Hidden histories will come to light

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One will set a group of Young Heritage Hunters on the trail of forgotten and overlooked history covering various parts of the town and, in the process, spark interest in further investigations in the future. In the other, volunteers will research the story of Newport Pagnell's role in the English Civil War providing information for a guided walk and for local schools.

Stuart McLeod, Head of Heritage Lottery South East England, said: "Encouraging people, of all ages, to help uncover the facts about their town's or neighbourhood's past will give them a stake in their local history and help preserve it for the future."

The Young Heritage Hunters project will be run by the Milton Keynes Heritage Association which has received a grant of £49,500. Groups of young people will work to show how Milton Keynes is formed of a range of constituent parts, each with its own distinctive history. They will seek out evidence for their own areas researching at libraries, museums and archives and mounting visits to heritage sites. It is hoped their researches will uncover facts for areas that currently have no local history society and so spur the creation of new groups.

Having gathered the information they will inform a wider audience through exhibition displays, films, animations, artworks, and short plays. They will be helped by attending training workshops and receiving advice from a range of experts. Displays will be mounted as part of the new 'Discover Milton Keynes' showcase at CMK Library and at other venues across the city. The project will be represented at the city's 45th anniversary celebrations in January next year.

For Milton Keynes Heritage Association Chairman David Muston said:" This is a great opportunity to build on the experience of previous heritage projects involving young people and will bring them together with local communities in new and exciting ways. We are very grateful for the continued support offered by the HLF and hope that this new project will produce a lasting legacy in terms of new ways in which people can interact with and appreciate the heritage which lies all around us."

The second project, Newport Pagnell Garrison Town, is being run by the Newport Pagnell Muster with the aid of a £37,800 grant. Volunteers will bring together for the first time information held in local and national museums, libraries and archives to show the historic significance of the town which was one of several fortresses along a frontline that stretched during the Civil War through the South Midlands to London.

The area was close to Charles I's Royalist stronghold at Oxford and the project will identify some of the major local figures, both Royalist and Parliamentarian, as well as identifying the buildings and sites locally associated with the period.

This information will be used to create a Garrison Town walking trail as well as an exhibition that will feature next year in Heritage Open Days, the organiser's Muster event in September and at the 'Discover Milton Keynes' showcase in the CMK Library. A school's learning pack will also be produced for use by Year 8 children in local schools.

For Newport Pagnell Muster Group Chair Steve Williams, said: "This can only be great news for the town and people of Newport Pagnell. From our basic research we already know that this ancient town has a fascinating store of history just waiting to be told. Having this grant will enable us to bring out the largely unrecorded era when Cromwell's army ran it

as an important garrison. It will make it a more interesting and historic place for all ages to learn about, to live in or just to visit."

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 £428million granted in the South East alone.

Further information

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