Rock and roll – Lapworth staff celebrate historic



Professor Alice Roberts at Lapworth Museum Adrian Burrows

The grant will provide funds for a large scale redevelopment project which will create innovative new exhibitions and allow the display of one of the most outstanding rock, fossil and mineral collections in the UK.

The museum will explore life over the past 3.4 billion years, covering mass extinctions and evolutionary changes. A host of fossils from around the West Midlands will show how the area has changed from a tropical sea to desert to ice sheets over a 450 million-year period.

A grant of £1,564,300 has been awarded by the HLF to the Lapworth Museum which forms part of a larger fundraising project. The £2.5million cost of the redevelopment is also being funded by University of Birmingham alumni, and a number of grant awarding bodies, trusts and foundations.

The redevelopment process will see the Lapworth transformed into a more engaging public museum with innovative exhibitions structured around four key themes which will examine the evolution of life, active earth processes such as volcanoes, mineral wealth and the impact of minerals on the industrial heritage of the West Midlands.

Professor Alice Roberts, anatomist, author and broadcaster and Professor of Public Engagement in Science at the University of Birmingham, said: “I am so excited about the redevelopment of the Lapworth Museum, which, thanks to

the HLF, will now become a reality. The Lapworth collection is so important – this is the geology museum in the West Midlands. This funding gives us the chance to make sure that the collection is used to its best advantage – and made accessible to as many people as possible."

Jon Clatworthy, the Director of the Lapworth Museum of Geology at the University of Birmingham, said of the HLF grant: "This is fantastic news; the HLF grant will allow us to make the large and nationally important collections of the Lapworth Museum at the University of Birmingham much more accessible to the community. It will provide the public with access to outstanding collections relating to popular and exciting themes such as dinosaurs, fossils, volcanoes, earthquakes, evolution and environment change, and provide visitors with greatly improved facilities."

Reyahn King, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund West Midlands, said: "We're delighted to support such an exciting project which will help bring the past 3.4 billion years of geology to life in the 21st century.

"From evolution and woolly mammoths to precious gems and minerals used in local industry, this is an excellent example of just how far back heritage can reach and how events that happened billions of years ago can still impact and engage people today."

Work on the Lapworth redevelopment is scheduled to commence in December 2014 with a proposed reopening time of October 2015.

Notes to editors

A total grant of £1,564,300 has been awarded by the HLF. Alumni and friends of the university have so far given more than £500,000 to help secure the investment from the HLF which will ensure the very best facilities, and allow the redeveloped museum to engage new audiences, provide inspiring educational experiences for school groups, and house the collections in innovative spaces. We are still looking for support, and if you are interested in finding out how you can make your mark on this transformative project, please visit the Lapworth Museum website.

Further information

For further information or to request an interview with either Professor Alice Roberts or Jon Clatworthy please contact Faye Jackson in the University of Birmingham press office at f.e.a.jackson@bham.ac.uk or 0121 414 6029. For out of office enquiries please contact the press office at pressoffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk or 07789 921 165.