National Centre for Horseracing opens in

Today, Her Majesty The Queen officially opened the National Centre for Horseracing and Sporting Art in Newmarket, made possible by support from National Lottery players.

Her Majesty was introduced to a few of the equine stars in the Rothschild Yard before she was shown the museum, including the Robert's Veterinary Gallery and the Pivotal Racehorse Simulator Gallery, as well as a gallery showing for the first time the recently excavated skeleton of Pot-8-Os, an important 18th-century stallion. This was followed by the unveiling of the official opening plaque and a tour of the Fred Packard Museum and Galleries of British Sporting Art in Palace House.

Built in the remains of Charles II's 17th-century sporting palace and stables, the new National Heritage Centre will allow visitors to explore the rich history of Newmarket and horseracing.

The site includes the remains of the original Palace, a recently restored Mews block and its stables. The Kings Yard, restored in the 18th and 19th centuries, may be the oldest racing stables in the world.

The project provides a museum, art gallery, and study centre celebrating the development of the thoroughbred horse and sporting art in Britain.

It will showcase the outstanding collections of the National Horseracing Museum and British Sporting Art Trust using state of the art interpretation. A working stable yard and paddock will engage wider audiences through the work of the Retraining of Racehorses Trust.

However, just as importantly, the centre will be a major cultural destination and a significant contribution to the town, supporting the development and regeneration of Newmarket and providing opportunities for people to gain employment and learn new skills.

[quote=Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive]"HLF is delighted to have played a role in the opening of this wonderful new cultural destination."[/quote]

Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive of HLF, said: “HLF is delighted to have played a role in the opening of this wonderful new cultural destination, which will support the development and regeneration of Newmarket, and make a huge contribution to the local economy. We are delighted that, thanks to National Lottery players, we’ve been able to fund this fantastic project, helping visitors engage with the global history of horseracing and underlining the significance of the sport’s heritage story."

Newmarket has been the spiritual home of English horseracing since the 17th century, and the Jockey Club was founded here in 1750. The stables were used almost continuously for the training of racehorses from the days of Charles II to 1985. Seventeen Classic winners were trained from the Stables between 1837 and 1926. Much of the current fabric, including the Trainer’s House, date to 1857-60 when the stables and house were bought by Rothschild.

Her Majesty The Queen is Patron of the National Horseracing Museum and opened the original Museum on Newmarket High Street on 30 April 1983.