

NEWS RELEASE

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A classroom with a difference at Gayle Mill

Children from schools in the Yorkshire Dales will soon be able to experience hands-on learning by visiting the 230-year old Gayle Mill, near Hawes, as it launches a heritage education project with the arrival of Samantha Belcher, a dedicated Heritage Education and Training Co-ordinator. Samantha joins the Mill from The Bowes Museum at Barnard Castle to co-ordinate a three-year heritage education and skills project, part of the Yorkshire Dales LEADER Programme. The project will build on the Mill's current successful educational programme developed and managed by volunteers.

William Lambert, Chairman of Gayle Mill Trust said, *"We are delighted to welcome Samantha to Gayle Mill. Education is a key objective for Gayle Mill. Our successful application to the Yorkshire Dales LEADER programme has given us the funding to develop and expand our current activities to realise this objective. I hope everyone makes Samantha feel welcome and supports this important project."*

In the coming months Samantha will contact schools throughout the Yorkshire Dales to discuss visiting children in their classrooms and to invite them to visit Gayle Mill. In the classroom and at the Mill children will learn about local heritage, textile manufacture, sustainable electricity and power generation, and wood working, amongst many other interesting topics. Each visit will include hands-on activities and practical learning materials that link directly to the national curriculum. We know from experience that children cannot help but enjoy visiting the Mill, especially when they have the chance to generate electricity using a water powered turbine manufactured in 1920.

The project will also provide opportunities for young people and adults to keep traditional heritage skills alive, such as stone masonry, building with lime, and making



gates and stiles. Heritage Craft Alliance (HCA) will partner with Gayle Mill to provide a range of demonstrations and hands-on workshops, using proven traditional tools and techniques.

Samantha is keen to see more children visiting the Mill. *“This is a dream job for me”, she said, “as it combines my enthusiasm for history and heritage with my experience and passion for working with the community.”*

To find out more about Gayle Mill’s Heritage Education & Skills Training Project please contact Samantha Belcher, the Heritage Education and Training Co-ordinator at Gayle Mill on 01969 667320 or samantha.belcher@gaylemill.org.uk.

Picture Caption: Samantha in the main workshop at Gayle Mill (j-peg attached)

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Additional Information

1. Gayle Mill is a restored 19th century state-of-the-art sawmill, complete with Victorian machinery driven by water-powered turbines. It is run by the voluntary organisation Gayle Mill Trust and supported by the Friends of Gayle Mill (FOGM). Gayle Mill Trust concentrates on; running the Mill as a historic visitor attraction, providing commercial wood services, electricity generation and, heritage education and training.
2. Gayle Mill Trust (GMT) Gayle Mill Trust is a Limited Company by Guarantee and a Charity registered in England & Wales Company no. 05190918 – Charity registration 1123047- VAT registration: 898 4281 62. It was created on 27 July 2004 to provide formal support, alongside the Friends of Gayle Mill (FOGM), to the campaign to restore Gayle Mill and open it to members of the public. It is governed by a board of directors who are also trustees, as GMT was registered as a charity on 3 March 2008.

3. Visitors can experience Gayle Mill on one-hour guided tours, given by volunteer tour guides, from 22 April to 2nd July on Tuesday to Saturday at 11.00am and 14.00. Then from 5th July to 1st October guided tours are at 11.00am, 12.30pm, 14.00 and 15.30 on Tuesday to Friday but stay at 11.00am and 14.00 on Saturday. Gayle Mill also runs two-hour demonstration tours on the 1st Sunday of each month, throughout the year, and selected bank holidays (24th April, 29th May and 28th August) at 11.00am and 14.30. On a special demonstration tour visitors' experience, see and hear, the original 1879 water-powered Victorian machinery being used to make wooden products. Booking is strongly advised.

4. The Heritage Education and Skills Training Project is currently a three-year project (2011-2014) primarily funded by an £80,000 grant from the Yorkshire Dales LEADER programme. The project will bring together key elements of the Mills long-term and more recent history to educate children and adults, preserving its story for the benefit of future generations. The project can be broken down into two main elements; Education and Skills Training. Educational activities will be targeted at school children in the Yorkshire Dales Area and Heritage Skills Training will be aimed at young people over 16 and adults.

5. 'LEADER' is an initiative for assisting rural communities to improve the quality of life and economic prosperity in their local area. The funding is being made available through the Rural Development Programme for England, which is jointly funded by Defra and the European Union, and is managed by Yorkshire Forward in the Yorkshire & Humber region. LEADER is an acronym for "Liaison Entre Actions pour le Développement de l'Economie Rural3 (Linkages between rural economic actions and activities).

6. 80% of the funding for this project comes through the Rural Development Programme for England, which is jointly funded by Defra and the European Union, and is managed by Yorkshire Forward in the Yorkshire and Humber region. The other 20% of the funding comes from Gayle Mill Trust and the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).



7. Samantha Belcher studied for a degree in Archaeology at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, with particular interest in Prehistory. Since graduating she has worked in various museums in the North East in visitor services and community engagement roles; including Beamish Museum - The Living Museum of the North, Discovery Museum in Newcastle, and Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens. Most recently Samantha occupied the post of Community Curator at The Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle. Originally from Consett in Co. Durham, Samantha now lives in the village of Aysgarth in Wensleydale.