



**Press release - 21.03.14**  
**For immediate release**

## **National Heritage Science Forum response to Budget**

The National Heritage Science Forum (NHSF) welcomes the recognition of cultural heritage in the Chancellor's Financial Statement on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March, but calls for greater breadth in the range of charities and cultural heritage organisations able to benefit from the enhanced support.

The significance of heritage to the UK is evident in the grant to the Magna Carta Trust to commemorate the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its signing; the expansion by one third of Arts Council England's Cultural Gifts Scheme; the £20m to repair cathedrals to host World War 1 commemorations; and the inspiration drawn from the past in the design of the new £1 coin.

The socio-economic impact of heritage science is in the way it improves understanding of cultural heritage and opens up new ways for people to enjoy and learn from our rich history. From the use of digital imaging techniques to gain new insights into difficult-to-read ancient texts, the design of state-of-the-art exhibition facilities for fragile artefacts; or the application of x-ray techniques to aid understanding of the mechanisms of weathering and decay of masonry stone in cathedrals, heritage science underpins how we understand, preserve and interact with heritage. The targeted nature of the support announced in the Budget whilst welcome, represents a missed opportunity for heritage science to benefit from investment which would have enhanced the activities associated with landmark events such as the Magna Carta and World War 1 anniversaries by demonstrating how advanced scientific techniques are being applied to protect our most treasured records of the past.

The National Heritage Science Forum brings together academic and cultural heritage organisations who share a vision of building a coordinated community of scientists representing many disciplines to address the big challenges to the present and future needs of cultural heritage in the UK. At its heart is the goal of pooling and sharing our scientific understanding of the things, both natural and man-made, that are valued for their meaning and significance for the benefit of present and future generations.

**-Ends-**

## **Notes to editors**

1. 'Heritage Science' is the term used to encompass all technological and scientific work that can benefit the heritage sector, whether through improved management decisions, enhanced understanding of significance and cultural values or increased public engagement.

2. The National Heritage Science Forum (NHSF) was launched in June 2013. It brings together major UK institutions active in the field of Heritage Science who work to deliver the National Heritage Science Strategy, which was drawn up in response to the 2006 House of Lords inquiry into science and heritage: <http://www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk/strategy.php>.

The strategic aims of NHSF are:

- To improve partnership within the sector and with others by increasing collaboration to help practice make better use of research, knowledge and innovation and to enhance resources, funding and skills, investment and profile.
- To demonstrate the public benefit of heritage science and increase public engagement and support for it.

NHSF is a registered charity (number 1154160), [www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk](http://www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk).

3. Research was undertaken by the University of Cardiff / York Minster into weathering and decay in historic magnesian limestone as part of the Science and Heritage research programme. Research involved the application of X-ray techniques to inform cathedral conservation in the 21st century.

[http://www.heritagescience.ac.uk/Research\\_Projects/projects/CRS/RWalker](http://www.heritagescience.ac.uk/Research_Projects/projects/CRS/RWalker)

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