

Winners of Best Craftsman or Apprentice on a Heritage Rescue or Repair Project

The unsung angels of the local heritage sector were celebrated at a special event in Belfast last night.

The first annual Northern Ireland Heritage Angel Awards were held in the Grand Opera House, to celebrate the efforts of local individuals and groups who have worked to save historic buildings and spaces.

The awards were run by the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, and funded by the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation and the Department for Communities, brought together 12 finalists, including a number of HLF-supported projects. There were four categories of award, and all 12 finalists were also eligible for the Northern Ireland Public Vote award.

The event featured the debut performance of material produced by the HLF-supported Buildings of Belfast – Heritage in Song project. The project was conceived by local songwriter Brigid O'Neill, working with the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society and local songwriters including Duke Special, Anthony Toner, Steve McCartney and Gareth Dunlop to compose songs on the heritage theme, raising awareness of the threats and successes of Belfast's historic sites and buildings.

[quote=Paul Mullan, Head of HLF Northern Ireland]"It was wonderful to celebrate our local heritage heroes, and raise awareness of our amazing built heritage and historic streetscapes as part of the first Heritage Angel Awards in Northern Ireland."[/quote]

Head of HLF Northern Ireland Paul Mullan, who presented the prize for the Best Craftsperson or Apprentice on a Heritage Rescue or Repair Project, said: “It was wonderful to celebrate our local heritage heroes, and raise awareness of our amazing built heritage and historic streetscapes as part of the first Heritage Angel Awards in Northern Ireland.

“On behalf of HLF I congratulate all of this year’s winners, and say thank-you to the other unsung heritage heroes – National Lottery players – whose money allows us to put heritage at the heart of creating a better future for everyone in Northern Ireland.”

And the winners are

- Best Rescue of a Historic Building - Bill Wolsey, The Dirty Onion, Belfast
- Best Contribution to a Heritage Project by Young People (25 and under) - Tom Meharg, The Belfast Hills Community Archaeology Dig
- Best Craftsperson or Apprentice on a Heritage Rescue or Repair Project - Chris Balmer, George Irwin and Keiran Loughran, Ballycopeland Windmill Conservation Project
- Best Rescue, Recording or Interpretation of a Historic Place - Bellanaleck Local History Group, A unique experiment: the resettlement of eleven WW1 ex-servicemen of Cleenish Island, Upper Lough Erne
- Northern Ireland Public Vote Award - Sebastian Graham, Mills of Northern Ireland

Congratulations to all the winners and finalists, and particularly to the winning Bellanaleck Local History Group and their HLF-supported project to explore an overlooked part of First World War history.



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The Heritage Hunters are up for an award

Young heritage heroes up for national award