25 years: Derry Girls star takes us on a tour of her



To celebrate The National Lottery's 25th Birthday, we explore (with help from Saoirse-Monica Jackson) how its investment in heritage has transformed Northern Ireland's second city.

Derry~Londonderry

Also known as the Walled City thanks to its historic 17th-century walls, Derry~Londonderry is Northern Ireland's second-largest city.

It is home to over 150,000 people and a wealth of heritage treasures, including museums, arts venues, cathedrals, parks and waterways.

Over the last 25 years The National Lottery Heritage Fund has invested a huge £26million in heritage projects across Derry~Londonderry. This has undoubtedly helped it to be named as the first UK City of Culture in 2013 and in making that year such a success.

To celebrate The National Lottery's 25th Birthday we took Derry Girls actor Saoirse-Monica Jackson on a tour of her home city. We visited just some of the people and places who have benefited from National Lottery funding.

Creating better places to live, work and visit

The Playhouse received more than £1m from The National Lottery to redevelop two listed buildings in the heart of the city. Today it boasts a 175-seat theatre, an extensive education and community outreach department, a dance studio and gallery. It is now a shared space for local cultural, arts and community groups to use and enjoy.

The city's **historic centre** has also been transformed by two Townscape Heritage Initiative projects. New retail and residential units were created, and underused or derelict spaces found new life as restaurants and boutique hotels, creating a booming night-time economy that has brought people back into the city centre to enjoy all that it has to offer.

In 2012 the city achieved Purple Flag status, the city centre equivalent of the Blue Flag, in large part due to the improvements made to the streetscape through National Lottery funding.

Giving young people digital skills

With almost £1m from The National Lottery, **the Nerve Centre** is delivering a four-year project to give young people a range of digital and new media skills. Using techniques like 3D film making, app development and virtual reality they are rediscovering and reinterpreting their heritage using the collections held by local museums. Four thousand young people will take part and will have the opportunity to achieve an accredited qualification.

Telling the story of Derry

The Museum of Free Derry tells the story of Free Derry and Bloody Sunday, a key event in the city's and Northern Ireland's more recent history.

A National Lottery grant of £875,000 was used to develop and extend the museum to create more exhibition space, improve access to its important collection and archive, and create a dedicated community space**.**

Regeneration and economic growth

The **Bishop's Gate Hotel** received The National Lottery Heritage Fund's first Heritage Enterprise grant. This helped bridge the funding gap when the cost of repairing this historic building made it commercially unviable. Over 130 people were employed during the redevelopment of the former Northern Counties building, with a further 60 new jobs created afterwards at the reopened hotel.

25 years of funding for heritage

Over the past 25 years, The National Lottery Heritage Fund has been the largest dedicated grant funder of the UK's heritage. We've awarded £8bn to more than 44,000 projects across the UK.



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[25 years: inspiring passion, people and pride in Rochdale]