

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES**

**SUNDERLAND HISTORY FAIR 2008**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the History Fair 2008.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Sunderland Heritage Forum was established in 1997 in order to pursue objectives which were of common value and interest to all of the heritage and history groups of the city and their members. Over the years the Forum has run a number of conferences, participated in heritage open days and organised a programme of events for Local History Month.

- 2.2 The Local Heritage Strategy states in Key Theme 1 – Provision, that an action is to seek to involve the Local Studies Centre and community libraries in a regular programme of heritage activities and events, such as a Local History Fair.

- 2.3 A small sub-group with representatives from Sunderland Heritage Forum (SHF) with Culture and Tourism officers have had regular meetings to discuss and organise this event. Alastair Yule (from the SHF formerly Curator of Fulwell Mill) acted as the Project Manager and staff from Culture and Tourism, including the Marketing Team supported the project throughout its preparation and delivery.

- 2.4 Research was undertaken to decide on a suitable venue, cost of hiring exhibition space and stands to commercial and non-commercial groups, publicity and marketing of the event.

**3.0 HISTORY FAIR**

- 3.1 The History Fair took place on Saturday 7 June 2008 at the Seaburn Centre from 10.00am – 4.00pm.

- 3.2 The fair was open to all groups and organisations interested in promoting Sunderland's heritage through their activities. With over sixty exhibitors present it provided a unique opportunity for the general public to appreciate the diversity of the active organisations in the region and also provided a point of personal contact for individual interests.

### 3.3 Highlights of the day included:

- A lecture on the Great Northern Coalfield from 1550-1984, in the lecture room of the Seaburn Centre by staff from the North East of England Mining Archives and Resource Centre.
- Displays from the Roma Antiqu re-enactment group on land opposite the Seaburn Centre.
- Tours on vintage buses run by the North East Bus Preservation Trust.
- A lecture on Raine's Eye Plan of Sunderland, 1785 by Stuart Miller, local historian and chairman of the Sunderland Heritage Forum.
- An exhibition of mining banners from Durham Mining Museum.
- Sunderland Maritime Heritage Group displayed the model of the Adelaide.
- 68<sup>th</sup> regiment of the Durham Light Infantry.

### 4.0 OPENING CEREMONY

- 4.1 Popular local historian and TV broadcaster John Grundy gave a speech and officially opened the event with the Mayor Councillor Mary Smith.

### 5.0 PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

- 5.1 The History Fair event was added to the Visit Sunderland website, Events website and appeared in Switched On, Workwise and Sunrise Council publications.
- 5.2 The event details were posted on the Our Place website and the Local History Month website.
- 5.3 Sara Stoner from the Sunderland Echo produced a double page article which featured the forthcoming History Fair in the week preceding the event.
- 5.4 The Sunderland Heritage Forum placed a quarter page advert in the Sunderland Echo.
- 5.5 A press release from Sunderland City Council's Marketing Team was sent out on Wednesday 4 June.
- 5.6 Three versions of an electronic bulletin newsletter were mailed out.
- 5.7 Approximately 200 promotional brochures giving details of the event with a booking form were posted to relevant groups and organisations.

- 5.8 An e mail address was created to accept bookings and take enquires [sunderland.history.fair@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:sunderland.history.fair@hotmail.co.uk)
- 5.9 A5 flyers and posters were produced and distributed to all libraries, Museums and the Tourist Information Centre in April to promote the event and to attract an audience.
- 5.10 Pam Tate will produce news articles about the event in Eastwise and Colliery News in the near future.

## **6.0 FUNDING AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Total income from exhibitors stands was £1,410.
- 6.2 After submitting a bid to Community Chest a grant of £400 was awarded from the Fulwell Ward, the bid was also circulated to all Area Committees.
- 6.3 Sunderland University donated £100.
- 6.4 A supplementary bid to Awards For All for £2,600 was awarded to assist with the shortfall and cost of hiring re-enactors, artists, public liability insurance and other contingencies.

## **7.0 EVALUATION**

- 7.1 Evaluation forms were collected from exhibitors and 82% were very likely to attend another similar event organised by Sunderland Heritage Forum.
- 7.2 It is estimated that approximately 3,000 visitors attended the History Fair.
- 7.3 Some of the feedback comments included:
- 'A very enjoyable day for the public and exhibitors'
  - 'Good to see such an event in Sunderland'
  - 'Great atmosphere'
- 7.4 It is proposed that the Sunderland History Fair will become a bi-annual event following its success and in order to coincide with the Durham History Fair which takes place on a bi-annual basis also.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report.