

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Educational Services

Culture Sub-Committee: 4 August 2008

Subject: IndustryUS Heritage Lottery Project

1. Purpose

1.1 To advise the Culture Sub Group of Heritage Lottery Funding Awarded to West Dunbartonshire Council's Heritage Project IndustryUS.

2. Background

2.1 The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) was set up by Parliament in 1994 to give grants to a wide range of projects involving the local, regional and national heritage of the United Kingdom. HLF distributes a share of the money raised by the National Lottery for Good Causes.

2.2 The Heritage Lottery Fund is the UK's leading funder of the UK's diverse heritage and the only heritage organisation which operates across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and funds the entire spread of heritage – including buildings, museums, natural heritage and the heritage of cultural traditions and language.

2.3 HLF helps groups and organisations of all sizes with projects which:

- conserve the UK's diverse heritage for present and future generations to experience and enjoy;
- help more people, and a wider range of people, to take an active part in and make decisions about their heritage;
- help people to learn about their own and other people's heritage.

2.4 West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) has within its Museum Collection as large number of artefacts and archives relating to the industrial heritage of the area, including those relating to Singer, Shipbuilding, and Textiles. Many of these items have been donated by the public and local companies and require to be documented and recorded within the context of the local heritage.

2.5 Shipbuilding has a long history in West Dunbartonshire. Ships have been built in Dumbarton for hundreds of years; indeed, Mary Queen of Scots left Scotland for France from Dumbarton. More recently, Beardmore at Dalmuir radically altered the sleepy rural village at the end of the nineteenth century while Thomson, later John Brown, created the town of Clydebank when they moved their ship yard from Govan. Many famous ships have been built in West Dunbartonshire, including the Cutty Sark, Queen Elizabeth, Queen Mary and QE2.

- 2.6** Turkey Red was an extremely well-known dyeing process centred around the Vale of Leven. The Vale became internationally famous for dyeing and one of the factory owners, Henry Monteith, invented the red and white spotted handkerchief. Goods were exported all over the world, especially to the middle and far eastern corners of the Empire. The industry turned the Vale of Leven from a sparsely inhabited rural backwater to a centre of the textile trade and created several new towns.
- 2.7** The Kilbowie (Clydebank) factory was Singer's first foreign venture and supplied sewing machines for the whole of Europe. At its peak, it employed 18,000 local people, including 2/3 of the available female workforce when the only other alternative was to go into service. The factory built a technical archive of sewing machines, photographs and paperwork dating from the 1850s. This was gifted to the museum in 1980.
- 2.8** There are within the Museum Collection star items which reflect the importance of the industries of local the area. Indeed, Clydebank, Alexandria, Renton and Jamestown would not exist as settlements without these industries. It was identified that more investigation was needed to catalogue these items to make these accessible to researchers and the public for further investigation and promotion.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** This paper advises the Culture Sub-committee that £47,500 funding has been awarded to West Dunbartonshire Council from the Heritage Lottery to enable the documentation of the councils industrial collections
- 3.2** IndustryUS is a two year project employing a Documentation Officer with the remit to catalogue, research and promote understanding of the council's industrial collections. The purpose of this will be to promote learning and public access to the industrial collections.
- 3.3** The main areas covered by the WDC industrial collection are shipbuilding, including tools, launch artefacts, furniture and photographs. WDC also has large items from the Tullis laundry which was based at Clydebank. These are currently on long term loan at Summerlee Heritage Park in South Lanarkshire, as West Dunbartonshire Council does not currently have the capacity to be able to store or exhibit these large scale items. We would aim to bring these back to West Dunbartonshire and display them in a public area.
- 3.4** Another important aspect to WDC's industrial collections is the Singer collection of artefacts and archives. It is thought that this may be a collection of international significance: it is certainly one of the largest in the world. The International Sewing Machine Collectors Society (ISMACS) recently visited the collection and identified several extremely rare or unique sewing machines and several prototype machines which were never subsequently developed. We also possess an archive of extremely rare technical photos. It is hoped that the work carried out through IndustryUS will lead to an application for National Significance for WDC's Singer Collection.

- 3.5** WDC also holds a collection representing the Turkey Red dyeing industry in the Vale of Leven, another local industry of international importance. There are also other examples of local industry which have not been investigated as yet. IndustryUS aims to document and realise the value of this collections.
- 3.6** The star items in the collection reflect the importance of industries to the local area. Indeed, Clydebank, Alexandria, Renton and Jamestown would not exist as settlements without these industries. More investigation is needed, this project is the first stage in getting collections catalogued and made accessible to researchers and the public for further investigation.
- 3.7** **Learning:** The industrial strand of the Culture Section's learning programme will be developed as a direct result and response to IndustryUS in year 2. The industrial elements of the collections lend themselves to key elements of A Curriculum for Excellence. The learning development programme and IndustryUS are mutually beneficial and will enhance one another's aims and delivery.
- 3.8** **Access:** The IndustryUS project aims to produce a series of brochures concentrating on discrete areas of the industrial collection which will be available free of charge. These will be available from and promoted by all 10 branch libraries, Clydebank Museum, the Backdoor Gallery and community education centres. In addition the works will be available for download online via the Culture Section's popular weblet.
- 3.9** **Voluntary Sector:** IndustryUS will continue and expand upon the Council's work with Project Scotland, employing volunteers to work with the collections. These placements provide volunteers with the skills to return to work or compete in the job market.
- 3.10** **Digitisation:** IndustryUS will digitise the industrial collections and oral history collections enabling broader public accessibility. This work will be in partnership with Friends of Clydebank Museum and Clydebank Local History Society.
- 3.11** It is anticipated that more star items will become known throughout the duration of the project and we will invite experts to view the collections when they become accessible – these need not be academics or curators, but, for instance, could include people who worked in the industries. This, in turn, will make collections more accessible to the general public.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** HLF funding for IndustryUS has enabled the employment of a Documentation Officer for the 2 year period of the project.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** £47,500 of external monies have been attracted to WDC via the Heritage Lottery Fund. All match funding from WDC will be delivered from within existing budgets.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** There is no increased risk to the Council associated with the contents of this report. Risk assessments are undertaken as required in line with the Council's Collections Management Plan.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1** This paper informs the Sub-committee of the recent Heritage Lottery Award to WDC's exciting new local heritage initiative IndustryUS, and indicates its aims and benefits linked to the strategic aims of the WDC Cultural Strategy:

- a) To conserve, interpret and celebrate our culture and heritage.
- b) To promote West Dunbartonshire's cultural identity locally, nationally and internationally.
- c) To increase access and participation in cultural activity for all citizens.
- d) To recognise and promote the role of culture to cross-cutting agendas including Economic Development, Social Inclusion, Regeneration, Lifelong Learning and Health among others.
- e) To develop handling/loans collections of artefacts for school and community use and establish cultural links with other Councils to share information.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1** The Culture Sub Committee is invited to:

- **note the contents of this paper and the aims and objectives of the WDC IndustryUS project.**

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Wards Affected: All

Background Papers: West Dunbartonshire Council Cultural Strategy 2005
West Dunbartonshire Council Collections Management
Plan 2006

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