£2million spring boost for London’s diverse heritage

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The restoration of a precious chapel in Havering – once the heart of its community and in continuous use for nearly 200 years; the heritage and stories of East End communities living on the Olympic Park site long before the construction workers moved in; the Wiener Library ‘Keeping the Truth Alive’ to become the key UK resource in Holocaust education; the untold stories of Chinatown’s first settlers in 1950s Soho; and the frequently shocking tale of education provision for disabled people in the early part of the 20th-century – these are just some of the fascinating stories that make up London’s heritage at the heart of our communities.

Sue Bowers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for London, explains why these new projects from across the capital have been successful in gaining funding: “There are countless hidden histories across the capital, that play a vital part in our understanding of our heritage. At an exciting time when East End boroughs are watching the changes around them as the Olympic Park takes shape, we must not forget the stories of people who have lived their lives on this site for many years before. Similarly, we can help those organisations that act as memory-keepers for periods in history such as the Holocaust, that without funding, may be lost forever.”

Mapping the Change: £293,200, LB Hackney
This project will ensure the documentation of the impact of one of Europe's largest construction sites on the communities of Hackney and East London. Over a period of twenty months, local people's memories and experiences will be collected as the host borough changes in preparation for the Olympics. Led by Hackney Museum, this major Hackney contribution to the cultural celebration of the Olympics will chart the changes and give local residents a real opportunity to recall the past and comment on the future.

Research and interviews around Hackney Wick and Dalston with Hackney's hugely diverse communities will lead to an archive, catalogue, exhibitions and teaching materials for local schools and culminate in a major display during Games Time telling the story of Hackney's incredible journey between the first London Olympics in 1948 and the 2012 Games.

Cllr Jonathan McShane, Hackney Council Cabinet Member for Community Services, said: "Well done to Hackney Museum for securing another Heritage Lottery Fund grant. Hackney co-hosting the London 2012 Games is not only about new buildings, better transport and job opportunities, it is about people experiencing change in preparation for what will be a major event in history. It is important that the Council plays a role in documenting this. Mapping the Change will provide us with a revealing and valuable account for future generations to look back on."

The Past: £239,500, LB Waltham Forest and other Olympic boroughs
This two-year project hopes to reveal the hidden histories of the area that is now the Olympic Park and Stratford International Terminal before they are lost forever. To be run by Waltham Forest-based African Heritage and Educational Centre (AHEC) - a charity working throughout the capital to help people understand African culture and heritage – it will focus on the Caribbean, Ghanaian and Nigerian workers of industries previously occupying the site such as the Post Office, London Transport, British Railway, and health and social care in East London during from the

1940s onwards.

As factories, homes and streets have given way to the Olympic Park volunteers will be recruited to research and to interview up to 100 people who used to live and work locally. They will create an exciting thought provoking exhibition that will tour 15 boroughs and distribute thousands of DVDs and booklets as a result.

Christine Borsah, Director of AHEC, said: “With this grant HLF has proved once again their commitment to preserving the rich heritage of the diverse communities of London, leaving an enduring legacy for present and succeeding generations.”

Restoration of Upminster Old Chapel: £670,800, LB Havering
Once the heart of the local community and in continuous use for nearly 200 years, Grade II listed Upminster Old Chapel sits on English Heritage's 'At Risk' Register after closing in 1987. Now, with HLF support, this historic nonconformist chapel in the old village of Upminster will be saved and opened to the public for the first time in more than 20 years. Pupils at Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School, on whose site it stands, and the local community, will benefit from the transformation of the chapel, which, situated opposite the Grade II Upminster Windmill, forms an important part of the heritage of the area.

The restoration and repairs will enable the chapel to be put to use a heritage centre offering opportunities for people of all ages to get involved through education and volunteer based activities. Works will also include the installation of toilet facilities, a kitchen, the creation of storage and meeting spaces, plus a small permanent on-site exhibition and a variety of historical character tours led by students and volunteers to bring the story of the chapel alive.

Mrs Williams, Headmistress at Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School, said: "The school is absolutely delighted to receive the news that Heritage Lottery Fund are supporting our bid for £670,800 - this will enable us to lovingly restore and renovate Upminster Old Chapel. This is a very exciting time for us; as a result of our successful bid we will be able to promote the history and heritage of Upminster."

An Oral History of Chinatown: £193,000, LB Westminster and LB City and Hackney
Since the development of Soho’s Chinatown in the 1950s, the histories of the Chinese communities living there have been largely undocumented. This 2-year project, to be run by City and Hackney-based charity the Chinese Mental Health Association (CMHA), aims to trace the area’s history through the memories of local residents and businesses and open up a fascinating yet largely unknown story.

The CMHA - set up in 1993 to maintain the mental wellbeing and quality of life of Chinese communities in the UK – will expose this fascinating tale of Chinese cultural development and identity in London by training young volunteers to carry out bilingual research, produce a documentary film, an educational pack for local schools and libraries, and a multimedia resource for visitors around the area. There will also be a new website and various exhibitions.

Leon Lee, Chief Executive of the CMHA, said: “The China town in Soho is one of the most popular tourist attractions in London and yet little is known about its past and how it became a thriving and bustling community that it is today. We are all delighted with the award as it grants us the privilege to work with the early founders, business builders, and stakeholders in the area. We will capture stories of the many unsung heroes and make them accessible via a wide range of media. We hope that this project will lead to better awareness and understanding of the cultural heritage of the

area.”

Keeping The Truth Alive – Opening the Wiener Library’s Heritage to All: £475,000, LB Westminster/Camden
The Wiener Library Institute of Contemporary History holds the most extensive archive on the Holocaust and Nazi era in the UK and contains over 2million items including books, documents, photographs and eye witness accounts. In relation to its move to new premises in Russell Square this summer, this 4.5 year project made possible with a £475,000 HLF grant will see a step change for the Wiener Library, with its first ever exhibition space and extensive public programming.

The library will become the key resource for UK Holocaust education, and offer greatly improved public access to some 65,000 books (over 20% of which are to be found nowhere else in the UK), 2,800 periodicals, press cuttings, photographs and eyewitness testimonies. Opportunities are planned for people of all ages and backgrounds to engage with and learn about the vital stories these collections hold.

Ben Barkow, Director of The Wiener Library, said: “As the Wiener Library turns an important page in its long and distinguished history, the £475,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund allows us to realise our vision of a collection made accessible to all. As we take down the barriers that have limited public access, our collections will stand revealed as Britain’s most powerful tool for teaching people about the Holocaust and the challenges – political, personal, cultural and ethical – that the catastrophe of mass murder and genocide poses for us all.”

What did you learn at school today?: £176,100, LB Lambeth
Much has changed since the early 20th century in the education of disabled people. This ground-breaking two-year project - to be run by London based charity The Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE) - aims to uncover the often challenging educational experiences over the last century of people with a range of physical, sensory and neurodiverse impairments, learning difficulties, and health conditions. A £176,100 HLF grant will help the charity realise its vision to create a public archive, made up of oral histories and research led wholly by disabled people themselves, to be used as an education tool for the future and to encourage, debate and promote continued equality and diversity in the education system today.

The archive aims to show how the education and support of disabled people has altered radically in the past hundred years and will be fully accessible by the public, academics and health professionals at the British Library.

Tara Flood, Chief Executive Officer, ALLFIE, said: "We are very excited to have HLF as our funding partner for this new project - it will give a new, and as yet unheard, perspective on the changing experience of education for disabled people. We hope the resources we create will challenge, inform and encourage everyone to think differently about disabled people's lives and our aspirations"

Have your say: HLF’s three-month consultation Shaping the future – for heritage, for everyone is now live on our website and all views will help shape HLF’s strategy from 2013 to 2019. This is people’s chance to tell us what they think we should continue to do and what we should do differently. For further information, to view our consultation video and to respond to the consultation visit the consultation page, until 26 April 2011.

Further information

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