

Freedom Studios receives grant for Bradford oral history project

09/12/2010

Bradford based Freedom Studios will be able to embark on their oral history project 'The Mill' thanks to a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The Mill will train young people in interview techniques in order to collate the stories and experiences of immigrants who have worked in Bradford's textile mills since 1945. Over the next six months we will be working with people from the Ukrainian, Polish, Pakistani, Italian, Afro-Caribbean and indigenous communities in order to celebrate the city's rich heritage and promote understanding between the different generations.

Over the course of the project Freedom Studios will be working with 60 people from the local area to record the experiences of mill workers. These stories will then be archived and made available to the general public at the West Yorkshire Archive Service. As well as interview techniques, 20 young people aged eight to 18 years old will also be taught photography skills in order to create an exhibition of the participant's portraits and stories, around the theme of identity. This exhibition will tour from summer 2011 to venues across Bradford.

The Mill aims to open up a dialogue between people of different generations and ethnic backgrounds living in Bradford today. Understanding the history of immigration to the city is vital to celebrating the rich and vibrant culture that exists. We hope that by recording these stories for future generations we will help strengthen feelings of identity and belonging in the region.

Fiona Spiers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund, Yorkshire and the Humber, said: "The mill industry has shaped the geographical, architectural and cultural heritage of Bradford. This exciting project will train young people to capture the memories of the former mill workers, preserving this unique heritage by bringing its stories to life."

Deborah Dickinson, Creative Producer of Freedom Studios, said: "We are delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is going to support this important project. The Mill will help to preserve the stories and experiences of generations of people from Bradford for years to come."

Notes to editors

Using money raised through the National Lottery, since 1994 the **Heritage Lottery Fund** has not only revitalised hundreds of museums, parks, historic buildings, landscapes and wildlife sites, but has also given new meaning to heritage itself. People from every walk of life are now involved with the heritage that inspires them, making choices about what they want to keep and share from the past, for future generations. HLF has supported more than 33,900 projects, allocating over £4.4billion across the UK, including £351million to 2,890 projects across the Yorkshire and the Humber region alone.

Further information

Jenna Omeltschenko, Freedom Studios on 01274 730077 or jenna@freedomstudios.co.uk.