

Locally-trained stoneworker led project to carve immense sheep statue

# Prince to unveil 17-ton ram of resort craftsman

By ANGELA GALLEN

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A SCULPTOR who learnt his craft in Weymouth is to have his 17-ton Portland stone statue honoured with a royal opening today.

Shawn Williamson has masterminded the crafting of a huge Herdwick ram over the last seven months, helped by a team of student stone-workers.

Prince Charles is to unveil the sculpture in Cockermouth, West Cumbria, where it will mark the gateway to the district.

Mr Williamson achieved a diploma in stone sculpture and a City and Guilds in stonemasonry from South Dorset Technology College, now Weymouth College, 20 years ago.

He said: "The ram is an icon of hope and a symbol of farming that is special to the area. The Herdwick ram is a hardy breed but it took a bit of a kicking during the foot and mouth outbreak.



**GIANT RAM:** Sculptor Shawn Williamson with his 17-ton Portland stone sculpture of a Herdwick sheep

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"This has been about people working together to create a major statement that will stand the test of time. Ownership belongs to the community as a whole, not just one artist."

The project - funded by Rural Regeneration Cumbria, West Cumbrian training organisations and local busi-

nesses - has provided hands-on training for 45 young people studying ancient stone crafts.

Weymouth College student Dawson Colvert carved out most of the fine detail on the animal over five weeks and is looking forward to meeting Prince Charles for the second time, at the opening.

He first met the prince after being awarded a scholarship from the Prince's Foundation to pay for his travel and accommodation expenses in Cumbria.

Dawson, 23, originally from Tennessee, USA, said: "His Royal Highness saw a picture in my portfolio of the bare 17-tonne block so I think he'll be

impressed with the finished product.

"This has been a really big opportunity for me, as I did nearly all the carving of the fleece and fur of the ram. I also trained the younger students on using the basic tools.

"I have been juggling this with an HND in applied architectural stonework."

## In Brief

### 50 taken off blazing train

PASSENGERS were evacuated from the Waterloo to Weymouth train when it caught fire at Wareham at 4.30pm yesterday.

About 50 people were safely helped off the train after an electrical fault sparked the blaze as it drew into the station.

Two fire engines attended and used infra-red cameras to check that the flames were out.

Witness Ed Harland said: "A spectacular electrical arc occurred approximately 100 metres from the end of the platform followed by a cloud of smoke as the electrical motor that drives the train caught fire."

### Boat towed in

A DIVE boat and lifeboat towed in a vessel that had lost power.

The Weymouth Diver responded to a distress call from the dive boat *Rebel* which reported it had lost engine power in Southwell Bay, Portland. It was towed into port.

### Witness plea

POLICE are seeking witnesses who may have seen two youths trying to break into a vehicle in Essex Road, Weymouth, at 11.30pm on March 22. Call police on (01305) 222222.