

Havens East: uncovering lost stories of refugees in East Anglia

National Lottery Heritage Fund supports research into Basque child refugees



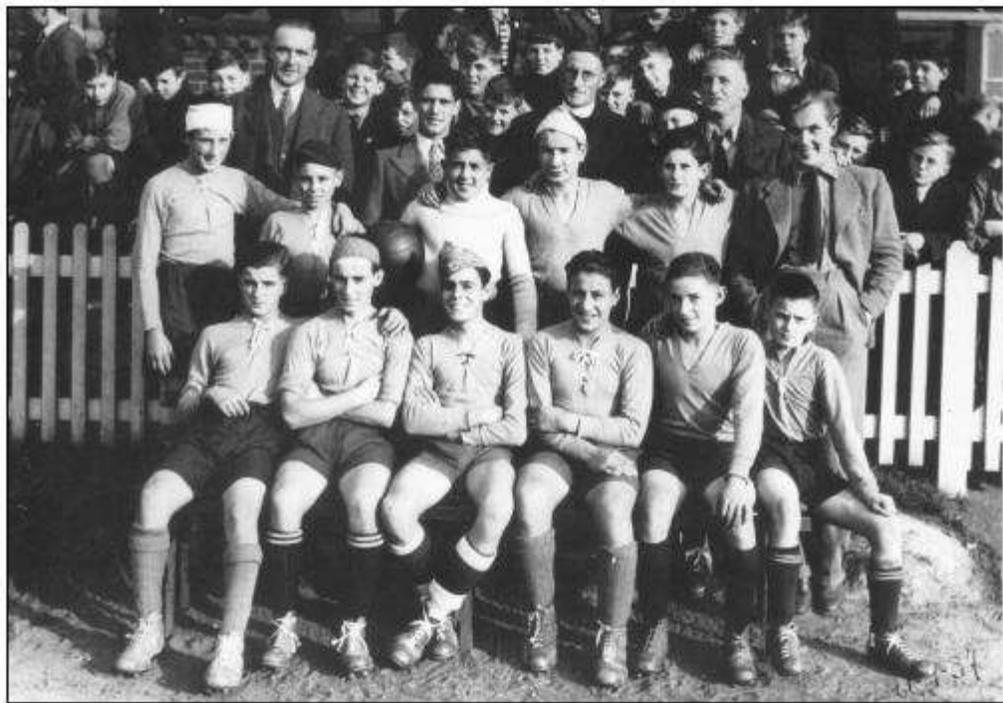
In exciting news for BCA'37 UK: The Association for the UK Basque Children, Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) has received a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £54,600 to investigate the lost histories of child refugees who sought sanctuary in East Anglia during the Spanish Civil War.

The Havens East project, which will take place during the first half of 2020, aims to uncover the stories of the children, who were from the Basque region of northern Spain, and the local volunteers in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk who worked tirelessly to help them.

Activities will take place across the region with specialist teams working with citizen researchers, local schools, refugee groups and heritage supporters, including BCA'37 UK. Dr Edward Packard, a trustee of the Association, is helping the project's research in Norfolk.

This strand of the project will focus on the boys based at Oakley Park, near Hoxne, on the Norfolk-Suffolk border, who then moved to Rollesby near Great Yarmouth. The project will shed light on the everyday life and culture of the boys, and draw on documentary and living testimony to look at the relationship between the colony and the local community.

As part of Football Welcomes Refugees 2020, the project will also recreate an historic football fixture. The Basque Boys beat a local Great Yarmouth Boys XI 8-2 at the Wellesley Ground, Great Yarmouth on 21 October 1937, and then triumphed 9-0 in a rematch played on the same ground on Boxing Day 1937.



Researchers will look at the local volunteers, now largely forgotten, who worked tirelessly for the welfare of the children and also focus on the efforts in Norwich to provide wider support to the people caught up in the Spanish Civil War, including the local 'Aid Spain' initiatives.



The Cambridge strand will draw on ‘A Tale of Two Hostels’, a previous National Lottery Heritage Fund project. The new research will focus on the stories of the local volunteers as well as the children who remained in the region after the war had ended, such as the Gallego brothers, Joe and Tony, who played football for Cambridge United, Cambridge Town and Norwich City.

Participants will create a showcase event, heritage publication, and exhibitions in Norwich and Cambridge to support Refugee Week 2020. They will also work with [Schools of Sanctuary](#) to produce learning and teaching materials to support Norfolk Welcomes 2020, a day of action to raise awareness of issues of migration and sanctuary-seeking experience, past and present. The project will also launch a seed

version of Cambridgeshire Welcomes 2020, in collaboration with Cambridge Schools of Sanctuary.

The Havens East project will be led by [Dr Jeannette Baxter](#), the Director of New Routes, Old Roots, a research and impact hub based at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), which enables students, artists, schools, museums and communities to explore issues of migration, marginalisation and heritage through the arts.

Dr Baxter said: “We are thrilled to have received this support thanks to National Lottery players. The heritage stories we want to preserve are severely at risk because of the advanced age of the Basque children and members of the local communities that served them, all of whom will now be in their 90s.”

“The Cambridge Basque child refugee story has only partially been told and the Norfolk and Suffolk Basque child refugee story has not been told at all. With this project we have a unique opportunity to capture personal stories, memories and testimonies, and to bring generations together so that our younger participants can experience history at first hand.”

If you or a family member helped to look after Basque refugees during the 1930s, please contact the project leader Jeannette Jeannette.Baxter@anglia.ac.uk as Havens East would love to hear your story.