

Tinsley field work with MP Clive Betts

Sheffield has a surprisingly rich natural heritage, and the wildlife of the River Don and giant redwoods of Whinfell Quarry are as much a part of the heritage of the city as Weston Park Museum, Sheffield Cathedral or Abbeydale Industrial Museum.

Sheffield will pilot Yorkshire's Back Garden, a large-scale awareness raising campaign designed to look at the extraordinary natural heritage on offer in Yorkshire, and encourage people to apply for funding to explore their local natural heritage. The campaign is being launched with the Bugs, Birds and Back Gardens event at Weston Park Museum on 22 October.

HLF want to get people talking across the natural heritage sector and encourage grant applications from smaller community groups on a wide range of natural heritage topics, such as citizen science, geodiversity, recording and managing species, and river projects, as well as traditional habitat and species projects.

Drew Bennellick, Head of Landscape and Natural Heritage at HLF, said: "Nature is everywhere but few have knowledge of the vital role nature plays in sustaining our lives. From microscopic beetles, to fungi, bats, bees, birds and mammals, all play a part in running our planet and we can't survive without them. HLF grants offers a great opportunity to fund projects to re-connect people to nature and to explore this fascinating if often hidden world around us."

Through HLF-supported projects, groups in Sheffield have already dug up the foundations of Tinsley Manor, and restored the gardens at Whinfell Quarry.

Whinfell Quarry Gardens

To see impressive giant redwood trees or 200 varieties of alpine plants, the people of Yorkshire can either take a plane to California and the Alps or they can visit Whinfell Quarry Gardens.

Created out of a jungle of overgrown vegetation, the Gardens are now a true testament to the original vision of the steel magnates, the Doncaster family, who wanted to show city dwellers the beauty of exotic and specimen trees from all over the world. The family was later helped in their quest by the renowned horticulturalist and nurseryman, Clarence Elliott and now the Friends of Whinfell Quarry Gardens have brought the gardens back to their former glory with the help of two grants totalling nearly £60,000.

David Jordan, Chair of the Friends, said: "What has given us the confidence to succeed has been the help of the HLF. They've shared our enthusiasm, guided us along the way and helped us with the applications. They've made it as easy as possible for us and we couldn't have done it without them."

Exploring Tinsley Manor

Children from Tinsley Junior School took to archaeology with enthusiasm, some even digging up their back gardens with old spoons, after discovering during local history lessons that a medieval manor house and farm was buried under their classroom. A mix of generations used a £50,000 HLF grant to work together to share memories, research and excavate the remains of the manor and the working farm that replaced it, and learn about the pre-industrial landscape of their community.

Sally Rodgers, Community Heritage Officer, said: "The majority of children in Tinsley School speak English as a second language, many of them have come to Tinsley from all sorts of places in the world, but they all now have this place in common.

“The opportunity to engage in local heritage and to raise awareness by celebrating the unique history on our doorstep has been what this project is all about and we think it is this that’s made such a difference to our community.”

Further information

Felix Gott, HLF press office, on tel: 020 7591 6138 or email: felixg@hlf.org.uk



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'Yorkshire’s Back Garden' campaign flyer

New natural heritage campaign ‘Yorkshire’s Back Garden’ launches