# Making a splash with Lido history project

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The memories of Lido life will be collected as part of a social history project made possible by a £12,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The newly formed charity – Hilsea Lido Pool for the People – will be researching the pool's history and impact from 1935 to the present day. Volunteers will research how the Lido transformed local leisure opportunities for people re-located from slum housing during the depression of the Thirties and during and after World War Two.

They will look at the surge in group fitness activities such as the Women's League for Health and Beauty and how the appeal of outdoor pools waned with the growth of post-war foreign holidays. Local people will be interviewed to capture memories of sunny summer childhoods, meeting future partners at the pool and visiting with children and grandchildren.

The project coincides with the Lido's 75th anniversary year and will feature in local exhibitions of memorabilia including historic pictures and original and replica bathing costumes. The organisers will also take part in local carnivals and Heritage Open Days to raise awareness of their plans to bring the Lido back into full use.

For the Heritage Lottery Fund, Stuart McLeod, Head of HLF South East England, said: "This project will raise awareness of the crucial role played by the Lido in the social life and leisure time of Hilsea over many years and will whet the appetite for a re-opening of the pool in the future."

For Hilsea Lido Pool for the People Trust, Sabrina Richards, said: "This is a fantastic project and we are really excited to receive the Heritage Lottery Fund grant which will enable us to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Hilsea Lido. It will remind everyone about the significance of our Lido and its role as a premier venue for entertainment and swimming and also marks the beginning of the Hilsea Lido revival. We hope that when we have attracted further funds to re-open the pool, a whole new generation will enjoy the benefits of Lido Lifestyle'.

The Lido was designed by then Portsmouth City Engineer Joseph Parkin and built as an employment project in 1935 for the sum of £36,000. Its main pool could accommodate 900 swimmers with more than 1000 spectators and it opened from the end of May to the start of October each year from 7am to 10pm. During the Thirties Hilsea Lido hosted national diving championships and aqua spectaculars. Original admission charges were 6d (2.5p) for adults and 3d for children. One particular claim to fame was the pool's appearance in the Ken Russell rock film 'Tommy', although the current project may reveal more unrecorded events or famous connections with the pool.

Local residents are being asked to get involved in the project later this month. "Local people have great affection for the Lido," said Ms Richards. "We need them to come along to Portsmouth City Museum on Sunday 27 June between 11am and 4pm to bring us their photographs of times past at the Lido, old costumes, memories of events at the Lido, in fact anything that will help us to bring the last 75 years to life."

**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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Contact Jane Smith, Hilsea Lido Pool for the People Trust Chair on 02392 873259 if you would like to volunteer for the 75 year celebration activities.