Penzance Skills for the Future

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The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced a massive £17 million investment in heritage-skills through its one-off Skills for the Future programme*.

PZ Conservation CIC in Penzance is one of the 54 projects supported by the scheme has been awarded £127,100 through the programme to support internships for people to develop skills in book conservation and bound collections.

The aim of the project is to increase the number of skilled people who wish to work in book conservation. A British Library Study in 2004 identified the probability of there being a future shortage of book conservators and that demand for their skills in libraries and archives in the public and private sector is likely to increase. The Penzance project will meet this demand by offering training in practical conservation skills as well as developing the trainees' professional skills to help them initiate future conservation projects.

The Penzance project comes as part of an overall investment of £17m – treble the amount it 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 focus is not solely on traditional conservation training but also a wide variety of more contemporary skills, such as managing volunteers and using social media, that will help reinvigorate and broaden the appeal of the heritage industry to job-seekers.

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.

The 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.

To apply for a placement with one of the 54 successful applicants go to the Skills for the Future page.

Placements with these organisations will start towards the end of 2010/beginning of 2011.

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.

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 allocating over £4.4billion across the UK, including £404.7 million of grants to 3,015 projects in the South West.

Further information

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