

To celebrate 25 years of National Lottery funding for heritage, we're delving into our archive this festive season to look at some of the many inspiring projects over the years.

Heritage can be so many things – memories, archives, parks, museums, landscapes, culture... This month we present just a small selection of some fantastic projects supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund over the past 25 years.

We'll be sharing a different project on each day of advent, running through each year of our 25-year history. Head to Twitter, Facebook or Instagram to see more using #NationalLottery25 #AdventCalendar.

December 25 – Places of Poetry, 2019

In 2019, the Places of Poetry project launched the search for thousands of poems.

The project was inspired by Michael Drayton's Poly-Olbion (1612-22) which describes England and Wales. The 15,000-line poem was published with unique maps by the engraver William Hole.

An interactive map based on those 17th century maps has been created. Ordnance Survey data allowed map users to zoom to a high-level of modern detail and choose where to pin their poems – whether on a town, local landmark or street-corner.



Inspiring poetry

Communities were invited to add their own poems to the map and poem workshops took place across England and Wales.

Professor Andrew McRae of the University of Exeter, one of the project's leaders, said: “We hope the map will inspire people to write, whatever their age or experience."

“The aim is to encourage people to think about heritage from different angles, such as environmental, industrial, religious, cultural or sporting. We want to celebrate the diversity, history and character of the places around us.”

A festive poem from the map

Christmas At Golitha Falls
By Clare Dwyer

Under a hard white winter sky,

small fields of moorland grass;

granite walls hem King Doniert’s Stone.

We drop down the steep-sided river valley.

Leaving the car, cold air hits

sharp as lemon on the tongue.

Hearing the peaty water busy amongst stones

clamouring for the freedom of the sea.

We pick our way through tree roots

exposed over time by passing feet,

stepping on brown leaves

their edges lightly frilled with frost.

Little trickles of bird song are woven

into the soft sibilants of water

pouring over, through, boulders;

banks hang with diamante icicles.

All is just as it should be,

this shining winter walk

to ease our stomachs.

We turn for home, to tea and Christmas cake.

Other featured projects

24 December

Tees-Swale Naturally Connected, 2018

23 December

Back from the Brink, 2017

22 December

Unlocking the River Severn, 2016

21 December

Lincoln Cathedral, 2015

20 December

Beamish, County Durham, 2014

19 December

Titanic Hotel Belfast, Northern Ireland, 2013

18 December

Ben Nevis, Scotland, 2012

17 December

Temperate House, Kew Gardens, 2011

16 December

The Piece Hall, Halifax, 2010

15 December

Stonehenge, Wiltshire, 2009

14 December

Mary Rose Museum, Portsmouth, 2008

13 December

York Minster Revealed, York, 2007

12 December

People's History Museum, Manchester, 2006

11 December

Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 2005

10 December

Wedgwood Museum, Stoke-on-Trent, 2004

9 December

Royal Festival Hall, London, 2003

8 December

Stowe House, Buckinghamshire, 2002

7 December

Imperial War Museum, AirSpace, Duxford, 2001

6 December

SS Great Britain, Bristol, 2000

5 December

Newsplan, UK-wide, 1999

4 December

Cardiff Castle, Cardiff, 1998

3 December

British Museum, London, 1997

2 December

Lister Park, Bradford, 1996

1 December

Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1995

25 years of funding for heritage

Over the past 25 years, The National Lottery Heritage Fund has been the largest dedicated grant funder of the UK's heritage. We've awarded £8bn to more than 44,000 projects across the UK.

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done for us?

25 years: astronaut Tim Peake celebrates National Lottery funding for world of science