Celebration as Blackdowns Metal Makers launches



Education project highlighting the Blackdowns Metal Makers excavation launch

Project partners The Carousel Project, The Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership and Somerset County Council are delighted after receiving £21,700 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to make the project a reality.

The excavation, targeted in an area of known iron working activity, marks the beginning of a nine-month project to develop new, innovative learning materials and special events on an iron working theme to local people of all ages. This ambitious project aims to work closely with preschoolers, schoolchildren, students, families, the general public and academics to produce materials as diverse as iron working play packs, dramatised historical filming with schoolchildren, an iron working walks leaflet and a new iron working website complete with academic information as well as a children's area.

Katherine Findlay from the Blackdown AONB Partnership explained: "The Blackdown Hills has a rich iron working past and we want Blackdowns Metal Makers to increase understanding of how the iron working industry was rooted in the area's geology and in turn left its mark on the landscape."

Commenting on the awards, Marie Leverett, from early years creative learning initiative The Carousel Project said: "We're thrilled to receive funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for Blackdowns Metal Makers and we have some exciting things planned for this project. Working on the Local Stories project last year, which was also supported by the

Heritage Lottery Fund, gave us a real thirst to explore how heritage themes could be communicated to the youngest members of our society and we aim to push the boundaries of what is possible during this project. Songs and storytelling have been used for centuries as a way to communicate information, excite and inspire listeners, stir up curiousity and to be passed on through generations and we want to explore this method of learning more by working with Hemyock preschool and primary school children on developing inspirational new learning materials."

Nerys Watts, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South West, said: "The ability to smelt and work iron by a variety of different and increasingly sophisticated means has marked significant steps forward in the history of civilisation and has had a profound effect on communities from a local to an international level. HLF is delighted to be supporting the Blackdown Metal Makers project in its investigation of the iron working heritage of its own area, which will give local people and visitors alike an understanding of their locality's place in the history of an important global trade."

The excavation at Churchinford starts at the end of September. If anyone would like to volunteer please email community archaeologist Marc Cox on MACox@somerset.gov.uk to register your interest.

Watch out for the Iron Working Storytelling Tour next spring lauching at Tiverton Museum then heading off to Honiton, Chard, Wellington, Axminster and the Blackdown Hills.

More information can be found on The Carousel Project website and on the Blackdown Hills AONB website.

Notes to editors

About The Carousel Project
The Carousel Project is an Exeter based social enterprise bringing creative learning, new experiences and outdoor adventure to early years children and their families. Our aims are to offer quality creative learning experiences for young children and their families and to inspire families to get more involved in creative and cultural activities, the outdoors, the environment and their locality.

We run regular workshops and events in Exeter, mid and East Devon aimed at families with young children where children learn about a wide variety of themes through fun, creative, participatory activities.

The Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership
The Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covers 370 sq km of land on the Devon and Somerset border. It is one of 46 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. These are landscapes which are considered so precious that they are protected for the nation. The Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership brings together local authorities, interest groups, national agencies and local communities to help ensure that the AONB remains a healthy, living landscape for future generations.

Further information

For more information contact Marie Leverett from The Carousel Project on marie@thecarouselproject.org.uk or 07825 874 874.