



THE STOLL
FOUNDATION



THE SIR OSWALD STOLL FOUNDATION



VETERANS' VOICES

100 YEARS OF HOUSING HEROES

Community Heritage Project

Exploring the heritage of The Stoll Foundation
with residents and the local community

December 2025 - May 2028

The Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation, Charity No. 207939
Thanks to National Lottery players



Overview

Veterans' Voices: 100 Years of Housing Heroes is a 2.5 year project funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund to explore and celebrate the heritage of 109-year-old veterans' housing charity The Stoll Foundation, based in Fulham, SW London.

The project, which runs from December 2025 - May 2028, aims to **preserve** the heritage of The Stoll Foundation, **support** the wellbeing of veterans, **engage** with the local community and **celebrate** the hidden history of our new site.

It will be led by a full-time **Heritage Project Officer**, with support from two **volunteer committees** made up of The Stoll Foundation residents and local people respectively. Activities will include creative **workshops**, archival **research** and management, historical **walking tours**, a guest **lecture series**, **oral history** production, and a temporary **exhibition**. Outcomes will be measured against the successful production of assets, building of relationships in the local community and demonstrable **improvement in veteran wellbeing** measured via the WEMWBS scale.

Veterans' Voices: 100 Years of Housing Heroes is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, we have been able to launch an ambitious project exploring the rich history of The Stoll Foundation while engaging our residents through workshops and events and building lasting ties with the local community.



Aims



Preserve the heritage and stories associated with The Stoll Foundation as they face risks due to our upcoming move.



Improve the wellbeing of our beneficiaries during a turbulent time, while teaching key heritage skills and providing new opportunities.



Creating a sense of place at our new build development by exploring the lost and forgotten heritage of the area and easing the transition of the move.



Build lasting connections with the local community (both civilian and veteran) while increasing awareness of veterans' issues.





Our Past

The Stoll Foundation is one of the UK's oldest veteran support charities.

Founded in 1916 by theatre impresario Sir Oswald Stoll as **The War Seal Foundation**, the charity sought to provide custom-built flats for severely disabled veterans returning from WWI. Sir Oswald sold millions of 'War Seals' (small diamond-shaped stamps) in theatres and shops across the country to fund the construction of War Seal Mansions in Fulham.

The Mansions enabled **veterans to live independently** alongside their families in accessible, affordable accommodation, all while receiving support services from a dedicated team.





Our Present

We're still carrying out Sir Oswald's mission over 100 years later.

Today, The Stoll Foundation houses almost 300 veterans, war widows and military family members in Sir Oswald's original Mansions buildings as well as schemes across London and Aldershot. Additionally, we provide **safe and affordable housing** for veterans across the UK through our Veterans' Nomination Scheme.

Our **bespoke support offering** includes an Independent Living Service, Veterans' Drop Ins, advice on wellbeing, finance and employment and a range of social, creative and physical events. We are also part of NHS Op Courage and the Poppy Factory's Thrive Together network.





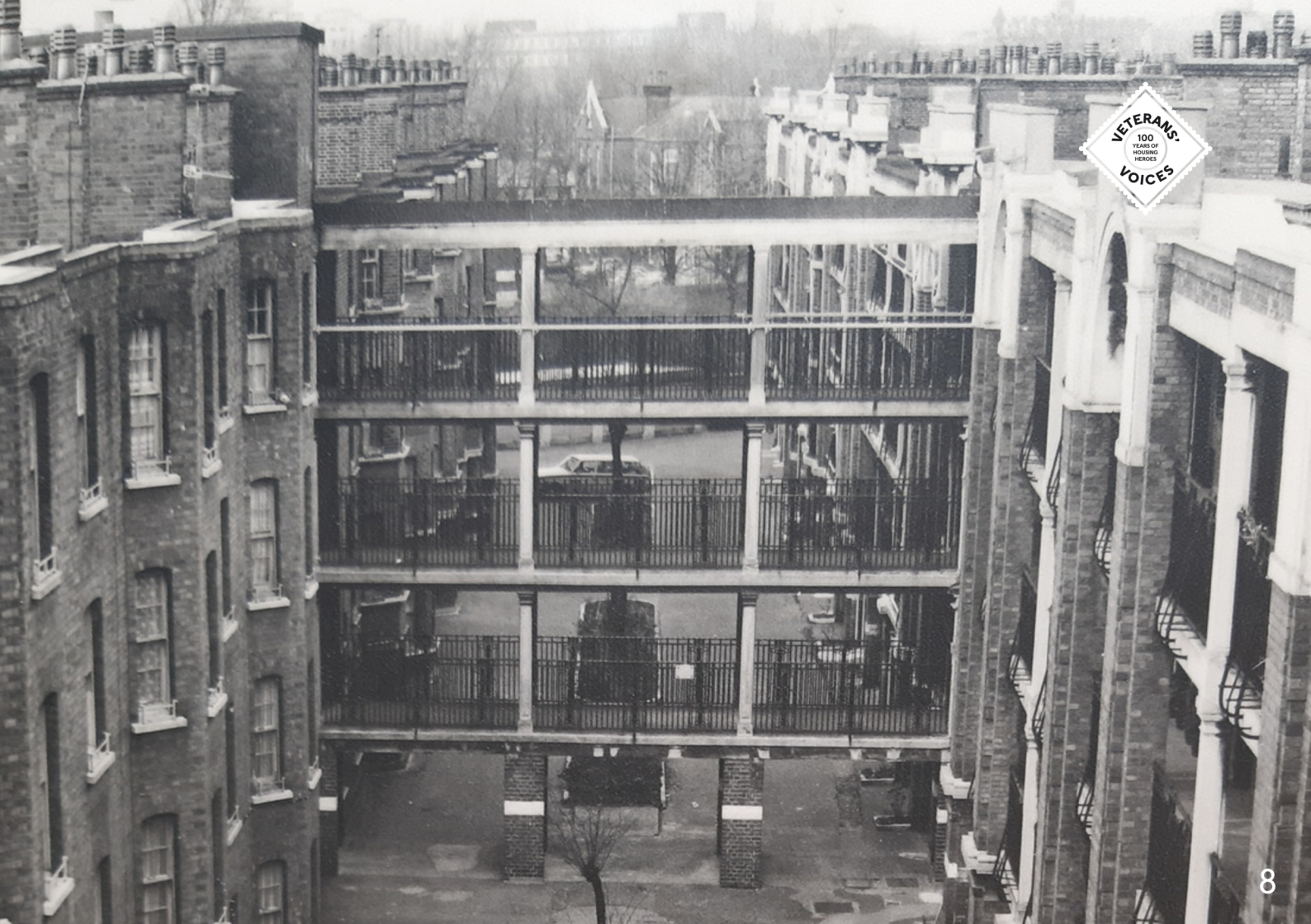
Our Future

We're entering a new chapter in our storied history as we leave Stoll Mansions behind.

In 2025, we began moving our residents and staff from our historic home at Stoll Mansions to two nearby, **brand-new buildings** in the riverside King's Park Road development. This move, while sad, is necessary for the sustainability of the charity and to provide the best possible housing to the vulnerable veterans we support.

While our upcoming move provides a wealth of opportunities for our residents and charity, it also presents **risks to our heritage**. These include the potential loss of physical documents and artefacts, access to Stoll Mansions and stories and memories of veteran residents, In addition, documents about the charity are scattered in archives around the country and largely unexplored.





VETERANS
100
YEARS OF
HOUSING
HEROES
VOICES



Staff & Volunteers

Key individuals will support The Stoll Foundation in delivering the project:

Heritage Officer

This **full-time, fixed-term role** will lead the day to day delivery of the Veterans' Voices project; recruiting and working closely with the volunteer committees, facilitating workshops, organising tours and talks and leading the production of the exhibition.

Veteran Volunteer Committee

A group of up to 10 **residents of The Stoll Foundation** properties will guide the project and support the research, writing and design of the exhibition from their own unique perspective.

Local Heritage Heroes

A group of up to 10 **local Fulham residents** will support the Heritage Officer, guide the project with the community's interests in mind, and support the research, writing and design of the exhibition.

Get Involved

To apply for any of these roles, or see how else you can support the project, contact **heritage@stoll.org.uk**.



Heritage Skills

The project will teach volunteers and participants a number of key heritage skills:



Archival Research

Residents will learn key research and archive handling techniques while connecting with the life stories of past residents.



Mansions Memories

Residents and the local community will reflect on memories of the Mansions through the creation of a participatory, submission-based scrapbook.



Oral History

Facilitated workshops will involve residents in the process of recording their own video oral histories to preserve the stories of Stoll's veterans.



Exhibition Planning

Facilitated workshops will involve residents in the design, planning and writing of exhibition elements, including object labels and interpretation boards.



Connecting Old and New

Activities will explore the history our old site (Stoll Mansions) and our new site (King's Road Park):



Mosaic Workshop

Creative workshop inspired by the War Seal mosaic decorating Stoll Mansions; work to be included in final exhibition.



Fulham Walking Tours

Historical walking tours of the local area around Stoll Mansions (central Fulham & Walham Green) and King's Park Road (Sands End)



Tile Painting Workshop

Creative workshop inspired by artist William de Morgan who lived in Sands End. Work to be incorporated into communal spaces in new residential buildings.



Field Trips

Residents will visit Chelsea History Festival and Hammersmith & Fulham Archives to explore the military heritage of West London.



Community Engagement

Events will open up The Stoll Foundation's sites to the general public and local community:



Guest Speakers

A variety of guest speakers will be hosted as part of a series of heritage and history talks, for residents and the local community, exploring the rich heritage of Fulham, The Stoll Foundation, and the military community in West London.



Heritage Open Days

Participation in annual Heritage Open Days will give the local community rare access to the Mansions once residents and Stoll staff have moved out, before access is lost and the site is demolished in 2027.





Temporary Exhibition

Two years of archival and genealogical research, arts and crafts, memory gathering, and participatory planning and design will culminate in an exhibition celebrating The Stoll Foundation's heritage, from our inception as a wartime saving grace to our role today as a London-wide home and vital support service for a diverse range of veterans.



About Veterans, By Veterans

The participatory nature of the project means that the stories told will be decided and shaped by veterans' own lived experiences.



Powerful Stories

Research throughout the project will uncover the forgotten life stories of remarkable early residents who were WWI & WWII heroes.

These will be juxtaposed with case studies of current residents, many of whom have overcome great adversity, including homelessness, addiction and PTSD, showing how veterans' experiences of war and its aftermath have changed over time.



Key Stories

Founder and Philanthropist

Sir Oswald Stoll led an incredible life; from surviving a shipwreck and a bomb that destroyed his home during WWII, to starting his theatre empire as a teenager, to changing the lives of thousands of vulnerable veterans.

The Show Must Go On

Stars of stage and screen - including Charlie Chaplin, Vesta Tilley, Ellen Terry and Edith Craig - were integral in creating The War Seal Foundation through campaigning, fundraising and donating to support WWI veterans.

No Man Left Behind

During and after WWI, severely injured veterans faced struggles finding housing, employment and survived on a measly pension. The War Seal Foundation's holistic approach revolutionised veteran care and allowed families to stay together.

Stoll Mansions at War

Fascinating documents tell the tale of Sir Stoll's desperate search for accommodation and transportation to evacuate paralysed veterans from Stoll Mansions during the Blitz, as well as attempts to protect the Mansions from the bombing.



Key Stories

Women's Work

Women have played a central - often overlooked - role in the life of Sir Oswald Stoll and The Stoll Foundation, from Sir Oswald's mother, Adelaide Stoll, who started the theatre empire he would inherit, to his wife, Lady Millicent Stoll, who became President of the charity upon his death, to the dozens of military wives who cared for their disabled husbands for decades at Stoll Mansions.

The women often had to go out to work, care for the house and children, and even carry their husbands on their backs up and down stairs - as a result, their life expectancy was significantly lower than their severely injured husbands.

Medical Marvels

On-site nurses offered War Seal Mansions residents over 15,000 treatments each year including artificial sunlight, exercises, massage and electrical treatments, with free prescriptions courtesy of Boots Pharmacy. The change in treatment offered over time provides a fascinating insight into the evolution of the physical and psychiatric support offered to veterans.

Friends in High Places

The War Seal Foundation boasted a fascinating board of trustees who used their expertise and connections to support the charity; from Jesse Boot to Gordon Selfridge to the wife of the Prime Minister Margot Asquith.



Key Content

In addition to fascinating stories, the exhibition will feature a variety of elements:



Archival Material

Our rich archive of material includes documents, pictures, videos and more, the majority of which has never been seen publicly.



Personal & Loan Objects

Modern veterans' personal objects and loaned archive objects will shed light on experiences of war, homelessness, recovery and community over time.



Artwork

Many of our residents are talented artists and can contribute artwork produced during and outside of the Heritage Project.



Video Oral Histories

Video and audio oral histories of current residents can be incorporated into the exhibition to give a multimedia element.

Veterans' Voices: 100 Years of Housing Heroes



Get in Touch

To volunteer, partner with us, help us with our research or just chat about the project, get in touch:



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Find out more about The Stoll Foundation:



www.stoll.org.uk



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The Stoll Foundation

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