Celebrating The Cardiff Story

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The new museum, The Cardiff Story, will present a vibrant and sophisticated introduction to the city's rich heritage and will also act as a community resource and venue for lifelong learning for people of all ages and backgrounds. The Cardiff Story opens to the public on 1 April and entry to the Museum will be free.

To mark the completion of the Cardiff Story, on St David's Day at 1.30pm Gillian Clarke, National Poet of Wales, will read the specially commissioned Cardiff Story poem on the stairs of the Old Library Building.

Gillian said: "I am Cardiff born and Cardiff bred. It is truly an honour to contribute to what is and will be a significant element of our collective narrative as a city, culture and people."

Sections of the poem will also adorn the walls of the Museum.

Located on the site of the iconic 19th century Grade II* listed Old Library Building, the museum will include a permanent introductory gallery, a secure fully interactive lifelong learning suite (City Lab), state of the art classrooms, a community showcase gallery and access to the Grade II* listed historic tiled corridor.

Over 3,000 objects make up the new Cardiff collection, which incorporates loans secured from partner museums as well as a huge number of personal contributions from Cardiff residents and communities, ensuring that The Cardiff Story is truly told through the eyes and stories of the people who have made the city we know today.

The Cardiff Story worked specifically with the National Museum of Wales in a major collections access and development prosiect which began in 2005. The aim of the partnership prosiect was to get locally significant items in the National Museum collections into the communities whose history they reflect and the development of the new galleries of The Cardiff Story fulfil just that.

Nigel Howells, Executive Member of Sport, Culture and Leisure, said: "I am delighted that working in partnership with relevant organisations and individuals, this long held ambition has finally been realised."

"The Museum is unique in many ways not least because it literally tells the story of the city through its people, their stories of events, photographs and items that have helped shaped the city's identity."

"As Cardiff strives towards becoming the best European capital city, we will also ensure that the story of that journey remains documented and that The Cardiff Story is told for generations to come."

Dr. Kathleen Howe, Museum Manager for The Cardiff Story, said: "It's been a unique opportunity to start a city museum and collection from scratch – a mammoth but very enjoyable task! I know that The Cardiff Story team has found it a real privilege to work with the community groups, individuals and organisations across the city and county, to gather objects, information and stories that will represent Cardiff's long history for generations to come."

"Achieving the completion of our brand new museum in just two short years is testimony to the goodwill and enthusiasm of the people of Cardiff. We have been humbled by the willingness to share family stories, precious keepsakes and the fact that many have also contributed financially to achieving their museum."

“The museum’s opening to the public in April is only the start of its life. We’re all excited about continuing to work with the communities of Cardiff to make sure their museum is relevant and distinctive.”

The new galleries will provide an introduction to all aspects of Cardiff’s social history including the making of the city, its relationship with its hinterland and the world and the rich histories of its industrial heritage and the docks.

Museum visitors will have the opportunity to find out how to research specific aspects of their personal histories or related subjects, such as the street or house they live in through interactive games, role play and knowledge exchange in a safe and inclusive environment.

Signposting facilities will also highlight other heritage offers within the city and further opportunities for investigating personal histories. Working collaboratively with Cardiff Central Library Local Studies and Glamorgan Archives, The Cardiff Story continues to work with partners to develop and deliver a lifelong learning programme that will increase opportunities for people and communities to interrogate their histories across the resources made available through the custodians of Cardiff’s heritage.

Dan Clayton-Jones, Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Wales, which awarded £440,000 to the project, said: “This prosiect has helped bring Cardiff’s historic past back to life, helping local people and visitors to explore the making of our capital city. Communities and local people are at the heart of this prosiect, and their tales, memories and experiences will help share the city’s story for many years to come.”

Notes to editors

The Cardiff Story will open to the public on 1 April.

The Museum’s phase 1 development has been completed with support from Cardiff Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, the Engelhardt family’s Moondance Foundation, the Welsh Assembly Government via Museums, Libraries and Archives (CyMAL) and the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries Wales and kind contributions from donors to the Big Give public appeal as well as various community groups across the city.

Further information

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