Unique collection saved

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Some 60 years later, thanks to a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant of £45,000, the Friends of Horsham Museum are embarking on an ambitious project to make these posters about everything from the theft of a fat sheep to town band concerts relevant to today's generation.

In the past such posters proliferated throughout the ancient market town of Horsham, relevant for just a day or one event and then torn down and forgotten like yesterday's news. Thanks to the foresight of William Albery and others, many of these posters were kept; and we are not talking of just 10 or 20, but over 1800. The posters were never intended to be souvenirs of events or to become history, they were just meant to speak out to the good folk of a market town; but kept they were, capturing a forgotten voice.

Now, with the Heritage Lottery Fund's help, The Friends of Horsham Museum will help them speak to a new audience – one that might be school children studying mass communication, design or literature, or perhaps clubs and societies that have vague recollections of past glories and who want to show their rich heritage and tradition. The posters will demonstrate communication network that operated across the region before Facebook and Twitter or the internet, and the new project will use these modern forms of communication to make the old posters relevant once more.

The multi-strand project will involve the physical preservation of over 250 posters. It will catalogue the entire collection to produce a photographic and digital archive of all the posters. Networking with schools, clubs and societies, the Friends will use this resource to develop and promote the skills of those researching the stories behind the posters, so they can explore their organisations' past.

The undoubtedly fascinating stories will form the backdrop to a unique series of websites, exhibitions, talks, publications and workshops. With posters advertising events such as house sales, daffodil days, lights out, registration for tea, presentation of an Iron Cross, a food crisis, as well as the full gamut of concerts, cricket matches, ploughing events, talks by Hilaire Belloc and others, this great community project can help retell stories of society and community life between the 1800s to 1940s that first unfolded on the walls of Horsham.

"This exciting project enables the posters that William Albery gave to Horsham Museum to reinvigorate the local community", said Jonathan England, the Chairman of the Friends of Horsham Museum. "Just as television programmes like *'Who Do You Think You Are'* stimulate interest in the history of an individual, our project will generate interest in our local community, and we could not do this without the Heritage Lottery grant."

Stuart McLeod, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South East England, said: "This poster collection provides a unique window onto community life in Horsham that will now be opened for everyone with an interest in local history."

Further information

Phil Cooper, HLF press office, on: 07889 949 173.