Heritage Lottery Fund invests more than £458,00 as part of All our Stories programme

23/11/2012

Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is announcing 55 successful projects in the East of England which will be receiving a total investment of £458,500 to help people explore their community's heritage, through its All Our Stories programme.

This grant programme – developed to coincide with BBC Two's history series, The Great British Story: A People's History - aims to get thousands more people across the UK involved in exploring the local history, customs and traditions that are important to them.

And now, people in the East of England will benefit from small grants that will help them to find out more about their own local heritage – often complex, sometimes quirky but always fascinating – at a truly grass roots level. A kaleidoscope of unusual stories of communities is already emerging, such as who has played for, managed and supported Cambridge United over the years and what Roman remains could lie hidden beneath the Fens.

Cambridge United, United is one of 55 regional projects out of a total of 542 successful projects awarded a total of £4.5million across the UK today. It is Cambridge United Football Club's centenary year and the memories of past players, fans and managers will be collected to bring alive the story not just of sport but of a community.

"A football club is a living thing, people come and go and the generations change," says chair of Cambridge Fans United David Mathew-Jones. "The history of the club is the social history of this part of Cambridge."

Volunteer researchers including supporters and students from the university and local schools will help gather the information for the project which has received a £10,000 All Our Stories grant. Oral histories will be collected and a dramatic presentation depicting a player, manager and fan from byegone eras will be filmed. The visual and audio snippets will be included on a smartphone app that will encourage people to explore the club and find out more about it. Contact: David Mathew-Jones 07703 274 034

All Our Stories, launched in April, was so popular that HLF has quadrupled the amount it had originally set aside for projects. Grants ranging from £3,000 up to £10,000 have been granted to all sorts of organisations, from small community groups, residents' associations and local history groups to larger heritage organisations and charities. The grants will bring communities together to explore the past, as well as providing those people with the skills and expert advice - delivered by top academics - to delve into their local community's history in a lasting and well-informed way.

Historian Michael Wood presented The Great British Story which was broadcast earlier this year, and encouraged people to get more personally involved with the heritage in their own backyard. He said: "We British love our history, and no wonder: few nations in the world, if any, have such riches on their doorstep, and so much of it accessible to all of us. It is fantastic that so many people have been inspired to get involved, both from The Great British Story series, and HLF's All Our Stories. Thanks to lottery players people can now dig deeper into their own past and I'm certain many surprising stories will be uncovered which will not only bring to life the excitement of local history, but will illuminate every community's connection with the national narrative."

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund East of England, said: "It's often amazing what people don't know about where they live. We have been bowled over by the response to All Our Stories and the great news is that we have been able to find the money to support so many fascinating projects such as Romans in the Fens, and a century of Cambridge United. We're looking forward to hearing more about the colourful stories that emerge; they will create a unique picture of the East of England and these islands as a whole at an important time in our history."

Other successful applicants today include:

- The Fenland in Roman Times, the Fenlands
- Castles in Cambridgeshire
- West Wickham Big Village Dig, West Wickham
- It Will All Come Out In The Wash, South Cambridgeshire
- Memories of Ely Pits and Meadows, Ely

To support All Our Stories, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) is providing funding so that projects can work closely with universities and benefit from the professional support of heritage experts. The AHRC funding will be encouraging early career researchers to work with community groups to share and develop their research skills. HLF will also be commissioning the Media Trust to help projects create a new type of digital record of the work they do.

Although the All Our Stories programme is now closed to further applications, HLF will be launching a new £3,000 - £10,000 community heritage grants programme, 'Sharing Heritage', in February 2013. It will use a similar, simple to access application process and will also be designed to reach new applicants working at grass roots.

Notes to editors

All Our Stories was developed in response to HLF's Strategic Framework consultation with the public and heritage sector which encouraged HLF to make applying for funding simpler and easier for first time applicants and community groups.

All Our Stories featured in five BBC Learning events at flagship heritage locations and regional events across the UK which ran in tandem with The Great British Story: A People's History TV series to get people involved with their local heritage. These events provided opportunities for people to discover their place in history, learn about their surnames and uncover the history of their local area.

The funding has been made available through the AHRC's Connected Communities programme whose aim is to understand through research the changing nature of communities and the role of communities in sustaining and enhancing our quality of life.

The NCCPE support universities to engage with the public. It works with all the beacons to promote best practice in public engagement and provide a single point of contact for the whole higher education sector. The NCCPE also works strategically with key national partners to help develop work across the higher education sector.

The Media Trust believes in the power of media to change lives. It works with the media industry to empower charities and communities to have a voice and be heard. This is achieved by providing communications skills and resources, helping access audiences, and harnessing creative industry talent. For more information visit Media Trust's website, or follow on Twitter @Media_Trust

Project examples:

The Fenland in Roman Times: this project will give local people and volunteers of all ages a chance to find out more about the fascinating history of the Fens. They will carry out a landscape archaeology survey and produce activities and resources for local schoolchildren highlighting and recording the evidence of Roman life in this area. A new website, leaflets, a celebratory event and a short film will all be created and equipment such as dig boxes and costume sets will be used in outreach visits to local schools.
Contact: Alex Fisher 07769 656 819

Castles in Cambridgeshire: young archaeologists will research and explore the stories of Cambridgeshire's castles, and bring that story to others. County archaeologists will develop research tools for the young people, go on knowledge excursions, and finally visit and record them. They will develop a toolkit that will help future young archaeologists explore similar sites and publish the results over the Internet.
Contact: Quinton Carroll 01223 728 565, email: quinton.carroll@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

West Wickham Big Village Dig: By giving local people hands-on archaeological experience the local history club aims to inspire, stimulate and engage wider interest in the history of West Wickham and its environs. These excavations will enable the community to come together and learn together through a fun and exciting project which will enhance social and educational well-being through active participation in archaeology.
Contact: Janet Morris 01223 290 863

It Will All Come Out In The Wash: Since the late 19th Century, laundry work has been significant employment for Cambridge women. By interviewing past and present workers from the commercial laundries stories will be uncovered about their working lives and some of the key events which have taken place particularly in the past fifty years. These stories will be launched at an exhibition, placed as pod-casts on a website and broadcast on community radio.
Contact: Kay Blayney 0779 2624 042

Memories of Ely Pits and Meadows: This project will capture memories of Ely pits and meadows - memories of digging clay especially during 1947, army activities during the Second World War, the activities and wildlife records leading to Natural England's 2009 SSSI designation, recreational and agricultural use of the land and swimming in the Blue Lagoon. Memories will be available via website, pod cast, transcript and annotated guide.
Contact: Corinne Cox 01787 379 410

The National Lottery: Lottery funding has been changing people’s lives for 18 years - 19 November is the National Lottery's 18th Birthday. Every week National Lottery players raise over £30 million. From funding our Olympic and Paralympic athletes to grass roots sport, the National Lottery has invested in museums and galleries, local parks, artists, theatres, film, charities and local communities. National Lottery Good Causes' website.

Further information

HLF Press Office: Phil Cooper on 07889 949 173.