

Toy bear which forms part of the collection at Brighton Toy and Model Museum

Involving volunteers from the local community, the two-year project will collect memories from a range of people and use these to create a website, book and touring exhibition which will visit local venues. It will also run community outreach sessions to enable people to share their memories of toys and handle examples of dolls, teddy bears and construction toys from a range of time periods.

Volunteers involved in the project will be able to learn new skills, including interviewing, photographic and videoing skills. They will also help to curate the touring exhibition.

By interviewing people of all ages and backgrounds, the project will help to create links between different members of the local community through the sharing of memories.

Commenting on the award, Museum Manager Tig Savage said: “We are delighted to have this financial support from HLF. We are looking forward to making our collections more accessible to people who may be unable to visit us due to physical, financial or social reasons and to listening to our contributors’ valued memories. It is my sincere hope that this will forge much stronger links between the Brighton Toy and Model Museum and our community in Brighton and Hove.”

Stuart McLeod, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South East England, said: “Toys from years past stir memories of childhood and community. This project will capture these and in so doing add a new dimension to its fascinating collection.”

Anyone in the Brighton and Hove area who is interested in being involved in the project, either as a volunteer or by being interviewed, is invited to the museum on Wednesday 9 July between 5.30-7.30pm, or is welcome to contact the museum on 01273 749 494 or by emailing memories@brightontoymuseum.co.uk.

Notes to editors

Brighton Toy and Model Museum is a treasure trove of toys and models that extends over four thousand square feet of floor space, through four of the early Victorian arches supporting Brighton Railway Station's forecourt. Founded in 1991, it has over ten thousand toys and models in its catalogue, focusing on the first half of the twentieth century, and including rare vintage model train collections and many period antique toys. Its display area includes two large operational model railway layouts (in OO-gauge and gauge O), and displays of period pieces from a range of classic early manufacturers that includes Bing, Dinky, Hornby, Marklin, Meccano, Pelham Puppets, and Steiff. The museum also includes individually-engineered pieces such as the working quarter-scale traction engine and the Spitfire fighter planes in the lobby, and a range of other working scale models throughout the museum.

The museum's exhibits and displays undergo constant review and change, the museum itself has recently undergone an extensive world class, innovative lighting refit, with LED lamps now allowing much brighter illumination throughout the museum while still protecting the more sensitive dyes and paints of some of the older items.

The museum, a registered charity, is supported by the collections' trust – the trustees are made up of a handful of dedicated collectors such as Anthony Capo Bianco, Hugo Marsh (SAS) and Barry Potter. Without their support, such review and change would be very difficult.

A Lottery grant in 2012 afforded a year-long celebration and exhibition of the work of Frank Hornby and the museum is about to embark on the next Lottery project, reaching into their community for memories, in the form of the Toys in the Community, oral history project.

Entrance to the first of four arches (which also houses the museum shop and Tourist Information Point) is free, and the museum's handy location beneath Brighton Station makes it a great stopping-off point for visitors to Brighton to pick up maps and tourist information before seeing the rest of the city.

Further information

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