



- Press Release -

Something to Bragg About! Lord Bragg shows his support for Dennis Potter Archive

Tuesday 18th October: For immediate release

On Saturday 15th October, Lord Melvyn Bragg visited the Dean Heritage Centre (DHC) to show his support of the planned Dennis Potter archive and exhibition which will open at the heritage site in 2012.

Following an appearance at the Cheltenham Literature Festival, Lord Bragg enjoyed a packed visit at the centre and met with all the partners involved in the project including Voices in the Forest¹, the University of Gloucestershire, the Rural Media Company and Lakers School, before taking a tour of the site and viewing a small selection of the archive.

The DHC, in partnership with 'Voices in the Forest' and the University of Gloucestershire, secured £120,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and £30,000 match funding from the Local Action Group (LAG)² to purchase, preserve and display the Dennis Potter archive at the heritage centre. Potters' work is an important aspect of the history and heritage of the local area and the HLF grant meant that it was not lost to a private collection or overseas.

The Potter archive has a huge significance to Lord Bragg as Dennis Potter spoke openly to Bragg about his life and work in his final television interview in 1994 before his death from cancer a few weeks later.

Commenting on Potter, Bragg said: "I think the idea of using the archive as a launching pad, irrigating the appetites of the young people of the area, is as good





as it gets really. I couldn't think of a better way to employ it, rather than it being something to be stared at. Taking it on the way that you are doing is very imaginative, it's the sort of thing that Dennis would have been extremely happy with"

Bragg and Potter followed similar life paths and came from working class, tight knit communities and both attended Oxford universities, although in separate colleges.

Bragg continued: 'We were both keenly aware of the importance of "place" and where we grew up and were both drawn back to it in our different ways because it was home but also because we wanted people to know about it.'

Bragg has been patron of 'Voices in the Forest' since 2004 and Voices' co-founder, Rich Daniels said: 'We felt it was important for the archive to be at the Dean Heritage Centre. The Potter archive is of such international, national and local significance, the Forest of Dean and specifically the Dean Heritage Centre is the right place for it to be". The plan is to conserve it by using it as a living archive, not just putting it away in a cupboard.'

Jason Griffiths and Dr Joanne Garde-Hansen from the University of Gloucestershire will use the archive as a tool for students and researchers. Jason will develop an audio guide with radio production students as part of their studies that will then be used at the centre by visitors. While Joanne will be supervising postgraduate research on the Potter archive's relationship with the community and explore how the DHC attract visitors and sustain visitor numbers using tools such as events, festivals, exhibitions and learning opportunities.

Rachel and Adrian Lambert from The Rural Media Company will use the archive for their work with students at Lakers school. They will be using what they learn from





Dennis Potter's work to document their very own Forest of Dean life in the 21st century. Adrian Lambert, Creative Director at the RMC said "We're extremely pleased to be part of this very exciting project. Dennis Potter was a true visionary and his work and legacy deserves to be celebrated in this way, in the place and with the people that played such an important part in his life and career."

Commenting on the partnership venture, Alison Elliot, head teacher of Lakers school said: 'Using the Potter literature will help the school children with their aspirations. These sorts of projects are the ones that help them to feel powerful within their own environment.'

The Potter collection comprises material spanning several decades of his writing career, and incorporates typewritten, handwritten or copies of scripts, notebooks and production documentation of his plays. It also includes well known works and unpublished works, initial drafts and final scripts.

The Dennis Potter Archive is an important historical archive but the DHC would also like it to become a living, lasting legacy by including memories, memorabilia and artefacts from people in the local area who either knew, worked with or have recollections of time with Potter. If you would like to donate items or memories to the archive please contact the centre on 01594 822170 or email alex@deanheritagecentre.com

The Potter archive and exhibition is due to open in 2012.

¹ Voices in the forest seeks to raise the profile of creativity and heritage in the Forest of Dean.

² Additional funding was provided by the Forest of Dean Local Action Group, supported by the European Agricultural fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas, which approved match funding towards the bid in December. The project is being delivered through the South West of England Regional Development Agency with Defra as the Managing Authority.



Dean Heritage Centre

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For more information or an image of Dennis Potter or Melvyn Bragg's visit to the Dean Heritage Centre please contact Harri Le Claire on 01594 822170 or email: harri@deanheritagecentre.com

Visit: deanheritagecentre.com

Notes to editors

- The Dean Heritage Centre is based in five acres of scenic woodland and is home to five galleries that tell the story of the Forest of Dean and its' people spanning 10,000 years of history, from the ice age to present day.
- It is open 363 days a year and offers a full diary of events, activities and exhibitions.
- It is a centre of education and offers tailored educational workshops and activities to tie in with the school curriculum. For more information please call Joanne Clarke on 01594 822170.
- The Centre has been awarded the accreditation of Quality Assured Visitor Attraction.
- The Dean Heritage Museum Trust (DHMT) is a company limited by guarantee and is a registered charity.
- In March 2007 the Centre was awarded the accreditation of Quality Assured Visitor Attraction.
- Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, the HLF invests in every part of the UK's diverse heritage.
- The HLF has supported over 30,000 projects, allocating £4.5 billion across the UK, including £411 million to the South West alone. Website: www.hlf.org.uk
- 'Voices in the Forest' is a community interest company that aims to raise the profile of creativity and heritage of the Forest of Dean with all profits goes back into the organisation.
- If you are interested in finding out more about funding opportunities through Forest of Dean Local Action, please contact Local Action in 01594 812608 or neil.batt@fdean.gov.uk



Supported by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas