

Cause for celebration. Sleeping giant comes to life

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The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced today a £3m grant* for the spectacular Giant's Causeway World Heritage Site in Northern Ireland and £3.7m for Liverpool's pioneering Florence Institute for Boys. In addition, it has given initial support** for projects at Kettle's Yard in Cambridge, the Transporter Bridge in Middlesbrough, Roman Maryport in West Cumbria and the University Church of St Mary the Virgin in Oxford.

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund, said: "This is heritage in all its kaleidoscopic glory! From Northern Ireland's breathtaking coastal landscape to Liverpool's first ever youth club, these places have mass appeal. Heritage means different things to different people but what is really important is these places reflect the UK's multi-layered and fascinating history."

Cause for Celebration

The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast is Northern Ireland's only World Heritage Site. Owned on behalf of the nation by the National Trust, it is a spectacular piece of natural heritage which boasts 40,000 interlinked basalt columns on the north Antrim coast. HLF's £3m grant will enable the Trust to protect and enhance this popular tourist attraction whilst involving the local community and creating much-needed employment opportunities.

The Trust will build new visitor facilities to provide a better understanding of the site's history and geology. It will also put in place a specially-designed volunteering strategy to get more people involved in looking after the site.

Florrie across the Mersey

HLF's £3.7m grant will enable The Florence Institute - 'The Florrie' - to begin extensive repair and conservation work. Closed for over 20 years, the 19th-century Jacobean-style building in Toxteth is one of the oldest surviving purpose-built youth clubs in the UK. The Institute's alumni include Tommy Bache, a boxer who won medals at the 1958 Empire Games, and Gerry Marsden (of Gerry and the Pacemakers fame) who held his first gig there in the 1950s.

Gerry Marsden commented: "It's great news to hear of the Florrie being restored and brings back many great memories for me. It was where I learned to play the guitar and where our skiffle band started out.

"The Florrie was a place for kids to go; it was the centre of the community – something to look forward to. I'm sure the new Florrie can do the same and young people will learn a lot and be able to give something back."

Once completed, the Florrie will be a multi-purpose community centre and a focus for young people in Toxteth and neighbouring Dingle. It will be run by the Florence Institute Trust which has been campaigning to save the building for the last decade.

The following four projects have received initial backing from HLF – plus confirmed development funding – and will now move to the next stage of their plans before a final funding decision is made:

Kettle's Yard, Cambridgeshire - initial support for a £2.3m HLF bid, including £225,500 development funding

Kettle's Yard was created in 1956 by Jim Ede, the Tate Gallery's first modern art curator. Ede masterminded the idea of a unique 'open house' environment where people could stop by and enjoy art and music on an informal basis. Proposals will help open the site up more widely to visitors as well as improving care of the collection which includes work by Ben and Winifred Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore, Joan Miró and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska.

Transporter Bridge Visitor Experience, Middlesbrough – initial support for a £2.03m HLF bid, including £111,500 development funding

Transporter bridges (a type of moving bridge with a gondola) are extremely rare with only three surviving in the UK. Middlesbrough's Transporter Bridge, created in 1911 and linking Middlesbrough and Port Clarence, is a spectacular landmark on the River Tees. The project plans to restore and improve access to the Bridge; visitors will not only enjoy the panoramic view but will also gain a greater understanding of the history of the Bridge and the surrounding industrial heartland.

Roman Maryport: World Heritage in West Cumbria – initial support for a £3.74m HLF bid, including £165,600 development funding

Camp Farm in Maryport is home to a Roman fort and the largest intact civil settlement (known as vicus) on Hadrian's Wall. The fort, originally dating back to the first century AD, was rebuilt during the reign of Hadrian and is part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site. The site has never before been open to the public and plans will enable visitors to watch the excavation as it happens. It is estimated that this project will create 100 jobs, including 10 on site.

The University Church of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford – initial support for a £3.29m bid, including £118,550 development funding

The Grade I listed University Church is one of England's most popular parish churches with 300,000 tourists visiting each year. The official church of Oxford University, it makes up part of the city's landscape of 'dreaming spires' and offers one of the best views of it. Whilst parts of the church will undergo urgent conservation work, proposals also include providing a permanent display about its history and offering guided tours, lectures and learning activities for schools and other groups.

Notes to editors

* A confirmed award means that money had already been earmarked by HLF for the project in question and that the full amount has now been secured.

** A first-round pass means the project meets our criteria for funding and we believe it has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award.

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 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

Further information

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