Scottish National Portrait Gallery

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The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) today announced a grant of £4,531,000 to transform the Scottish National Portrait Gallery (SNPG), the first purpose-built portrait gallery in the world, into an exciting new experience attracting even greater local, national and international visitors.

Housed within an architectural masterpiece which opened in 1889, the ‘Portrait of the Nation’ project will create a modern and dynamic gallery with contemporary interpretations, using new media and sensory experiences to engage the visitor. It will double the amount of gallery space, increase the number of items displayed by 350% and aims for a 50% increase in visitors.

The dramatic increase in gallery space will allow the SNPG to display many more of its 30,000 portraits and photographs depicting men and women whose lives and achievements helped shape Scotland and the wider world. There will also be a dedicated education suite, auditorium, IT gallery and research and learning centre to inspire school groups and adult learners.

Commenting from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Colin McLean, Head of HLF in Scotland, said: “New life will now be breathed into this beautiful historic building. Treasures that have been stored away for years will be brought out to showcase Scotland’s history through the portraits of those who shaped it. The Heritage Lottery Fund is delighted to be able to support ‘Portrait of a Nation’ and in doing so, support Edinburgh as a leading European cultural destination."

James Holloway, Director of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, said: “We are delighted with the support from the HLF. Their confidence in the scheme is a terrific boost at this critical stage of the project. Portrait of the Nation will enable us to create an imaginative and bold portrait gallery suitable for Scotland in 21st century for the enjoyment of the Scottish people and visitors to Scotland.”

The Scottish National Portrait Gallery closed on Sunday 5 April in order to start the refurbishment.
www.nationalgalleries.org