

Trent Park Museum Trust

Community Engagement Manager

trentparkhouse.org.uk

Trent Park Museum Trust is seeking to appoint a freelance Community Engagement Manager to help build new relationships with local audiences and support co-creation of a digital resource – the ‘Digital Museum’, focusing on oral histories and the ‘Secret Listeners’.

Trent Park House

Trent Park House, in Enfield, is recognised by Historic England as being of significance on a par with Bletchley Park. One of London's grandest houses, it was home to the 'Secret Listeners' during World War II - a story that has remained hidden in the house for over 70 years.

During the War, Trent Park House became one of the Allies' most successful secret weapons. State-of-the-art listening devices were wired throughout the House and gardens, and highly-prized Prisoners of War – including some of Hitler's most loyal Generals – were transferred to the site. Teams of ‘Secret Listeners’ – many of whom were German-Jewish émigrés – worked from the basement, recording and translating the conversations taking place on the floors above. Their discoveries were crucial to the outcome of the War.

In the lead up to the War, Trent Park was home to Sir Philip Sassoon, a central figure of both British inter-war politics and the anti-Nazi movement. Sassoon designed Trent Park to be both a political and social entertaining venue. He created a sumptuous atmosphere and entertained guests ranging from King George V, Edward VIII and a young Princess Elizabeth, to Sir Winston Churchill, Charlie Chaplin, TE Lawrence and Rex Whistler.

The House and gardens are currently being restored as a new heritage attraction which will immerse visitors in these extraordinary histories.

The Digital Museum

In addition to the onsite offer, an online resource is also being produced. This ‘Digital Museum’ will feature a digital gallery of individual Secret Listeners, learning resources for schools, and additional video content including local migration stories and behind-the-scenes insights into the lead up to opening the House to the public.

Focusing predominantly on the key question ‘Who were the Secret Listeners?’, the Digital Museum will widen audience reach and providing deeper insights and opportunities for learning about this largely hidden history. Crucially, through the collection of oral histories and other materials for inclusion online, the resource will form part of a new and important archive documenting the lives and work of these extraordinary men and women.

Further memories of the House will also be collected and incorporated into the resource, including of those who lived and worked there as servants, gardeners and in other occupations, and those who studied there when it formed part of Middlesex University in the 1960s and 70s.

Through adopting a co-created approach to the collection of oral histories and other materials for the Digital Museum, the team will work closely with heritage partners and local communities, particularly those with migrant heritage, to build local relationships and exchange skills.

The role

Working closely with the Learning and Access consultant, Oral Historian, Academic Research Lead and other team members, you will play a crucial role in forging new and sustained relationships with local communities and building participant skills in historical research and collecting oral histories.

You will:

- i. Recruit two groups of local participants, utilising links with community organisations
- ii. **Group 1:** work with the Oral Historian and heritage partners to devise a series of activities/workshops. These will enable Group 1 recruits to participate and develop skills in:
 - interviewing identified relatives of the Secret Listeners, Middlesex College alumni, and local residents with memories of the House
 - recording their oral histories and collecting possible further related materials such as photographs, documents and letters.
- iii. **Group 2:** work with the Academic Research Lead and heritage partners to devise a second series of activities/workshops. These will enable Group 2 recruits to participate and develop skills in conducting research into documentary evidence of the Secret Listeners to:
 - provide additional insights into individual experiences of migration to Britain, work at Trent Park House and post-war lives
 - identify new potential subjects for interview.
- iv. Lead the delivery of initial contextual workshops for each group, working together with participants to:
 - understand individual and group needs
 - share participant skills, knowledge and experiences (including of migration to Britain)
 - build a sense of inclusion, cohesion and trust between participants, and between participants and the project team
 - provide a basic history of the House and understanding of the project.
- v. Support the Oral Historian, Academic Lead and Heritage partners in subsequent training and activity of each group to provide an important sense of continuity for all.
- vi. Support participants in sharing their own migration stories for inclusion in a video resource for the Digital Museum.
- vii. Collect and provide required project data and insights as required by the Independent Project Evaluator.

Important notes

- i. This project revolves around histories and experiences associated with forced migration, war and the Holocaust. All project members are expected to approach all activity with appropriate sensitivity and undertake associated training (provided via the project) as required.

- ii. Co-creation is central to the project and this role. Activity and approaches must result in a genuine collaboration and exchange of skills and experience between participants and the project team. The focus for participants is on gaining heritage skills and a sense of pride and ownership in local heritage. The focus for the project team is on forging positive local relationships and gaining unique insights into diverse local audience need and experience (particularly of underrepresented communities).
- iii. The Digital Museum will target local schools and residents, as well as national audiences with an interest in the House and its associated histories. Activity should remain mindful of this and foreground opportunities to best meet target audience need.

Skills and experience

Essential

- At least 3 years experience of designing and delivering co-creation programmes in a cultural setting.
- Experience of working with underrepresented communities in a heritage context.
- Up-to-date knowledge of best practice in community engagement, including diversity and inclusion agendas.
- Understanding of audience-focused approaches and tailoring activity to audience need.
- Understanding of unique opportunities for audience learning and engagement in heritage through digital resources.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Excellent organisational skills.

Non-essential

- Experience of working with inclusive and/or underrepresented histories
- Experience of working with newly arrived communities in a heritage setting
- Understanding of Holocaust-related histories and associated approaches to learning and interpretation
- Experience of working with oral histories
- Understanding of historical research processes

The appointed person will be able to work both remotely and in Enfield and the surrounding area.

Time period: Approx. 12 months, starting October 2022.

Budget: £12,000 fixed fee. Public transport travel expenses provided up to £420 (receipts required).

Payment schedule

Monthly payment, against agreed deliverables, on the submission of invoices to the Project Administrator

To apply

Please send a CV and covering letter (no more than 2 sides of A4) to Kate Francis at kate.francis@trentparkhouse.org.uk outlining your suitability for the role and including an indicative, costed breakdown of your approach to the work.

Short-listed candidates will be interviewed remotely, by MS Teams or Zoom. The provisional date for interviews is the 14th October 2022.

Please contact Kate Francis with any questions about the role or the application process.

Application Timeline

Closing date for applications is 30th Sept 2022

Key relationships

- Reporting to the Project Steering Committee, with day-to-day management by the Project Manager.
- Working closely with the Oral Historian and Academic Research Lead
- Liaising with:
 - Learning and Access Consultant
 - Project Evaluator
 - Digital Content Creator
 - Schools Manager

