Royal Albert Memorial Museum reopens in December

12/11/2011

RAMM will be open 10am to 5pm every day except Mondays and bank holidays and entry will still be free.

Fully refurbished after a multi-million pound redevelopment, the new displays will showcase the collections and collectors that have helped RAMM to become one of Britain’s finest regional museums. They tell the story of Exeter and Devon from the prehistoric to the present but, more than a local museum, its internationally important world cultures and natural history collections also tell a story of global exploration and collecting in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The splendid Victorian building on Queen Street has been repaired, refurbished and extended preparing it for the 21st century. Original architectural features have been revealed allowing visitors to experience the splendour of the original Victorian spaces and the extension includes a suite of modern, flexible exhibition galleries allowing RAMM to bring to the South West prestigious loans and exhibitions from national partners. Modern services will improve the care of visitors and the collections alike.

A new garden entrance links the Victorian museum to its historic surroundings and the neighbouring gardens. The area is one of only five sites classified by English Heritage as an Area of Archaeological Importance.

Contrasting with the city-centre bustle of the Queen Street entrance, this new entrance offers a leisurely approach to the museum and easy access to the arts centre, library and castle. A new bridge from the entrance leads visitors to the Roman wall and panoramic views of the gardens and the city.

Council Leader, Pete Edwards, said: "I am proud and delighted to reopen the Museum after its multi-million pound redevelopment. With the galleries, facilities and services expected of a truly modern museum, RAMM is now set to regain its place as Exeter’s most visited attraction. Its world-class collections trace the history of the city and this redevelopment shows Exeter to be the developing, dynamic and forward looking city that it is today.

"Over the last 140 years RAMM has become one of the city’s most cherished institutions and it has been sorely missed during the closure. On behalf of the City Council and the people of Exeter, I would like to thank the Heritage Lottery Fund and all who have helped us make RAMM fit for the 21st century. The Museum is now home to over a million objects, and I would like to invite everyone to join us over the coming months to explore these stories and make RAMM home to a million thoughts."

Nerys Watts, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South West, said: “We at HLF are delighted by the reopening of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, which means that visitors from near and far will be able to explore the transformation that has taken place. This museum is of huge regional significance, providing a wonderful insight into the rich, natural and cultural heritage of the South West. Through redesigning the galleries and improving access the museum has dramatically improved opportunities for visitors to learn about and enjoy the collections. We want to congratulate the team on their dedication and hard work.”

RAMM will launch its busy programme of exhibitions and activities with artworks by some of the most prestigious names in art, many on loan from national and regional collections. Into the Light is an exhibition of French and British painting

from Impressionism to the early 1920s. It includes paintings by Monet, Renoir, Stanhope Forbes and Pissarro. The exhibition, The Road to Rome: Artists and Travellers on the Grand Tour follows John Rolle Walter's journey through Italy and explores the wider history of the 18th century Grand Tour. An exhibition from the Royal Collection features the extraordinary photographs of Roger Fenton (1819-69) and Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-79) two of Britain's most accomplished early photographers.

As visitors explore the new RAMM, the all-round sensory experience will be enhanced by four new contemporary works by internationally renowned and award-winning artists, Maria Lalic, Nicky Hirst, Michelle McKinney and Blast Theory, included thanks to support from the Arts Council England through Grants for the Arts.

Notes to editors

RAMM's multi-million pound development project was funded by the HLF (£9million), ECC and other sources. It allowed RAMM to move much of its collection to a new purpose-built off-site store expand its public areas at RAMM and redisplay the majority of galleries.

RAMM is one of five museums in the South West supported by Renaissance, the government's groundbreaking investment in regional museums. The first investment of its kind, Renaissance has enabled RAMM to enhance what it offers so it can attract more visitors, make the most of its collections and make a real difference to learning. Royal Albert Memorial Museum website.

Further information

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