

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**NEWS RELEASE
JAMES GILLESPIE'S TRUST
EDINBURGH**

Successful Heritage Lottery Fund Bid for James Gillespie's Trust

The James Gillespie's Trust in Edinburgh has just been awarded £49,200 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to run an oral history project called 'Living Stories'.

The project will capture, curate and archive the oral history of the community centred on James Gillespie's High School in the notable Marchmont and Bruntsfield areas of the city.

In the main, the grant will pay for a professional, freelance oral historian to undertake the interviews and recordings of the lives of community members and the costs of setting up an archive to ensure public access and sustainability.

The project will involve the engagement and interaction, through a monitored and tutored interview process by students of James Gillespie's High School and the older members of the community, under the tuition and management of the historian.

The study will record the living history and the socio-economic development of this area of Edinburgh City and in particular the changes within the School, over the past 100 years, from a Girl's Independent to a culturally diverse, modern Comprehensive.

Amongst many notable former pupils' experiences, the celebrated late Scottish author Muriel Spark's contribution to the school will be acknowledged and it is hoped that those who have connections to her days there, may come forward with their memories. But the project is not just about the 'great and good' or indeed only about former pupils, it is intended that members of the local community with stories, pictures and information will all want to offer what they can and take part.

The resulting archive will be presented to the Community through oral and visual exhibitions in the local public libraries, as well as permanently available for public access in the James Gillespie's School library, thereafter.

Using the most modern methods of recording and maintenance, the archive will remain for public and educational use in perpetuity in Edinburgh city.

The Trust, which supports the extra-mural activities of the school and its students and staff, will be managing the project from the newly established Development Office in the school.

Volunteer Development Officer and former Gillespie's school parent, Frances Benton was responsible for the application and is delighted with the result:

"This a wonderful opportunity for pupils and staff at the school to become more closely involved in the community and this important area of Edinburgh and to establish a historic archive of living memories by its inhabitants. It will be exciting and revealing and we hope lots of people will now come forward and get involved."

Colin McLean, Heritage Lottery Fund Manager for Scotland, said:

"This is a great example of how we can help people to explore their local history. The school has been a part of the community for generations and the archive will be a great way to capture memories for future generations to share."

Anyone who can help or would like to put themselves forward to take part in the interviews can contact Frances on 07711 031 567 or email frances@mews7.co.uk

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