

West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust

Media Release



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War Graves Walk

Sunday 16th August, 2pm to 3.30pm.

Within Lye and Wollescote Cemetery there are a number of Commonwealth War Graves where men who died in both world wars are buried and commemorated.

To mark VJ day, which was the final end of the Second World War, the Friends of Lye and Wollescote Cemetery and Chapels are holding a guided walk to discover more about the brave men who fought and died all over the world and are remembered in the cemetery. The walk, on Sunday 16th August, will be led by local historians Jean Weston, Marlene Price and Ray Griffiths.

Ray is himself a veteran of the Second World War and fought alongside Cedric Holdnall, who was killed in action at Teutoburger Wald in Germany during the last weeks of the war in Europe. He was just 18 years old and the youngest of the men from Lye to lose their lives during the war. Cedric is buried in Hanover War Cemetery and his parents were laid to rest in Lye and Wollescote Cemetery where Ray still tends their grave in honour of his friend.

Those joining the walk will also hear about a family's five year search for a lieutenant missing on the Somme during the First World War, and the terrible events of the of 31st March 1944 when the RAF suffered their worst night of the Second World War losing 545 men including Sergeant Kendrick of Lye.

Some of the soldiers are buried in the cemetery, others were buried abroad or their bodies never found and instead are remembered on family graves. Jean, Marlene and Ray have painstakingly researched the lives of these men and will share their stories during the one and a half hour walk which starts at 2pm from the Springfield Road entrance.

For more information contact Carolyn by email Carolyn@redkitenetwork.co.uk or call 07805 489296.

This event 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 and other charitable sources.

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Notes to editors:

To find out more please contact:

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More information about the exciting project for the Lye & Wollescote Cemetery Chapels building can be found at the project website www.lyeandwollescote.info

Supporting information such as photographs and artists impressions are available on request.

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). 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

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. www.hlf.org.uk @heritagelottery @HLFWestMids