The Industrial Heritage Support Officer Project

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About The Industrial Heritage Support Officer Project

- England wide

- Funded via English Heritage’s Heritage at Risk programme until September 2015

- Managed by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust (IGMT) and supported by key partners the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) and the Association for Industrial Archaeology (AIA)

- The project is directed by a Steering Group consisting of Sir Neil Cossons, English Heritage, AIM, AIA, IGMT, The European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH), The Prince’s Regeneration Trust and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)

- Delivers and facilitates support including advice, mentoring, training, developing local networks, developing regional/national funding bids, developing new partnerships
Supporting Industrial Heritage: Background

• Around 650 publicly accessible industrial heritage sites in the UK

• A pressing concern that many industrial heritage sites are operating on an increasingly unsustainable basis

• Key resources such as visitors, grant aid and volunteers seem to be getting harder to attract and retain

• Industrial heritage sites typically extensive, big and complex historic buildings, additional issues include caring for and operating historic machinery

• Particular pressures on sites wholly or partly run by smaller charitable trusts and volunteers

• Potentially bad consequences for the future of nationally and internationally important industrial heritage
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Delivery:

- Information ‘clearing house’
- Training
- Mentoring
- Developing national funding bids
- Developing new partnerships within and beyond the sector
- Advocacy and celebration of best practice
- Monitoring key industrial site indicators (via project database)
Example: Advisory ‘Clearing House’

Churchill Forge, Worcestershire
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• Important 18\textsuperscript{th}/19\textsuperscript{th} century water operated forge, Scheduled Monument and EH identified Heritage at Risk site. Owned by local family who operated the forge commercially, run by local trust (all trustees now 70 plus), occasional opening days.

• Trustees approached IHSO for advice on how to take the care and management of the site forward (some uneasiness at potential imposition of paper work/formal procedure).

• IHSO facilitated and attended advisory visits with EH staff to review immediate repair issues, EH now initiating a Section 17 Management Agreement to facilitate routine care/consent, identified suitable specialist contractors.

• Working with the Trustees to get additional professional support (developing CMP, visitor access proposals etc.) via an Architectural Heritage Fund ‘Cold Spots’ grant application.

• Linking Churchill into other networks (such as the IMechE partnership) to help take forward trust development and recruitment.
Example: National Partnerships

Partnership with the Institution of Mechanical Engineers

• Partnership in place between the Institution of Mechanical Engineers and the IHSO project (supported by Memorandum of Understanding).

• The Institution is the fastest growing professional engineering institution in the UK with 100,000 members – runs the prestigious engineering heritage awards.

• Jointly running a series of events around the country to connect the Institution’s members to local industrial heritage groups.

• Matching up members of the Institution with industrial heritage groups to help plug skills gaps and provide informed advisory/mentoring support.

• Working to use the ‘clout’ of the Institution to address issues such as the cost of insurance for industrial heritage groups.

• Supporting local network development, and potential to collaborate on a national funding bid linking the professional and heritage engineering sectors.
Example: Network Development

North West England Industrial Heritage Network

- Working with Museum Development Officers in the North West to set up a network of industrial heritage groups (based on the East Anglian ‘Heritage Engineering Network’).

- With Museum Development Officer project seed funding, running a programme of three day long events in 2014 (May, July, October) to develop the network.

- Each day to be hosted by an industrial heritage site/group and will include professional training session (themes including volunteering, Health and Safety and marketing), a site tour (drawing issues, problems and best practice experience), and the opportunity for informal networking.

- Process will explore the potential to sustain the network beyond the 2014 events, and look at possibilities for future development including collective marketing and funding bids.

- Linking with other existing initiatives including IHSO/English Heritage support for stationary steam engine groups in the North West.
Example: Local Training Support

Training delivery via European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH)

• Collaborating with ERIH UK to deliver local training/networking days.

• Days focused on regional ERIH networks, and target industrial heritage groups around the country.

• Each day targeted on identified theme, with specialist professional speaker/facilitator.

• Days delivered so far include Fundraising for Industrial Heritage Groups/Developing an HLF Landscape project (Heartlands, Cornwall), Volunteering for Industrial Heritage Groups (Royal Gunpowder Works, Waltham Abbey), and Health and Safety/Historic Machinery (Kew Bridge Engines, Middlesex).

• Additionally helps to support the existing ERIH network as well as facilitate local networking and information exchange.
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Some achievements to date:

• 58 groups supported with range of advice ranging from fundraising, to practical historic building management, re-locating a museum and volunteer development.

• Bespoke training delivered to 58 organisations around the country (topics including fundraising, marketing, volunteering etc.).

• Range of regional and national partnership and funding projects in the pipeline (e.g. with the Conservation Volunteers to support volunteering on industrial heritage sites).

• Supporting network development in the North West, Hampshire and the West Midlands.

• Supporting and reinforcing existing networks (e.g. ERIH, AIA).

• Partnership set up with the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

• Overall, the IHSO project model is working.
Supporting Industrial Heritage: Pressing Issues?

- Skills support, development and transfer?
- Health and Safety/Competence?
- Governance?
- Insurance (‘We exist to pay the insurance’)?
- Marketing?
- Coping with changing funding and volunteering environment?
- Best practice heritage management, including conservation planning?
- Responding to sites under threat (development, local authority transfer etc.)?
- Overall, what support do you need?
Supporting Industrial Heritage: Opportunities?

• Regional/thematic support networks – a good model which works, is popular with groups, and is a cost effective way to build capacity, draw down funding through partnership, and improve standards and sustainability in common areas of difficulty.

• ‘Giving the sector clout’ (e.g. combined approach to reducing insurance costs).

• Developing partnerships/collaboration beyond established sectors (e.g. linking industrial heritage and professional volunteering sector, or industrial heritage groups and wider volunteering and social enterprise initiatives which share many common aspects) – also has novelty and potential in a highly competitive fundraising environment.

• Continue with the simple support processes – for many groups and sites a small amount of relatively straightforward help will go a long way.
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