Memories of south Wales' Jewish communities shared at Cardiff exhibition

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The exhibition, which comes as a result of a three year project, shares the lives and stories of 60 members of the Cardiff Reform community and reflects on how their identity has been formed.

From memories of life in Germany in the 1930s and fleeing persecution to happier recollections of growing up in the south Wales valleys, the stories weave a tapestry showing a diverse and courageous community.

Cardiff Reform Synagogue was awarded over £33,000 from Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in 2010 to provide project volunteers with specialised training in oral history, archiving, interviewing and the digital technology skills needed to document the stories.

Cardiff Reform Synagogue, working in partnership with Butetown History and Arts Centre, renowned for its work in portraying local minority ethnic communities, will now share the fascinating stories and photographs through the exhibition, which runs until the end of September.

The exhibition is supported by a new website, where visitors can watch video interviews with community members and view old photographs.

Colin Heyman, Project Manager, said: "We wanted to capture the fascinating stories and memories from community members, which is how the project came about. As the project progressed, we realised that people had such different experiences to share, from Welsh speaking Jews to taxi drivers, and so the exhibition needed to truly reflect the diversity of our community."

"Visitors will also gain an understanding of how the Reform Jewish community and Welsh people have interacted over the last 60 years or so. By knowing more about our past we can also move more confidently into our future."

Glenn Jordan, Director of the Butetown History & Arts Centre, said, "I am very pleased to be involved with this project as a photographer and oral historian. These are stories that need to be told; these are faces that deserve to be remembered."

Jennifer Stewart, Head of HLF in Wales, added: "This is a fantastic project that helps share the courageous stories of one of Wales' many diverse communities. The stories have been digitally archived to ensure that they're not forgotten and so future generations can explore their community's history. People are at the heart of HLF projects and through projects like these we're able to invest in training volunteers with the necessary skills to protect our heritage."

The Hineni exhibition is showing at the Cardiff Story Museum until 28 September. It will then travel to numerous museums across the UK, visit the Hineni website for further information.

Did you know?

Hineni is Hebrew for ‘here I am’. Originally it was used in the Torah in a spiritual sense. It is what Abraham said to God to indicate his readiness when he is called on and what Moses said when called by God at the Burning Bush.

Further information

For further information or to arrange interviews please contact Helen Newton or Kate Sullivan on 029 2076 4100.