Lottery boost for traditional heritage skills

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The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) today announced seven projects, under its existing Training Bursary Programme, that are set to benefit from an additional £2.85m investment. This will deliver a wide range of skills training - including blacksmithing, botanic gardening, stone masonry, gold leafing and thatching – and immediately create over 220 additional training places. These placements will provide accredited work-based training with highly-skilled crafts people and environmental specialists.

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund, said: "We've allocated this extra money because we wanted to make a real impact now, when it is needed most. More than ever in difficult times, HLF wants to offer people skills that will give them a future career whilst also meeting the needs of the sector. This investment will help make sure heritage skills are protected for the future and is designed to attract people who might not usually consider a career in heritage."

Schemes benefiting today are:

- The Historic and Botanic Gardens Scheme, a partnership of 17 heritage organisations led by English Heritage, has been awarded £338,000 to create 34 practical placements.
- The Institute of Archaeologists has been awarded £355,000 for 20 archaeology placements across the UK.
- ICON (The Institute of Conservation) has been awarded £490,000 for 20 bursary placements in the conservation of objects and collections - from books and textiles to metalwork and architectural details.
- The Traditional Building Skills for England and Wales Scheme, run by English Heritage and the National Trust, has been awarded £500,000 for 56 placements.
- The Masonry Conservation in Scotland and Northern Ireland Project, run by Historic Scotland, has been awarded £436,800 for 14 year-long and 50 short-term bursary placements.
- The Natural Talent Project, run by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), has been awarded £389,100 to offer training for 12 new apprentices to develop skills in the conservation of specialist habitats.
- The LEMUR Scheme, run by Herefordshire Nature Trust, has been awarded £331,600 to help 18 trainees learn about natural heritage conservation skills.

HLF's £7m Training Bursary Programme, originally launched in 2004, has been a resounding success, already providing over 300 people with high-quality on-the-job accredited training over a range of 50 skill sets. 89% of those who completed placements in 2008-09 went on to secure jobs in the heritage sector.

The additional funding announced today will be followed by a further £5m for HLF's new programme, entitled Skills for the Future, to be launched in December 2009. Also focussed on work-based training, Skills for the Future will equip the heritage workforce with an even wider range of skills, for example, those needed to work with digital technologies or to open up heritage to new audiences.

Organisations interested in Skills for the Future should call HLF's information team on 020 7591 6044 / 6042.