



PRESS RELEASE

February 2020

**Manchester Histories Festival 2020**  
**“Celebrating Alf’s Act, 50 Years of Disabled People’s Rights”**  
**and**  
**Manchester Histories Celebration Day**

**Thursday 4 June to Monday 8 June 2020**  
**#mhfestival2020**

From **Thursday 4 June to Monday 8 June** the **Manchester Histories Festival 2020** will take place across Greater Manchester. The focus for the sixth edition of the festival will be the **50th anniversary of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (1970)**, a landmark piece of legislation that was pioneered by **Lord Alf Morris** (1928 – 2012). Alongside this, a **Celebration Day** will take place on **Sunday 7 June** bringing together heritage organisations from across Greater Manchester.

Reflecting on the legacy of social reformer Alf Morris, the festival, which will be based at **Manchester Central Library**, will be inspired by the themes of **Celebrate – Learn – Challenge**. Individuals and groups are invited to take part whether by putting on a talk, performance, debate, film screening, discussion, exhibition or creative intervention.

Alf was born and lived in Manchester where he served as MP for Wythenshawe for 33 years. He followed the 1970 ground-breaking legislation by becoming the world’s first Minister for Disabled People (1974) and would go on to help establish the Motability Scheme (1978).

**Gill Morris, Daughter of Lord Alf Morris**, says “The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act changed millions of lives not just in this country, but worldwide. My father’s vision to ‘add life to years’ was ground-breaking. Born in Ancoats as one of a family of 10 he saw first-hand how disability was hidden away and ignored. I’m so proud of Alf, my Dad; a truly great man – always a Mancunian. Against the odds, he led the way and changed the law. It is time to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Alf’s Act, which is a very proud moment for me and all my family, but also for Manchester. The festival will build on the legacy and celebrate equality and fairness for disabled people – but also acknowledge that a boy from the slums did good!”

The spirit of all Manchester Histories events is for them to be co-created and supportive of individuals and communities. It is therefore holding an open call inviting anyone to contribute to the festival programme and its aims and aspirations, whether individuals, organisations, service professionals, researchers, academics, historian, artists or musicians. The organisers would especially like to see most of the events led by disabled people.

**Karen Shannon, Chief Executive of Manchester Histories**, says, “The campaign that led to the 1970 Act was incredibly powerful. By exploring these events and their legacy as part of the Manchester Histories Festival 2020, we want to remember the past, take a critical and creative look at where we are today, and give people a platform to express their voices.”

Manchester Histories Festival 2020 is collaboration between **The University of Manchester** and its **Disabled Staff Network**, the family of the late Lord Morris of Manchester, **Manchester Metropolitan University**, **University of Manchester’s Students’ Union**, **TUC (Manchester)**, **Manchester City Council** and the **Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People**.

**Alys Young, University of Manchester Lead for Disability Equalities**, says “The University of Manchester is proud to be working under the leadership of disabled people, and in collaboration with the Morris family and Manchester Histories, to celebrate and learn from the legacy of ‘Alf’s Act’. Difficult questions remain about equality of disabled people in today’s society and this festival will also shed light on those alongside seeing in action the freedoms and rights that this ground-breaking legislation has engendered.”

#### **Manchester Histories Celebration Day, Sunday 7 June 2020**

Manchester Histories Celebration Day will take place at the beautiful and historic **Whitworth Art Gallery**, Institute and Park. Heritage organisations are invited to apply for a stand and take their place at this event, which gives visitors the chance to discover and enjoy the diverse, colourful and inspiring stories of Greater Manchester.

The deadline for the open call for both events is **Friday 27 March 2020**, with all the details available here: <https://bit.ly/2Uy0KQP>. In advance of this, on **Saturday 29 February 2020** (11.00am – 2.00pm) a drop in session will be held at Manchester Central Library for people to find out more or discuss their ideas before they make their submissions.

Manchester Histories is a charity that seeks to work with people, organisations and partners to reveal, share and celebrate Greater Manchester's diverse histories and heritage. The festivals it organises are biannual, with this being the 6th to take place. In 2019 Manchester Histories led Peterloo 2019, a project that brought together communities, cultural organisations and individuals to mark the 200th anniversary of the Peterloo Massacre, one of the important milestones in British democracy.

To find out more about Manchester Histories, its work and projects visit

[www.ManchesterHistories.co.uk](http://www.ManchesterHistories.co.uk)

**ENDS**

**For further information please contact Fido PR:**

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#### **About Manchester Histories**

Manchester Histories is a growing and dynamic charity that works collaboratively with people, organisations, and partners to reveal, share and celebrate Greater Manchester's diverse histories and heritage. Manchester Histories develops and delivers the biannual histories festival and a yearlong programme that includes projects, trainings, exhibitions, events, networks and more with communities to recognise, explore and value histories. [ManchesterHistories.co.uk](http://ManchesterHistories.co.uk)

In 2019 Manchester Histories led and delivered Peterloo 2019, a project to mark the 200th anniversary of the Peterloo Massacre, working with cultural organisations and communities across Greater Manchester and with the support of The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The programme combined public events, learning opportunities and creative exploration. Every aspect was co-produced with members of the public, cultural organisations, historians, writers and artists.

[Peterloo1819.co.uk](http://Peterloo1819.co.uk)

**Manchester Histories' lead partners and funders for Manchester Histories Festival 2020:**



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