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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Child's Play Recreates Cradley Heath 'Stute!**

Work on the next biggest attraction is underway at the Black Country Living Museum where builders are using child's play to recreate the past. Awarded a £1.535 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund the Museum is using a unique construction method - 'building by numbers', to return 'the 'Stute' to its former glory.

Ian Walden, Museum Director said: "It is the first time Sapcote have worked with numbered bricks. We have spent years developing the best way of reconstructing buildings and have passed this knowledge on to our own staff and others. The Worker's Institute reconstruction was far too large for our staff to undertake so we called in an experienced building contractors – Sapcote. However because we want them to do it our way - we've had to give them additional training with our staff."

Work on 'the 'Stute' began in July this year and it is envisaged will take about a year to complete with the building opening to the public in and the Worker's Institute building will open to the public in September 2007. the building will be the first of many in a new High Street development. Reconstruction

Selwyn Owens, Projects Officer said: "In order to re-build the Workers Institute, Sapcote contractors are receiving on site training and supervision by BCM staff in the method of re-erection using survey drawings, log books, method statements and procedures developed by the Museum which enables buildings to be re-erected as they were originally built."

The 'Stute will overlook the existing canalside village and will be 'set' in the 1930s with original period displays. A multi-media time-capsule room will tell one of the most significant yet hidden stories of British labour history: the Women Chainmakers' Strike and the story of its leader Mary Macarthur.

Originally rescued from the route of a bypass last year, it will finally achieve its founder Mary Macarthur's original vision of being a 'centre of social activity, education and entertainment for working people and their families' as they visit the Museum.

Rob Pell, Site Manager, Sapcote said: "As one of the oldest construction companies in Birmingham and the Black Country, it's is great to be involved in reconstructing another piece of social history. The exciting challenge this time is to recreate 'the 'stute', using the method of recorded reclaimed brickwork. This entails using the numbered brick records supplied by the Museum after they had taken the Worker's Institute down, and re-building in a reverse order. As far as I am aware this is a first for Sapcotes. When it's finished the people of Cradley Heath and the Black Country will be able to visit a building they probably thought had disappeared for good."

The Worker's Institute, to be reconstructed overlooking the Museum's canalside village, will be the first of a number of buildings planned to create a new High Street which will expand the Museum and attract more visitors to the Black Country.

The Institute will be fitted out as it would have been in the 1930s with original period displays and what is a new departure for the Museum, a multi-media time-capsule room. It will tell one of the most significant yet hidden stories of British labour history: the Women Chainmakers' Strike and the story of its leader Mary Macarthur. She became one of Britain's leading female trade unionists, whose landmark victory laid the legislative foundation upon which today's national minimum wage is built.

Reconstruction work will take about a year to complete and the Worker's Institute building will open to the public in September 2007.

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