

At work on the North Pennines in the 1930s

With stunning landscapes, incredible coastlines and a wealth of traditions and wildlife, the North East undoubtedly has a rich natural heritage.

Now four projects recently given the go-ahead thanks to National Lottery funding are providing an insight into the work and passion that is needed to not only celebrate it but to protect it for the future.

Heavy horses were once a vital driving force of the Industrial Revolution, and over in Milfield the Heavy Horse Association is determined to not let their contribution be forgotten. As well as preserving rare breeds, the group is also taking an exciting new step towards their future and the ultimate aim of creating a visitor attraction and training centre to ensure rural skills and traditions do not disappear.

Over in Billingham, building skills is also a priority. Under the guidance of Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, youngsters from the Billingham Youth Council will develop key conservation skills as they transform litter-strewn Harrington’s Pond into a haven for wildlife and the local community.

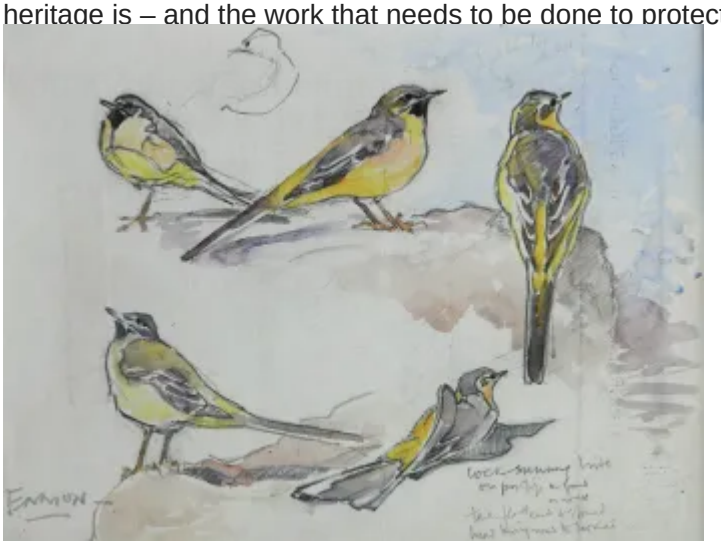
[quote=Ivor Crowther, Head of HLF North East]"These projects demonstrate just how fantastic our natural heritage is – and the work that needs to be done to protect it." [/quote]

From new skills to skills developed over many decades. While the stunning natural heritage of the North Pennines is well known, the time, effort and skill it takes to maintain it is largely overlooked. Now the stories of its farmers,

conservationists and landowners are set to be heard for the very first time, thanks to a project led by the North Pennines AONB Partnership.

Also often overlooked is the work of Eric Ennion, a wildlife artist who made huge contributions to our knowledge of birds in the North East. With a knack of capturing birds' characteristics and movements in his drawings, Ennion lived and worked on the Northumberland during the 1950s – even setting up the Field Centre and Bird Observatory at Monk's House. Now the University of Sunderland is armed with a programme of bird drawing sessions, research and cataloguing plans and handling and identification sessions to spread Ennion's passion and reconnect people to the heritage of our feathered friends.

Ivor Crowther, Head of HLF North East, summarised: "These projects demonstrate just how fantastic our natural heritage is – and the work that needs to be done to protect it."



Eric Ennion's drawing of grey wagtails Estate of E.A.R. Ennion

## Groups take action for future of natural heritage thanks to National Lottery boost