Blyth Tall Ship charity secures £777,000 Lottery



Trainee at work at Blyth Tall Ship project

The project will buy and restore a 100 year-old wooden tall ship, that will be on show to the public at the Quayside in Blyth. It will start to explore, through archive research and through the practical restoration of the ship, the life of merchant adventurers from the North East who changed the face of the globe.

The ship will be the host tall ship for the recently announced Tall Ship Race from Blyth in 2016 and leading on from this, the charity are planning a heritage boat festival from their quayside location in 2017. The project will train 50 young people and volunteers a year in heritage boat building skills at NVQ Level 1, 2 and 3, restoring two traditionally built east coast estuary vessels in the process. By recruiting, training and working with archive and museum volunteers, the project will also conserve, digitise and share, for the first time via an online portal, the archives of the Port of Blyth. Woodhorn Museum and Northumberland Archives will deliver a new community archive accreditation, and exhibitions will be displayed in the recently opened Blyth Boathouse Heritage Centre and Restaurant. An educational programme is also planned and will enable 2,000 school children to take part in curriculum based activity days around the theme.

The ship that is currently based in Svendborg in Denmark is of similar size and design to the Brig Williams, a merchant vessel built in Blyth in 1813, which discovered the first land in Antarctica six years later. It was skippered by a local captain, William Smith. It is hoped the project will pave the way for an informed bicentennial celebration of the discovery in 2018 and 2019 by recreating the original voyage and re-introducing wooden shipbuilding in new workshops at the

quayside location.

Clive Gray, Chief executive of Blyth Tall Ship, said: “This represents a sea change for the Blyth community and the volunteers, staff and trainees of Blyth Tall Ship. We can now live up to the aspiration of our name and really start to explore what it meant to discover a whole new content 200 years ago from Blyth. We are all tremendously excited.”

Ivor Crowther, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North East, said: “We’re incredibly proud to be supporting this internationally important project which will bring the story of ship building and the lives of sea adventurers from the North East alive visitors and locals alike. It will not only ensure the survival of the historic ship but, through creating a first-class heritage skills training centre, will teach people practical, sustainable heritage skills along the way.”

Notes to editors

By working with volunteers and unemployed young people on heritage boat building, researching original archive material and museum development and planning an expedition to celebrate the discovery of Antarctica by a Blyth ship in 1819, Blyth Tall Ship aims to inspire transformational change in the expectations and opportunities of those who live in the hard to reach areas of the Blyth Valley by engaging the sort of enthusiasm and action that leads to employment and improved well being.

Further information

For further information, images and interviews, please contact:

Blyth Tall Ship: Clive Gray, Chief Executive, on email: clive@alnsideassociates.co.uk , tel:07824 997 370.

Laura Bates, HLF press office, lbates@hlf.org.uk or 0207 591 6027.



Trainee at work at Blyth Tall Ship project

Support for Blyth Tall Ship