£1.3million to training projects across North West

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Heritage projects across the North West received a 1.3million investment to provide heritage skills as part of a nation-wide **Skills for the Future** programme launched today by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

As part of the programme, National Museums Liverpool has been awarded £350,700 to help fund the 'Positive Action Training' project, which aims to improve diversity within the heritage workforce. New accredited training opportunities will be offered at four venues across the North West, targeting those from ethnic minorities and those with disabilities.

There is a recognised skill shortage in this area and the project is being delivered by National Museums Liverpool and North West Fed which supports the region's museums and galleries.

Six people will be trained by National Museums Liverpool and the other six at Manchester Museum, Salford Museum & Art Gallery and Towneley Hall, Burnley.

The Waterways Trust will use its HLF grant of £110,200 to run a training scheme for skills relating to traditional boat building and the conservation of historic vessels. Working in partnership with the National Historic Ships Unit, the Trust will take on three trainees over an eighteen-month period at the National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port.

The scheme will equip trainees with a variety of hands-on skills and specifically target 18- to 25-year-olds who live locally. There is a significant shortage of people to maintain the 1,000 ships on the National Register of Historic Vessels and this project will make an important contribution to the sustainable future of the UK's maritime heritage.

Across the country, Skills for the Future will deliver 808 placements and adds-up to an impressive 780 years' worth of paid training opportunities for people across the UK seeking a career in heritage.

The focus of the Skills for the Future programme is not solely on traditional conservation training but also a wide variety of more contemporary skills, such as managing volunteers and using social media, that will help reinvigorate and broaden the appeal of the heritage industry to job-seekers.

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the HLF, said: "When the recession kicked-in last year we thought very hard about how the Heritage Lottery Fund could make a difference to people's lives at a time of real need. The answer was an innovative and ambitious programme focusing on equipping people with practical skills to help them secure future employment.

"We have been astounded by the response which clearly shows a great hunger for skills training within our sector. We're delighted to be supporting 54 projects – from learning how to digitise archives to conserving historic gardens – and we know that the range of placements on offer will attract people who might not previously have considered working in heritage."

Skills for the Future offers work-based training in a wide range of skills that are needed to look after buildings, landscapes, habitats, species, and museum and archive collections, as well as equipping people to lead education and outreach programmes, manage volunteers and use new technology. Its focus is on vocational learning, helping meet

the skills gaps identified by heritage bodies, and on encouraging potential trainees from all walks of life.

Trainees will learn how to engage families, schools and communities with their heritage, bringing heritage sites and collections alive for the next generation.

Other projects funded in the North West are:

Chester Renaissance Academy of Heritage Skills
The project will deliver four 12-month work-based apprenticeships in stone masonry and traditional wood joinery through on-the-job training and allied formal education. Awarded £104,000, the trainees will develop those specific skills required to maintain pre-1919 buildings and structures - vital for involvement future restoration projects.

In partnership with Cheshire West and Chester Council and West Cheshire College, the apprentices will gain hands-on experience of their craft by working with local heritage-skill businesses during four rotations of three months each.

Marine Heritage Skills - Cumbria Wildlife Trust
Cumbria Wildlife Trust have been awarded a grant of £294,100 for a project developed in partnership with The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside to focus on marine heritage skills. The project will provide a total of twelve 12-month trainee placements over three years. As well as providing individuals with personalised and structured training, the project will increase the Trust's capacity in marine conservation heritage for the future.

Stockport Skills for Heritage - Stockport Council
The Skills for Heritage scheme - awarded £268,900 - will comprise two training programmes to develop different skills sets. One programme will focus on documentation, digital archiving, collection conservation and conservation management skills, whilst the other on skills relevant to the natural landscape and the historic environment.

Paid training places will be available from autumn at a range of sites including Reddish Vale Country Park, Stockport Heritage Library and various museums, as well as alongside Stockport's many voluntary heritage groups.

Biodiversity Trainees - North of England Zoological Society
The grant of £182,500 will support science graduates in receiving practical training in a range of skills within the natural heritage/wildlife conservation area. It will target those who have been unable to secure employment due to lack of practical experience.

Aimed at promoting natural heritage conservation, the new project will help step up the response to the threats - habitat loss, pollution and the threat of climate change - facing biodiversity in the UK.

If you are interested in applying for a placement with one of the 54 successful applicants go to HLF Skills for the Future page.

Placements with these organisations will start towards the end of 2010/beginning of 2011.

Notes to editors

* Launched in July 2009, **Skills for the Future** is a one-off HLF programme supporting organisations across the UK to create new training places. Grants range from £100,000 to £1million for a number of traineeships over a period of up to five years with an emphasis on high-quality work-based training.

For a list of all 54 projects.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK allocating over £4.4billion across the UK.

Further information

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