Visitor numbers soar at newly opened Experience Barnsley!

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This imaginative project – four years in the making and supported by just over £2.6million from the Heritage Lottery Fund – has transformed Barnsley's 1930s landmark town hall into a state-of-the-art museum and archives centre, providing a heritage hub for the borough and a focal point for many exciting cultural and learning activities. Thousands of objects, stories and photographs have been donated by local people, organisations and other museums, and can now be explored by visitors now at the Discovery Centre.

Every day, hundreds of people have discovered the first ever museum about Barnsley, its history and culture, with almost 1,700 filling the galleries on the first Saturday after its opening at the end of June 2013.

Whether you're interested in football, fashion, the borough's industrial story or how stone-age ancestors lived, there is something for everyone. Experience Barnsley is open seven days and week and entry is free.

Cllr Roy Miller, Cabinet Spokesperson for Development, Environment and Culture, said: "People are flocking to see the new museum and having this major new attraction in Barnsley has provided a real boost to the town. On Sundays, previously, the town centre was usually quiet, and now people come and enjoy Experience Barnsley, complete with shop and café. The extra visitor numbers and renewed interest in Barnsley's history and culture has also benefited the wider town centre, including the markets and surrounding shopping area."

Fiona Spiers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Yorkshire and the Humber, said: "The success of the newly opened Experience Barnsley demonstrates how strong heritage-based tourism is – currently worth £26.4bn a year to the UK economy – and how it can bring so many benefits to our towns and cities economies."

Notes to editors

Read HLF's latest research on heritage-based tourism.

Further information

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Experience Barnsley