

## **Bunhill Heritage: Brief for Artist-Educator-in-Residence**

Islington Heritage Service seek an artist for the third year of the Bunhill Heritage project, following on from artists Georgie Fay (2022-23) and Jacky Oliver (2023-24).

### **Background**

Bunhill is a ward in the southernmost part of the London Borough of Islington, bordering Hackney and the City of London. It is an area with a unique history, where nestled amongst new high-rise developments are historic buildings, cultural community hubs and a significant amount of private and social housing. The name Bunhill comes from a derivation of 'Bone Hill', referring to Bunhill Fields, a burial ground in the ward. Bunhill Fields is a historic burial ground for religious non-conformists, dissenters and intellectuals. The name 'Bone Hill' indicates the site's use as a depository for dried human bone from the charnel house in St Paul's Cathedral in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In 1665, the City of London prepared the field as a burial ground for plague victims but it was never consecrated nor used for this purpose. It subsequently became the main burial ground for non-conformists in London.

Bunhill Fields was in use from 1665 – 1854, at which point it became a public garden. It is the resting place for over 120,000 people, including many radical and dissenting figures such as artist William Blake, writer Daniel Defoe, writer and preacher John Bunyan, and many others such as Susanna Wesley, known for being the 'Mother of Methodism.' Following WWII, the site was redesigned as a modern park, with the surviving tombstones protected behind high railings. Behind the railings the grass has been allowed to grow naturally, creating an area of biodiversity. Bunhill Fields, while located in Islington, is owned and managed by the City of London.

Bunhill (the ward) is now a densely populated area of South Islington, with a mix of public and private homes. Within the ward is a large number of new developments, stretching into the City of London. At one point in Bunhill's history, prior to WWII, it was the most densely populated area anywhere in the UK, along with neighbouring Clerkenwell. While the population has increased significantly, it remains less populated than it was at other points in its history. Bunhill is an area of South Islington with its own rich history including many historic industries including printmaking and clock-making.

### **Project Overview**

Bunhill Heritage is a community development project. Islington Heritage Service works to support the lives of residents, creating opportunities for inclusion and development, while improving wellbeing and reducing social isolation. We work with demographics such as families and under-5s, young people, over-55s as well as the general community in Islington.

The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have brought home the need for the local authority to help residents safely access community services and outdoor green spaces.

Using the history of Bunhill Fields as an anchor, Islington Heritage Service's new heritage project encompasses the history of the whole ward of Bunhill. We will do this in part by partnering with the St. Luke's Community Centre, Central Street.

Bunhill (and neighbouring Clerkenwell) have a unique radical and non-conformist history. Many of the people interred in Bunhill had radical ideas which were often not well received during their lifetimes. For example, John Bunyan wrote much of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in prison, as he faced religious intolerance throughout his life for his non-conformist views.

Amongst the many thousands of people interred at Bunhill Fields include notable preachers, clergy, writers, theologians, engravers and artists. Hymnist Issac Watts, writer of "Joy to the World", is buried in Bunhill Fields.

### **Community Engagement – Artist-Educator-in-Residence**

Islington Heritage Service wish to engage a **local artist-educator** to work with the community in order to create a work of public art, exploring the radical history of Bunhill as the inspiration for the artwork.

All three completed artworks are intended to be on display in in the ward of Bunhill for one year, which includes, but is not exclusive to, Bunhill Fields Burial Ground.

Each work of art will be created by an artist-educator: an artist with the ability to lead a number of workshops with different community groups. The outcomes of those creative workshops will help inspire the creation of a work of public art. The art will draw on the history of Bunhill, the ward and the burial ground, with focus on some of the notable figures interred at Bunhill Fields or who have a connection to Bunhill/Finsbury/South Islington.

There will be three artist residencies during the project. Each residency will last 1 year.

- Residency 1: January 2022 – January 2023 (Printmaker Georgie Fay)
- Residency 2: January 2023 – January 2024 (Metalworker Jacky Oliver)
- **Residency 3: January 2024 – January 2025 (Artist TBD)**

Artists will be contracted and paid a set fee of **£10,000**, to be paid at set points throughout the year.

As part of the agreement, each artist-educator will:

- Receive access to a 24-hour studio based at the St. Luke's Centre, Central Street, EC1 where they can undertake their own work as well as work related to the project
- Receive the costs of materials used to create the main artwork
- Receive appropriate guidance to effectively lead activities with different community groups
- Lead approximately 10 workshops with different key demographics of the community (families, over 55s, schools, mixed age groups)
- Agree to contribute 6 hours per month of ad hoc support at the St. Luke's Centre

- Agree to be responsible for the care and maintenance of their studio space and to tidy and repaint the studio at the end of the year
- Explore the history of Bunhill as the inspiration for the artwork

The artist-educators will work closely with the Bunhill Heritage Project Manager, supported by the Heritage Learning Manager.

**Candidates:**

- We seek applications from art practitioners who are experienced in leading workshops and educational activities with a range of different community groups. Candidates will gain support and guidance in the methodologies, but it is essential that candidates have some experience in leading workshops/classes
- Artists from a range of creative disciplines are encouraged to apply
- It is desirable that candidates with a connection to Bunhill and/or Islington apply

We look forward to receiving applications from all candidates who feel they fit the requirements, and encourage candidates from diverse backgrounds (race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality, class background) to apply, as well as a variety of art practises.

**To Apply:**

Applicants should send the following:

(1) An up-to-date CV (2) a project proposal and (3) select examples of previous work to [BunhillHeritage@islington.gov.uk](mailto:BunhillHeritage@islington.gov.uk)

In your proposal, please include the following:

- Details of your preferred art form and why this would work for this heritage project
- An aspect of the heritage of Bunhill and how you would use this as an inspiration for a work of public art
- An outline of a proposed workshop with one of the following groups (over-55s, children and families, primary or secondary age school children, mixed adults including young people aged 16+)

**Dates:**

Applications close at midnight on Sunday 4 December 2022. Interviews will take place during the week commencing 12 December. The duration of the appointment will run from the end of January 2024 to the end of January 2025.

**For more information on the project, please contact:**

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