



Press Release – Thursday 19th September 2019

The Word Garden invite you to the ‘Origins’ project exhibition and publication launch.

The Word Garden invites the local community to the ‘Origins’ Publication Launch on Wednesday 16th October at Babylon Gallery, Ely, 6-8pm. This event marks the start of the Project Exhibition 16th-26th October inclusive, 12-4pm every day, at the Babylon Gallery. The team welcomes and encourages you to come along to the exhibition to learn about the fascinating project findings and this ‘missing’ period of history. The 20 minute film, *‘Dunure to Denver Coventina’s Quest into Hidden History’* by Jean Rees-Lyons, adapted from the fictionalised story of Coventina who risks all in search of *her* Scottish soldier, will be shown at regular intervals throughout the exhibition.

Jean Rees-Lyons, Scriptwriter and Project Coordinator on the Origins project comments, ‘our National Lottery Heritage Funding has made it possible to reach the key aims of Origins, to discover hidden heritage stories whilst combining findings from archive materials, new research and recording previously unseen records. With the passage of time, social, cultural, political and environmental changes have transformed traditional ways of life, and reshaped, in many ways, the unique Fen landscape’.

The Word Garden, received a National Lottery grant of £49,200 for an exciting heritage project in East Cambridgeshire titled: ‘The Scottish Soldiers, the Ouse Washes; the Origins of Landscape Change in the Fens’. Made possible by money raised by National Lottery players, the project commenced in October 2019 and focused on exploring a ‘missing’ history of events, 1650-53. The team researched the construction of the Hundred Foot River, by Scottish prisoners-of-war, following their capture after the Battle of Dunbar in 1650.

The new Word Garden full colour publication, known as Origins, an entirely original body of work shows project activities, people, places and events. Significant new archive material is transcribed from The Adventurer’s Minute Books, together with the authenticated fictionalised story of Coventina’s search of the Wash-lands. This valuable contribution to local legacy creation documents the journey south by the Scottish Soldiers and how they lived and worked with other prisoners-of-war whilst building the second drain.

The project, which is managed by Babylon ARTS, aimed to involve people locally in a unique heritage project. Claire Somerville, Chief Executive of Babylon ARTS commented: “The exhibition to be held at Babylon Gallery is a chance to show the project findings and launch the publication; Origins tells a local heritage story like no other. It’s been really great to have heard from people already, who were eager to contribute to the project and I hope this exhibition will encourage even more people to learn about this ‘missing’ period of history”.

To follow the activities of this project, please visit www.babylonarts.org.uk/projects and www.thewordgarden.org.uk

-ENDS-

**Editors Notes:****About The Word Garden**

The Word Garden is a not-for-profit unincorporated community group of creative practitioners dedicated to working with the public, including young people, in the exploration and preservation of cultural heritage.

About Babylon ARTS

Babylon ARTS is a registered charity (no: 1043197) operated by ADEC comprising: The Babylon Gallery, Ely Cinema, a live events programme and community projects including Market Place, presented across East Cambridgeshire and beyond. Babylon ARTS is supporting The Word Garden by overseeing the Project Management of this project.

About the National Lottery Heritage Fund

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. www.hlf.org.uk. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #NationalLottery.

Images

Image credit: Helena g Anderson.

For further information, images and interviews please contact Florence Tong at Babylon ARTS on 01353 611591, florence.tong@babylonarts.org.uk.