

A nine day Georgian Festival is planned in the historic East Yorkshire market town of Beverley. This exciting project will mark and celebrate the 300th anniversary of the accession to the throne of King George I and the completion of Beverley's Market Cross.

The Festival Committee, led by Beverley Civic Society and supported by Beverley Renaissance Partnership and a variety of local arts, history and community voluntary groups, has been given £8,800 to develop a programme of events to make the rich Georgian heritage of the town and its influence on the present day better known.

Sharing Heritage is a new funding programme to help people across the UK explore, conserve and share all aspects of the history and character of their local area.

Students more often study the Tudors, the Victorians and the two World Wars than the Hanoverians, but it was the Georgians who brought about tremendous changes in Britain and also worldwide. Some historians would argue that Britain was made great by the 'Glorious Georges', but they are not well known to the public, and no other town in Britain appears to be celebrating the 300th anniversary of the accession of George I.

For Beverley in particular, the Georgian era that began in 1714 marked a golden time for the town. Extensive building provided eye-catching accommodation that can still be seen today, whilst horse racing, gentlemen's clubs and a theatre attracted rich county families to enjoy the dashing spirit of the period. Dominating the town centre and in its original state, Beverley Market Cross is a prime example of the legacy of the Georgian era, which is also visible but

uncelebrated in many other towns.

Commenting on the award, Festival Committee Chairman John Bird said: "It's great that we have been awarded this grant and we are extremely thankful to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Beverley is a very well loved town, and we want everyone to know as much as possible about its past, for it is this kind of knowledge that helps us to enjoy it even more. Our programme of 25 events that make up the Georgian Festival includes, we hope, something for everyone. Our Heritage Open Day will give people the opportunity to explore an extensive list of Georgian houses, many of which have never been available to the public before, and also to view the two great historic churches in the town. We have a variety of talks, lectures and demonstrations on Georgian themes planned, as well as period dancing, a costume display, harpsichord music by candlelight in our 18th century Guildhall, 'Fit for a King' chocolate tasting and a new play created from a Jane Austen story.

"I'm particularly looking forward to two very special events, which are the Masked Banquet in Beverley Minster, and a historical re-enactment of the proclamation of George I where it all began in 1714 at the Market Cross in Beverley's newly refurbished Saturday Market, complete with period soldiers and performers, and a giant Georgian birthday cake. Our partners have been generous in their support, including both Town and East Riding Councils. Other events will include a claret tasting session, an exhibition at the Treasure House, an archaeological exploration, a contest between local chefs to make a special 'Beverley Bun' recipe using authentic ingredients and a unique '1714' ale provided by the local Atom brewery. All in all, it should be a nine day festival to remember."

Fiona Spiers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund, Yorkshire and the Humber, said: "Sharing Heritage is a wonderful opportunity for communities to delve into their local heritage and we are delighted to be able to offer this grant so that the Beverley Georgian Festival can embark on a real journey of discovery. Heritage means such different things to different people, and HLF's funding offers a wealth of opportunities for groups to explore and celebrate what's important to them in their area."

Notes to editors

Beverley Civic Society was founded more than 50 years ago in order to stimulate civic pride in the beauty and character of Beverley and its surroundings, take an active interest in preserving those features on which the character of the town depends, and to conserve the elements that make it special.

Beverley Renaissance Partnership is an organisation that brings together a number of private, voluntary and public sector organisations who aim to develop Beverley and its surrounding area for residents, businesses and visitors, whilst respecting the natural and built environment and celebrating the town's heritage and ancient past.

Further information

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