National Memorial Arboretum opens outstanding



The new interactive exhibition exploring the concept of remembrance

The National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire opens the doors of its new Remembrance Centre on Friday, complete with state-of-the-art interpretation supported by HLF.

The 150-acre Arboretum, which is part of The Royal British Legion, focuses on the heritage of conflict, service and self-sacrifice, honouring those who have served and remembering the fallen. The new £15.7million centre launches after a seven-year fundraising campaign, with support from donors including HLF, Staffordshire County Council and The Royal British Legion.

With a steadily increasing number of visitors each year, the Arboretum wanted to expand and enhance the educational offering at the site and lead visitors on an emotional journey of discovery.

Introducing the concept of remembrance

A grant of £2.85m from HLF enabled the centre to install a fascinating, interactive exhibition, introducing the concept of remembrance. An immersive film experience, projected onto multiple screens inside The Drum, explores why remembering is such an important human need. Visitors will also have the opportunity to record and upload their own stories to a new national archive through a Memory Booth.

[quote=Vanessa Harbar, Head of HLF West Midlands]“Thanks to National Lottery Players, more people will be able to understand and appreciate the heritage of conflict and sacrifice, as represented so movingly at the new Remembrance Centre.”[/quote]

Lt Col David Whimpenny, Chairman of the National Memorial Arboretum Board, said: “Opening the doors of our new Remembrance Centre to the public marks the culmination of years of hard work and it is fantastic to see our compelling vision become a reality. We look forward to welcoming the many thousands of visitors that we are now capable of accommodating, thanks to the new facilities.”

Other expansions to the centre include a new landscaped area entitled Heroes Square, a 100-year time capsule containing messages and stories of remembrance, and a striking bronze and steel sculpture depicting the face of a young soldier.

Vanessa Harbar, Head of HLF West Midlands, said: “With HLF support the National Memorial Arboretum has been able to utilise state-of-the-art interpretation to offer an enhanced educational experience for its growing number of visitors. Thanks to National Lottery Players, more people will be able to understand and appreciate the heritage of conflict and sacrifice, as represented so movingly at the new Remembrance Centre.”