Liverpool’s black history kept alive thanks to



A vital Liverpool organisation has avoided closure and is continuing to share the diverse stories of the city's past.

When asked what Liverpool is famous for you may say its football teams, The Beatles or the Royal Liver Building.

For years, the Heritage Development Company Liverpool (HDCL) has showcased the city and wider borough’s untold histories of people of black origin. The city was once a central hub of the transatlantic slave trade. HDCL has been working to compile and promote the many different stories of Liverpool's black communities, celebrating their contribution to the social, economic, political, creative, cultural and everyday life of the city.

On the brink

Before coronavirus (COVID-19) struck, HDCL had successfully hosted Black Punh at Liverpool Central Library. This exhibition explored the story of Liverpool’s black boxers, including Harry Brown whose professional career ran from 1897 to 1905. Unfortunately, Brown was prevented from fulfilling his professional potential by the British Boxing Board of Control’s ban on black boxers fighting for the British title.

Tasha Jonas at the Black Punch exhibition launch

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The exhibition was incredibly well received, but its touring plans were a casualty of lockdown.

The onset of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic threatened their wider work too. With only three months' worth of reserves, HDCL was faced with imminent closure if funds could not be raised to save it.

Looking to the future

Thankfully, The National Lottery Heritage Fund was able to award HDCL a lifesaving Heritage Emergency Fund grant of £12,900 to continue their mission. HDCL can now continue enabling people to discover their heritage and encourage people everywhere to have a deeper appreciation and understanding of Liverpool's diverse history. The funding will also go towards website development to further HDCL's digital outreach, and aid in recruitment of new volunteers.

> "The National Lottery funding has brought us back from the brink, allowing us to amplify the stories of our community that need to be told."
>
> *Joint founder and secretary Louis Julienne*

Despite the setbacks HDCL has faced because of coronavirus (COVID-19), joint founder and secretary Louis Julienne is looking forward to what the future holds for his organisation: "Following the success of Black Punch, we were excited to progress with future ideas. But then coronavirus put paid to our plans, and we thought our closure was imminent.

"The National Lottery funding has brought us back from the brink, allowing us to augment our links with larger heritage organisations in the city that can amplify the stories of our community that need to be told. We're already looking ahead to our next projects!"



Brockholes Visitor Village, Lancashire Wildlife Trust Bentham Images



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Welsh island puffins protected thanks to Heritage Emergency Fund grant