Doin’ the Lambeth Walk – again

07/06/2010

Lambeth Walk may be a shadow of its former self but will be in the limelight once more, thanks to a community history project made possible by a £49,900 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Writer development agency Spread the Word is based in Lambeth Walk and will be running the project dubbed My Old China looking at the social, cultural and industrial heritage of the area, taking in Black Prince Road and the China Walk Estate as well.

A dynamic working class neighbourhood through much of the 19th and 20th centuries the area was further popularised by the song ‘Doin’ the Lambeth Walk’ in the 1937 musical ‘Me and My Girl’. During this period industry and homes were intermingled and the Doulton Pottery Factory was a major source of local employment.

Spread the Word will recruit and train half a dozen volunteers as ‘story-catchers’ who will research and record local stories. They will be aided by children from Archbishop Sumner Primary School who will use the tales discovered to create a short play. Local memories will also be jogged by a ‘pop-up stall’ where archive information and images will be designed to prompt reminiscences from passers-by.

Material gathered by these various means will be used by a specially commissioned writer to create a high quality narrative. Then, working with local potters, elements from this text will be cast into pots to be installed in the windows of shops along Lambeth Walk, thus recalling the area’s earlier industrial connections. A small heritage festival will also be organised. At every stage the local community will be involved in the project.

For the Heritage Lottery Fund, Head of HLF London Sue Bowers, said: “Existing archives will be strengthened by the addition of previously unrecorded stories giving local people the chance to both contribute to and learn more about the history of their neighbourhood.”

Emma Hewett from Spread the Word, said: “We are delighted to have been awarded a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It will enable us to unearth hidden histories and find out more about the area we are based in and work with our local community."

Notes to editors

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

Further information

HLF Press Office, Vicky Wilford on 020 7591 6046 / 07973 401937 or vickyw@hlf.org.uk or Phil Cooper on 07889 949 173.

Emma Hewett, Director, Spread the Word on 020 7735 3111.