Maidstone Museum wins Heritage Lottery Fund support

Maidstone Museum has received a £78,700 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for an exciting project to redisplay ancient Egyptian and Greek artefacts in an Ancient Civilisations Gallery. With support from the Maidstone Museums’ Foundation, the Egyptology Department at the British Museum, the Petrie Museum at University College London, and the Egypt Exploration Society to research and uncover the stories behind the objects, the redisplay will be unveiled in Summer 2017 with a fantastic new space in which to discover the artefacts.

The project will enable visitors to Maidstone Museum to experience the Ancient Civilisations collections in a modern environment. The Museum’s Cur8 youth group (ages 12-24) will research both the Victorian collectors responsible for bringing the items to Maidstone Museum, and the life of the museum’s 2,500-year-old Egyptian mummy, Ta-Kesh. With nearly a third of the 10,000 annual school visitors finding out about ancient Egypt and Greece through workshops, local teachers will be invited to help create educational activities for school visits.

Maidstone Museum is owned and operated by Maidstone Borough Council, and holds more than 600,000 artefacts and specimens in its historic buildings. As the largest collection in Kent and one of the best regional museums in the South East, Maidstone Museum is free to attend and offers a wealth of educational services and workshops to local schools and visitors of all ages.

Commenting on the award, Lyn Palmer, Public Programming Manager at Maidstone Museum, said: “We are thrilled to have received the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and we look forward to transforming the Ancient Civilisations Gallery into a fantastic space that educates, informs, and entertains. We’re also delighted to be working with the Kent Association for the Blind to ensure that development of the space will be optimised for visually impaired visitors, while Maidstone Borough Council will be funding a new lift and ramps to provide accessibility to the gallery and other galleries currently out of reach to less able visitors.”

Explaining the importance of the HLF support, the head of the HLF in the South East, Stuart McLeod, said: “We are pleased to support Maidstone Museum with their project to form a collectively-curated new space to exhibit and research artefacts from the Ancient Civilisations Gallery. Thanks to National Lottery players, the funding will engage the community and youth groups to research the collections and bring to life the stories behind the artefacts.”

In addition to the redisplay of the Ancient Civilisations Gallery, Maidstone Museum will be working with the Kent Institute of Medicine and Science (KIMS) and Liverpool John Moores University to conduct a CT scan and facial reconstruction of Ta-Kesh, helping determine how this 2,500-year-old mummy – who passed away aged 14 – looked during her lifetime.

-ENDS-
Notes to editors

About Maidstone Museum & Bentlif Art Gallery

Situated in the heart of Kent’s County Town and housed in a range of historic buildings, Maidstone Museum & Bentlif Art Gallery contains over 660,000 artefacts and specimens, making it the largest collection in Kent and one of the best regional museums in the South East.

The Museum is a “treasure trove”. The quality of the collections is outstanding and their diversity staggering. They include:

- World culture collections from North and South America, the Pacific and Australasia.
- Over 6,000 paintings, prints and drawings and sculpture by Epstein and Moore.
- An internationally important collection of Japanese Edo-period objects
- A comprehensive record of British flora and fauna and tens of thousands of natural history specimens from Europe and the Far East.
- Medals and memorabilia from the Queen’s Own Royal West Kent Regimental collection.
- 40,000 fossils including the remains of Maidstone’s very own dinosaur, the Iguanodon.

The Museum is owned and operated by Maidstone Borough Council. Its core is a Tudor manor house dating from 1561. It was acquired by the Council along with its contents in 1855 from the estate of Thomas Charles, a local doctor. The ‘Charles Museum’ was opened three years later. In the late 19th century local benefactors added huge wings to the Elizabethan mansion to house the growing collections and now the whole magnificent edifice is Grade II* listed.

Open Tuesday-Saturday 10am-5pm, and Sunday 12pm-4pm.

Website: www.maidstonemuseum.org
Twitter: @MaidstoneMuseum
Email: museuminfo@maidstone.gov.uk

About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife.

www.hlf.org.uk  @HLFSouthEast

For further information
For further information, please contact Michael Johnson, Marketing and Media Officer at Maidstone Museum on 01622 602609 or michaeljohnson@maidstone.gov.uk

Heritage Lottery Fund: Tom Williams, Communications Manager, 020 7591 6056, Tom.Williams@hlf.org.uk