Alfred Wainwright collection comes home to Cumbria

21/12/2011

The grant will be used not only to purchase the archive and to preserve, catalogue and publish the papers and sketches online, but also to work with a number of partners to develop a range of opportunities for audiences of all ages to learn about the life and work of Alfred Wainwright.

The project is also being supported with a grant and donation from Friends of the National Library and Frances Lincoln, publisher of the Wainwright guides.

Alfred Wainwright (1907-1991) is a significant historical and cultural figure for Cumbria and his guide books to the fells of the Lake District, which are still popular today, are famous worldwide. Ahead of his time, he used new and innovative techniques to produce some of the country's first ever guide books and they have remained in continuous print since 1955.

County Councillor Gary Strong, Cabinet member for the Archive Service, said, "We're over the moon. Anyone who knows and loves Cumbria, and more specifically the Lake District, will be familiar with Wainwright and with these world famous guide books. Wainwright and his books are a fundamental part of Cumbria's culture and heritage and as such it is extremely important that records like these are retained and protected for future generations to enjoy. It's a real bonus that their future is now secure in the county that really made Alfred Wainwright famous and we're very grateful to the Heritage Lottery Fund for its generous assistance."

Sara Hilton, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North West said, "We at the Heritage Lottery Fund are delighted to be able to offer our support to Cumbria County Council so that they are able to secure this precious archive. Through his writings and sketches Alfred Wainwright was able to share his passion for the fells with many generations of visitors, inspiring many to follow in his footsteps across this beautiful landscape. With our support, Cumbria County Council will preserve this collection of personal papers, drawings, sketches, photographs so that they can be studied and enjoyed for many generations to come."

The Wainwright collection consists of annotated maps, notebooks, photographs, and extensive slide collection, original pages, sketches and proofs of his books. There are also a range of personal papers including correspondences with his late widow Betty Wainwright, letters from fans, and records relating to the animal rescue centre at Grayrigg, near Kendal, which he and Betty were patrons.

The archive will be kept at the Cumbria Archive Centre in Kendal where it will be available for the public to research. The Archive Service will also work with a variety of potential partners including the Kendal Museum, the Lake District Visitor Centre, Brewery Arts Centre, Mountain Heritage Trust, Wainwright Society, Wordsworth Trust, schools and a range of walking organisations, to develop a programme of activities for target audiences that include school children and their teachers, walkers and walking organisations and those living outside Cumbria.

Notes for editors

- Although the total cost of the project is £207k, the cost of purchasing the collection is £135k, with the additional £72k used for preservation costs and a programme of outreach work.
- The source of this collection is from the Wainwright estate. Contact: Jane King 07957 233 195
- Items from the collection are available at the Archive Office in Kendal or digitally, please contact the Communications Team to arrange to film/photograph them.

Further information

Media enquiries to communications adviser Chris Little on 01228 226 685.