

### Happy New Year! Awards time....



Heart of Teesdale's project RiverLAB led by the Tees River Trust received a commendation under the Schools and Colleges category in the 2015 Environment Awards! Another of our projects, Upper Demesnes Hay Meadow Restoration led by Barnard Castle Town Council received a commendation under the Natural Environment category. Fantastic news so well done to both projects!

The Heart of Teesdale itself has been shortlisted at the Teesdale Business Awards in the Community Participation category. We have to wait until 18th February to find out if we have won. Two of our other projects have been shortlisted in the Environmental Achievement category - Birds and Farm Landscapes and Tees Rivers Trust. Fingers crossed!

#### 'A Celebration of Volunteers'

**24 January 2016, St Mary's Parish Church, Barnard Castle**

The Town Mayor of Barnard Castle has issued an invitation to a community celebration to acknowledge the valuable role that volunteers play in the life of the town and its residents, as well as those in the surrounding area of Teesdale.

The event is in two parts: the first part at 10.30am will be a service of celebration held in the Parish Church, Barnard Castle followed by the second part, held in the Parish Hall from 11:30am and is a chance to meet, to share information on your organisation and perhaps encourage more volunteers to join you.

#### Keep up to date with the Heart of Teesdale's activities!

Website: [www.heartofteesdale.net](http://www.heartofteesdale.net)

Like us on Facebook: [facebook.com/heartofteesdale](https://www.facebook.com/heartofteesdale)

Follow us on Twitter: [twitter.com/heartofteesdale](https://twitter.com/heartofteesdale)



#### PROJECT UPDATE:

##### Crafts and Skills in the Community

Just before Christmas, this programme held a workshop to make upcycled Christmas decorations! This was very well attended and felt extremely festive with snow falling throughout the day.

This project has supported a huge number of varied workshops which have been hugely popular. The project has also supported various small extra - curricular activities with schools, nurseries and organisations or groups engaging with children of primary school age. Several of these are still ongoing.



#### Project Update: VIVA

In late November, this project held a public art exhibition of the works produced by a local village art group in Whorlton in response to their local environment. Members of the group took part in a couple of inspirational walks and members of the Darlington and Teesdale Naturalists' Field Club gave a short presentation on the botany of the local woodland. The resulting artwork was put on public display in November. If you would like to do something similar in your community, please contact Karen Collins 03000 260835 [karen.collins@durham.gov.uk](mailto:karen.collins@durham.gov.uk)

## **Please give us your views and help us plan for legacy**

Heritage Lottery Funding for the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership finishes in Autumn 2016 and an independent evaluation is being conducted of what the scheme has achieved for heritage and for people in the area.

Please click on this link [www.surveymonkey.com/r/HeartOfTeesdale](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HeartOfTeesdale) to let us have your views about what the Scheme has - and hasn't - achieved!

### **PROJECT UPDATE: Creative Media**

This project has commissioned the creation of an app which will include trails, maps, information, pictures and audio relating to the Heart of Teesdale area and our projects. This is being produced by Audio Trails who were featured in BBC's Countryfile on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2014 for the development of a similar app for the Gower in South Wales (This is Gower).

### **PROJECT UPDATE: Historic Landscapes**

This project has made improvements to the setting of Egglestone Abbey and the Red Well (not the pub!) in Barnard Castle. Work has starting over the last couple of months to improve the setting of Rokeby Church (adjacent to the A66). The project will also see restoration work to a packhorse bridge at Headlam and new interpretation panels at Winston Church.

### **Barnard Castle Walkers are Welcome**

A group of volunteers from Barnard Castle are looking to gain the prestigious 'Walkers are Welcome' status for Barnard Castle. This is a national accreditation scheme which aims to encourage and support towns and villages to be attractive destinations for walkers with top-quality information on local walks; offer local people and visitors excellent walking opportunities within their areas; ensure that footpaths and facilities for walkers are maintained, improved and well-signposted and to promote the health benefits of walking and increase participation.

The group is still seeking volunteers and will be trying to gather support in signatures so if you are interested and would like to know more please contact Peter Singer on 01833 631142 or email [pandjsinger@btinternet.com](mailto:pandjsinger@btinternet.com). Petitions will be placed in various places across Barnard Castle including the Library/ Customer Access Point.

### **Event: SOCIAL MEDIA CAFÉ with Emma Hignett First Thursday of every month! The Witham 10am-11am**

An opportunity to have your social media queries answered and network with others. Businesses, community groups and individuals all welcome.

### **PRACTICAL CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERING TASK**

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January  
Romaldkirk, meeting by the village green  
10.30am-2.30pm**

Rhododendron bashing- cutting back and burning this invasive species. Please ensure you wear warm waterproof clothing and sturdy footwear. Please note this task involves a 15-minute walk to the site across muddy fields. Please bring a packed lunch and a drink. Gloves and tools will be provided and no previous experience is necessary.

For more information please contact Karen Collins, Volunteering Officer, on 03000 260 835 or email [karen.collins@durham.gov.uk](mailto:karen.collins@durham.gov.uk)

**For more information please contact Alex Sijpesteijn on  
03000 260842 or [alex.sijpesteijn@durham.gov.uk](mailto:alex.sijpesteijn@durham.gov.uk)**



### **PROJECT UPDATE: Paths for all People**

A walking group embraced the giving spirit of Christmas by buying two new gates for the Teesdale Way as part of the 'Donate a Gate' scheme.

The Darlington CHA and HF Rambling Club purchased two gates along the popular route on the Piercebridge side of Gainford.

Thanks to the scheme 45 new gates have now been installed along some of Teesdale's most popular trails by Jay Marrison from 4Nature.

Chairman of the Darlington club, Ian Bagshaw said: "It makes everything much more accessible; if you don't walk so well you don't want to be going over wobbly styles. So it just makes things safer and easier for everybody."

The club (joined by Emma our Paths for All People Officer) used their annual Christmas walk to visit the new gates for themselves and dressed in festive attire for the occasion, stopping off to sing carols along the way.

If you are interested in finding out more about the scheme and would like to donate a gate please contact Emma Ashton-Wickett on 03000 260645 or [emma.ashton@durham.gov.uk](mailto:emma.ashton@durham.gov.uk)



### **PROJECT UPDATE: Environmental Volunteering**

Our volunteers have been working hard over the winter months and have been battling invasive species, managing scrub in key areas and carrying out footpath repairs and improvements (pictured above). If you would like to get involved, please contact us and keep an eye on our events listings. Well done and thank you for all your hard work!