

Underfall Yard was built in the early 1800s Underfall Yard Trust

As the Easter holidays approach, we're getting ready to celebrate the opening of the Underfall Yard visitor centre at Bristol's Floating Harbour.

This wonderful historic site, built between 1804 and 1809, is famous in the South West for enabling boats to float rather than be grounded at low tide.

HLF investment of £3million in these ambitious redevelopment plans is ensuring the future of a number of industrial buildings and the boatyard. The visitor centre – the Power House – is the perfect place to retell the story of Victorian engineering which still protects the city from flooding in the 21st century.

[quote=Nerys Watts, Head of HLF South West]"Completion of The Power House learning centre is a key milestone for wider plans and comes just in time for the Easter holidays."[/quote]

Underfall Yard reminds us of some of Bristol's most famous engineers – William Jessop and Isambard Kingdom Brunel – and the largely-forgotten John Ward Girdlestone who built the slipway and most of the buildings.

There's plenty to keep visitors interested, with highlights including a trip in the historic 'Human Accumulator' to unravel the mysteries of hydraulic power, a Victorian workshop and forge, and stunning and previously unseen waterfront views.

Running alongside the visitor attractions, the Yard has a range of businesses in residence, including boat builders, a rigger, a blacksmith and a diving club.

Ian Wilkinson, Chairman of the Underfall Yard Trust, said: “This imaginative project addresses the needs of businesses at the boatyard, with sensitive repairs and new workshops, to create a thriving hub of traditional craftsmen and women.”

Nerys Watts, Head of HLF South West, added: "Completion of The Power House learning centre is a key milestone for wider plans and comes just in time for the Easter holidays. This work has been made possible thanks to National Lottery players purchasing tickets and in so doing enabling us to invest in places like Bristol Floating Harbour."

Read more on the Underfall Yard website.