Heritage Lottery Fund awards £329,400 to Woodland Trust's Tring Park and Natural History Museum at Tring

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Victorian parkland where exotic animals once roamed free as live exhibits at a natural history collection is to be restored, thanks to a £329,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The project will give visitors to the Woodland Trust's Tring Park and the Natural History Museum at Tring new ways to learn about the fascinating history of these two heritage treasures.

The Walter Rothschild Zoological Museum was opened on the site in 1892 and before long wallabies, cassowaries and rheas were roaming the extensive grassland. As well as collecting thousands of stuffed animal specimens for his museum collection, Walter Rothschild himself would ride through the neighbourhood in a carriage drawn by a zebra. The parkland is still grazed today, but by more traditional sheep and cattle.

The Woodland Trust and Natural History Museum at Tring will now work with community groups and businesses to raise the profile of both park and museum with local people. As part of the project, people from across the community will be able to get involved in a range of volunteer opportunities. These will include learning conservation skills, helping to raise awareness of the park and delivering education activities.

Conservation work will include the restoration of the 19th century Lime Avenue, key parkland views and vistas and scrub clearance to improve the chalk grassland habitats. The funding will also see improvements made to access so that larger number of visitors can be accommodated at any one time.

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund East of England, said: "We at HLF are delighted to support the Woodland Trust and the Natural History Museum at Tring in their exciting plans to transform these much loved heritage sites. This project will provide a fantastic opportunity for visitors from near and far to explore the park and museum, as well as giving local people the chance to get directly involved with their conservation."

Louise Neicho, Woodland Trust site manager, added: "One of our key aims is to inspire everyone about trees and woods, and sites such as Tring Park make this easy. Thanks to the HLF funding we can work with the museum and local community to make even more of this wonderful site in months and years to come."

Tring Park runs along the Chiltern Ride and once formed part of the historic Tring Estate. The park has a wealth of natural heritage and wildlife habitats, including areas of ancient woodland and chalk grassland.

The museum holds one of the finest collections of mounted mammals, birds, reptiles and pinned insects in the country. It was gifted to the British Museum (Natural History) by Lord Rothschild in 1938. Tring Park and Tring Park Mansion were also part of the Rothschild family's estate at that time.

Notes to editors

The Natural History Museum at Tring in Hertfordshire opened in the late 1800s to house the collections of Lionel Walter, second Baron Rothschild, and offers some outstanding examples of 19th century taxidermy. The museum was bequeathed to the nation and became part of the Natural History Museum in 1938. The public galleries were modernised but the fascinating character of the museum has been retained.

Further information

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Further information about the Natural History Museum at Tring can be found on the Natural History Museum at Tring website.