

Tref Rhufeinig Caerwent, Sir Fynwy

Using the latest 3D and digital technologies to create a virtual Roman town, this new grant will enable the Roman town of Caerwent, near its well-known counterpart Caerleon, to be brought back to life, ready to be explored.

Young people aged 10-17 will get the chance to help design and build an app and website that will home an interactive and fully immersive Roman experience – including everything from virtual buildings and town tours, the human stories behind the artefacts unearthed at the town and a host of other learning tools.

Explaining her vision for the project, Jane Ellis, First Campus Funding and Events Coordinator at the University of South Wales, said: “Imagine visiting Caerwent, downloading an app to your phone, looking through portable virtual reality goggles and seeing the town as it would have looked when it was first built thousands of years ago. We are delighted that HLF is supporting us, and hopefully over the course of the year we’ll really open these young people’s eyes to some exciting history.”

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Almost 40 schools across South East Wales will be participating in the project, which aims to bring together Communities First areas and cultural bodies for the first time to engage with and inspire young people and adults who might not normally have the opportunities to participate in culture and the arts.

Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Touism, Ken Skates, emphasised the importance of the project. He said: “I have set out my ambition to make Wales the most creative nation in Europe and to achieve this we must ensure culture is accessible to all. Our Fusion: Tackling Poverty through Culture programme links cultural bodies more closely with the Communities First programme with the aim of inspiring young people and adults.

“This project supports this aim of placing culture at the heart of our communities and will be an asset to the local area and all the young people involved in it.”

The project will provide the young participants the opportunity to learn about what Caerwent Roman Town tells us about the Roman conquest, occupation and settlement in Wales using the latest 3D immersive technology, as well as providing an alternative way for young people to learn more about archaeology.

Known to the Romans as Venta Silurum, Caerwent’s archaeological remains provide an insight into the culture and life of a bustling Roman market town complete with shops, houses, baths, temples, a civic hall and marketplace.

Richard Bellamy, Head of HLF Wales, explained why the project is of particular significance for him. He said: “The Caerwent Roman Town Project will bring a range of fantastic partners together in providing young people with a new and creative way to explore our very distant past, meaning that over 500 primary and secondary school pupils from schools in Communities First areas can join in, learn and have fun with the Roman history of the area.

“Students at the University of South Wales will be volunteering their time to support their younger peers by helping to design and create the 3D models, while 50 young people will gain accredited training with Agored Cymru Accreditation, giving them the opportunity to find out more about the past whilst gaining new skills and qualifications for the future.

“Thanks to National Lottery players, money from ticket sales can really be put to excellent use in projects like this, benefitting a large group of young people in different ways – I’m looking forward to jumping into the virtual Caerwent town myself!”

Further information

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Monmouthshire’s Roman past brought back to life