Young boat builders secure £42,000 in lottery funding

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The funding comes through HLF's Young Roots programme, designed for projects led by young people aged 11 to 25. The scheme aims to involve young people in developing skills, finding out about their heritage, building confidence and promoting the involvement of their local communities.

The project is led by Féile an Phobail, organisers of Ireland's biggest community arts festival and other events and programmes. They will guide the young people through an exploration of traditional boat building, navigating through the heritage of the craft and ultimately practical boat construction. The project is utilising the expertise of Lough Neagh Heritage Boating Association alongside other supporting organisations.

Paul Mullan, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Northern Ireland, explained: "It is fantastic to have driven young people who want to explore various aspects of their heritage – and this project on the rich heritage of Irish boat building will provide valuable theoretical and practical experience for the young participants".

Kevin Morrison, Youth Arts Coordinator with Féile an Phobail, welcomed the funding: "This support from the Heritage Lottery Fund will enable Féile an Phobail to develop a cross community initiative we successfully piloted last year. Féile is always looking at new innovative approaches to exploring our culture and heritage while at the same time building the skills and capacity of our young people. We are delighted that the HLF have seen the benefits of this approach and have invested in not only the project idea but also in a partnership with Féile an Phobail and the young people within our community".

The project will see the young people create their own boats using traditional methods and materials, and even more excitingly, taking their boats onto open waters. They will explore the experiences and personal stories of traditional Irish boat builders through oral history research. The completed boats will take part in Féile an Phobail's August Carnival Parade 2013, which significantly is the 25th anniversary of the August Féile, showcasing the young peoples work to a large local and tourist audience.

A project exhibition and video will share the results and journey of the project with the wider community. The young participants also hope to achieve accreditation through NVQ and/or OCN certificates. Féile an Phobail will provide the young people with valuable references for potential employers and give them guidance onto further opportunities.

HLF has also awarded, under the same scheme, a £32,200 grant to Enagh Youth Forum in Derry, for a youth archaeology project which will see young people exploring sites across the North West, looking into periods ranging from Ice age, Mesolithic, Neolithic periods through to the vikings, monastic/ religious periods, Celtic history and more.

Further information

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