Call for volunteers as Brighton history projects share £100K in Heritage Lottery funding

06/10/2010

My House My Street is being run by the Brunswick Town Charitable Trust which will be looking in particular at the North Laine area, the early industrial heart of the city that flourished between the 1820s and the early 20th century.

An army of volunteers will be recruited to trawl through property deeds, architectural records, census returns and other historical documents and piece together a history not just of each street but of each individual building. Some 20 streets each containing around 60 houses are being targeted and the organisers expect that up to a million snippets of information will be gathered during the year-long project.

All the data collected will be stored permanently online and a series of special events will be organised including street history exhibitions, heritage walks, house tours and workshops. It is hoped that as the project develops more and more residents will get involved, intrigued to find out about the lives of those who lived in their properties in years gone by.

Stuart McLeod, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South East England, said: “This is truly a people’s project that will unlock information to show that, in addition to major heritage sites like the Royal Pavilion and the grand Regency terraces, there is a rich vein of history to be found in more modest streets.”

Commenting for the Brunswick Town Charitable Trust, Nick Tyson, said: “We have piloted this project for over two years and there has been tremendous interest in the trials we have staged. My House My Street is our most successful local heritage initiative to date. It’s very exciting to now have the funds to develop the programme properly.”

Nick is keen to recruit more volunteers to the project. He says: “We are going to be providing lots of skills-training sessions and research opportunities over the next 12 months and would welcome local people joining us to deliver the initiative. If you would like more information about the project contact mhms@rth.org.uk / 01273 206306.”

In the second project, called Past/Present, which has received £50,000, old films about life on the Home Front during World War Two will be used to inspire Brighton school students who will be interviewing a number of older residents about their wartime memories.

Students from Longhill High School will be viewing archive films that cover such themes as children in wartime, civil defence, community life and women’s role on the home front. They will also be researching material at the Mass Observation Archive kept at the University of Sussex. The Archive holds the results of social research collected during the 1930s.

The project, run by Lighthouse Arts and Training, will lead to the creation of a special resource for history teachers and their students. Results of the research will be used to create information in a virtual reality format, accessible on smartphones.

For Lighthouse Arts and Training, Jamie Wyld, Head of Media Arts, said: “This project will provide young and older people the opportunity to work together to discover and research with one-another histories within heritage film. They will also be engaged with a project that will benefit the public with a virtual map, available through mobile phones, to

everyone who visits Brighton and wants to know more about its home front heritage."

Notes to editors

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the **Heritage Lottery Fund** (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported more than 33,900 projects, allocating over £4.4billion across the UK, with over £428 million granted in the South East alone.

Further information

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Nick Tyson, Brunswick Town Charitable Trust Secretary on 01273 206306.

Jamie Wyld, Lighthouse Arts and Training Head of Media Arts on 01273 647197.