Fantastic news for Sunderland’s heritage

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Three groups are sharing the funding. Their projects range from following in a pilgrim’s footsteps and exploring the roots of the Bangladeshi community, to securing the future of two of the city’s key heritage assets.

This announcement follows the news that the Church of Holy Trinity will be transformed into a new cultural venue and story centre, thanks to the Canny Space project and a HLF grant made possible by National Lottery players.

Ivor Crowther, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North East, said: “This is particularly fantastic news as Sunderland is one of the key areas where we are trying to encourage more, good-quality heritage projects to apply for funding. These three projects show just how diverse, fascinating and deserving of celebration Sunderland’s heritage is!”

The projects being announced today are:

Stringing Bedes: a poetry and print pilgrimage (£19,900 grant)

University of Sunderland’s WALK Research Centre (WALKRC)

In early medieval times, the monasteries of St Peter’s in Sunderland and St Paul’s in Jarrow were twinned and considered as one. Bede’s Way was the route monks would take to travel between the two, including its namesake Saint Bede, Europe’s greatest scholar of the time.

Now people can follow in his footsteps. Pilgrimage walks led by ‘walking poets’ and natural historians will follow the route, strung along which will be a number of heritage events. The project will use the walks, as well as poetry and art, to help participants connect with their natural and mediaeval heritage. A brand-new website and touring exhibition will share the project with a wide audience.

Securing a bright future for Living Heritage North East (£62,000 grant)

Living History North East

Living Heritage North East (LHNE), which looks after two of Sunderland’s key heritage assets, will assess the way it works and plan for the future.

As well as the historic Donnison School buildings and the Heritage and Education Centre there, LHNE also holds one of the region’s largest and most significant collection of oral histories, photos and memorabilia including 2,000 recordings and 500,000 images relating to social history and identity in the North East.

The grant will enable LHNE to take an in-depth look into how it can improve the way it stores its collections, develop a robust fundraising and engagement strategy and look at ways it can maximise its existing volunteer programme and skills training.

Our roots, our journey, our city (£39,700 grant)

Sunderland Bangladeshi Community Centre

The Bangladeshi community has a relatively short history in Sunderland, with numbers growing from a few hundred in the late 1970s to around 5,000 today. However it is the largest and longest established ethnic community in the city and has a history full of rich cultural traditions, challenges and memories.

This year-long project will gather family records and photographs alongside oral history interviews to preserve and share Sunderland's Bangladeshi story. Volunteers will receive training from Living History North East and will create a website, mobile exhibition and a permanent display in the Bangladeshi Community Centre.

Further information

For further information, interviews and images please contact Rebecca Lamm, Heritage Lottery Fund press office, on 020 7591 6245 or Rebecca.Lamm@hlf.org.uk.