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PRESS RELEASE

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Pitt Rivers Museum wins National Lottery funding

The Pitt Rivers Museum is delighted to have been awarded £91,200 from the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The award will fund an eighteen-month project *Beyond the Binary: Queering and Questioning Collections and Displays at the Pitt Rivers Museum* starting in December 2018. It will build on existing engagement work with LGBTQ+ stakeholders and set out an ambitious programme to build inclusive practice within the Museum. This will transform the Museum through events, interpretation and exhibitions.

By “queering”, we mean challenging hetero-normative interpretations of the Museum’s collections – and identifying human histories that are unrepresented as a result of intolerance. This is so that no individual or group feels excluded from the Museum because of their sexuality or gender, and so that all visitors – however they might identify themselves – can understand humanity better.

Our approach will be collaborative and co-creative. We will re-interpret objects within our permanent collections with the aim of providing a richer, more diverse context to their histories and stories. The project will challenge accepted historical interpretations and offer alternative understandings from people with different identities. We will work with a broad range of partners, from researchers to community activists, to reshape the Pitt Rivers as a welcoming inclusive space.

In addition to exploring the existing collections, this project will include a community focussed acquisition programme. Although the Pitt Rivers has some objects that tell the stories of LGBTQ+ histories, there has not been a dedicated endeavour to accession LGBTQ+ cultural and historical artefacts into the collection. We will collect objects from British communities and a number of objects from across the globe that highlight traditions of gender non-conformity, bringing British LGBTQ+ heritage into conversation with global LGBTQ+ material culture.

National Lottery funding for *Beyond the Binary* will power a series of events to encourage discussion on LGBTQ+ heritage, including cultural performances and a co-curated exhibition involving community training in conservation, display and interpretation. Digital evaluation will ensure that learning from the project will inform not only the policies and practices of the Pitt Rivers Museum but also its partnership museums locally and nationally. Through this work LGBTQ+ heritage will be made permanently visible in the Pitt Rivers Museum.

Michelle Roffe, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund for South East England, commented “We are proud to support this important collaboration between the Pitt Rivers Museum and Oxford’s LGBT+ communities. Thanks to National Lottery players, the project will record and share historically underrepresented stories through new and existing collections, ensuring that the Museum engages with and represents more of the diverse histories of Oxford, the UK and the wider world.”

Volunteers from previous LGBTQ+ projects at the Museum commented -



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“It is really exciting that the LGBTQ+ community are now being engaged by academia to perhaps bring another facet to some of the exhibits.”

“Congratulations! This project makes my heart sing. Thank you.”

ENDS

Notes for Editors

- The Pitt Rivers Museum is one of Oxford’s most popular attractions, famous for its period atmosphere and outstanding collections from many cultures around the world, past and present. Admission, exhibitions and events are free.
- The Pitt Rivers Museum was founded in 1884 when General Pitt-Rivers, an influential figure in the development of archaeology and evolutionary anthropology, gave his personal collection of some 30,000 items to the University on condition that a museum was built to house the material, and that a post was created to lecture in anthropology. Today the collection numbers some 600,000 items, and the Museum remains an active department of Oxford University, doing and supporting research and teaching in archaeology and anthropology.
- This work builds on an earlier ACE and HLF funded pilot project *Out in Oxford* www.glam.ox.ac.uk/out-oxford
- We are currently using 'LGBTQ+' as this was identified as the preferred term by our community partners.
- About the Heritage Lottery Fund: Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. www.hlf.org.uk. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #NationalLottery and #HLFsupported.

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