Heritage Lottery Fund to help re-tell the story of world’s oldest map

02/10/2010

The new exhibition of the map (circa 1290) will be commissioned from internationally renowned designers Hayley Sharpe Designs.

"We are delighted by the news," said Canon Chris Pullin, Chancellor of the Cathedral, who oversees the exhibition on a daily basis. "While the Mappa Mundi and Chained Library have been receiving phenomenal television and newspaper coverage, the current exhibition has begun to look tired."

"Scholarship has also advanced, and the exhibition has not been able to reflect the new stories that we know about the map and its origins. This marvellous grant will help us achieve this and to make the interpretation of the map available to so many more people."

The new exhibition will include new fixed and interactive interpretative panels, dummy chained books and book case, which visitors can use to experience handling the books and manuscripts, and a programme of work to increase the accessibility of the exhibition to all. This will include the introduction of season tickets to the exhibition.

Anne Jenkins, Head of HLF West Midlands , said: "This is fantastic news for Hereford Cathedral. The Mappa Mundi is the oldest and perhaps the most famous map in the world and a real heritage gem for Hereford and its community to have on its doorstep. We look forward to seeing the improvements that this grant will bring to the exhibition for people of all backgrounds and ages."

Hereford & South Herefordshire MP, Jesse Norman, also welcomed the news: "The Mappa Mundi and the Chained Library are not just local but national treasures. I am thrilled that the Heritage Lottery Fund has decided to support this important exhibition. We must do more to promote Hereford City as a cultural and artistic destination – this is a great step in the right direction."

In addition to the new exhibition, the grant will help fund interpretive material in a number of different languages for those local residents - for whom English is not their first language - and international visitors. The project will also develop our programmes of work with local schools and training opportunities for volunteer guides and stewards.

The upgrading of the interpretative exhibition will be undertake and installed over the winter months while other works will be taking place. It will take place in tandem with other works including a new conservation case for the Mappa Mundi and additional exhibition space for the cathedral’s various other treasures, including its copy of the 1217 Magna Carta which is currently on display until 30 October.

Funding for these other areas of development is still required and anyone interested in supporting the development should contact Hereford Cathedral Perpetual Trust on 01432 374261 or at perpetual.trust@herefordcathedral.org.

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 33,900 projects, allocating over £4.4billion across the UK, including £319million to projects in the West Midlands alone.

Mappa Mundi: drawn around 1300, it is the oldest complete map of the world still in existence. To find out more about the map.

Chained Library: created around 1611 contains in excess of 1,500 manuscripts and books, which date from the eighth to the nineteenth centuries. To find out more about the Chained Library.

Hereford Cathedral Perpetual Trust: the Perpetual Trust works to secure external funding for the Cathedral through a program of private giving, legacy promotion, applications to trusts and foundations and an active programme of events.

Further information

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