Uncovering the UK’s Deaf heritage

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To mark Deaf Awareness Week, we’re taking a look back at some projects we’ve supported that celebrate deaf heritage. Have an idea for a project? Get in touch!

Thanks to money from the National Lottery, we’ve helped uncover some remarkable stories exploring the UK’s Deaf heritage. These include fascinating anecdotes told in British Sign Language (BSL), a film about the battle for equality and projects exploring the archives of leading Deaf organisations.

A few recent highlights:

Deaf Detectives

The Royal Association of Deaf People was awarded £85,100 to help people research their archives. The stories will be told in plays, a booklet, via DVD and online so that young Deaf people can learn about their history, language and culture and share this important research.

Signed Voices

The Signed Voices project captures the Deaf community’s memories and experiences - showcasing them to the public and preserving them for future generations. Thanks to a £54,500 grant, the charity Deafway trained volunteers to film over 200 Deaf participants who paired up to share their memories and thoughts in BSL.

Power in Our Hands

A film comprising previously forgotten archive footage of the Deaf community which premiered at BFI Southbank before heading across the UK, thanks to the British Deaf Association and £719,100 from the National Lottery. The film tells the story of BSL, Deaf rights and the struggle for equality that was largely unknown in the hearing community.

Funding for Deaf heritage

Liz Ellis, HLF Communities and Diversity Policy Advisor, said: “Thanks to National Lottery players, people from the Deaf community have been able to tell some fascinating stories about heritage, often shining a light on a history that has not been well known or understood by wider society. Deaf Awareness Week is the perfect time to remind people: if your group has an idea for a heritage project, our funding is a great way of making sure these important stories are preserved and shared.”

Find out more about applying on our funding pages.

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