# Bradford Bulls Foundation helps protect Odsal Stadium’s rich history

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The money will see the West Yorkshire Archives Service and Huddersfield University work in partnership with the Bradford Bulls Foundation to deliver a three year heritage project focussing on Odsal Stadium’s key role in the sporting, cultural and social history of Bradford between its construction in 1934 and 1966.

The project will offer exciting volunteering and learning opportunities for people of all ages, and help save the wealth of fascinating memorabilia and archive material housed at the stadium.

Local people, including school children, university students, and history societies will be involved in the project documenting historical artefacts, learning state-of-the-art archiving techniques and recording memories in relation to the stadium’s history. Heritage events and stadium tours will be held for up to fifty local schools during the first two years of the project, and staff and volunteers will be trained in environmental control and conservation techniques. The project will also produce a book, website, DVD and displays at the stadium for wider audiences to learn about the importance of Bradford’s much-loved historical sporting venue.

Recognised by the project partners and Bradford Industrial Museum, Bradford Library Service and Yorkshire Film Archive as being of significant heritage importance, the stadium’s lesser known story played a key role within the social fabric of the local community between 1934 and 1966. Traditionally known as one the UK’s top homes of Rugby League, the stadium also played host to a wide variety of other sports from cricket to motorcycle speedway, baseball to horsejumping. During the Second World War it was also a vital lynchpin of the war effort, home to ‘Dig for Britain’, the Air Raid Communications Centre for the North of England, as well as a venue for key community events such as religious festivals and coronation pageants.

Fiona Spiers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Yorkshire and the Humber region, said: “Osdal Stadium has very strong links with the local community and this project will strengthen them further by engaging people in its fascinating history. People from across the community will be able to volunteer, learn new skills, and play a part in protecting this special slice of their local history for future generations to come.”

Chairman of the Bradford Bulls Foundation, Ryan Duckett, said: “This award by the Heritage Lottery Fund will allow us to provide a valuable and unique resource to be enjoyed by current and future citizens of Bradford and the wider community across West Yorkshire. We are grateful for the support of the HLF and all our partners in this unique initiative.”

West Yorkshire Archive Service Chief Officer, Graham Hebblethwaite, said: “We are delighted to be able to offer our Archive Conservation Department’s specialist skills to support the Past Times Project. Expert staff will be assisting and training volunteers at the Bradford Bulls Foundation using the latest archival materials and environmental monitoring equipment to protect the collection for the future.”

The Bradford Bulls Foundation is grateful for the support of Bradford Bulls RLFC, Sovereign Health Care, The Garfield Weston Foundation, the Local Studies Department of Bradford Libraries Service and the continued involvement of the

Bradford Industrial Museum. Past Times will commence in the Autumn 2010 and the Bradford Bulls Foundation would be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to become involved as a volunteer in the project.

**Further information**

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