Seven Stories

09/09/2009

The grant from HLF has been awarded to fund the preservation, cataloguing and digitisation of Seven Stories unique collection of original manuscripts, artwork and archives, as well as a comprehensive outreach and education programme.

The collection is made up of the works created by outstanding British writers and illustrators for children from the 1930's to the present day, including some of Philip Pullman's early work. It is this collection that forms the foundation on which Seven Stories rests, providing inspiration for the thousands of children and adults that have visited the centre since it opened last month.

English literature is an integral part of the UK's heritage and some of the most popular authors for both adults and children are those who inspired and engaged us in our earliest years. This grant will ensure that those great British authors, from Philip Pullman, Peter Dickenson and Jan Mark, to illustrators such as Edward Ardizzone and Shirley Hughes are kept in the UK and can be accessed and enjoyed both by visitors to the SCC and also online.

Throughout the course of the three year long HLF funded project, there will be a strong connection between visitors and the collection. School and community groups will be actively involved from the beginning and will be able to learn about handling and caring for the fragile original work, and also how to catalogue and interpret it for different audiences. These groups will also play a part in selecting the material to be digitised so that by the end of the three year project, Seven Stories will have 10,000 digital images from its collection available on line.

Keith Bartlett, Regional Manager for the Heritage Lottery Fund, said: This great project will really bring the Seven Stories collection to life for everyone to explore and learn about. It's vital that the popular works of British children's authors are preserved to ensure that future generations, both young and old, can enjoy and appreciate them.

Sarah Lawrence, Collection Manager for Seven Stories says: This is fantastic news for us. This grant will enable us to unlock the potential of a really wonderful collection. It will mean that children and their families, and anyone interested in children's literature, will be able to enjoy this material for the first time. We are thrilled that the Heritage Lottery Fund has recognised the importance of children's literature as an aspect of our national heritage, after all, everyone remembers the books they enjoyed reading as a child!

Philip Pullman, in support of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant, added; I was immensely heartened some years ago by the suggestion that a centre should be set up for collecting, preserving, and displaying manuscripts and original artwork from children's authors and illustrators. Consequently, I was glad to donate to its collection a number of original manuscripts and other papers relating to my work. If this centre had not existed, it would have been hard to find anywhere in this country where they would have been looked after properly and even more importantly, found their place among other such items. The value of a collection like this lies in the connections that can be made, the lines of influence that can be traced, the similarities and differences that can be pointed out. This can only happen if a critical mass of material has been gathered, and if it is all properly and expertly catalogued and examined.

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The Seven Stories project was established as a charity in 1996 when its founding directors, Elizabeth Hammill and Mary

Briggs embarked upon an ambitious plan to draw together a collection of manuscripts, sketches, finished artwork and books that document the work of contemporary British authors and illustrators for children.

At the heart of the project are three key ideas:

A national collection preserving the original artwork and manuscripts of Britain's modern writers and illustrators for children's a vital part of our literary heritage.

To use this collection as the inspiration for exhibitions and education programmes. Over the last seven years, seven exhibitions exploring children's books have been presented.

Celebrating children's books and making them widely accessible through community outreach projects.