisations caring for the historic environment in the West Midlands. This year, the Heritage Lottery Fund made grants worth £16.5m bringing the total support since 1994/95 to £356.2m for 3,659 projects. Since 2005, Natural England has provided £10m for environmental stewardship schemes including £63,331 for historic building restoration; £2m for historic and archaeological feature protection; and £1.8m for the maintenance of traditional farm buildings. And, in 2011/12 English Heritage paid £2.3m in grants (£1.1m for historic buildings, monuments and designed landscapes; £257,500 on conservation area schemes, £637,414 for places of worship and £224,600 on other grants including capacity building).

Staffing in local authorities continues to fall, slipping from 92 in 2011 to 90 in 2012. Private sector employment in the heritage sector has risen, however, and may reflect the value of money heritage

Area	Listed Buildings Grade I	Listed Buildings Grade II*	Listed Buildings Grade II	Scheduled Monuments	Registered Parks & Gardens	Conservation Areas
Shropshire	129	538	7006	463	32	129
Staffordshire	78	341	4617	279	20	166
Worcestershire	107	322	5923	172	15	137
Warwickshire	112	353	5521	177	31	138
Herefordshire	127	356	5406	263	23	64
West Midlands (Met County)	63	222	2839	64	29	141

*Note: the sub-regional totals may include some building or monuments which go over local authority boundaries. Therefore these cannot be added up to find the regional total*

attractions offer for those ‘holidaying at home’. In 2010, the Historic Houses Association reported member properties employed 1,749 permanent staff, up from 519 in 2008. The number of seasonal staff had fallen from 499 to 309 over the same period, although this is more than compensated for by the increase in ongoing jobs.

Planning applications fell by 1% from 35,710 in 2010/11 to 35,264 in 2011/12 – after the increase noted in Heritage Counts 2011. Similarly, listed building consents dropped by 1% since last year, from 2,209 to 2,198.

## Using and Benefiting

As noted above, holidaying at home has continued to prove popular and has benefitted the historic environment. Visits to English Heritage properties in the West Midlands rose by 7% compared to 2010/11, to a total of 331,862 in 2011/12. 338 Heritage Open Day events were held in the region in 2011, up from 314 in 2010. Visits to ‘Renaissance hub’ museums remained steady at 2.3m.

Volunteering continues to rise with the National Trust counting on 4,062 individual volunteers, and 386 people in groups. Between them, they provide 7,268 hours of voluntary work per week across the West Midlands.

*Visitor numbers in the West Midlands remained strong in 2011/12. Here, schoolchildren try out an Anderson shelter at Weston Park, winners of the Sandford Award for heritage education for the third time in 2012. © Weston Park Foundation*



## Resilience: West Midlands Waterways Partnership

The transition of British Waterways from a Government agency to the Canal & River Trust presented a number of challenges, one of which was to establish a new way of working in partnership with local communities. Consequently, a number of Waterways Partnerships – mostly based on geographical areas but with one dedicated to museums and attractions – have been formed.

The volunteer-led Partnerships aim to help shape plans for each area, guide the Trust's decisions about spending and help develop local engagement and fund-raising plans while championing the interests of the waterways. Membership is made up of a range of people representing boaters, walkers, cyclists and anglers as well as those with experience in volunteering, fundraising, environment, heritage and community engagement. In this way, the Partnership has been able to harness the enthusiasm and expertise that exists in local communities. Each Partnership's Chair has a seat on the Trust's Council.

To date, the West Midlands Waterways Partnership has established working

relationships with pre-existing schemes including:

- a number of regeneration and improvement schemes with Birmingham City Council;
- founding a student volunteer programme along the Stourbridge Town Arm with Stourbridge College;
- devolving a number of maintenance activities, including vegetation clearance and tidying of the Titford Arm, to a volunteer group – the Birmingham Canal Navigations Society;
- facilitating the 'adoption' of the Farmers Bridge Flight of the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal – including litter collection, painting and general tidying up – by HSBC Bank;
- the provision of more than 4,000 working days by Staffordshire & West Mercia Probation Services, for undertaking community "payback" schemes including lock painting, litter collection and small-scale vegetation removal;
- developing and implementing a number of canal-side improvements including towpath repairs in Brierley Hill and Fens Pool, in partnership with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council;

- improving the towpaths on the Dudley Canal thanks to a project involving the Dudley Canal Trust, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Groundwork West Midlands and the Heritage Lottery Fund;
- establishing cleanup projects in specific, canal-side 'grot spots' with Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.

[www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/noticeboards/west-midlands-waterways](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/noticeboards/west-midlands-waterways)

*Canals and Rivers Trust staff and volunteers on the Birmingham and Fazeley canal.*  
© Canal & River Trust



*The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscape Project has contributed to the historic environment characterisation of the region.* © West Midlands Historic Environment Forum



## Ten Years of Heritage Counts – Changes Affecting the Historic Environment in the West Midlands

Since Heritage Counts was first published ten years ago, the local historic environment is better understood and enjoyed by more people. While fewer heritage assets are classified as being at risk, the number of expert staff caring for the historic environment has declined substantially.

In 2002, less than a third of the West Midlands had been mapped for historic landscape characterisation. Now, 98% of the region has been mapped and this has provided the vital information necessary

for the sector to understand and protect the historic environment appropriately. The accessibility of the 13 Historic Environment Records covering the West Midlands has also increased, rising from three being online in 2008 to nine in 2012.

With greater understanding comes greater enjoyment and more people are involved in heritage than ever before. In the West Midlands, the percentage of adults participating in the historic environment improved significantly from 66% in 2005/06 to 72% in 2011/12. Between 2006 and 2012, membership of English Heritage rose by 41% to 73,000 and the number of National Trust volunteers has gone up by 34% to 4,448.

Continued effort from across the sector has helped to reduce risks to heritage assets. In 2002, 155 grade I & II\* buildings (or 5.2% of all grade I & II\* buildings) were deemed at risk. In 2012, 102 (or 3.7%) of grade I & II\* buildings are at risk. In 2012 alone a net total of 16 buildings were removed from the Heritage at Risk Register, coming a year after 18 scheduled monuments were similarly removed. These successes are due to a number of factors including the strategic use of management agreements and partnership working between owners, English Heritage and Natural England. Since its inception, the Heritage at Risk register has been expanded to incorporate a widening range of assets including conservation areas and places

of worship. Now, there are plans to include grade II listed buildings on the register, for the first time.

While there has been success in tackling risk factors for heritage assets, the reduction in staffing – particularly in local authorities – has caused special concern given local authorities are responsible for the protection of the overwhelming majority of the historic environment. The numbers of staff working in conservation and archaeology in the West Midlands rose from 113 effective full-time posts in 2003 to a peak of 130 in 2006, before declining dramatically. Today, there are 90 posts – of which 45 work on conservation and 45 on archaeology – representing a decline of 31% of since 2006.

During the same period, listed building and conservation area consents rose and then fell to a low in 2009/10. Since then, however, they have remained relatively steady – but at a time when staffing levels have continued to fall. There is a risk that local authorities will be left without sufficient staff to deal with existing and future workloads. Planning applications have fallen by 30% since 2002/03 and, while this indicates less new construction is taking place, it is likely that many owners and developers are looking to make alterations to existing, listed property – thus the role of historic environment staff is more crucial than ever.

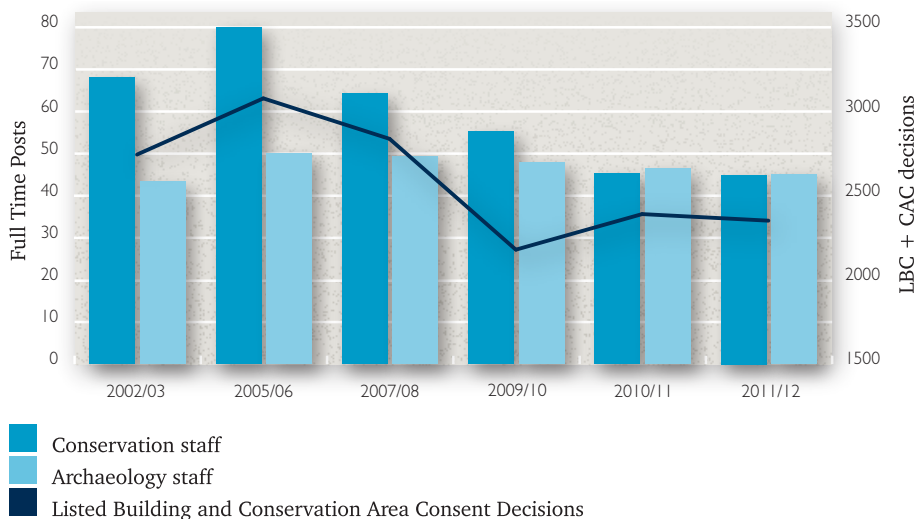


The formerly 'At Risk' Astley Castle, Nuneaton is now a Landmark Trust holiday let. © Copyright Landmark Trust

Heritage Counts 2012 has been produced by English Heritage on behalf of the West Midlands Historic Environment Forum:

Association of Local Government, Archaeological Officers, Association of Preservation Trusts, Birmingham Museums Trust, Canal & River Trust, Campaign to Protect Rural England, Churches Conservation Trust, Council for British Archaeology, Country Land & Business Association, English Heritage, Forestry Commission, Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Houses Association, Institute of Field Archaeology, Institute of Historic Building Conservation, Ironbridge Institute, National Trust, Natural England, West Midlands Amenity Societies Association.

## Local Authority Staff/Workload Comparison in the West Midlands



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