

PRESS RELEASE



Lewisham Youth Theatre wins Heritage Lottery funding to build Catford's community pride.

Heritage Lottery Fund awards Lewisham Youth Theatre (LYT) £31,500 for *Catford Tales* – a community history performance that will showcase Catford's past, present and hopes for the future.

Incorporating local resident's memories and verbatim testimony, young people and community members will join together in Catford Town Centre in July 2015 for a celebration of the area's history and the changing face of Catford.

Lewisham, London, October 2014

Once a thriving centre for shopping and entertainment, today's Catford is often best known as the place one drives through on the South Circular. But Catford is about to be regenerated, with plans to rebuild a large portion of the town centre. Before this new phase of the area begins, a grant from Heritage Lottery Fund has enabled Lewisham Youth Theatre (LYT) to deliver *Catford Tales*, which will bring local people together to learn about Catford's history and share their memories and experiences of the area.

Gordon Dennington, Chair of Lewisham Historical Society expressed why the project is important to the Catford Community: "I'm an old Catfordian myself and I am well aware the place has always had a bad press ...So it's a refreshing change to find something positive being done for it."

With over 25 years of experience of creating theatre with and for the Lewisham community, LYT will draw together partners from across sectors to create *Catford Tales*. Partners include: Emergency Exit Arts, Lewisham Archives, Lewisham Council's Regeneration Team, The Broadway Theatre and the Catford Constitutional Club.

In October 2014, LYT's Senior Youth Theatre will begin researching local history and capturing oral history from local residents of all ages. From the evacuations during World War II to the vibrant nightlife of Catford in the 1960's; from the gothic old Town Hall and St. Laurence Church to the building of the town centre as it currently stands, LYT's young people will transform these discoveries into a play. *Catford Tales* will be performed by young people and community members in a site-specific production through Catford Town Centre in July 2015.

LYT's Artistic Director Helen Stanley says, "We're overjoyed that the support from Heritage Lottery Fund will allow us to work with the community to build more positivity towards the local area, and to get people more involved with what's going on in Catford today."

Through partnership with the Lewisham Archives, the oral histories collected will be archived and saved to offer future generations an insight into the history of Catford, and a snapshot of the community as it exists today.

Since 1989, Lewisham Youth Theatre (LYT) has provided free drama activities and performance projects to young people aged 8-24 in Lewisham. Our aim is that all young people, regardless of background or ability, have access to high quality arts provision that builds their confidence, inspires them and increases their life chances. In the last year, the charity has engaged 170 young people in sustained activities at the Broadway Theatre in Catford and reached over 1000 young people through outreach sessions.

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