Fifteen - North East Heritage

10/12/2009

To mark the 15th Anniversary of the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) commissioned four young filmmakers from the Tyneside Cinema's Northern Stars Academy, to produce and direct their own film entitled 'Fifteen' to showcase the North East's rich heritage.

A private screening of 'Fifteen' was held on 8 December at the Tyneside Cinema where key partners from the Heritage sector, project participants and local council representatives saw the film, talked to the Northern Stars and learnt more about HLF's work in the region. It was a chance for the young people to show off all their hard work and demonstrate what it means to them to call the North East home. It was a great success!

The Northern Stars researched 15 HLF funded projects, one from each of the last 15 years, speaking to project participants and looking at the affect that HLF funding has had on the region. The film entitled 'Fifteen: North East Heritage' enabled the Northern Stars to take charge of the creative process, from speaking to the projects, filming, directing and editing. HLF funded projects featured in the film cover a huge spectrum, ranging from the redevelopment of the Great North Museum to the introduction of Red Kites back to the North East.

From the restoration of the Heugh Gun Battery to preserving the traditional songs for the Northumbrian Anthology project, the effects of HLF funding can be seen all across the region. Heritage is not just about restoring out historical buildings and wonderful museums, it also about preserving memories, helping people gain new skills, providing volunteering and training opportunities and helping the local community get involved in and make decisions about their heritage.

'Fifteen' shows the regeneration benefits our funding has brought, giving real financial and social benefits to local economies across the region, bringing in new visitors and creating new jobs. Just look at the increased visitor numbers at Woodhorn, the thousands enjoying the World Heritage site of Hadrian's wall in a safe and sustainable way and the huge queues outside the award-winning Great North Museum – as many as 80,000 in the first week.

HLF are committed to let as many people as possible gain new skills when they become involved in our projects. Traditional heritage skills have gone a long way in making many of the projects featured in 'Fifteen' happen. Many of our projects – especially targeted at young people – have equipped project participants with a host of new skills which they can transfer as they develop their own professional paths. Our commitment to learning and participation will remain at the heart of what we do as we start out next 15 years of funding.

Ivor Crowther, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in the North East, said: "The North East is home to some of the country's most spectacular architecture, landscapes, wildlife and collections that have all been captured in the film directed by the young film makers. Not only has the commission produced a really professional film but it's also taken them on a journey to really discover who they are and where they come from.

It is vital to remember that without the dedication, enthusiasm and commitment of the teams of staff and volunteers associated with these projects, it would not have been possible to have achieved such great success. The Northern Stars have done an amazing job at conveying the region's heritage through the eyes of young people; they are a

talented group and are an inspiration to others wanting to get into the film industry."

Rachel Dixon, 16, Director of 'Fifteen', said: "Being involved in Fifteen has been an amazing experience, I loved how each of the projects had a community aspect, where everyone benefited and people were brought closer together. I think that heritage is a big part of our identity, it's our history, and that history makes us what we are today.

It's incredibly important because it tells us about our culture and where we have come from. Without it, we wouldn't understand as much about ourselves today. My favourite project to research and film was probably HMS Trincomalee, which a ship is built in the 1800s in India and now in Hartlepool. It's really interesting to me that the ship had been restored to its original condition and you can walk around the museum and understand how people lived on a ship in those times. "

Notes to editors

Pictured from left to right
Rachel Dixon, Director -16
Sarah Younas, Producer - 17
Head of HLF in the North East, Ivor Crowther
Vicki Whitehead, Sound - 17
Will Jackson, Cinematographer - 17