Lady Lever's South End galleries to reopen this



Installing Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess of Hamilton and Duchess of Argyll, 1760, by Sir Joshua Reynolds Gareth Jones

The South End galleries at the Lady Lever Art Gallery will be revealed this Good Friday after a £2.8million major redevelopment.

The gallery was opened in Port Sunlight in the Wirral in 1922 by William Hesketh Lever. It is the only major public gallery in the UK built by its founder to house a private collection.

Visitors can see a stunning collection of fine and decorative arts including over 1,500 objects, such as the best collection of Wedgwood jasperware in the world, one of the finest collections of Chinese porcelain in Europe and outstanding 18th-century paintings, furniture and sculpture.

In 2014, we awarded a £1.26m grant to the National Museums Liverpool, who run the gallery, for a project to return the South End galleries to their original architectural glory.

[quote= Sara Hilton, Head of HLF North West]“It’s great to see the South End Galleries returned to their former glory, creating a fantastic setting for one of the most stunning fine and decorative art collections in the UK.”[/quote]

The original doorways have been opened up, ceilings installed in the 1960's have been removed and innovative architectural lighting highlights some of the most beautiful features, including the South End glass dome. All the works

are now complete and the galleries are reopening to the public this Easter weekend.

The HLF-supported project is far from over however as we are also funding a large range of activities at the newly restored galleries including family art clubs, art and singing workshops with the local NHS and a new training programme for 50 volunteer ambassadors.

The story of William Lever himself is also being told as part of the project. Lever believed that art should be a source of inspiration for everyone and he built the gallery in the model village that he had created for the people who worked in his first purpose-built factory nearby.

Sara Hilton, Head of HLF North West, said: “It’s great to see the South End Galleries returned to their former glory, creating a fantastic setting for one of the most stunning fine and decorative art collections in the UK. The Lady Lever Art Gallery demonstrates the leading role heritage plays in making this area such a special place to live in and visit and I’m delighted to see it go from strength to strength, thanks to National Lottery investment.”