Young people from across the North West celebrate their roots

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On 19 April 2011 Band on the Wall will be brimming with interactive displays exhibitions and performances exploring what it is to be young and growing up in the 21st century North West – and now young people from across Manchester have the chance to get involved.

Jamil Thomas (aged 21), spokesperson for the Diverse Roots creative team, said: “Most people’s perception of young people is really negative, so we want to challenge people to come down and see what we have made happen. For us, learning about heritage means celebrating our culture and our history, and that is a really positive thing. We want to hear about what it means to other people of our age. All they need to do is drop by on the day and tell us what they think.”

The creative team is made up of young people from the region, all of whom are passionate about exploring their history and identity and wanted to find a way breaking down people’s preconceptions of what heritage is.

The Diverse Roots celebration was their response. By showcasing some of the projects that have been funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Young Roots programme in the North West they hope to open up conversation of what heritage actually means.

Naomi Pemberton (aged 26) was part of the team that created ‘Back to Roots’, a project which gave young people the chance to research their roots and how it relates to the development of modern Black culture. As well as carry out research at Manchester Museum, they participated in African dance, music and film-making workshops.

Naomi, said: “Young people who are into music and dance are naturally interested in how this relates to their culture and identity. Through ‘Back to Roots’ we wanted to use their passion as a way of exploring what it is like to grow up in modern Britain. In school, history is something that is told to you and it can be hard to grasp and really imagine it. When you do it yourself, and you get hands-on, it really goes in.”

Over the last 10 years HLF has awarded nearly £4million through the Young Roots programmes in the North West to a whole range projects that celebrate and explore their heritage.

Bonnie Shaw (aged 14), first got involved with HLF through the Reclaim Project, which empowers young people across Manchester to make positive changes in their communities.

Bonnie, said: “Before, I had a fairly stereotypical idea that heritage was all about old buildings. It is mad how different my opinion is now. For me heritage is so broad because it is about our present and future, as well as our past, and you can’t get bigger than that.”

The internationally renowned Band On The Wall re-opened in 2009 following extensive restoration funded by HLF and the Arts Council. The project also provided enhanced facilities for training and development of young musicians. Band on the Wall is now a place listen and a place to learn, providing an open access resource for music education and professional development

Diverse Roots will be open to the public:

12pm - 5pm, 19 April 2011

Band On The Wall
25 Swan Street,
Northern Quarter
M4 5JZ

Further information

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