New Museum of Liverpool opens

19/07/2011

Tuesday 19 July sees the opening of the largest newly-built national museum in Britain for more than a century on the city's waterfront at 10am.

Telling the fascinating story of Liverpool and its world-renowned people, the £72million Museum of Liverpool is testament to those who have shaped and continue to influence the history of the city. A People's Opening is being held to honour 'Scousers' from Liverpool and beyond.

This will take place at 10am on Tuesday 19 July, led by Professor Phil Redmond CBE, Chairman of National Museums Liverpool, Director Dr David Fleming OBE, and special guest Finn O'Hare, aged six, representing the youngest generation of Liverpudlians.

Phil Redmond said: "It is fitting that in Finn we have a regular Liverpool lad helping out at such a pivotal event in our city's history. Liverpudlians across the ages have created a city with a host of tales to tell, and that is what the Museum of Liverpool is all about, and why we have chosen to celebrate with a People's Opening. We look forward to sharing the Museum with the people of Liverpool."

The Museum of Liverpool has been made possible with generous support from major funders, including the North West Development Agency (NWDA), The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS).

Funders quotes

Robert Hough, Chairman of the NWDA, commented: "The rejuvenation of Liverpool's world-famous waterfront is a major part of the legacy the NWDA leaves for this city and the region. The Museum is a great and fitting representation of Liverpool's identity as a cultural Mecca, celebrating the city's past and looking towards a bright future. The NWDA invested more than £33 million towards the build of the Museum, and I look forward to seeing the it in all its glory at the opening event."

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of Heritage Lottery Fund, said: "The Museum of Liverpool is a spectacular new landmark for the waterfront area as well as a much-needed learning resource about Liverpool's unique place in both British and world history. Over the years, the Heritage Lottery Fund has supported a number of major projects in the city and we are delighted to see this latest one completed and opening its doors for everyone's enjoyment this summer."

About the Museum of Liverpool

From small beginnings, Liverpool began as a tidal inlet, growing into one of the wealthiest port cities in the world. Taking on highs and lows of all proportions, this once prosperous city has encountered war, poverty and decline, yet continued to flaunt its determination to re-emerge as a dynamic 21st century city. The Museum of Liverpool continues this legacy.

From the world's first wet dock, to the invention of goal nets, Liverpool has been at the forefront of innovation and pioneering successes. The city has achieved fame through the talents of a staggering roll call of entertainers, writers, poets, performers, musicians, artists, comedians and sports people. Continuous top-flight football and the birth-place of the greatest band in the world are just two tips of the iceberg.

Dr David Fleming, Director of National Museums Liverpool said: “Our ambition for the Museum of Liverpool was to create the world’s greatest urban history museum. For the past ten years our team has worked tirelessly, with a great deal of help from the public, to channel this ambition and develop a museum which explains Liverpool using objects to illustrate its story.

“Liverpool is very easily misunderstood, not least because in living memory it has been a poor city, plagued by unemployment and poverty. But less than 100 years ago Liverpool was one of the greatest cities on earth, and only through knowing this, and understanding why this was, can anyone understand the modern city.

“The Museum of Liverpool is a living biography of the city, a biography that is honest, ever-changing, created by people who love living here, many of whom were born here.”

The Museum will open in several phases, featuring four main galleries and a number of smaller gallery spaces. From 19 July, three of the four main galleries Wondrous Place, The People’s Republic and Global City will open. Also opening is Little Liverpool, a dedicated gallery for children aged six and under, the stunning Atrium space and Skylight Gallery.

The diverse range of exhibits on display in Phase One includes:

- The stage where John Lennon and Paul McCartney first met in 1957
- Ben Johnson’s Liverpool Cityscape
- 10 metre-long (30ft) Chinese Ceremonial Dragon
- The first Ford Anglia off the Ford’s Halewood production line in 1963
- Victoria Cross medal awarded to Sergeant David Jones of the King’s (Liverpool) Regiment on 3 September 1916 for brave leadership while serving in the First World War at Guillemont France
- 360? immersive films about football on Merseyside and The Beatles
- Life-size 5.5m (18ft) Liver Bird
- Cycling legend Chris Boardman’s famous Lotus Sport bike
- Model design for Lutyens’ enormous Cathedral of Dreams
- Reconstruction of typical court housing
- Items from the Everton Collection Charitable Trust

Notes to editors

- The world’s first commercial enclosed wet dock opened in Liverpool in 1715.
- Liverpool singer Lita Roza was the first British woman to top the charts with ‘How much is that doggy in the window?’ in 1953.
- Six year old Finn O’Hare from Liverpool sent a letter last year saying how excited he was to see the new museum taking shape, and put himself forward for the job of opening the museum himself: ”It will be great. I am good at opening things – Please can I open the museum?”. Dr David Fleming, Director of National Museums Liverpool, was impressed by the youngster’s enthusiasm and has invited him to help open the new Museum on 19 July.
- The Museum will provide 8,000 square metres of public space across three floors, and visitors will have access to more than 6,000 objects, many of which have never been on public display.
- National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside was established as a national museum group in 1986 due to the outstanding quality of its collections. In 2003 we changed our name to National Museums Liverpool. Our origins

go back to 1851 and the founding of Liverpool Museum.
- National Museums Liverpool runs eight museums and galleries: International Slavery Museum, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Merseyside Maritime Museum, UK Border Agency National Museum (Seized! The Border and Customs Uncovered), Sudley House, Walker Art Gallery, World Museum Liverpool and the Museum of Liverpool.

The Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) works to deliver economic success in England's Northwest by building the competitiveness of businesses, people and places. The Agency is the strategic lead for tourism in the Northwest and works with the region's five tourist boards to support and grow our £13 billion visitor economy.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is making a real difference to people and businesses in the Northwest. With €755 million to invest between 2007 and 2013, ERDF is enhancing the competitiveness of the region's economy by supporting growth in enterprise and employment.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) sponsors a wide range of museums and galleries across England, from very large establishments, such as the British Museum, to smaller bodies, such as the National Coal Mining Museum in Wakefield. Of the 21 museums and galleries we sponsor, 13 were founded by Act of Parliament and are defined as 'nationals', with NML the only national museum service based wholly outside London. All DCMS sponsored institutions receive Grant-in-Aid funding, although we do not intervene in their day-to-day business operations.