Young people’s animation will tell Dreamland’s story

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The Re-animating Dreamland project has been made possible by a grant of £22,800 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Run by Whitstable-based social enterprise Animate & Create the project will recruit young people from Hartsdown School and set them to work delving into the heritage of the amusement park which started life as pleasure gardens and menagerie in the late 1800s before being developed with its famous rollercoaster and other rides after the First World War.

Helped by the Dreamland Trust the two dozen young people will study the huge part that the park has played in the cultural and social life of the town over so many years. They will also interview older local people about their fond memories of days out at the park. And they will collect old photographs and other mementoes to help create a series of short animated films to capture Dreamland’s checkered history using stop-motion techniques. They are also planning to build a scale model of the park to be part of the animation process.

When the park’s wooden roller-coaster first opened in 1921 it attracted half a million visitors within its first three months. Margate went on to become a mecca for Mods and Rockers during summer seasons in the 1960s and, finally, disaster struck following an arson attack in 2008.

The animated films will be premiered at the Calton Cinema, Westgate, this winter. They will also be shown at the South East’s annual animation festival, Canterbury Anifest, in September next year to more than 400 young people from across the county.

When the restored Dreamland – backed by a £3million HLF grant - reopens as the world’s first amusement park for historic rides in the films will become a permanent part of its new learning space and exhibition.

Stuart McLeod, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South East England, said: “Dreamland is on track to become a unique part of the South Coast’s seaside heritage and this animation project will help older visitors re-live past memories while newcomers can find out about its fascinating history. The young people involved will gain both insight and new skills as a result.”

For Animate & Create Dan Richards said: “It’s going to be a really exciting project bringing Dreamland back to life through animation. The project will give the group the chance to learn about the history of the site and how it grew into a major tourist attraction. The films produced will go on to be screened at the site when it opens and be available for future generations to watch.”

Further information:

HLF Press Office: Vicky Wilford, 020 7591 6046 / 07968 129 241, email vickyw@hlf.org.uk. Phil Cooper, 020 7591 6033 / 07889 949 173, email phillipc@hlf.org.uk

Dan Richards, Creative Director, Animate & Create, on: 01227 281 966

Notes to editors:

Supported by a £3 million HLF grant Dreamland is being restored and transformed. A variety of vintage rides, some of the last working examples of their kind, have been collected from across the UK including the 1914 Whip and the 1920s Caterpillar. These rides along with the Scenic Railway, the oldest surviving rollercoaster in the UK, and the listed menagerie cages will be fully restored.

Animate & Create is a not-for-profit, Community Interest Company based in Whitstable, Kent. The organisation works with young people through animation to empower them to explore their thoughts, culture and heritage through animation. Films made by young people in Animate & Create workshops have gone on to be screened at film festivals around the world.

To learn more visit www.animateandcreate.com