

Young pilgrims at Scrooby Manor

Two men who fled religious persecution in 17th-century England are to be honoured as preparations get underway internationally to mark the 400th anniversary of the group known to history as the Pilgrim Fathers.

William Bradford and William Brewster, who became leaders of the Pilgrim community, are among those who will be remembered thanks to a National Lottery grant of £450,000.

Discover the Pilgrim Roots project

The Pilgrim Roots project will tell the Pilgrim's story and the views of the Native Americans through a new gallery at Bassetlaw Museum in Retford and a Pilgrims Trail with information at eight key sites in the surrounding area, as well as through a new website.

The project was conceived by Bassetlaw Council and, thanks to the HLF grant, will be completed in time for the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims' journey to America on the Mayflower that falls in 2020.

The Museum's new state-of-the-art gallery will give visitors the chance to learn the two men's stories. The Roots area embraces North Nottinghamshire, South Yorkshire and East Lyndsey and is expected to generate public interest far and wide.

The funding will enable the council to employ two new members of council staff:

- A Heritage Engagement Officer who will visit schools and groups across the Roots area equipped with dressing up costumes, learning boxes and lesson programmes to increase knowledge and local pride in the Mayflower story
- A Heritage Support Officer will act as an intermediary, working with tour operators and individual visitors to ensure churches and local venues are open, tour guides organised, transport arranged and hotel and restaurant facilities booked

Councillor Jo White, Deputy Leader of Bassetlaw Council, said: “The project will attract many new visitors to our area and gives American descendants who have previously visited a reason to return.”

Mayflower 400 anniversary

A year-long calendar of commemorative events had been planned to coincide with Mayflower 400 but, thanks to National Lottery funding, the celebration can now be extended to 18 months.

This will begin with the opening of the Pilgrims Gallery in spring next year followed by the official launch of the Pilgrims Trail in summer 2019. Other activities include a lecture series, festivals, touring exhibitions, photography and short story competitions, music and drama.

The Mayflower departed Plymouth, England, on 6 September 1620 and arrived at Cape Cod on 9 November after a 66-day voyage. There were 102 passengers, and the crew is estimated to have been about 30 in number. Brewster, by virtue of his education, became senior elder and one of the leaders of the newly-founded Plymouth colony in America. Bradford served as governor of the colony intermittently for the next 30 years.



efyd mewn ...

Scrooby Church

Bassetlaw’s rich Pilgrim history to be explored for Mayflower 400