

UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL 00.01: ON FRIDAY 1 JUNE 2012

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Art Fund Prize 2012 reveals the nation's ten 'Unsung Museum Heroes'

To celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Art Fund Prize for museums and galleries, earlier this year the Museum Prize Trust launched a nationwide search for the UK's Unsung Museum Heroes, ten everyday individuals who have made a truly memorable contribution to museums and galleries. Today, these ten Heroes are revealed:

- Pam Fry, Cambridge & County Folk Museum: A volunteer and Trustee of the Museum for over 20 years, Pam continues to help raise much-needed funds for the museum at the age of 86.
- Anne Lord, Colne Valley Museum: A retired primary school teacher who volunteers for the
 museum which preserves the heritage of the domestic weavers of the West Riding of Yorkshire,
 Anne is dedicated to organising and publicising a range of exhibitions at the museum.
- John Henry, Downpatrick & County Down Railway: Northern Ireland's only full size heritage railway has been rebuilt through the efforts of volunteers like 80 year old John Henry. As well as laying the track, John is also a regular at public events, meeting and greeting the passengers and explaining about the railway to visitors.
- Pam Brown, Ironbridge Open Air Museum of Steel Sculpture: Pam set up the Museum with her late husband Roy Kitchen over 21 years ago, and since then has dedicated her service as a volunteer to all aspects of running and maintaining the museum.
- Adam Corsini, Museum of London: Adam's role as Volunteer Coordinator of the London
 Archaeological Archive and Research Centre has been distinguished by widening access to
 volunteering opportunities at the Museum through engaging local agencies, schools in Hackney,
 homeless charities, special needs groups and the unemployed. Up to a third of participants
 have gained employment or gone on to further education as a result of volunteering at LAARC.
- Michael Quinn, National Museums Liverpool: Michael Quinn is the Foreman of NML's small inhouse Production Team of joiners, electricians and painters, a role which he has held for the last 15 years. The Production Team, which works behind the scenes to deliver the all the technical aspects of the organisation's exhibition programme across seven venues, including such awardwinning displays as 'Plantastic' and 'Age of the Dinosaur'.

- Roy Overall, Oxford University Museum of Natural History: Roy started volunteering to
 monitor the swifts (Apus apus) that nest in the tower of the Museum for its ornithology project
 in 1962. Since then, Roy has recorded every breeding season of this remarkable screeching
 migratory visitor, for the last 50 years, at least 25 visits per nesting season year and climbing the
 tower at least 1200 times. Roy only retired this year, but still offers some special tours of the
 tower.
- Patricia Candlish, Robert Burns Birthplace Museum: A volunteer guide for the museum and birthplace cottage, Tricia gives up hours of her spare time to inspire visitors to the site through her engaging and informative tours, and creative contributions to the museum's programmes to engage visitors and the wider community.
- Jeffrey Charles James Elson, The Staffordshire Regiment Museum: The Staffordshire Regiment
 Museum tells the story of the Staffordshire Regiment from its beginnings in 1705 right up to the
 present day. Having volunteered at the museum for 15 years, and being an ex-Stafford himself,
 Jeffrey has built up an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Regiment and works to help visitors
 discover the answers to any military, local, family or social history question they might have.
- Sally Hall, Wordsworth Trust: Sally was 50 when she started volunteering as a guide at the Wordsworth Trust, and is still volunteering 20 years and over 14,000 tours later. She is has also taken on responsibility for the cottage garden, researching how the garden was planted in the Wordsworths' time, and recreating it in a form that the Wordsworths would recognise.

Penelope, Viscountess Cobham, Chairman of The Museum Prize Trust said: "In this, the tenth year of the Prize for Museums and Galleries, the Trustees felt it was a timely moment to look at the wonderful achievements of individuals whose tireless commitment makes museums so special, in addition to celebrating the excellent achievements of the institutions themselves.

Choosing ten heroes from the nominations was unfathomably difficult, given the sheer volume of inspiring, surprising and delightful stories that we read. After much lively discussion we were able to settle on this list of ten brilliantly stalwart personalities who between them represent the rank-and-file of museum professionals and volunteers, without whom the cultural and heritage life of this country would simply cease to function."

Ends

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Notes to Editors

The Art Fund Prize is administered by The Museum Prize, a charitable company created in 2001 by representatives of National Heritage, the Museums Association, the Art Fund and the Campaign for Museums and chaired by Lady Cobham. These organisations agreed to put aside award schemes they formerly ran (including National Heritage's Museum of the Year) and lend their support to this single major prize.

The Art Fund has sponsored The Museum Prize since 2008. The Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art, helping museums to buy, show and share art for all to enjoy. Over the past 5 years, the Art Fund has given £24m to help 227 museums and galleries acquire over £195m of art for their public collections. The Art Fund is funded by over 90,000 members who own a National Art Pass, which gives free entry to over 200 museums, galleries and historic houses across the country as well as 50% off many major exhibitions.

Find out more about the Art Fund and the National Art Pass at www.artfund.org.uk. The press office can be reached on 020 7225 4888 or media@artfund.org

The Clore Duffield Foundation is chaired by Dame Vivien Duffield DBE and has a strong focus on supporting cultural learning, particularly within museums and galleries and at heritage sites.

www.cloreduffield.org.uk. It is one of the founding partners of the Cultural Learning Alliance, a collective voice working to ensure that all children and young people have meaningful access to culture in this difficult economic climate. www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk