# Heritage Lottery Fund’s £415,100 investment to help us delve into our colourful past

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Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is announcing 50 successful projects in the South West which will be receiving a total investment of £415,100 to help people explore their community’s heritage, through its All Our Stories programme.

This grant programme – developed to coincide with BBC Two’s history series, The Great British Story: A People’s History - aims to get thousands more people across the UK involved in exploring the local history, customs and traditions that are important to them.

And now, people in the South West  will benefit from small grants that will help them to find out more about their own local heritage – often complex, sometimes quirky but always fascinating – at a truly grass roots level. A kaleidoscope of unusual stories of communities is already emerging, such as the 53 year history of Plymouth market to the tale of supporter-owned Exeter City FC.

Plymouth Market Archive is one of 50 regional projects out of a total of 542 successful projects awarded a total of £4.5million across the UK today. The history of Plymouth City Market’s 53 years is one deeply embedded in its community of traders and customers.

“This is an epic building with some great stories,’ says Matthew Pontin, Creative Director of social enterprise Fotonow CIC. Now the organisation, aided by a £7,800 All Our Stories grant, will create an archive of this once bustling local market where, for example, a young Richard Branson ran his very first Virgin Records stall in the 1970s.

Fotonow believes the market should become the hub of an independent commercial quarter in the city and it will be recording interviews with past and present shop and stall owners and regular customers. Supported by the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office, the market team of volunteer researchers and interviewers will create a living archive which will be accessible online. They hope it will underline the market’s importance and assist in any future planning discussions.

All Our Stories, launched in April, was so popular that HLF has quadrupled the amount it had originally set aside for projects. Grants ranging from £3,000 up to £10,000 have been granted to all sorts of organisations, from small community groups, residents’ associations and local history groups to larger heritage organisations and charities. The grants will bring communities together to explore the past, as well as providing those people with the skills and expert advice - delivered by top academics - to delve into their local community’s history in a lasting and well-informed way.

Historian Michael Wood presented The Great British Story which was broadcast earlier this year, and encouraged people to get more personally involved with the heritage in their own backyard. He said: “We British love our history, and no wonder: few nations in the world, if any, have such riches on their doorstep, and so much of it accessible to all of us. It is fantastic that so many people have been inspired to get involved, both from The Great British Story series, and HLF’s All Our Stories. Thanks to lottery players people can now dig deeper into their own past and I’m certain many surprising stories will be uncovered which will not only bring to life the excitement of local history, but will illuminate every community’s connection with the national narrative.”

Richard Bellamy, Acting Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for the South West, said: “It’s often amazing what people don’t know about where they live. We have been bowled over by the response to All Our Stories and the great news is that we have been able to find the money to support so many fascinating projects such as the community around Plymouth Market and the stories of Exeter FC. We’re looking forward to hearing more about the colourful stories that emerge; they will create a unique picture of the South West and these islands as a whole at an important time in our history.”

Other successful applicants today in Devon include:

- Grecian Voices, Exeter FC
- Memories Recipe Book, Plymouth
- Plotting Plymouth’s Past, Plymouth

To support All Our Stories, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) is providing funding so that projects can work closely with universities and benefit from the professional support of heritage experts. The AHRC funding will be encouraging early career researchers to work with community groups to share and develop their research skills. HLF will also be commissioning The Media Trust to help projects create a new type of digital record of the work they do.

Although the All Our Stories programme is now closed to further applications, HLF will be launching a new £3,000 - £10,000 community heritage grants programme, ‘Sharing Heritage’, in February 2013. It will use a similar, simple to access application process and will also be designed to reach new applicants working at grass root

**Notes to editors**

All Our Stories was developed in response to HLF’s Strategic Framework consultation with the public and heritage sector which encouraged HLF to make applying for funding simpler and easier for first time applicants and community groups.

All Our Stories featured in five BBC Learning events at flagship heritage locations and regional events across the UK which ran in tandem with The Great British Story: A People’s History TV series to get people involved with their local heritage. These events provided opportunities for people to discover their place in history, learn about their surnames and uncover the history of their local area.

The funding has been made available through the AHRC’s Connected Communities programme whose aim is to understand through research the changing nature of communities and the role of communities in sustaining and enhancing our quality of life.

The NCCPE support universities to engage with the public. It works with all the beacons to promote best practice in public engagement and provide a single point of contact for the whole higher education sector. The NCCPE also works strategically with key national partners to help develop work across the higher education sector.

The Media Trust believes in the power of media to change lives. It works with the media industry to empower charities and communities to have a voice and be heard. This is achieved by providing communications skills and resources, helping access audiences, and harnessing creative industry talent. Find out more by visiting the Media Trust website or follow on Twitter @Media_Trust

*Project examples*

- Grecian Voices – Exeter. Exeter City Football Club, owned by its supporters, plans to mark the centenary of its historic 1914 tour of South America by creating and promoting a permanent movable archive of the epic visit to inform and educate present and future generations.
  Contact: Paul Farley 01647 253 049
- Memories Recipe Book, Plymouth. Age UK Plymouth will bring together groups of older people to share their historic local recipes to create a collection of simple low cost meals in a 'Memories' Recipe Book with pictures and quotes from the era.
  Contact: Lynne Hodgson 01752 256 020
- Plotting Plymouth's Past, Plymouth. The project will complete a comprehensive survey of all of the City's Boundary Stones, Milestones and Markers and present the data online. There are estimated to be about three hundred items to be surveyed and recorded.
  Contact: Doreen Mole  01752 774 316

Recent confirmed HLF grants have included £3m to the National Arboretum in the West Midlands, £2.5m to Battersea Old Town Hall in London, over £3m to help the Fitzwilliam Museum acquire Poussin's 'Extreme Unction' and £1.6m for conservation work around the white cliffs of Dover.

The National Lottery: Lottery funding has been changing people's lives for 18 years - 19 November is the National Lottery's 18th birthday. Every week National Lottery players raise over £30 million. From funding our Olympic and Paralympic athletes to grass roots sport, the National Lottery has invested in museums and galleries, local parks, artists, theatres, film, charities and local communities. To find out more go to the National Lottery Good Causes' website .

**Further information**

HLF press office: Phil Cooper on 07889 949 173.

Fotonow CIC: Matthew Pontin, Creative Director on 01752 269 110.