

# HERITAGE COUNTS 2015 LONDON

*Heritage Counts 2015* is the fourteenth annual survey of the state of England's historic environment. This Regional Report is prepared by Historic England on behalf of the London Historic Environment Forum. This year, the theme for Heritage Counts is caring for the local historic environment. Visitors to the Heritage Counts website can

download the complete research projects commissioned to support this year's report and access the full set of local statistics and maps detailing the historic environment for London including asset data, funding information, employment numbers and visitor figures. Please see: [www.heritagecounts.org.uk](http://www.heritagecounts.org.uk) #heritagecounts

## CARING FOR THE LOCAL HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Research commissioned for Heritage Counts 2015 demonstrates that listed building owners see themselves as custodians of history. They feel strongly that their listed buildings are important to the character of the local area and are actively involved in the repair and maintenance of their properties. Similar findings emerge from UK Association of Preservation Trusts research which demonstrates that Building Preservation Trusts show a strong commitment to the future upkeep of buildings in their care. This research also indicates that community involvement with Building Preservation Trust projects is high, through volunteering and involvement in events such as Heritage Open Days. More detailed findings can be found on the **Heritage Counts website**.

Research for Heritage Counts 2015 demonstrates that alongside owners, the government plays an important role by ensuring good legislation is in place to protect our built heritage. Uncertainty about the future funding

of local authorities' services is a concern to the heritage sector, particularly the impact this may have on heritage protection. The effects of cuts to local authority historic environment services can certainly be seen in London. There has been a small, but steady, increase in the number of full time equivalent (FTE) staff working in conservation and archaeology since 2011. However, in real terms, there has been an overall decline of 31% in FTE staff in London since 2006\*. This longer term decrease in staffing levels is in sharp contrast to the levels of Listed Building Consent (LBC) applications received during a similar period. London, bucking the national trend, has seen a continual rise in LBC applications from 2007/8 – 2014/15 of 21%. In terms of planning applications, London, less adversely impacted by the recession, has seen a relatively small decline of 12% in the same period.

\*when data on staffing levels were first collated

## CASE STUDY – BEAUFOY INSTITUTE

In 2013, two charities, Diamond Way Buddhism UK and Diamond Way Teachings and Centres took on an empty Grade II listed building, the Beaufoy Institute, in Lambeth to create a new London Diamond Way Buddhist Centre. The building, previously a school dating from 1907, had been empty since 1999 and is currently on the London Heritage at Risk Register.

The two charities are run entirely by volunteers, who are leading on the restoration project. The volunteers have a variety of skills, from qualified architects, to a stained glass expert, and are using and sharing their skills with other volunteers. Where skills are lacking, or risk of failure is too great, the charities employ external consultants and contractors. Volunteers involved in the restoration project are using the skills and experience gained from working on the Beaufoy Institute in their professional life and sharing their new found skills with others in the UK and abroad.

Restoring the Beaufoy Institute is bringing a new lease of life to the area and the building itself, and ensuring the building once more becomes an active and engaged part of the local community.

[www.buddhism.org.uk/](http://www.buddhism.org.uk/)  
[www.buddhism-london.org/beaufoy-institute](http://www.buddhism-london.org/beaufoy-institute)



**Image:** The Beaufoy Institute, a Grade II listed building on the Heritage at Risk Register, now being restored by its new occupants, Diamond Way Buddhist UK and Diamond Way Teachings and Centres and once again open to the local community. (Diamond Way Buddhist Centre ©)



**Image:** A volunteer working on the restoration of a window at the Beaufoy Institute. (Diamond Way Buddhist Centre ©)

## POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN LONDON

Earlier this year the Chancellor and the Mayor of London announced their six point economic plan for London, setting out steps for London's growth over the next fifteen years. Alongside the development of the London Land Commission, the designation of nine further housing zones and a feasibility study for a new concert hall, a number of proposals involving transport schemes, such as the Old Oak Common redevelopment are to be prioritised. We have already been involved in a number of these schemes, including supporting the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation in developing the evidence base for the area. Continuing the theme of transport, in July the Airports Commission published its recommendation, identifying the third runway at Heathrow as the preferred option. Whilst a final decision has still to be made, all the options have implications for the historic environment and Historic England will continue to provide advice on these.

London's World Heritage Sites came under scrutiny over the summer, at UNESCO's convention in Bonn, in particular the Westminster World Heritage site (the full decision regarding Westminster can be viewed on UNESCO's website: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6342/>). Meanwhile, a State of Conservation Report for the Tower of London is being drafted in preparation for submission to the next World Heritage Committee. We continue to work with all our partners involved in the management of London's World Heritage Sites.

And finally, a full review of the London Plan is underway, which will be further shaped by the election of a new Mayor in May 2016. In September the Outer London Commission undertook a public consultation on the challenges facing London. We actively responded to this consultation, and other discussions with the Mayor on the nature of the review and its implications for the management of London's heritage. Looking to 2016, we will continue to provide active support and valued advice to both Boroughs and the Mayor on the future planning of London, in order to ensure a robust framework is in place for London's historic environment.

## HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS FOR LONDON

London Assets	2015 Totals
World Heritage Sites	4
Scheduled Monuments	158
Listed Buildings Grade I	594
Listed Buildings Grade II*	1,399
Listed Buildings Grade II	16,943
Registered Parks and Gardens	150
Registered Battlefields	1
Protected Ship Wrecks	0
Conservation Areas	1021
Accredited Museums*	134

\*Data provided by Arts Council England

## Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service

The Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) maintains London's Historic Environment Record (the GLHER) and provides archaeological planning advice to the London boroughs (except the City of London and Southwark, who have their own in-house advice). In 2014-15 GLAAS commented on 2378 planning applications and 373 other development related consultations; an increase of 19% on the previous year. In about half of these cases a potential archaeological interest was identified usually triggering further investigation. The GLHER undertook 646 data searches, created 1,757 new records, and enhanced another 1,451. This was with the help of our volunteers and placement students who between them contributed 124 days' worth of work.

### Historic Burial Grounds



**Image:** Excavation of a burial site in the London Borough of Hounslow (Allen Archaeology ©).

Historic burial grounds make a significant contribution to London's historic environment but can be affected by development – which can lead to lengthy and costly archaeological investigations.

To better understand this archaeological resource,

an audit of large historic burial ground excavations was commissioned from Allen Archaeology. It found that since the 1980s 35,000 burials had been archaeologically excavated from 51 London sites dating from the 10th century to the early 20th century. The report is available to download on Historic England's website (<https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/archaeological-audit-and-resource-assessment-of-historic-burial-grounds-greater-london/GLBG-15-Report-PartA-1-2.pdf/>) and will inform planning advice and enhancement of the GLHER.

### Heritage at Risk

A total of 35 historic buildings and sites (including conservation areas) in London have been removed from the 2014 Heritage at Risk Register. However, a further 32 sites have been added to the Register this year. Comparing London to the national Register shows that 80.2% of all commemorative monuments and 57.6% of all public buildings are at risk in our region. For more information on Heritage at Risk in London, please visit: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/>

This Heritage Counts 2015 Regional Report is edited by Rachael McMillan and produced by Historic England on behalf of the London Historic Environment Forum (London HEF). London HEF comprises the following organisations:

Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers; Council for British Archaeology; Canal & River Trust; Diocese of London; Greater London Authority; Heritage Lottery Fund; Heritage of London Trust; Institute of Historic Building Conservation; London Forum of Civic and Amenity Societies, London Parks and Gardens Trust; Museum of London Archaeology; The National Trust; Transport for London; University of Westminster.