Hampshire and Isle of Wight win £3.7million summer lottery hat trick for heritage

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Grade I and II-listed Quarr Abbey, the Isle of Wight Steam Railway, and Twyford Waterworks near Winchester, can now all move forward with exciting conservation and restoration works.

Stuart McLeod, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund South East England, said: “This investment is exciting news for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, as we see three important, yet very different, heritage sites celebrate news of HLF funding today. A rare ‘time capsule’ Edwardian waterworks, one of the 100 most endangered historic sites in the world**, and one of the world’s most important collections of historic railway rolling stock, will now offer exciting opportunities for people of all ages to get involved in the heritage on their doorstep while these special places are conserved and protected for future generations.”

Isle of Wight: ‘The Two Abbeys’ - £2million confirmed HLF award
On the World Monuments Fund Watch list and of international historic importance, Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight is a true heritage gem. The 80 hectare site contains three listed structures of different eras: the French/Moorish styled 'modern' abbey, designed by Dom Paul Bellot in the early 20th century (Grade I); the abbey's remains (Grade II) - dating back to 1132AD when the original Cistercian Abbey was founded; and the medieval abbey precinct walls (Grade II and dating to the 1360s). Benedictine monks continue to live in The Abbey, which also features a Victorian mansion and gardens, while the estate also forms part of the Isle of Wight AONB, the Solent and Southampton Water (Ryde Sands and Wooton Creek) Ramsar and SPA, and Fishbourne Copse SSSI.

HLF funds will create a new visitor information centre which will explore the story of the monks’ life at Quarr Abbey and deepen visitors’ understanding of the many facets of its history. Repair and conservation works of the abbey remains and existing abbey church, will be accompanied by an education and volunteering programme, training placements in construction for local colleges students, and open air drama performances, walking talks on bees and red squirrels, and much more so that people of all ages, local and visitors alike, can get involved.

Fr Finbar, the Prior, said: “We are very pleased to have been awarded a substantial grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It makes possible the consolidation of the ancient Cistercian Abbey ruins and the further engagement of the present monastery with the public, while at the same time preserving our contemplative way of life.”

Isle of Wight: ‘Changing Trains’ - £970,000 confirmed HLF award
The Isle of Wight Steam Railway has one of the World’s most important collections of historic railway rolling stock, with over 80 locomotives, carriages and wagons, the oldest dating back to the 1860s. Now, with support from HLF, a new 2,000 square foot engine and rolling stock shed will conserve and safeguard these precious items for future generations, protecting them from the elements and housing them on four tracks with platforms and walkways between them, all brought to life by volunteer guides in an exciting interactive visitor experience. From ‘The Beach Hut Carriage’, which will tell the story of how a historic carriage survived, to the story of former wartime female railway guard, May Joyce, who met and married an engine driver there will be a host of new interpretation for people of all ages.

Isle of Wight Steam Railway Chairman, Steve Oates said: “This is transformational stuff for the Isle of Wight Steam Railway. We are hugely indebted to HLF and to all those who gave so generously to our appeal. After 41 years of operating and growing our railway we will soon have a new purpose-built structure which will not only protect and conserve so much of the collection we have built-up, but also provide a wonderful new attraction for our many visitors. To be awarded a grant of this size is a huge acknowledgment of the skills, effort and dedication of our 300 volunteers and staff who work so hard to keep a little piece of Island railway history alive for future generations to enjoy”.

Island MP Andrew Turner welcomed the news of the two awards: “Congratulations are due to all the hard working staff and volunteers at The Isle of Wight Steam Railway and Quarr Abbey. These grants are recognition of how important their work is. The Steam Railway is a very popular part of the Island’s tourism experience, and Changing Trains is an exciting project which will attract even more visitors. Those people will spend money out and about on the Island, so this grant is good news for the Steam Railway and for the whole Island. I am very much looking forward to seeing the project take shape and visiting it when it is complete.

“Quarr Abbey meanwhile is an oasis of calm and peace in our hectic lives and it plays an important part of the history of the Island. Many people will be interested to find out more about the life of the monks, both in times gone by and the present day. This imaginative project will also help Island youngsters gain skills in traditional building techniques and will benefit the wider community in a number of ways, so this support from the Heritage Lottery Fund is very welcome.”

Hampshire: ‘Return to Steam at Twyford Waterworks’ - £820,000 confirmed HLF award
Still commercially pumping five million gallons of water a day, Twyford Waterworks, which nestles in a rural chalk downland setting in the heart of Hampshire and within the South Downs National Park, is also a ‘time capsule’ of engineering, showcasing the complete history of water pumping through the eras. From Edwardian steam, through to 1930s diesel, 1950s electricity and right up to today’s modern technology, the historic site has been described by English Heritage as ‘exceptional’. Containing nearly all its original equipment from the past 100 years including five large lime kilns, a water-powered narrow gauge incline railway, water-driven lime mixing equipment and the entire water softening process, most of the Waterworks is now managed by Twyford Waterworks Trust and is run and kept alive by a team of 40 passionate volunteers and nearly 200 Friends.

HLF funds will now mean that the huge towering historic steam boilers and pumping engine will be restored to enthral visitors and bring the site back to life and back into steam. There will be new interpretation for visitors, and a new workshop facility will also mean that vital skills can be passed on to a new generation of volunteers so that the waterworks – once an important employer in Twyford Village – can be brought back to the heart of the community.

Graham Feldwick, Twyford Waterworks Trust Chairman, said: “This is fantastic news for our Trust, and the HLF award will enable us to literally breathe new life into the Waterworks. Visitors will be able to enjoy the sights and sounds of the waterworks as it was in Edwardian times. Through our new ‘Discovery Zone’, which will have one of the boilers as a huge cutaway exhibit, and interpretation across the site, visitors will be able to gain a clear understanding of how drinking water has been produced from those early days through to the present day. This is good news too for our volunteers who will now have a new workshop and other facilities. If you are looking to give some time to volunteering then do consider Twyford Waterworks.”

Steve Brine, MP for Winchester, said: “This is fantastic news, and I am really pleased for the team at Twyford Waterworks. I will never forget how this was one of my first ever engagements as the newly-elected MP back in 2010, and I pass on all my congratulations at this wonderful news.”

Notes to editors

The HLF grant to the project Quarr Abbey is for £1,907,600 (87% of project costs) and is a second-round pass, which means it is a confirmed award.

The entire Quarr Abbey site was included in the 2012 World Monuments Fund Watch List on October 2011, meaning the site is considered by heritage experts to be one of the 100 most-endangered historic sites in the world.

The HLF grant to the project Changing Trains is for £970,700 (81% of project costs) and is a second-round pass, which means it is a confirmed award.

The HLF grant to the project Return to Steam at Twyford Waterworks is for £819,600 (89% of project costs) and is a second-round pass, which means it is a confirmed award.

Quarr Abbey
For more information, visit the Quarr Abbey website.

Isle of Wight Railway
For more information, visit Isle of Wight Railway website.

Twyford Waterworks
Twyford Waterworks Trust was set up in 1992 ‘to preserve and maintain the former Twyford Waterworks for the education and benefit of the public generally, and to promote the preservation and display of all things and matters associated with the abstraction, treatment, distribution and consumption of water.’

Further information

HLF Press Office: Vicky Wilford, 020 7591 6046 / 07973 401 937, vickyw@hlf.org.uk

Isle of Wight Steam Railway: Steve Oates 01243 555 959 , 07774 188 930 or Peter Vail 01983 882 204

Twyford Waterworks: Graham Feldwick, 01929 552 973, chairman@twyfordwaterworks.co.uk