

# News



English Historic  
Towns Forum

ENGLISH HISTORIC TOWNS FORUM  
for prosperity and conservation in historic towns

JULY 2005

## 'Transportation & the historic public realm'

Congestion and traffic management will be the key concern of this year's Annual Conference to be held in Oxford on October 19 – 21.

The programme will include:

- Park & Ride – examples of 'added value'
- Innovative alternatives to the car
- Retail / transport linkage
- Congestion charging
- Legibility
- Quality car parking
- Urban design issues
- The role of public realm strategies & masterplanning
- and more - illustrated by walking tours and, with a full programme of networking opportunities, including the conference dinner.



The Annual General Meeting will be held on 19 October and any motions for the agenda or proposals for the Executive Committee should be sent to the Bristol office by 21 September. Further information and online booking will shortly be available on the website at: [www.ehtf.org.uk/events.asp](http://www.ehtf.org.uk/events.asp), we will also circulate brochures to all Members.

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## WANTED: Best Practice in the Public Realm

In 2003 the Forum published a document 'Focus on the Public Realm' which highlighted the disparity between the controls on works to buildings and the myriad of actors looking after the spaces between them.

The document launched a major strand of work for the Forum concentrating on the many aspects of the streets and squares of our historic towns and cities. The Forum is now seeking to publish good practice notes on various aspects of the public realm, such as surface materials, street furniture, advertising 'A-Boards', co-ordination of designs through strategies and public art. If you know of examples of good (and perhaps bad) practice which might be included in good practice guidance then we would like to hear from you.

We need good quality photos (min 300 dpi digital images or photographic prints or slides) a description of where the example is and why it is good (or bad). The information is needed by the end of July in order that the good practice guidance can be put together before the end of the year.

We are also looking for people to sit on a time-limited project group to compile the guidance notes. The Focus on the Public Realm document was prepared by a small group over the course of 2 days and it is intended that the guidance notes should be produced in the same way.

If you can submit information, are interested in joining the Project Group, or would like to nominate someone in your organisation to join the Project Group, please contact Ian Poole, EHTF Chair and Planning Policy and Information Manager, St Edmundsbury Borough Council, on 01284 757350. Alternatively, you may email him at [ian.poole@stedsbcc.gov.uk](mailto:ian.poole@stedsbcc.gov.uk)



Are A-Boards taking over your streets?



Have you got good examples of how litter bins are looked after and emptied?



Do your signs have a local identity or are they the same as any found elsewhere?

Please Circulate this newsletter among your colleagues

EHTF is supported by

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### EHTF Strategic Planning

The Chair, Director and Treasurer of EHTF met on 17 June to begin plans for the bi-annual Strategy Meeting which will take place early in 2006. Traditionally, Members have been invited to participate in this event to help formulate the policies and plan the strategies for the next two years.

Members will be contacted later this year to collect information which will feed into the event in order to maximise its effectiveness.

We are currently looking for a suitable London venue. Details of the meeting, which will be free of charge, will be made available as soon as this is secured.



### New Members

We would like to welcome the following new members to EHTF, please add their details to your directory:

#### Horsham District Council

Mr Tony Stevens  
Head of Property & Design Services  
Park North, North Street, Horsham  
West Sussex RH12 1RL  
Tel: 01403 215486 Fax: 01403 215418

#### Ms Bernadette Oakenfull

Student, 27 Jubilee Cottages, High Halstow  
Kent, ME3 8SQ

#### Oxford Bus Company

Mr Nigel Eggleton, Commercial Director,  
Cowley House, Watlington Road,  
Oxford OX4 6GA  
Tel: 01865 785405 Fax: 01865 711745

#### Pop Up Power Supplies Ltd

Mr Michael Brown, Managing Director,  
PO Box 1447, Ilford, Essex IG2 6GT  
Tel: 020 8551 8363 Fax: 020 8220 8838

#### South Bedfordshire District Council

Ms Eleanor Ward,  
Building Conservation Officer, Local Plans  
The District Offices, High Street North,  
Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 1LF  
Tel: 01582 472222

#### University of Lincoln

Mr David Mullaney  
Director of Estates and Facilities,  
Services Building, Campus Way,  
Brayford Pool, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN6 7TS  
Tel: 01522 886052 Fax: 01522 886795

## Using heritage and cultural assets in regeneration

GATESHEAD & NEWCASTLE 8 & 9 June 2005

It's "no longer grim up north" was the quote from the Guardian article on the Lonely Planet Guide chosen by Ben Cowell of English Heritage to open the recent conference held in Gateshead and Newcastle. This was amply demonstrated during the event attended by over 80 delegates from as far as Cornwall and Northern Ireland.

The regeneration achieved by the towns which face each other across the Tyne was explained and explored by many of the people who actually carried out the work. Understanding the character of the place - its heritage and culture, as well as topography and social history, were all important in creating places which are now vibrant and moving forward with increased momentum and local pride.



John Devlin, at the Welcome Reception held in the Gateshead Visitor Centre

Local politicians welcomed delegates and spoke of their pride in their towns and officers from both Councils - who have overcome old animosities - explained how the schemes and projects had been brought to fruition.



Delegates on tour: The Sage, Gateshead



Grainger Town, Newcastle upon Tyne

As well as Ben from English Heritage, representatives from CABE and HEART helped delegates to see the 'big picture' and how best practice from regeneration programmes across Europe are being shared. From Northern Ireland, the ongoing process of regeneration in Belfast offered yet another perspective.

Transport links, public art and industrial heritage have all played a large part in the recent renaissance of the Tyne quayside area, giving it an international profile with award winning schemes like Grainger Town and The Sage, Gateshead.



State of the art new Quayside Transit Bus

As always we were delighted with the quality of speakers who give their time for EHTF events and the hospitality of the host towns. Copies of the powerpoint presentations are available from the EHTF office.

A full report of this event is available online at: [www.ehtf.org.uk/admin/getfile.asp?ID=76](http://www.ehtf.org.uk/admin/getfile.asp?ID=76)

Chris Winter, Director,  
EHTF

### Soap Box session planned for Annual Conference

As a new addition to the format of the Annual Conference this year, Members will be invited to submit a short paper on the subject of the Conference to be considered for presentation on 20 October. Submissions will be judged on their ability to make a concise, pertinent point on the topic and to generate discussion and provoke lateral thinking. Authors of the two winning papers will receive a free place at the Annual Conference and an opportunity to present their paper as a power point presentation.

Details and specifications will be notified with the Conference programme which will be available next month.

## Heritage Open Days 2005 - Discover Secret Norwich

The Heritage Economic and Regeneration Trust (HEART) has been successful in securing the launch of Heritage Open Days (HODs) 2005 for Norwich. The event, which takes place between 8 & 11 September, is the largest, free, voluntary heritage initiative in the country.

The launch reception will take place at Norwich Cathedral's award winning Refectory on 1 September.

Guest speakers will include:

- Nigel Burton, Chair of the Civic Trust
- Simon Thurley, Chief Executive, English Heritage
- Bill Bryson, Author, HEART Patron and English Heritage Commissioner
- as well as representatives of the Cathedral, the city authorities, heritage organisations and HEART.

### The Events

HEART's HODs Team have put together an event of truly national stature which we believe will represent the biggest Heritage Open Days event in the UK. HEART believes that Norwich has a heritage resource of truly international importance and this year aims to deliver one of the most diverse and enjoyable Heritage Open Days in the UK. The Trust and its partner organisations are eager to bring undiscovered buildings and heritage stories to local people.

So far, 130 activities have been confirmed and HODs 2005 is seeking to achieve the broadest possible appeal, ranging from opening more unusual heritage structures like the football ground, the recently listed University of East Anglia and the Theatre, providing activities for young people and animating open buildings with concerts, exhibitions, art and lectures.

Events include:

- 'unusual' or rare access to the City's two Cathedrals and 32 medieval city churches - the largest collection in Northern Europe, probably all open for the first time in a century or more.

- Non-conformist buildings like the Octagon Unitarian Chapel – John Wesley thought it 'the most elegant in Europe'
- The Old Meeting House Congregationalist Church
- The Friends' Meeting House
- The Rosary Cemetery – Britain's first non-denominational cemetery.

Norwich has the largest collection of medieval undercrofts in the UK, but most are not usually open to the public, some will be made available during HODs.

Other examples of 'underground Norwich' include:

- Crypt of the Norwich Whitefriars
- a Norman house beneath the City Law Courts
- the basement of a shop showing a perfect example of life below stairs during the early part of the last century.
- possibly the last surviving representative of the hundreds of shoe workshops for which Norwich was once famous.

The event has been taken up enthusiastically by local retailers, who will be commemorating well known local stores through a series of heritage window displays.

There will also be an insight into lost pubs and breweries in a series of exhibitions, to be held within pubs themselves. 'Modern heritage' will include the recently listed UEA campus and the Forum complex, as well as sympathetic changes of use like the Whitefriars, St Catherine's House and Willow Lane Chapel office developments.

Contact: Sophie Cabot on 01603 212234 or email [sophiecabot@norwich.gov.uk](mailto:sophiecabot@norwich.gov.uk)

**Portfolio Holder: Michael Loveday**  
Norwich Heritage Economic & Regeneration Trust



Crypt at Norwich Whitefriars

## Focus on... Tourism

Tourists love historic towns, but is the feeling mutual? Whatever the answer, and it varies from place to place, it's a relationship that the EHTF cannot ignore.

The Tourism Group is taking the lead in drawing up a policy statement for the Forum. It will be for everyone with an interest in historic towns and it aims to encourage a balanced, sensitive and integrated approach towards the UK's sixth largest industry.

The Director and four Members of the Tourism Group spent two days in bracing Morecambe at the end of May putting together an outline of the statement.

It will cover:

- Guiding principles
- The value of tourism
- Tourism products in historic towns
- Tourism and the built environment
- Transport planning
- Communications and information
- The stakeholders and disciplines involved
- Research and monitoring
- Key conclusions

Case studies, some background statistics and details of information sources will also be included.

The statement should be launched at the Annual Conference in October.

The Tourism Group will welcome comments on the proposed content of the statement and suggestions for examples of good practice in managing tourism in historic towns. Contact Brian Human at: [brian.human@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:brian.human@cambridge.gov.uk)

## Insights in Sight

Users of the invaluable Insights publication from VisitBritain (that ceased production in 2004) will be pleased to know that it is back. Insights Online is a continuation of the Insights series which was produced between 1989 and 2004. The portal contains all Insights reports published since July 2000 and these are available electronically either as individual items, sector-related compilations or complete volumes.

New content will be made available on the website from Summer 2005 see [insights.org.uk](http://insights.org.uk)

**Portfolio Holder: Brian Human**  
Cambridge City Council

To find out about PLB's services for historic towns, see [www.plbtd.com](http://www.plbtd.com) or give us a call on: 01653 698 309



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## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PORTFOLIO

### National Trust Practice



Ickworth House, Suffolk:  
visitors are encouraged to use bicycles

The National Trust has published a report 'Tourism: Policy from Practice' that has much in common with the approach being developed by the Forum.

Drawing on its own experience it stresses the importance of tourism to the economy, the value of distinctiveness and

local identity and the importance of more sustainable approaches to visitors' modes of travel, including the introduction of visitor travel plans for new or expanded attractions.

See the report at: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/policy/documents](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/policy/documents)

### PPG 21 Replacement: Planning for Tourism Guide

The replacement good practice guidance for planning and tourism is now being finalised by the ODP. A draft has been circulated to Tourism Alliance members for consultation. It covers national planning guidance and tourism, planning for tourism at the regional level, planning for tourism at the local level, strengthening the economy, tourism and communities, protecting and enhancing the environment, tourism locations and transport, and development control and tourism. A draft for publication will be prepared in early July. The intention is that this will be submitted to Ministers recommending that it is published and that PPG21 is cancelled.

Contact Brigid Simmonds on 020 8780 2377 for details.

*Portfolio Holder: Brian Human  
Cambridge City Council*

## TRANSPORT & TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

### Park & Ride 2005

#### 'Diversifying usage and creating quality schemes'

Park and Ride is a familiar feature now of many of our historic towns. But does it 'work', how do we measure success, and how do we get more people to use it? EHTF were invited by Landor Conferences to participate in this conference at Glaziers Hall, beside London Bridge, which reviewed recent developments in Park and Ride.

The content was stimulating and controversial from the outset, and attracted considerable media interest. Paul Hamblin from the CPRE re-stated the CPRE's longstanding concerns about loss of greenfield sites to Park and Ride, and argued that Park and Ride could generate more, rather than fewer car trips. Graham Parkhurst from the University of the West of England shared research which showed that Park and Ride services reduce traffic in urban areas.

Schemes in Shrewsbury and York achieved the greatest reductions in urban traffic. Effective marketing was seen as crucial to the success of Park and Ride, with examples from Cambridge and a very entertaining and challenging presentation from Ray Stenning the self styled 'supermodel' head of a cutting edge design agency. Park and Ride issues will again be to the fore at the planned EHTF Annual Conference in Oxford.

*Portfolio Holder: Rob Surl  
Shropshire County Council*

## View from The Chair

At the last meeting of the Forum Executive Committee I had to report the reluctant resignation of Nigel Davies of Christchurch Borough Council. Nigel has been struggling to attend meetings and personal circumstances now leave him with little option but to withdraw from his positions with both the Forum and the Royal Town Planning Institute to concentrate on the health of his family and himself. We wish Nigel and his family well and look forward to seeing him at future Forum conferences.

Nigel's resignation leaves a position on the Executive which we will be seeking to fill at the AGM in October. If you represent a member town and are interested in joining the Executive please give me a call on 01284 757350 or email me at: [ian.poole@stedsbc.gov.uk](mailto:ian.poole@stedsbc.gov.uk)

## Slovenian Return Tour

Return study tour proposed for Eastern European colleagues. Following the very successful study tour of Slovenia by a delegation from EHTF last year, a draft programme for a return visit in early September has been sent to the Secretary of the Association of Historic Towns of Slovenia for their consideration.

It is proposed that the programme will include an opportunity for EHTF members to attend a half day symposium to discuss shared issues and exchange information with the visitors.

It is possible that the invitation will also be extended to colleagues in Finland, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

## Feature Town: Lancaster



Midland Hotel, Morecambe

The area between Lancaster Castle and St George's Quay, one of Lancaster's most historic and attractive areas, is the focus of a new draft Management Plan which sets out how the area could be improved over the next 15 years or so. The purpose of the plan is to restore the historic setting of the Castle and Priory, improve links between this area and the Quayside and thus encourage greater use of the area by residents and visitors. This is reflected in the Council's vision for

the area as "the vibrant heart of the city, a place for everyone to enjoy". Work has started on the Midland Hotel in Morecambe following its purchase last year by the company Urban Splash. The first phase of the £7million project got underway in May. The hotel's famous art deco works and features will be covered up and protected to ensure no damage befalls them in the complex restoration process. The hotel is due to be fully open by Summer 2007. Lancaster City has been short listed within the Northwest Development Agency's 'Historic Towns and Cities Status', which aims to identify towns with the heritage asset.

*Mark McTigue & Jim Trotman  
Lancaster City Council*

Do you represent a Full Member organisation? To feature your town in 'NEWS', please send a short article (150 words) and an image (300 dpi, tif) by email to [ehft@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:ehft@uwe.ac.uk)