



Note to the editor. Please release this today.

## South Wales Heritage Group Receives £8,600 Heritage Lottery Fund Grant

Yr Hyddgen – Hanes Gwerin a Theatr Gymunedol (folk history and community theatre) group has received a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Sharing Heritage grant of £8,600. The grant will fund construction of a full scale ‘Iron Age’ chariot to be used in living history events.

The group has been staging performances to promote better understanding of Welsh culture, heritage and history in the Gwent area for the past seven years. The chariot will provide an exciting new focus for a group whose motto is ‘there is no audience, everyone participates!’.

The chariot, which incorporates archaeological evidence from south Wales, is built by renowned chariot maker Robert Hurford. He has previously constructed chariots from around the ancient world for agencies including the BBC and the British Museum.

When finished, the chariot will be used in a series of living history projects which will focus on the culture of the Silures, the Iron Age tribe of southeast Wales, and their long and determined resistance to Roman invasion.

The project is important on several levels. As Professor Ray Howell, author of several books and articles on the Silures and an advisor on the project, explains, 'archaeological reconstructions can be helpful to both theoretical archaeologists and to educators. The process of building the chariot helps archaeologists to understand how things could have worked and consequently to better interpret the evidence which we have'.

'Perhaps even more important for Yr Hyddgen is that the reconstructed chariot will be an excellent visual aid for stimulating the imagination of young and old alike', Professor Howell continued. 'It will be a particularly useful educational resource for schools.'

Richard Bellamy, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Wales, said, 'Sharing Heritage is a wonderful opportunity for communities to delve into their local heritage and we are delighted to be able to offer this grant so that Yr Hyddgen can embark on a real journey of discovery. Heritage means such different things to different people and HLF's funding offers a wealth of opportunities for groups to explore and celebrate what's important to them in their area.'

The chariot will be central to living history projects which focus on the Silures, the Iron Age tribe of southeast Wales, and their long and determined resistance to Roman invasion. The first of these will provide a new perspective for Key Stage 2 pupils from four local schools. Following on from the National Museum of Wales' successful 'Roman army boot camps', with the help of the chariot, yr Hyddgen will provide an alternative Silurian experience at Pontypool Museum on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2017 at 11 am.

A Celtic camp has already been trialled at Siarter Iaith Ysgol Panteg, recorded by a film crew from S4C's Heno programme. At the events, 'young warriors' learn skills such as using a bow and arrow, swords, shields and, of course, the 'ins and outs' of the chariot. A reconstructed round house helps pupils learn about the domestic life of the Silures. The experience helps pupils understand the cultural sophistication of the people of southeast Wales in the Iron Age.

With the chariot as a centre piece, similar events will continue throughout the summer and into the new school year. Yr Hyddgen is, for example, providing a 'Celtic experience' at 'the Big Event, 10<sup>th</sup> of June from 11am at Cwmbran boating lake, Party in the Parc', On the 8<sup>th</sup> of July in Pont y Pwl from 9am and presenting a heritage fun day at the Blaenafon Festival, on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> of June, we will be situated on Market street, opposite the Car park.





Yr Hyddgen hopes this is now acceptable for publication .

Yours Sincerely

Rhisiart morgan

PS, It is still in Open Office to open in Word.