Heritage Lottery Award announces £2million to save Cromford Mills

27/09/2010

This is thanks to an award of £2million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) creating new jobs and further economic investment into this area of rural Derbyshire.

The first mill at Cromford was the world's first water-powered cotton spinning mill developed by industrial pioneer, Sir Richard Arkwright in 1771. Thanks to the award from HLF, the largest building in what subsequently developed into a complex of buildings at Cromford Mills will be turned into an interactive visitor and exhibition centre, acting as the information hub for all of the industrial heritage landmarks in the Derwent Valley. New staff will be employed to lead activity programmes for schools, including interactive and hands-on activities for young people to take part in.

New opportunities will be offered for local people to get involved with the project, with volunteers being trained to lead and guide interpretive tours, give talks on the history of the site and helping with educational activities.

The conservation of the mill building will also include the repair of the 4 upper floors, to be brought back into use as managed workspace units for a mix of creative and other innovative industries. This will lead to new job opportunities for local people, which will have a positive effect on businesses and services in the surrounding community.

Emma Sayer, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund East Midlands, said: "The Cromford Mills complex was the birthplace of the factory system, and is therefore a vital part of our national heritage. This project will ensure the preservation of this iconic building by creating a centre where visitors will be able to learn about and explore the wider world heritage site. At the same time, local businesses will be given a boost by the creation of new managed workspaces. This is a really exciting project that will have huge benefit for the local community."

Sarah McLeod, Chief Executive of The Arkwright Society, added: "I am absolutely delighted that at last the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site will have a Gateway facility, providing the public with information they need to really explore and learn about why this unique valley is so important in world history. The new managed workspace units will also give a huge boost to the economic health of this rural area. I cannot thank the project team enough for the hard work they have done in such a difficult economic climate. Obtaining endorsement for our plans from the Heritage Lottery Fund is a fantastic achievement and a real boost for the work now ahead of us to bring this project about."

Cromford Mills were built progressively from 1771 onwards and provided the template for mills across the world. This revolution in textile production was to have dramatic consequences for the British Economy, and earned Arkwright the accolade as the 'father of the factory system'.

Alongside the award to Cromford Mills, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced confirmed funding* of £15m for four very different heritage projects. Other awards have been made to a collection of fascinating aerial photographs that chart the changing face of Britain over the 20th century; York's internationally famous Minster; and the William Morris Gallery in the heart of Waltham Forest's Lloyd Park.

Notes to editors

A confirmed award means that money had already been earmarked by HLF for the project in question and that the full amount has now been secured. Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustainsand 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.

Further information

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