# Community Heritage Grant Awards

25/08/2010

Three projects in South East Wales, aiming to keep the rich heritage of their towns alive with support from local people and volunteers, have been awarded almost £100,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The three projects, Merthyr Tydfil Heritage Interpretation Project, Pontypool Townscape Community Project and Park Place Remembers the Great War in Tredegar, will create opportunities for people of all ages living in the local community, including 84 new volunteer positions.

Jennifer Stewart, Head of HLF in Wales, said: “These three projects will give local people the opportunity to develop new skills while exploring the rich history their towns have to share.

“Communities are at the heart of HLF projects, and we’ve funded these projects in recognition of the opportunities they present for people, young and old, to get involved and play a part in taking their heritage forward.

“From the impact of WWI to the industries and people that have made the towns we know today, there is so much to be remembered and celebrated and these innovative projects will capture memories, photographs and the real stories from our past for the future.”

**Park Place Remembers the Great War in Tredegar**
First to benefit from the Heritage Lottery Fund cash injection is Kidz-R-Us, a project that has been awarded £23,000 to document the town’s experiences of WWI through the use of film and drama.

Kidz-R-Us, which helps young people in Tredegar develop new skills in their own free time, will see over ten young people, aged 12 to 18, explore the history of the first World War and the impact it had on Tredegar. The young people will benefit from workshops in interviewing techniques and multimedia, visits to historical monuments and developing research skills.

The young people will film and document their findings, experiences and feelings over the 12 month project, ahead of the film’s premiere and dramatic performance at a WWI themed finale in 2011.

A former English teacher, Trisha Dann, has been working at Kidz-R-Us for four years. She said: “The inspiration behind the project came from the young people themselves. They wanted to know more about the soldiers who are listed on a plaque in the centre, which is a former chapel. They asked us lots of questions about WW1, about the effect it had on Tredegar and whether any of the families still lived in the town, and we decided that it would make an interesting project.”

Aimee Hardman, aged 16, from Tredegar, said: “I decided to get involved in this project as I’m really interested in history and especially the history of my local area. I studied history at GCSE and have decided to take it next term for A Level, which will involve a module on WWI, so the project will help me to gain a better understanding.

“I’m getting the opportunity to develop new skills through the project and have been given the responsibility of

overseeing the research element, by speaking with members of the local community and hopefully finding the families of some of the soldiers from Tredegar who lost their lives at WWI.

“I think projects like these are so important for young people, as we don’t realise how lucky we are these days, so it helps us to empathise and appreciate all that we have today.”

**Merthyr Tydfil Heritage Interpretation Project**

HLF has also awarded £30,000 to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, to support the town’s Heritage Interpretation Project. The 18 month project, which is led by Communities First, will celebrate the history of the town and surrounding villages by increasing local people’s opportunities to learn about the heritage of their area.

60 volunteers from throughout the borough will be recruited to take part in regular workshops and create information panels and an interactive website, which will detail the iron and coal mining industry’s effect on the Valleys’ growth, the communities that were created during the industrial era, and the living conditions these earlier generations suffered during this period of time.

The workshops and 16 information panels, which will link the Taff Trail, Trevithick Trail and the river walk in Merthyr Tydfil, aim to engage the local community, schools and tourists in Merthyr’s heritage and rich industrial past.

People from the local community will be involved in every aspect through a series of research workshops and consultation events, to help decide what information, stories, people and details should be included as part of the project.

Michelle Lewis, Museum Community Officer at Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, said: “It is important to us that we work closely with the local communities, whatever their age and background, as they are the people who have made Merthyr Tydfil the place it is today. Working together, we can encourage older residents to share their memories and experiences of Merthyr Tydfil with the younger generation, to keep the area’s rich heritage alive.”

**Pontypool Townscape Community Project**

Torfaen Museum Trust has been awarded £45,200 towards a two-year Pontypool Townscape Community Project to help communities find out more about the history of their town.

The project brings new roles to the area, including two part-time project officers and opportunities for 24 volunteers. The volunteers will undergo training in research and archiving, as well as learning transferable skills such as how to engage with community groups, before hosting two open workshops per month in the town.

At the workshops, volunteers will ask local people to bring their photography and interesting documents including deeds and leases, as well as recording oral histories, for the trained volunteers to examine the items. All items will be included in an exhibition at Pontypool Museum, while some items will be added to the main collection.

The oral histories recorded at the sessions will provide young people with anecdotes from older members of the community, to unearth unknown stories of community members from past generations, benefitting the people of Pontypool.

Deborah Wildgust, Curator at Pontypool Museum, said: “With this project, we will be bringing the community together

while encouraging them to take a greater interest in their community and heritage. We also hope to encourage people to volunteer their spare time and invaluable local knowledge to the museum, so that we can create a detailed digital resource of the historic development of the Pontypool Townscape which may otherwise be lost. We're really excited to get moving with the project and search for our volunteers."

**Note to editors**

**Volunteering/skills/training facts**:
• More than £86.3m has been awarded to over 1,484 projects in Wales that involve volunteers. More than 98% of grants awarded in the last year have created volunteering opportunities.
• Volunteering is a cornerstone of HLF projects. Our research indicates that, on average, 13 volunteers are involved in every project, providing nearly 450 hours of volunteering time per project – that's a total of 667,800 volunteering hours across Wales!
• HLF has awarded £49.3m to 179 projects in Wales that have included delivery of taught programmes for learners of all ages.
• Over 60 projects in Wales have offered participants the chance to learn new skills such as blacksmithing, textile and paper conservation, traditional building skills and dry stone walling.
• 64 new work-based training opportunities have been created in Wales through our Training Bursary programme which aims to address specific skills shortages in the heritage sector.

**Further information**

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