Lyme Regis Museum secures National Lottery



Future fossil hunters? Leweston schoolchildren rockpooling at Lyme

The project aims to provide Lyme Regis Museum with a new fossil gallery and Learning Space, as well as providing a larger shop and the lift and visitor toilets that the museum currently lacks.

The Mary Anning Wing, a modern extension to the museum's charming 1902 building, will enable the museum to extend its free education service for local schools, work more closely with local community groups and make Lyme's fascinating history more accessible. It will also enable the museum to host more events, improve the offer to Lyme's many tourists as well as working with larger museums and universities to encourage the study of Lyme's unique geology.

[quote=David Tucker, Director of Lyme Regis Museum]"Our museum is bursting at the seams and we'll be able to do so much more for so many more people, both local and tourists."[/quote]

Lyme Regis Museum is built on the site of the home of Mary Anning, the world's first great fossil hunter and early scientist. Situated at the heart of the Jurassic Coast, the museum has a spectacular collection of local fossils and runs very popular fossil walks on the same beaches that Mary Anning walked 200 years ago. The museum also tells the story of Lyme's other great events and people, its famous writers (Austen and John Fowles), the Monmouth Rebellion (the last attempted invasion of England) and as the birthplace of Thomas Coram, Lyme's 'greatest citizen' and founder

of the Foundlings Hospital, England's first charity.

The museum currently has 100 volunteers without whom the museum could not operate.

David Tucker, Director of Lyme Regis Museum, said: "We're delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this support. Our museum is bursting at the seams and we'll be able to do so much more for so many more people, both local and tourists." He added: "We want to play a major role in supporting Lyme's schools and community groups and the Mary Anning Wing will allow us to do just that. People, irrespective of disability will be able to access our first floor and we'll no longer have to send visitors across a busy road to the nearest public toilet."

Nerys Watts, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South West, said: "As the home of geological and charitable 'firsts', the inspiration of literary greats and the place to go for generations of people fascinated by fossils, Lyme Regis has an extraordinarily rich heritage. Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, this project will transform the gateway to this heritage with massive benefits for the collections themselves and the visitors and volunteers of this much loved museum. We're delighted to play a funding role."

Notes to editors

About Lyme Regis Museum

Lyme Regis Museum, a charity, is the most used museum by schools in Dorset. The museum is open all year and is supported by a talented team of volunteers providing governance, expert advice on business and academic matters, researching into Lyme's history, fundraising and operating the museum's admission point and shop. Its auspicious patrons include author Tracy Chevalier, Professor Richard Lane, Professor Sir Ghillean Prance, Sir Crispin Tickell, Sir David Attenborough and previous Honorary Curator Max Hebditch.

The Mary Anning Wing will cost £1.3M to build and the museum has also won generous support from The Fine Foundation, Dorset County Council, The Friends of Lyme Regis Museum and The Garfield Weston Trust. The museum is still actively fundraising.

The museum expects to commence building in September 2016, for completion in June 2017.

Further information

For further information, images and interviews please contact David Tucker, Director, Lyme Regis Museum on 01297 443 370 or email: director@lymeregismuseum.co.uk.