Home and Away – Olympic and Paralympic stars shine over the North East

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Taking place in the year of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, this project will celebrate and explore the amazing connections between local Olympians and Paralympians through history - and how sport its still inspiring young people across the North East today.

Through this project people from across the local community will explore 200 years of sport in the North East including local athletes involved in Olympic and the Paralympic Games. Their work will form part of the regions build up to the 2012 Games in London next summer.

Volunteers will work with sports clubs in Newcastle, Gateshead, Durham and Hartlepool, undertaking research that will help contribute to an exhibition show-casing the sporting achievements of local sporting heroes.

Everyone involved will receive training in object handling, and commentary writing. The project will also give them hands-on experience at the exhibition by using their newly researched knowledge to engage the public.

Well known names in North East sport include the world record breaking distance runner, Brendan Foster, from the Gateshead Harriers; Steve Cram, from Jarrow, Tyneside, who took Silver in the 1500m at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics and, from over 200 years ago, Robert Chambers the famous Oarsman from Tyneside.

Famous Paralympians include Tanni Grey-Thompson who is one of the most successful UK disability athletes of all time. Tanni came third in the BBC Sports Personality of the Year in 2000.

Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North East, Ivor Crowther said: "This is an amazing project that celebrates the magnitude of our sporting heritage. With the 2012 Games next year, stories of success from the sporting personalities of the North East gives everyone the opportunity to get involved and feel inspired."

On hearing about the project, Tanni Grey-Thompson said: "This project will be a fantastic celebration of sport in the North East. There is a rich tradition in this region and it is important that we highlight this for future generations. My daughter and I love to visit the local museums, and it will make the Games accessible for everyone."

As well as the main exhibition, which will be opened at the Newcastle Discovery Museum there will be five additional smaller exhibitions focussing on local Olympians. Volunteers will create a series of 10 digital stories to support their research whilst blogging about their experiences during the project. These smaller exhibitions will be held in cultural venues across the region including the Hartlepool museum, The Dorman Museum and Berwick Borough Museum.

The project will create six guided walks and heritage trails exploring hidden sporting venues and sports clubs including the famous Durham Regatta which began in 1834 has traditional boathouses and today is home to a vast amount of riverside sporting activities. Another will focus on Hartlepool the home of the famous Hartlepool Rovers Rugby team and the Hartlepool Cricket Club.

Notes to editors

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 over 30,000 projects, allocating £4.7billion across the UK with £223million in the North East alone.

Further information

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