

Media release

NATIONAL LOTTERY AWARDS £66,600 TO THE EQUIANO SOCIETY

The Equiano Society has received £66,600 from the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a project to celebrate the 225th anniversary of the publication of Olaudah Equiano book: THE INTERESTING NARRATIVE.

It will include community workshops, presentations and BEN television broadcasts that provide information about his book. The project will also reproduce 200 hard copies of the 18th century book and a PDF copy, which will include the original text, footnotes, cover, and design. There are only few original copies of his books in existence today. The PDF version will be available free of charge and downloadable on the project's website.

Fourteen BEN TV broadcasts will feature Equiano scholars, students and community individuals who will discuss different aspects of The Interesting Narrative each week. The broadcasts will be available on YouTube as well as the website and made available to High School pupils who are exploring the 'history'. The broadcasts will also help the public to better understand Equiano's life. Working with the American International Church, the project will create an Equiano Exhibition which the Church will host for three months and the following two months Croydon Supplementary Education Project will do so.

Arthur Torrington CBE, Director of The Equiano Society, said: "The National Lottery award will ensure that Olaudah Equiano's book, The Interesting Narrative, is given another opportunity to be read or re-read by thousands of people. They will learn how an enslaved 12 year old African boy, who arrived in mid-18th century Britain, and unable to read or write, defied all expectations and became a bestselling author by 1794. On 31 December 2017, The Guardian newspaper included his work among the 100 greatest non-fiction books of all time. Since 1996, The Equiano Society has played a significant part in bringing his book to the public's attention. This National Lottery funded project will reach more people, especially youth, as the remarkable life of a black Briton becomes an inspiration to all."

Stuart Hobley, Head of HLF London, said: "Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, this project will celebrate and share the incredible story and far-reaching legacy of Olaudah Equiano, through his own words and those of people they continue to inspire."

Notes to editors:

About The Equiano Society

The Equiano Society is a community organisation that includes individuals who research and provide information to the public. It was founded by the late Sam King and Arthur Torrington in London, England, in 1996 to celebrate and publicise the achievements of Olaudah Equiano (also known as Gustavus Vassa) and his African contemporaries including Ignatius Sancho and Ottobah Cugoano who also made outstanding contributions to black British literature and culture. Equiano was formerly enslaved but became a businessman, explorer, abolitionist and best-selling

author in 18th century Britain. The Equiano Society holds events and activities about his life, and they are open to the general public. It does not operate as a membership organisation.

For further information and interviews please contact:

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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

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