Heritage Lottery Fund invests over £1m in skills in the North East

08/06/2010

These three projects will not only support traditional conservation training in the region but also a wide variety of more contemporary skills, such as managing volunteers and digitising archives and landscape surveying helping to reinvigorate and broaden the appeal of the heritage industry to job-seekers. They will provide over 50 people with the chance to gain tangible heritage skills and help preserve North Easts rich heritage too.

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the HLF, said: “When the recession kicked-in last year we thought very hard about how the Heritage Lottery Fund could make a difference to people’s lives at a time of real need. The answer was an innovative and ambitious programme focusing on equipping people with practical skills to help them secure future employment.

“We have been astounded by the response which clearly shows a great hunger for skills training within our sector. We’re delighted to be supporting 54 projects – from learning how to digitise archives to conserving historic gardens – and we know that the range of placements on offer will attract people who might not previously have considered working in heritage.”

* Skills for the Future offers work-based training in a wide range of skills that are needed to look after buildings, landscapes, habitats, species, and museum and archive collections, as well as equipping people to lead education and outreach programmes, manage volunteers and use new technology. Its focus is on vocational learning, helping meet the skills gaps identified by heritage bodies, and on encouraging potential trainees from all walks of life. Trainees will learn how to engage families, schools and communities with their heritage, bringing heritage sites and collections alive for the next generation.

The North East projects come as part of an overall investment of £17m – treble the amount originally set aside - in 54 projects** across the country. This money will deliver 808 placements and adds-up to an impressive 780 years’ worth of paid training opportunities for people across the UK seeking a career in heritage.

The successful projects in the North East are:

Heritage engineering skills - Tyne & Wear Archives & Musuems
Tyne & Wear Archives & Musuems will use the £490,100 HLF grant to provide 24 training opportunities, helping to develop the trainees work-based skills in maintaining industrial exhibits in Museums across the North East. These exhibits, including items in relation to the steam railway era, planes and mining and water pumping stations, are some of the most important cultural assets in the region. The North East is famed for its rich industrial and mining history and with these placements, in mechanical engineering, metalwork and carpentry; trainees will be able to preserve and protect these valuable pieces of history and get some hands on experience in the field.

Heritage Landscape Skills - North Pennines AONB Partnership
This project will provide two main strands of skills training for young people in conserving heritage landscapes in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Dry stone walling and scientific survey skills will be offered to six

trainees on 10 and 12 month placements. People with these skills are becoming increasingly rare; these placements will start to fill the skills gap, introducing new life into the sector. Scientific surveys of landscapes are vital research tools and often help to find ways of preserving our precious natural heritage, while dry stone walling is a traditional craft that is hugely important in maintaining the rural environment of the North Pennines

Opening up archives for the 21st century - The National Archives
This award of £580,900 will go a long way in filling skills gaps within the archives sector. The project led by The National Archives will work across England with both national and local support for the trainees; providing training opportunities for 26 people in community engagement and digital and traditional archive preservation, all creating better access for visitors and encouraging wider community involvement. The majority of the training will be delivered in archive services around the country including Tyne & Wear Archives & Musuems, London Metropolitan Archives and Birmingham Archives and Heritage, where the trainees will be able to get excellent hands on experience.

Notes to editors

* Launched in July 2009, Skills for the Future is a one-off HLF programme supporting organisations across the UK to create new training places. Grants range from £100,000 to £1million for a number of traineeships over a period of up to five years with an emphasis on high-quality work-based training.

** Full list of all 54 projects

Skills for the Future is complementary to HLF's existing £10m Training Bursary Programme which has been running for the last four years delivering a wide range of skills training - including blacksmithing, botanic gardening, stone masonry, thatching and book conservation. In the UK, over 700 placements have been created providing accredited work-based training with highly-skilled crafts people and environmental specialists. In combination with the Skills for the Future placements, this means that over 1,500 training opportunities have been created by HLF.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK including over £209million in the North East.

Further information

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