Project will dig up the Land Girls' stories

07/10/2009

Uckfield-based film and music charity Sound Architect will be working with local young people to interview surviving members of the Women's Land Army and record their memories which will not only be collected on a DVD but also used to inspire a dramatic performance devised by the youngsters.

Throughout Britain, tens of thousands of women and girls volunteered to work on the land, sowing, tending and harvesting crops while the men where away fighting Hitler. Many came from towns and cities and were completely new to rural life and the backbreaking task of working the land.

Their efforts to keep wartime Britain fed still lack official recognition although a museum dedicated to their efforts can be found in Dover. This will be visited, along with London's Imperial War Museum, and Kent and Sussex farms, by the 40 young people involved in the project. These will include pupils at Robertsbridge Community College, East Sussex, and Cobham Hall School, Gravesend, Kent.

Commenting for Sound Architect, Rachel Lewis, said: "These women worked extremely hard for the people of Britain producing food during the Second World War. We are privileged and excited to be recording their efforts in this project, and working with young people who will be experiencing first hand what it was like to be a member of the Women's Land Army."

For the Heritage Lottery Fund, Stuart McLeod, Head of HLF South East England, said: " This project not only performs a valuable service in preserving the stories of local women who undertook this vital task during the Second World War, it also provides young people with a range of skills in researching the subject and gathering the material."

In addition to the interviews, the young people will work with Stage Coach theatre school at Tunbridge Wells to devise a drama performance. This will form part of the DVD and also be performed live at venues in both counties together with an exhibition of photographs and artefacts. It is hoped the DVD will be added to the permanent displays at both Dover Museum and the Women's Land Army Museum. Some 500 copies of the DVD and a booklet will also be produced for distribution through schools and public libraries.

Notes to editors

This year HLF is celebrating its 15th anniversary. Using money raised through the National Lottery, since 1994 it has not only revitalised hundreds of museums, parks, historic buildings, landscapes and wildlife sites, but has also given new meaning to heritage itself. People from every walk of life are now involved with the heritage that inspires them, making choices about what they want to keep and share from the past, for future generations.

HLF has supported more than 28,800 projects, allocating over £4.3billion across the UK, and since 1994 the Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded over £378 million to more than 2,660 projects in South East England.

Further information

HLF Press Office, Phil Cooper on 07889 949 173 or

Vicky Wilford 020 7591 6046 / 07973 401937 or vickyw@hlf.org.uk

Rachel Lewis, Sound Architect on 01825 830494.