Over £1million to Harris Museum and Art Gallery

25/01/2011

The new ‘Guild Gallery’ will be filled with historical objects telling the story of Preston and will open to coincide with the 2012 Preston Guild celebrations - the only surviving Guild celebration in the country with an unbroken history stretching back to the 12th century.

The award from HLF will also fund repairs to the fabric of the building, remodelling of visitor facilities and widening the learning programme to provide new opportunities for people to engage with and share their heritage as visitors and volunteers.

Sara Hilton, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North West, said: “This exciting project promises to transform Harris Museum, with the new gallery celebrating national and international importance of Preston’s history. Our funding will also support the development of the Museum’s education programme so more people from across the local community with have the opportunity to explore and enjoy the museum and its remarkable collections.”

Councillor Ken Hudson, Leader of Preston City Council, says: “The HLF grant is a wonderful achievement for Preston City Council and will enable the Harris Museum & Art Gallery to provide the very best history experience for local people and visitors to the city in Guild Year and beyond. We would like to thank both HLF and all of our other funders, including the many local individuals and organisations that have helped make the gallery happen. We now look forward to the hard work ahead to get the gallery open in 2012."

One of the North West’s important museums, the Harris Museum & Art Gallery is a Grade I listed building housing substantial collections of fine and decorative art alongside artefacts relating to Preston’s industrial and social history.

Prized pieces include the ‘Poulton Elk’, a 10,000-year-old elk skeleton whose bones show evidence of humans’ first presence in the area, and a significant photography collection of images of Preston from 1850 onwards.

The building itself was designed by James Hibbert following a bequest by a Preston lawyer named Edmund Robert Harris. Opening in 1893 it quickly became a city icon, and remains one of the most important 19th-century buildings in the North West.

Notes to editors

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported more than 30,000 projects allocating £4.5billion across the UK, including over £500million to the North West alone.

Further information

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