

The Ironbridge Gorge Heritage Site and its local and regional functions

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the issue of heritage and its functions. Based on the existing literature, the author presents the definition of heritage, the classification of heritage resources, and its most important impacts. The aim of the article was to show the functions that may be performed by a heritage site, locally and regionally. The example used by the author is the Ironbridge Gorge Heritage Site in the United Kingdom. Most heritage functions described by other authors are confirmed in this case study. The cultural heritage of the Ironbridge Gorge creates an opportunity to undertake various local and regional activities, having first of all an educational influence on the inhabitants, school youth and tourists. We must not ignore the economic influences, such as financing the activity of the Ironbridge Trust (the institution administering the site), generating income for local firms providing service to tourists, or for construction companies. This income helps to preserve and conserve the tangible heritage of the Ironbridge Gorge, as well as to generate jobs in heritage management, conservation and heritage tourism. Other effects of the Ironbridge Gorge Site include a socio-cultural impact or that related to sustainable development.

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1. Introduction

The question often asked nowadays is: what is cultural heritage, how it can be classified and why it is important for the development of societies and economies (Harvey, 2001). Heritage and its role were perceived differently at different times. Currently, it is believed that heritage itself and heritage studies do not refer to the past which the heritage elements come from, as much as to their current meaning and application. This generates a discussion about the main heritage functions, i.e. what it can be used for (Graham, Howard, 2008).

Socio-cultural changes in today's societies, including the departure from one-nation heritage and moving towards the complex heritage of foreign cultures connected with migrations are widely discussed (Ashwort, Graham, 1997; Littler, Naidoo, 2004). An important issue is the role heritage plays in education, as well as in personal and social group development. This function may be analysed using the example of school groups' visits or cultural or heritage tourism, where the visits have an educational and cognitive character (Richards, 2001; Robinson, 2010).

There is also the important issue of supporting cultural heritage financially. Money is needed for the conservation and protection of heritage sites. It is a difficult question whether cultural heritage sites should be financed from public funds or remain self-financing entities (Raedy, Navrud, 2002).

In this article, the author presents the main local and regional heritage functions, using the example of the Ironbridge Gorge: a British heritage site connected with the history of the Industrial Revolution and perceived as one of the most valuable heritage sites of this kind in Europe. There are books which describe heritage functions but there are not many concise articles presenting these functions on the basis of an individual and complete case study. The aim of this article is to observe the ways and purposes of using heritage locally and regionally, on the example of the Ironbridge Gorge. Other aims include presenting definitions of heritage, classifying it and presenting its main functions, based on literature. The author used several research methods, including direct observation, conversations with the employees of the Ironbridge Institute, and the analysis of the Ironbridge Trust reports, literature and Internet sources.

2. Theoretical background

Originally, heritage was a legal and cultural term referring to passing down parents' assets to their successors. In the 18th c., in France, the term started to be used to talk about national legacy. The following centuries brought further changes as regards the understanding of heritage; there appeared international organizations and legal regulations regarding heritage (Vecco, 2010). The concept of heritage was first introduced into international law in 1907. Subsequent international legal acts started to be constructed in the 1950s by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) (Blake, 2000; Yahaya, 2006).

The word *heritage* has many meanings which have been changing over time. It has strong links with the past, represents some sort of inheritance passed down to the next generations. It includes natural components, as well as elements of human tangible and intangible culture. Following the values adopted in a given socio-cultural area, the society decides what is worth preserving and passing down as heritage (Dallen, Boyd, 2003). Heritage studies feature two most common approaches. The first one involves an analysis of what heritage is, while the other one – how it should be selected and interpreted (Carman, 2002). Earlier definitions put a greater emphasis on the elements constituting heritage. Bowes (1989: 36) wrote that "...heritage must be broadly defined to encompass not only major historic sites and institutions, but the entire landscape of the region with its geographic base: farms and field patterns, roads, harbours, industrial structures, villages and main streets, commercial establishments and of course, the people themselves and their traditions and economic activities."

Recent research papers have been presenting a discussion on the different ways of understanding and interpreting heritage (Urry, 1995). Moreover, heritage started to include some contemporary elements, e.g. certain old but still cultivated traditions and behaviours (see: Smith, 2006). It is accepted that the significance of heritage depends on many elements, such as individual and social evaluation, the historical period, economic condi-

tions, or political system (Henderson, 2011). Heritage is gaining an increasingly pluralistic character, because nowadays we deal with a diversity of heritage, as well as a multitude of actors influencing and creating it, which results from the variety of cultures existing in contemporary western multicultural societies (see: Tunbridge, 2008). It can be assumed that heritage in the present context is referring “to the ways in which very selective past material artifacts, natural landscapes, mythologies, memories and traditions become cultural, political and economic resource for the present” (Graham, Howard, 2008: 2). “Heritage is therefore ultimately a cultural practice, involved in the construction and regulation of a range of values and understandings” (Smith, 2006: 11). As Smith (2006: 1-2) wrote, “Heritage wasn’t only about the past – though it was that too – it also wasn’t just about material things – though it was that as well – heritage was a process of engagement, an act of communication and an act of making meaning in and for the present... The real sense of heritage, the real moment of heritage when our emotions and sense of self are truly engaged, is ... in the act of passing on and receiving memories and knowledge.”

As regards the types of heritage, the UNESCO distinguishes between natural and cultural heritage. Considering the topic of this article, the author decided to define cultural heritage, which, according to UNESCO, includes the following (see: Recommendation..., 1972):

- monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, including cave dwellings and inscriptions, and elements, groups of elements or structures of special value from the point of view of archaeology, history, art or science;
- groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of special value from the point of view of history, art or science;
- sites topographical areas, the combined works of man and of nature, which are of special value by reason of their beauty or their interest from the archaeological, historical, ethnological or anthropological points of view.

Moreover, we may also distinguish between two heritage constituents, i.e. intangible and tangible

values of heritage. As Ahmad (2006: 297) wrote, “The importance of intangible values as part of heritage was emphasized by UNESCO when it adopted a convention in 2003 that helped to protect intangible cultural heritage, which was defined as: practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated with communities, groups and individuals.” In another part of Ahmad publication (2006: 298), we find a description of tangible values: “...in 1999 UNESCO clarified the scope of tangible (heritage) values as cultural properties to include monuments, groups of buildings and sites (Article 23:5)...” An interesting division of heritage objects can be found in the work by Carman (2002: 35-36). He distinguished movable objects of heritage, sites and monuments distinguished from their surroundings by borders, and landscapes containing many different human and environmental elements, which are spatial elements with boundaries.

Ashwort and Graham (1997: 382) divided heritage with regard to the process of European integration. This division is more geographical; thus, it is more connected with space and its different levels. There, we find four different kinds of heritage: (a) local heritage: found on regional, ethnic or tribal level; (b) national heritage; (c) European heritage; (d) world heritage.

Contemporary discourse concerns two important sets of heritage: the first one concerns the management and conservation of heritage sites, places and objects, while the second one refers to visiting sites and institutions as a part of tourism and leisure (Smith, 2006: 12). These two discourses give grounds to an analysis of the functions which heritage performs in the contemporary world. These functions should be understood as the roles played by properly managed and protected heritage. “To reiterate, heritage is that part of the past which we select in the present for contemporary purposes, whether they be economic or cultural (including political and social factors)” (Graham, 2002: 1006). Heritage functions may be divided in different ways. We may talk about direct and indirect influence, influence on individuals or social groups, as well as about global, national, regional and local scale functions. Heritage functions may be divided into positive and negative ones. Finally, we may distinguish among various types of heritage functions based on

the sphere which they have an influence on. Based on the analysis of selected literature referring to cultural heritage (Cultural heritage as...; Ashwort, Graham, 1997; Graham, 2002; Mazzanti, 2002; Bedate et al., 2004; Mähina-Tuai, 2006; Mälkki, Schmidt-Thomé, 2010; Waterton, Smith, 2010; Murzyn-Kupisz, 2012; Clayton et al., 2014), the author lists the following types of cultural heritage functions:

- **The educational-cognitive function.** It involves popularizing knowledge about heritage among adults and youth, e.g. pupils or students. This function also regards adult inhabitants of a given country, foreign tourists and viewers watching educational TV programs abroad. This function helps to promote a given country or region, its assets, culture and customs, as well as creates its positive image. The function is supported by a variety of products offered to visitors (e.g. museums, museum lessons, tourist trails, books, brochures, educational films) by organizations involved in education and heritage promotion, operating at different levels (e.g. foundations, tourism organizations, authorities).
- **The tourist function.** It involves generating tourist traffic on the basis of interest in heritage. We may refer here to cultural tourism (Richards, 2001; McKercher, Du Cros, 2002) and heritage tourism (Nuryanti, 1996; Yale, 2004). In this case, the purpose of a journey is to discover elements of human culture or an element of heritage. Tourism itself has a number of social, economic and spatial impacts which can be called functions. They are also observed in cultural and heritage tourism. It is estimated that “37% of global tourism has a cultural motivation. Heritage visitors stay longer, visit twice as many places, and so spend 2 1/2 times more than other visitors” (see: Cultural heritage as...).
- **The economic function.** Cultural heritage may bring profits, as heritage sites are places of consumption (Graham, 2002). At given heritage sites, tourists spend money on entrance tickets, tourist services (accommodation, board), and goods (food, drinks, souvenirs, fuel). For instance, in 2011, 35% of overseas visitors to the United Kingdom visited castles, churches, and historic houses. According to the British Council report, cultural and historical attractions are among the most important assets making the country attractive. In the United Kingdom, in 2011, built heritage contributed £ 5.1 bn to British economy (Clayton et al. 2014: 11). Due to the fact that heritage generates profits, it also helps to develop economy at the national, local and regional level.
- **Job creation.** A derivative of the tourist and economic function is the creation of jobs, e.g. in tourist services at heritage sites, in museums, institutions popularizing the knowledge of heritage (educational, training and research institutions), as well as in small production plants. For example, in 2011, ca. 134,000 jobs constituted direct employment in built heritage tourism in the United Kingdom. Adding the indirect employment and the induced effects generated by the heritage sector purchasing from other industries, the estimated number rose to 393,000 jobs (Clayton et al. 2014: 11). Creating jobs is particularly significant socially, as it generates incomes for the local population, leads to a reduction of unemployment and its negative social effects.
- **Place regeneration.** Place regeneration takes place through revitalization and development of heritage. It involves regenerating areas with valuable pieces of tangible heritage and creating sustainable and revitalized spaces with renewed buildings and new functions (Stratton, 2000; Tweed, Sutherland, 2007). Place regeneration may involve many actors, e.g. city authorities or the local community. The process creates jobs and incomes for subcontractors. For instance, in the United Kingdom, the repair and maintenance of historic buildings in 2011 supported ca. 180 000 jobs and generated economic output of £4.1 bn (Clayton et al., 2014: 12). Moreover, regeneration often has a wider range because it requires the redecoration and development of infrastructure, an improvement of the state of the neighbouring buildings, etc. (for details about place regeneration see: Roberts, Sykes, 2000). In effect, the living conditions and economic perspectives of the local population are improving. It should also be stressed that regeneration can make use of intangible cultural heritage, e.g. as part of culture-led regeneration strategies (Bianchini, Parkinson, 1993; Miles, Paddison, 2005).
- **Place promotion.** In this case, we deal with typical activities which involve promotion of given

localizations through culture, historical monuments and events (for more information about place promotion see: Andersson, 2014). As a result of using heritage associated with a given localization, "... the marketing images are portrayed through the medium of urban heritage... to mark its (*place*) advantages over other places—not only as a centre of innovation, but also as a vibrant and attractive living urban environment" (Graham, 2002: 1009).

- **Socio-cultural impact.** Heritage has a number of positive social effects, both as regards individuals and social groups (Clayton et al., 2014). It makes it possible to create a sense of national or community belonging, a community sense of place, as well as increases individuals' civic pride and the level of wellbeing due to the increase of life satisfaction. The interpretation and selection of heritage has a significant political dimension. Heritage makes it possible to shape the politics of memory, promote certain social attitudes or even a given state policy (Henderson, 2011). Heritage has an influence on the social capital; it creates opportunities to develop new social relations and increase knowledge, provides contact with tangible and intangible culture, and creates cooperation possibilities (e.g. in local communities). Cooperating to preserve heritage increas-

es community cohesion as well (Murzyn-Kupisz, 2012; Clayton et al., 2014).

- **Protecting and shaping natural environment.** Heritage conservation may contribute to the protection of natural environment and to the sustainable development of heritage sites. Staying under legal protection, such sites are protected from damage and further transformation. Moreover, we can observe some development of responsible tourism, connected with heritage preservation. Such projects often include pro-ecological technologies (Murzyn-Kupisz, 2012).

3. The Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site

The Ironbridge Gorge is a heritage site covering about six miles of the River Severn Valley, situated in Shropshire County, West Midlands, England (Fig.1). It is a hilly area with a deeply cut river valley, called the Ironbridge Gorge. There are several small destinations situated there, such as Coalbrookdale, Ironbridge, Broseley, Jackfield, Madeley and Coalport (Fig. 2). The Ironbridge Gorge is known as the cradle of the Industrial Revolution (Alfrey, Clark, 1993).



Fig. 1. Location of the Ironbridge Gorge

Source: Author's elaboration

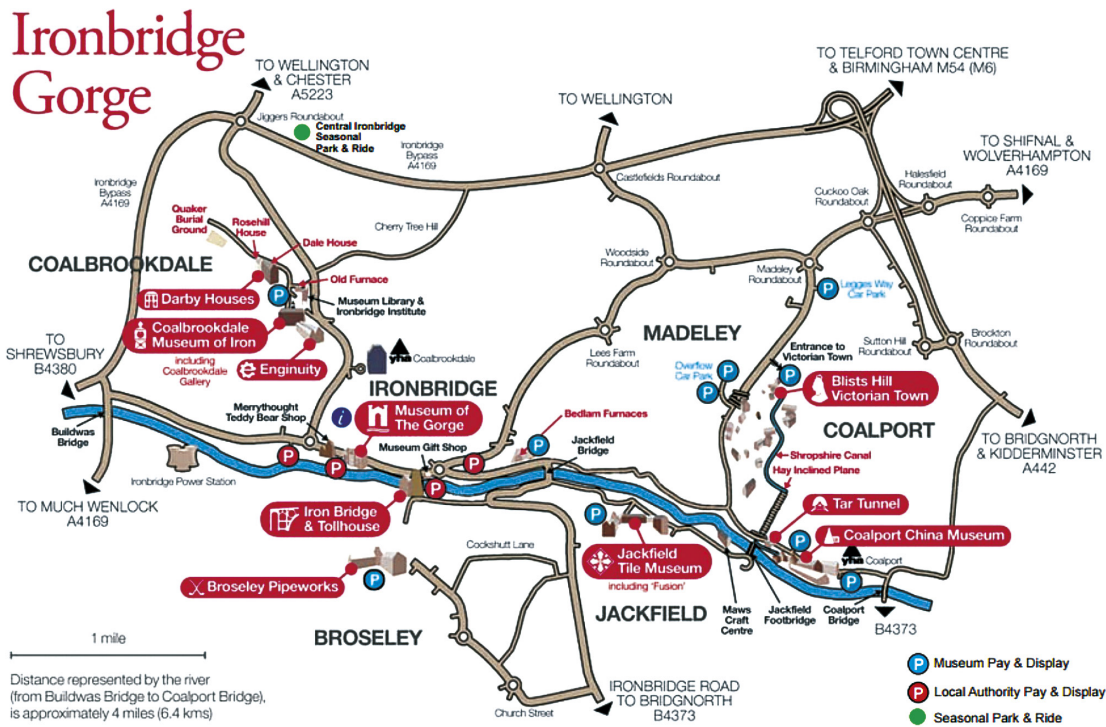


Fig. 2. Map of Ironbridge Gorge

Source: <http://www.ironbridge.org.uk/assets/Uploads/2014-LEAFLET-all-pages-lores.pdf>

“In 1986, the Ironbridge Gorge became one of the first group of 7 UK sites to be awarded World Heritage status by UNESCO. The designation of the Ironbridge Gorge as a World Heritage Site recognised the area’s unique contribution to the birth of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, the impact of which was felt across the world. The surviving built and natural environment with its museums, monuments and artefacts, including the world famous Iron Bridge of 1779, serve to remind us of this area’s unique contribution to the history and development of industrialised society” (<http://www.ironbridge.org.uk/about-us/world-heritage-site/>). Ironbridge represents tangible and intangible values of heritage distinguished by Ahmad (2006). Thus, we have different historical buildings, as well as several events are organized there through the year. This site should be treated as an area of heritage landscape, described by Carman (2002), which contains of human and environmental spatial elements.

The items in the Ironbridge Gorge which are most important for the world heritage are managed by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust. The Trust was established in 1967 and its objectives include the preservation and interpretation of the remains

of the Industrial Revolution within the six square miles of the Ironbridge Gorge. The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust is a registered independent educational charity. The aim of this organization is to protect and develop tangible heritage elements, engage the local community and the visitors in this protection, popularize the knowledge about the Ironbridge Gorge through various types of promotional and educational campaigns, and generate tourist traffic based on local heritage. The Trust cares for 36 scheduled monuments and listed buildings. Ten of those sites are museums that will be described in detail further in the article. The site also includes a research library, a tourist information centre, two youth hostels, archaeological sites, historic woodlands, housing, two chapels, and two Quaker burial grounds. More than half of the Trust’s revenue income comes directly from visitor admissions, including Gift Aid, and the remaining balance comes from the revenue generated from its retail operation, conference, tenanted properties, etc. Moreover, the cost of conservation and development works is covered from public subsidies and sponsors’ donations¹. The heritage of Ironbridge has important local, national, European and world functions (Ash-

wort, Graham, 1997). The heritage site is important for local economy, tourism and social development. It is also important on the scale of the country: it educates and provides information about the role of Britain in Industrial Revolution. From this point of view the unique heritage of Ironbridge Gorge is also valuable on the European and global scale.

The history of industry in the Ironbridge Gorge started in Coalbrookdale, where in 1709 the entrepreneur Abraham Darby smelted iron ore for the first time in history, using an efficient blast furnace fuelled with coke instead of charcoal used earlier. As a result, for the first time, an iron alloy of higher purity and durability was obtained. Darby improved the technology of cast iron production as well, by using sand moulds. In mid-18th c., the iron industry located in Coalbrookdale really began to take off. The family business was then taken over by Abraham Darby II, who continued the production of cast iron, cooking pots, kettles and other iron goods. The next decades brought the development of new inventions of the Industrial Revolution, in-

cluding the rise of railway. That increased the demand for iron and cast iron produced at Darby's company, which manufactured cast iron cylinders for steam engines, cooking utensils and cast iron elements of interior design (Coalbrookdale. Birthplace of Industry, 2014).

Currently, the Coalbrookdale area invites visitors to several museums, such as The Darby Houses from the 18th c. – the Darbys' property, preserved in its original state. Another facility is the Museum of Iron, with a variety of iron history-related exhibits, including a collection of fine arts castings. The museum also includes a souvenir shop and a café (Fig. 3). Next to it, there is the Ingenuity, an interactive design and technology centre. It is divided into the following areas: Materials & Structures, Systems & Control, Energy & Design. We can also find there a special workshop and an interactive show zone, used by school groups during museum lessons. There is also the Old Furnace there, built at the beginning of the 18th c. and used by Abraham Darby for the first smelting of iron with the use of coke (Fig. 3).

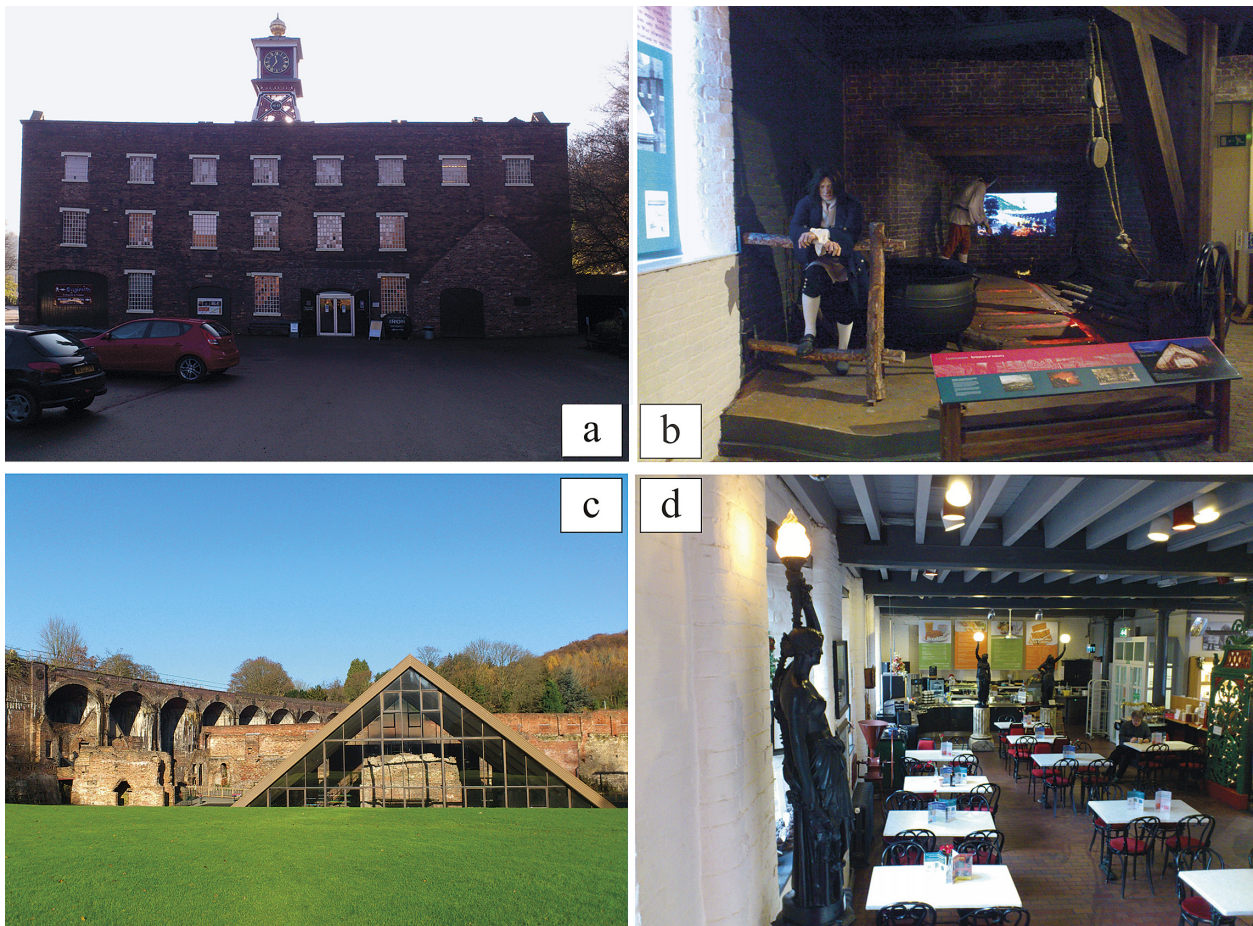


Fig. 3. Historical objects in Coalbrookdale.

Explanation: a – Entrance to the Museum of Iron, b – Inside the Museum of Iron, c – The Old Furnace, d – Coffee shop in the Museum of Iron

Source: Author's photos

Abraham Darby III, the next in the line of Quaker industrialists, took over the family business in Coalbrookdale and decided to build an iron bridge across the River Severn. The bridge was needed to make transporting raw material to foundries more convenient. It was designed by Thomas Farnolls Pritchard and built in 1779. The cast iron elements of the bridge were cast in one of Darby's furnaces (The Iron Bridge and Town, 2010). The Iron Bridge was the first of the kind in the world; it also became a symbol of the Industrial Revolution and Britain's eighteen-century industrial achievements (Alfrey, Clark, 1993). After building the bridge, the north-

ern end of the town of Ironbridge developed rapidly (Fig. 4). A new town square was built, as well as new shops and houses. In this way, the bridge became a town-creative factor and contributed to the development of a new destination, whose name derives from it: the Town of Ironbridge (The Iron Bridge and Town, 2010). At present, the most important tourist attraction in the town of Ironbridge is the Bridge and the Tollhouse situated next to it. Going westwards, we can find another interesting facility – the Museum of the Gorge, with information, materials and presentations regarding the natural environment and the history of industry in the Ironbridge Gorge.



Fig. 4. The Iron Bridge and the town

Explanation: a – The Iron Bridge, b – The Town of Ironbridge

Source: Author's photo

On the south bank of the River Severn, in Broseley, there is another museum, the Broseley Pipeworks. Broseley developed as an industrial town in the 18th c. At that time, it was a major coal mining, iron manufacture and clay mining centre. Apart from that, the town was known for producing clay pipes. Nowadays, we can visit an old pipe production plant, where pipes were manufactured until the middle of the 20th c.

Jackfield Tile Museum in Jackfield is another place connected with the production of ceramic tiles used in construction. The museum is located in buildings which belong to the former Craven Dunnill Factory, built in 1874. The facility accommodates extremely interesting expositions of tiles produced in the factory. They imitate different kinds of sets, such as the 1930s Domestic Residence, Tube Station, etc. (Fig. 5). Moreover, we will find many

exhibitions there, e.g. the recently-opened John Scott Gallery. The museum also includes a workshop, a coffee shop and a shop offering ceramic goods. Adjacent to the museum is Craven Dunnill & Co Ltd, a company producing valuable wall tiles, floor tiles and specialist ceramics. Another attraction is the modern Fusion gallery, added to the main Museum building in 2007 (Fig. 5).

Coalport, situated opposite Jackfield, is a small former industrial settlement based on mining. At present, its tourist attractions are the Tar Tunnel, Blists Hill Victorian Town and the Coalport China Museum. The Tar Tunnel was built in the 18th c. in order to connect the River Severn with the mining areas situated on the hill. However, as a result of finding bitumen deposits, the construction of the tunnel was abandoned and the material started to

be mined underground. Today, in the Tar Tunnel we can find an underground tourist trail. Blists Hill Victorian Town is an open-air museum representing the way of life in a Victorian town in the 19th c. We can find here a town, ironworks and countryside areas, where numerous events are organized. The buildings come from the 19th c.; some of them were later re-

constructed and adjusted to the needs of an open-air museum. The area includes houses, shops and workplaces, pubs, restaurants and cafes, where customers are served by appropriately trained employees, dressed in historical costumes. In this way, the place acquires the look and atmosphere of a small industrial town from the end of Queen Victoria's era.



Fig. 5. Jackfield Tile Museum and its surrounding institutions

Explanation: a – Inside the Jackfield Tile Museum, b – Shop in the Jackfield Tile Museum, c – Fusion gallery, d – Craven Dunnill&Co Ltd.

Source: Author's photos

An interesting facility is the Coalport China Museum, accommodated in the former china factory established by John Rose, which operated in 1795–1926. One may see here the bottle-shaped chimneys of the factory as well as the buildings of the Coalport China Factory. Visitors can watch live demonstrations of traditional china production techniques. In the museum, tourists will find a cafe and a gift shop selling a range of china products and souvenirs. Nearby the museum, there is also a Youth Hostel.

4. The results of the Ironbridge Trust activity

The Ironbridge Gorge performs many functions typical of heritage areas. Based on a theoretical overview presented in Part 2 of this article, the functions of the Ironbridge Gorge Heritage Site may be divided into educational-cognitive, tourist, economic ones, those involving job creation, urban regeneration, place pro-

motion, socio-cultural impacts, as well as the protection and formation of natural environment.

The educational-cognitive function is enacted by visiting facilities in the area of the Heritage Site, including first of all the ten museums described in the previous part and administered by the Ironbridge Trust. In 2009 and 2010, they were visited by 567,000, and in 2012 and 2013 by 525,000 people annually. This aspect is extremely important, as the museums offer expositions, present films, promotional materials and souvenirs illustrating the history of British industry. In that way, the actions of Ironbridge Trust educate the visitors and show them the history of early stages of industrial revolution in Britain. Thus, the heritage site is a tool used for educational and cognitive purposes (Richards, 2001; Robinson, 2010), and visiting the Ironbridge Gorge could be treated as an act of receiving memories and knowledge (Smith, 2006). Besides, they are shown on TV and other media, not only in the United Kingdom, but also abroad. In this way, they contribute to the popularization of information about the history of the country and industry; they educate the society internationally, nationally, regionally and locally. They also generate the sense of national pride with the country's achievements in the industrialization era (The Ironbridge Gorge Museum..., 2014).

Another important aspect is the education of the youth. The positive role of trusts managing the heritage site in the education of school children was already described by O'Donnchadha and O'Connor (1996: 153). In Ironbridge Gorge, in 2013, there were about 75,000 school visits organized to the museums. The Ironbridge museums were among the most visited museums for schools outside London. An important educational facility is the Enginuity museum in Coalbrookdale, where children and youth may see various inventions at work, e.g. the locomotive, car or steam engine. In 2013, the Fabrication Laboratory was started there, where you can build prototypes of new ideas. A significant activity related not only to education but also science and international promotion of the Ironbridge Gorge, is the cooperation with the University of Birmingham, institutionalized in the form of the Ironbridge International Institute for Cultural Heritage for over 30 years. The Institute's objective is to educate about, as well as conduct research on heritage.

From the educational point of view, an important area is Blists Hill Victorian Town. Here, we may see how people from the Victorian age used to live, not only thanks to the revitalized buildings, but also the employees and volunteers who work in local costumes recreating the atmosphere of the past epoch. The different events, which should be included into intangible heritage values (see: Amad, 2006), organized there attract lots of school groups, among others. It may be said that those re-enactment activities are an element of the intangible heritage connected with the past of this place (The Ironbridge Gorge Museum..., 2014).

The development of tourism and local economy and job creation are the next important effects of the Ironbridge Trust's activity and the facilities it administers. Cultural heritage is an economic resource for the present (Graham, Howard, 2008), and on its basis different economic activities could be developed (Rizzo, Mignosa, 2013). The main element attracting visitors including cultural and heritage tourists are museums and other facilities connected with heritage (Richards, 2001; Robinson, 2010; Murzyn-Kupisz, 2012). This is also one of the most important factors in the case of Ironbridge Gorge. The events, including those organized in Blists Hill Victorian Town, Enginuity and other museums are of great importance for tourism and economic development as well. For instance, the Annual World Heritage Festival held in 2013 was attended by over 6000 visitors. In 2014, there were 44 different events connected with the history of the Heritage Site organized in the Ironbridge Gorge. Visitors to the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site come from various parts of the world and different regions of the United Kingdom. About 7% of the overall number of the visitors come from abroad and over a half of the visiting Britons from the West Midlands region (<http://www.ironbridge.org.uk/about-us/ironbridge-gorge-museum-trust/facts-and-figures/>, The Ironbridge Gorge Museum..., 2014). Due to the tourist activity, it is also possible to educate people about heritage, its significance and functions (Murzyn-Kupisz, 2012). Those activities are also important for local communities; thus, they are consulted with and co-organized by local inhabitants. Due to those activities people have an opportunity to cooperate, develop community pride as well as social capital (Smith, 2006).

Heritage is a public good but it needs money for its maintenance and restoration (Ready, Navrud, 2002). On one hand, heritage as an economic value generates income and jobs as well as allows to promote the heritage site. From the other hand, heritage requires resources in order to redevelop and revitalize the heritage areas and buildings (Rizzo, Mignosa, 2013). That money could be acquired primarily from tourism activities realized within heritage sites (McKercher, Du Cros, 2002), as well as from donations or public funding (Rizzo, Mignosa, 2013). Tourism generates important incomes financing the activity of the Ironbridge Trust (admission fees finance ca. 50% of the Ironbridge Trust activities) and creating conditions for site redevelopment activities. The Ironbridge Trust facilities in-

clude 8 shops, 6 restaurants and coffee shops, which also generate profits (<http://www.ironbridge.org.uk/assets/Uploads/2014-LEAFLET-all-pages-lores.pdf>).

Moreover, the Ironbridge Gorge is an important tourist destination generating substantial income for local business. On the TripAdvisor website, we can find over 6300 reviews of the Ironbridge Heritage Site (January 2015.). It is estimated that the Ironbridge Trust generates around £20m of income annually, which is a part of the visitor economy of Shropshire area. (<http://www.ironbridge.org.uk/about-us/ironbridge-gorge-museum-trust/facts-and-figures/>). According to <http://www.ironbridgeguide.info/>, there are 17 different accommodation facilities, 5 main shopping areas, and 10 large restaurants and pubs serving tourist services in the Ironbridge Gorge (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6. One of restaurants and accommodation facilities in Ironbridge Town.

Source: Author's photo

As regards job creation, the Trust supports around 160 full-time equivalent jobs directly and hundreds indirectly, in terms of its tenanted properties and wider creative and visitor economies. As well as employing around 200 staff, the Trust enjoys the support of over 400 regular local volunteers (<http://www.ironbridge.org.uk/about-us/ironbridge-gorge-museum-trust/facts-and-figures/>). What is more, because of the presence of destinations such as Coalbrookdale, Ironbridge Town, Broseley, Jackfield, Madeley or Coalport, there have appeared the gastronomy and accommodation facil-

ities mentioned before, as well as shops for tourists, which also provide employment for the inhabitants of the area.

With regard to the regeneration activities, the Ironbridge Trust has invested over £30 m in the development and conservation of the local historic assets in the last 15 years. In this respect, the Trust has enjoyed substantial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, European Regional Development Fund, the Regional Development Agency, trusts and foundations, commercial sponsorship, covenants and private donors (<http://www.ironbridge.org.uk/>

about-us/ironbridge-gorge-museum-trust/facts-and-figures/). The creation of heritage protected areas is a way of redevelopment and revitalization of valuable architectural and historical sites (see: Stratton, 2000; Tweed, Sutherland, 2007). Without the activity of the Ironbridge Trust, it would not be possible to maintain the historical buildings in the Ironbridge Gorge in a good condition. For instance, in 2013, on the premises of Coalbrookdale, about 300 different redevelopment programs were run, which were financed by the Trust. A particularly large amount of work and money was invested in the reconstruction of Blists Hill Victorian Town (The Ironbridge Gorge Museum..., 2014).

The wide-ranging activity of the Ironbridge Trust would not be possible without a variety of activities promoting the Ironbridge Heritage Site. The Trust pursued a successful regional marketing campaign, which included TV advertising, traditional print advertising (leaflets), as well as e-marketing. The promotional campaign on TV was run with the use of PR tools, such as educational or tourist programs. The events organized in the Ironbridge Gorge are also used as elements of promotion. An important tool is the Internet (websites and social networks).

The Ironbridge Trust and its facilities is also an example of activity aiming at sustainable local development and development of pro-environmental attitudes. That function of heritage sites was already mentioned by Murzyn-Kupisz (2012). In 2014, the Gold Star Green Tourism Award in Museums was awarded to the Ironbridge Trust for achievements in sustainable tourism. Green Tourism is a non-profit organization, founded in 1997. It is the world's largest sustainable certification scheme. Its aim is to maintain the UK destinations as sustainable tourism areas. The Green Tourism award is presented to places that take different actions to support the local area and the wider environment. Businesses that meet the standards recognized by Green Tourism could be awarded one of the Green Tourism Business Scheme awards: Bronze, Silver, or Gold. Every company or destination that wants to receive such an award is evaluated as regards Management and Marketing, Social Involvement and Communication, Energy, Water, Purchasing, Waste, Travel, Natural and Cultural Heritage and Innovation (<http://www.green-tourism.com/>).

5. Summary

The main aim of this article was to show that a World Heritage Site functions may have a significant and varied influence on the local and regional development. The author wanted to prove it using a specific example of the Ironbridge Gorge in the United Kingdom. It should be stressed that the majority of the heritage functions described in literature are confirmed in this particular case study (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7. Functions of the Ironbridge Heritage Site on the local and regional scale

Source: Author's elaboration

As regards the local functions, contact with heritage has a cognitive and educational value (Smith, 2006) which was confirmed in the case of Ironbridge. Promotional materials, broadcasts and commercials on TV and the Internet, lessons for children and youth from regional schools, as well as the activity of the Ironbridge Institute are all activities with educational purposes. Apart from the local inhabitants, also people from all over Britain and other countries can discover the industrial heritage of the area.

The presence of heritage makes it possible for the heritage or cultural tourism to develop (see: Nuryanti, 1996; Richards, 2001; Yale, 2004). The development of tourism based on heritage and the

resulting promotion of a given destination is an invaluable local phenomenon (Graham, 2002). Since there are no large industrial plants in the Ironbridge Gorge, tourism is crucial to the development of local economy. It generates incomes for companies (e.g. those offering trade, gastronomic or hotel services) and contributes to job creation. Heritage becomes a local and regional economic commodity (see: Graham, 2002) also due to the revitalization and regeneration processes, which in the last 15 years have cost about £30m as regards the Ironbridge Gorge Heritage Site. A part of these means supported the local economy by placing orders with small construction or transport companies. A place on the UNESCO World Heritage List and the activity of the Ironbridge Trust made it possible to preserve and regenerate material remnants of the industrial age. Without it, the Ironbridge Gorge facilities would have been destroyed or at least irreversibly transformed.

Moreover, local heritage performs important socio-cultural functions (Smith, 2006). In this case, due to the cooperation developing around heritage projects conducted by the Ironbridge Trust (e.g. in the form of social consultations or voluntary activity), many social objectives are reached. They include an increase in the community sense of the place, social cohesion, the creation of new social contacts, cooperation, as well as the development of knowledge through contact with tangible and intangible culture. In the case of a heritage site which includes natural and man-made elements, it is possible to create pro-environmental attitudes and achieve sustainable development (see: Murzyn-Kupisz, 2012). That is what happened in the Ironbridge Gorge, which was appreciated by granting the Gold Star Green Tourism Award to the Ironbridge Trust in 2014.

As we can see, Ironbridge Gorge performs many local and regional functions. They involve a variety of activities, from educational, through tourism-related, to economic, social or even sustainable development activities (Fig. 3). On the other hand, the activities have an effect on heritage, promoting it or financing its preservation and regeneration. It should be stressed that the relations described above are measurable, mutual and confirmed by nation-wide research conducted in the United Kingdom (see: Clayton et al., 2014).

Notes

- (1) Based on: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/browse-regularly-funded-organisations/npo/ironbridge-gorge-museum-trust/>; <http://www.ironbridge.org.uk/about-us/ironbridge-gorge-museum-trust/facts-and-figures/>; <http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Show-charity/RegisterOfCharities/CharityWithPartB.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=503717&SubsidiaryNumber=0>; <http://www.ironbridge.org.uk/about-us/ironbridge-gorge-museum-trust/>

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