How Northern Ireland's museums have been



HLF awarded £4.7m to redevelop the Ulster Museum

The Museums Association Conference and Exhibition 2018, the biggest event of its kind in Europe, opens in Belfast tomorrow for the first time in 30 years.

The theme of this year's event is Dissent: inspiring hope, embracing change; a fitting topic for a city which has changed dramatically since the conference was last hosted here three decades ago.

The local museum sector has been transformed since then, with National Lottery funding playing a key role since 1994. HLF has awarded a huge £53million to 95 museums, libraries, archives and collections-based projects to create the vibrant cultural offering that can be found across Northern Ireland today.

[quote]The city has changed dramatically since the conference was last hosted here three decades ago.[/quote]

Supporting both large and small museums

HLF support has benefited a huge variety of museums, supporting big projects including:

- The Braid, Ballymena
- Bagenal's Castle, Newry

- Enniskillen Castle
- the Armada Exhibition at the Tower Museum, Derry
- the historic O'Laverty Library at St Malachy's College, Belfast

Small grants have brought big benefits too such as improving visitor facilities and access at Armagh County Museum and supporting creative new ways to inspire and connect with new audiences through initiatives like the Northern Ireland Museum Council's Playful Museums Festival.

[quote=Paul Mullan, Head of HLF Northern Ireland]"In Northern Ireland our heritage is often contested and is at times difficult, so it is vital that we have a robust network of museums, programmes and initiatives to facilitate discussion and exploration of our past."[/quote]

National Lottery funding has also provided skills development opportunities and traineeships to enhance or kickstart a career in heritage.

Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said: "In Northern Ireland our heritage is often contested and is at times difficult, so it is vital that we have a robust network of museums, programmes and initiatives to facilitate discussion and exploration of our past and help place these diverse narratives into a wider context.

"Thanks to National Lottery players crucial funding has been provided to create a local museum sector that is creative, adaptive and outward looking. Much can be learned from our local sector and we hope the delegates at this year's event are inspired by our story."



Ros Kerslake with David Lewis and Niall Kerr from the Nerve Centre

orthern Ireland



Carra Castle featured in Games of Thrones

National Lottery funding to showcase Northern Ireland’s cultural heritage