What did you do in the war Brighton?

26/08/2009

It was turned into a hospital for Indian soldiers during the First World War and its wine cellars were used as air raid shelters during the Second. Such stories involving the Royal Pavilion will feature in a new project, Wartime Brighton & Hove, made possible thanks to a £34,400 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Devised and delivered by staff from the Royal Pavilion & Museums, the project will enlist the help of local residents past and present to delve into the wartime history of the town. They will explore the home front experiences of local people, including the evacuation of London children to the resort, enemy bombing and the billeting of US and Canadian troops locally during the preparations for D-Day.

Commenting for the Heritage Lottery Fund, Head of HLF South East England Stuart McLeod, said: “This varied project will recapture a wide range of experiences, memories and images from a significant moment in the local history of Brighton and Hove. In so doing it will tap into a vital local resource, local residents themselves, who will help to build up a picture of how the area got through these difficult times.”

Childhood memories, historic cinema and film newsreels, as well as wartime music and dance will provide the inspiration for a programme of events for people of all ages. As well as the exhibition there will be study sessions and talks offered in conjunction with the Mass Observation Archive and Screen Archive South East.

The Royal Pavilion & Museums will also be working with the Argus newspaper to reproduce archive photographs originally taken by the now defunct Brighton Herald. Some of these photographs will be on show at Hove Museum & Art Gallery as part of the War Stories exhibition that opens 29 September 2009 and runs to 10 January 2010.

Community involvement is at the heart of the project, with the involvement of local schools and the production of information packs for distribution to neighbourhood libraries. An oral history project will work with the local WRVS to capture the memories of people who experienced at first hand the effect of the Second World War on the town.

For the Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton and Hove Council Cabinet Member for Culture, Councillor David Smith, said: “We are delighted that the HLF has recognised the strengths of this exciting project. The grant will enable us to deliver a first class programme of events with strong community involvement. It will provide a fitting way to mark 70 years since the start of the Second World War.”

Notes to editors

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) enables communities to celebrate, look after and learn more about our diverse heritage. From our great museums and historic buildings to local parks and beauty spots or recording and celebrating traditions, customs and history, HLF grants open up our nation’s heritage for everyone to enjoy. Since 1994 the Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded over £378 million to more than 2,660 projects in South East England.

Further information

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