

PRESS RELEASE

**2015 EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards:
Five winners from the UK**

Brussels / The Hague, 14 April 2015 - The European Commission and Europa Nostra have revealed today the winners of the 2015 European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards, considered Europe's most prestigious prize in the heritage field. The **28 award winners**, selected from 263 applications submitted by organisations and individuals from 29 countries, are honoured for outstanding achievements in four categories: 1) conservation, 2) research and digitization, 3) dedicated service to heritage, and 4) education, training and awareness-raising.

The **European Heritage Awards Ceremony** will take place on **11 June** at the **Oslo City Hall** and will be co-hosted by **Fabian Stang**, Mayor of Oslo, **Tibor Navracsics**, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, and **Plácido Domingo**, the renowned opera singer and President of Europa Nostra. At the ceremony, seven of the selected winners will be named as Grand Prix laureates, receiving €10,000 each, and one will receive the Public Choice Award, chosen in an [online poll](#) conducted by Europa Nostra.

"Cultural heritage is one of Europe's biggest assets. It brings countless cultural, economic, social and environmental benefits to all of us. I would like to congratulate the winners of the 2015 EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards, who are the perfect example of what dedicated and competent Europeans can do for heritage - but also for our European identity, contributing to a sense of belonging. We all need to keep working together to help communities and citizens take ownership of our heritage, make it part of our daily lives and preserve it for the generations to come," said Commissioner Navracsics.

"This year's winners are powerful examples of creativity and innovation at work for Europe's cultural heritage. They also demonstrate that heritage matters to Europe and its citizens. We trust that, under the leadership of President Juncker and Commissioner Navracsics, the European Union's strategy for an integrated approach to cultural heritage will be further developed and implemented," added Plácido Domingo.

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TO FIND OUT MORE

About each winning project:
[information and jury's comments](#),
[high resolution photos](#) and [videos](#)

[Creative Europe website](#)
Twitter: [@europe_creative](#)
[Commissioner Navracsics website](#)

2015 Award Winners

(listed alphabetically by country)

Category Conservation

- [Picturesque Garden of the Museum van Buuren in Brussels, BELGIUM](#)
- [Armenian Church and Monastery in Nicosia, CYPRUS](#)
- [Boulingrin Central Market Hall in Reims, FRANCE](#)
- [Antouaniko Mansion in Chios, GREECE](#)
- [Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, HUNGARY](#)
- [Nuragic Sculptures of Monte Prama in Sardinia, ITALY](#)
- [Paleochristian Mosaics of the Basilica Complex in Aquileia, ITALY](#)
- [The Halls Amsterdam: Centre for Media, Fashion, Culture and Crafts, THE NETHERLANDS](#)
- [Manor House in Eidsvoll, NORWAY](#)
- [Cathedral in Tarazona, SPAIN](#)
- [Salt Valley of Añana, Basque Country, SPAIN](#)
- [Armenian Church of St. Giragos in Diyarbakir, TURKEY](#)
- [Middleport Pottery in Stoke-on-Trent, UNITED KINGDOM](#)
- [Stonehenge: Surrounding Landscape and Visitor Centre in Wiltshire, UNITED KINGDOM](#)

Category Research and Digitization

Research Projects:

- [Restoration of Lasithi Plateau's Windmills with Perforated Sails, Crete, GREECE](#)
- [Learning from las Cuencas: the Cultural Landscape of the Asturian Coalfields, SPAIN](#)

Digitization Projects:

- [HERMES: Hermoupolis Digital Heritage Management, Syros, GREECE](#)
- [Wonders of Venice: Virtual Online Treasures in St. Mark's Area, ITALY](#)

Category Dedicated Service

- [The Rundling Association, Jameln, GERMANY](#)
- [Huis Doorn Association of Friends, Doorn, THE NETHERLANDS](#)
- [Churches Conservation Trust, London, UNITED KINGDOM](#)

Category Education, Training and Awareness-Raising

Education Projects:

- [Heritage Skills Initiative, Newcastle upon Tyne, UNITED KINGDOM](#)
- [Young Archaeologists' Club, York, UNITED KINGDOM](#)

Training Projects:

- [Programme for Owners of Rural Buildings in Estonia, Tallinn, ESTONIA](#)
- [The Outbuilding Project, Roros, NORWAY](#)

Awareness-Raising Projects:

- [The Garden City of Stains, FRANCE](#)
- [Saving Past Testimonies for Building a Future, Chisinau, MOLDOVA](#)
- [The Fota Walled Garden, Cork, IRELAND](#)

Middleport Pottery in Stoke-on-Trent, UNITED KINGDOM

Middleport Pottery is located in Stoke on Trent, at the heart of the British ceramics industry. The Pottery was built in 1888 as a model factory for the production of what became the world-renowned “Burleigh” earthenware. In 2010 closure threatened, jeopardising 50 jobs, traditional skills, historic processes and unique collections of ceramics moulds and archives. So great was the cost of repairing the buildings that the site had no viable operational future.

But the business has been dramatically rescued by a UK heritage charity, The Prince's Regeneration Trust. Its many buildings are still home to Burleigh pottery, using traditional techniques, and also host a growing visitor destination with interpretation facilities, a gallery exhibiting historic examples of its products, educational and teaching space and a café. Additionally, the historic machinery, artefacts and nationally important collections and archive have been saved for public viewing. The site also now houses three smaller specialist pottery businesses and has workshop space available for further creative businesses.

“The Jury were gratified to be able to recognise the rescue of this fine unit of production – both the industrial premises and its delightful product. Many such worthwhile ventures fall by the wayside through the absence of a new sponsor, and that is where the Prince's Regeneration Trust deserve thanks for facilitating the continuation in production of this attractive range of earthenware pottery. The factory too now has a secure future as one of the last surviving traditional potteries in the West Midlands of England, known as “The Potteries” and once characterised by its factory chimneys and distinctive bottle kilns. The techniques and skills of production have been revitalised and buildings and machinery carefully conserved to retain their unique atmosphere and spirit of place.”

Stonehenge: Surrounding Landscape and Visitor Centre in Wiltshire, UNITED KINGDOM

Stonehenge in Wiltshire is among the world's most iconic and best known archaeological sites. It stands as testimony to the prehistoric peoples who built it some 4,000 years ago and is one of the most intriguing and remarkable monuments in Europe. Sadly, for many years, Stonehenge has been severely compromised by a busy road cutting it off from its surrounding landscape and by outdated visitor facilities and parking close to the monument.

This project sought to restore a sense of dignity and wonder to the setting by building a new visitor centre at a location further from the Stones and providing new interpretation and exhibitions. By removing the road and the outdated visitor facilities, it was possible to restore the ancient landscape and re-unite the monument with The Avenue, its original processional route. The new building was designed to sit unobtrusively in the ancient landscape, minimising below ground disturbance and alteration of the existing topography, while creating an accessible and legible layout for visitors. A low-tech visitor transit system runs from the visitor centre, along the route of the closed road, thereby avoiding the need for additional infrastructure.

“The Jury recognised that the opening of the Stonehenge visitor centre in 2013 was the fulfilment of many years of hard work to find a solution to traffic and visitor problems for this outstanding World Heritage Site. They admired the new building, designed by international architects, discreetly out of view of Stonehenge, and the interpretation based on major programmes of research into the archaeology and early history of the area. The partnership formed between English Heritage and the National Trust to manage the approaches to the monument is a fine example of cooperation between the UK's two leading conservation bodies.”

Churches Conservation Trust, London, UNITED KINGDOM

The Churches Conservation Trust is England's national charity for protecting historic churches at risk by taking them into direct care. First established in 1969, when many churches were falling into disrepair or, perceived as an impediment to progress, were threatened with demolition, the Trust was originally known as the Redundant Churches Fund. It works with the Church of England to secure a future for listed churches that lack a regular congregation. From its first vesting in May 1971, the Trust has now saved a collection of 347 listed buildings, is supported by over 1700 volunteers, and its buildings are visited by nearly 2 million visitors every year.

All the Trust's work, from regeneration to tourism, and community engagement to marketing, is firmly guided by its conservation principles. As a heritage charity that works directly with an established state church, it is the only organisation of its kind in the world and is a recognised leader in the fields of religious heritage preservation, conservation, regeneration, and use.

“The Jury admired particularly the Churches Conservation Trust’s early recognition of the importance of safeguarding the religious and architectural significance of historic places of worship and their essential function as centres of community life. Public disengagement with religion (as regards Christianity anyway) has made this task even more necessary. This long-established but still unique partnership between Church and State should be a model for all to follow. The Jury also appreciated the highly significant role the Trust has played in the foundation of the Future of Religious Heritage Network, where its proven model of sustainability will be pivotal for the preservation across Europe of religious heritage buildings and their interiors.”

Heritage Skills Initiative, Newcastle upon Tyne, UNITED KINGDOM

The Heritage Skills Initiative has been running at North of England Civic Trust since November 2006. It was set up after a series of reports drew attention to the shortage of skilled heritage craftspeople available to maintain the region’s built environment and engineering heritage. It has worked with organisations, charities, educational establishments, professionals, craftspeople, students, teachers and the general public to raise awareness of and promote educational and training opportunities in traditional heritage skills. The programmes have been developed against a sound educational methodology to ensure a wide participation from schoolchildren through to professionals, enhancing their understanding for both the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the region. The project has achieved a reputation for raising the profile of heritage skills and providing opportunities for everyone to participate.

Since its foundation, Heritage Skills Initiative has delivered 150,000 hours of training and engagement with over 37,000 people. Its activities range from Taster Days, master classes, lectures, conferences to a variety of tailor-made events; also there have been 11 building bursaries of over 6 months’ duration and 53 heritage engineering bursaries of 12 months’ duration. 91% of the engineering trainees continued into heritage and engineering employment. 40% of the participants for practical hands-on training are women. In addition, nearly 400 children between 13 and 15, from 25 schools, have taken part in the programme.

“The Jury hailed the substantial contribution made by the Heritage Skills Initiative in raising awareness of the built environment in the North East of England and Cumbria: assessing training needs and delivering a varied programme with opportunities for all ages, from school children to students and professionals needing to develop their knowledge of specific heritage skills. The participatory, sustainable and creative ways to address a regional challenge are inspirational. The Heritage Skills Initiative creates structured means for people to understand and be involved in caring for their regional heritage, and perhaps even to consider it as a career.”

Young Archaeologists’ Club, York, UNITED KINGDOM

The Young Archaeologists’ Club is a community-led programme which engages children in archaeology and the built environment. The Club began at the University of Cambridge in 1972 and its programme is now delivered by 600 volunteers at 70 Branches throughout the UK. In 2013 the Club provided opportunities for 7,000 children to get involved in archaeology.

At Young Archaeologists’ Club Branches, young people (age 8 -16 years) can learn together, develop strong identification with their communities and understanding of their place in the world. They develop team-working and communication skills in real-world situations. Getting involved in a Branch provides essential opportunities to meet like-minded peers exploring a subject which inspires genuine motivation, allowing young people to make the most of their individual passions and talents to raise their aspirations and realise their full potential. In a recent survey, two-thirds of Young Archaeologists’ Club Alumni had gone on to study archaeology and one-third to work in the sector. In addition, Young Archaeologists’ Club is unusual in the heritage sector in attracting, as supervisors and teachers, young volunteers, the majority between 25 and 34; it is an experience which gives valuable support as they establish their own adult lives and careers.

“The Jury were impressed with the successful achievement over many years of a simple yet vital role – to enthuse young people about archaeology and the past. The dedication that goes into the planning of activities and longer-term structure of the organisation is truly noteworthy and it is no surprise that a high percentage of members go on to study archaeology and work in this field. With many branches embedded into different organisations and geographical areas the Young Archaeologists’ Club is an outstanding achievement in education, which is particularly important when opportunities in this subject within the school curriculum are limited.”

BACKGROUND

The [EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards](#) was launched in 2002 by the European Commission in partnership with Europa Nostra. The Prize celebrates and promotes best practices related to heritage conservation, management, research, education and communication. In this way, it brings cultural heritage closer to European citizens and contributes to a stronger public recognition of cultural heritage as a strategic resource for Europe's society and economy. A total of 415 outstanding heritage accomplishments have been recognised in the past 13 years.

Every year, organisations and individuals from all over Europe submit their applications to this awards scheme. [Specialist juries made up of independent experts](#) assess the nominations and select up to 30 winners in four categories: 1) conservation, 2) research and digitization, 3) dedicated service to heritage, and 4) education, training and awareness-raising. All the winners receive a plaque or trophy. The seven Grand Prix winners also receive €10,000 each.

The Awards are presented to the winners at a major public event, which is hosted each year in a different European city. The 2015 Awards Ceremony is to take place in Oslo and is part of Europa Nostra's [European Heritage Congress](#) held in the Norwegian capital (10-14 June). The Congress is supported by the European Union's Creative Europe programme, Riksantikvaren - the Directorate for Cultural Heritage and the Arts Council of Norway, and the City of Oslo, among many other public and private bodies from Norway.

The Prize received the support of the [EU Culture](#) programme (2007-2013) and is now supported by the new [Creative Europe](#) programme (2014-2020).

[Europa Nostra](#) is the European federation of heritage NGO's. Covering 40 countries in Europe, the organisation is the voice of civil society committed to safeguarding and promoting Europe's cultural and natural heritage. Europa Nostra campaigns to save Europe's endangered monuments, sites and landscapes, in particular through 'The 7 Most Endangered' programme, run in partnership with the European Investment Bank Institute. It celebrates excellence through the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards. It also seeks to contribute to European strategies and policies related to heritage. Founded in 1963, Europa Nostra is today recognised as the most representative and influential heritage network in Europe. In 2014, the organisation received an EU grant from the Creative Europe programme to support its network's activity on 'Mainstreaming Heritage' in Europe.