

Evaluation Report

National Heritage Ironwork Group

HLF Skills for the Future Heritage Blacksmiths Bursary

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Contents	page
1 Introduction	3
2 The Heritage Blacksmiths Bursaries Programme	3
Aims Of The Project	
Background To The Project	
What The Project Planned To Do	
What Difference The Project Was Expected To Make	
3 Programme Planning And Delivery	5
Training Plan	
Trainee Recruitment	
Trainee Induction	
College Block Release	
Placements	
Placement Summary Of Feedback	
Assessment	
Mentoring	
Resources	
Finance	
4 Trainee Outcomes	16
Trainee Retention	
Training Awards	
Trainee Feedback	
Trainees One Year On	
5 Programme Achievements	21
Trainees Trained And Transition Into Employment	
Increasing The Diversity Of The Sector	
New Partnerships And Networks	
New Training Programme	
New Training Award	
Trainee Gains	
Heritage Gains	
6 Lessons Learnt	24
NHIG As A Group	
If Doing A Similar Project Again	
7 The Future	27
Advanced Apprenticeship	
Accreditation Feasibility Study	

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1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this evaluation report is to provide the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) with an overview of the Heritage Blacksmith Bursaries training programme run by the National Heritage Ironwork Group (NHIG) as part of the HLF Skills for the future initiative.

The report covers the period between the launch of the programme in 2010 and its completion in October 2013 and builds on the end of month reports submitted to the HLF during this time.

2 HERITAGE BLACKSMITH BURSARIES PROGRAMME

Aims of the Project

The primary aim of the Heritage Blacksmith Bursaries project was to address skills and training needs within the Heritage Ironwork sector. The project therefore set out to;

- Provide work-based training
- Increase the diversity of new people entering the heritage ironwork sector
- Establish and secure delivery partners
- Develop and pioneer a new and sustainable model for progressive learning and assessment in the heritage ironwork sector
- Offer an award to trainees in recognition of specific skills and knowledge gained
- Disseminate good practice
- Raise the general awareness of heritage ironwork and its specialist practitioners

Background to the Project

This project was initiated in 2009 as a direct response to the need for training and standards within the heritage ironwork sector. With no training opportunities or qualification available to the heritage blacksmith their work and skills were under-represented not just in terms of education but also standards against which they could be evaluated. The knock on effect has been that work on heritage ironwork, even that which is listed, is carried out according to no established guidelines, often resulting in irrevocable damage.

Poor quality work is not isolated to blacksmithing alone but is a commonplace among the heritage craft sector as a whole, the seriousness of which initiated the formation of the National Heritage Training Group (NHTG). In 2008 they carried out two 'Skills Needs Analyses of the UK Built Heritage Sector' which highlighted the extensive gaps in knowledge and skills, among many of those who undertake this type of work. Their then Chairman, Mike Moody, said 'This will have a detrimental effect on preserving our traditional building stock and with a lack of suitably knowledgeable younger recruits to replace experienced professionals when they retire these gaps are set to widen. The low numbers of professionals seeking accreditation in the building conservation also needs to be addressed, as professional disciplines need to operate within a framework of common principles designed to protect and conserve the historic built environment.'

For the skilled blacksmith the main barrier to entering a career in the heritage sector is that once the specialist skills, which require hard work and dedication, are attained, result in no commercial advantage as there is no formal recognition of these skills. In fact their skills are often excluded through the tender procedure which works on price as opposed to ability. A number of other heritage craft disciplines address this issue by belonging to accreditation schemes where by members operate within a framework of common principles designed to protect and conserve the historic built environment. Unfortunately with no existing conservation accreditation schemes that includes blacksmiths within their membership, the heritage ironwork sector continues unregulated and works outside the well-established conservation guidelines which other craft disciplines have adopted.

What the Project Planned to Do

The Heritage Blacksmith Bursary was designed as the first advanced training program for blacksmiths working in the British heritage ironwork sector. Its intention was to broaden the skills and experience of blacksmiths involved in historic ironwork repairs by bringing together the best of blacksmithing craft practise and the philosophy and ethics of conservation.

With no existing training opportunities for heritage blacksmiths this project planned to enhance the capacity of the sector to deliver training by developing the first educational pathway. This pathway would be for work based training enhanced with underpinning knowledge delivered via block release to college. With sustainability in mind this pathway would be mapped against National Occupational Standards (NOS) with an assessment process mapped against the National Qualification Framework (NQF) in order to ensure that it was accessible to mainstream education funding.

Further to this the project planned to deliver the training it would develop, to 16 pioneering trainees in order to provide the beginnings of a skilled and experienced cohort of practitioners able not only to work on sensitive ironwork artefacts but also work effectively with fellow professionals in the field.

As an advanced vocational training opportunity this project was aimed at semi-skilled blacksmiths wishing to up skill. The recruitment process therefore would require candidates to supply a detailed portfolio and those selected for interview also needed to complete a practical test. Successful candidates would then be enrolled onto the programme and receive a £15,000 bursary to cover all living, travel and accommodation costs.

Each trainee was expected to complete a twelve month full time training programme. The project was designed to deliver this to two groups of eight trainees over a two year period. Each trainee was to receive their own calendar which was made up of work-based training placements, at both blacksmiths' and conservation workshops, which were separated by five separate college attendance blocks each of one week duration. With the placements being spread nationally and running consecutively the training was expected to require a lot of travel and be intensive but the unique experience also promised to be an exciting and challenging opportunity for the successful trainees.

The training provided trainees with the opportunity to gain the 'NHIG Award for Heritage Skills – Blacksmithing' to demonstrate the skills they have gained. This was awarded through assessment of the portfolio of their work experience that they were expected to keep.

What Difference the Project Was Expected To Make

As the first training of its kind within the United Kingdom the project planned to provide a new model for progressive learning in the heritage ironwork sector. However, the difference this project was expected to make was that its intention was to be the pump priming for;

- An on-going requirement for training and accreditation in the heritage ironwork sector. If successful this would be the first step in putting the craft of blacksmithing on a par with other more widely recognised heritage building craft skills.
- Dissemination of best practice. Those directly involved in the delivery of the programme will - all being well - go on to be 'pro-active' in the field of ironwork conservation.

3 PROGRAMME PLANNING AND DELIVERY

Training Plan

Following the award of the HLF grant on the 10th June 2010 the NHIG Training Steering Group (TSG), who had put the grant application together, took responsibility for the development and delivery of the project's Training plan. Working together the TSG completed the training plan for which the main inclusions were;

- Training programme overview
- Delivery Timetable
- Course Syllabus
- Trainee recruitment strategy, process & agreements
- Workshop placements recruitment strategy, process & agreements
- Trainee assessment
 - Candidate work evidence pack
 - Assessors Pack
- Partnership agreements with;
 - Hereford College of Technology for the delivery of a bespoke course
 - Hampton Court Palace for group work placement at the Palace
- Job descriptions, tender packages and agreements
- Budget breakdowns and Cash flow

This was completed on time by the agreed completion date of 29th October 2010.

Following receipt of the HLF permission to start the TSG agreed the job positions as set out in the training plan and recruited the additional freelance staff the project required for the positions of Project Manager and Assessor in accordance with HLF tendering procedure.

Trainee Recruitment

With a specialist target audience of existing semi-skilled blacksmiths application numbers were expected to be sufficient for adequate selection but not excessively high.

Application Numbers;	Register of interest	Applications Received	Interview Invitations
Year 1	78	34	23
Year 2	n/a	29	16

Prior to application the TSG were accessible to potential candidates and this provided a filtering process ahead of application whereby their suitability for the programme could be discussed directly.

Three interviewers used a scoring system to select those they wished to offer places to. Included in this system were practical skills and candidate feedback to a specifically prepared list of questions. Candidates were also assessed in response their general attitude, communication and potential.

Overall the bursary places were offered to a broad spread of age ranges, between 21 and 56, which mirrored the potential candidates that were available for interview. The candidates that were offered places were also across a broad academic range including post graduate to time serviced apprentice to those with no formal qualifications.

In review of the attractiveness of the programme to potential applicants the TSG considered;

- Journeymanhip; the travel aspect of the programme would limit its appeal, as a journeyman lifestyle is not suited to everyone's personality or personal circumstances.
- Design Forgework Skills (DFS) Course; This block release course was available by the 2nd recruitment and the TSG were aware of potential applicants who decided to go for the DFS instead.
- Misconception; General misunderstanding of what opportunities the bursary offered.
- Heritage& Conservation; general preconceived ideas about what 'heritage' or 'conservation' is resulting in lack of appeal.
- Work Opportunities; misconception that even if the time is put into heritage training then there are, especially in the current economic climate, limited work opportunities in this sector in the immediate future.

Therefore 2nd year recruitment adverts were amended to include;

Are you interested in?

- Paid training within established firms?
- Having work placements arranged for you?
- Working alongside skilled crafts-people?
- Developing & broadening your practical skills?
- Increasing your career connections?
- Exploring advanced forge work skills, as contained within heritage ironwork?
- Understanding how best to secure the future of heritage ironwork?
- Gaining the NHIG Award for Blacksmithing Conservation?

Or to put it simply.....enhancing your skills by building on the experience of master smiths both past and present?

Trainee Induction

Each intake of trainees attended a group induction where by the aims included;

- Welcome the trainee to the project
- Introduce the trainees to the management group
- Explain the project administrative and payment arrangements
- Clarify and agree to the terms and conditions of the bursary
- Explain the portfolio evidence and assessment process
- Brief the trainee in work-based health and safety
- Review and resolve any trainee issues
- Opportunity to get to know the other trainees

There was a lot of information to get across at induction and general response from trainees was that while it was pretty intense it was generally good.

In review of the induction process for year two trainees the project manager arranged for two of the first year graduates to attend for an informal question and answer session. In order that the trainees felt comfortable in asking any questions the management left the room for this part of the discussions. In addition two points were also discussed which were suggested by the first trainees;

- Discussion of liking or not liking your placement and while 100% satisfaction is not guaranteed you should like 'most' of it.
- Discussion of how organised you need to be for both the travel and portfolio work

The tool and drawing equipment lists were also revised, with the assistance of the first trainees, for the second year.

At the 2nd year induction the programme was two trainees short due to short notice withdrawals by trainees who had initially accepted places. While the TSG were successful in finding replacement these two missed the group induction and the first college block and while they were able to get up to speed this did hinder their initial portfolio building.

College Block Release

Hereford College of Technology (HCT), were partners in this programme. Their role was to develop and deliver five weeks of underpinning knowledge to each group of trainees that would complement the work based learning. The syllabus was specifically drawn up for this programme and was based on the content of the heritage blacksmithing NOS.

The five weeks delivery time was established in relation to the available budget although it was appreciated from the beginning that, given the wide scope, its full appropriate coverage would need

twice as much time as this programme had available. Therefore there was a severe prioritising of subjects to be covered and while the mandatory units of the NOS had to be covered the optional study areas provided flexibility to adjust the syllabus to suit the timetable.

For delivery the five week allowance was split into one week blocks at period intervals in the calendar. The first college attendance immediately following the trainee induction to the course.

Overall trainees agreed that, while the previous experience of individuals affected how much they got out of classes, the intermediate level the classes were pitched at was about right for the group as a whole. The highlights were the external lecturer practical demonstration by Paul Allen and conservation talk by Brian Hall. All trainees appreciated that HCT had a tough job due to their being only five weeks available for delivery but feedback on what they did cover was very positive.

Following the experience gained in the first year and trainee feedback the second delivery was reviewed and amended. These changes included;

- A greater focus on theory of conservation and that the first college block should major in this in order that the trainees are better prepared for their conservation placements.
- Given the course entry level requirements HCT was to focus on technical demonstrations rather than practical lessons. Technical demonstrations cover more in a shorter time after which the trainee always goes and practices. However this does rely on self-management as there is no substitute for doing. Therefore ideally it should be tied in with the need to complete a practice piece which can be finished on placement and handed in at the following college block.
- When selecting practical lessons to deliver HCT would provide ones which are difficult to experience in workshops i.e. having a go at working with a range of different materials to experience the working properties and associated faults

Placements

High quality placements, with the right quality of work and supervision, are of course vital to successful work-based training and this programme was successful in establishing such placements for all its trainees. This is evidenced by the experiences of trainees and especially the outcome with all who completed their training achieved the NHIG Award for Heritage Skills – Blacksmithing.

As this programme was a training first for heritage blacksmiths the management believed it was important to ensure each trainee had a thorough grounding in conservation and therefore in addition to the blacksmithing placements that would naturally be associated with this project. Conservation placements were also recruited the aim being to give a fuller understanding of the conservation world and the similarities in styles of working and documentation. While this approach was controversial, as the conservation placements were primarily museums, the trainee feedback (see below) justified that the management were right in persisting with it.

Recruitment of both conservation and blacksmithing placements was through direct contact where by the management identified and initiated contact with those that they wished to participate. This was a very effective method as it allowed us to overcome any perceived barrier that had so far been

holding the placements back from participating. However, it should be realised that it worked primarily because of the knowledge and contacts the management already had within the heritage sector. This meant they could use their knowledge of companies working in the sector to specifically target placements whom they believed were right for involvement in the programme. As a result not only were the placements of high quality but also they all had experience of managing trainees.

Adverts were put out for blacksmithing placements but extremely limited response and in review the reasons for this are believed to be;

- Heritage work; concerns that they would not have the right projects at the right time given the nature of commissioned work.
- Recession; the severe downturn in the economy and therefore not the opportunities for the employment and supervision of extra staff. Some workshops commented that taking on one of our trainees would be viewed by existing staff as taking work off them.
- Appeal; taking on a trainee simply does not appeal as placements don't perceive it to be a benefit to themselves. (see '**Lessons Learnt**' for further discussion on this)

All placements received an induction to the project and a placement pack to ensure they had all the information they required about the;

- Programme
- management
- trainees
- timetable
- course assessment

An agreement was also signed by the placement ensuring they understood the terms and conditions of hosting a trainee. Given the previous experience the placements had in managing trainees, which had been established at the vetting stage, no specific training was given to placements on this. However, regular monitoring and reviews ensured they were consistent in providing a benefit to the trainee.

The placements used for this programme were;

Conservation Placements	Year 1	Year 2
Birmingham Museum	4 trainees	2 trainees
CSI Sittingbourne	n/a	1 trainee
Hampton Court Palace	1 group placement	1 group placement
Hereford Museum	8 trainees	n/a
Imperial War Museum Duxford	n/a	4 trainees
National Maritime Museum	n/a	1 trainee
Royal Armouries	4 trainees	n/a

Blacksmithing Placements	Year 1	Year 2
Anwick Forge	2 trainees	2 trainees
Chris Topp & Co	8 trainees	6 trainees
Dorothea Restorations	1 trainee	n/a
Fransham Forge	2 trainees	1 trainee

George James and Sons	5 trainees	4 trainees
Hall Conservation	6 trainees	3 trainees
Ironart	n/a	2 trainees
Newlyn Forge	4 trainees	3 trainees
Peat Oberon	2 trainees	n/a

A trainee placement calendar was issued at the start of each year which identified which placements were hosting which trainee and when. Doing this at the beginning of the year was important for planning by those involved. The risk taken was that the right type of work may not be available at the placement at the right time but the management decided that the stability and confidence it gave to participants outweighed the risk.

The museum placements were short in that the total time spent in a museum by a trainee was six weeks. The success of this controversial placement was evidenced by the general opinion received from trainees at debrief whereby they all agreed it played a key role in their understanding of conservation and 'without this placement the conservation principles would not fully have made sense'.

Year 2 trainees; Trainees' comments on their museum placement;

Adam Baillie	Hosted by The Imperial War Museum; "I didn't study history at school but being surrounded by it at the museum, be it the objects or knowledge of the guys I was working alongside, was a true insight. I hadn't really thought about the history of objects before and this was the best history lesson you can ever have. A real inspiration."
Fred Suffield	Hosted by The Imperial War Museum; "I worked on a 1918 Mark 5 tank which was being prepared for a special centenary exhibition in London. It was cutting edge technology as the first tank that one man could drive. At first the conservation approach was clear; we were cleaning and making good the material with no welding, cutting, repairs or replacing missing elements. Then I discovered a structural crack and everything was thrown in the air. This led to a really interesting debate on how to balance the agreed approach with the need to make it structurally sound enough for the display."
Jen Leigh	Hosted by Birmingham Museum; "I feel far better informed and now have an understanding of how the museum conservator works which is important if we're to work alongside the well-established conservation fields. Nothing should be dismissed without consideration to its value. It has given me an insight into "high end" conservation that no blacksmithing placement could have done."
Matt West	Hosted by the National Maritime Museum; "Profoundly inspirational! It was such a rewarding experience to work alongside top specialist conservators. Their bright enthusiasm, knowledge and skill made museum conservation interesting and exciting. The non-commercial environment allowed creativity to flow and made the place buzz. I learnt so much on this placement; it was a huge privilege to be taught conservation theory and practice on such precious historic objects."
Paul Ashmore	Hosted by Birmingham Museum; "This has been the most enjoyable placement to date. It has given me a totally different approach to my restoration work. I used to restore pieces to their original use with no consideration, cutting off and renewing at will, but now I consider the history

	behind the piece and the original workmanship now has preciousness. This placement has made me stop and think.”
Rowan Taylor	Hosted by The Imperial War Museum; “Had a brilliant time which really grounded my understanding of the difference between conservation and restoration. The museum’s most frequently asked question is “are you going to get it running again?” This would often require the replacement of so much material that it would end almost new, the history of the original would be lost. Instead the museum’s policy was to conserve as much as possible. The aim with what I was working on was to keep it in its Battle of Britain state, sort of freezing them in this state just how they left the battle field.”

Blacksmithing workshops made up the majority of the placement calendar with the time spent at any one workshop varying between 6 and 11 weeks. Overall trainees agreed they really enjoyed the mix of workshops. They acknowledged it was difficult to get it spot on as personality and the nature of commissioned work had a big influence. They all experienced times that were not as enjoyable as others, or simply not liking the task in hand, but in general they accepted they were being paid to learn so didn’t have to like it but did in fact enjoy the vast majority of the work. For most of them working in a commercial environment to tight budgets and deadlines was an eye opener and working at a commercial rate the biggest challenge. They also observed the reality within the sector of the effect of budgets on best practice within the industry and how different this was to work in the museums. In addition they all noticed how much the weather had an impact on their enjoyment as all found the winter placements difficult with the cold and darkness. Some trainees had been unaware that many workshops are used to journeymen and found this reassuring as it made them more relaxed when they first turned up as they realised they were not unusual in doing this. They also noticed that mundane jobs at the start of placements helped them settle in as it removed any pressure to perform while they were finding their way around.

For the second year the timetable was changed so that there were fewer but longer placements as a direct result of feedback from both trainees and placements. All first year trainees agreed that fewer workshops would have made the year a lot easier as the travel, accommodation and settling in caused the greatest difficulties. Placements were also keen to extend the time anyone trainee was with them. The number of placements was initially designed to address the risk that trainees would not gain enough experience to achieve all the units in the NHIG Award. However, with the first year assessment process complete the TSG were able to reassess the situation and on reflection were confident that trainees would gain the breadth of experience they needed at few placements and therefore the second year calendar was amended. The biggest change in this was to the museum placements whereby in the second year trainees only attended one museum instead of two and thereby doubled the length of this particular placement from 3 to 6 weeks.

Out of a total of 12 host placements in the first year 8 of these also participated in the second year. The reasons for this varied;

- Hereford Museum – funding cuts prevented them from taking any interns
- Royal Armouries – didn’t have the capacity as they had already agreed to interns from a different programme

- Dorothea Restorations - bankruptcy
- Peat Oberon – didn't feel he could continue to provide the supervision that he felt was necessary

Our reserve list of placements was never fully utilised as either the right work was not available or the location was not suitable when the personal circumstances of the individual were considered, especially as reserve placements were only used at extremely short notice. The reserve list was in reality only used once when a particularly good and relevant project came into the workshop. Reserve placements were therefore sourced and recruited from scratch as and when needed. The reserve placements used within the programme were therefore;

Reserve Blacksmithing Placements which were used	Year 1	Year 2
Hector Cole	1 trainee 3 weeks	n/a
Little Newsham Forge	1 trainee 6 weeks	n/a
Newton Forge	1 trainee 1 week	n/a

Placement Summary of Feedback

What worked well?

- The enthusiasm of the participants, the questions that they ask, their willingness to learn, participate and share knowledge with excellent levels of commitment.
- Providing trainees with valuable exposure to the real world of time pressures, price pressures, competitive pressures and actually being able to earn a living as a heritage blacksmith
- Assuming trainees had no conservation skills or knowledge and working up from there.
- Having a project for the trainee to work on from start to finish
- Induction to programme from NHIG
- Providing trainees with opportunity use equipment they do not normally have access to
- Placement length
 - The short periods for the conservation workshops
 - The longer placements for blacksmithing workshops
- Bursary allowed the luxury of allowing plenty of time to practice new techniques and methods before being let loose on real objects
- The benefits on both sides
 - Introducing a new person to the existing team dynamic had positive benefits.
 - Having a bursary trainee makes you question what you do and how you do it more than you might otherwise - which is a good thing.
 - Sharing ways of doing things – the ways of the workshop and the fresh ideas brought in with every new trainee coming in.
 - Development of relationships with peers outside of the workplace.

What didn't work well?

- Occasional issues around trainee travelling which placements resolved by offering flexible working hours to offset.
- Not being able to take projects from start to finish given the structure of the placement calendar which made it difficult for a trainee to get an overall view of the job.
- Trainees that came from a purely college background often lacked the ability to produce at a commercially viable speed.
- Some surprising gaps in their general engineering knowledge:

- Never seen a Zeus Table, thread gauge or micrometer and consequently had no idea of how to identify threads.
- Attempting to blind tap 4 x 25mm thread in wrought iron which obviously resulted in a sheared tap – no understanding that a thread depth of more than 1.5 times the diameter is redundant
- Not even basic lathe experience
- No idea about drill cutting speeds
- Deciding what to give the trainees to do requires some thought, and can only be decided once you have assessed them over a couple of days.

What changes would you make given a choice?

- Ensure all trainees have a CSCS card.
- Greater awareness of individual trainees skill base as there was a significant difference
- Host one student at the time
- Higher level of forge work skills
- A draft programme of work that was being offering prior to arrival
- A short pre visit prior to the placement beginning

Assessment

Assessment was a key part of this project as the aim was for each trainee to be successful in gaining the NHIG Award for Heritage Skills – Blacksmithing. The monitoring and assessment process for this was created as part of the training plan and was based on existing NVQ structure and mapped against the National Qualification Framework (NQF) as part of our sustainability aims.

Each trainee had to keep a portfolio of the work they were involved with during their placements and this provided the primary mechanism for demonstration of the skills gained. In addition to this trainee progress was also monitored and evaluated by means of;

- Assessor report; submitted this at the end of each month
- Knowledge questions; demonstration of understanding through interview
- Trainee reviews; given to the trainee by the assessor
- Direct contact; the project manager and assessor were in direct contact with each trainee
- Portfolio and forgework piece feedback; each trainee received feedback on both their portfolio and forgework piece after final assessment

Although the assessment and monitoring system was based on an NVQ structure over the course of the programme several amendments were made as it was found in practice not to be fully fit for purpose. The amendments included;

- Trainee placement report; trainees submitted this at the end of each month and it summarised the work they had carried out in order that they could monitor and self-asses their own progress. From a management point of view this proved a valuable tool in keeping regular formal contact with trainees and especially in getting them to raise any issues they were experiencing.
- Candidate work evidence pack; the paperwork format was redesigned for year 2 trainees in order to make it easier to use and fully fit for purpose in a multi workplace environment.

- Sample portfolio; a sample was compiled for year 2 trainees using the work of existing trainees.
- Assessment timetable; for year 2 a stricter and more regular assessment calendar was introduced to ensure continued and steady achievable targets as they year progressed.
- Digital submission; was actively encouraged due to logistics
- Conservation assignment; a scenario was generated for trainees to write a report and method statement with specific references to conservation practice.

In general it should be noted that all trainees struggled with their portfolio building at the beginning but accepted that there is no quick route to understanding the process you just have to do it and it therefore takes around three months to get to grips with. Trainees understood that the wording is in line with National Occupational Standards (NOS) and is therefore ambiguous so that they can fit evidence in rather than being so specific that it doesn't fit. All trainees found it a lot of work, they not only had to evidence work but also do it consistently and reference it to many units.

On reflection trainees felt the discipline and mental ability involved with assessment was good preparation for their future careers in conservation. The biggest problem was not time but when they did sit down to do it they often got stuck and owing to the distance, help given by the assessor, although good, was just no comparison to the one to one sessions at college. However, all complemented the assessor on his being readily accessible throughout the programme.

All trainees also struggled with trying to compile their portfolios on placement. Firstly as they wanted to give value to their host so worked on, rather than giving time to going into the office to do their write ups. Secondly after finishing a day of physical work they were tired in the evenings. Thirdly they all found it difficult to get themselves organised when they were away from their own home office where they had everything (desk, printer, computer, wi-fi, etc) to hand i.e. a comfortable & fully equipped work environment. The end result was that, again although only for a small number of trainees, completing work to the deadlines continued to be a problem.

In both years of the programme the management had to intervene in order to get trainees to produce the work required and for one trainee the programmes disciplinary procedure was instigated. While this was obviously unpopular the result was that the situation was very quickly remedied.

Overall the key to the success of the assessment process, especially the portfolio building, was that the assessor made himself available to trainees via phone and email outside of his allocated assessment hours during the college blocks.

Mentoring

Mentors were available to provide a point of contact with someone independent of assessment should any difficulty arise about personal involvement, progress and achievements on the course. TSG members acted as mentors and for year 2 we recruited two of the first year trainees to join the mentoring team. This was seen as an important addition primarily as they provided a point of contact that could relate directly to the trainees situation but also because they were independent of the management while at the same time fully understanding the details of the programme.

The main issue come across with mentoring was that the trainees were reluctant to admit to problems and didn't want to ask for help. At debrief both groups of trainees admitted that they realised that it was their responsibility to speak up but accepted that they often kept issues to themselves as they didn't feel they were appropriate to contact mentors or the management about. However, they all agreed that they always felt there was someone available to talk to and that the last question in their monthly report was an appropriate way of checking up although they also appreciated being asked directly by the project manager when other communications took place.

While a mentoring system was in place and did work the reality was that the key to its operation and success turned out to be the assessor. The reason for this is that all trainees acknowledged that the regular contact with the assessor built up a good relationship with him and that they were more willing to open up to him than other members of the TSG. The assessor was therefore able to pick up on points raised in casual conversation and pass this information on to the appropriate mentor for attention. As a result at debrief trainees admitted that when they did get informal or formal mentoring they wished they had done so much sooner.

Resources

The management and administrative resources for this project included;

- Training Steering Group (TSG)
 - Adrian Legge; Chairman / Education Officer
 - Bethan Griffiths; Secretary / Liaison Officer
 - Chris Topp: Treasurer
 - David James; Skills / Agreements Officer
 - Brian Hall; Conservation Officer
- Project Manager
- Secretary / HLF Liaison Officer
- Finance Officer

Management of the programme was not always easy or straight forward but all issues affecting delivery were always resolved with the end result that the management delivered a successful programme. The main evidence for this comes from the feedback of those involved and the trainees in their award

There was a disappointment early on in the programme with the retirement of the original project manager but a member of the TSG was able to fill this position until permanent replacement was found. Prior to re-tendering the opportunity was taken to make revisions to the training plan to clarify the roles and responsibilities within the project with the creation of programme check list.

Overall those involved in the management and administration of the project made a good team as not only did the work well together, with a strong team bond developed, but the energy created by this resulted in continued high levels of commitment. This commitment was amply demonstrated by the voluntary contributions of time that were regularly made, often at short notice and above their original pledge of voluntary time, and is a significant tribute to the success of this project.

Finance

Overall this project was delivered at a cost of £357,410 which was £34,180 under the original budget. The two primary reasons for this were;

- Reduction in bursary payments due to the loss of three trainees during the programme
- VAT costs being less than anticipated

During the programme the NHIG had to make additions to their bookkeeping system in order to meet HLF monitoring objectives. Aside from HLF requirements two small but important revisions that the NHIG initiated in its bookkeeping were;

- all VAT costs were given their own separate column in all accounts spread sheets so that overall project costs could be better managed
- all spread sheet figures were rounded to avoid the inclusion of pennies which meant that we were able to balance the overall figures exactly

The original forecast costs were, in negotiation with HLF, tweaked during the delivery and as a result the project was delivered at the expected revised overall cost. Not included in this however was the true value of the voluntary management contributions as these were far in excess of what was predicted.

There was however one cost not allowed for in the original budget and that was for the awards ceremonies. NHIG were therefore fortunate in securing in kind sponsorship for the venue costs for this from Historic Royal Palaces.

TRAINEE OUTCOMES

Trainee Retention

Out of the 16 trainees that started this programme 13 completed. The reasons behind this varied between individuals but included;

- Family difficulties
- Finance due to family circumstances
- The away from home requirements of the programme

It is interesting to note that these difficulties also, to varying degrees, also affected a number of trainees who did complete but retention has been down to the support provided by;

- Regular open channels of communication with the assessor and project manager
- Assessment review sessions
- Placement providers' support
- Mentoring trainees through work and problems

Training Awards

This programme developed and pioneered a new training award, the ‘NHIG Award for Heritage Skills – Blacksmithing’, in order to provide trainees with recognition for the skills and knowledge gained. This award was set at level 3 with a total of 10 units of achievement mapped against National Occupational Standards. This award was endorsed by NHIG and Hereford College of Technology (the primary deliverer of qualifications in this sector) as at the time of delivery these were the only bodies able to do this.

The Mandatory Units available were;

1. **Unit No. VR01** Conform to General Workplace Safety
2. **Unit No. VR209** Confirm Work Activities and Resources for the Work
3. **Unit No. VR210** Develop and Maintain Good Working Relationships
4. **Unit No. VR211** Confirm the Occupational Method of Work
5. **Unit No. VR546** Working on Conservation and Restoration Projects
6. **Unit No. VR621** Repair, Restore, Conserve, Replace or Maintain Forged Heritage Metalwork
7. **Unit No. VR622** Clean, prepare and Protect Heritage Metalwork

The Optional Units available were;

8. **Unit No. VR623** Heat, Weld or Solder Heritage Metalwork
9. **Unit No. VR624** Thermal Cutting Metal for Heritage Work
10. **Unit No. VR625** Dismantle and Fix Heritage Metalwork

Trainee achievements were;

	Mandatory Units	Optional Units		
	all 7no	VR623	VR624	VR625
7 Trainees	✓	✓	✓	✓
6 Trainees	✓	✓		✓

As can be seen one unit proved difficult for trainees to achieve and the reason can be attributed to a lack of opportunity with their work experience rather than ability.

At the discretion of the assessor prizes of £50 each, sponsored by Hall Conservation and George James & Sons;

Best of prizes were awarded to;

	Year 1	Year 2
Best Portfolio	Jo Adkins	Rowan Taylor
Best Forgework Piece	Simon Doyle & Matt Boulwood joint winners	Paul Ashmore

Aside from the formal awards the assessor added to the achievements of the trainees in that ‘it had been wonderful observe their development over the year and a pleasure to see what they had managed to achieve’.

Awards were handed out at a formal awards ceremony hosted at Hampton Court Palace, thanks to the in-kind support of Historic Royal Palaces who provided the venue.

Trainee Feedback

Year 1 trainees; Feedback at the end of programme;

Adrian Wolfe	This course has given me great connections and valuable skills as well as a deep understanding of the amazing heritage in iron we have in the UK. It has allowed me to work with skilled crafts-people who are the cutting edge of rescuing and maintaining our heritage ironwork in a way I couldn't otherwise, the connections I am making and the skills I am learning will stand me in good stead for years to come, if rescuing heritage ironwork is your passion this is definitely the course for you.
Alex Coode	As a working blacksmith I had been asked to do things that seemed inappropriate to more than a few fine old pieces of ironwork. The course has given me the knowledge and authority to advise on the best course to take, depending on the clients budget. Possibly most important of all it has given the confidence to charge accordingly, having been exposed to most processes and pricing structures at the more responsible end of the Industry
David Johnston	I've been working self-employed prior to starting but it's been a tremendous experience. It's not just the work, where I've picked up tips and tricks from more established firms that I'd have never thought of, but also the contacts in the trade. Only downside is a lot of time away from home to be prepared for.
Joanna Williams	It's been good to work in museums as they gave me a very different insight into conservation practise methods and approach that I didn't know before.
Joanne Adkins	The NHIG course is a unique opportunity to be welcomed into numerous workplaces and receive the benefit of their experience in the Heritage iron working sector. It has been an incredible year that will benefit and help shape my career with Heritage ironwork.
Mathew Boulwood	The course has been an excellent learning experience, it has really opened my eyes to the wider world of conservation as well as given me time to hone and develop my own skills in an array of amazing workshops around the country. The NHIG course made me realise that although as blacksmiths we can find ourselves isolated in our understanding and connection with iron, we are not alone in trying to protect and preserve what we see as beautiful objects. 5 stars, would do again.
Simon Doyle	I recognise the importance of doing conservation properly and this is the only way of learning it as a blacksmith. Whilst the museum placement work bears little relation to what I normally do the ethics and principles of conservation are very important. I am going to come across historical ironwork during my career. Being able to understand the role of a conservator as well as being able to do the work myself will stand me in good stead when working alongside conservation societies in the future.

Year 2 trainees; Feedback at the end of programme;

Adam Baillie	I've always believed in the journeyman system as the best way to gain knowledge and this year has given me a treasure chest of knowledge. There were so many highlights from the amazing places we had the opportunity to work at to the trip around St Paul's. 100% satisfied.
Fred Suffield	Prestigious jobs, working with master smiths and absorbing their knowledge – where do I start? I can honestly say I have a genuine passion coming through now when before I wasn't actually bothered.

Jen Leigh	Been really good and an opportunity to see things I wouldn't normally see like behind the scenes at Hampton Court Palace and then it just got better and better as the course moved on.
Matt West	It's stopped me doing any more damage! It's changed and focused my life and given me a route to follow.
Paul Ashmore	It's done loads for me in that it's brought my confidence back. 28 years ago I left my apprenticeship a year early and this has been like finishing off my last year. I now have a better insight into how the industry works and broadened my skill base. Really good positive experience.
Rowan Taylor	Having come straight out of college it's taught me how to work professionally. I've developed both my business and practical skills no end on top of learning conservation which I didn't know before. There have been times when I struggled with the tasks or people, but I've come out with a wealth of experience which means I'm in a much better position for setting up my own business.

Trainees One Year On

During debrief at the end of the programme trainees gave general feedback on the programme but having been in employment of just over a year by the time the programme completed the original group of trainees were asked to comment on 'what difference the bursary has made for you?' Or to phrase it differently 'Is your life as a blacksmith different to what it was before the bursary?'

Responses received were;

Adrian Wolfe	<p>The experience and learning has given me numerous very useful skills, a deeper understanding of metals, of treatment, of corrosion, of protection, from production to construction and more.</p> <p>I have noticed a number of aspects in relation to the above. One is a much finer understanding of the history and importance of items in general and 'metals' in particular. Another is that my approach is now different to that of some other blacksmiths (many more experienced or technically much better than I am). They may miss some detail of or the importance of an object, or assume that replacement with a replica is better than proper conservation; they may use conflicting material (galvanic effect causing corrosion) or poorly apply a coating, or use an inappropriate one.</p> <p>Overall, I am still very much satisfied with having attended the NHIG course; I would not choose to have done anything else with my time. I not only enjoyed the learning and the knowledge gained but also much appreciated the chance to work with the skilled men and women I met, as well as the chances, (I cannot imagine I would ever have had otherwise) to be involved in some very amazing projects and collections.</p> <p>Since then I have had some restoration work locally as well as being involved in consultation on larger projects. I am currently furthering my technical blacksmithing skills by attending the 2-year DFS course at Herefordshire and Ludlow College.</p>
Alex Coode	<p>I am not entirely sure where to start. But I shall do my best.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I met my business partner and started the Heritage Blacksmith Partnership immediately on finishing the course. We are receiving a

	<p>lot of interest and thus far business is good. Contracts include working for National Trust, conservators and the church as well as private clients.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have just finished a week as a specialist guest tutor at West Dean College teaching conservation blacksmithing to the metals conservation students. • I will be speaking on November 8th at the ICON metals conference and AGM at the Wallace Collection on the subject of appropriate finishes from the point of view of a working conservation blacksmith. • We have just secured a contract to renovate a large set of gates originally off a gothic cathedral in Spain of some importance • I am presently on the PACR pathway to ICON accreditation with a view to qualifying in the medium term <p>Without question, all of this has been a direct result of the knowledge, techniques and confidence gained during the course of the bursary.</p>
Joanna Williams	<p>A lot!</p> <p>The N.H.I.G bursary gave me the unique opportunity to expand my knowledge and experience in heritage ironwork. Working under the guidance of accomplished and highly skilled practitioners in the field of metalwork conservation and blacksmithing, I was able to develop my technical abilities and improve my understanding of philosophy and conservation principles. After completing the course I worked as a freelancer for a number of reputable metal conservation companies applying my skills to a variety of projects. I also chose to work for a company with limited knowledge where I could offer informed advise, so best practice could be followed meaning the piece of heritage ironwork would not suffer from a multiple of incorrect and further damaging repairs.</p> <p>I have now set up my own workshop in the historic Underfall boatyard in Bristol, where I am able to take on projects and hope to be involved in the future restoration and conservation of the heritage site where my forge is located. I still continue to offer my services as a freelance conservator blacksmith.</p> <p>The Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Heritage Ironwork Group have given me the ability, through this course, to elevate my working practice and contribute to conservation of metalwork and heritage craft skills. Thank you.</p>
Joanne Adkins	<p>Overall the bursary scheme has given me the foundation in an extremely interesting career. Off the back of National Heritage Bursary Scheme I was offered a full time job with Hall Conservation Ltd.. Our work is incredibly varied, from welding lead sculpture to manufacturing supportive armatures and dealing with 15th century ironwork. Everything we do hinges on a firm understanding of conservation principles and the skills to work with a variety of metals that I was developing throughout the bursary course. Before the bursary scheme I was unsure how my career in blacksmithing would develop. With knowledge and skills gained during the course certain career paths have become accessible. I have gained experience that allows me to follow a variety of opportunities within blacksmithing and metal</p>

	conservation.
Mathew Boulwood	<p>The bursary has drastically changed the course of my career as a blacksmith. I gained employment with one of the placement providers on completion of the course. This has directly enabled me to work on heritage ironwork projects of larger scale and greater importance than I would have ever been involved in without the NHIG.</p> <p>Additionally the skills and knowledge that I picked up when on the NHIG have helped me to work consistently at a higher level and with greater confidence.</p> <p>I had a fantastic time on the NHIG bursary and have thoroughly enjoyed working on heritage ironwork since. My sincere thanks go out to all involved with the NHIG project</p>
Simon Doyle	<p>I always intended to work in conservation within blacksmithing, and the NHIG has given me the skills, ability and credibility to set up in business with another NHIG alumni Alex Coode. Our business, Heritage Blacksmith Partnership, is specifically geared towards the conservation, restoration and maintenance of historical metalwork. Without the training the NHIG has offered me, the business would not have gained the instant support and custom of organisation like CADW, National Trust and several private clients with significant historical ironwork.</p>

PROGRAMME ACHIEVEMENTS

Trainees Trained and Transition into Employment

This programme was successful in seeding the blacksmithing craft with 13 people who are now 'pro-active' in the field of ironwork conservation. Although only on a small scale this has directly improved the quality and quantity of skills available to the heritage sector.

Of the trainees who completed the programme 100% of these are in employment all of which is in either general blacksmithing (which includes heritage work projects) or metal conservation.

The employment status of the trainees is;

Temporary Employment	Full time Employment	Newly Self-Employed	Return to Self-Employment
2 No	2 No	4 No	5 No

Increasing the Diversity of the Sector

This programme was successful in increasing the diversity of new people entering the heritage ironwork sector as evidenced through the achievements of the 13 trainees that completed.

However, not all of the three diversity targets set at the beginning of the programme were met. In setting these targets the below were taken into consideration;

- the research of the National Heritage Training Groups (NHTG) report, 'Skills Needs Analysis for the UK Built Heritage Sector' which identified a need to inspire younger people to consider a career in the built heritage sector
- workforce diversity in relation to the national mix of the UK population

Our diversity targets and results were;

	Overall Targets	2011 intake	2012 intake	Overall Results
Gender	4-3 No / 25-19 % Female	2 No	2 No	Target hit
Age	12 No / 75 % 19 -25 yrs old	1 No	0 No	Target missed
Ethnicity	1 No / 6 % Other than British White	1 No	0 No	Target hit

In review of the age target it is important to recognise;

- Heritage workforce; The age of this programmes trainees reflects that of the existing heritage workforce in that it is mainly made up of older people who are in or past their mid-career as per the findings of the NHTG report mentioned above.
- Paid learning; the opportunity of paid learning attracted and gave all age groups the ability to participate.
- Previous experience; The only potential trainees we had in the target age group were still lacking in basic blacksmithing skills and would be better served by a more general blacksmithing training provision rather than a focused heritage ironwork course. Within the interviews there were several students that had potential but were more interested in general blacksmithing education rather than specifically conservation ironwork.
- Resetting the target; Interesting if the age target had been up to 30 years then we would still have still missed our target as we only recruited 6 people under 30 years of age.

New partnerships and Networks

The bursary enabled NHIG to develop new and positive partnerships with Hereford College of Technology, Historic Royal Palaces and St Pauls Cathedral.

Established new and positive networks between blacksmithing practitioners, museums, conservation practices and institutes. Introducing them to each other and the craft which has enhanced communities and the sharing of best practise.

New training programme

This programme was successful in developing and pioneering a vocational training programme for heritage blacksmithing at Level 3. This has provided a new and sustainable model for progressive

learning in the heritage ironwork sector (see 'Advanced Apprenticeship' under The Future chapter) and therefore there is real potential that a long lasting training impact will result from this programme.

New training award

This programme was successful in developing and pioneering the 'NHIG Award for Heritage Skills – Blacksmithing' in recognition of the skills and knowledge gained by trainees. Further success was in that this was successfully achieved by all 13 trainees who completed the programme.

In understanding the value of the assessment outcome this programme's 100% pass rate can be compared to national pass rate statistics for Post 16 education which are only 75%.

Trainee gains

In addition to the award this programme was successful in inspiring and giving confidence to all its trainees for their future careers. Feedback from trainees evidences this in that they all felt they had gained the skills and knowledge to work to higher standard and to advocate these higher standards to their clients

Heritage gains

Overall this project has been significant in helping NHIG to contribute towards the conservation of heritage ironwork for which examples, not included earlier in this chapter, include;

- The practical work the trainees completed on their placements
- The introduction of trainees and placements to Continued Professional Development activities leading to continuous education beyond this programme
- Dissemination of best practice;
 - Several of our work experience providers expressed the opinion that their own work practices had been refined/ improved by having our trainees.
 - Seeding the 13 people who are now 'pro-active' in the field of ironwork conservation.
 - Through press releases associated to the programme
- Raising awareness of heritage ironwork and the specialist skills of the practitioners involved through the promotional opportunities the bursary offered
- Improved understanding and appreciation of the skill set of heritage blacksmiths
- Conservation professionals have become aware of the advantages of working with blacksmith conservators for example;
 - Practical experience of how to do the work
 - Traditional skills of making using both process and materials
 - Knowledge of vernacular and original makers/designs
- Helped establish the NHIG within the wider conservation community as a 'representative' organisation for ironwork conservation practice and professional contacts

- Led to the potential of NHIG to investigate the feasibility of an accreditation scheme that would be underpinned by the training and qualification structure instigated by this programme.

LESSONS LEARNT

NHIG as a group, have learnt a number of things from this project including;

- The programme has not simply provided 13 people trained in ironwork conservation it has both inspired and empowering its trainees to become passionate and 'pro-active' advocates of conservation best practise.
- The value applicants put on the up-skilling opportunity the programme offered was unexpectedly high. It was a surprise to find that people were prepared to make significant sacrifices in order to participate in the programme including living away from their families and closing their businesses. This in turn has confirmed that NHIG were right in pitching this programme at the right skill level and target group as there is demand for training to higher standards among the practitioners as people really want to do it better.
- This programme has enhanced NHIG's understanding of the need for a stepping stone to assist college leavers into full time work. This was evidenced by the fact that those trainees that came from a purely college background often lacked the ability to produce at a commercially viable speed.
- The value of a trainee gaining a breadth of experience by working in a range of different workshops each offering their own approach to general practice and conservation. This didn't just simply enhance opportunities for the portfolio evidence required but accelerated their individual development. Experiencing a range of approaches allowed trainees to evaluate and refine their own approach and the direct effect of this was particularly noticeable in their gain in confidence. A wonderful and pleasurable process to observe.
- The programme provided a valuable network of contacts not just for NHIG but for all involved.
- It is hard to attract young smiths into the heritage sector even when paid learning opportunities are offered. The heritage sector, including NHIG, needs to work on its image, address misconceptions and provide better information in order to improve attractiveness to young recruits.
- The model developed for including trainees at Hampton Court Palace was unique in its concept for how they were involved on prestigious work. This would make a suitable case study to inspire training programmes on other prestigious projects. It is also of note that the placement worked so well that for the second year trainees the placement time was extended from four to seven weeks.
- The teaching of conservation philosophy was much more difficult than NHIG had anticipated. While the programme was successful in this objective it took time, patience and importantly a mixture of approaches before true understanding was reached. However, in contrast the rewards in getting the 'penny to drop' were significantly higher than expected as demonstrated in the whole hearted 'respect' that all trainees now possess. (For evidence of this please see the trainee feedback in the chapter on placements).

- The importance of securing sufficient paid-for resources. Funding for bursaries was fine but the financial support for the management and administration of the programme was undervalued. The voluntary commitment made by the Training Steering Group (TSG) as part of the match funding was too high and therefore not sustainable. The NHIG were wrong in their expectation that the work of the TSG could be confined to the quarterly meetings as work was in reality much more continuous and therefore significantly onerous at times.
- The success of this programme is specifically down to the team spirit and personal commitment of the TSG to go above and beyond their pledged contribution in order to get the necessary results. What NHIG learnt from this is that the work and objectives of the group attract passionate and committed individuals the value and potential of which should not be underestimated in relation to future projects.
- The industry is not so large that it can afford to invest lots of money in a specialist area like this and therefore funding for future projects needs to concentrate on and therefore be attractive to investors outside of ironwork sector.

If doing a similar project again, in addition to the reviews to the training plan which took place during delivery, NHIG would consider;

Trainees

- CSCS card; for each trainee so they had access to construction site work.
- Seminar funds; as part of the value added process, and introduction to Continued Professional Development (CPD), ideally a budget would be set aside to allow trainees to attend seminars or for specific site visits. For example NHIG arranged for all trainees to attend their two day CPD and a behind the scenes visit to St Pauls Cathedral but trainees had to fund the additional travel out of their already stretched bursary

College Block Release

- Portfolio building time; specific, adequate and regular allowance in the timetable
- College weeks; more weeks to support the programme particularly in view of the fact that;
 - At times it was difficult to get the full spread of processes and skills evidenced in the workshop or museum environment.
 - More in-depth coverage of the underpinning knowledge would have been beneficial.
 - The opportunity for academic research during training would have been beneficial to the trainees and to the arena of blacksmithing conservation.

Placements

- Placement length; minimum length should be six weeks but ideally longer, up to 12 weeks was adequate for this programme, as not only do they work best for both trainee and host but short stays are harder to find.
- Appeal; taking on a trainee simply does not appeal to many placements, as they don't perceive it to be a benefit to themselves. Therefore consideration on how to tackle this needs to be built into the training plan.
- Training for providers; getting a well balanced placement to fit the needs of a trainee is important, but this needs to be complemented by trained and motivated work-based supervisors. Therefore the training plan should include for training and supporting work-

based supervisors. A series of one-day seminars in different parts of the country could be organised to both attract people to the idea of hosting trainees as well as providing guidance and allay any worries they might have on how to best to accommodate them.

Assessment

- Portfolio building; a regular timetabled slot should be scheduled into the working week.
- Office facilities; formally arranged access to full office facilities for trainees, preferably their own working space/desk, while on placement so trainees can efficiently get on with portfolio building. In addition research possible funding for IT facilities for trainees on the move i.e. dongle, laptop, etc. In addition

Mentoring

- Assessor; in light of the findings of the importance of the assessor within the mentoring process this should be considered when appointing someone to this role.

Resources

- Key tasks; these should be itemised and listed with person responsible identified. This is in addition to their inclusion in the training plan, as given the length and nature of the plan it is easy for items to be overlooked.

Finance

- Total grant request; although the HLF grant is worked out by percentage, overall cost in relation to match funding, the HLF round down their actual grant figure to the nearest 100 therefore NHIG had to unexpectedly find an extra £90 of match funding.
- Individual Budgets; unlike freelance commissioned work individual budgets that make up the overall grant are fixed and it should not be assumed that surplus can be transferred between them.
- Contingency; while the application form includes a contingency column for unexpected items this should not be confused with a general allowance for contingency within any individual budget. The actual contingency column is only accessible with HLF approval and is only for unexpected items that do not relate to the purpose of the main budget.
- 10% retention; NHIG learnt that the only source of an interest free bridging loan, to cover the HLF's 10% retention period, was a private investor. Although we could find charitable organisations interested in investing in the programme their constitutions prevented them from making a loan although they would have been able to provide match funding.
- HLF Administration; the HLF have specific administration requirements that are not always clear prior to beginning the project. Therefore an allowance should be made within the overall administrative budget to cover adhering to HLF requests.

Trainee outcomes

- Awards Ceremony; at the end of a year of hard work the importance of there being a focus for culmination, and for this to be an enjoyable celebration which trainees can share with their families, should not be overlooked especially when it comes to finding facilities and allocating an adequate budget.

THE FUTURE

Advanced Apprenticeship

A level 3 qualification is currently under development with City and Guilds with the intention of a 'Advanced Apprenticeship' being up and running between August 2014 and August 2015. The heritage blacksmithing course developed by NHIG, through its Heritage Blacksmiths Bursary programme, is built into this scheme as a heritage pathway. With City and Guilds as the awarding body this qualification will have national recognition. This development was led by the British Artist Blacksmith Association whose steering group of three members included the NHIG Education officer who played a key role.

Currently the Advanced Apprenticeship pathway as described above is for work based training which will be open to people employed full time as apprentice. However, ultimately NHIG would also like to develop a technical higher education programme, at level 4 and above, that would include optional conservation pathways. This two pronged approach, with delivery modes varying from full-time to block release to part time distance learning, should therefore provide access to training for those who are;

- working their way up through the educational system from foundation to advanced higher levels
- employed
- self-employed