

Archive materials including magazines, clothes and badges Yorkshire Mesmac

2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Sexual Offences Act, and the 60th anniversary of the Wolfenden Report which preceded it. Thanks to National Lottery players, three groups in Yorkshire will share Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) support of £400,000 for projects to record, explore and share the memories, culture and personal experiences of an often marginalised community, as well as celebrating the anniversary of an important milestone in the fight for equality in both law and society as a whole.

Fiona Spiers, Head of HLF Yorkshire and the Humber, said: “We are thrilled that, thanks to National Lottery players, we are able to provide this important investment in Yorkshire’s LGBTQ+ heritage. These sorts of stories often go unrecorded, but provide an incredibly important context for the wider history of marginalised communities and movements for social change”.

Queer Stories

Yorkshire MESMAC has received initial support of £390,400 for their project to explore the heritage of LGBTQ+ communities in West Yorkshire.

LGBTQ+ heritage is held in personal memories and stories, artistic and cultural materials like literature, photographs, films and performance, and is also often connected to specific locations.

Thanks to National Lottery players, Queer Stories will focus on collecting oral history testimonies and material culture, then creating films, artworks and educational resources inspired by the stories and objects. These materials will be presented to encourage people to learn about the heritage through a website, events and workshops. Volunteering will be at the heart of the project; so that LGBTQ+ people can learn the skills to collect, research and curate this heritage.

Exploring untold stories, integrating the voices of marginalised communities and the narratives of LGBTQ+ people who face multiple discrimination will be important aspects of the project.

Working with partners Leeds Museums and Galleries and West Yorkshire Archive Service, Queer Stories will celebrate and preserve this vibrant heritage for future generations.

Tom Doyle, CEO of Yorkshire MESMAC, said: "LGBTQ+ individuals, groups and communities have contributed massively to the history of West Yorkshire, everything from our literature to worker's rights. Too often these contributions have been hidden, overlooked or lost, Queer Stories will allow us to research, collect and celebrate our stories, struggles and victories, I am excited that Yorkshire MESMAC are a partner in developing this exciting and valuable community asset."

Hear my Voice

Barnsley MBC has received £10,000 for Hear My Voice: This is my Home, a project focusing on memories and stories from people from Barnsley's LGBTQ+, disabled and ethnic minority communities. The project aims to give the wider community a better understanding and encourage a sense of empathy and connection to some of those who have been marginalised, or from those who can be some of the most vulnerable people in their communities.

Many of these stories have never been recorded or shared before, and this project will capture the heritage of a town which is continually changing in demographic and diversity, bringing together an understanding of Barnsley's heritage and how it, and its people, have changed over time.

Cllr Roy Miller, Cabinet spokesperson for Place, said: "We are once again hugely grateful to HLF for their support of this project. It is our hope that it will bring local communities together and offer a greater level of understanding of the issues some groups face."

Doncaster Pride

Doncaster Pride has received £10,000 for their project to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Sexual Offences Act 1967, and explore how attitudes have shifted over the last 50 years, and how legal changes have actually impacted on the LGBTQ+ community.

Only 50 years ago in Britain, loving the wrong person could make you a criminal. Smiling in the park could lead to arrest and being in the wrong address book could cost you a prison sentence. In 1989, more than 2,000 men were prosecuted for gross indecency, as many as during the 1950s and nearly three times the numbers in the mid-1960s. This project will explore how far we have really come in the last 50 years by creating a film capturing stories from the local LGBTQ+ community about how they feel their life has been impacted on over the years from a wide range of age groups.

Further information

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