

Read about all latest news and what opportunities are available through the Dukesfield Smelters and carriers project this autumn.

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Dukesfield Smelters and Carriers Project

Bulletin 1: September 2013

Welcome to the very first newsletter of the Dukesfield Smelters and Carriers Project. This is where you can read about past activities and how to get involved in up and coming activities.

Over the next two years there will be lots of opportunities to work alongside artists, archivists, archaeologists and architects to learn more about the smelters and carriers and to conserve the magnificent arches at Dukesfield, Hexhamshire.



The Arches are located close to NE46 1SG, between Slaley and Whitley Chapel to the south of Hexham. They are the physical remains of the 17th and 18th Century hub of the North East's thriving lead and silver industry, and in addition to the fascinating



Did you see us at Slaley Show?

The line of pack ponies leading to our exhibition and competition entries tempted hundreds of people to take time out from the traditional attractions at Slaley show.

Lots of local visitors and people who had travelled from Newcastle and Gateshead were equally intrigued by the fascinating images and details about the lead industry. Those who knew the site as their quiet tranquil playground 50 years ago or who had enjoyed quiet pony treks past the hidden arches more recently, were amazed to see and hear more of its

historic records that survive, are the stimuli for this project.

Art and Craft Classes at Slaley Show

The Dukesfield tent was also the place to see the entries into new show classes based on the arches and carriers routes. There were some very high standards of craftsmanship displayed. Get thinking for next year now!

Who does what?

The project sprung from the enthusiasm and hard work of a handful of local people who now make up the steering group and lead many of the activities.

Joining this team of dedicated volunteers who have succeeded in securing a Heritage Lottery grant to make all this possible is a small project team consisting of a part time Project Manager, Volunteer Events Co-ordinator, Marketing Officer and Designer. But it is you the volunteer that will help bring the project to life.

Inspiring Stones

On June 15th amateur artists from all over the Tyne Valley gathered at Dukesfield Arches for a day's outdoor sketching and painting. This was the culmination of two weeks of activity in which groups of local artists and individual painters worked at the site. The place's sense of remoteness, contrasting with its evidently busy industrial past, inspired an exciting variety of artistic approaches, from

industrial past.

Volunteer Opportunity

Reading The Past - archive work

If you have ever wanted to find out more about the history of your local area by examining old records but not known how to go about it, then this project is for you.

From late September you can learn new heritage skills with expert help and play a part in researching the history of the important Dukesfield smelt mill and the web of carriers routes linking it with mines and markets throughout the region.

We will be visiting local archives and with expert advice make use of the surviving letters, accounts and other records to build up a picture of the industry and the people whose livelihood depended on it from the 17th to the 19th century. The transcripts that we make of these records will be of huge importance to the project and future research. To register your interest or just find out more please contact Greg Finch at

gregpfinch@hotmail.com

impressionistic landscapes to detailed architectural 'reconstruction' of the 18th century scene. In subsequent studio sessions two of the groups worked up their sketches into finished paintings, some of which appeared in the Dukesfield competition classes at the recent Slaley Show.

More than 40 artists participated in the activity. They will be invited to an indoor session later in the year to compare artistic approaches and finished work.

Get involved

There are many ways to get involved which may use your existing skills or help you to learn new ones.

Opportunities range from practical site work to researching the history of the carriers routes and the people that were associated with them. You can get creative through drama, art and even cookery events. Or just enjoy the restored natural beauty of the lead routes by helping design walking and cycling routes or even joining a carriers pony trek.

Volunteer Opportunity

Calling all budding Archaeologists

Would-be archaeologists are invited to learn from professional excavators & historical mining specialists. After the last dig volunteer Rob Beardsley said "My first foray into archaeology sadly didn't include crystal skulls or running from giant rolling balls, but was a hugely satisfying day. I'm not sure if I was digging a chimney or flue but apparently that makes me as puzzled as the experts!"



Being inspired!

Share your skills with us

We're always looking for more people to share in leading activities or helping out with on-going tasks such as website management or reporting on events. If you think you could help please get in touch.

Diary dates

- Heritage Consolidation Ltd (Gary Simpson) on site: 9th September– 15th November
- Archaeology Volunteer Days: 16th – 22nd September
- Soft Capping Training: Wednesday 25th September (*fully booked*)
- Lead Carriers Way Evening Talk : Monday 30th September Allendale Village hall, 7,30pm
- Lime Slaking and Mortaring training: Wednesday 2nd October (*fully booked*)

Site days are Monday 16th September to Sunday 22nd September 2013, starting at 10 am. Volunteer for just one day or more; stay for a couple of hours or bring a packed lunch and stay all day. Taking part is free, but booking is essential, and you can do this by emailing Pete Jackson p.jackson@ntlworld.com or telephoning him on 07718385646

- ‘People, Places and Packhorse Ways, new findings on the Shire lead industry’: project talk, Whitley Chapel Parish Hall: Friday 4th October 7.30pm (£5)
- Open Meeting: Wednesday 16th October, Whitley Chapel Parish Hall, 7pm

More detail about finds from this dig and the exciting discoveries from the earlier digs will be featured in future bulletins'

Contact us

Use the links below to find out more about the project and keep up with the latest news. Click on the email icon to register your interest in any opportunity and Mandy Roberts will contact you with exact details.



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The Dukesfield Smelters and Carriers Project, is led by the Friends of the North Pennines in partnership with Hexhamshire and Slaley Parish Councils and has the active support of the landowner, Allendale Estates. It is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the generous support of other sponsors. Friends of the North Pennines: Charity No:1137467

