Coast to coal: Lottery grants for North East heritage

View of Cleveland Coast Martin Allen

Following the coastline from Sunderland to Staithes, and further inland to Sacriston, the projects will reconnect people with the man-made and natural heritage which has made the North East what it is today.

Ranging from personal accounts of growing up by the sea and the forgotten uses of coastal wildflowers, to the ups, downs and lasting legacy of living in a mining community, the projects will tell the stories of how the landscape has shaped our lives and how we in turn have affected our natural environment.

Ivor Crowther, Head of HLF North East, said: “Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players we’re delighted to be able to support these projects through our Sharing Heritage programme. Whether man-made or natural, our heritage has a lasting impact on our lives today and by capturing local memories and sparking interest, particularly for young people, we can ensure future generations have a personal connection with their roots.”

Capturing Coastal Memories

Durham Heritage Coast awarded £9,200 HLF grant

From family stories and the rise and fall of the mining industry to the impact of war and effects of expanding cities and towns alongside an eroding coastline – memories of living and growing up on Durham's coastline will be captured on film.

The project aims to give future generations a truly personal connection to their community's heritage and young people will have some great opportunities to get involved. Local school children will visit key points along the coast (including Horden Heritage Centre, George Elmy Lifeboat House and Donnison School) and have the chance to add their own thoughts through artwork and poetry.

Cleveland Coast Wildflowers

Tees Valley Wildlife Trust awarded £9,900 HLF grant

Humans have historically had a vital interest in wildflowers, particularly for medicines, dyes and food, but in modern times this awareness and knowledge has drastically decreased.

The Cleveland Coast Wildflowers project aims to rekindle this interest and encourage greater appreciation for their history, fascinating names, breath-taking array of colours and species and the effects of human intervention.

As well as their fascinating human history, wildflowers can reveal a lot about the area they're growing in. Cleveland Coast stretches 25km from South Gare to Cowbar and has many different habitats – including cliff tops, grassland, dunes and tidal marshes as well as reclaimed sites and industrial land. The diversity and types of wildflowers growing in a habitat are a reflection of the climate, topography, geology and history of the sites. One example of how human activity has had a real impact on the natural world can be found along one stretch of coast where artificial cliffs formed by the disposal of molten slag from 19th and 20th century iron works have given rise to plants that would not be found naturally along the coast.

A leading local botanist will lead events and workshops to enable volunteers to accurately and photographically record the wildflowers throughout the summer and add to a new database which will explain the natural and human significance of each species.

Mining 30 Years On

Sacriston Community Development Group awarded £9,200 HLF grant

Sacriston has a strong mining history with much of its development and growth the result of the opening of its coal pit in 1838. At its peak in 1929, the village's pit employed 966 men and had a massive impact on population sizes, services available and employment opportunities. Its closure in 1985 heralded a new set of challenges and Sacriston residents experienced a rise in deprivation.

Since then, the hard-work, pride and passion of local people has helped to reverse the village's fortunes and this year, the 30th anniversary of the closure of the mine, will see its mining heritage celebrated and remembered.

Local young people will look back at the lives and work of members of the mining community and visit the Sacriston Working Men's Club to hear the stories first-hand from second and third generation miners. Students from Fyndoune Community College will work with Durham Records Office and a banner maker to create a new miners banner to be carried at the Durham Miners Gala, the current banner will be retired to Sacriston Working Men's Club. Children from St Bedes Primary and Sacriston primary schools will create mini banners to be used as bunting at a celebration gala.

Further information

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