England’s oldest swimming club receives lottery splash

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The funding will allow the club to explore a recently discovered archive in Brighton Museum that delves into a fascinating and extensive heritage of swimming in Brighton. The project, called ‘Floating Memories’ will shed light on archive material dating back to the 1860s.

Activities such as sea swimming, water polo, diving and more will be explored. Artefacts including reels of unique 16mm film footage from the 1940s, and club rules from 1887 are among fascinating items to be properly documented and conserved.

Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for the South East Stuart Mcleod, said: “While preserving and sharing these valuable un-catalogued archives with the widest possible audience, opportunities to volunteer are also at the heart of this project. A wide range of skills training will be offered to new volunteers from archive research, cataloguing and digitisation, to recording oral histories and exhibition design.”

Sea swimmer and 33-time King of the Channel, Michael Read, commented: “I think that the project is an absolutely brilliant idea. I do not believe that the city appreciates what a significant part the Brighton Swimming Club has played in its development over the past 150 years. Brighton was at the forefront of sea bathing in the 1800s and now in the new millenium open water swimming is one of the fastest growing outdoor activities. This project offers the local citizens an opportunity to understand what a significant step sea swimming was and what an important part Brighton Swimming Club has played in the town’s (now a city) sporting success.”

A new display in the Brighton Fishing Museum celebrating Brighton’s sea front will show 150 years of the BSC’s history. This will be open to the public all year round with free entry. Students from the University of Brighton will be involved in the production of an exhibition at Brighton’s Fishing Quarter Archive which will coincide with Brighton’s famous Mackerel Fayre in May 2012.

There will be many other project outputs including a series of public talks for the wider community, a ‘Floating Memories’ website providing a snapshot of the fascinating and unusual archive and a project book.

Further information

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