

All Our Stories - Heritage Lottery Fund invests in helping us delve into our colourful past

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Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is announcing over 50 successful projects across 18 local authorities in Scotland which will be receiving a total investment of £427,600 to help people explore their community's heritage, through its All Our Stories programme*.

This grant programme – developed alongside BBC Two's history series, The Great British Story – A People's History - aims to get thousands more people involved in exploring the local history, customs and traditions that are important to them. Small grants will enable people across the country 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 why children at Tayvallich Primary School want to re-establish their links with Ireland, how the haggis crosses cultures, and why Craigmiller residents want to record the history of their housing estate.

All Our Stories, launched in April, was so popular that HLF has quadrupled the amount it had originally set aside for projects. Grants range from £3,000 up to £10,000 and 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 the skills and expert advice - delivered by top academics - to delve into their local community's history in a lasting and well-informed way.

Presented by historian Michael Wood, the BBC Two series was broadcast earlier this year and gave people the chance to get more personally involved with the heritage in their own backyard.

Michael Wood, TV presenter and historian, added: "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."

Colin McLean, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland, said: "These grants seem to have struck a chord. We were overwhelmed by the interest shown by people of all ages and backgrounds and from all parts of Scotland, and I am delighted we have been able to find the money to support them. The stories are as diverse as they are plentiful. The common thread is people's curiosity and enthusiasm in uncovering and celebrating what has shaped their community. I am heartened that community spirit appears to be still around and delighted that HLF can help support it."

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.

Project Examples

International Haggis Journey - Love it or loathe it, the humble haggis has been centre table in Scottish traditions and folklore since medieval times. Today, this spicy dish has inspired a group of Glasgow refugees and asylum seekers to explore its origins and introduce people to equivalent dishes from their homelands. Ladies from Algeria, Sudan, Libya, Iraq, Kurdistan, Syria, Palestine and Somalia have come together with a common love of cooking to research the story of the haggis, and explore the connection the spices used to make it have with their home countries. The project will culminate with a Burns Day exhibition at which visitors will be invited to try 'haggis' from around the world.

Probably the oldest housing estate in Scotland - The changing face of one of Scotland's oldest and most deprived housing estates is the focus of a fascinating All Our Stories project. Dominated by the medieval Craigmillar Castle, the area, on the outskirts of Edinburgh, has changed dramatically over the centuries from the time when Mary Queen of Scots stayed in the Castle, through to its thriving brewing and coal industries of the early 20th century, to the regeneration initiatives that are taking place today. Elderly residents from the community will be researching and documenting that change. They will learn new computer skills to tap into online resources, learn to read historical maps, visit museums and document reminiscences to create a 'community tree'.

Mid-Argyll Heritage Project - An archeological dig and a view across the sea to Ireland has inspired the children of Tayvallich Primary School in Argyll, to join forces with Mill Strand Integrated Primary School, Portrush N.Ireland, to research the story of their shared Iron Age and medieval heritage. Once a strong sea trading route, the connection between the two places has long been lost. The children will be researching local archives, taking part in workshops run by Kilmartin Museum, investigating a medieval fort and taking to canoes to experience the land from the sea. They will be trained to use digital cameras, and will blog their findings while creating a resource box for the community with weapons, costumes and jewellery from the era.

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 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.

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