Young people at heart of four Havant heritage projects

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Hayling Island, Wecock Farm Estate, and Sir George Staunton Country Park are the sites of four projects where the young conservationists and history detectives will play a prominent part. Their efforts will transform a piece of waste land into a local nature reserve, create new stained glass windows for a historic library and uncover the stories behind the creation of a 19th century landscape and the development of a holiday resort.

Stuart McLeod, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South East England, said: “Havant is a priority local authority for HLF so we are delighted to see these four projects up and running. It is also great to see local young people involved in making a major contribution to improving a community open space as well as uncovering local histories. They will gather a range of new skills and interests that will be of benefit for years to come.”

The Day the Monkeys Left Hayling Island
Community organisation Dot to Dot Arts has received a £41,900 grant for a project that will trace the history of Hayling Island from the 1930s. It takes as its starting point the period when a local boating lake featured a colony of monkeys living on its central island. Volunteers working alongside professionals will record the memories of local people who have witnessed the changes to the popular seaside resort during the past 70 years.

Working with local schoolchildren, college students and elderly residents the project will create an archive of recorded interviews. An exhibition at the end of the project in a years time will feature information presented in a ‘soundscape’ accompanying small replicas of the beach huts which are a familiar sight on Hayling Island.

For Dot to Dot Clare Jefferson said: “We are delighted to be working on this exciting project to conserve the precious Hayling Island seaside memories of residents and visitors. We are looking forward to holding our first information gathering days over the summer and we will be posting regular updates of our progress on our website.”

For details on how to get involved please call 023 9220 0317 or see Dot to Dot website or visit the Facebook page. The first information gathering days for members of the public are on:

- 18 August at Hayling Island Community Centre, Station Road 10.30 – 3.00
- 15 September at S. Hayling United Reformed Church, Hollow Lane 10.30 - 3.00

Billy’s Lake: Community Nature Area Development Project
The Acorn Community Centre on the Wecock Farm estate has received a £77,100 grant to create what has been described as “the most beautiful outdoor area for all the community to enjoy.” The project, that will transform a piece of waste land with a small lake, was the brainchild of a group of local teenagers from the estate.

“One of their great passions was that those who didn’t have a car can still go out for the day together,” said Ann Waters, for the Acorn Community Centre.

The project will improve access to the 10 acre site, especially Billy’s Lake and the land around it. Workshops will be run teaching fish handling, species identification and bird and bat box construction. The young people will discover the

history of the area and test their conservation maintenance skills as well as being involved in a range of hands-on tasks including clearing undergrowth, cutting paths and planting new trees.

Anyone wanting to get involved should email admin@acorncentre.org.uk or telephone 023 9225 8423.

Windows into the Past
Children from eight local schools will help the education team at Sir George Staunton Country Park to create two new stained glass windows for installation in the Grade II listed Victorian Gothic library. The project has received a grant of £17,340. The octagonal building is the last remaining part of the original mansion that stood on the site. It was designed by 18th century architect Lewis Vulliamy for Sir George Staunton to house his extensive collection of books from the Orient and Far East.

The original windows are said to have been removed during or after the Second World War and were never recovered. Working with a stained-glass specialist up to 200 local children will research the designs of the original windows and use this information to inspire their own designs. They will also learn how to help make the two replacement panes.

The project will also enable the schoolchildren to find out more about the history of the 1,000-acre estate and use this knowledge to create a 'history and mystery' tour and trail guide which will then be available for other visitors.

Hampshire County Councillor Liz Fairhurst said, "This is great news for the Park and local community. Working with the children to create the windows will really enhance this beautiful building for the visitors. We hope it is the first of many projects to showcase Staunton's remarkable heritage.'

Adventures in Victorian Glasshouses and Gardens
Also at Sir George Staunton County Park, a group of young people with learning difficulties will be working with social enterprise The Butterfly FX using a grant of £5,600 to create a short film about the history of the park. Also with support from the Park's education team, as well as media students from local colleges and young people from Solent Youth Action, those taking part will research the estate which traveller, botanist and Orientalist Sir George Staunton created in the early 1800s building gardens, pleasure grounds, lakes and follies.

The young researchers will study the Victorians' interest in landscaped parks and glasshouses which were used to grow exotic plants brought back from the tropics. They will use their discoveries to make a short film that will be screened at the park along with an exhibition display. Lis Calder, for The Butterfly FX, said: "This is an exciting project in which the young people will investigate the history of Staunton Country Park by interviewing the staff and making animations about this amazing 1,000 acre site."

If any local organisations have got an idea for a heritage project, give the HLF development team a call on 020 7591 6171 for help and advice.

Further information

HLF press office: Vicky Wilford, 020 7591 6046 / 07968 129241, email vickyw@hlf.org.uk.

The Day the Monkeys Left Hayling Island: Melanie Stowe, Dot 2 Dot Arts, 07767 270 288 / 023 9220 0317

Billy's Lake: Ann Waters, the Acorn Centre: 02392 258423

Windows into the Past: Kerry Bailey, Sir George Staunton Country Park: 023 9245 3405

Adventures in Victorian Glasshouses and Gardens: Lisa Calder, The Butterfly FX, on: 023 8065 1120