Grant for international basketry festival at Dartington

11/03/2013

Led by the team at Basketry and Beyond and volunteers from the local community, the HLF grant will enable Basketry and Beyond to research and record, for others to learn from and enjoy, the heritage of basketry from the south west of England.

The festival takes place at Dartington on Friday 17 May, Saturday 18 May and Sunday 19 May 2013 and will enable young and old to come together to discover, create and have fun. The event will feature have-a-go workshops, displays and demonstrations of south west baskets.

In the run up to the event Basketry and Beyond will be working with the Museum of English Rural Life, local basketmakers and volunteers to research and record details of a range of south west baskets including the Devon Maund, the Devon Stave basket, the Tamar 'chip' baskets made in the factory at Calstock for the fruit picking industry, the Grub bag, Cornish Cowel and the crab and lobster pots made in different styles to suit the sea conditions.

Working alongside the National Trust, Basketry and Beyond will be exhibiting a range of baskets and demonstrating basketry at High Cross House.

Emma Carter, Arts Programme Manager at High Cross House, said: "The National Trust and High Cross House at Dartington are very pleased to be able to support such an important festival through programme of exhibitions and artists residencies. High Cross House is steeped in a rich history of not only iconic architecture but some of the finest makers and creators of arts and crafts of the 20th century."

In the lead up to the festival there will be courses for people to learn the traditional craft skills of basketry. Commenting on the award Angela Sanders, said: "We are thrilled to have received support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The South West has a heritage of basketry going back centuries and we want to share with people the role that baskets played in the fishing and agricultural industries and ways of life in the country. The funding will enable us to promote and celebrate the traditional craft of basketry at the planned exhibition and festival. We hope that the festival will encourage young people to get involved, have-a-go and help maintain the tradition of the craft of basketry."

Richard Bellamy, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South West, said: "Basket weaving is one of the most widespread and ancient crafts in the history of human civilisation; the oldest known baskets have been carbon dated to between 10,000 and 12,000 years old, earlier than any established dates for archaeological finds of pottery. The South West has always been an important centre for basketry, providing materials from its varied landscape of coast, moor and wetland, and a range of maritime and rural activities within which baskets played an important role. We are delighted to be able to support Basketry and Beyond in their exploration and celebration of this fascinating craft."

Speaking on behalf of the Heritage Crafts Association, the advocacy body for traditional craft skills in the UK, Trustee Greta Bertram, said: "We're delighted to hear that Basketry and Beyond were successful in their bid. The basketry festival is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate and raise awareness of this aspect of our shared craft heritage, and to pass on the skills and knowledge of the craft."

If you would like to get involved as a volunteer or wish to share information about south west baskets, visit basketryandbeyond's website for more information

Notes to editors

About Basketry and Beyond
Basketry and Beyond is a not for profit organisation encouraging and furthering the craft and skills of basketry. Basketry and Beyond operates to preserve what has been learnt from traditional basketmaking, to explore new ways of making and to expand the boundaries of the craft. Basketry and Beyond is based in the South West of England. The organisation operates within the community and internationally, working with groups and individuals and in particular those who for whatever reason may experience barriers to learning.

Exhibitions and demonstrations at High Cross House
FROM BARE STEMS 8 March – 2 June 2013: focuses on the fishing, farming and fashion theme of the festival and is curated by Hilary Burns. Basketry and Beyond will be makers in residence. There is an admission fee for all non-National Trust members.

Further information

Basketry and Beyond: Hilary Burns on 01803 553 144, email: hilary@basketryandbeyond.org.uk