Historic church organ saved by lottery grant

21/09/2011

St Mary's Star of the Sea Church, Rostrevor announced today that it has been awarded the grant. The award will allow them to restore its 19th-century organ and host a series of activities and events to preserve and celebrate the unique history of the instrument.

The organ, which dates to around 1896 was gifted to the church by the Rosses of Bladensburg around the same time. The project will involve carefully disassembling the instrument for transportation to England, where it will be professionally restored by a team of experts. These detailed conservation works will begin in early October. The project is expected to be completed by March 2012 with a celebratory concert planned for St. Patrick's Day to mark the return and full restoration of the organ.

Alongside the restoration works, a programme of events and activities will be used to raise awareness and appreciation of the instrument, its historical value and the quality of its engineering. Opportunities to involve the wider community in using the organ and in various musical events are planned to run to 2013 and will include recitals and concerts. The current programme of music studies will be expanded to offer local school children and individual students free of charge performance opportunities and music theory lessons.

An information booklet will be produced and distributed, a brass plaque erected on the exterior of the church and the organ included as a feature on historic walks to enable as many people as possible to learn about and enjoy the historical significance of the instrument.

Funding for the project was awarded through HLF's Your Heritage programme, which provides grants of up to £50,000 for projects that open up, protect and celebrate all aspects of our local, regional and national heritage.

Commenting on the award, Angela Lavin from HLF, said: "We are delighted to be involved in this truly community based project to save the historic church organ. The restoration and preservation of the instrument and its history will ensure current and future generations will be able to enjoy this unique heritage asset for years to come."