Plans for educational activities will include outreach sessions with schools Sheila Burnett, courtesy of the Royal College of Music

We've just awarded £3.6m to redevelop the Royal College of Music Museum in South Kensington. A new and more welcoming space will be created to house the Royal College of Music's (RCM) wonderful collection of historic instruments.

Some of the key pieces in the museum include: the world's oldest surviving guitar from Lisbon dated 1581; the oldest known stringed keyboard instrument, Ulm's Clavicytherium dated c. 1480; a Venetian harpsichord c. 1531; and The Anne Boleyn Book, a choir book dating from 1530 and linked to Henry VIII's second wife.

[quote=Sir Peter Luff, Chair of HLF]"The Royal College of Music is home to an extraordinary collection of instruments which deserve to have plenty of noise made about them!"[/quote]

Sir Peter Luff, Chair of HLF, said: "The Royal College of Music is home to an extraordinary collection of instruments which deserve to have plenty of noise made about them! Music should be for everyone's enjoyment and I think a round of applause is due to National Lottery players for helping open up this treasure trove for that very purpose."

Colin Lawson, Director of the RCM, said: "This HLF grant will allow us to progress the vital work needed to establish a new museum at the very heart of the RCM and offer greater public access than ever before."

An extensive conservation project will be carried out on over 500 instruments, alongside documentation and digitisation of around 45,000 items. Educational activities will include outreach sessions with schools, nurseries and adult care centres, temporary exhibitions and pop-up exhibitions to reach new audiences.

Visitor numbers are set to rise post-completion of the project – from 8,000 visitors each year to over 40,000. Alongside rebuilding work, opening days will be increased from the current four to six days and a number of new jobs created.

How to find out more

Read more about the project on the Royal College of Music website.