Tales of the Oak wins support from Heritage Lottery Fund

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Local volunteers will research some of the more unusual parts of Inverclyde's history and heritage and produce two new publications – a scary storybook for children aged 4-8 years and a 1950s terror comic in the style of "Tales from the Crypt". Free copies of the publications will be made available at local venues and online. There will also be an opportunity for schools to get involved in a Scary Story competition, with the winning story being illustrated for one of the books.

The grant will also fund a new storytelling club where people can informally share and tell stories based on local heritage, with the highlights being released as a monthly downloadable podcast. The focus for the winter session will be local ghost stories.

Volunteer Paul Bristow explains: "We've been collecting and sharing folklore and tradition locally for 13 years, but we've always enjoyed the more unusual parts of our local history – mermaids, sea monsters, Catman – this project is about celebrating some of the stranger parts of our heritage, and inspiring people to keep telling those stories, and sharing their own".

Group member Ross Ahlfeld added: "We are not looking for people to do a formal presentation, or give a performance; it's not a book reading or a drama group. We want to draw inspiration from the tales that folk used to be tell around firesides. Those folk were not professional storytellers, neither are we. We want to help restore an old oral tradition by creating a new living tradition".

Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: "This is an extremely exciting project driven by Inverclyde local residents. It demonstrates how our heritage can be a living part of a community bringing people together to learn from and enjoy their shared – and unique stories. We are delighted to be giving this very worthwhile venture our full support. HLF is keen to hear from Inverclyde groups with other heritage project ideas. Interested groups can find out more from our website or by contacting Development Officer Louise Hastie on LouiseH@hlf.org.uk".

The volunteer led project will start in September, with members of the group and new volunteers being trained in storytelling by the Scottish Storytelling Centre. Further information and regular updates on the project can be found at the Magic Torch blog or by emailing aulddunrod@gmail.com. Further information will also be available at The Dutch Gable House on Doors Open Day on Saturday 8 September.

Notes to editors

About Heritage Lottery Fund
Using money raised through the National Lottery, 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 26,000 projects, allocating over £4billion across the UK and more than £½billion across Scotland.