World’s oldest Methodist building opens doors in



Statue of John Wesley New Room

A Bristol building known as the ‘cradle of Methodism’ has reopened as a museum thanks to National Lottery players.

The New Room is the oldest Methodist building in the world and was built in 1739 by the religion’s founder John Wesley. It was one of the first places to offer free medical care and the place from which Wesley spoke against the slave trade.

£2.6million of National Lottery funding has seen the creation of a new visitor centre, expanding the museum from the 18th-century Preacher room above the chapel to a series of themed rooms with much more of the fascinating collections on display.

[quote= Nerys Watts, Head of HLF South West] "The New Room is one of the most important buildings in the history of Methodism and now, thanks to National Lottery players, its place in the history books is set to be revealed to a whole new audience." [/quote]

The Duke of Gloucester attended the grand opening of the visitor centre and museum which also boasts a new café, gift shop and an education and conference centre.

It is hoped that the new facilities will enable the New Room to take its place a key tourist and learning destination in Bristol.

Manager David Worthington said: “This building has been at the heart of Bristol’s history for nearly 300 years. Our new visitor centre will make Wesley’s work accessible to all, and we hope visitors will be fascinated to discover what a pioneer John Wesley was and how far ahead of his time - campaigning for causes like gender equality, abolition of slavery, healthcare, education, and the natural environment.”

Nerys Watts, Head of HLF South West, said: “The New Room is one of the most important buildings in the history of Methodism and now, thanks to National Lottery players, its place in the history books is set to be revealed to a whole new audience. We’re delighted to celebrate this opening which will see 18 months of fantastic hard work pay off as Bristol gains a new community and learning space and unprecedented access to this remarkable aspect of its heritage.”

The museum now open for visitors. For more information visit the New Room Bristol website.



Staff and volunteers from the New Room celebrate the grant success

Grant success for the oldest Methodist building in the world