

Great North Run starting line Photo North News & Pictures

The HLF supported project will use the moment of the one millionth finish of the Great North Run (GNR) as a spring board to explore and celebrate the North East's sporting and industrial heritage and the big ideas and ‘world firsts’ that have happened in the region over the last 200 years.

Ivor Crowther, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North East, said: “Celebrating the millionth runner to cross the finish line at this year’s Great North Run is a fantastic achievement. People come from all over the world both to compete and to show their support so what a great opportunity to get those thousands of people engaged with the North East’s incredible cultural offering. This yearlong programme of events, exhibitions and community activities will help people learn about some of the region’s greatest historical moments and world firsts, including key events and people from our sporting, scientific and industrial heritage. We’re sure this project will be a success and hope everyone gets involved in celebrating all that makes the North East great.”

Brendan Foster, founder of the Great North Run, said: “When we started the Great North Run all those years ago we could only dream of the millionth finish across the line. The Run has since gone on to become the world’s biggest half marathon and this September, we’re proud to be the first event in the world to be officially recognised by the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) to celebrate this significant moment in the history of running."

Beth Bate, Director of Great North Run Culture, said: "This September, the Great North Run will be the first event of its kind in the world to reach it's one millionth finish, so we're absolutely delighted the Heritage Lottery Fund is supporting

our plans to celebrate this incredible achievement. With our good friends at Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums we're planning a yearlong programme of special events and exhibitions to celebrate not only this exceptional landmark occasion, but also a whole host of other North East 'world firsts'. Our region has so much to be proud of, and we hope as many people as possible will get involved in the #GNRMillion and help us to tell the truly remarkable story of the North East."

Cllr Ged Bell, Chair of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums Joint Committee, said: "Teaming up with Great North Run Culture and other partners to deliver this project is a huge opportunity and one we're really looking forward to. We have plans to create some amazing public exhibitions and events over the next year to mark this historic milestone for the Great North Run and to celebrate the unique spirit of the North East." Details will be announced via an online reminder service – sign up to be the first to hear the news here.

Notes to editors

- Great North Run Culture is an annual series of arts projects, events and exhibitions which celebrate and explore sport and art. Featuring film, photography, dance, drama, writing, participation projects and more, we use the world's largest half-marathon as the starting point for commissioning exciting, innovative and accessible work, "...linking the worlds of art and sport in a unique and innovative way," Culture24.
- Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM) is a major regional museum, art gallery and archives service attracting around 1.6million visits to our venues each year. We manage a collection of nine museums and galleries across Tyneside and the Archives for Tyne and Wear. We are supported by the five local authorities of the area and Newcastle University. TWAM is also a Major Partner Museum funded by Arts Council England and has Core Funded Museum status. We hold collections of international importance in archives, art, science and technology, archaeology, military and social history, fashion and natural sciences.
- The Great North Run is brought to you by Nova International and is sponsored by Bupa. Nova International, headed by Olympic medallist Brendan Foster also organise some of the biggest running events in the world, all based on the Great North Run, the world's leading half marathon with 57,000 entries. Nova International was established in 1988 and has a strong sporting pedigree. Based in Newcastle upon Tyne, Nova has established itself as a market leader in the world of sports marketing and event management.

Further information

Helen Fussell, Great North Run Cultur on 0191 226 3256 / 07801 369 778, email: helen@greatnorthrunculture.org.

Laura Bates, Heritage Lottery Fund press office on 020 7591 6027, email: lbates@hlf.org.uk.