Boatbuilding, blacksmithing and shoe-making – HLF boosts heritage skills across the UK

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From traditional boatbuilding and river conservation to blacksmithing and engineering, new skills and employment opportunities will be up for grabs as part of wider conservation and improvement work.

£3.8m has been awarded to the Boatbuilding & Heritage Skills Training Centre in Portsmouth to ensure the on-going preservation and teaching of traditional boatbuilding skills through the creation of a Centre of Excellence for Traditional Boatbuilding.

The centre will be housed in Boathouse 4, a rare and vast naval building, crucial in the rearmament on the south coast during World War Two, which will be restored and revamped. It will offer up to 85 people per year the opportunity to undertake a year's full-time traditional boatbuilding training, including providing annual bursaries for those currently unemployed or not in education, as well as delivering over 500 places on shorter training courses. From constructing the backbone of wooden boats and restoring metalwork on damaged vessels, to fitting out the interiors, it will set students up with practical skills that can be directly applied in the industry, enabling them to develop careers in broader heritage and marine sectors.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said: "Lack of skills training continues to be a serious concern as those looking for jobs struggle in challenging conditions. This HLF money will help fund a wide range of opportunities for people to gain valuable training and in so doing will help build a more sustainable heritage sector. We're keen to play our part in job creation which can have a huge impact on local communities and their morale."

Ricky Wheatley, an existing HLF-funded apprentice at Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust, who has now secured permanent employment at the organisation, said: "Getting involved has been an amazing opportunity for me and thanks to Lottery players I now have hands-on practical knowledge in how to repair historic boats which I'll be able to use in the future. I'm really looking forward to getting stuck in as a full-time member of the team and developing my skills. It's become a real passion for me and I think it's great news that other people will benefit from the same opportunities I've had."

£2m has also been awarded to the Eden Rivers Trust in Cumbria to give the communities surrounding the River Eden the skills to safeguard and manage its future protection. The project will provide volunteers with training in practical river conservation; a series of training workshops for local landowners and farmers to increase understanding of the impact of farming practices on ecosystems; an apprenticeship scheme for up to 18 Cumbrian youngsters; and a number of workshops to develop local people's creative skills as part of a media project about the River Eden.

Rockingham Forest Trust has received £456,300 for a project to provide training in the traditional skills that helped shape the Nene Valley in Northamptonshire, to rebuild the connection between local people and the landscape in which they live. There will be a traditional skills training programme provided for young people not in education, employment or training. These courses, such as blacksmithing and shoe-making, will develop their skills and experience and lead to them gaining an accredited award.

The other three successful HLF projects recently decided also include strong skills elements:

• **V&A Exhibition Road Building, London - £4.9m**

This project will create a new public courtyard on Exhibition Road and a world-class temporary exhibition space. Three apprentices will be employed to work with the Museum's collections and the historic building, while also studying for a Diploma in Cultural Heritage.

• **Delapre Abbey, Northampton - £3.7m**

The Abbey will undertake restoration work and a range of skills development will be offered to support long term care and use of the building from conservation and construction to project management and hospitality.

• **Kelvin Hall, Glasgow - £4.6m**

The project will create a cultural hub bringing together outstanding collections of objects telling the history and archaeology of Scotland. A portfolio of training and workforce development opportunities will be created for the sector, offering degree and vocational qualifications across a range of cultural and heritage sectors.

Projects in the pipeline

In addition, three projects have been earmarked grants totalling £12.1m plus £752,600 of development funding:

• St Mary Magdalene, London - £3.2m
• Guildford Cathedral, Surrey - £4.9m
• Restoring the Montgomery Canal, Shropshire - £4m

Notes to editors

• Heritage Grants applications are assessed in two rounds. A first-round pass is given when HLF has endorsed outline proposals and earmarked funding. A first-round pass may also include an immediate award to fund the development of the project. Detailed proposals are then considered by HLF at second-round and as long as plans have progressed satisfactorily and according to the original proposal, an award for the project is confirmed.
• HLF offers a dedicated Skills for the Future grants programme supporting organisations across the UK to develop vocational learning programmes. HLF has awarded grants totalling £47m under this programme enabling high-quality work-based training, the development of new qualifications and capacity building in the sector.

Further information

Please contact James Steward or Katie Owen, HLF press office, on 020 7591 6056 / 6036, out of hours mobile: 07973 613 820.

Watch the coverage of the announcement on the BBC news website.

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