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Bringing to life the dead in Epsom’s forgotten cemetery – Historic England awards local charity.

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Historic England has announced £9,988.00 in funding to the **Friends of Horton Cemetery** Charity in **Epsom and Ewell** as part of its ‘Everyday Heritage Grants: Celebrating Working Class History.’ [Photo: Aerial shot of Horton Cemetery taken in 1952.]

This grant will help the charity realise their heritage project titled ‘**Out of Sight, Out of Mind**’ which will amplify in-progress research by 50+ volunteers to reconstruct biographical histories of the thousands of men, women and children buried in ‘pauper graves’ within the largest abandoned hospital cemetery in the UK. Co-creation of 900 ceramic flowers to commemorate former psychiatric patients without memorialisation, an exhibition and crafting workshops.

This announcement follows an open call earlier this year, inviting community or heritage organisations across the country to apply for grants of up to £25,000.00 in a bid to further the nation’s collective understanding of the past. Competition was intense with 57 successful bids being announced today out of 500 nation-wide applications.

Historic England hope the grant will contribute positively to participants’ wellbeing, as well as providing innovative volunteering opportunities for young people or those facing loneliness and isolation. Local heritage also gives people a sense of pride in place, a cornerstone of the levelling up agenda, and they are excited to help it act as a powerful catalyst for increasing local opportunities and prosperity.

Dr Alana Harris, Director of Liberal Arts at King’s College London, local Epsom resident and expert consultant to the Friends of Horton Cemetery will direct the Project. She said “The support of Historic England is a ringing endorsement of the importance of Horton Cemetery as a heritage site of national importance and widespread interest. I am excited by the opportunities provided by this prestigious funding grant to involve more people in remembering these forgotten histories.”

Kevin McDonnell, who leads the volunteer research team, responded to the award of this grant*:* “Winning this grant is down to the skill, dedication and time generosity of the great team of volunteer researchers who are telling the stories of the forgotten people, mainly Londoners, buried in this cemetery as paupers, and bringing them “back to life”.

The Friends of Horton Cemetery are encouraging teams researching other psychiatric hospital cemeteries around London to use a similar model to theirs. Anyone interested in working on these projects should email hortoncemetery@gmail.com

Visit www.hortoncemetery.org for further information

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