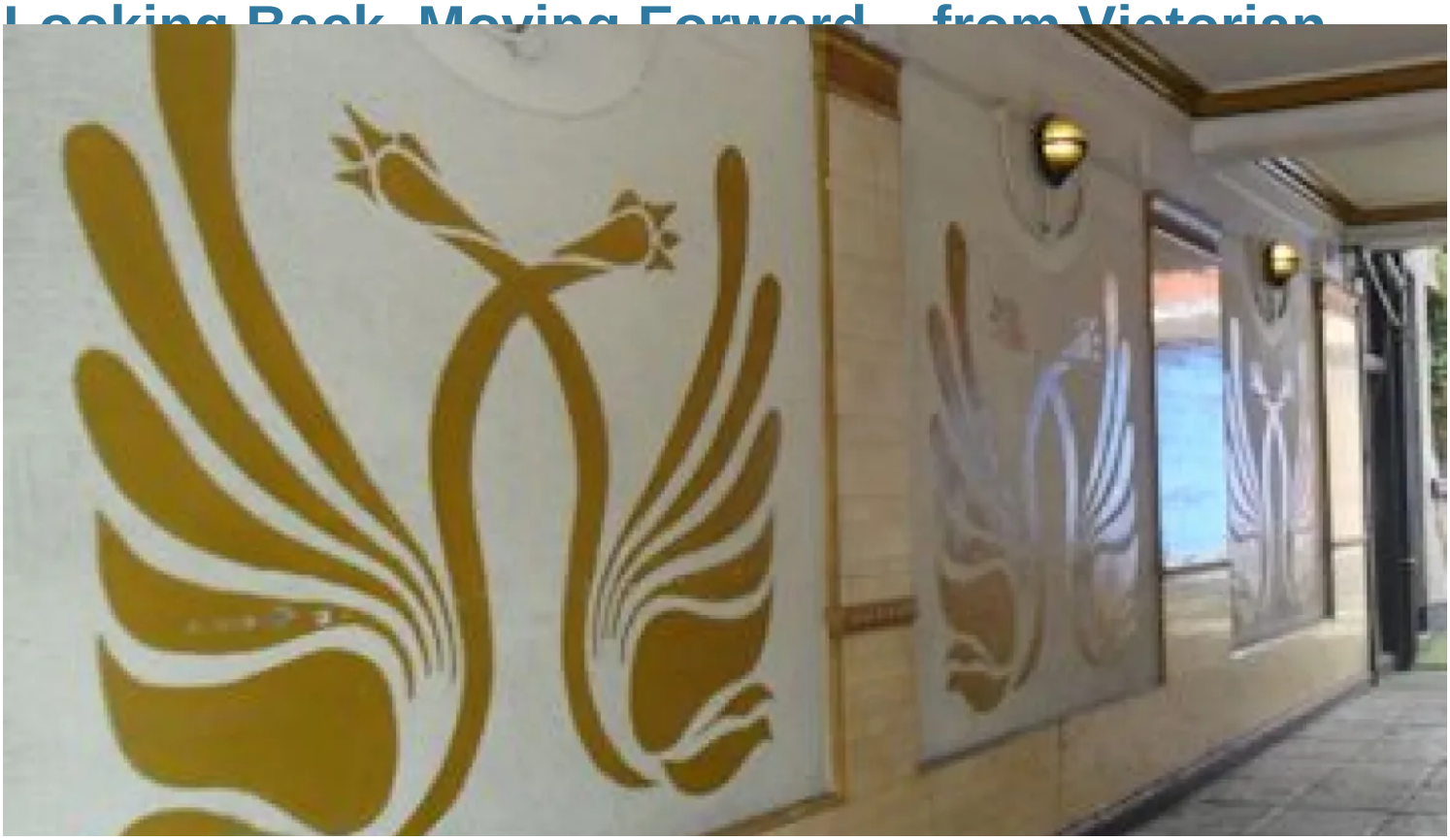
Looking Back, Moving Forward – from Victorian



Inside view of the Swan Buildings in Manchester

Back on Track, a charity which provides training and recovery support for ex-offenders and other disadvantaged adults, will use the HLF funding to launch their Looking Back, Moving Forward project and uncover the history of Swan Buildings in Ancoats.

Alongside 10 volunteer mentors, 120 Back on Track clients will work together to uncover the history of the four-storey building from a thriving furniture and linoleum warehouse during the industrial boom to a modern-day charity and community hub.

Hundreds of staff, charity users and visitors have passed through Swan Building's doors and their memories and memorabilia will give an insight into the social history of the area. Records and original features, including an ornate courtyard entrance and mosaics, will be explored to find out how the building has changed.

A permanent exhibition within the building itself and a website with blogs, photos, films and oral history recordings will be created to tell the story of the building and those who have used it. Guided tours of the exhibition will take place during Manchester Histories Festival and heritage open days.

The project also aims to help participants move forward in their lives by developing skills for future careers and ambitions. Manchester Community Central (a charity also based in the building) and Back on Track will work alongside local heritage organisations Archives+ and the People's History Museum – also HLF funded – to provide guidance and build skills in presenting, research, social media, design interpretation and film-making.

The project will also provide many of those involved with their first opportunity to properly engage with their heritage – something project coordinators hope will improve confidence and motivate participants to continue.

David Fisher, Chief Executive of Back on Track, said: "Visitors are always asking us about this history of Swan Buildings, and we are thrilled to have the chance to uncover some of its stories from the past 100 years. We're also excited about the opportunity to develop some innovative approaches to involving clients in researching and celebrating the history of the building."

Sara Hilton, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund, North West, said: "This is an excellent project which has already generated much support from the groups who use the building, its many visitors and several local heritage organisations. This will be the first time the rich history of this Victorian building has been interpreted and, equally important, the first opportunity most of the Back on Track members have had to get involved with their heritage."

Notes to editors

About Back on Track

Back on Track is a Greater Manchester charity which provides education, training and work experience to enable disadvantaged adults to make a fresh start and achieve a positive future. For more information visit the Back on Track website.

Further information

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