

# West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust

## Media Release



Supported by

**The National Lottery**<sup>®</sup>  
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



## Friends help to uncover Titanic link at Lye and Wollescote Cemetery

Two members of the Friends of Lye and Wollescote Cemetery and Chapels spent Saturday morning clearing ivy and holly that was starting to cover a grave that links Lye to the Titanic disaster. The Friends are a new group whose aim is to help maintain the cemetery for remembrance, local history, wildlife and as a valuable open space for local people.

The cemetery contains lots of Victorian graves that are no longer tended by family members and some of these are becoming overgrown with ivy and holly. The Friends Group is looking to uncover these graves, many of which have fascinating stories of the people of Lye's past, but more help is needed.

The Haywood family grave commemorates Frank Haywood who died on 22nd April 1904 when he was just 17 years old. Frank jumped overboard from the ship 'Boadicea' which set sail from Dunkerque heading for New York. It was Frank's first voyage and he was homesick and suffered from seasickness and bullying. Frank's tragic story is told in letters from one of Frank's shipmates, James Moody. Eight

years later, James was Sixth Officer on the bridge of the Titanic, taking the call from the lookout that there was an iceberg ahead. James saved the lives of many people that night but sadly went down with the 'unsinkable' ship.

Establishing the Friends is part of a project by the West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust to refurbish the Chapels building at the Lye & Wollescote Cemetery and is being made possible thanks to grant funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

In just two hours, the volunteers filled twelve garden sacks with weeds and pine needles. More volunteers could make a huge difference to the cemetery. The Friends are meeting again to uncover more graves on Saturday 1st August at 10am until 12 noon and need local people to come along and help out. Contact Carolyn Healy on 07805 489296 for more details.

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Pictures –

1. Friends group member, Simon Trehearne removing holly trees.
2. The Haywood family grave before work started
3. The Haywood family grave when the friends have finishes.

***Notes to editors:***

**More about this project**

More information about this exciting project for the Lye & Wollescote Cemetery Chapels building can be found at the project website [www.lyeandwollescote.info](http://www.lyeandwollescote.info)

To find out more about the wider Lye & Wollescote Cemetery Chapels project please contact David Trevis-Smith, Project Organiser: email [david@dts-solutions.co.uk](mailto:david@dts-solutions.co.uk) or phone 07711 601560

### **About the West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust**

The West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust (WMHBT) is a registered charity, established in 1985, with specialists in the field of building conservation giving their time on a voluntary basis to serve as Trustees and funds coming from membership subscriptions. WMHBT's purpose is to safeguard buildings within the West Midlands that are of historical or architectural importance. Where this cannot be achieved by simply raising awareness to the issues, WMHBT will consider carrying out a conservation project itself. As a registered Building Preservation Trust, WMHBT is able to attract grants and low-cost loans to carry out the type of rescue scheme often necessary with 'Buildings at Risk' and in this way aims to cover the deficit in funding such projects.

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in safeguarding historic buildings. WMHBT organises a range of activities, focused on the West Midlands, which include a regular newsletter; specialist talks, events and visits to historic buildings; arranging public access (as appropriate) to buildings before, during and after repair; commissioning and publishing research into historic buildings; encouraging the involvement of schools and colleges in conservation projects; and disseminating information.

The first WMHBT project was 19-20 High Street, Kinver, South Staffordshire, a timber-frame building listed grade II. In the Staffordshire volume of 'The Buildings of England' series, the late Nikolaus Pevsner states that in Kinver High Street the best houses are numbers 17-20. To have lost an important building within that range would have been a tragedy, but when the WMHBT took the building over it was in a dangerous condition, with parts close to collapse. By that stage no-one was prepared to take up the arrears of maintenance because it would have cost more than the market value to put it right. As a result of the WMHBT project, 19-20 High Street has been transformed into a comfortable four-bedroom home and is now occupied by new owners. The high standards of the work were recognised by two awards: "The Carpenters' Award" presented by English Heritage in recognition of "the sensitivity of approach and excellence of craftsmanship"; and a "mention" by the Civic Trust for its "worthy contribution to the community".

The second WMHBT project was the grade II listed office building built as a living showcase by the former Harris & Pearson Company, firebrick manufacturers, in Brettell Lane, Brierley Hill, West Midlands. The building had been unoccupied for 13 years and was in a derelict state when acquired by WMHBT, with the costs of repair again being in excess of market value. The building was converted for modern-day use as prestigious offices and materials produced to interpret the associated

heritage stories (see [www.harrisandpearson.info](http://www.harrisandpearson.info)). The project was a regional finalist in the RICS Awards, a national finalist in the Brick Awards, and was awarded a Civic Trust awards “commendation”.

Both of the above projects were made possible by tremendous local community and local authority support and financial assistance from several sources, including primarily the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Architectural Heritage Fund.

### **About the Heritage Lottery Fund**

From the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife, we use National Lottery players' money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about. [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk) @heritagelottery