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Case studies

**HLF Major Grants – The first 100**

**June 2015**

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## **Ashmolean Museum**

The Ashmolean, Oxford University's museum, was the first public museum in the country and holds an impressive collection. However its organisational culture, and its approach to display and interpretation, was rather scholarly and inward-looking, and as such the museum did not entice the numbers of visitors it ought to have done. The HLF grant came with some strong conditions that the project had to not only carry out necessary refurbishment work, access improvements and upgrading of conservation facilities, but also rethink the museum's relationship with a wider public. This has been achieved by the Ashmolean by becoming an outward-looking and welcoming museum, with ten-times the number of visitors it used to receive.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2004

**Value of grant:** £15,907,500

**Description of project:** Demolition of old building extensions to a Grade I listed building; construction of new extensions; creation of a dedicated education space and storage facilities; building of new lifts and stairs; expanded cafe and shop; new conservation facilities and equipment; renovation and re-organisation of existing exhibition space.

**Year of completion of project:** 2009

**Interviewee:** Professor Christopher Brown, Director, Ashmolean Museum

"The Major grant made the Ashmolean beautifully designed, modern, and outward-looking – it went from being a university museum to a national- or even international-class one."

Professor Brown was appointed director of the museum in 1998. It was always his intention to lead a big project to revive and modernise the museum. When he arrived, the prevailing view in the University and in the sector at large was that, in spite of it being Britain's first public museum and having a superb collection, the Ashmolean was punching well below its weight. It was an inward-looking university museum, whose collection was poorly presented in a set of buildings in various states of disrepair, which didn't attempt to address a wider public.

The major grant enabled a radical transformation. Following the redevelopment, it now has significantly more exhibition space, which is light and airy and inspirationally designed. It has adopted a new approach to presenting its collection; it has new and expanded catering and retail space and four new departments. It is much more outward-looking, attracting ten-times as many visitors than when Brown joined (over 1 million per year), and has the profile and reputation of a national museum.

The collection itself is in better condition. The re-development included a new conservation studio and associated facilities – the conservation department is still the largest in the organisation. These new facilities help the conservation team to do their job better; and makes it easier to raise external funding for conservation work, such as the recent improvements to the Egypt gallery and the sculpture gallery. There is a new set of attitudes in the conservation department too – there is much more focus on the public engagement side of their work.

“Without pressure from the HLF grant guidelines, we probably wouldn’t have been so ambitious with our plans to transform the levels of public engagement.”

Professor Brown’s previous experience as part of the team that fundraised for the building of the Sainsbury wing at the National Gallery was one of the key factors in the success of the Ashmolean scheme. In addition to his fundraising expertise it also meant that he had a good relationship with Lord Sainsbury, who became the single largest private donor to the Ashmolean project.

Brown believes it is highly doubtful whether the redevelopment would have been possible at anything near the scale or quality it achieved without the major grant, which amounted to about one-third of total cost. Without that level of HLF investment, Lord Sainsbury would not have come in as the major private donor. In turn, without Lord Sainsbury’s donation, the private fundraising target would have been too high, even for an Oxford University institution.

The Ashmolean is now a totally different organisation. As well as the physical transformation it now has a different focus and organisational culture, as well as new sets of skills and capabilities in areas such as exhibition design, press and PR, and audience development.

It also has a radically different revenue model. Previously only a fraction of its revenue came from non-academic sources. Now, while core funding still comes from the University (from the Higher Education Funding Council for England) and other academic funders like the Arts and Humanities Research Council, 60% of its annual budget comes from other sources such as sponsorship, donations and earned income. Among major UK museums only the Tate has a revenue profile resembling this.

Brown feels that the extent of the change in the organisation’s outlook and culture was probably greater than expected. He sees the Ashmolean as part of the broader ‘renaissance’ across the sector that HLF has helped engender. The national museums in particular have modernised their facilities so they can shed new light on their collections and engage a larger, more diverse public.

## **Beaney House of Art & Knowledge**

**Year of HLF grant:** 2007

**Value of grant:** £7,015,000

**Description of project:** Restoration work carried out to the building fabric of the Beaney, a Grade II listed building, including any internal additions to the building; creation of a new extension to the rear of the building incorporating new galleries, atrium and library; re-display of existing collections; improved visitor and accessibility capabilities.

**Year of completion of project:** 2012

**Interviewee:** Janice McGuinness, Assistant Director – Commissioned Services, Canterbury City Council

“The success of the Beaney has been a big boost to the morale and ambition of the whole museums service. The Art Fund 2013 shortlisting for museum of the year was a real surprise as the building had only been open for a year.”

Transforming the Beaney – a late Victorian building in a serious state of disrepair – was one part of a ten-year plan to use culture to help regenerate Canterbury. This was seen in an East Kent context alongside developments in Margate and Folkestone. The scheme arose as part of Canterbury and East Kent’s bid to be 2008 European Capital of Culture. While Canterbury did not win the title, a real benefit was still felt to have come from the process, planning and partnership that underpinned developing the bid. This proved to be the case, as Canterbury has now implemented virtually all the projects, including the Beaney, that were proposed in the bid.

The Capital of Culture bid – and the capital projects at the heart of it – was championed by the Chief Executive, Colin Carmichael. The Council gave the scheme its full support at the time and members have maintained cross-party support since, despite several changes in political balance. This cross-party support was critical to the success of this and other major cultural regeneration projects.

The project involved redisplaying the collections, now organised thematically around the ideas of ‘people, places, stories’, an approach that allows visitors to find their own way through the collection. The Beaney was renamed ‘Beaney House of Art and Knowledge’ and the galleries have been given a ‘homely’ feel, with names like The Front Room and The Garden Room. A much greater percentage of the collection is on display than before, with elements of the collection brought together thematically. The public response to the project overall has been very positive, and annual visitor numbers have doubled.

“The Beaney is shaping the culture of Canterbury, previously it was a bystander”

## Big Pit

Big Pit is Wales' oldest and most complete remaining colliery, and since closing as a working mine in 1980 has been operating as a visitor attraction introducing members of the public to the world of mining. Although highly popular, the museum was in a precarious position before the award of the HLF grant, with declining income and an unsustainable burden of conservation and maintenance needs. The investment enabled a merger with the bigger institution of National Museums and Galleries of Wales, and the restoration and further development of the site. These measures have put Big Pit on much more secure footing for the future.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2000

**Value of grant:** £4,963,000

**Description of project:** restoration of 19 listed buildings; creation of a conservation workshop, storage space, new exhibition areas, an education room and added space for operational needs; engineering works to ensure long-term access to the historic underground workings, as well as conservation and interpretative works to improve understanding of how they were used.

**Year of completion of project:** 2004

**Interviewee:** Peter Walker, Keeper and Manager, Big Pit

Big Pit is the oldest and most complete remaining colliery out of around 2,000 that were in operation throughout Wales. Opened in 1860, it was in action until 1980, at which point it closed for three years before reopening as a museum of mining. From the start, the visitor experience included underground tours – always led by former colliery workers – that introduced the public to the reality of mining. It was a very popular attraction, being the most visited coal mine in the UK, and for a number of years the most visited paying attraction in Wales. Because of its completeness, Big Pit is also a significant part of British industrial heritage, and the surrounding area – Blaenafon historic industrial landscape – was named as a World Heritage Site shortly before Big Pit was awarded its major grant.

Although still a popular tourist destination, in the 1990s visitor numbers were eroding due to the expansion of the cultural tourism industry, and the consequent competition from other attractions. The site was also in need of investment.

“Everything was getting a bit old and tired,” says Keeper Peter Walker. “A number of things were in need of conservation attention – and at that time we had no conservation or curatorial expertise on site.” There were financial difficulties: income was less than expenditure and, run by a small independent trust, the museum had little clout to generate more. Although the site charged an entry fee, it was out of operation for two months every year in order for the necessary maintenance work to take place. Without radical change, Big Pit faced an uncertain future.

One obvious solution was for the Big Pit to find a new home with National Museums and Galleries of Wales (NMGW). However NMGW was understandably cautious about taking on what was then an “impecunious little museum at the top of the Welsh valleys”. Equally unfortunately, other investors were not keen to commit unless Big Pit had identified a more secure basis for its activities. Peter Walker says, “It was a

'catch 22' situation, and one that took four years and lots of conversations to come to a solution." In the end HLF was "extremely helpful ... Without the major grant we wouldn't be here now. The only option was to go into the NMGW. The HLF grant freed up the blockage and got everything moving. Blaenafon being nominated as a World Heritage Site also helped, as without the minea vitalelement would be missing from what is now theWorld Heritage Site."

The injection of capital from HLF, and the new partnership with NMGW, enabled Big Pit to enrich and improve the site as a heritage attraction and centre of conservation. The team's capacity to do outreach work means that oral histories are being collected in greater volume, and voluntary donations to the collection have increased, particularly of items relating to the social history of the area. Big Pit's people-led approach to interpretation has now been expanded across all elements of the site.

"The concept had always been 'real mine, real miners', but this was mainly enacted in the underground tours. The grant allowed us to expand this 'authentic voice' approach across more formal exhibition spaces."

Although the site was already popular, the reopening saw a spike in visitor numbers that has since stabilised at around 150,000 annually, almost double the pre-grant number. However this has been affected by the introduction of free entry, so attribution isn't entirely clear. 45% of visitors are educational groups (who now benefit from a dedicated education space), with the remainder split between visitors from Wales, England and France. The Museum is now open all year round, which has also helped improve attendance.

A few years after the reopening of the site, a study by Cardiff Business School estimated the economic impact of Big Pit on the region at £3.4 million. However the social impact is just as significant: all staff on site are locals, with around half from Blaenafon itself, and the presence of Big Pit is a significant part of local identity and a source of pride. Walker comments that one of the most unexpected outcomes of the major grant project was "how proprietorial local people would become".

"Initially the idea of turning a working coal mine into a museum went down like a lead balloon. However we proved ourselves, and people started to take pride in the site as a local icon. Following the major grant work that has only increased, especially now that we've won a number of awards."

The financial position of the site has certainly improved, and it is now in a relatively secure situation, albeit facing the same public cuts as others in the sector. "But we are in a far better position than we would have been without the grant... we are secure now whereas before we were living day-to-day." Additionally, the success of the grant-funded project, the new governance structure, and winning prizes such as the Gulbenkian Museum of the Year and Wales' Favourite National Treasure, have all made it easier to leverage funding from other sources.

Looking to the future, the site naturally has on-going maintenance needs. But as well as routine conservation work, there is also the need to make improvements to the technical viability of the underground experience. Big Pit is still classed as a mine – and there have been many advances in mining since the 1980s. However Peter is unequivocal about the positive effect of the grant: "The impact of the major grant is:

we're still here. The support from HLF turned Big Pit from a minor provincial museum into a world class national museum.”

## **Birmingham Town Hall**

**Year of HLF grant:** 2000

**Value of grant:** £13,500,000

**Description of project:** External and structural repair of the iconic Grade I listed Town Hall; Internal refurbishment to ensure its viability as a modern venue and improve accessibility; development of a flexible performance space and community facility.

**Year of completion of project:** 2008

**Interviewee:** Val Birchall, Assistant Director, Culture & Visitor Economy, Birmingham City Council

Birmingham Town Hall closed at the time the city built the Symphony Hall, and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra moved there. At that point it was felt Birmingham only needed one concert hall. But over time that view changed, as the loss of the Town Hall both as a cultural venue and a heritage building was felt. As a result, a plan was devised to restore and re-open the Town Hall with a new focus on both commercial and community uses, which has encouraged a broad social mix of audiences. This plan became part of wider cultural regeneration plans for Birmingham city centre.

The Town Hall re-opened again approximately 15 years after it had closed. It is now a spectacular venue. It is significantly smaller than the 2,500 capacity Symphony Hall and therefore more suitable for many organisations and ventures. It ensures Birmingham has venues of a different character and is especially valued by community groups. Although the building is still council-owned it operates as a genuinely civic building 'owned' by the people. Programming is run by a charity, which goes out of its way to make community links with choirs and artists and to encourage wide usage. As it is a high-quality venue it is a prestigious showcase for community-led arts.

“Without HLF the transformation could not have happened. While there was a desire to reopen the Town Hall, there was no guarantee it would have happened, and it might even have been lost.”

## **Bletchley Park**

Bletchley Park, the site of Britain's code-breaking triumphs in the Second World War, was in a perilous physical condition by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although an increasingly popular visitor attraction, the site could not support the numbers of visitors it was getting. Having been run by a small team and hundreds of volunteers. since it was saved from demolition in 1992, it was in need of investment not only to save some of the buildings from collapse, but to turn it into a viable visitor attraction. The newly restored buildings were opened in early summer 2014, with great publicity, and the site is already seeing a sharp increase in visitor numbers. The project puts the organisation in a strong position to move onto the next more ambitious phase of restoration.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2009

**Value of grant:** £5,001,000

**Description of project:** restoration of Block C into a new visitor entrance and exhibition; total repair of Huts 3 and 6, with interpretation; external repairs to Huts 1 and 4; repositioning of car park away from centre of site and reordering of vehicle route around site; relocation of education suite; improvements to visitor facilities; general wayfinding and interpretation improvements; landscaping and sound installations across site; new education officer, curator, and conservation trainee posts.

**Year of completion of project:** 2014

**Interviewee(s):** Iain Standen, Chief Executive, Bletchley Park Trust

Bletchley Park, a Victorian house and estate on the outskirts of Milton Keynes, was bought by the government in 1938, as a location for the Code and Cypher School and elements of the Secret Intelligence Service (later to become GCHQ and MI6). The site was first used for code-breaking and intelligence during the Munich crisis in 1938, and then again throughout the Second World War. At its height, about 9,000 people were working there, and to house all of this activity, a number of wooden huts – and, later, larger more robust buildings – were added to the site. It was in these buildings that the Nazi Enigma code and Lorenz ciphers were broken, as well as other messages that had major implications for the success of the Allied campaign. Some of the machines developed to process this data were the forerunners of the modern computer. So although the buildings themselves are not of any great architectural significance, the site is of immense importance to military history, and to the history of computing, the British Intelligence Service, and code-breaking.

After the war, the site was still in government ownership and was used in various ways. But increasingly Bletchley Park fell into disrepair, and its heroic history was only publicly revealed in the 1970s. In 1992 when it was about to be bulldozed for a residential build, it was saved by the Bletchley Park Restoration Trust. With the completion of the major grant project in 2014, the Trust's 23-year journey has seen a major milestone in its mission for full restoration.

Much of the major grant project involved physically improving the most seriously deteriorating buildings. Bletchley Park CEO Iain Standen commented: "Some of the

wooden huts were literally about to fall down – and in fact would have been lost in the storms last winter if we hadn't done the work." In stabilising them, the project returned them to their 1941-42 look and feel with painstaking precision, including nicotine stains on the ceilings. Veterans who used to work on the site and have visited since the refurbishment say it feels just as it used to. Other elements of the site have been returned to their wartime state – including the reinstatement of a grass tennis court that had been turned into a car park.

The whole site has been made much more visitor-focused. The ticket hall and reception has been repositioned so it is easier to find, and there is an overview exhibition at the entrance of Block C. Everything has been designed to allow visitors to easily navigate the large site. The wayfinding is much better, and everyone has the opportunity to use a multi-media guide. There is also multi-media interpretation inside the buildings, which brings them alive with the activities that used to take place. All of this takes some of the burden off the guides, whereas previously the only way to understand the site was through guided tours. The new approach to presentation is partly the result of a new curator – a role created as part of the major grant project.

Although there were some challenges related to the difficulty of moving from a largely volunteer-run organisation, where there was a sense of volunteer ownership over the site, to a more outward-facing, visitor-oriented site, the feel of the site, post-project, is of a professional and efficiently-run visitor attraction. According to Standen, "It's created a step change in how we do business. This time last year we couldn't have handled the numbers of visitors we've had in August." Visitor numbers between Jan-May 2015 are up approximately 82% on the same period last year, and Trip Advisor satisfaction ratings of 4 or 5 are up by 7%. The majority of visitors are families (at an increased percentage, which was hoped for as part of the development), retirees, and those with a specific interest in the content and history. Going forward, the team is thinking about how to draw more tourists out of London.

The project created two new roles within the organisation, a curator and an education officer, plus a conservation trainee, all of which have brought benefits. However the expansion has allowed the Trust to buy in a number of other new members of staff: in operations, fundraising, and education. There is a full-time archivist, managing a big digitisation project with volunteers. Some archives have now been returned to Bletchley Park from elsewhere as a consequence of the team's increased capacity to look after them. The development has also supported jobs externally in conservation architecture and construction.

Financially, increased profile has helped with fundraising, and in some instances sponsors have approached Bletchley Park about opportunities. The organisation is generally "much more business savvy now. It pays for itself, and we can put aside some money every year for future repairs and refreshing exhibits."

Looking to the future, the next project is to restore the rest of the site, making more of the Victorian mansion at the centre, reclaiming some buildings at the centre of the site, and repairing those on the periphery. However Iain is confident that the recent project has proved the viability of the site to become even greater. He is also unequivocal about the ongoing need for grants of the scale HLF can bestow. "There

is corporate sponsorship out there, but you can rarely get the scale that HLF gives, which is what allows these substantial projects to go ahead.”

## **Brighton Museum and Art Gallery**

Brighton's recent success has been down in part to its mix of the very contemporary, such as its thriving digital sector, and its rich heritage. Yet this has not been accidental – there has been a determined effort since the late 1990s to use culture and heritage to re-shape the landscape of the city and to boost its economy. The major grant to the Brighton Museum and Art Gallery has played a significant role in this – it has let the museum become a leading regional museum which has 'upped the game on the city's heritage'. Heritage and culture very obviously equate to jobs in Brighton. The city now gets eight million visitors a year. It is pretty much at capacity; any future growth will depend on shifting the balance away from day-trippers to higher-spending overnight stayers. Heritage and culture are key to this shift, as they are known to encourage overnight stays.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1997

**Value of grant:** £7,562,000

**Description of project:** Refurbishment of existing galleries, restoration of original mosaic flooring, and improvement to visitor circulation; creation of a new education pavilion; installation of a new energy plant; improvement to existing museum storage space and environmental controls; creation of better visitor facilities and accessibility, including larger shop, larger entrance space, customer lift; replanting and landscaping of the Royal Pavilion Gardens.

**Year of completion of project:** 2002

**Interviewees:** Paula Murray, Head of Culture and Economy, Brighton & Hove City Council; Janita Bagshawe, Director Royal Pavilion and Head of Museums and Arts, Brighton & Hove City Council

"The Royal Pavilion Estate could rival the RSC or Shakespeare's Globe as a fundraising package – the different elements are individually strong and combine well as a package."

Brighton Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG) is part of the Royal Pavilion estate. Before the major grant it was very much in the shadow of the Royal Pavilion. However, the combination of BMAG, the Royal Pavilion and the nearby Brighton Dome was one of the earliest and most successful examples of partnership working between cultural organisations.

There had been little serious work done to BMAG since the end of the 19th century, though a number of galleries were updated gradually over the years. The collections were not in ideal casings, and full environmental controls weren't in place. There was a small shop, a poor entrance space, and the circulation of visitors didn't work well – there were three dead-end galleries on the ground floor.

The major grant has given them a bigger shop, a more welcoming entrance, toilets on the ground floor, as well as a goods lift and a customer lift. The mosaic floor was restored. Previously there was only one education room, now they have expanded education facilities and a lecture room.

The displays are kept much. The storage of collections is much better too – the costume collection has its own store in the basement, and there is a good ceramics store. Such objects are now much more accessible for students. The museum was also able to document its collections better.

Although the number of objects on show hasn't increased dramatically, it is much easier to rotate the collection after the changes funded by the major grant. Many visitors dislike cluttered displays, so this rotation approach is a much more effective way of showing off the collections to their best advantage.

“The major grant was transformational for the museum and for the whole area. It has really raised the profile of the museum. The staff feel really proud of the museum – it has boosted morale.”

Visitor numbers have grown significantly, and the area around the museum has improved greatly. Bagshawe thinks the Pavilion estate has contributed to the revival of the previously run-down North Laines: there are lots of new businesses in the area now.

The improvements in BMAG (and the Dome) had a big knock-on effect, partly because of their central position in the city. They triggered other investment into the city, including the Jubilee library, built on what was a derelict car park. These effects are still present; the revival of the cultural quarter has led the city to think about what it might do to improve Valley Gardens, which is in something of a traffic island next to the cultural quarter.

The demographic of the museum's audience has changed significantly. Before it was largely made up of local residents, now it is heavily tourist-driven. This was not a deliberate strategy, but there is more overlap with the Royal Pavilion's audience thanks to the new entrance in the Pavilion Gardens, and the revival of the area more generally has helped attract visitors.

## **British Film Institute Film and TV Archive**

**Year of HLF grant:** 1999

**Value of grant:** £9,149,560

**Description of project:** Creation of a new archival storage facility; processing and cataloguing of backlog of archive material; associated costs for accommodation, materials and equipment needed to catalogue and preserve backlogged material.

**Year of completion of project:** 2004

**Interviewee:** Amanda Nevill, CEO, British Film Institute (BFI)

The British Film Institute, the UK's agency for the promotion and development of moving image culture, is responsible for the National Film and Television Archive (NFTVA). The NFTVA holds over 300,000 titles dating from 1985 to the present day, on a range of technology, as well as related items in other media. In 1999, the BFI received a major grant to improve the conditions in which its archival material – some of it very delicate and liable to deterioration – is housed in its facilities outside London. Much of the collection was also uncatalogued, so a significant part of the project involved processing a huge backlog.

Although there were some difficulties along the way – largely stemming from uncertainty at the outset around exactly how much material needed cataloguing and preserving – the project was ultimately a major achievement in restoration and conservation. It laid the foundation for the ongoing task of raising government and public appreciation of film heritage, and challenged the view that film is the 'poor cousin' of the arts. It also altered the BFI's organisational view of the fundamental importance of its own archive, and Amanda Nevill, BFI CEO, is clear that the major grant compelled the team to take a more strategic long-term approach to managing the archive. It was also a catalyst for opening up the archive: now the whole collection – thanks to this initial grant from HLF and other subsequent investments – is far more publicly accessible.

## **British Museum: Education and Information Centre**

The HLF grant for the British Museum was specifically in relation to their education centre, the Reading Room, and the restoration of several parts of the historic building. However it was all tied in very closely with a much grander vision for making the Great Court the heart of the museum, a place to arrive, meet, get your bearings, and disperse into the rest of the museum. This whole project has been a great success – at peak times the museum now receives 30,000 visitors per day – and the expanded capability has allowed the Museum to be more wide-ranging in the audiences it welcomes.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1997

**Value of grant:** £15,198,860

**Description of project:** Creation of an education centre, housing several seminar rooms, education rooms, a large foyer for informal displays, a teaching centre and school facilities (such as a lunch room); restoration and recreation of several parts of the historic building, in particular the restoration of the Reading Room and provision of 300 seats.

**Year of completion of project:** 2003

**Interviewee:** Neil MacGregor, Director, British Museum

The British Museum's major grant project was driven by a far-sighted vision of what the institution wanted to be. The boldest step was realising that the Great Court – an open space in the centre of the building – had to become the heart of the Museum. This enabled the team to take the opportunity of the major grant to rethink how the public use the Museum.

The scheme to cover over the Great Court has transformed how the public use the British Museum's collections, as it gives people more control over how and where their visit starts. The Museum is also able to accommodate more people now and receives up to 30,000 visitors a day at peak times. This would be impossible without the new central space: it's where groups can gather and then disperse through the galleries.

The quality of the architecture has been a major factor in the scheme's success. The roof of the Great Court was well-designed, extremely complex and of high quality. Anything less – a duller, flatter roof, for example – would not have had the same impact. It's so well-known that it is used on posters and was one of the featured images of culture in the GREAT tourism campaign.

“The Great Court is not just an icon of the British Museum, but of modern Britain.”

Other galleries were created in conjunction with the project and with the help of other funders, including the Sainsbury Africa Galleries and the Wellcome Trust Gallery. These have allowed the British Museum to present its collections in a more flexible and creative way. The Joseph Hotung Great Court Gallery was also created to provide space for medium-sized temporary exhibitions, allowing contemporary issues to be explored in context with the wider collection, such as the exhibition curated by Grayson Perry, 'The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman'. Having temporary

displays means the Museum can experiment with new types of exhibitions, to attract diverse audiences beyond their usual market.

As well as widening the audience of the Museum through flexible and contemporary exhibitions and more public spaces, the Great Court scheme has enabled an expanded education programme to be offered.

The Clore Centre for Education provides a space that is now used by thousands of schools. It has changed the way that schools use the Museum, sometimes in very practical terms: they have somewhere they can leave their things, have classes, and use performance spaces. The new Centre has broadened the range of things schools can do when they visit, such as workshops and object handling sessions.

Along with the new and expanded facilities for schools, the Museum grew its audiences team. It also established a Community Partnerships team dedicated to widening engagement with diverse communities.

As they can now accommodate more people, the staff have become more proactive about trying new things and reaching new audiences. The desire to do such work was always there, but the new spaces have changed the practice of how it is done.

For example they held the 'Voices of Bengal' exhibition in 2006, which encouraged thousands of new, first-time visitors [British Bengalis] to come to the Museum. It has allowed the Museum to 'invite' such communities, knowing there is space in which they can be received – during the exhibition Bengali craftsmen built a giant statue of the goddess Durga in the Great Court. The staff are able to explore new forms of engagement, such as a programme with BBC Asian Radio and a London-based Bengali newspaper. These are things that they didn't feel they were able to do before.

"The reality is we have a totally different kind of engagement with different ethnic communities in the UK."

The success of the major grant has led the Museum to consider what else it might do to improve its appeal to visitors: what to do with the Reading Room, for instance. MacGregor is also keen to improve the infrastructure required to share the collection with the rest of the UK – if the British Museum were able to share and loan their collections more easily this could have a big impact regionally. MacGregor wants the collection to be a UK-wide one, not just a London one.

"The British Museum has always been the possession of the citizen. We are taking that tradition to the next stage."

## Cardiff Castle

Cardiff Castle occupies a large site in the very heart of Cardiff, yet before the major grant it was decidedly underpowered as a visitor attraction – the history of the site was not being told, there was very little for visitors to do or see, and there was no education offer. It was also in need of repairs, which the Council, who owned it, were struggling to afford. The major grant has allowed these issues to be tackled and in the process has woken the ‘sleeping giant’ that the Castle had become. Now it is one of the city’s most popular heritage sites, with a particular appeal to families.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2000

**Value of grant:** £6,702,500

**Description of project:** Repair to the fabric of the walls, keep, gates, Burges’s interiors, and domestic range of Cardiff Castle, a Grade I listed building; repair and recreation of Summer House; construction of a new interpretation and visitor centre; assembling new displays of regimental museums; refurbishment of visitor facilities, including new café and lavatories.

**Year of completion of project:** 2010

**Interviewee:** Martin Hamilton, Chief Officer – City Management, Cardiff County Council

Before the major grant, Cardiff Castle was in the ownership of Cardiff County Council (CCC), and part of the Tourism and Economic Development department. But the Council was struggling to fulfil its duty of care to the site as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. A 1992 survey of the property discovered that it was in poor condition throughout: both internally and externally, as well as areas such as the electrics. The education offer was non-existent, with ‘no facilities for sessions and no special provision.’ And the visitor experience was limited: “It was just a tour and a walk up the keep. There was very little else to do on the site... Most people thought it was a mock Victorian manor; it was very bric-a-bric – lots of different epochs and histories and none of these stories told.”

The Council’s first attempt to secure a major grant led to HLF initially providing funding for the development of a coherent Conservation Plan, which meant that important heritage at the site, such as the internationally renowned William Burges interiors, have now been registered and given priority. Having addressed these concerns, a secondary bid was successful.

The major grant tackled the maintenance issues, ensuring that the walls and buildings were repaired and conserved in a manner appropriate to their status as a Scheduled Ancient Monument: “most of the attraction [of the Castle] lies in the interiors and the building fabric”. It also addressed the visitor experience and education offer, and has dramatically improved the product and experience for visitors. While little ‘new’ heritage has been displayed, the staff now have the scope to interpret the different layers of history on the site, which had previously either not been narrated at all, or not in a coherent fashion.

There is now the right environment for on-site education sessions, and the Castle is currently averaging 20,000 admissions annually to its education centre. Having a

large education programme means that many children want to come back later with their parents, so the Council reviewed what activities were available for families, and has worked hard to provide many more activities and products on-site. These include audio guides, family trails, jousts, and banquets.

The changes facilitated by the grant have altered the demographics of the visitors. Previously, when there was little to do at the site, the dominant visitor group was older, with a pre-existing interest in heritage: 'a National Trust-type of visitor'. Now the Castle has much more mass market appeal and it is more of a family destination.

Overall visitor numbers illustrate this greater popular appeal. In 2002, there were 180,000 visitors, and numbers rose gradually from 2003 onwards and hit a high of 275,000 in 2011/12, despite rises in admissions charges.

Higher charges mean that the Castle is now in profit, which 'puts it on a much more sustainable financial footing'. There has been some local criticism that the admissions charges are now too expensive, so the Castle has responded with an offer for Cardiff residents, who can now get unlimited access for three years for £5.

Council Officer Martin Hamilton says, "There has been across-the-board change; real strategic thinking... while also looking at specific assets and thinking about how to exploit them." For example, the World War II air raid shelters in the grounds of the Castle have been opened up, diversifying the offer further, and the Castle now attracts visitors fascinated by how people used to shelter there during the War, and has been able to develop a highly successful home front educational programme in those spaces.

"It wouldn't have happened [without the major grant]. The scale of the grant enabled a step change in the quality of the offer. Without that, the best you could hope for was to get more people to a site that would have disappointed them... It's been absolutely pivotal in delivering a tremendously enhanced asset for Cardiff."

## **Christ Church, Spitalfields**

This major grant enabled one of Hawksmoor's finest churches to be brought back to life as a working church, and to play its part in the community of one of London's fastest-changing areas. The church acts as an important boundary between the City and the mixed-use neighbourhood of Spitalfields to the east of the City of London. The restoration of the church was an important part of the regeneration of the wider area. "The City [of London] is really encroaching and it [Christ Church] stopped this area from being swept away. The church plays an important part of the local community and is a focal point." The grant funded the restoration of the exterior and virtually an entire refit of the interior. The church is now structurally secure for the next 100 years.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1996

**Value of grant:** £5,984,500

**Description of project:** Repairs to the external fabric of the Christ Church, a Grade I listed building; internal restoration including removal of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century alterations, and reinstatement of the original Hawksmoor design; provision of disabled access and increased opening hours.

**Year of completion of project:** 2008

**Interviewees:** Carolyn Fuest, Director, The Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields; Christine Whaite, Chair of Trustees, The Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields; Andy Rider, Rector, Christ Church Spitalfields

Christ Church is a beautiful Anglican church on the edge of the City of London, designed in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century by Nicholas Hawksmoor. Before the major grant it was derelict and locked up, and the parish had moved out to hold services elsewhere. Although it was out of use, and had been scheduled for demolition in the 1960s, it had never been deconsecrated. One of the purposes of the grant was to bring the church back into full use.

The survival of the church – one of the few Hawksmoor churches left – owes much to the Friends of Christ Church, which was established as an independent charity in 1976 and the Parochial Church Council (PCC). The vision for the restoration of the church long pre-dated the HLF, and early funding came from individual donations and charities. The Spitalfields Music Festival was also started by the Friends to encourage people to visit the church and learn about the building. And the Friends' vision for the future of the church was supported by "*a core group of local Spitalfields people who recognised what an architecturally important gem it was.*"

The major grant in 1996 was the catalyst that meant the restoration could take place and the church could be returned to its former glory. It was matched by generous grants from charitable trusts and many individuals from around the world. However going for the major grant was not an easy decision, due to concerns among the PCC about using grant money from Lottery sources. The Friends decided to apply only after some debate, but ultimately felt it was acceptable given the number of people who might benefit from its restoration to working order.

The grant was used for the restoration of the exterior and a refit of the majority of the interior, drawing on a masterplan prepared on the basis of surviving archaeological and documentary evidence. After years of neglect, it has now been restored to its original 1750s state, and the project has revealed one of the most complex and sumptuous of Hawksmoor's interiors in London.

“Only a major grant would have worked, because we had done lots of preparatory work. If the restoration had happened less quickly it wouldn't have been so good. Without doing it like this, it would have been of lower quality”.

The restoration meant that the church could be used once again to hold services and provide other functions. There are currently four services: two on Sunday; one mid-week; and one weekly Bengali service, along with daily prayers, and various Christian courses such as the Alpha Course. The church is open six days a week and currently receives around 50,000 visitors per year, many of whom are interested in its heritage. It is also used for weddings, concerts and outdoor events. The restoration project included (with support from HLF) the establishment of an event hire company to provide an income stream, and the parish now generates income from events in the church that it can invest into maintenance. The ownership and day-to-day management of the Church remains with the PCC.

The Friends of Christ Church has 2,000 supporters worldwide. It continues to focus on fundraising campaigns and a (modest) programme of awareness-raising: its current project is the restoration of the internationally acclaimed 1735 Richard Bridge organ built for Christ Church. There is no expectation that the church should need major capital investment in the next 100 years, though fundraising for smaller-scale projects continues, including for a new proposal to open up the crypt. The restoration received seven major awards and was widely praised for its quality and vision – and the fine craftsmanship that brought that vision to life.

## Churchill Archive

The Churchill Archive was one of the earliest and most controversial HLF major grants, yet it has been one of the institutions most changed by its grant. Churchill is a figure of worldwide interest – having his papers in a single place has led the Archive to work on an international stage. The expertise and focus the grant has triggered, as well as the associated publicity, led to a ‘snowball’ effect, with other major collections of political papers – those of Baroness Thatcher, Sir John Major and Gordon Brown – being given or promised to the Archive. The result is that the Archive Centre has become one of the country’s major centres for research on recent British political history.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1995

**Value of grant:** £13,253,929

**Description of project:** the purchase of pre-1945 Churchill papers; improved access to these papers by increasing cataloguing, digitisation, and staffing.

**Year of completion of project:** 1996

**Interviewees:** Allen Packwood, Director, Churchill Archives Centre; Piers Brendon, former Keeper, Churchill Archives Centre

Churchill College was established as a national memorial to Churchill in 1960 – it was unusual in being a memorial that was established during his lifetime. The Archive Centre came later, growing out of the College as it started to get given books, artefacts and other material related to Churchill. There was a desire to see a centre on the site for research into his era.

When Churchill died, all his papers went to his son, Randolph, who was undertaking a biography of his father. When Randolph died, Churchill’s wife Clementine bequeathed those papers to the College. But the pre-1945 papers remained the property of a literary trust, the Chartwell Trust.

The Archive Centre opened in 1973 and all the papers were transferred to it (including those owned by the Chartwell Trust). But there remained lots of debate about the future of the papers as there was no security about the ownership of half of the archive. The government was worried about official documents getting lost. “It was an enormous collection that was in danger of being broken up.” And there was no real public access to the Archive. It was controlled by the Chartwell Trust, and viewing was by appointment only. As there was only a basic National Archives file level catalogue for the material, it was very hard to find anything, even if you were granted access.

In 1995-6, HLF broke the impasse and purchased the pre-1945 papers. Everything was consolidated into a new Trust, the Churchill Archive Trust. In addition to the money for the purchase, HLF provided £1 million to establish an endowment fund and a £750,000 access fund for conserving, cataloguing, digitising and producing microfilm of the archive.

Access to the heritage changed with the major grant. The grant opened the collection up to everyone. “The research usage is mainly graduate level and above,

but anyone can look.” In addition to being truly open to the public, intellectual access to the archive has been very significantly enhanced through the cataloguing process (the catalogue has been made freely available on the Archives Centre website and so can be consulted by anyone):

“You can now find the needles in the haystack; find that one letter that documents the time that a person interacted with Churchill just once. Since the collection has been opened up, an incredible number of biographies and programmes have been made using the material it contains.”

The Centre has also benefited from being a ‘wheel within a wheel’ – part of the College and part of Cambridge University – and thereby having a bigger international role. This also gives the Trust independence: “we are not a government repository; we are a specialist organisation within the university. We have always been supported from the endowment – and this has given us great operational freedom.”

“The major grant transformed a small local outfit into a national institution and it professionalised it in a way that it had never been before. It had been developed in a piecemeal way... the grant gave us focus, it gave us prestige, it gave us the ability to professionalise.”

## **Cutty Sark**

The Cutty Sark has been a very popular visitor attraction for many years, but towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the ship was in need of serious repair. The project presented some unique challenges in relation to the skills required to conserve historic ships. In 2007 a fire broke out, complicating the preservation project further. However the restoration was eventually completed successfully, and returned the ship to a truer version of its former self, with some collections removed to other exhibitions, and new interventions made clear through colour-coding. It now receives four times the number of visitors it used to, and £1 million per year is set aside to insure against the cost of future repairs.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2005

**Value of grant:** £25,001,000

**Description of project:** Extensive conservation work carried out on the fabric of the ship, using electrolysis, mechanical cleaning, selective repair and application of preventative coatings; replacement of the main and 'tween decks, and sheathing; strengthening of dry berth and introduction of support structure to preserve the shape of the hull; installation of glass canopy to protect and enhance the environment and the viewing experience of the hull; improved access to the ship and dock; construction of visitor facilities (kitchen, café, public toilets, studio-theatre & shop), reorganisation of physical maintenance of the ship and berth, including provision for air-conditioning and extensive re-interpretation of the ship and her stories.

**Year of completion of project:** 2012

**Interviewee:** Richard Doughty, Chief Executive, Cutty SarkTrust

By 1999 the owners of the Cutty Sark, the Maritime Trust (MT), had realised it was in urgent need of repair. An application was made to HLF but was turned down. In 2001 (when current Chief Executive Doughty joined the organisation) the Cutty Sark was receiving about 100,000 visitors per year. However in the context of its history this was seen as an underachievement: in the 1960s, '70s and '80s it was getting 350-400,000 visitors per year. Its contribution to the Maritime Trust was cross-subsidising a fleet of the Trust's other vessels and supporting the establishment of maritime museums in Scotland and Cumbria.

However the Cutty Sark itself was not being invested in: it was in a 'perilous' condition – the structure was unsafe, visitor numbers were declining further, its organisational planning was very weak. The Maritime Trust consequently decided to create a separate trust: the Cutty Sark Trust (CST). A second bid was prepared to HLF with a stronger business plan and a new approach to conservation, including a glass canopy to protect the ship.

"It's not enough to secure an asset; you have to help it live".

Following the approval of the major grant, costs quickly escalated. These were then greatly exacerbated by the fire that broke out on the ship in 2007. HLF became increasingly concerned about delivery of the project and the Trust's ability to secure

match funding, and halted drawdown of the grant in 2008. However, CST secured sufficient additional funding from other sources to complete the project.

A key strain on the budget related to the unique challenges of preserving historic vessels and the specific, high-level expertise required for, as an example, the rigging, which was undertaken by contractors. The original CST application included plans for a separate conservation centre to help carry out such training, tying in with HLF's preference to upskill and teach staff and volunteers alongside the project. However, this was dropped in 2009 as being simply inappropriate for Cutty Sark, either in the kind of skills required or the timescales involved.

Doughty's feeling is that the ambition to train staff in various skills will be achievable in the future. For now Cutty Sark has trained its own volunteer guide group, and the ongoing involvement of National Maritime Museum staff is testament to the strong support it receives from the Royal Museums Greenwich (RMG) group. Training for front-of-house staff and technicians is continuous and covers everything from technical details about the ship's history and how she was sailed, to customer care, and story-telling.

Various solutions offered different levels of authenticity, and despite there having been much more repair and strengthening works than the first plan suggested, original and new interventions are made clear to visitors through colour coding. Removing collections from the ship has allowed a truer picture of Cutty Sark, in her heyday, to be presented.

Visitor figures for 2012-13 show the ship received 350,000 visitors – more than projected and a huge uplift from before the grant. Of these visitors, 26% come from overseas, and it is expected that this will increase to over half. The share of visitors accounted for by children had doubled from 15% to 30%.

Following the success of the major grant, CST is in a position to pay savings of £1 million per year into a fund to be used towards the cost of continued conservation.

The finished project has been criticised for being led by commercial imperatives rather than conservation ones, but Doughty feels this is unfair. The two are symbiotic, for the commercial revenues will help to secure the site for future generations. They can also enhance the ship's offering to the public year on year.

Conservation would have been impossible without the HLF major grant. The scale of the project was such that its costs could not have been met from any source other than HLF, and it also rallied other funding streams and kept up momentum: "It was HLF that saved Cutty Sark, and they didn't just save it once, but several times".

## **Devonshire Royal Hospital**

The Devonshire Royal Hospital project – which saw a former hospital converted to a university building – has provided a psychological boost to Buxton. Buxton has only around 20,000 people; bringing 1,200 higher education (HE) students and 1,000 further education (FE) students into the town centre has changed its daytime feel, and helped the University integrate with the town more. The Dome is now publicly accessible and has been embraced by the town. The High Street offer has been much improved by the students' presence; a second auditorium has been added to Buxton Opera House; a Waitrose has opened; a cafe culture has developed; parents of students stay in town centre hotels. The project has had a catalytic effect on the town.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2003

**Value of grant:** £6,110,500

**Description of project:** Removal of considerable amounts of asbestos from the site; conservation and restoration of the Grade II listed building and dome; conversion of building's use from a hospital to university campus with public access; library with public access and facilities; made fully accessible for people with limited mobility.

**Year of completion of project:** 2008

**Interviewee:** Professor John Coyne, Vice Chancellor, University of Derbyshire

This major grant funded the restoration and conversion of the Devonshire Royal Hospital, a Grade II\* listed building, originally built as part of Buxton's growth as a spa town, and by 2003 on English Heritage's Buildings at Risk Register. It has an impressive central dome, with a central lantern, corner lanterns and a clock tower, which, at the time of building, was the world's largest unsupported dome, surpassing that of the Pantheon, St Peter's Basilica, and St Paul's Cathedral. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the building was converted into a hospital, and re-named the Devonshire Royal Hospital in 1934 when it became part of the National Health Service. It closed as a hospital in July 2000 and was acquired by Derby University in 2001.

Before that, in 1997, the University of Derby had bought High Peak College, a further education college in Buxton. It then developed two strategic initiatives for the town: it wanted to bring a higher education offer into Buxton and it wanted to bring the FE college into the town centre. (High Peak College was based at Harper Hill on the edge of town.)

The Devonshire Royal Hospital site had the scope and the location to allow the University to achieve its strategic goals, and there was little interest from other bidders, and no other bidder would have kept it open to the public (there was one proposal to turn it into flats). The University saw it as too good an opportunity to miss, but knew they would struggle to fund the restoration from their own resources. They started to look for other funding opportunities, and eventually secured an HLF major grant.

The Hospital was in poor condition when the University bought it, and in worse condition than had been realised. The University had been prevented from doing

intrusive inquiries pre-project, but it turned out there was large-scale asbestos contamination.

John Coyne, Vice Chancellor of University of Derby, thinks the University would have gone ahead with the restoration even had it known about the asbestos earlier, but it caused major problems, not just in terms of delays and cost overruns for the project itself, but in its knock-on effects.

The restoration work on the Dome started in 2003. It was due to re-open in September 2004. It partially re-opened in September 2005 and the full re-opening took place in the following year. The discovery of asbestos – hugely expensive to fix – caused considerable delays.

The physical dislocation was manageable because they still had the Harper Hill site, but the financial effects were very serious. They had intended to sell the Harper Hill site to fund some of the costs of the work and the move. The delays meant that that idea was caught up in the credit crunch. Although the Harper Hill site is now empty, the University has still not been able to sell it. Had it not been for the success of the University's other branches in the last ten years, which have done extremely well in both student numbers and income, the Devonshire Royal Hospital project would have put the University under severe strain. In that sense, the project has been 'economically more detrimental' than expected.

Nevertheless, in many other ways the project has been good for the university – it has given them a much higher profile in the north of Derbyshire. The University originally intended to transfer some of its popular programmes over from Derby to encourage students to go to Buxton. Over time it has realised it is better to have a programme that reflects the town, the countryside and the building. It has developed a school of Culture and Lifestyle at the Buxton site, with tourism, events management and sports-related courses. Coyne feels that the academic life in Buxton now reflects the geography of its location.

The Dome itself is now in good condition, but there have been some follow-on problems, such as water ingress into the roof, heritage was revealed for the first time in decades: the stained glass in library, solid oak panels, and a floating floor was removed to reveal the original floor. The University hasn't needed to go back to HLF for large-scale funding, but having had the major grant makes other funding easier to obtain – "It's easier to say come and join this project than to be the first to give".

The Dome is publicly accessible with a cafe and restaurant – members of the public and students share the space. It has become a general asset to the town. They now have a dozen volunteer guides working in the Dome and a small interpretation area – panels explaining the building's history, photos, and a mini-exhibition of spa-related material (the area is called 'From horses to courses' reflecting its shift from being a stables to a university). As well as the guides they also use volunteers in small-scale fundraising, such as coffee mornings.

Coyne thinks the university would have "gone ahead with the project anyway even without the major grant, but it would have been a much slower, more piecemeal process," with the Harper Hill site being kept open for much longer.

Coyne believes the way in which Buxton's major attractions – the Devonshire Royal Hospital, the Opera House, the Pavilion Gardens and the Crescent and Spa – are coming together is greater than the sum of their parts, and is an exemplar of how heritage investment can revitalise a town.

## **Dulwich Picture Gallery**

Dulwich Picture Gallery's major grant enabled the architect Rick Mather to carry out a great modernist intervention into an old building on a hugely sensitive site. Desmond Shawe-Taylor, the previous director, believes the Picture Gallery's business model was unsustainable without the overhaul of the building's infrastructure. The major grant from HLF was both the driver of change – to governance and management as well as the building – and the catalyst. Without it progress would have been difficult: "The building had reached a tipping point". Dulwich Picture Gallery is now a credible international museum with an exhibition programme that has steadily grown in stature.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1998

**Value of grant:** £5,000,000

**Description of project:** Repairs and improvements to buildings, lowering the ceilings of four rooms, and reinstating the north-east gallery; construction of an L-shaped cloister; construction of multipurpose building with cafe and facilities; construction of new education room; creation of onsite car parking; creation of new storage and staff facilities.

**Year of completion of project:** 2000

**Interviewees:** Ian Dejardin, Director of the Dulwich Picture Gallery; Desmond Shawe-Taylor, former Director, Dulwich Picture Gallery

Dulwich Picture Gallery, in South London, is the oldest purpose-built public art gallery in England, opening in 1817. The building was designed by Regency architect John Soane, and the gallery has one of the country's finest collections of Old Master paintings.

In the early 1990s the Dulwich Estate, which at the time included both the gallery, and Dulwich College, carried out a review of its functions. The estate was thought to be overly complicated, and the report recommended, among other things, that the gallery become independent. It was the great achievement of Giles Waterfield, the Gallery's first Director, that Dulwich Picture Gallery became an independent charitable trust in 1994. This meant the gallery could be more enterprising, and approach major donors: the grant from the College had never quite been enough.

Waterfield's next major achievement was in recruiting Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover – passionate about Old Masters, and a longstanding fan of the building and collection – to be chair of the board of the new organisation. An endowment was created to support the Gallery's activities. Lord Sainsbury became a major donor, both to the building and to the endowment, but crucially acted as a driving force behind the new charitable trust's proper governance, adamant that the place had to work on its own. So, from this time onwards the gallery was considering its future options, particularly as the deteriorating fabric of the building was becoming a concern.

The Trustees of the Gallery put together a programme of work, for which they received a major grant, to repair and restore the original building, and create more space through a new extension. It was an incredibly sensitive site – everything was a

tight fit, and the restrictions of the building's location (right next to the old College's Chapel of God's Gift, for instance) increased the cost of the project.

The architect Rick Mather was brought in to manage the scheme. His designs included a new cafe, a new education space (the Sackler Studio), a lecture theatre, a new roof and a new 'cloister'. Mather also transformed the backstage spaces – some old Dulwich College buildings were turned into a picture store and a new service corridor, and office space for staff was renovated and increased. The interior of the Soane building was gutted and restored to the original Sir John Soane design and colour scheme as far as possible. The east front was transformed, the entrance foyer increased in size and enhanced, while galleries 11 and 12 were effectively rebuilt with new skylights and no windows. Desmond Shawe-Taylor, who managed the project to its successful conclusion, credits Mather with finding the right balance: "His work didn't ride roughshod over the past, but wasn't pastiche either."

The result is that the permanent galleries are now less disrupted by temporary exhibitions than they previously were. And while the collection itself wasn't part of the major grant, the project has enabled the display collection to be restored (30-50% of the stock), and more work to be done on the reserve collection. Dulwich Picture Gallery is aware it has to make the most of its collection – not having the same breadth of pieces as some other London galleries.

Since the project, the general audience has continued to grow – driven by exhibitions (as in most galleries) – but also by the renovations. Ian Dejardin says, "People who have known the Gallery for decades now say they barely recognise it – it has changed so much." Audiences now come from further afield too: the gallery has added a north London and national audience to its loyal south London following. Visitor numbers are now up to 150,000 a year.

Dulwich Picture Gallery had always had an extremely public spirited attitude towards education – with a free education programme for school groups, recognised as being very high quality and widely accessible. "Dulwich Picture Gallery doesn't have invisible barriers", and the grant has helped the education programme go further. "The education department has become absolutely core to what the Gallery does" and is now reaching 38,000 people a year. The Sackler Studio (the education space) is in constant use, and with outreach work the gallery reaches "everyone from dementia patients to five-year-olds".

The organisation has further professionalised, and grown. Before the grant, the gallery was struggling with a limited staff, with a serious lack of facilities for education, visitor services and income generation. Now it has over 40 staff, including much-enhanced development and operations departments. It also continues to work well with volunteers - always a feature of the Gallery - with around 80 volunteer guides and teachers, and a 6,500-strong 'friends' group, which is credited with doing 'a massive amount for the gallery'. It runs public programming, concerts, and quizzes, and its members edit and write the gallery's magazine, InView, and a community blog, Dulwich OnView. The Gallery has also developed US and Canadian Friends groups. The Gallery can now also offer the services and facilities that today's visitors expect, including the Sunley exhibition rooms, enhanced display spaces for the collection and – particularly – a thriving and popular café. It is also able to meet the ever more demanding environmental standards required by lenders.

Even before the major grant, the gallery was recognised as one of the most enterprising smaller institutions in the UK, with a commitment to community and education and an exceptional wider network of friends, volunteers and supporters. But it was desperately short of core funding and proper governance. This was addressed by the move to Trust status, and the recent creation of an endowment, by current director Giles Waterfield. The Gallery's growth has been continuous under all three of its past directors – Dejardin, Shawe-Taylor and now Waterfield. HLF funding facilitated a transformative change under Desmond Shawe-Taylor, allowing the Gallery to address its problems with poor facilities, inadequate visitor service provision and infrastructure; and enabling it to reach new levels of attendance and visitor satisfaction, with an enviable national and international reputation.

“The Dulwich Picture Gallery shows what a dedicated staff and a small institution can do.” Desmond Shawe-Taylor

## **English National Opera: Restoration of the London Coliseum**

**Year of HLF grant:** 2000

**Value of grant:** £10,980,000

**Description of project:** interior roof repairs, new auditorium seats, reinstatement of glass barrel roof over Upper Circle Bar, restoration of the exterior facades, removal of intrusive lighting and other technical equipment, reintroduction of an internal decorative scheme, which follows Matcham's original design, removal of false proscenium and reinstatement of original proportions of the stall boxes.

**Year of completion:** 2007

**Interviewee:** Loretta Tomasi, former CEO, ENO

"We had an old fashioned, dysfunctional building... We couldn't have continued limping on. Now we have the most beautiful auditorium in London and people are still struck by it."

In 2000, the Coliseum, the home of the English National Opera, was approaching its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, and it was showing its age. The terracotta façade was in poor condition, the interior needed refreshing, the globe at the top of the building was broken, the auditorium was uncomfortable for audiences, and parts of the building were closed off. Financially, the organisation was going through some difficulties too.

In 2003 an extensive programme of repairs began with the help of a major grant. Now, the building fabric is in much better condition, and the visitor experience has materially improved. There is 40% more visitor space in the front of house areas, and the restoration has improved accessibility. An original planned design feature – a staircase from the stalls area to the lower ground floor – was finally realised.

As well as physical changes, the organisation had to adapt to carry out the project. Most significantly, this meant closer engagement with supporters to raise the necessary funds. This new relationship means that ENO audiences are now more aware of the heritage of the building.

In terms of impact, ENO has seen an increase in visitor numbers – to 350-400,000 per year. The refurbishment has also had a spill-over effect on St Martin's Lane. The streetscape has been much improved by the renovation of the front of the theatre, and businesses have benefitted from increased footfall.

## **Exeter Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery**

The Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery (RAMM), described by architectural historian Dan Cruikshank as ‘an exquisite jewel box of a building’, is a distinctive Victorian Gothic landmark on the Exeter cityscape, housing high quality collections, and served by a committed staff. However, before the major grant programme, it was in serious need of a revamp. A small scale project to refurbish and redisplay two galleries had highlighted the building’s enormous potential and led to an ambitious scheme to transform the rest of the building for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2005

**Value of grant:** £10,190,000

**Description of project:** Refurbishment of building, removing additions and changes, conserving and restoring the building fabric; improved access and visitor facilities, including a shop, a new public entrance, and improved circulation; creation of new extension for temporary exhibition and education spaces.

**Year of completion of project:** 2011

**Interviewee:** Camilla Hampshire, Museums Manager & Cultural Lead, Exeter City Council

“We knew we’d succeeded when one visitor said, ‘this feels less like a museum and more like a personal voyage of discovery.’”

Exeter’s Royal Albert Memorial Museum is unusual in being a substantial regional museum and collection run directly by a district council. As such a large institution in a small city, this means it receives close political scrutiny, and there is a strong sense of public ownership. Clearly, making changes to an institution so close to many people’s hearts was going to require some careful negotiation. Luckily, the Council was prepared to invest finances and time in restoring the museum, seeing it as a flagship project for the city.

The focus of the refurbishment programme was to rationalise the arrangement of the spaces within the building, which over the years had become very confused. The building had originally been built in phases, on Prince Albert’s favoured hybrid model of museum – library, school of art, and technical college. However in the following century, as other occupants found new homes, the museum grew into all the other parts of the building. This approach resulted in several issues: galleries were subdivided with partition walls; suspended ceilings hid original features and obscured the original character of the building. An HLF grant ten years previously had successfully restored the World Cultures galleries, revealing some of the building’s wonderful original interiors, but, according to Camilla Hampshire, Museums Manager at the City Council, “It highlighted the needs of the rest of the museum, which were still caught in another age of ‘brown hessian’ displays”. A holistic scheme was also seen as an opportunity to restore the museum’s relationship with the external environment, to the surrounding parkland and ancient city walls, which run alongside the building.

Also, the building’s arrangement was inhibiting the development of the work of the museum, impairing the visitor experience and the services RAMM could offer to

community partners, young people and families. Upgrading the facilities to be more flexible was a priority, together with improving and broadening public access to the museum's extensive and rich collections.

The programme of restoration inflicted some 'radical surgery' to the building: "34 new openings were created in the building, and everything came out" says Hampshire. Even the newer World Cultures galleries were revamped to be consistent with the rest of the museum. There was some collection conservation carried out as part of the project. The concurrent Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's 'Renaissance' funding programme helped RAMM 'do the basics well' on collections management, documentation and conservation, and created a platform for the collections element of the capital project.

The RAMM team also took the opportunity of the refurbishment to completely rethink their approach to interpretation. They were "very concerned to create the right, consistent voice across all galleries", that was both collections-led and audience-guided, leaving space for visitors' own thoughts. This is reflected in a new strapline, 'Home to a Million Thoughts'. In the improvement and expansion of the galleries the focus has therefore been on self-guided learning. RAMM now attracts lots of families, especially in school holidays, when the new learning and activity spaces come into their own.

Finally, the commercial offer has been improved significantly: corporate hires have taken off, making use of the new spaces, and a new café serves locally sourced food, provided by an independent operator.

The restoration programme was transformative for the organisation, building a sense of collective purpose, shared learning, and developing new ways of working. Hampshire says, "It drove through real organisational development, and got people outside their comfort zones". It also built a much better relationship between RAMM and the rest of Exeter City Council. The project was not without its challenges: during the process some "hidden horrors" were discovered in the building that pushed the budget from £15 million to £24 million. But Exeter City Council persevered, and has since been highly praised for its commitment to the museum.

As a result of the restoration, visitor numbers jumped significantly to 343,000 the year after reopening – in a city of only 120,000. Having successfully achieved its year one target of retaining the existing visitor base, the museum plans for year two were targeted on a wider catchment area and other visitor markets. Surveys show 98% of visitors' top three words/phrases to describe the museum are 'high quality', 'educational' and 'family friendly'. Similar public feedback resulted in the award of a Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence in 2014.

Its achievements have been recognised on a national stage too: RAMM was awarded Museum of the Year in 2012 with the judges describing it as 'quite simply a magical place'. Other awards include the Devon Tourism Awards 2012 Visitor Attraction of the Year. This has brought a great sense of local pride to residents and business owners. The museum is 'regarded by partners as being central to the visitor offer in Exeter and much of Devon', and a key element in helping to sustain the city's high quality of life and economic vibrancy.

## **Fitzwilliam Museum**

**Year of HLF grant:** 2001

**Value of grant:** £ 5,928,000

**Description of project:** Demolition of existing courtyard building; creation of a new, larger building; provision of enhanced visitor facilities, including better accessibility and a lift, a new cafe and shop, and enhanced educational facilities; improvements to storage space and conditions; improvements to long term usability of the museum.

**Year of completion of project:** 2005

**Interviewees:** Tim Knox, Director, Fitzwilliam Museum; Kate Carreno, Assistant Director, Central Services, Fitzwilliam Museum; Duncan Robinson, former Director, Fitzwilliam Museum

The Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge has a remarkable collection of art and antiquities, built up over 200 years. Yet by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a shortage of space was limiting the potential of the institution. In addition to the challenge of displaying the permanent collection properly, there was little room for temporary exhibitions or the museum's education programmes. Physical access and circulation was a problem, increased footfall was damaging the original Grade I listed 'founder's entrance', and visitor facilities needed improvement.

The project created a new building alongside the courtyard to be used as a main entrance, café, shop and circulation space on the ground floor, with two floors of offices, a new gallery and a high level plant room above. The new gallery, dedicated to temporary exhibitions, has allowed the Fitzwilliam to increase the number and range of contemporary exhibitions, which is critical for generating repeat visits and attracting new audiences. It has also encouraged experiments with different types of exhibition – for example, shows that address both art and scientific themes.

"An example of what I would call 'the perfect exhibition' was the exhibition about Darwin, because we gathered philosophy, anthropology, art, science, geology. It was very complete! It had a huge impact attracting national and international audiences."

Visitor numbers rose sharply after the major grant, up 30% on the previous year. The major grant has enabled the museum to "change entirely; the emphasis is now on welcoming visitors rather than just being a place to house these objects."

## Great North Museum

The Great North Museum was formed, predominantly, out of three University-managed museums in Newcastle. All had important collections but were “jaded, unloved and failing to meet their potential. They were tired museums in tired buildings.” Two of the three had few visitors. Bringing the collections together in a major re-development on the site of the third – the Hancock Museum – has animated and brought out the cross-over between the collections, and created a highly successful museum for Newcastle and the North East.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2006

**Value of grant:** £9,246,000

**Description of project:** Amalgamation of three existing museums, the Shefton, the Hancock, and the Museum of Antiquities, into the Hancock Museum building, a Grade II\* listed building; creation of a new extension building at the back of the existing Hancock Museum; complete refurbishment of the Hancock Museum, uniting the amalgamated displays; creation of new visitor and accessibility features, including improved entrance, lifts, cafe, retail space, and library.

**Year of completion of project:** 2009

**Interviewees:** Iain Watson, Director, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums; Alec Coles, former Director, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

The Great North Museum: Hancock was formed out of the Hancock Museum, Shefton Museum, and the Museum of Antiquities in Newcastle. The University of Newcastle, which housed all three museums, developed a proposal in partnership with four other organisations (including the Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums [TWAM]) to renovate and extend the Grade II\* listed Hancock Museum building to display items from all three collections, and storage would move off-site to a new facility.

Some change was needed because two of the three museums were struggling, in particular because of small and inaccessible buildings and outdated displays. The Hancock Museum was the exception. Operated by TWAM on behalf of the University, it had a much stronger public presence in the city – both physical and psychological. It was sustained mainly as a paying temporary exhibitions venue. Problems with the building meant that visitor numbers and income were declining, but TWAM had strong fundraising, conservation, and capital project development skills already in place.

The HLF had rejected a previous bid for funds from the Museum of Antiquities, encouraging the University to address the issue of the other museums simultaneously, and think more strategically. Progress came following a conversation between Alec Coles, then director of TWAM, and Newcastle University Deputy VC John Goddard in early 2002, after which Goddard provided strong leadership to get the University on board. Coles also convinced the TWAM board to back the plan. Steve McLean, the manager of the Hancock, helped convince the Societies, which own the collections and, in the case of the Natural History Society, the Hancock Museum building. Iain Watson’s role (now director of the museum’s service) was

critical, as he was later seconded to work within the University to pull the second (successful) HLF bid together.

The extension and refurbishment of the Hancock now allows for much better maintenance of the building and collections. The deliberately bold new interpretation (bringing together natural history and archaeology collections) preserved authenticity and introduced new technology and interpretive approaches. The new Clore Learning Centre provided much better facilities for the schools programme. Learning opportunities through the archaeology collections have been greatly enhanced. The new museum and the new off-site store at the Discovery Museum safeguarded the collections and improved the buildings.

The Great North Museum now gets over 490,000 visitors per year and excellent visitor feedback (the business plan predicted 250,000 visitors.) The new exhibitions are wearing well. It is one of the most visited museums in the North East. The visitor profile hasn't changed much and the Museum remains a popular family attraction, especially for those with young children, but physical access to the site is much improved. The new collections store in the Discovery Museum continues to enable research by both community projects and academics.

The grant also brought forth a new business model: free admission, core funding, ancillary income generation – and helped secure Arts and Humanities Research Council/Higher Education Funding Council for England funding. Venue hire is now the biggest earner: a real mix of people (corporate organisations, the Council, the University, community groups) use the events space. They are happy to pay for 'a venue with real character'. Since 2013 a major emphasis has been put on retail development and on regular large-scale family events in holiday periods, with significant results.

It would have been impossible to deliver this scale of outcomes with a smaller grant. There were such fundamental and costly issues to address – for example, the new roof cost £1.5 million and the collection centre cost £2 million – that the museum would have struggled to secure vital match-funding without the support and prestige associated with a major HLF grant.

The HLF major grant was absolutely critical to the merger. The project could never have been conceived without the prospect of a large award. The chance of success galvanised the partnerships. Securing the HLF grant helped to then secure a European Regional Development Fund grant, support from trusts and foundations, and individual donations. It safeguarded outstanding collections and a very significant heritage building; creating in the process, a major new heritage based visitor attraction.

## Harrogate Royal Hall

Harrogate Royal Hall is a beautiful and unique piece of Edwardian architecture, which had to be closed due to disrepair and structural problems. A popular public campaign, led by patrons the Prince of Wales and Edward Fox, raised enough money alongside the major grant for the hall to be restored and reopened. It now has a much more community-focused programme of events, and works well in partnership both with the Council and with other venues in Harrogate.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2002

**Value of grant:** £6,580,500

**Description of project:** Restoration and weatherproofing the infrastructure of the Royal Hall, a Grade II listed building; installation of ventilation and heating controls; repairs and beautifying the front of house and circulation areas; improvements to back of house facilities, accessibility, and heritage displays for public use.

**Year of completion of project:** 2008

**Interviewee:** Simon Kent, Director, Harrogate International Centre

Royal Hall in Harrogate is a Grade II listed Edwardian theatre built in 1903, Britain's only remaining 'kursaal' (a popular form of public building in European spa destinations of the late 19th century), and an important cultural hub for North Yorkshire. It had always been owned by the Council and operated as a 'large village hall', with a focus on community and civic events. But the Council suffered financially through the 1980s, maintenance budgets were cut, and although there was some investment – for example towards a new roof in the 1990s – the Hall had to be shut in 2002 because of major structural problems.

A local campaign to save the Hall, spearheaded by the Royal Hall Restoration Trust (and making effective fundraising use of its star supporters, the Prince of Wales and Edward Fox) raised £2.7 million. Together with the major grant from the HLF, a £2 million investment from the Council and technical support from Harrogate International Centre (HIC), the Hall was restored and reopened.

The HLF grant allowed the building to be secured, structurally, and the other funds allowed the redecoration of the lavish Frank Matcham interior. But without the lump sum from HLF, the project would not have happened at all. Funding in stages would not have been as efficient or effective. "Odd little projects would not have propelled us to where we are now".

Managing the Royal Hall restoration helped HIC to develop skills around partnership working (with the Trust and the Theatre), and helped build a relationship with the local community. The project has also improved the relationship between the Council and the Trust.

The improvement to the physical state of the building, and its programming, has been indisputable: it was closed before, and now it is open and operating again. There are public access days, guided tours, commercial events, Harrogate International Festival events, conferences, exhibitions, and over 70 community events per year. But the passion ignited by the Hall in its restored form is also

inspired by the quality of the repair work. “There’s now a big sense of responsibility – we can’t let the building get in that state again. And the building’s raised profile helps that commitment.”

As part of Harrogate International Centre’s portfolio, the Hall adds value and cachet, although the finances are perhaps a little more difficult to quantify. And in 2012/3 it developed a new, mutually beneficial, partnership with the theatre. In return for reduced hire rates, the theatre programmes events that HIC couldn’t otherwise service profitably.

Although the building is now secured for the foreseeable future, interviewee Simon Kent suggests community buildings such as this one should be seen as living, never finished. “Its usability can always be improved and reinvested in”, and “keeping buildings alive” through smaller grants could be a good focus for future HLF resources.

## **Horniman Museum**

The Horniman Museum and Gardens in London has been open since 1901. It houses internationally important collections of anthropology and musical instruments, as well as an acclaimed aquarium and natural history gallery – all surrounded by 16.5 acres of gardens. By the end of the 20th century, although the Horniman was not a failing museum, it was under considerable pressure and felt ‘stuck’. It had poor physical access, and inadequate gallery, learning, café and retail spaces. It was operating at visitor capacity with around 200,000 visits a year. The site’s heritage value was diminished by the addition of 20th century buildings that had been added to the historic Grade 2\* listed building creating poor circulation and detracting from the visitor experience.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1998

**Value of grant:** £9,902,860

**Description of project:** Restoration of exterior building stonework; creation of an extension to the Museum, containing newly fitted out galleries and a new temporary exhibition space; creation of new visitor facilities, a new education centre, a hands on learning base, a shop and cafe; creation of a new conservation laboratory and exhibition studio; improvements to environmental controls and lighting; landscaping of the gardens surrounding the building.

**Year of completion of project:** 2003

**Interviewee:** Janet Vitmayer, Chief Executive of the Horniman Museum and Gardens

The Horniman was founded by Frederick Horniman, a Victorian tea trader, collector and philanthropist. Over the last 120 years, the Museum has added significantly to its collections (Horniman's original collections comprised only 10% of the current ethnography and musical instrument holdings, for instance) and further buildings had been added in a piecemeal fashion to the original site as particular needs arose and bits of funding allowed.

Using the HLF major grant, the Horniman embarked on what it called the ‘Centenary Development’ to address the major challenges of space, design and content. It demolished a number of poor 20<sup>th</sup> Century additions and created a new extension and several associated spaces, which altogether added 2,000m<sup>2</sup> to the Museum and linked it to the 16.5 acres of surrounding gardens. The new facilities included exhibition spaces, a conservation laboratory, an education centre, shop and café, as well as improvements to environmental controls and lighting. There was also some landscaping work to the gardens immediately surrounding the building. The quality of the refurbishment has been recognised at a national level, with a RIBA Award, and the quality of visitor experience with the Telegraph Family Friendly Museum of the Year Award 2013 and short listing for Museum of the Year Award 2013. Neither would have happened without the Centenary Development.

Alongside physical improvements, the interpretation was radically updated, introducing more opportunities for participation, hands-on objects and multiple voices in the displays. Across the Horniman, staff undertook diversity training and worked on new audience development plans and programmes. The project offered the

opportunity to make some major organisational changes, particularly to front-of-house and public engagement, which were – with some training supported by HLF – restructured into a new ‘Visitor Services’ department. Vitmayer says, “The capital project created an opportunity to reconfigure, retrain and recruit some great staff. For us it was never just about the buildings but always about the people – staff and visitor.”

As a result of the capital project, the organisation has become more resilient and better able to manage financial challenges: it has significantly grown its ability to generate earned income and to fundraise from other sources. The Centenary Project appointed the first staff fundraiser (a function that has since been retained and grown) and introduced the Horniman to several major trusts, who continue their support today partly because the Centenary Project was such a success. So although the Horniman remains dependent on core funding, the Centenary Project created a scale and quality of operation that is more robust and provides more income generating opportunities.

The Museum now has a quality that enables it to lever in ancillary income, for example through a new membership scheme, the temporary exhibition gallery or the aquarium (which are charged for). Operating at capacity before the expansion, footfall has since increased and visitor numbers totalled 698,000 to the Museum and a further 163,000 to the Gardens in 2013/14. Survey findings show that average visit time increased following the redevelopment, along with the proportion of those who visited both the Museum and the Gardens. The audience is also now more diverse and representative of south London as a whole. The BAME audience share went from 8% before the Centenary Project to 30% a few years later. Since reopening, visitor satisfaction rates have remained consistently high at 98% or 99%.

In terms of its impact on the local community, which was one of Frederick Horniman’s founding concerns; the redevelopment of the Museum is felt to have played a part in the positive change that has been seen in the area in recent years. As well as increasing footfall, thereby supporting small businesses, the Museum and Gardens provide an important, high quality recreational resource for a diverse, local community generating educational and wider social benefits.

The major grant has been fundamental to the Horniman’s achievements over the last decade. Without it, some minor capital developments might have taken place, but that would not have been enough to strategically transform the organisation and the visitor experience. “The major grant created the opportunity to solve, ‘in one hit’, the problems that were holding the organisation back and would have undermined it in the longer term.”

## Hull History Centre

The major grant given to Hull History Centre enabled two public archives that were rich in material but more or less inaccessible, to be rehoused in a striking new building in the city centre. The new facility brings together material held by the City Archives – including borough archives dating back to 1299, records relating to Hull's maritime history, and papers of nationally significant individuals such as William Wilberforce and Philip Larkin – with archives and records held by the University of Hull.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2006

**Value of grant:** £7,697,000

**Description of project:** Creation of new building to house both Hull City Council archive and Hull University archive; re-location of archives from existing locations to environmentally controlled area; re-cataloguing of existing catalogues; provision of flexible research/learning space; landscaping of surrounding park area.

**Year of completion of project:** 2010

**Interviewee:** Simon Green, Head of Heritage, Hull City Council

“The effect of the major grant on the archives was enormous – the collection was unseen and unknown and might have stayed that way for another 50-60 years.”

Before the move, Hull City Council's (HCC) archive was kept in a fine but largely inaccessible Victorian building. The entrance was hard to find and opened on to a maze of stairs, and the collection was scattered across a warren of first and second floor rooms. There were some small study areas, with limited natural daylight, alongside staff offices, but there was only space for ten visitors at any one time – more than that would have been more than the staff could have coped with anyway. Because of this, public awareness of the archive was low, not least because Hull City Council didn't promote the archive. So although the collection contained many treasures, and fascinating nuggets of local social history, the population of the city was unaware of its existence.

The organisation and condition of the archive also left something to be desired. Environmental controls, while adequate, were not up to modern standards. And the system for managing the archive was rather haphazard. Hull had developed its own bespoke way of cataloguing, which was not standardised across the collection or compatible with other national and international archives.

The idea of sharing space with the University archive had been around for a few years. The University's archival spaces were in need of improvement, and lacked room to expand. The Council was looking to build partnerships, and the University was under external pressure to widen participation. The University is based three miles outside of the city centre, and can seem “a bit remote and forbidding” to non-students, says Green.

So, in the end, an entirely new building was built in the city centre with environmentally-controlled rooms to house both archives. The new facilities include a local studies library, a search room, education facilities, staff offices and a café (all

on the ground floor), with the archives themselves on the first floor, safe from flooding, and with enough space for 20 years' worth of expansion. (In fact, expansion space is needed because depositions have risen dramatically since the centre was opened, as people discover it.)

The building itself represents a remarkable achievement. The build went smoothly and finished on budget. The design is very contemporary and, although it was somewhat controversial on the grounds that it was so modern for a 'heritage' space, it has already become a popular icon of the city, and has won a Civic Trust award as a project that "makes an outstanding contribution to the quality and appearance of the environment".

As a result of the build, the archives have received some much-needed attention: existing items have been re-catalogued, bringing everything up to contemporary standards, and the collection is being put online. This process is leading the archive to (re)discover some items, such as the details of the war record of a well-known local singer, David Whitfield (the first British male vocalist to earn a gold disc). The new space has also allowed the team to make better use of volunteers – in the cataloguing work, but also on one-off themed projects.

All in all, the project has resulted in a wholly different visitor experience for people using the city archives. There is much more space, and everything is now fully accessible for disabled visitors. Consequently, the number of visitors has increased greatly, as well as the range – from casual visitors to professional researchers. The archive can now receive school groups, which it could not do previously. Although the facility still has two distinct staff groups – the Council and the University – visitors are presented with a seamless public face.

The archives are now used in displays both in the History Centre and in city museums and libraries, thereby enriching the wider cultural activity of the city. There is a good cross-over between Hull's museums service and the archives: if people are interested in a particular topic they are encouraged by staff to explore what the other institutions hold on that subject. Members of the fishing community, for instance, have been redirected from the Maritime Museum to the archives to find out more about history of fishing in the area.

The impact of the project is easy to discern: the archives are now much more accessible, and receiving around 30,000 visitors a year, which makes it one of the busiest archives in the country, outside London. And while the quality of the collection was previously known only to a select few, it has now been embraced much more by the city. "People feel a sense of ownership of the archive now", says Green, and the University has a much stronger profile in the centre of the city.

The Centre has helped the council to understand the benefit of culture, and has therefore raised the profile of culture politically too. Hull City Council was considering reconfiguring its service to limit the opening hours of the archive, but the election of a new council led to that decision being reversed and funding was secured for heritage, libraries and arts. The History Centre was part of the reason for this change – its success has been evidence of what culture can do for Hull. The political support has been rewarded by Hull's successful bid to be UK City of Culture in 2017.

Green was keen to stress the power of the large grants from HLF: “They allow you to advocate for arts/culture/heritage at a city-wide level. Their grand scale lets cultural professionals sit at the big table. It’s real currency for the profession.”

## **Imperial War Museum**

**Year of HLF grant:** 1996

**Value of grant:** £8,000,000

**Description of project:** Refurbishment and creation of a new exhibition space at Imperial War Museum (IWM) Lambeth, offering permanent and temporary exhibition spaces; provision of education facilities, including a conference centre and study galleries; improving the accessibility of the site.

**Year of completion of project:** 2003

**Interviewee:** Diane Lees, Director General of the Imperial War Museum

The IWM was founded in 1917 to record the story of what was then known as the Great War, and it expanded to include the Second World War in 1939, eventually including all military operations in which British or Commonwealth forces have been involved. The IWM moved into its current home, formerly the Bethlem Royal Hospital, in 1936. The major grant made for a radical upgrading of the IWM, saw the creation of major new spaces, and the installation of a specially-created Holocaust Exhibition.

The Holocaust had been a topic on IWM's Learning programmes in the late 1990s, and a full narrative exhibition allowed the thousands of schoolchildren studying it as part of their curriculum to gain a better understanding of this challenging subject. A massive collecting effort ensured that the showcases were filled with artefacts and documents relating to the plight of those persecuted by the Nazis, while filmed testimony gave a very special personal dimension to the display. The Holocaust material is the most significant content that the museum has ever exhibited, in the view of Director-General Diane Lees. She believes that people have a confused view of what a war museum is for; in her opinion, people and the totality of their experience in war. The Holocaust galleries were an important re-statement of the museum's true founding purpose.

## **Imperial War Museum, Duxford: the American Air Museum and Air Space**

The major grants for IWM Duxford have allowed what was previously an overspill collection of a London-based National Museum – the Imperial War Museum (IWM) – to become a significant museum in its own right, operating to the highest standards and open all year round. IWM Duxford became a fully-fledged and integrated member of the IWM group of museums and a leading East Anglian visitor attraction with a national and international reputation. The grants also unlocked major new streams of private funding, especially from the United States.

**Project:** American Air Museum

**Year of HLF grant:** 1995

**Value of grant:** £6,500,000

**Description of project:** an iconic new building to accommodate and interpret the IWM's large collection of US aircraft, facilitating their conservation and long-term preservation to museum standards in appropriate environmental conditions. The building also serves as a memorial to US airmen lost in Europe in the Second World War flying mainly from UK bases, including Duxford. Further donor-funded facilities were completed and the building rededicated in 2002.

**Year of completion of project:** 2002

Project: Air Space

**Year of HLF grant:** 2001

**Value of grant:** £10,500,000

**Description of project:** substantial redevelopment and enlargement of an existing unserviced hangar to accommodate and preserve the Museum's British and Commonwealth aircraft collections in appropriate environmental conditions and to provide permanent and temporary exhibition galleries of museum standard; the building included a dedicated education centre, auditorium, shop, conference space and conservation area accommodating the largest aircraft.

**Year of completion of project:** 2007

**Interviewee:** Sir Robert Crawford, former Director General, Imperial War Museum

The Imperial War Museum (IWM) established a facility at the former RAF Duxford in the early 1970s, as there was nowhere on its central London site for its growing collections of aircraft, boats, large vehicles, other objects and archives. In the years between this beginning, and the major grant, the Duxford site developed from a store and archive to a visitor attraction, hosting popular air shows, and inherited a large collection of American aircraft.

However the facilities on site were not of museum standard. Too much of the collection was based outdoors, where it was constantly deteriorating. There was nowhere to do proper interpretation and storytelling. The indoor stores and archives were adequate, but not publicly accessible – material required for research was

routinely transported to London. And the site was still only open seasonally around air shows.

So the first major grant was to build a quality space in which to complete the conservation and restoration of the US aircraft collection; and properly show and interpret it. The new space would in turn free up other hangars to improve conditions for the collection as a whole, including significant British aircraft.

“It (the first major grant) achieved a step change in the quality of the museum – it set new benchmarks for IWM over the rest of the site. It raised Duxford’s game to make it truly fit for what is expected of a National Museum. As a result it hugely raised public awareness and public benefit – we could interpret, provide educational services (public and academic) and all the ancillary services – good toilets, shop, cafe. It also catalysed the earning power of the museum, both through admission charges, but also by making people more willing to spend more. And most significantly, it catalysed our fundraising efforts hugely.”

This first project led directly to the second major grant for Duxford – the Air Space project – which was completed in 2007. It was designed to do for the British and Commonwealth collections what the US Museum had done for the US collection, utilising the big unheated hangar built for the Museum in the 1980s. It was to establish conventional National Museum-quality galleries telling the story of aviation, and the role of air power in modern conflict (from the Wright Bros to space flight).

Together, the two major grant funded projects so improved the all-round visitor experience, that operation of the public aspects of the site became largely self-financing. The two modern buildings made Duxford a genuine all-year-round attraction, which was important as its business case was premised on charging for entry. This also meant that quality had to be good, and former Director Sir Robert Crawford doesn’t see how this could have been achieved without the HLF funding.

“To keep its audience (it’s a day out in the country, a car-borne experience) the quality of the experience is essential.”

The Lottery funding unlocked other sources of philanthropy, particularly from the US: “It brought us private money that we wouldn’t have otherwise been able to have. It gave us the projects that people wanted to invest in.” He feels that although capital projects may have happened at Duxford in some form, the American Air Museum would have been a challenge without the HLF grant, “the only means at our disposal to unlock the stream of financial support from the US.” The IWM had been fundraising in the US for some time, but donors were only forthcoming once they saw that “the Brits were getting their wallets out!” The HLF grant also gave the project a reassuring stamp of approval: “a green light from the HLF shows that a thoroughly professional assessment of the project has been undertaken and that the organisation can deliver the project. This gives confidence and encouragement to other funders.”

## **John Rylands University Library of Manchester**

**Year of HLF grant:** 2001

**Value of grant:** £8,426,800

**Description of project:** restoration of the John Rylands Library building and roof; creation of a new roof over the original, unexecuted design; installation of new security and fire protection systems; creation of a new entrance wing, providing high quality collections storage together with greater visitor facilities including a shop, cafe, and reception point.

**Year of completion of project:** 2008

**Interviewees:** Jan Wilkinson, University Librarian and Director, John Rylands Library; Rachel Beckett, Head of special collections, John Rylands Library

The John Rylands Library was founded as an independent library, opened to the public in 1900. In 1972 it became part of the University of Manchester Library. In the late 1990s the Library faced a number of significant challenges. Major structural problems included a leaking roof and windows, a breakdown of the ventilation system, and environmental conditions that were not suitable for the long-term storage of the Library's world-class collections. There was a danger that it would be placed on the Buildings at Risk Register.

The HLF major grant has been critical to saving this superb example of the Victorian Gothic building style, but it has done much more than this – it has allowed an admired but introspective organisation to change radically, becoming much more engaged with its audiences and the wider community. Previously the Library was perceived principally as an academic library, with a small exhibition facility. The 'Unlocking the Rylands' project increased the area open to visitors by 300%, exhibition spaces have been transformed, there is a vibrant visitor programme and the Library is now open seven days a week. In 2012 it was voted Manchester's Large Visitor Attraction of the Year.

Research remains a priority, but the building has become more than a library – it uses its city centre location to collaborate with other cultural venues, and its education and learning work has been accessed by over 2,000 pupils each year. While financial pressures remain in higher education, the Library is regarded as essential to the University's future.

## **Kelvingrove Museum**

Glasgow's recent development of the Kelvingrove Museum and Riverside Museum projects have given the city great confidence as a cultural hub, and the HLF major grants were central to this. At a time when local government reorganisation had reduced the complement of staff in the cultural team, leaving a demoralised workforce who feared decline was inevitable, the Kelvingrove major grant was a catalyst for change. It brought prestige and rigour, led to the team being respected, and ensured Glasgow City support for the museum. Kelvingrove has now been restored to its place as Glasgow's leading art gallery.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2001

**Value of grant:** £13,171,500

**Description of project:** Relaunch of Kelvingrove as a world class museum: creation of six additional public galleries, 35% increase in public space over three floors, a 100% increase in the number of objects on display, six new educational spaces, two object cinemas, a 150-seat lecture theatre, 55 public interactive IT stations and two retail outlets, and the redisplay of the collection.

**Year of completion of project:** 2006

**Interviewees:** Dr Mark O'Neill, Head of Museums and Collections, Glasgow Life; Dr Ellen McAdam, former Head of Museums and Collections, Glasgow Life

The Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum is a Victorian institution in the West End of Glasgow, and the flagship venue of Glasgow's museums service. The imposing building was voted by Glaswegians as their favourite building in a 1999 survey, and it is the most visited museum in the UK outside London, with more than one million visitors per year. However, by the late 1990s, the building was in need of renovation, with the state of the building fabric posing a threat to the objects inside. The wiring dated to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and was a permanent safety issue. The storage in the basement and ground floor was unsuitable. Staff had begun to move to the outer edges of the building as it deteriorated, concentrating the displays in the central areas of the museum. Many displays had remained unchanged since the 1950s. The public experience of the collection was patchy and limited.

There was also a need to take control of the management of the collection. There was no order to it, with 1.4 million objects scattered across 147 locations and 13 buildings. Documentation and security were poor, and inadequate cataloguing meant it could be very hard to find objects. Most of the time finding anything relied on the personal knowledge of staff. Large parts of the collection were inaccessible to the public.

"Without the HLF grant, Kelvingrove would have closed within two years," Mark O'Neill, Head of Glasgow Museums, believes. "The electrical system would have failed the insurance tests, while the heating had failed the previous winter." Glasgow City would have been forced to pay for infrastructure repairs: an enormous cost to bear for no improvement to the service, and there would have been no new storage facility. Instead, the major grant enabled a total restoration and re-launch of this popular world-class museum.

The new store, which was funded entirely by Glasgow City Council, has been key to the success of the project. One million objects are now housed in the resource centre/store, which also has conservation and technical facilities. All the central functions – design, research, the archive and the library (every element not involved in day-to-day service delivery) – have been transferred to the new facility. This in turn has increased the available space for display and public facilities at Kelvingrove by 35%. The store also gave them somewhere to put the objects while the museum itself was closed for the refurbishment, and enabled a careful inventory of all items. The process of moving objects meant museum staff could check the condition of each one: those at risk were identified and conserved if going on display or on loan.

Post-launch, the visitor experience at Kelvingrove has been revolutionised. There is more to see, it is more attractively presented and the interpretation is much more oriented to the non-expert visitor. There are now more school groups visiting, with better facilities for accommodating them, and informal learning is more effective thanks to better interpretation of exhibits.

The improved management of the collection means that Kelvingrove is able to originate international touring exhibitions, reaching previously untapped markets in North America, Europe and Japan. The major grant has put them on the map within the sector, internationally and in Scotland, although both O'Neill and McAdam feel that Kelvingrove could have a greater UK-wide profile, a symptom of the 'London-centric nature of British art reviewing'.

McAdam believes that the Riverside Museum and now the Burrell Collection are learning from Kelvingrove's experience and making the best use of the opportunity to research their collections. However, learning how to make the most of the capital project at Kelvingrove 'has been a process of trial and error'. McAdam believes that only now are they using the spatial flexibility inherent in the design well.

Beyond the success of the individual institutions, Glasgow Museums has begun to act as more of a joint service. To deliver the Kelvingrove project all the museums had to contribute the time of their curators and museum managers, which brought the service together and led to an understanding that, 'while this was Kelvingrove's turn to benefit, their turn would come'. This collegiate approach has been maintained.

## **Kennet and Avon Canal**

The number of registered leisure boats in the UK grew from around 500-1,000 in the 1960s to approximately 35,000 by 2012. This growth in the popularity of the waterways has been driven by efforts to make them better and easier to use. It has been accompanied by a transformation in perceptions of the role of waterways in towns. In the '60s and '70s people didn't want to live or work next to canals, but by 2000 this had been reversed. The restoration of the Kennet and Avon canal has been a symbolic and high-profile example of the type of project that has contributed to this transformation of people's perceptions and use of canals.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1996

**Value of grant:** £25,000,000

**Description of project:** Significant restoration to pumping station and lining of canal at Claverton; several upgrades to gearing and sluicing mechanisms; replacing of lock and bridge at Caen Hill, embankment at Martinslade, and lock gates at two locations; dredging at various sites along the canal

**Year of completion of project:** 2005

**Interviewee:** Robin Evans, former Chief Executive, Canal & River Trust

In the 1960s the government mood was hostile to canals – some were even starting to be filled in. But there was a small group of activists and volunteers who were convinced that the canals had a new future as a leisure amenity. To this end, activists started digging canals out themselves to make them navigable again. Under this pressure, the government used the 1968 Transport Act to create British Waterways. Its primary duty related to freight transport, but it was also given a secondary remit to open the canals for leisure use.

The restoration of the Kennet and Avon Canal had begun in the 1960s, led by volunteers. This was a gradual effort, though, and it wasn't until the 1980s that a more systematic restoration was undertaken, supported by Berkshire Council, the Manpower Services Commission and various other bodies.

“The early restoration was incredibly noble and important as a symbol – canals were previously barely operable – not dredged, gates not working. So the first restoration [the 1980s one] was a massive signal. But it was done really without any money and so the resources weren't there to do it for the long term.”

Although the restored sections were opened by HM the Queen, by 2000 the canal had almost become inoperable again, and was very expensive to keep open. British Waterways would soon have faced difficult decisions about whether, and how, to keep it open. Yet at the same time the demand from leisure users was increasing. So if the Kennet and Avon Canal was to be a proper cruising waterway, it needed a large amount of money to undertake the restoration.

The major grant made a big difference. “Left to our own devices, we would have just restored it for navigation. But with the HLF grant, we didn't just ensure that things weren't lost (which they would have been), but that things were enhanced and brought to life, and all of this began to change our whole philosophy.”

The whole enjoyment of the canals is underpinned by the heritage: “The canals created the industrial revolution, canals enabled coal to come into town centres, produce to be taken to market [for example, Wedgwood used to lose 60% of his stock in breakages when going by road] – they were the catalysts for the Industrial Revolution. Preserving them is incredibly important for the nation and internationally.”

The Kennet and Avon Canal is a particularly important canal. There are earth locks on the canal that are unique in the country, including the longest continuous row of locks anywhere (20 locks). The canal is a remarkable engineering feat, having been constructed by hand and cart only. There are also unique historical circumstances that have added to this initial industrial heritage. In particular, the canal was to have been the second line of defence in the event of a Nazi invasion: ‘plans were drawn up to withdraw behind it; defences were built’. The canal has pill-boxes dotted along it.

The project also had an effect on other funders. The interest HLF showed in canals helped give the Millennium Commission the confidence to invest in canals too. “The HLF grant was a huge signal both inside and outside the organisation that canals had something really good to offer society. It added the zest to what was already a growing leisure pursuit... it emphasised the heritage of the canals – this was not just a country park, not just a natural landscape; it was more important than that.”

Outreach and education work also became more important during this project – telling the story of restorations, but also the importance of the canals more generally. The major grant specifically enabled the Trust to do more interpretation on the canalside, to increase the awareness of the canal among local communities, and to make them more widely accessible to people with disabilities: boat trips for groups of disabled people weren’t possible before the major grant, but have been ever since.

The Grant also encouraged the Trust to think much more about heritage – not just the built environment but natural heritage too.

“We’ve been on a journey from freight... to paying lip service to leisure, to now, where we’re a big heritage manager, a big manager of habitats – this has become what we are all about and what people give us money for... The HLF grant was huge in this journey – it gave us expertise, prestige, exposure.”

In 2012 British Waterways became the Canal and River Trust. This move would not have been possible without the major grant. “It took a huge cost burden away; we couldn’t have become a Trust with a decaying portfolio. The grant hugely contributed to the growth in awareness and publicity – it grabbed headlines, it was a huge injection of confidence into the canal network”.

## Leeds City Museum

The major grant let Leeds reclaim one of its most important buildings – the Leeds Institute, on the city's main square – while at the same time providing a new home for the city's museum. In doing so, it secured the future of the Institute, preserving the most beautiful parts of it, while inserting a museum into the space. The new museum excels in education work and engagement with the public, has started collecting objects again, and has revolutionised Leeds' museums service. It has also helped improve the public perception of the city.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2004

**Value of grant:** £19,479,000

**Description of project:** Creation of a new open-access Resource Centre; restoration of the Leeds Institute Building, a Grade II\* listed building; refurbishment of the interior to provide four floors of permanent and temporary gallery space; improved visitor facilities including education rooms, cafe and a shop.

**Year of completion of project:** 2009

**Interviewee:** Catherine Blanshard, Chief Libraries, Arts and Heritage Officer, Leeds City Council

The grant given to Leeds City Council (LCC) was to rehouse the Leeds City Museum collections – which had been in storage since 1999 – in the former home of the Leeds Mechanics Institute. The Grade II\* listed building in the city centre, designed by Cuthbert Broderick, would be renovated for the purposes of display, and storage would move to a new facility close to Clarence Dock.

Before its repurposing as a city museum, the Leeds Institute building was in a very poor state. It had a prime location on the main city square, but was largely left empty, used only by some amateur arts groups and an arts college. The city museum had closed in 1999 and had in any case been squashed into an annex of the city library, with an inadequate collections store. So there was nowhere that was telling the story of Leeds. The previous museum had been traditional, old-fashioned and focused on the collection, not on visitors, working with a limited budget and team. Yet the collection was a rich one, with potential to tell a strong story.

The City Council was well aware of the embarrassing state of museum provision in the city, and was searching for a solution for Leeds Institute as it created the adjacent Millennium Square. The answer was to create a new city museum in the Institute building. The City Council's architect and asset management team got involved to help with the conversion of such a challenging building.

There were lots of competing voices on how Leeds City Museum should be developed. Blanshard had a bumpy ride getting the vision across to Friends and historical societies, among others. But HLF support recognised and gave authority to Blanshard's vision. It got the council properly on board and changed its view of museums (with knock-on benefits for other projects such as the Discovery Centre, for which the Council gifted land).

The collection is now protected and kept to the right standards. The building has been secured and restored. The transfer of collections was an opportunity to focus on their conservation. The story of the Leeds Institute itself is being told too, through interpretation and 'reveal moments'. The displays have fitted in well into a challenging space. The council architect put in huge time and effort into working out the visitor flows, and the best way to divide different collections between the spaces on offer in the building.

Now, 97% of Leeds schools engage with the museum. There has been strong footfall and satisfaction levels. The visitor profile has shifted, with a family feel, particularly around half terms and holidays. The museum is keen to get families and young people involved, through, for example, the Leeds Wall and the Tiny Tots corner.

The Major Grant was a trigger for administrative changes too. There was a complete restructure across the museums service, and a change of mind-set that put more emphasis on the public over the collection and building. The service needed to change, but Blanshard used the redevelopment as a catalyst for that change.

This change of mind-set can be seen in the new approach to interpretation, which has set out to re-write labels for objects so that they are readily understood by the public rather than being too academic. The rules are: no label over 50 words and no tricky words, while still maintaining integrity.

Leeds City Museum has had to evolve along the way. The original business plan did not work. The museum expected to be able to charge for exhibitions (in an otherwise free museum). But the exhibition gallery's location at the top of the museum meant many people didn't bother to go there.

Since then they have brought some exhibitions down to the ground floor arena space, and moved to free admission for many of them. The revenue focus has shifted towards secondary spend through the café, shops and events. All the shops have been further upgraded since the HLF redevelopment.

Leeds has carried out other successful bids and projects since the Museum. It was an influential project for LCC in terms of how they are developing their learning offer in particular.

## London Transport Museum

The London Transport Museum was in a state of flux at the time of the major grant. It was being managed by the newly created Transport for London (TfL), and was conducting a strategic review to see if this was the most appropriate governance structure. The museum was also re-thinking its curatorial ambitions. It wanted to use transport as a way to explore the social history of London. To do this, though, would require more space to show more exhibits and mean tackling some of the building's deficiencies.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2004

**Value of grant:** £9,470,000

**Description of project:** Fitting insulation to glass ceilings and roof to improve display environment; creation of a new level for permanent and temporary exhibition spaces; excavation of basement area to increase available space; installation of new education and accessibility features, including a cafe, improved access and new under-five play area; redisplay of current exhibitions.

**Year of completion of project:** 2008

**Interviewees:** Sam Mullins, Director, London Transport Museum; Rob Lansdown, Assistant Director of London Transport Museum; Claire Williamson, Assistant Director, Marketing & Development at London Transport Museum

The London Transport Museum exists to conserve and explain the transport heritage of Britain's capital city. It holds the collection of what was formerly London Transport. When the transport authority became Transport for London (TfL) the museum's remit expanded to cover all aspects of transport in the city. Before the re-development the museum was managed directly by TfL, but a strategic review found that becoming a charity would have significant benefits, and so it became independent.

However there were some significant issues to overcome in making the London Transport Museum fit for purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It wasn't meeting basic museum standards in storage and conservation. The building was expensive to heat, and had no means of cooling in summer. The roof needed repairing – buckets were used to collect rainwater. The major grant enabled the museum to restore the original Victorian natural ventilation system, by re-opening windows at the top of the building and opening the entrance onto the Covent Garden Piazza.

Alongside the structural work, the content of the museum was re-worked, changing the focus to look at the social history of London through the lens of transport past, present and future. One of several catalysts for this change was a Time Out review in 2001, which said the museum was 'a great place for lads and dads in a nice part of town', which shocked the team – who saw themselves as having a broader reach than that.

"When we started we knew the museum wasn't as good as it could be, but we didn't know much about what visitors wanted to see."

Audience research demonstrated that there was a rising interest in city life, in what makes it tick and what gives it its character. Previously the Museum had overlooked

the significance of telling the story of the people who used the transport equipment. The Museum had plenty of relevant material for this, but it was locked up in the design and art collection that wasn't on display. It became clear that to attract a bigger audience more of these stories had to be told, which needed more space. Through the Major Grant project gallery space was increased by 50% ("a real challenge for the designers") and other ancillary spaces provided. Before the redevelopment, the museum had fewer than 400 objects on displays (albeit 29 of these were very large). It was able to double the number of objects on displays (it is now around 1,000), although achieving this did mean reducing the number of large objects on display.

Visitor numbers increased by 50%, from 205,000 before the grant, to 300,000, and the type of visitors also changed, to include both 'engaged culture seekers' and casual visitors coming in from the Piazza.

The museum did very little fundraising before getting the major grant. Initially, it hired a consultant to lead the way on fundraising, but since then it has been able to sustain and continue to grow it. For example, it was able to raise the whole cost of the programme to mark the 150th anniversary of the London Underground. The museum learnt a lot along the way. During the early days of fundraising, for instance, it found that big corporate sponsors were only interested in material that fell within their staff's living memory.

"We fundraised really hard, and corporate fundraisers had a big influence, they steered us – they weren't interested in the past."

Following the major grant the museum has raised an additional £5 million from the corporate sector – learning that donors like to be associated with a successful museum. Much of this comes from banks, construction firms, and consultants, many of which are in TfL's supply chain.

## Lowry Centre

Salford City Council (SCC) had the largest publicly-owned collection of the work of artist L.S. Lowry, but was only able to show a third of it at the Salford Museum and Gallery. Appreciating the potential value of the arts in regeneration, particularly in an area going through a period of rapid economic transition, the Council made a new exhibition space for the Lowry collection, a key part of a wider re-development programme for Salford Quays, an area that now includes MediaCityUK and the Imperial War Museum North. But despite attracting big visitor numbers, The Lowry's original business plan did not work. Much subsequent effort has gone into turning footfall into revenue, and the Centre is now on a more sustainable path, both contributing to, and benefiting from, the revival of this part of Salford.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1996

**Value of grant:** £10,875,000

**Description of project:** Creation of three new exhibition spaces, including a temporary exhibition space; creation of a study centre; improved storage facilities, including stores and loading bays.

**Year of completion of project:** 2006

**Interviewee:** Julia Fawcette, Chief Executive, The Lowry

L.S. Lowry was an early 20th-century painter, best known for his depictions of industrial scenes in North West England. He had a connection with Salford, having been educated at Salford Royal Technical College, and often using the city as a subject for his art. Salford City Council had always valued the Lowry connection, and prized its world-leading collection of his work. Around a third of it was on display at Salford Museum and Gallery, where it attracted around 65,000 visits a year.

As a city, Salford has changed dramatically over the last 40 years, following the closure of the docks, which were the largest employer. The Quays had become virtually derelict and many people moved out of the area. The council had tried throughout the 1980s to attract developers to redevelop the Quays, but to no avail – the only serious offer it got was to turn the Quays into a car park. So the council was aware it needed to do something dramatic to instigate change and regeneration. The arrival of major Lottery funds in the mid-1990s provided a way forward. A new gallery was built on Salford Quays to house the council's Lowry collection and other items, with spaces for permanent and temporary exhibitions, learning spaces and all the usual ancillary services.

The funding arrangements for this project were unique: the Millennium Commission was the lead funder, with HLF and Arts Council England in supporting roles. HLF provided funds for the Lowry Gallery within the wider Centre, but then contributed later on to the bailout of the Centre in 2002. "Getting the HLF to come on board was critical to realising the Lowry Gallery element of the Centre," according to Julia Fawcette, the current Chief Executive. "If HLF hadn't committed, it would have sent out a negative message about Salford City Council's vision."

The new Lowry Gallery is fit-for-purpose and equipped with modern conservation facilities, and it has introduced a new approach to interpretation, based on

accessibility for a crossover audience. This includes, for instance, innovative juxtapositions with The Lowry's contemporary arts programme, such as its Spencer Tunnick commissions, or ballet performances by the Royal Ballet. The new building is able to show virtually all of the collection and so has contributed to the continuing rise in the reputation (and valuing) of L.S. Lowry's work. In 2013, Tate Britain held a major retrospective of his work that drew heavily on The Lowry's collection. The greater exposure has also made the public more aware of the variety of his work – it's not simply 'matchstick men'. During the summer of 2013, for example, Carol Lowry (to whom L.S. Lowry left his estate) allowed the display of previously unseen 'difficult' Lowry works at the Centre.

The standalone education centre, built in 2004/5, supports a large programme working with groups like design and technology pupils; young people not in education, employment or training; and at-risk young people.

The public was enthusiastic about the Centre from the beginning. It attracted 700,000 visitors in its first year, and now gets over a million annually. However, while huge numbers were coming in through the doors, they were spending very little when they were there (entry to the galleries was free). This left something of a deficit in the forecast budget, and, when combined with cost overruns on the build itself, meant that the Lowry Centre had to ask its backers for additional funds.

In 2002, Julia Fawcette arrived, and set about converting the Centre's high footfall into revenue. Some changes were relatively simple: while retaining free entry, the Centre changed the layout of the approach to the galleries and introduced a welcome desk where staff ask for donations. This raised £250,000 the first year it was tried.

Fawcette also overhauled the structure and team of the organisation. The first tranche of staff had come from the subsidised sector and "had done an amazing job of getting the doors open". But operating the Centre sustainably was beyond their skillset and "they were burnt out from the revenue problems". Fawcette set out to change the outlook of the organisation, with a stronger sense of commercial possibilities.

The Lowry now runs a mixed economy model, drawing on Fawcette's commercial leisure experience. A strengthened arts offer (supported since 2004 by being an Arts Council Regularly Funded Organisation, though this accounts for less than 10% of total income) lies at the heart of the model, with a 'commercially compelling' leisure offer wrapped around it.

The Lowry is now a sustainable and popular destination, with a radically different team, programme, and business model from that which prevailed at the Salford Museum and Gallery. The business plan is holding up well and is resilient to funding cuts. Fawcette believes that the formula is simple: "if the product is good, people will come and spend money."

## **M Shed: the Museum of Bristol**

**Year of HLF grant:** 2004

**Value of grant:** £12,521,400

**Description of project:** Refurbishment, redevelopment and fitting of an important quayside building and the Bristol Industrial Museum into the Museum of Bristol, containing a mixture of permanent and temporary gallery space; re-housing of several archives into the Museum of Bristol; improvements to visitor accessibility to the buildings.

**Year of completion of project:** 2011

Interviewee: Julie Finch, Director Bristol Museums Galleries and Archives, **Bristol City Council**

M Shed, home to over 3,000 Bristol-related artefacts and stories, tells the tale of the city and its unique place in the world. It replaces – and incorporates the collection of – the previous Bristol Industrial Museum, which was housed in a shabby 1950s transit shed on Prince's Wharf. The major grant involved a heavy restoration of this building, and a rethinking of interpretation (which was previously minimal).

The new concept was to tell the entire story of Bristol and to make global connections via Bristol's diverse communities. The reimagined displays draw on hidden archive material and there was much consultation to develop themes and narratives, and to collect residents' stories – for example gathering multiple perspectives on the Stokes Croft riots.

Although the museum already had a loyal following of 150,000 visitors per year, it has attracted 1.4 million visits in the first two years after opening. They are also doing well at raising revenue – through corporate hires and as a wedding venue, and by attracting high-profile sponsors.

Key to the success of the project has been aligning the museum's work, especially learning and social outcomes, with council objectives. The new learning studio hosts four times the previous number of users, and the museum has developed a 'Bristol curriculum' using the collections, and the city itself.

Julie Finch, former Director of the Council's Museums Service, says, "HLF support meant that the City Council committed, and the project actually happened."

## Manchester City Art Gallery

Manchester Art Gallery re-opened to the public in May 2002 following a £35 million transformation. The project rationalised a site that was previously split between two buildings, and reinvigorated the displays – bringing out items that hadn't previously been viewed, and creating some new themed galleries. Alongside the physical move there was a change in governance, allowing fundraising to happen more readily. In spite of some issues with the building control system, the project has been a success and the Gallery is a popular element of Manchester's cultural landscape.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1997

**Value of grant:** £15,000,000

**Description of project:** Repair and refurbishment of the two existing City Art Gallery buildings; installation of environmental controls; creation of a new extension and connecting building; improved accessibility for visitors to the galleries and historic interiors of the buildings.

**Year of completion of project:** 2002

**Interviewees:** Maria Balshaw, Director, ManchesterCity Galleries; Virginia Tandy, former Director, ManchesterCity Galleries

Manchester's City Art Gallery, designed by Sir Charles Barry, first opened in 1824. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century an adjacent plot of land was acquired, although nothing was done with it, and eventually by the 1990s it had become a car park. In the 1930s a second site, the Athenaeum, had been acquired next door, which was also designed by Barry. All these elements created a rather disparate site, and discussions about how to resolve it had been going on for years. The HLF major grant funded a complete overhaul by Hopkins architects (subsequently an award-winning scheme), which brought the two Barry buildings together with a modern infill.

The project was much-needed. "The permanent galleries hadn't had any significant investment for a long time" – in terms of both content ("in 1998 the gallery was temporary exhibition heavy and permanent collection light") and physical condition ("there were holes in the roof and buckets on the floor"). It certainly didn't have the feel of a world-class art gallery, and the quality of its collection wasn't attracting the attention it should have been. So the physical refurbishment was only one part of the plan: decanting the entire collection during construction allowed staff to rethink things, and 'rediscover' items. Exhibits were improved and new galleries created: a craft and design gallery, a children's gallery, and the Manchester gallery, which enabled the display of a range of Manchester related objects.

The focus on making all aspects of the collections accessible and relevant to people in Manchester has been one of the contributing factors in inspiring the loyalty and pride of the resident population. "The Gallery has become part of the cultural landscape. The café is always full – it's part of the city." The change in interpretation has also helped increase the accessibility of the place. "The main driver was to attract new audiences, especially those who didn't usually engage with the arts. So we went for a very simple, direct approach to labelling and text – consistent across all galleries. We wanted it to feel like two people having a chat." And this was very

successful. The target for the number of visits within the first year was exceeded in the first four months after reopening.

Financially, pre-grant, the Gallery was on a tight budget: there was very little fundraising activity or earned income, although a modest amount of money was being generated by the 'friends' scheme. Now, Manchester City Council funding is down to 50%. The café and retail spaces are well-used, and the corporate hire strategy is working well – the newly refurbished space is very popular as a venue. The financial position of the organisation was also helped by the creation of an independent charitable trust, the first of its kind in the country, to help get businesses, donors and charitable foundations on board.

There were some difficulties to do with the environmental controls, which have subsequently been judged to be too stringent ("it's attempting to dehumidify the entirety of central Manchester"), and Maria Balshaw, current Director, argues there is little proof that the previous less-controlled conditions were damaging the collections. The current system makes the building environmentally unsustainable, and the City Council is now investing in a series of measures to relax building controls to work towards a more environmentally and financially sustainable business model.

However the outcomes for the organisation have been positive overall. The move, in to the town hall, and then back into the new space played an important role in democratising what had been a quite hierarchical organisation. And the project provided an opportunity to recruit new people with different skills. Looking to the future, the team has now refreshed some of the exhibitions and displays that were put in at the time of the grant, and the learning space has been renewed.

## Manchester Museum

Manchester Museum was – and still is – a much-loved institution, by default the city's principal public museum. It exemplifies the Victorian impulse to collect and understand the world, so today it is the custodian of collections of international significance. However, the Museum hadn't had a serious capital injection since the 1920s, and whilst its staff had worked miracles with the meagre support available, by the 1990s it looked rather thread-bare and clearly lacked the facilities expected of a major museum in the late twentieth century. Tristram Besterman, the former Director of the museum, says it was respected but regarded as a "slumbering leviathan" in the industry. Moreover, the major grant also facilitated a shift in organisational culture: Manchester Museum has become much more engaged with its diverse communities in the university, the city, the wider region and beyond. This has resulted in a substantial increase in visitor numbers and has raised its profile in the university and more widely.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1997

**Value of grant:** £ 11,650,000

**Description of project:** Creation of new exhibition space; refurbishment of gallery spaces; improved circulation and access throughout the museum; improved education facilities; creation of new conservation labs and collection storage; installation of air conditioning systems; creation of new entrance, reception, lifts, shop, café, lecture theatre.

**Year of completion of project:** 2003

**Interviewees:** Dr Nick Merriman, Director, Manchester Museum; Tristram Besterman, former Director, Manchester Museum

Manchester Museum, part of the University of Manchester, contains 4.5 million items pertaining to archaeology, anthropology and natural history from across the world. It is the UK's largest university museum and serves both as a visitor attraction and as a resource for research and teaching. Before the major grant, it had a good reputation and was considered the city and region's major public museum. However, former Director Tristram Besterman says it was clear that the relationship with the university was strained. "The deans of faculty couldn't really see the point of the museum as it was – it wasn't seen as contributing added value to the university." It was an insular institution, whose output was out of step with the standards of the museums profession, with the university's measures of academic excellence and with the needs of the wider community.

Alongside this macro-issue, there were a few other problems. With no lifts and no ramps, the museum would probably have been in breach of the then new Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The stored collections were kept in poor conditions without climate controls. Whilst some galleries had been successfully refurbished, most were many decades out of date. The museum didn't have a café or an adequate temporary exhibition space; and only a small shop. The toilets were inadequate. A lack of strategic leadership in the organisation had led to a culture of entitlement amongst some staff, who expected to be left alone 'to do things their way' with little or no accountability.

Besterman had been appointed by the University explicitly to turn things around. His background was not academia, but the professional museums sector, with plenty of managerial experience. He was aware that the museum wouldn't survive if things didn't change – but there was nonetheless a particular spirit of place about 'The Manchester' (as it was known locally). What made the challenge so interesting to him was the responsibility to 'lead the museum firmly into the 21st century without destroying its *genius loci*,' a fragile legacy of two centuries of collecting and building. He was also convinced that the twin roles of serving the academic community and the wider public could and should be mutually reinforcing.

The building and collection had each grown opportunistically over the last hundred years to become increasingly dysfunctional. Besterman brought in an architect (Ian Simpson Associates) to undertake 'space planning' to develop a more coherent plan for the building and make it fit for the 21st century. This planning became the blueprint for the physical transformation of the museum, as well as the catalyst for changes in organisational culture and management.

The collection is now much better interpreted and explained. Five of the ten galleries were refurbished, a new temporary exhibition space was created, and public facilities more generally are of higher standard. There have been improvements behind the scenes too, such as a new goods lift, new and improved collections stores and conservation laboratories.

HLF, as a funder, was particularly attracted by the Alfred Waterhouse buildings and the international standard of the collection. Besterman was worried HLF external advisers would struggle with the eclectic mix of the Museum (including natural history and archaeology) but they loved the museum while recognising the difficult state it was in. HLF were, in fact, more concerned with making sure the project achieved social benefits and public engagement. Besterman found this very useful, as some of the Museum's staff had never been held to account in this way before – it was another catalyst for change.

This meant there was a huge training and development issue. Whilst senior museum staff were proficient in their specialist disciplines, they were untrained in resource or project management or indeed in any of the professional issues around public engagement. Many of the staff assumed things would go 'back to normal' once the build was done, and were shocked this wasn't to be the case. Besterman worked hard to bring the senior staff with him: some were 'up for it', understanding the need for change, but others opted either for early retirement, or were redeployed within the university.

The HLF award had two further and largely unforeseen benefits. It raised the profile of the museum within the academic community: such an investment by an external agency was read as a credible measure of worth. Also, because HLF received applications for a major grant from three of Manchester's premier cultural institutions simultaneously – the others being the Museum of Science and Industry and the City Art Gallery – a closer and more collaborative relationship between these museums ensued.

The Museum is seen now as a major asset for both the university and the city, and is a key player in meeting the university's mission around public engagement and in contributing to academic teaching and research. Visitor figures show the Museum is

much more popular now than it was, with numbers increasing from approximately 140,000 in 1996-7 to 375,000 in 2012-13. Besterman is particularly pleased by the level of engagement achieved with specific communities in the city, especially South Asian and African Caribbean communities, who are the majority population in the Museum's immediate neighbourhood and had previously been under-represented in the Museum's visitor demographic.

Manchester Museum has gained a reputation for innovation in programming: as a university museum it can experiment more than larger institutions. It has developed a good relationship with the British Museum; current director Nick Merriman feels his museum's approach (for instance, with the exhibition around Lindow Man, loaned by the British Museum) has influenced the British Museum's approach to exhibiting. Manchester Museum also now has a reputation for good management too. It shares managers with the Whitworth Art Gallery (there is one head of visitor services for both, for example), and this approach has led to a 20% reduction in costs, without damaging services.

Besterman is sure that the HLF grant helped to propel fundamental change, "not just to the bricks and mortar but to the whole culture of the museum". Fit for purpose and adaptable, Manchester Museum is in good shape to meet the challenges of the future.

## **Manchester Museum of Science and Industry**

The Museum of Science and Industry (MSI) in Manchester holds a large collection of Manchester-related artefacts, and is housed in a significant piece of industrial history – the world's first passenger railway station. At the time of the major grant, parts of the site were still derelict and it was constantly going through a gradual process of renewal and improvement. The major grant project fast-tracked the building's restoration, as well as carrying out three interlinked projects forming the final phase of the development of the Museum: the creation of three new galleries; the development of an open access Collections Centre; and the creation of new visitor facilities.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1997

**Value of grant:** £8,800,000

**Description of project:** the creation of three major galleries, together with a Science Theatre and Communications Lab in the 1830 warehouse; the development of a Support Centre comprising accommodation for archive and object collections, reception and study facilities, technical workshops and a photographic studio; the creation of a new entrance, exhibition spaces, a restaurant and external lift in the 1830 Warehouse.

**Year of completion of project:** 2006

**Interviewees:** Ian Blatchford, Director, Science Museum Group; Heather Mayfield, Deputy Director, Science Museum; Jean Franczyk, former Director, Museum of Science and Industry

The Museum of Science and Industry (MSI) – part of the Science Museum Group since 2012 – is located on the site of the former Liverpool Road Station and goods yard in the historic Castlefield area of Manchester. The site is of enormous heritage importance being home to two Grade I listed buildings; the Liverpool Road Station building itself and the 1830 Warehouse. This project focused on the redevelopment of the Grade II listed Great Western Warehouse, also known as the Lower Byrom Street Warehouse.

The museum's collections are of national and international significance and include domestic appliances, manufacturing machinery, scientific instruments, vehicles, office equipment, industrial technology and objects from Manchester's more recent history. The collections support a story that ranges from the birth of the industrial revolution, through the heyday of 'Cottonopolis' to the present day. MSI also cares for major holdings from Manchester's textile industry past, including fabric samples and pattern books, prints, paintings and audio-visual and sound recordings, including oral and video histories. What ties all these objects together is their provenance: they were all made or used in the Manchester area.

A key heritage outcome of this project was a ground-breaking new Collections Centre which made possible unprecedented public access to MSI's reserve collections. The first of its kind in the country, the Centre provides visitors the chance to see behind the scenes and delve deeper into the objects and artefacts of the collections. This onsite, open store, in the basement of the Warehouse, allows

greater flexibility in programming. For example, since 2012 the Museum's curators have made use of the access to the collections to create small exhibitions focusing on MSI's holdings in a temporary 'Highlights Gallery' located in the Liverpool Road Station building.

In addition, the restoration of the Great Western Warehouse afforded greater appreciation and understanding of the heritage of the building, and a new gallery was created to tell the story of the important scientific history of Manchester. Improvements to facilities, including a new entrance, welcome area and restaurant improved the visitor experience and, as a result, financial viability improved, due to rising visitor numbers (up to around 800,000 in 2007-8).

The redevelopment of the Great Western Warehouse was a significant step forward in the evolution of the Museum of Science & Industry site from a former industrial yard to a modern museum of national standing. The Heritage Lottery Fund's investment has provided the platform for the further enhancements to the Warehouse made in 2011 and also informed the creation of a new site-wide Museum Masterplan in 2012. This project contributed to a rise in the museum's profile and reputation that has since attracted key academic and programmatic partnerships, including the Wellcome Collection and the universities of Manchester and Salford.

The Heritage Lottery Fund has played a major role in beginning a journey that will ensure that the Museum of Science & Industry is relevant, sustainable and attractive to visitors, and that the important heritage of the site can be enjoyed and understood.

"The major grant was a milestone for the preservation of the building and the collections. It was an important step to move the museum into the future. Some further refurbishment and infrastructure developments took place, but a building that is 200 years old will always need investment and maintenance. The major grants are extremely important in this. Heritage buildings need constant attention, and these grants help them to become relevant and accessible."

## Mary Rose

The Mary Rose, Henry VIII's warship that sank in the Solent in 1545, is hugely important as both a maritime heritage asset, and as evidence of life in Tudor England. Raising it from the seabed and preserving it for future generations has required intensive and costly conservation work due to its years underwater. The major grant enabled the third and final phase of a 25 year conservation process to be completed, and – with the building of a new museum – visitors can now appreciate the richness of the ship and its collection of artefacts in a way that wasn't previously possible.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2009

**Value of grant:** £6,066,000

**Description of project:** Completion of the conservation of the Mary Rose Ship and 19,000 artefacts found on board; construction of a new museum to house the hull and artefacts; new enlarged learning spaces; new exhibition displays showcasing 70% of collection; some external landscaping.

**Year of completion of project:** 2013

**Interviewee:** Robert Lapraik, Deputy Chief Executive, *Mary Rose* Trust

The submerged wreck of the *Mary Rose* was discovered off Portsmouth in 1971, and in 1982 the *Mary Rose* Trust raised it to the surface and put it into dry dock, in one of the most ambitious rescue operations in the history of maritime archaeology. The *Mary Rose* is the only 16<sup>th</sup> century warship in existence, and its surviving parts, as well as the 19,000 artefacts found on board, are incredibly valuable as historical evidence – not only in terms of maritime history but 16<sup>th</sup> century life in general. For example, as 172 skeletons (92 fairly complete) were discovered on board, its contribution beyond heritage to research into health, disease, nutrition and many other scientific and engineering disciplines is immense.

The conservation of the ship and its collection of artefacts was complex, due to the years they had all spent underwater. The hull required a very slow and multi-stage process of spraying with water, then polymers, and finally drying, with great care taken that the timbers did not warp and split. The grant fast-tracked some of that conservation work to stabilise the hull. Deputy Director Robert Lapraik says that “without it we would have remained as we were with the ship in a temporary building being continuously sprayed, and many of the artefacts in storage or conservation and still not displayed to the public.”

It was also desirable that the ship and the artefacts found on board might be displayed in close proximity to enhance understanding. Previously, due to space limitations and the requirements of environmental control, the objects were displayed separately from the ship – in different buildings – and only 1,000 of 19,000 were on display. So, although the site received around 200,000 visitors annually at its highest point, up to a quarter of these did not see both the ship and the museum containing the artefacts. Now, the visitor experience has been radically transformed, with a total representation of the ship and artefacts in one building, including a wide array of items that the public had never seen before.

Thirteen months after the opening of new facility, 500,000 visitors have been received and turnover has doubled. Those revenues are primarily from ticket income, but also from the new café and retail offer. Other sources of funding come from trusts and foundations, rather than public funding or local authority funding. The Mary Rose's main partners now are Portsmouth Historic Dockyard – who have collectively received great publicity from the new museum. The positive press has given the Mary Rose and the Dockyard great leverage, particularly with regard to launch day which reached some one billion people worldwide. The project has been a great boon to tourism locally, and tour operators now form a significant part of business.

Crucial to the museum's success on reopening has been a new approach to interpretation. "It's possible now to do much more", Lapraik says. Both the hull and objects are presented in context and modern forensic reconstruction techniques allow the stories of individual crew members to be told, including the ship's dog. The exhibition presents a very personal view of life at the time: the roles, the characters, and even the looks of the people can be explored by visitors.

There were some challenges along the way. Construction of the new museum was complex as the building sits on top of the existing dry dock – which in itself requires protection as a Grade I scheduled monument. The objects in the collection are diverse and have very specific conservation needs – so the building also has to be a very 'high spec', technologically. But they were fortunate in the good quality of their consultants – exhibition designers and project managers – and museum construction and exhibition fit out came in on budget.

The approach to fundraising for the project was successful, led by the CEO himself, (he brought in Robert Lapraik to run operations); however the team have found that now the museum is built and the 'call to action' is over it is predictably harder to fundraise.

Since the reopening, the Mary Rose's 'trailblazing' outreach work continues, with groups such as the Stroke Association, dementia groups and specific disability groups being visited and engaging with items from the collection, as well as being offered special tours on site. There is now far greater capacity for school visits, covering topics including science, technology, engineering, and maths as well as Tudor history and the history of medicine - using practical experiments to engage students. There are also facilities on site that allow the museum to host postgraduate researchers from universities from the UK and abroad.

"The Mary Rose has been at the centre of a quantum change in enabling a unique story of Tudor England to be told. The major grant has given us a long term home for these stories. While it will need modification and updating along the way the new facility has secured the ship and its contents for future generations."

## **Milestones Museum**

**Year of HLF grant:** 1996

**Value of grant:** £6,083,750

**Description of project:** Creation of the Milestones Museum, to house the Tasker collection (cast iron objects, agricultural tools, models, photos) and Thorneycroft collection (steam wagons); installation of environmental controls for the collection; visitor facilities include a shop, cafe, fully accessible building and education centre.

**Year of completion of project:** 2004

**Interviewees:** Karen Murray, Director of Strategic and Business Development, Hampshire County Council; John Tickle, Assistant Director, CCBS Department, Hampshire County Council Museums Service.

Milestones Museum in Basingstoke – the new Hampshire Museum of Transport and Technology – was an ambitious project to create a home for two significant local collections: the Tasker Collection, which had been given to Hampshire Council (HCC) in 1968, and consisted of cast iron objects, agricultural tools, models, photos; and the Thorneycroft collection, which consisted of steam wagons, which was acquired at about the time of the HLF bid. Altogether, these collections – which were at that time in storage rather than on display – told an interesting social, historical and technological story, a story of transport as it relates to a particular locality. The project had strong political support from the very start.

The resulting museum is an iconic, fantastic building. It has provided a good home for the collections, and will keep them in a stable condition. The presentation of the exhibits is compelling: with pieces sited in re-created townscapes with the whole storyline of the gallery built around them. The education facilities are good, the museum has a strong education programme, one that is curriculum based and linked to Key Stages, and school visits have increased. Given all this, it is not surprising that Milestones won a Museum of the Year award in 2000.

However despite being a success on many levels, it initially struggled financially, having become caught up in the 'Millennium moment' and developed an overly optimistic business model. The museums service has worked hard to address this challenge and the museum is now on a more sustainable footing.

## **Murrays' Mills, Ancoats**

**Year of HLF grant:** 2003

**Value of grant:** £7,164,000

**Description of project:** Extensive structural and fabric repairs to the Grade II\* listed Murrays' Mills complex

**Year of completion of project:** 2006

**Interviewee:** Kate Dickson, Trust Director, Heritage Works Buildings Preservation Trust

Murrays' Mills in Ancoats in Manchester has been one of the most challenging projects HLF has funded under the Major Grants scheme. The project concerned the repair of the Grade 2\* listed Murrays' Mills, a site of international importance on account of its industrial heritage, and relationship to the Ancoats area of Manchester. The intention was to repair the buildings prior to handover to a commercial developer.

While the restoration itself ran fairly smoothly, being delivered on time and on budget, the choice of business delivery model and bad luck in timing – (the credit crunch hit the project at a crucial moment) – means that the Mills scheme did not achieve what was hoped for it, and the long-term future of the site remains unclear.

However, without the grant, Kate Dickson feels Murrays' Mills would now be in a parlous state. Some buildings would have been lost, or not as sensitively redeveloped. The 'delicate old lady' that the buildings are now would likely have been destroyed. Dickson thinks the building is better loved by the community now: there's been little vandalism, and it had some positive spillover effects on the area. The Royal Mills would not have been developed had the eyesore of next-door Murrays' Mills not been addressed.

## **Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading**

**Year of HLF grant:** 2001

**Value of grant:** £5,170,000

**Description of project:** Repairs to the external fabric of St Andrew's Hall, a Grade II listed building; removing the 1960's additional wing, and creation of a new extension for storage; renewal and fit-out of the inside of the building to house the museum's archives and library; Public learning and study facilities; landscaping and creation of a car park.

**Year of completion of project:** 2006

**Interviewee:** Kate Arnold-Forster, Head of University Museums and Special Collections/ Director, Museum of EnglishRuralLife

The Rural History Centre owns the most comprehensive national collection of objects, books and archives relating to the history of food, farming and the countryside. The whole collection – from threshing machines and tractors to clothes and paper archives – needed rehousing as the temporary buildings it was housed in were becoming unsuitable. Objects were exposed to the elements and in danger of deterioration. It took some time to find a suitable site, but eventually it was decided to repurpose an Alfred Waterhouse building, St Andrew's Hall.

Although Kate Arnold-Foster, the museum's Director, thinks with hindsight the museum should have gone further in making the collections fully accessible, the project has delivered well on its original intentions. It has moved on from its former 'niche status', says Arnold-Foster. The open reading room has a growing number of community users, and overall the museum receives 30,000 visitors annually – comprising researchers, learners and the general public – whereas previously it only received 5,000. The team has grown too – from five people pre-project to 30-40 now. Although more now needs to be done to develop the interpretation and displays, the first HLF grant saved the collection and appropriately reused a beautiful Victorian building.

## Museum of London

The Museum of London at the turn of the century was not a mainstream museum. It had a niche audience, and organisationally reflected little of the diversity of the city of its name. No community work was being done; and the learning department was marginal to the institution. The major grant enabled all of this to be changed, and for the galleries to be brought up to date. More than that, though, it allowed successive directors to tackle the culture of the museum, to open it up to reflect what London is now, becoming a diverse, multicultural museum.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2005

**Value of grant:** £10,609,000

**Description of project:** Extension and refurbishment of the City Gallery; refurbishment of the Learning Centre and Modern London Gallery; improved visitor facilities, including better circulation, a new information point, a new cafe stop; refitting of the Learning Centre to include new learning rooms and a lecture theatre.

**Year of completion of project:** 2010

**Interviewees:** Sharon Ament, Director, Museum of London; Kate Starling, Director of Major Projects, Museum of London; David Spence, Director of Transformation, Museum of London; Jack Lohman, former Director, Museum of London

At the Museum of London the galleries, whose displays ended at 1945, were dated and unfit for purpose. Visitor numbers were disappointing, with some evidence of decline. The location of the museum – above street level in the middle of the City – was not conducive to tempting people in. Those who did visit tended to follow the same route around the building, seeing the early history galleries on the main floor, but not going elsewhere. The museum's feeling was that there were many more stories to be told, and much of their collection was not on display.

The major grant project addressed these issues with the new 'Galleries of Modern London'. The ground floor display was refurbished, using existing elements of current displays wherever possible, but crucially extending the story into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, making use of the museum's 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century collections. The City Gallery extended the perimeter wall to create a new display space and new glass frontage at street level, which opened the museum up to the city outside.

The museum also identified scope for development of visitor and education services, and a greater engagement of the learning function across the museum. "Previously the learning centre was very underused. E-Learning was seen as a 'quiet revolution', and something we wanted to update in our offering for all visitors." So the Galleries of Modern London were developed with strong input from the Head of Learning, as well as curators and designers. The outdated education wing was refurbished to better meet the needs of schools, adult learners, community groups and businesses. The learning department now aims to empower teachers and pupils, favouring self-directed learning.

Visitor numbers have increased substantially (to over 800,000 annually) and the museum receives good feedback that audiences are having a 'fuller' experience. Public perception of the museum has improved, and it has a high profile in the City of

London and Greater London. Greater visitors has meant greater financial sustainability. The diversification of income base has reduced the risk to core grant funding. They enjoy a close relationship with the Mayor. The museum is still gaining confidence in its commercial offering, and the original 'arm's length' model is now being revised. The Keynote space is an important source of income and the museum is seeking to expand this.

The major grant 'revolutionised the museum', but the transformation was more than just physical, it was a cultural change as well. Lohman had opened up a conversation with City Hall, as he was keen to see the Museum of London move from being the DCMS's responsibility to the London Mayor's. According to Lohman, the Museum was 'virtually bottom of the heap' at DCMS, but became the 'jewel in the crown' of the Mayor's portfolio. Many factors (the switch to the Mayor's office, the Olympics buzz, the HLF major grant, free admissions policy, Renaissance London money) came together in a moment in time that made big changes possible.

As well as learning, and development (fundraising), a third target for change through the major grant project was diversity. Lohman wanted the museum to be 'for London', rather than 'of London'. For him this was all about opening up and reflecting what London is now. He came from South Africa, and had 're-profiled' museums there, so he knew how bold one has to be to effect change. He conducted the museum's first diversity audit, and recruited a dedicated diversity manager.

The major grant gave a confidence to the organisation that it lacked before. An 'avalanche of support' developed after the Grant, from big donors and corporates alike. The grant sparked subsequent capital investment, and projects that formed part of the same curve. The museum began planning for 2004-2014 at the time, and mapped their audience development plans for a decade.

But to get to where it is now, the organisation had to go through a huge 'learning process', and Lohman thinks this really began with preparing the HLF bid, rethinking their desires and hopes for the organisation.

"The major grant upped the [museum's] baseline. Museum of London would still be here without the grant but it was critical to 'staying in the game' and presenting a 'national museum' image."

## **Museum of London Docklands**

The Museum of London Docklands was a risky project for the Museum of London Group but an important one. Docklands was a rising area with a growing population, and the site gave the Museum of London an outlet away from its roundabout on London Wall. The Docklands Museum let the Group 'start being in London', connecting further with London communities, especially in Tower Hamlets and Canary Wharf.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1997

**Value of grant:** £11,846,125

**Description of project:** Creation of the Museum in Docklands inside a Grade I listed sugar warehouse; fitting out the museum with 12 galleries, a lecture theatre, meeting room, a restaurant, shop; facilities for researching the archives from the Port of London Authority, including a reading room and study centre.

**Year of completion of project:** 2003

**Interviewee(s):** Sharon Ament, Director, Museum of London; Kate Starling, Director of Major Projects, Museum of London; David Spence, Director of Transformation, Museum of London; Jack Lohman, former Director, Museum of London

The Museum of London Docklands, on the Isle of Dogs in East London, tells the story of London's river and docklands. The nucleus of the collection is the archive of the Port of London Authority. This was acquired by the Museum of London in 1976, but was still managed by a separate Trust. The Trust had struggled to find a permanent home for the collection, and so it remained in storage. Eventually, management of the collection was absorbed into the Museum of London Group, a move which former Director Jack Lohman describes as a 'rescue mission': "When I was recruited this situation was the first item in my in-tray".

The Trust had failed to secure match-funding, and a private donor had fallen through, so the mission to find a home was in trouble. HLF, which had been supporting the scheme, was about to withdraw its grant. Lohman, urged on by HLF's Liz Forgan, took up the challenge and secured three years funding within six months. He also obtained the DCMS's support: the Museum of London needed a law change (a regulatory reform order) to carry out the takeover, because legally it was only allowed to operate within the Square Mile of the City of London.

The search continued for a space to house the collection, and they lighted upon a Grade I listed Georgian sugar warehouse on the West India Docks. The major grant allowed the necessary works to turn it into a museum, which opened in 2003.

Formalising the relationship with the Museum of London and harmonising the separate organisations took some time after the opening, and there was some initial resistance, but Museum of London Docklands was eventually embedded as part of the Group, reflected in a change of name from 'Museum in Docklands'.

But the acquisition nevertheless presented a challenge to the wider group's organisational strategy. A different but complementary role was identified for the Museum of London Docklands (compared with the London Wall site), and the

content was developed with a strong focus on social and working-class history, stories of empire and trade, and a particular focus on exploring the history of slavery. Lohman believes this is a peculiarly appropriate subject for its context, as the warehouse in which the gallery is housed is “the largest slave trade object in the country”. Museum of London Docklands subsequently received one of the largest HLF grants given to mark the bicentenary (in 2007) of the abolition of slavery.

There have been some changes in business strategy since opening. Initially, there was an admission fee of £5 per adult, which included free repeat entry throughout the year. However local residents could get in free, and there were other concessions available, so in reality the ticket yield was no more than £1 per visitor. Maintaining such charges in the face of competition from national museums with free entry began to make little sense, so the decision was made to stop charging entrance fees. Since doing so, ancillary spend by visitors has increased, the number of visitors has doubled and the audience has become more diverse.

Museum of London Docklands currently accounts for 20% of all visitors to the Museum of London group. The fact that the Isle of Dogs is an area of rapid development has helped the museum. Beyond the traditional business community, there is an increasing domestic population in the area, and the museum is popular with families.

The Group’s management believes that Museum of London Docklands is in a strong position to improve numbers and reach further. For instance, the museum is currently trialling a programme of more contemporary art, as there is limited exhibition space in the local area. There are also plans to redevelop the post-war gallery. The focus is on sustainability and reaching more people: the Museum of London institutions are now proud of their place and evolving role.

## National Football Museum

The FIFA Collection was a world-leading collection of 4,000 items of football memorabilia, originally collected by an Englishman (Harry Langton, an ex-sports journalist) and consisting mostly of English material. FIFA had bought it to prevent it being broken up, but didn't have any long-term plans for its future. A charity was established to try and buy the collection to form the nucleus of a new National Football Museum, to be based in Preston. The HLF major grant helped secure the collection, and the museum opened in 2001. The public-facing element of the National Football Museum has since moved to Manchester, but the appeal of this pioneering project remains, and the size of its holdings has snowballed as other organisations have lent or gifted their collections to be shown alongside the FIFA one. The Museum now has 11 major collections, and a total of 40,000 objects, along with a collection of 100,000 images.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2003

**Value of grant:** £9,384,000

**Description of project:** Creation of a new museum, extending the current museum; purchase of the FIFA museum collection; transfer and conservation of several football collections; provision of visitor accessibility and educational facilities, including a new resource centre, multi-purpose space, research and resource centre, shop and cafe.

**Year of completion of project:** 2006

**Interviewee:** Kevin Moore, Director, National Football Museum

“Football history is a relatively new field... much of this material would have been lost without the National Football Museum.”

The FIFA collection was always kept in England, though never publicly exhibited, and at the time of the HLF bid was being kept in Preston and managed by the Lancashire Museums Service.

FIFA had bought the collection, but didn't have any long-term plans for its future and was open to offers for it. The only serious proposal came from a new charity, the National Football Museum Limited, led by the Chairman of Preston North End FC, Bryan Gray. FIFA was keen on Preston for historical reasons. Preston North End was a founder member of the Football League (and was its first champion, in 1889), and its ground, Deepdale, is the oldest football stadium in the world still in use. FIFA also wanted the collection to be in a proper museum, subject to proper curatorial standards.

The museum opened in Preston in 2001, in the spaces under the stands on two sides of the Deepdale ground. A large entrance building was put in place to help mark out the National Football Museum (NFM) as a separate attraction from the ground itself. However, while Preston was an attractive location in many ways, it has always been a difficult sell to visitors. By 2010 NFM's financial position and the ageing visitor attraction site meant that staying in Preston was becoming increasingly unfeasible.

The North West Development Agency, however, did not want the NFM to move out of the North West, and Manchester City Council came forward with a 'fantastic offer' to move into the Urbis building in the city centre, which had recently become vacant. The National Football Museum has become a great success in its new location: it was targeted to get 350,000 visitors in its first year but achieved 458,000. The audience is mainly families, especially in the school holidays. People are now building trips to Manchester around the NFM: 29% of visitors are overnight stays.

The new site has doubled the size of the museum and roughly doubled the number of exhibits on show.

The research and collections centre remains in Preston, and continues to be a vital part of NFM's activities. It holds 95% of the museum's stock. The stock has been fully catalogued and partly digitised, though full digitisation remains a long-term ambition.

The collections have grown hugely since they were first displayed in Preston. The museum now has 11 major collections, and a total of 40,000 objects, including those of the FA and the Football League. Because football history is a relatively new field, Moore feels that much of this material would have been lost without the NFM: sold off to private dealers, broken up, taken abroad, or even thrown away. Moore says that much of the material the NFM now has was being stored in garages – some of it was even rescued from skips.

The HLF's support was 'visionary'. It faced a lot of criticism even from within the museum sector for giving this grant, Moore says, yet it was odd that England, the home of football, didn't have a museum for it. The major grant has rectified this anomaly.

## **National Gallery: Acquisition of Madonna of the Pinks**

The National Gallery acquired this significant Raphael painting with the help of the HLF. It played a key role in a successful 2004 exhibition, attracting new audiences to the National Gallery, and toured the country. The acquisition led to new developments in the Gallery's learning and outreach activities, and opened up a public conversation about the role of public acquisitions of artworks.

'Madonna of the Pinks' by Raphael

**Year of HLF grant:** 2003

**Value of grant:** £11,500,000

Year of Acquisition: 2004

**Interviewees:** Dr Nicholas Penny, Director, National Gallery; Charles Saumarez Smith, former Director, National Gallery

In 2004 the National Gallery purchased Raphael's oil painting, *The Madonna of the Pinks* from the 12<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland. A substantial HLF grant supported the purchase, as well as assistance from The Art Fund (with a contribution from the Wolfson Foundation), the American Friends of the National Gallery, London, the George Beaumont Group, Sir Christopher Ondaatje and a public appeal.

The history of this painting by a supreme painter of the Italian High Renaissance is an interesting tale. Until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, it had enjoyed fame and admiration since its creation in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. Originally made as a Christian devotional piece, as part of the Camuccini Collection in Rome it was a very popular and much-copied picture. This large collection was acquired by the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland in 1853, but a short while later the Madonna of the Pinks was declared to be a copy by Raphael scholar Johann David Passavant.

Its rehabilitation as the original began when then-curator of the National Gallery, Nicholas Penny, on a visit to the painting's home at Alnwick Castle in 1991, spotted a detail in the landscape background that suggested it was unlikely to be a copy. Further examination with infrared technology in the National Gallery's conservation studio confirmed it was indeed the real thing. Ten years later the Duke of Northumberland decided to sell, and the National Gallery mounted a successful campaign to acquire it. According to Penny, at that time it looked like 'the Raphael was due to go to the Getty: it could not have been saved without HLF.' Since the acquisition, further tests have reinforced its identification as an original work.

The painting is an important addition to the National Gallery's collection, as it fits neatly in chronological sequence with other works in the collection, making it possible to closely examine Raphael's stylistic development. It played an important role in the 2004 exhibition, *Raphael: From Urbino to Rome*. This show was unique: the National Gallery is the only museum in the world with a sufficient cross-section of works by Raphael to explore the artist's output in this way. It has subsequently been used in numerous other exhibitions in London and elsewhere, and, in order to ensure maximum public value from the acquisition was sent on a national tour that visited Manchester, Cardiff, Glasgow and County Durham.

That first exhibition proved enormously popular, exceeding its targets in visitor sales and catalogue sales (predicted sales were at 7,000 and actual sales totalled 15,005), and the National Gallery received much positive press and media coverage on both a national and international level.

A large number of education events were programmed around the exhibition, and the painting was also more generally part of extensive education and outreach activities across the UK. The impact of this programme goes beyond the learning outcomes on visitors (which were favourably evaluated by a University of Leicester research group in 2007) to developments in how the National Gallery delivers educational services. A list of 'Education Central Guiding Principles' was drawn up, with the aim of promoting an understanding across the Gallery about the aims and objectives of Learning and Access, and forging stronger working relationships between departments.

The purchase of *the Madonna of the Pinks* also opened up debate about the acquisitions process itself, according to Charles Samaurez Smith:

"The publicity and high profile nature of the project opened up the National Gallery, exposing it to public debate. It changed the mood of the organisation towards acquisitions, to make them public rather than private activities. The Raphael acquisition sparked public debate about the painting and the role of the Gallery: it wasn't all in support of the acquisition but the conversation overall was healthy and positive."

The HLF has supported a number of acquisitions now and both directors agree that this is perhaps an area requiring more attention. With large institutions retreating from acquisitions, HLF has a role in questioning why this may be, and exploring whether it is important for the country to remain collecting. Saumarez Smith suggests that HLF could provide valuable guidance on a national acquiring strategy, to help provide coherence to acquiring activity that takes place nationwide: "acquisitions are usually made 'in a crisis' rather than planned strategically, if at all."

## **National Gallery: Acquisitions of Seurat, Durer, and Stubbs paintings**

'The Channel of Gravelines' by Seurat

**Year of HLF grant:** 1995

**Value of grant:** £8,000,000

'St Jerome' by Durer

**Year of HLF grant:** 1996

**Value of grant:** £5,018,000

'Whistlejacket' by George Stubbs

**Year of HLF grant:** 1997

**Value of grant:** £8,268,750

**Interviewees:** Dr Nicholas Penny, Director, National Gallery; Charles Saumarez Smith, former Director, National Gallery

The HLF helped the National Gallery buy these three major paintings on behalf of the nation. Whistlejacket, in particular, is recognised as the most ambitious painting Stubbs produced, and 'it was important, as an English artist, for Britain's foremost gallery to secure it,' says Director Nicholas Penny.

The National Gallery made sure to harness the interest sparked by the acquisition. All the paintings have toured the country. The education department was inspired to try new things, seeing it as a test of how to use works in the most innovative way. The 'Take One Picture' programme is a good example. This empowers primary school teachers to focus on one painting and encourage children to look at it from different perspectives. The 'Take One Approach' has since been exported to galleries and schools nationwide. The National Gallery team works to 'teach the teachers'. "These efforts would not have happened without HLF," says Penny. "The excitement of the major acquisitions has driven forward the educational programme."

The acquisition of these four important paintings has helped the National Gallery to maintain and build its visitor numbers. Numbers have grown year on year since 1997, and exceeded 6 million in 2013. All four paintings have been on continuous public display (except when on external loan to other institutions), and they have therefore been viewed by millions of visitors as an integral part of their visit to the Gallery every year. Both Directors agree that a major acquisition helps promote the National Gallery as an active organisation, and keeps visitors coming back. Acquisitions 'keep the National Gallery alive as a major institution in the public's eye'.

## **National Library of Scotland: John Murray Archive**

The John Murray Archive, a unique collection of letters, manuscripts and printed material produced by leading writers and intellectuals of the Victorian age, was secured for the nation by the National Library of Scotland in 2007, with the help of a grant from HLF. The acquisition was the cornerstone of a broader organisational reorientation, that has made the NLS a more public-facing and accessible institution.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2005

**Value of grant:** £17,700,000

**Description of project:** Acquisition of the John Murray Archive; creation of new exhibitions and a new exhibition space within the National Library of Scotland building; establishment of a new reading room at the Library; digitisation of approximately a third of the John Murray Archive.

**Year of completion of project:** 2007

**Interviewee:** Martyn Wade, former CEO, National Library of Scotland

“The Murray acquisition has put the National Library of Scotland on a world stage.”

The John Murray Archive (JMA) is a collection of manuscripts, documents and letters belonging to the John Murray publishing firm, dating from its founding by Edinburgh-born Murray in 1768, until 1920. It comprises over 150,000 items, including material from writers such as Byron, Disraeli, Austen, Darwin, Melville and Livingstone, and artists such as J.M.W. Turner and David Roberts. The Archive is exceptional in the way it captures the interconnected nature of literary, scientific and cultural thinking in Britain's Victorian era. The firm was among the most highly regarded of publishing houses, and its papers provide a rich view of the cultural and intellectual life of the nation.

When the publishing firm was sold in 2002, the owners offered the archive for sale separately, expressing a preference that it should go to the National Library of Scotland (NLS). However given the financial value of the archive, this would not have been possible without help from HLF and the Scottish government. Indeed, in the absence of these grants, it is highly likely that the collection would have had to have been broken up for sale elsewhere. The NLS entered into conversations with HLF early on, and in 2007 the archive was successfully transferred to the library. Financial arrangements were made carefully to ensure its sustainability, with the 'John R Murray Charitable Trust' established from the proceeds of the sale to assist in the care and promotion of access to the archive. This support has enabled NLS to employ a dedicated curator and assistant curator, creating greater capacity to deliver interpretation and access activities.

Before its acquisition by the NLS, the Archive was being held in the Murray family home in London. It was not open to the public, although some access had been provided to around 175 visitors a year, nor was it very comprehensively catalogued. A full list of its contents had never been made available. It was also being stored in a wine cellar where – although the archive was in good physical condition – environmental conditions were not ideal.

So the move to the National Library Scotland has been beneficial both in terms of conservation of heritage, and public accessibility. The archive is indexed effectively

so things can be found easily, there is great scope for interpretation of the work by author or subject as well as via the history of the publishing house, and much of it has been digitised. The archivists' work links the collection to its place in the world, and to other items in the NLS's collection, through developing temporary and permanent exhibitions.

The acquisition was part of a long-term reorientation underway at the National Library, which was trying to move from a traditional academically-focused library to one with freer access. The HLF major grant therefore contributed to the transformation of the library's business across the board. Then-CEO Martyn Wade says, *"exhibitions are no longer simply collections of works, they tell stories in a rich and accessible way... The success of the major grant project has increased the ambition of trustees, management and staff, and increased appetite for change."*

The funding from HLF, the acquisition of the archive, and the corresponding improvements within the organisation, have all heightened the profile, capacity and confidence of the NLS. There is a greater range of skills internally, across fundraising, marketing and education. And being effective curators of such a large archive has raised the confidence of other donors and funders. Since the arrival of the John Murray Archive, other donations of items and funds have started to arrive:

"Individual donations are now being given to a library that previously wasn't on the world stage – when a woman in the US found the Byron memorial book from his funeral at her local jumble sale, she donated it to the library. It's a nice reflection of the story and knowledge of the library making its way across the world."

## **National Maritime Museum Cornwall**

**Year of HLF grant:** 2005

**Value of grant:** £18,431,638

**Description of project:** Creation of a building for the museum (as part of a major regeneration of Falmouth sea front), providing visitor facilities such as a cafe, shop and pontoon; transfer and housing of the national boat collection, the Bartlett museum and the local Cornwall Maritime Museum into the exhibition space.

**Year of completion of project:** 2010

**Interviewee:** Jonathan Griffin, Director, National Maritime Museum Cornwall

The National Maritime Museum Cornwall (NMM) was the result of the convergence of three things: the Cornwall Maritime Museum, the National Maritime Museum's collection of boats in need of a home, and a derelict piece of land on the edge of Falmouth town centre. The major grant funded project turned what had been a small museum run by volunteers, 'a cabinet of curiosities', with an uncertain future, into a modern institution with a more secure future. The boats which had been lying out of sight in a warehouse in South London are now properly conserved and many are displayed. The project has also encouraged loans and donations, and the collection has expanded.

Like many 'millennium club' projects, as director Jonathan Griffin terms them, there have been a few stumbles along the way. The original business plan was flawed, omitting some key costs such as maintenance, and overestimating visitor numbers and therefore revenue. However the museum remains a popular feature of Falmouth. The latest figures are 125,000 visitors per year, whereas previously the former museum had fewer than 10,000. 80% of these are tourists, so it provides a good dividend for the country and town. It has also had an important regeneration effect on Falmouth. If the HLF project hadn't gone ahead, the derelict plot of land would have become luxury flats. Now, 60% of tourists cite NMM Cornwall as their main reason for visiting the town.

## **National Maritime Museum Greenwich: Neptune Hall and the Royal Observatory**

**Project:** Neptune Hall

**Year of HLF grant:** 1996

**Value of grant:** £12,050,000

**Description of project:** removal and storage of existing Victorian roof on this Grade I listed building; construction of a new roof over the courtyard to create a large covered space;

**Year of completion of project:** 1999

**Project:** Time and Space - Developing the Royal Observatory Greenwich

**Year of HLF grant:** 2004

**Value of grant:** £7,151,400

**Description of project:** Refurbishing the Altazimuth Pavilion and the South Building, a Grade II listed building; landscaping of part of the site; improved access and visitor facilities, including an education and learning centre and a new gallery space.

**Year of completion of project:** 2007

**Interviewees:** Dr Kevin Fewster, Director, National Maritime Museum; Roy Clare, former Director, National Maritime Museum

Before the major grant developments, former National Maritime Museum Director Roy Clare characterises the museum as 'charming but old-fashioned'.

"The prevailing ethos was shaped by 1950s austerity, we needed to move the galleries on from focusing purely on maritime skills and customs, to the associated political, economic and social matters. In the culture of curation we needed to move from a philosophy of 'keeping things' to 'sharing things'."

NMM was primed for something 'bold and imaginative', and the HLF grant gave them the chance. Neptune Court – which was glazed over in a design by Rick Mather, and enabled the creation of a number of new galleries – was in fact one of the first HLF major grants, and 'a trailblazer', according to current Director Kevin Fewster. "It was the first project that brought NMM into the modern era." It enabled a major programme of museum and exhibition renewal, and inspired many subsequent capital projects such as the British Museum and Wallace Collection courtyards.

The grant to improve the Royal Observatory was even more needed. In spite of the Observatory site attracting more visitors than the museum itself, it was in a poor state, with 'cascades of water' leaking through the roof when it rained, and much of the building inaccessible to visitors. The multi-million pound Peter Harrison Planetarium replaced a dysfunctional facility in the telescope dome roof of the South Building. The HLF funding enabled the recovery of two historic buildings, but the public won far more than that. The integration of the elements of the site led to far greater public access, and to much better care for the collections.

Taken together, the two projects instilled a greater level of self-confidence in NMM, and a more contemporary approach to interpretation. NMM now serves a wider variety of audiences, and the whole Greenwich site has gone from 2 million visitors per year to 11 million.

“Neptune Court and Time & Space helped clarify the heritage value of Greenwich and set heritage at the heart of that visitor experience.”

## **National Media Museum**

**Year of HLF grant:** 1995

**Value of grant:** £6,081,000

**Description of project:** Creation of a new, three-story glazed pavilion Concourse Building, linking up three sites that originally comprise this museum complex, increasing exhibition and storage space; provision of new visitor and accessibility facilities, including full wheelchair access, retail space, cafe, and conference facilities.

**Year of completion of project:** 2000

**Interviewees:** Ian Blatchford, Director, Science Museum Group; Amanda Nevill, former Head of the National Media Museum.

The National Media Museum (NMM) in Bradford is home to the 3.5 million items of the National Photography, National Cinematography, National Television and National New Media Collections. At the point of the major grant it had been 20 years since the gallery had had any improvements and a number of changes were needed. The major grant funded refurbishment was the first investment of any scale – and effectively a re-launch.

The major grant enabled NMM to put more of the collections on display, including in some cases, such as the cinematographic collection, showing things for the first time. It created a national photographic collection, bringing the Royal Photographic Society's collection to Bradford from Bath. It provided the museum with state of art conservation tools and facilities – at the time the conservation centre for photographs was the most advanced anywhere in the world.

The success of the reopening boosted the confidence of the team. NMM did in fact see a sharp increase in visitor numbers – receiving over a million visitors a year for several years after opening – as well as a greater diversity of audience, a very important consideration given the multicultural population of Bradford. In light of continued cuts in public funding, the Museum is now looking at how it can engage further with the local community, with a particular focus on the science of light.

Despite the continued financial difficulties (not unlike those faced by many cultural institutions), it is clear that the HLF-funded project benefited the city in the long term: through cultural engagement, University of Bradford partnership working, and the award of UNESCO City of Film in 2009. The investment attracted significant collaborations: with Lucas Films to create an international touring exhibition of the Star Wars franchise, and a David Bailey exhibition. Both chose the National Media Museum as a partner to curate, present and tour internationally. Through this the Museum gained an important international reputation.

“For Bradford, and for the museum itself, the grant was transformational.”

## **National Museum of Scotland**

The National Museum of Scotland has received two major grants from HLF, which affected the institution in very different ways. The first grant did not perhaps achieve as much as it might have. A new director arrived in between the two grants and – drawing on the lessons from the first– managed the delivery of the second. The second grant, in the end, was transformational, uniting a distinct set of institutions into a single organisation, and leveraging significant cultural change across what is now a very successful visitor-focused museum.

**Project:** Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh

**Year of HLF grant:** 1995

**Value of grant:** £6,750,000

**Description of project:** Provision of new gallery space; transfer of exhibitions from the Museum of Antiquities; redisplay of these items.

**Year of completion of project:** 2000

**Project:** Royal Museum Project

**Year of HLF grant:** 2005

**Value of grant:** £17,762,000

**Description of project:** Creation of a new accessible entrance to this Grade A listed building; creation of a new learning centre with lecture theatre, learning studios; new space for housing special exhibitions; creation of 16 new galleries; new public spaces; to make building more accessible.

**Year of completion of project:** 2012

**Interviewee:** Dr Gordon Rintoul, Director, National Museums of Scotland

Two major grants from HLF, in 1995 and in 2005 helped to create the institution as it is today. The first was only partially successful; the second much more so.

The first major grant was for the creation of new galleries about Scotland and its people within a new and very ambitious modernist building. Much of the material for the new displays came from the former National Museum of Antiquities, which closed prior to the new development opening. Although the new displays portrayed the history of Scotland as a coherent whole for the first time and presented objects in new ways – or brought them out of storage for the first time – overall this first major grant-funded project under-delivered. Visitor numbers and reported visitor satisfaction were disappointing. The new building was not designed with ease of visitor flow in mind, resulting in a challenging visitor experience. More significantly, says Director Gordon Rintoul, the project had limited impact on the rest of the organisation culturally – “it was like it had landed from outer space”.

Part of the problem was felt to be the dominance of the design team, and the relative lack of a focus on visitors. In several ways the project was kept too separate from the wider organisation. In addition, in spite of being physically connected, exhibits and

visitor services staff in the new wing remained separate from the older original part of the complex. The new Museum of Scotland was sited right next to the older Royal Museum, but the relationship between the two had not been thought through.

There had been significant under investment in the estate for a number of years and consequently, the Royal Museum felt out of date and visitor numbers were relatively low. “The galleries were looking old and were half empty, with too many major items in storage (although not in adequate storage facilities), and access to the museum was dreadful.” The museum had also not nurtured its relations with potential donors so there was a fundraising issue.

When Rintoul arrived in 2002 he instigated a master planning process which re-evaluated the aims of the organisation and developed a new vision. “It was obvious the National Museum had to be brought together. The day I arrived I knew what I was going to do.” The second major-grant-funded project was conceived as part of this wholesale change agenda, although Rintoul recognises that the first project was a necessary step towards this new masterplan.

The second project was far more extensive. “We were doing everything at the one time, from a new vision and strategic plan, to planning a wholesale restructuring of the organisation, a new masterplan for the National Museum, to reworking the trading company. In retrospect it was madness.” The point is: the major grant in this instance was critical to mobilising a much more ambitious programme of change, and helped the Museum leverage funding from elsewhere to achieve it. As well as physically restructuring, the learning offer and the public programmes were very significantly expanded, both of which shifted the focus on to the visitor and helped inspire the curators to explore the collection in new ways. The result was a unified Museum of Scotland with a collection spanning 200 years and covering the natural world, world cultures, art and design, and science and technology as well as Scottish history.

Heritage outcomes have been positive. There are far more of the key items within the collections out on display now than before, and the pieces that are in storage are being kept in much more suitable conditions. Conservation facilities have been improved, and a digital cataloguing project is underway. As the building itself is nationally significant, the restoration of the building was an important heritage outcome.

In comparison to a modest increase after the first project, there has been an enormous leap in attendance since the second. Before, the museum’s best annual record was 833,000; in the twelve months after reopening the museum received 2.33 million visitors, half of whom had never been before. Since then, numbers have settled at around 1.75 million per year. Nearly nine out of ten visitors on the launch weekend said they were ‘very likely to return’. Due to the family-oriented nature of some of the redesigned exhibitions, there has been a particular increase in family visits. The Museum is now focused on planning further new galleries – particularly around its art and design and science and technology collections.

In terms of financial outcomes, the museum is now more resilient as an organisation, with better relationships with donors, a more substantial development team and a healthy team of volunteers supporting the museum in various ways. The wider economic impact has also been impressive: an independent impact study estimated

that in the six months following reopening, the 1.3 million visitors brought over £22 million of economic benefit to Scotland.

## **National Museums Liverpool**

**Project:** NML – Into the Future

**Year of HLF grant:** 2002

**Value of grant:** £30,939,800

**Description of project:** This major grant supported improvement works to three of National Museums Liverpool's venues:

- the Museum of Liverpool Life (creation of two new galleries over two floors),
- the Walker Art Gallery (restoration and development of temporary exhibition suite; and the restoration of a prime ground floor gallery space, previously used as offices, for the display of decorative art),
- and the World Museum (creation of a new ground floor entrance and atrium, including new circulation throughout the museum; shop and café; six new galleries and attractions, including an aquarium, World Cultures Gallery, Bug House, and interactive learning areas; the refurbishment of collections storage, research space and office accommodation.)

Funding was also received for the reroofing and refurbishment of part of NML's main collections store.

**Year of completion of project:** 2005

**Interviewee:** Dr David Fleming, Director, National Museums Liverpool

**Project:** Museum of Liverpool

**Year of HLF grant:** 2006

**Value of grant:** £11,400,000

**Description of project:** Creation of the Museum of Liverpool, in a contemporary new building and giving access to 10,000 objects from National Museums Liverpool's collection. With a focus on four main themes; Port City, Global City, People's City and Creative City.

**Year of completion of project:** 2011

**Interviewee:** Dr David Fleming, Director, National Museums Liverpool

The first major grant to National Museums Liverpool helped fund the refurbishment and development of three venues – the Museum of Liverpool Life, the Walker Art Gallery, and the World Museum – and the main collections store. A second Major Grant was awarded in 2006 for the creation of a new Museum of Liverpool in a new, contemporary building on the city's waterfront. This was the largest newly-built national museum in Britain for more than a century.

Before the grant-funded projects, the galleries were in need of serious attention. There had been several decades with no investment and the fabric of the buildings was deteriorating. The stores were not to the standard that is required for a national museum and the displays were out of date. There were also some cultural issues:

the museum staff had 'colonised' the best spaces. The first major grant meant returning these to the public and putting more of the collection on show, which required a change in mentality. So the redevelopment was aimed at transforming the whole organisation – 'a launchpad for modernisation'. The project set higher standards for museums across Liverpool and in particular those under the ownership of NML.

David Fleming, Director of National Museums Liverpool, says that this process had to be done with care as behaviour change can "take years to shift...this had to be managed strategically to make sure the organisation didn't 'implode' from too much change."

"The grant gave us some spectacular exhibitions space at the Walker and a major transformation at the World Museum."

## National Portrait Gallery

Before the building of the Ondaatje Wing – part-funded by the HLF major grant – the National Portrait Gallery was a very constrained, quite dark set of galleries. The problems with the site were such that serious consideration had been given to moving it to a different part of London. The new wing has created enough room for people to pause, work out what they're doing, and what they want to see. The new Tudor and Balcony galleries have released more space to show the 20<sup>th</sup> century collection. But the social transformation has been huge too – the cafe was created, the new Portrait Restaurant introduced, Thursday and Friday evening openings brought in; and music performances started: these have all now become part of the Gallery's appeal. The institution has a freshness now – the new wing has put to bed the lingering idea that the National Portrait Gallery was just “dusty kings and queens”.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1997

**Value of grant:** £11,900,000

**Description of project:** Construction of a new wing at the National Portrait Gallery; improvement to visitor facilities, including a new visitor reception area; re-organisation of the existing galleries into the new space; creation of a new Tudor gallery, roof top restaurant, and the 150 seat Ondaatje Wing Theatre.

**Year of completion of project:** 2000

**Interviewee(s):** Sandy Nairne, director, National Portrait Gallery; Charles Saumarez Smith, former director, National Portrait Gallery

The National Portrait Gallery had never been a particularly easy building to work with. (It mostly dates from 1896, with 1930s extensions.) Visitors had insufficient reasons to linger, and it wasn't a comfortable place to be: there was nowhere to eat or drink, for instance. Its audience was largely 'traditional' museum visitors, and the organisation had a culture of conservatism and introspection that led to mostly smaller-scale, relatively low key and specialist projects.

Charles Saumarez Smith, its Director in the 1990s, increasingly thought that there needed to be a 'leap forward' in the Gallery. The architects Sir Jeremy Dixon and Edward Jones developed a radical proposal to move the Gallery 'inward', building on an internal courtyard. This addressed the issue of a shortage of space and halted discussions about moving offsite. The clarity of Dixon Jones's plan helped increase support for the project from staff and Trustees.

When the philanthropist Christopher Ondaatje offered a substantial donation, the project could, with the help of an HLF major grant, and support from Heinz family, be realised. The atmosphere of the time just before the Millennium added to the sense of cultural opportunity which the Gallery was able to seize successfully.

The Ondaatje Wing has helped increase the space for showing art. The Tudor collection was recognised as a major asset of the Collection, but was not adequately exhibited before. The wing allows the Collection to 'start on a high' with the Tudors shown off to their best advantage in the first gallery of the top floor, where around half of visitors begin their visit. People now spend a lot of time in these galleries.

The changes at the National Portrait Gallery go well beyond the physical, though. The social transformation of the institution has been just as important. The emergence of the Gallery (and the Ondaatje Wing's entrance hall in particular) as a place where people meet, and that they use in different ways was a surprise. The music events, for instance, have built up a dedicated following, and the Gallery now has its own professional Portrait Choir.

“The Ondaatje Wing has been the final nail in the idea that the National Portrait Gallery was a stuffy, old place.”

The National Portrait Gallery had nearly 1 million visitors in 2000, a figure which has risen steadily since, and is now over 2 million. This growth is driven by the exhibition and display programming. The whole ethos of the institution has changed: it undertakes contemporary commissions, and has become much more adept at getting publicity, having holistic marketing strategies and utilising digital media. Sandy Nairne, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, says “we should be part of British public life”, and to this end he has worked to target minority audiences to make them feel the Gallery ‘is also for them’. An exhibition of Indian portraiture attracted substantial interest from the South Asian community, while the ‘Gay Icons’ exhibition has attracted interest from the LGBT community. The Gallery has managed to sustain these links through other projects.

## National Railway Museum, Shildon

Before the major grant a number of the National Railway Museum's (NRM) 290 rail vehicles were stored at other museums, heritage railways, military bases and in the museum's own yards in York. However, many of these sites were open to the elements and the vehicles were at serious risk of deterioration. The decision was made to refurbish the Timothy Hackworth Museum in Shildon, Co. Durham, creating both an updated museum and a new collections centre. NRM Shildon has now become an important symbol of local pride. It regularly attracts over 200,000 people a year, including many repeat visitors.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2000

**Value of grant:** £5,047,000

**Description of project:** The project involved building refurbishment and the construction of a brand new collections building for the NRM. The former Timothy Hackworth Museum was refurbished and a brand new collections centre was created, to showcase the large number of vehicles owned by NRM that were not already on public display due to space constraints at the NRM site in York.

**Year of completion of project:** 2006

**Interviewees:** Ian Blatchford, Director, Science Museum Group; Heather Mayfield, Deputy Director, Science Museum; Paul Kirkman, Director, National Railway Museum

The Shildon project was undertaken for two main reasons: firstly, to provide indoor space for conserving rail vehicles, and secondly, to increase public access to the site and collection. The National Railway Museum, part of the Science Museum group, had realised there was an opportunity for Shildon to become a visitor attraction as well as somewhere to store rail vehicles. One of the advantages of this particular site was that the area was eligible for European funding (ERDF), which was used to match-fund the HLF major grant. Shildon was developed as a partnership between NRM and Sedgfield Borough Council, which has since been subsumed into the larger Durham County Council unitary authority. The Council and the Science Museum Group each provide approximately half the revenue funding.

The museum received more acclaim than anticipated, and it now attracts around 200,000 visitors a year. It is one of the main (and few) visitor attractions in County Durham outside of the city of Durham and is seen as a high profile destination in the local towns and villages. Shildon is also an important part of the local community.

The area is struggling economically: coal-mining and railways, which were the mainstays of the economy, are long gone. The museum has drawn on the region's heritage to create a place that has broad appeal as well as generating interest from railway enthusiasts. For the local and wider community the museum is a much-loved part of the area's ongoing regeneration.

"It is one of the most deprived northern industrial locations that you can find. All industry and jobs were gone – it was dying on its feet. That's why people like it [the museum]".

The NRM makes a point of sending high-profile and significant pieces to Shildon. This is a deliberate step to build new audiences in the area, but also reflects the fact that the quality of the storage facilities and the museum are so good. In November 2012, for instance, two sister locomotives to the famous *Mallard* were brought from Canada and the US to be displayed at the National Railway Museum in York. They were sent to Shildon to be refurbished, but they attracted more attention than the

NRM had expected. 20,000 people turned out to see the trains at Shildon, accounting for 10% of the museum's projected visitor figures for the year. When they returned on display, with six of Mallard's remaining sister locomotives, before heading back to North America, they attracted 121,000 visitors over nine days: more than half the year's expected visitors.

"If you have a railway museum then you have a market for events. It's the biggest news in that part of the north east – you couldn't do it anywhere else."

The major grant has spurred continuing work on the site. After the grant, the museum and the Friends group fundraised to develop a workshop with conservation space. This would not have happened without the museum being there: Shildon has gained a reputation as a conservator of rail vehicles. The workshop has hosted a number of apprentices, including ones funded by the HLF's Skills for the Future programme, improving skills in heritage rail engineering.

The economic benefits for the area are an important aspect of Shildon's contribution to its locality. It has 20 full-time staff (who are officially employed by Durham County Council) as well as casual (paid) staff to run the community events programme. They also have a sizeable number of volunteers.

Paul Kirkman, director of NRM, says: *"None of this would have happened without the support from HLF"*.

## **National Trust for Scotland: Newhailes**

**Year of HLF grant:** 1996

**Value of grant:** £8,000,000

**Description of project:** Acquisition of Newhailes House, a Grade A listed building, along with chattels; provision of an endowment for Newhailes (£5.6m); necessary repair works to shell and fabric of the house.

**Year of completion of project:** 1997

**Interviewee:** Kate Mavor, former Chief Executive, National Trust for Scotland

Newhailes is a neo-Palladian villa and landscape garden, for many years owned by the Dalrymple family, influential figures and famed salon hosts of the Scottish Enlightenment. In 1996, National Trust for Scotland took on Newhailes from the owners, at which point it was in a very poor state, with rust, dilapidated furnishings and peeling wallpaper throughout its remarkable Rococo interiors. The house is now being looked after and deterioration has been stopped. However NTS took a conservation-led decision to keep it largely as found, controversial for some who would like to see it restored to its heyday conditions.

The estate is now open throughout the year and well used by locals. The education programme has been particularly successful: there is a full time learning officer in place, local schools attend sculpture classes at Newhailes, and mount plays in the house and grounds. Although it is financially secure due to an endowment, the property is now looking to increase revenue through an improved café and shop.

## **National Trust Scotland: Burns' Birthplace Museum**

Robert Burns is one of the most significant figures in Scottish cultural history, and the museum at his birthplace had become a major repository of documents and manuscripts about his life and work. Yet the building itself had holes in its roof: the potential for damage to the collection was enormous. The Burns site was operated by a range of different organisations with no common purpose: the National Trust of Scotland (NTS), which ran a café and theatre, the Burns Monument Trust, and the local council. The major grant project developed a clear vision, agreed by all, which allowed the site to be managed as a single entity. It is now an award-winning museum, and is clearly established as the primary custodian of Burns's legacy in Scotland.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2007

**Value of grant:** £5,827,000

**Description of project:** Redevelopment and revitalisation of the Burns National Heritage Park in Alloway, South Ayrshire. Construction and development of a new museum and the management and re-interpretation of the landscape and monuments around the cottage in which Burns was born.

**Year of completion of project:** 2013

**Interviewees:** Kate Mavor, former Chief Executive, National Trust for Scotland; Nat Edwards, Robert Burns Birthplace Museum Director, National Trust for Scotland; Mark Adderley, former chief executive, National Trust for Scotland

The Burns Monument Trust was established in 1814, and had run the site for most of its existence. The Trust was permanently short of cash, though, and this affected its ability to maintain the site. In 1995 a joint board was established to run Burns National Heritage Park: a partnership between the Trust, the Local Authority and Scottish Enterprise. However, this group also struggled to secure sufficient capital to reinvest in the museum, and the site was not fit for purpose as either a visitor attraction or a museum. By 2005, when the building's leaking roof was threatening the artefacts inside, local concerns were running so high that the Scottish Parliament was petitioned about the state of the museum. Parliament responded by encouraging National Trust Scotland (NTS) to become involved in the museum's future. This was a new venture for NTS – it had not tried to build and run a facility before.

The new museum opened in 2011 as a state-of-the-art facility to maintain all the heritage artefacts. It elevates the collection to the status it merits. The museum has only 5,000 objects but they are of national and international significance and are now housed in one place – previously they were dispersed in domestic settings, archives, and the National Library of Scotland. The new building offers new interpretations of Burns's life and work, and the archive is given the prominence it deserves. "We have a museum to unify the site and make sense of the real and imagined Burns legend. Alloway is on the map." Kate Mavor, chief executive of NTS says. Loans to other Burns collections across Scotland have led to increased interest and knowledge of the Birthplace Museum.

One part of the HLF grant conditions was that there should be professional museum staff on site. (Unlike most NTS properties, where collections are displayed in historic settings and looked after by a small central team.) Now there is a curator and a cohort of staff. This is very unusual for NTS and would not have happened without HLF. It has been very successful despite early tension as workloads changed and staff became used to a new regime. The environment is improved and that has allowed the Burns Museum to partner with other museums on loans and research.

Operating as a 'proper' museum has uncovered some issues – for the size of their collection they are curatorially under-resourced, for instance – but also offers opportunities such as the chance to be involved in AHRC knowledge exchange programmes.

The Museum currently gets between 300,000 and 350,000 visitors a year. This is not huge, but reflects the fact that it is not on a major tourist route. In Ayrshire only 5-6% of visitors are from overseas – the area gets very few of the 'Scotland in a week' American tourists. "This is Burns country so it's important the museum is there – but it does mean visitor access is difficult for many." says Mavor. Nevertheless, the profile of visitors has changed. Previously visitors were older and mostly local, with the occasional coach party. Now it is more diverse with younger locals, tourists and many school parties. The restaurant, coffee shop and social space on the site are of significant scale for the local area and have become centres for the local community.

Getting to this point was tricky, though. As with many heritage projects, stakeholder management was not straightforward, given the number of organisations with a direct stake in the site. The Scottish Government (and all of the Parliamentary Scottish parties, for whom Burns is a key figure), was watching closely and needed to be kept in the loop – although the cross-party support and interest was helpful. A clear plan was developed for the site, and major reforms were introduced, which resulted in an organisation with its own governance structure and property manager. Stakeholder and project management groups were also established.

Without HLF this would have been a different project. NTS would have been compelled to try and raise funds from other sources, an area in which it was short on expertise. The HLF grant and HLF's presence in the process raised the profile of the project, and reassured high-value donors and the Scottish Government.

The major grant was also good for NTS as a whole, for its morale and its public profile. While the museum was controversial at the time, it fits with NTS's vision of promoting and conserving heritage, and promoting enjoyment with learning, and it scores highly on both. The Burns Museum was also a good template for later change (at Bannockburn) and now both are examples of the changing face of NTS. Mavor says, "These capital projects have given confidence to NTS ambitions – Burns was a major part of that."

## **National Trust Scotland: Mar Lodge**

Mar Lodge is an important natural heritage asset for the UK, an expanse of land in Scotland containing a great deal of unique natural landscape, flora and fauna, all of which demand protection. The estate was bought from a private owner by National Trust Scotland with the help of a major grant in 1995. Their project was one of conservation (rather than establishing it as a visitor attraction, for example): having previously been damaged by over-grazing of deer and years of use as a hunting estate, Mar Lodge now has a 200-year preservation and bio-diversity plan. However the project was not without its problems, and a number of issues to do with local community relationships and internal management had to be worked through.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1995

**Value of grant:** £10,276,993

**Description of project:** purchase of the site of Mar Lodge, a 31,000 hectare site containing seven listed buildings; provision for an endowment for the site (£10 million); improvements to the shell and building fabric of Mar Lodge, a Grade B Listed building.

**Year of completion of project:** 2004

**Interviewee:** Kate Mavor, former Chief Executive, National Trust Scotland

“We could not have bought this estate without the HLF major grant, and then this incredible generous bequest would not have been accessed.” Kate Mavor, National Trust Scotland (NTS)

Mar Lodge Estate is a huge tract of land which makes up around 7% of the Cairngorms National Park in Scotland. This is some of the most remote and scenic wild land in Scotland, with a broad range of types of habitat typical of the traditional Highland landscape: pasture land by the river, ancient Caledonian pine forest, heather moorland, juniper scrub, and the high Cairngorm plateau and mountain territory, including four of the five highest mountains in the UK, and fifteen Munros (mountains of over 3,000 ft.). The estate is recognised as one of the most important nature conservation landscapes in the British Isles and, with all these features, is critical in the long-term conservation of Highland habitat.

However until its acquisition by National Trust Scotland, Mar Lodge had been in private ownership and run as a hunting estate, which had led to damage to this unique natural landscape: the mountains and glens of the southern Cairngorms were being seriously degraded. The Scots pine forest was being damaged by over-grazing by deer – with which the estate was overpopulated for hunting purposes. The deer were eating all new growth and inhibiting saplings. Walkers and vehicles were damaging the terrain across the estate, and previous attempts to drive tracks up to the higher reaches had left scars in the landscape. There was also fencing in inappropriate places which was a hazard to wildlife, in particular to some rare species of grouse.

When the owner decided to sell, a significant sum of money to help with the purchase was offered by the Easter Trust. The HLF contributed a further £10.2

million, and the NTS took ownership, running the estate as a public asset. The NTS's focus had to be on the conservation of the site, and the anonymous bequest also dictated that this should be a priority. However this led to some dissent among the board of trustees managing the property. Kate Mavor, Chief Executive, NTS, says, "Feelings ran high around the conservation role versus shooting", both of which had to continue side by side. For conservation reasons deer numbers had to be brought down, and this was to be achieved through the continuation of stalking. Some NTS members were uncomfortable about NTS's involvement in what was essentially a Victorian hunting estate. And there were tensions with neighbouring estates who felt that the suppression of deer numbers was leaving insufficient game for them to shoot.

There were also problems with the local community, and estate workers, who were used to life as it had been previously. As the NTS at the time was going through some organisational difficulties, the Mar Lodge acquisition and transformation process was not managed as well as it might have been. A lack of transparency about what was going on, or a public and visible plan for the estate led to accusations from the gamekeepers that it wasn't being professionally run. In hindsight, Mavor thinks the NTS would have benefitted from the structure of the HLF evaluation framework, which came in later – "it is an invaluable guide to ensure projects do not stray off course." Mar Lodge did struggle for a time, whereas now she thinks "the HLF would have been across that instantly."

The majority of these problems were smoothed over – in part through changes in the Trust itself – but also specifically through the process of a large-scale consultation, which opened up discussion and made the Trust's plans for Mar Lodge more public. There is now a more harmonious relationship with the Braemar community and surrounding estates. Indeed Mavor sees it as positive that "the debate about conservation and shooting was brought out in to the open for all to consider and contribute towards."

The Trust's strategy, now public, is one of conservation and restoration of the 'wild land quality' while ensuring public access and enjoyment, and a firm commitment to continuation of field sports. The estate has a 200-year management plan, which aims to balance these three objectives and demonstrate that they can all be achieved in harmony.

Although it is a 200-year plan and may need that time to come to full fruition, the restoration of the woodland is already reinvigorating insects, bees, and birds, all of which help maintain the estate in balance. And they are developing traditional skills such as woodland management to maintain this conservation work, with the results of their efforts recorded for future generations to learn from.

As Mar Lodge is one of the few NTS estates that has a sufficient endowment to maintain it. The Trust has only recently turned to the issue of attracting and managing visitors. People counters have recently been installed, although as an estate with multiple entry points this is difficult to monitor. However the visitor experience is now part of the delivery plan and will begin to be assessed, as well as work with local and national tourism bodies.

## **National Trust: Tyntesfield**

When Dame Fiona Reynolds joined the National Trust (NT) she felt that it needed to change, to develop an 'arms open' model of conservation, involving the public and NT members more. The Trust more generally was aware of the dangers of complacency, and wanted to become more responsive to developments such as the introduction of Sunday trading. Tyntesfield became an important vehicle for these changes. With the support of the HLF, the National Trust took a new approach, focusing much more on public engagement. The grant transformed Tyntesfield. More than that, though, it significantly shaped the National Trust's thinking on working with volunteers; on how to develop relationships with local communities; and how these experiences could be shared across the National Trust as a whole.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2005

**Value of grant:** £20,000,000

**Description of project:** Extensive conservation work done to Tyntesfield House, a Grade I listed building; installation of lighting, heating and security and fire detection systems; Repairs to farm buildings, saw mill, engine house and battery house, and four cottages; conversion of these buildings to spaces for education, training, and small business workshops, and providing income through holiday accommodation respectively; significant programmes of local community engagement and the development of a wide-ranging volunteer offer; conversion of a Grade 2\* listed Victorian Home Farm complex into a thriving visitor hub

**Year of completion of project:** 2012

**Interviewees:** Dame Helen Ghosh, Director General, National Trust; Dame Fiona Reynolds, former Director General, National Trust

Tyntesfield came on the market in 2002. There were few other existing National Trust (NT) properties in the area (North Somerset) and this large Victorian Gothic country house with substantial gardens had a huge 'time capsule' collection of domestic items in situ that the NT wanted to use to engage with visitors and stakeholders. Tyntesfield was seen as the perfect opportunity to start the transformation Reynolds was looking for; it was a blank canvas.

The first step in the process was acquiring the property and its contents. This was funded not by the HLF but by the National Heritage Memorial Fund (£17.4 million), a public appeal (£3.5 million) and anonymous donors (£5 million). The HLF major grant then enabled a transformation in the approach the National Trust took to the house's conservation.

Tyntesfield was important because the public was much more involved in the conservation work than in previous projects, helping to get the house up and running, and then to manage the place. From the outset, the NT challenged itself to make the process of change a learning experience for everyone involved (staff, volunteers and the public), giving the transformation a richer meaning. It was set out in a very democratic way where local people were involved in deciding what was special about the place. This allowed the NT the opportunity to be less 'curatorial' and more open in its decision-making.

An important aspect of the project was enabling all sorts of people and audiences to acquire new skills, with development opportunities for staff, interns, apprentices, people on work placements and volunteers. People had the chance to try out different roles and to take on more responsibility on a temporary basis. Some employees had the opportunity to compete for more senior roles in the Trust and elsewhere. Skills development covered a range of disciplines including conservation, curatorial, gardening, operational, volunteer management and planning.

Tyntesfield itself now has the largest volunteer scheme of all NT properties (around 850 volunteers), as well as providing places for apprenticeships and Skills for the Future volunteer placements (offering 16 spaces).

This was a new approach for the Trust and changed the way people experienced and felt about the work of the NT. The process was less about increasing visitor numbers and more about building a deeper relationship with its members and supporters. Nevertheless, during Reynolds' time both visitor and membership numbers doubled, with family membership increasing even faster.

The NT also found as it developed this new model that many of its staff had skills the Trust could use but which it wasn't exploiting. The Trust has therefore created an internal consultancy to pool this expertise, allowing every NT property access to skills and resources that it may not have itself.

Other sites took an interest in what was happening at Tyntesfield. The more proactive ones started to adopt the 'arms open' approach in their own properties. The NT realised that it needed to improve the sharing of learning across its portfolio of properties. Tyntesfield was therefore instrumental in the Trust developing a new Project Management Framework, which has now been rolled out across the organisation.

"We didn't have good enough ways of showing everyone else what good looks like".

Tyntesfield currently has a high visitor enjoyment score with 97% of people saying their trip was either enjoyable or very enjoyable. Total visitor numbers topped 1 million in the summer of 2012. There is a very diverse audience catchment with six million people within one hour's drive. At present the house is among the top 20 most visited NT properties.

Tyntesfield was a highly significant opportunity for the National Trust, offering it a chance to overhaul and transform the organisation and its approach to conservation, but Ghosh feels cautious about over-claiming for what they achieved. What happened at Tyntesfield was actually the summation of a lot of other good ideas and activities that may have taken place at other properties but had not been enacted collectively – Tyntesfield was the chance to do this in one place.

## **National Waterfront Museum**

The National Waterfront Museum in Swansea sits at the heart of a wider programme of regeneration, and celebration of local industrial heritage. The new facility brings together two important collections and presents them in the light of Wales' contribution to global industrialisation. The major grant funded project restored a listed building on the waterfront and created an 'open' museum that works actively with the local community by constantly refreshing its displays.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2002

**Value of grant:** £11,124,500

**Description of project:** Creation of new museum space, incorporating and refurbishing a Grade II listed building; spaces made for retail units, cafe and kitchen, shop, education workshop spaces, technical workshops; bringing two collections, the former Welsh Industrial and Maritime Museum, and City and County of Swansea collection, together under one roof.

**Year of completion of project:** 2005

**Interviewees:** David Anderson, Director General of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales; Anna Southall, former Director of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales

The National Waterfront Museum (NWM) is a new cultural hub on the waterfront in Swansea, which tells the story of Wales' industrial heritage, and its contribution to global industrialisation. Opened in 2005, the museum is the result of the amalgamation of two internationally significant collections: that of the Swansea Maritime and Industrial Museum (owned by the City and County of Swansea – CCS) and the former Welsh Industrial and Maritime Museum, which was in store at the time.

Two public bodies came together to plan and drive forward the new museum: the local authority in Swansea (CCS) and Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales (AC-NMW). AC-NMW had thought there was an opportunity to create a major regional museum in Wales, and was aware of the spare capacity in collections that had not been made use of in the existing strategy for interpreting the industrial history of Wales. The Council in Swansea was keen to go further in recognising the lost industrial legacy of the area, and its importance to Welsh heritage.

An old industrial site was identified – a former two-storey tin-plate warehouse built around 1900, and now Grade II listed. As well as presenting two important collections to the public, the project was also intended as part of a much wider regeneration scheme, sparking the development of the surrounding area. The major grant was both to extend the building, and to fund the fitting out and interpretation of the collections. Unusually, the museum planned to have a constantly changing exhibition programme, doing away with the traditional 'permanent' and 'temporary' distinctions, in order to emphasise the concept of social, economic and industrial change. Due to the early use of multi-media in these displays this refresh programme has proved more difficult to achieve than was originally thought;

however, the achievements of the National Waterfront Museum have nevertheless been significant.

Attendance has outstripped expectations by around 20%, but David Anderson, director of AC-NMW, particularly emphasised the contribution the museum has made to the local community, and the role of the director in 'portraying the Museum as a place to be used'. This is partly embodied in the design of the place – the foyer functions as a public thoroughfare for much of the day. But the museum has worked hard with the local community on programming, and building content and exhibits.

"Steph [Mastoris, NWM Director] has been very good on relationships: with communities, across the museum sector as a whole, with the Council... He has led the organisation in a community-focused way."

This impression is reflected in research from Swansea University about social networks between institutions and organisations, which found that NWM is one of the most well networked organisations in the city.

There is also a clear intention around addressing social inequality. Child poverty is a particular priority at AC-NMW, and they have been working with Communities First (areas targeted for investment by the Welsh government based on multiple index deprivation). The National Waterfront Museum has collaborated closely with the CF areas in Swansea, and their example has led all of AC-NMW's community outreach and development work. Its influence has thus extended beyond the bounds of the organisation. Anderson says, "That's down to Steph's leadership (his focus on poverty and disadvantage). This is probably why the Council is so supportive of the Museum. Our commitment to tackling exclusion isn't an accident, it's hard work. We are trying to address child poverty strategically as an organisation."

The museum has also, as intended, played a role in the wider process of cultural renaissance in Swansea, and also the rediscovery of local heritage. In particular, a collaboration with Swansea University led to a programme of work on the city's identity as 'copperopolis' – the global centre of the copper industry – in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a fact most people were unaware of. Anderson thinks investments of the kind the HLF makes are particularly important in places such as Swansea, where cultural organisations would struggle to find other funding. For a city of its size, Swansea hadn't previously had much investment in cultural heritage. The Museum 'kick-started' the slow steps that have been taken towards the renaissance of Swansea.

A key success factor in all of this has been the joint governance model of AC-NMW and the local authority. Although unprecedented, it has proved resilient, and contributed to the ongoing stability of the organisation. This is partly down to the commitment of the people involved on the both sides – the officers and leader of the council, and the trustees of AC-NMW – but also to do with the design of the partnership. The Museum and the Council have an agreement to sustain the funding going forward – if either side steps back from the arrangement, it makes the agreement null and void (and therefore the others' funding could be lost too). Anderson believes that this way of structuring a partnership is a good way to retain high levels of investment in the facility: "both parties are 'nudged' towards behaving well, and both get a lot of impact from their investment."

Some things have not gone quite as intended. Part of the revenue plan for the museum involved letting some rental units to businesses on site, which Anna Southall admits was an experimental approach. Although the museum is a success financially, several of these units have experienced high levels of business failure. This is partly due to the 2008 financial crisis, which could not have easily been predicted at the time of the grant.

Both Anderson and Southall agree that without the grant, AC-NMW may well have been able to raise some money for the museum, but they certainly would not have been able to deliver something of the quality and scope of the National Waterfront Museum. They also recognise the HLF's role in driving innovation – by demanding it – in education, outreach, community action and interpretation.

## **Natural History Museum: Earth Galleries and Darwin Centre**

The Natural History Museum has long been a prestigious and much-loved public museum. However, in the latter decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it needed to change: it was falling into disrepair, failing to engage with the contemporary public, and lagging behind in best scientific practice. Its model – where its research function was kept separate from its public display function – had not been rethought since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. And it was aware of the need to become less dependent on public money. Two major grants from HLF enabled the Museum to take two great leaps forward: through the conversion of the old Geological Survey Museum into the ‘Earth Galleries’, and the construction of the totally new Darwin Centre building. In many ways the Earth Galleries project paved the way for the Darwin Centre – a continuation of the museum’s transformation to being public-facing throughout.

**Project:** Earth Galleries redevelopment

**Year of HLF grant:** 1995

**Value of grant:** £6,058,000

**Description of project:** complete refurbishment of the former Geological Museum; modernisation of visitor and accessibility facilities, including a new cafe, shop and lavatories; redevelopment of gallery space to include six exhibitions and a central atrium. **Year of completion of project:** 1998

**Interviewee:** Sir Neil Chalmers, former Director of the Natural History Museum

**Project:** Darwin Centre

**Year of HLF grant:** 2001

**Value of grant:** £20,500,000

**Description of project:** demolition of existing building; creation of new building, containing large storage facilities, environmental controls, and a high degree of visitor access; decanting and preservation of large (28million+) existing collection; fitting out of new building for visitor access and scientific use.

**Year of completion of project:** 2010

**Interviewee:** Michael Dixon, Director of the Natural History Museum

In the late 1980s, zoologist Neil Chalmers became Director of the Natural History Museum (NHM), one of a cohort of younger directors brought in across a number of national museums and galleries to lead the modernisation of the sector. Part of his mission as a scientist was to bring the NHM up-to-date with its research practice. But there was also a public image issue. Brand consultancy Wolff Olins had been commissioned to work on the NHM brand, and reported that their current image was that of ‘an old zoo for dead animals’. Both the Earth Galleries project, and the Darwin Centre, addressed these two core issues together. Sir Neil says the grant-funded projects “brought into focus a core philosophical question about the purpose of the NHM which went back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century Director Sir William Henry Flower, who had

effectively divided the Museum into two businesses: a behind the scenes science business and a public display business.”

The ‘Earth Galleries’ were born of the incorporation and conversion of the old Geological Survey Museum. This had previously been the ‘baby brother’ of the Science Museum, but was only really intended for an audience of dedicated enthusiasts. It was highly inaccessible, both physically and intellectually: the display cases were too tall for young children to see into, and research had shown that the museum’s collection was seen as ‘remote and difficult’ because there was no context to many of the displays. Non-experts are unlikely to be interested in geological objects on their own, but they can relate to landscapes and to earth sciences.

The galleries were incorporated into the Natural History Museum, renamed, physically redesigned, and objects were presented in the context of people’s daily lives and interest in particular places. During the development phase staff were sent on a reconnaissance mission to Disneyland to learn how to create a good visitor experience, and the success of the project has shown in increased numbers of visitors to the galleries. The keen amateur geologists who had previously been the Geological Survey Museum’s primary audience became active volunteers in the new set-up.

Perhaps the most significant impact of the Earth Galleries project was in the confidence boost it gave to the Museum, “enabling a great institution to think big again”, according to Dixon. It allowed NHM to go on and tackle an even bigger project, the upgrading of its research and conservation facilities.

The Darwin Centre, which opened in 2009, meets the challenge of providing state of the art facilities for research in a way that allows the public to watch and see how science is done. This was potentially a very difficult brief – providing controlled environments for experiments and conservation work does not always go hand in hand with being publicly accessible. However Danish architects CF Moller came up with a highly novel solution, encapsulated in the symbolically appropriate form of a giant ‘cocoon’.

The new building achieves two things: an upgrade of research and conservation facilities, with real changes in processes around the maintenance of collections; and it foregrounds the museum’s role as a research institution, where once visitors may have been completely unaware of this work. In line with the need for all research organisations to demonstrate impact, the NHM now has a much more functional environment in which it can invite the public in to find out more about research. Specific events have been designed to do so: the ‘EU researchers’ night’ sees 7,000-8,000 visitors engaging with academics from all over the country.

Clearly, conceptually reorganising the museum was about more than building some new galleries. For a start, the NHM’s permanently employed scientists had to understand that their roles were fundamentally changing to be more public facing and be convinced about the reasons why. And, following on again from the Earth Galleries project, the Museum has further developed its use of enthusiasts in its V Factors programme in the Darwin Centre, where volunteers are employed to undertake certain elements of scientific work. Director Michael Dixon notes that, “*The cultural changes were twofold: making people work in different ways and more engagement between staff and public.*”

Alongside this, the development provided a new learning space, which allowed for an expanded learning offer and more school visits that led to an increase in underprivileged students' schools returning with their extended families. The new build has also allowed the museum to rethink the use of other spaces. Now that parts of the Victorian building previously used for research have been relieved of this function, it allows the Museum to open these beautiful spaces up to the public.

Although costs have increased – partly due to the demands around controlled environments – the result of both projects has been a sustained increase in visitor numbers, which in turn has generated increased revenue and enabled the NHM to raise money more easily. Both Chalmers and Dixon say this couldn't have been done without the major grants. Simply the prospect of a large grant from HLF allowed the Museum to 'think big', and get the trustees committed to fundraising. The Museum is still thinking today about altering its business model in the context of changes in public funding. But the two major grant-funded projects have put the NHM in a far stronger position to face the future.

## **New College Nottingham: Adams Building**

**Year of HLF grant:** 1996

**Value of grant:** £7,750,000

**Description of project:** Acquisition, refurbishment and preservation of the Adams building, a former lace factory; conversion of the building's use to an educational facility.

**Year of completion of project:** 2004

**Interviewee:** Maria Semak, former Director Corporate and External Affairs, New College Nottingham

In 1996, the Adams building – a former lace factory – was acquired by the Lace Market Heritage Trust and, restored and converted to a new use as a College of Further and Higher Education for New College Nottingham. This was part of a broad strategy for regeneration, and for repositioning post-16 education in the city. Many of the courses held here, such as fashion and textiles, echo the original purpose of the building as a place for the design and manufacture of clothing, and the students are taught about the building's heritage.

The HLF grant led to the restoration of an important part of Nottingham's industrial heritage. "The location of the buildings and its heritage value is undoubtedly an important factor in the College's ability to attract students", says Semak. The renovation also contributed to the transformation of the Lace Market as a desirable place to live and work – with a new ice rink, housing developments, and an influx of retail businesses into the area. The building has become an important hub in this city fringe area of Nottingham and an important symbol in shaping the identity of the newly created college. The building has become a civic and commercial meeting place, and the campus has increased business competitiveness in Nottingham.

## **Norwich Castle Museum**

**Year of HLF grant:** 1998

**Value of grant:** £8,000,000

**Description of project:** An improvement of the building's infrastructure and environmental controls; renovating the space to add learning facilities and spaces; a new auditorium, shop, cafe and meeting room facilities; and developing the Shire Hall for a collections storage facility with public access.

**Year of completion of project:** 2003

**Interviewee:** Vanessa Trevelyan, Director, Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service

Norwich Castle Museum's major grant project was designed to improve the building's infrastructure, 'shake up' the interpretation, and change the use of space – opening up more areas to the public. All these things were achieved, and indeed without the HLF grant would never have happened. But perhaps more significant have been the improvements in management structures, organisational processes and skills within the organisation. Vanessa Trevelyan, Director of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service (NMAS), says that when she arrived the service was “on its knees. Rudderless, exposed, with not enough support from the Councils.” Now it has new management, a visitor services team, a marketing team (who have started a popular membership scheme) a much expanded learning offer, and a better attitude to connecting with visitors.

The approach to interpretation is markedly different. Trevelyan says, “The HLF's focus on public outcomes is a force for good”. The project identified the most compelling stories across the building that would really engage audiences. They then put together a multi-disciplinary team - curators plus display designers and learning assistants – to strip back the accretions of decades within the Castle's displays and deliver a new offer. This has now become the norm for subsequent museum projects in Norwich. As a result the castle is now much more sensitive to the needs of customers, and appeals particularly to families, with new features such as a ride-on recreation of Boudicca's chariot, signalling that visiting the Castle is a fun day out.

## **Pallant House Gallery**

The Pallant House Gallery was created in 1982 to display the collection of the Dean of Chichester Cathedral. It had subsequently inherited other collections, and the space was becoming too small to show them properly, so a bid was put in to build an extension to the House. The new wing that resulted has quadrupled the space for showing art, and has allowed Pallant House Gallery to take its place as an important regional museum for modern British art.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2000

**Value of grant:** £5,179,000

**Description of project:** Creation of a new building extension to the Pallant House Gallery, a Grade I listed building; improved permanent and temporary exhibition space; increased visitor accessibility and education facilities, including a shop, cafe, public function space, and lift.

**Year of completion of project:** 2010

**Interviewee:** Gregory Perry, Director, Pallant House Gallery

In 1982, Walter Hussey, the then Dean of Chichester Cathedral, offered his important collection of modern British art to the city on condition it was housed in Pallant House, a beautiful Queen Anne town house then occupied by council offices. Over the next twenty years two more significant collections were donated, by a local businessman, Charles Kearley, and the architect Charles St John Wilson.

This expansion meant that the house was too small to display all the permanent collections simultaneously, or to host a strong programme of temporary exhibitions. The organisation tried to do both, but there were conflicts: the permanent collection had to be taken down to accommodate exhibitions. But programming temporary exhibitions was important for revenue: "Places like Pallant House Gallery (PHG) need a programme of temporary exhibitions to keep the institution alive", says Director Gregory Perry. There were other shortcomings too: there were no dedicated or purpose-designed learning facilities, which severely restricted the opportunity for education and community programmes.

Perry, who arrived in 2013, feels the PHG 'really needed' its extension: it was a 'transformative gift' for the institution, not a luxury, and he finds it 'hard to imagine how the institution coped beforehand'.

The main focus of the major grant project was a modern extension, which means that Pallant House can now show more of its (enlarged and still expanding) collection, run a strong programme of temporary exhibitions, accommodate more learning and community activities, and generate income through commercial offers: a modern restaurant, a bookshop, and corporate hires.

The organisation and its budget have grown to enable these expanded programmes, but PHG could not have been transformed without the contribution. "It was by far the largest single donation", and according to Perry there was no other obvious major donor for the project. "It is hard to imagine anything at all happening without HLF support or even with a smaller HLF grant." He says that "sometimes small additions

to museums just don't stack up in terms of economies of scale. All they do is consolidate the existing operation rather than enabling growth and transformation." Pallant House by contrast has been transformed. The extension is successful, particularly the interior spaces. The courtyard is bathed in light, with glimpses of the original Georgian architecture. The exterior, while modern, does not clash with the surrounding buildings – a key factor in the battle to receive planning consent. The new extension is respectful of its setting.

The collection has grown, and continues to grow. The bigger space helped it secure further collections, and in turn to secure £4 million from the Monument Trust for an endowment that helps with the (increased) running costs. So while the gallery's current position is not exclusively due to the major grant-funded project, it was the step that allowed PHG to show and do more. "It opened up new possibilities."

Perry says that visitor numbers went up after the capital project, and that the visitor profile diversified, particularly because of more learning and community programmes. The Gallery has averaged 56,000 visits per year for the last six years, with year-on-year fluctuations being down to the popularity of the exhibitions programme.

The extension performs well and at the moment Perry sees no need to rework anything. But the collection continues to grow, with many donors expecting the gallery to show their donated works – so it will in due course need more display and storage space. There is no firm plan in place yet for how to address this, but these are problems of success that reflect what the gallery has achieved in the last few years.

## People's History Museum

The People's History Museum used its major grant from HLF not only to expand and improve its physical space, but to transform its very offer: from being a museum of the history of the working class, to a museum relevant for all working people. In doing so it commissioned an eye-catching new building to sit alongside its original Edwardian Pump House home, improved conservation facilities, increased revenue and almost quadrupled its annual visitor numbers.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2006

**Value of grant:** £7,376,500

**Description of project:** Repairs to the Pump House building, a Grade II listed building; creation of a new extension to the building; re-interpretation and refitting of existing exhibits; provision of new visitor and access facilities, including a cafe, shop, reception area, education facilities and reading room.

**Year of completion of project:** 2011

**Interviewee(s):** Katy Ashton, Director, *People's History Museum*; Nick Mansfield, former Director, *People's History Museum*;

The People's History Museum in Manchester is the national museum of democracy, and the centre for the collection, conservation, interpretation and study of material relating to the history of working people in Britain. Its collection originated as the archives of the Trade Unions, Labour and Co-operative History Society, establishing a permanent museum space in Manchester in 1990 and changing its name to the People's History Museum in 1994. Its collection is unique, containing many thousands of historic objects including the largest number of trade union (and other) banners in the world. It specialises in conservation work in textiles – banners in particular. The Museum occupies a beautiful Edwardian hydraulic power station in Manchester – the only one of its kind left in the city, and a valuable piece of heritage in its own right. However before the 2007 major grant funded project, it also had a second site for back office functions, and conservation work. The project brought all functions onto one site for the first time.

This physical upgrading was really the primary motive for change. Current director Katy Ashton believes that if they hadn't carried out the extensive major grant project they would still have had to make some change: access was difficult and the space was small and cramped. But ultimately working across two sites was never going to be a sustainable long-term situation, as it was a 15-minute walk between the two, and culturally it created a division in the organisation. The museum also wasn't getting nearly the number of visitors it should. Something of a hidden gem, this national collection, although regularly used by researchers and academics, was not well known to the public, receiving around 25,000 visitors per year. Following the extension and refurbishment it now receives four times as many.

There were three main focuses to the programme of change. First, the size of the project gave the museum team an opportunity to rethink their purpose and mission. They decided to take a more inclusive approach to exhibitions and displays. So while the collection contains the archives of both the Labour and the Communist party, the museum itself is less exclusively focused now on 'the working classes. It is simply about the experiences of all working people with consequently a more democratic

approach that appeals to a broader cross-section of society. “It was beginning to seem a bit dated ... Now it’s about all kinds of people and their stories.” Katy says she sees visitors responding in a much more personal way: “Responses now seem deeper, people are more moved. The stories are personal and people relate to them on that level”. This has in turn allowed the museum to actively engage visitors much more with its collections, stories and ideas.

Second, of course, was the physical expansion and reorganisation. A new building was added alongside the original Pump House, allowing a doubling of exhibition and education spaces, and providing a good new shop and café. This trading element has been responsible for a significant increase in revenue – the canalside café in particular is very popular with visitors and locals. They also underestimated how much demand there would be for private hire of the museum’s spaces, which again is a new source of income for the organisation. From a heritage perspective, the conservation facilities are much improved, with better conditions for the collection and archive.

Finally, the expanded site allowed a unification of the museum’s two halves for the first time. As well as making the staff feel they were all part of the same team, this led to efficiency gains: streamlining in some areas has allowed the hiring of additional staff in outreach, engagement and collections. The move has also had important public engagement outcomes. The new learning studio has allowed them to completely rethink their educational offer. By bringing conservation to the public site, opening viewing windows onto conservation studios, and embedding a learning programme with the conservators into the mainstream museum offer, they have been able to make visitors more aware of that aspect of the museum’s work.

There have been a number of other positive outcomes: the volunteer programme is bigger and broader, mixing entry-level apprentices with older volunteers in a range of different roles (not solely customer service), and one staff member has been appointed volunteer coordinator to ensure volunteers are having a good experience. The museum now has a much better local, regional and national profile, which has resulted in a higher proportion of non-local visitors (it’s now approximately 50:50 locals to tourists). After the opening there was a lot of publicity, and the new building is striking. The museum won, or was shortlisted for, a number of awards (including the Art Fund Museum of the Year, and the European Museum of the Year) which raised its profile further. And so it is playing a very different role now in the cultural life of Manchester: “We receive many requests for partnership work, especially from festivals. The physical space is a real draw.”

Katy is clear about the success and lasting impact of the major grant: “Without it we wouldn’t be the organisation we are now. Numbers, profile and potential would be lessened. In the current economic climate we would be in a difficult situation in an old building in need of capital ... it could have been disastrous. Instead it’s been transformative: we have a fantastic physical resource which enhances our identity and future sustainability.”

## Riverside Museum

The Riverside Museum is a new building in Glasgow Harbour, housing the city's transport and travel collections. Glasgow Life – the charity that delivers cultural services on behalf of the council – had learned from its earlier experience with the Kelvingrove Museum development, which gave it the confidence to take on this 'immense project'. In regeneration terms it was an enormous, trailblazing scheme. The Guggenheim in Bilbao is always seen as the best example of cultural regeneration but the Riverside project stands comparison with it. The Riverside's content is local and of deep-rooted interest to Glasgow's people. Combined with its world-class architecture, the project has created a museum of global quality.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2005

**Value of grant:** £21,650,000

**Description of project:** Recreate and move the transport museum to a new site; stage 2 development of Glasgow Museums Resource Centre; creation of online digital access to Glasgow Museums collections; creation of new positions within Glasgow Museums in particular a digital media manager, digital media curator and visitor studies curator; reserve collections stored at the former Museum of Transport were moved to a purpose built second phase of Glasgow Museums Resource centre.

**Year of completion of project:** 2011

**Interviewees:** Lawrence FitzGerald, Museum Manager, Riverside Museum; Mark O'Neill, Head of Museums and Collections, Glasgow Life

Riverside Museum's HLF grant was the largest given to a Scottish institution at the time, equating to around 20% of the costs of the new building. Glasgow City Council was the largest contributor, which sees the scheme as part of its regeneration master-plan for the River Clyde waterfront. The move to the river was designed to 'future-proof' an attraction that, while still popular (it was the second-most visited transport museum in the UK) had declining visitor numbers, perhaps due to the lack of potential at its former Kelvin Hall site to 'refresh' the exhibition and its contents. The new museum's spectacular design by the architect Zaha Hadid has contributed to a huge surge in visitor numbers, and to the Riverside winning the title of European Museum of the Year 2013, the first UK museum to do so for ten years.

The Kelvin Hall Exhibition Centre – the site for the transport museum prior to move to Riverside – was built in the 1930s as an exhibition hall, and was poorly suited to house a museum. Environmental conditions were damaging exhibits: the humidity varied, so anything made of wood warped and split. The exhibition space flooring was easily damaged by vehicle movement and lacked the power and communications infrastructure for modern display. It was difficult to adequately light the display space and the Hall's fixed columns greatly restricted flexibility in the usage of the space. The transport and travel collections were largely not interpreted in a social or technological historical context, reflecting the people who owned, built, operated or used them.

Now the Riverside has a site that draws together Glasgow's transport and shipbuilding history on the banks of the Clyde, in the part of the city where important maritime industries were based. The 19<sup>th</sup> century *Glenlee* ship (owned by Clyde Maritime Trust) is moored alongside the museum, giving an additional dimension to the collection. The grounds around the museum have been landscaped to be accessible and skateboard- and cycle-friendly, to encourage use of the site by young and old.

Glasgow Life, the charity which runs Glasgow's museums, drew on the philosophy it had developed at Kelvingrove Museum, of arranging the collection around focused stories, told through the objects. This has given the Riverside a flexibility the collection didn't have when it was kept at Kelvin Hall. There is no temporary exhibition space at Riverside – transport and travel collections do not easily lend themselves to that type of programming – but they now have the resources to change the displays regularly. The displays are designed to be changed in a cost effective way. Glasgow Life has pledged additional annual revenue to change the displays (it is committed to changing eight 'story displays' a year). This ensures more of the heritage is seen and renews the visitor 'offer'.

The rotation of displays is supported by a Glasgow Museums Resource Centre (GMRC) – shared with the Kelvingrove and the other Glasgow Museum sites. New catalogues of significant parts of Glasgow Museums collections has greatly increased understanding of the collection as a whole. The entire collection is in a much better condition. Preventative and remedial conservation was undertaken ahead of the move of the collections to GMRC and the Riverside Museum.

The Riverside project was able to learn from the earlier Kelvingrove experience in many ways. For example, IT is often the last item to be delivered, so if budgets overrun it will often be squeezed. In Kelvingrove there were problems with this aspect so HLF wanted to make sure it didn't happen again: Riverside ring-fenced monies and agreed that IT would account for 15% of the budget.

The Riverside museum is performing very well in terms of visitor numbers – it received 0.75 million visitors in the last financial year, which drives greater income from catering, donations and the shop. The museum building and landscape was Zaha Hadid's first major public commission in the UK. This together with the non-traditional interpretation of the collections and the presence of the tall ship 'Glenlee' has ensured the museum has attracted a wide range of people with interests beyond transport technology. Lawrence Fitzgerald, the museum's manager, is realistic, and expects the visitor numbers to decline over time, but he thinks the numbers will stay higher than they were at the Kelvin Hall.

Without HLF they would have had 'a shed rather than a Zaha Hadid building'. The City Council would not have had the ability to support the high-quality building and landscape, digital provision, or to include a purpose-built, high-quality collections delivery and loading space. The museum is now firmly focused on 'transport and travel' rather than just the former.

The major grant legacy ensures that the museum engages with its wider community, individuals and organisations, and the ongoing nature of that engagement contributes to regeneration in the area. HLF's presence gave credibility to the project; this is as important as the funding. Councils and trusts listen to local curators

but the affirmation that support from HLF brings made a 'step change' possible. Fitzgerald says "The rigour of the HLF process is invaluable and assures other funders they can rely on HLF monitoring to deliver a quality project."

## **Royal Academy of Music**

**Year of HLF grant:** 1997

**Value of grant:** £7,635,000

**Description of project:** Acquisition of 1–5 York Gate, a Grade 1 listed building; conversion of the space into a public access museum, performance, practice and teaching space; housing of the Royal Academy Library's rare materials and special collections, its instrument workshops, education and accessibility facilities for visitors, including a study room and full disabled access.

**Year of completion of project:** 2003

**Interviewee:** Dr Timothy Jones, Deputy Principal, Royal Academy of Music

“The legacy of the grant has been three-fold: it has let us reach an audience we weren't able to reach before, it has allowed us to display more of our collections, and it has enabled us to use the collections more imaginatively in our teaching and research to enhance the richness of our students' learning experience”

The Royal Academy of Music had very significant collections of instruments, scores and papers, and music ephemera, but there were no dedicated spaces to display them well. They were scattered in various parts of the main building, and there was no place for temporary exhibitions or research events. The general public could access the scores and papers through the RAM library, and visit the musical instruments by appointment but in practice very few did. Then the chance came to acquire 1–5 York Gate (next to the Academy's main building).

The major grant had three big benefits: it gave the Academy more storage space, it allowed them to put on both temporary and longer-term displays, and it let them do their education and outreach work in the same space as the collections, so drawing directly on the collections. Visitor numbers have risen sharply to around 37,000 a year, with families being an important target market.

## Royal Albert Hall

The Royal Albert Hall, opened in 1871, is the largest concert hall in Europe and yet it receives no revenue funding from central or local government, relying instead on a unique organisational set-up with money originally raised from members by subscription. By the 1990s though, the Hall had become very run-down and required significant investment. The members alone could not have supported the capital investment needed to address this. A major grant could, and has, helped the Albert Hall to significantly expand its programme, growing from 256 events in 1994 to 397 in 2014, and doubling its audience. It has gone from being a rundown venue dependent on the BBC Proms, boxing and wrestling, and other popular shows to having an eclectic collection of artists and a world-class programme of live events together with an increasingly rich programme of education, outreach and discovery activities.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1996

**Value of grant:** £20,180,000

**Description of project:** Refurbishment of infrastructure, auditorium and public spaces; creation of new loading bays for servicing facilities together with three further basements (one for back stage and dressing rooms and two for cooling, plant and life support systems)

**Year of completion of project:** 2004

**Interviewee:** Chris Cotton, Chief Executive

“The Albert Hall makes a very important contribution to the cultural life of the country... and the HLF can take a part of [the credit for] that; great artists wouldn’t want to come here if it was not so special.”

The Royal Albert Hall in London was built in 1871 with money raised by subscription for some 5,400 seats. 1,200 seats continue to be held in private hands, spread across 340 Members. Members have a right to occupy their seats and to do what they wish with them for about two thirds of the performances, but they don’t share in income or surpluses and don’t have any ownership over the Hall. They are obliged by the Royal Charter and Acts of Parliament (last Act in 1966) to contribute to the maintenance of the building via an annual ‘seat rate’, currently around £1,200 a seat.

The members have kept the Hall going through most of its lifetime – they are “the bankers of last resort”, according to Mr Cotton. However, by the start of the 1990s the Hall was struggling. The venue had no loading dock and cramped back stage facilities, poor services and no cooling. There was no real plan for programming, and no marketing or development plans. Programming was somewhat ad hoc and the Hall “would pretty much take anything if you rang up on the right day”.

Maintenance costs for the building were high, but because the facilities were so poor it couldn’t charge appropriate rates to artists. And although events were its major source of income, it was not a particularly welcoming venue to visit as an audience member. All of this meant that the organisation couldn’t really cover its costs (the members made up the shortfall) – they were in a ‘downward spiral’ – and there was no spare capacity to invest in education and outreach work. Nothing was being done

to communicate the value of the building, or the history of the uses and purposes of the Hall, its key purpose to maintain the building in order to promote arts and sciences. The heritage of the building was not interpreted in any way. Physically, the Grade 1 listed building was robustly constructed but constant attention was required to the roof, rainwater systems, heating and the electrical systems, while there was work to be done on the acoustic, décor and finishes. Every part of the building was affected.

Rectifying this needed major investment, well beyond what the members could afford. The recourse was to successfully apply to the Lottery, (the grant was only the second that the HLF had awarded).

The capital works (over 1996-2004) refurbished and maintained the heritage, but also created new infrastructure for the Hall, such as new loading bays where the building could be serviced (for artists, for catering), and three basements – one for artists' dressing rooms and two for cooling, plant and safety equipment. All of these are essential for mounting the number and scale of events that the Hall now hosts.

The capital works have enabled the Hall to significantly expand its programme and meet the demands of shows. They have gone from 256 events in 1994, to 397 in 2014, and audience numbers over the same period have risen from some 800,000 to 1.7 million. The Hall is now also able to programme events outside the auditorium, and in 2014 there were 265 smaller performances in the Elgar room and Ignite series in the cafe.

Mr Cotton says: "It's about giving customers and artists an all-round experience – we're in the memories business, we need to give people wonderful memories". This extends to every element of their visit to make the Hall approachable: service, food, drinks, décor, and ambience.

The improvements that the major grant made possible are the cornerstone on which the organisation has been able to transform itself. Collectively they have opened the Hall up in a real way for the national benefit. We can now say it fulfils its original objective to be "the finest Hall in Europe for seeing, hearing and convenience." Mr Cotton does not believe that the size of the capital requirement, at the time, could have been fully raised from philanthropic sources, and certainly could not have been generated from earned income.

The process of applying to the HLF made everyone "think damn hard about what we are here for?"

And one of the results was a realisation of just "how special the building is". As a result of applying and securing HLF money, the Albert Hall was required to address the need to commission new work, promote artistic product and develop an education programme, whilst also improving and provide better access to the building for everyone: "we have achieved that in spades". In the last five years, tours of the building to the general public showcasing the heritage of the building have grown to 50,000 and audience numbers have doubled. Emerging artists are encouraged to perform at the Hall.

## **Royal Artillery Museum: Firepower!**

**Year of HLF grant:** 1997

**Value of grant:** £5,005,000

**Description of project:** HLF's grant was used in conjunction with the Royal Artillery Museum's (RAML) own existing financial resources to create a museum of artillery and offices, library and archives. For the museum, the grant was also used for interpretation of the objects and the story of artillery and the Regiment.

**Year of completion of project:** 2005

**Interviewees:** Joanna Ruddock, former Director; Jenny Branscombe, Finance & Operations Director

The Royal Artillery Museum in Woolwich is home to a collection of military artefacts and documents that date back to 1778, a collection originally established as the Royal Military Repository. The HLF major grant enabled the collection to move from what was essentially a glorified storehouse (the Rotunda on Woolwich Common) to a more accessible set up. 'Firepower: Royal Artillery Museum' opened in a newly refurbished set of buildings that had formerly been part of the Royal Laboratory Department (involved in the manufacture of ammunition) in the Royal Arsenal.

In spite of its successful move and reopening, and a strong and competent board, the project has since not met with great success. It has never reached its projected visitor numbers, and has had to downsize quite considerably. The reasons for this are partly overoptimistic feasibility studies, as well as the late completion of projects in the wider regeneration site of which the Museum was a part. "We delivered on time, but no one else had opened, so we opened onto a building site."

In spite of all this, there are some positive stories. In having to operate with a much reduced core staff, the museum has become adept at working with willing volunteers, and has developed a formal process for recruiting and training. Over time turnover has also increased, and traded income is now broadly comparable with grant funding.

## Royal Festival Hall

The Royal Festival Hall was established in 1951 with the vision of bringing culture to everyone. This agenda was stymied in part by the design of the site and the surrounding public realm. The redevelopment allowed the Southbank Centre to make the physical changes required to open up the site and buildings, whilst also preserving a unique part of London's post-war built heritage. "It's not just about preserving a heritage asset; it's about reviving a set of ideas about the role of culture in the life of a city like London."

**Year of HLF grant:** 2003

**Value of grant:** £22,176,000

**Description of project:** rejuvenation and restoration of building fabric within the foyer and Auditorium of the Royal Festival Hall, a Grade I listed building; improvement to accessibility of the building; re-establishing the original natural light and acoustical elements of the building;

**Year of completion of project:** 2007

**Interviewee(s):** Alan Bishop, Chief Executive, Southbank Centre

The Royal Festival Hall was London County Council's contribution to the Festival of Britain of 1951, and is an impressive piece of British post-war architecture. However by the time of the major grant, the building was over 50 years old, and suffering from inevitable wear and tear. The 1951 design had also been altered in 1964, and subsequently several changes in management policy had a considerable impact on the use of spaces within the building.

The programme of work drawn up in 2003 was driven by a new conservation and management plan, which referred back to the intellectual and historical framework of the 1951 design. The project was intended to restore the clarity and transparency of the original layout, reconnecting the building with the city from terraces at all levels, and reopening the sequence of spaces leading through the Hall. Internally, the main focus of the scheme was on opening up and rejuvenating the foyers, and improving the conditions – acoustic and otherwise – in the auditorium. The renovations have been a great success: "The building looks even more fresh and relevant than it did in the 1950s."

However, the Centre realised that in order for the development to be successful, there needed to be as much investment in the public spaces, as in the fit-out of the building, which was an approach that won strong political support from then Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, who understood that the project was about redefining the public space in this part of London.

This reconceptualisation completely changed the cultural and business model for the Centre. Reconsidering the value of the 1950s building prompted the organisation to take a different view of the site, and see the built environment itself as a heritage asset. The Southbank Centre realised that the essence of the site was its balance between existing and new, urban and high art, and quiet space and busy spaces. The Festival of Britain celebration in 2011 was a great example of how these

disparate themes clash and excite; “the site was brought back to life – it wasn’t all just a nostalgia fest.”

A further part of bringing the site back to life has been the building up of the retail and commercial units of the site. These are now the most valuable retail and cafe spaces in London, and the commercial income of the site – primarily from letting these units – is substantial, and forecast to overtake ticket sales. This is significant as it has helped the Southbank Centre cope with cuts in its revenue funding. It also allows them to be more flexible: the commercial revenue coming in has allowed the Centre to programme an increasing number of free events which raise the profile of the site even further.

During the re-opening of the Centre, the refurbishment was divided into 90 special ‘spaces’ and politicians and staff were invited to do a reading to officially ‘open’ that part of the redevelopment. These readings were recorded and stored in the Southbank Centre Archive. The redevelopment showed the Southbank Centre how important it was to capture and preserve artefacts that can be used to demonstrate the heritage of the site to future audiences. Although they have an existing archive, they are now looking to expand this to include an archive and heritage centre.

Since the re-opening of Royal Festival Hall, they have experienced a huge increase in visitor numbers; they receive eight million visitors alone for their festivals. The audience has also become more diverse and now 19% of their visitors come from minority groups. But the biggest transformation induced by the major grant was the overhaul of the business model, which had a knock-on effect on visitor numbers, and enhanced awareness of the significance of the site as a heritage asset.

## Royal Geographical Society

Before the major grant, the Royal Geographical Society (RGS-IBG) was unable to offer public access to its collections and the majority of its activities tended to be more inwardly facing to the Society's membership. The membership totalled 11,000, with public events reaching around 20,000 people a year. The grant has helped transform the RGS-IBG. The improvements to the curation of, and accessibility to, the collections have put them at the heart of the Society's public access and public engagement agenda. The associated development of the Society's facilities has also greatly enabled a public-facing role. Now it has 16,500 members, and public outreach of three to four million people a year. It has developed a much more outward-looking organisational culture, and is seen as a leading and innovative learned society.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2000

**Value of grant:** £5,154,000

**Description of project:** The existing Grade II\* listed building layout was reorganised and new buildings constructed on Exhibition Road providing two seminar rooms, an education centre, an exhibition pavilion, a new public entrance, a large reading room and environmentally controlled storage. The whole ground floor is now open to the public; a single storey, contemporary glass garden pavilion along Exhibition Road houses photographic exhibitions; and the majority of the Collection, some two million items, is in new purpose-built archive storage space. A unified digital catalogue was established for the entire archive with all catalogues accessible online.

**Year of completion of project:** 2004

**Interviewee(s):** Dr Rita Gardner, Director, Royal Geographical Society

The Royal Geographical Society, founded in 1830, is the learned society and professional body for geography and geographers. The Society's work is wide-ranging, but the major grant project focused on its use of its collections. These include two million documents, maps, photographs, paintings, periodicals, artefacts and books, and span 500 years of geography, travel and exploration. The prompt for the project was in part a merger in 1995, with the Institute of British Geographers. This triggered a strategic planning process that re-thought RGS's purpose and role. The idea for 'Unlocking the Archives' came about in 1997-98 as part of this planning, and involved placing the collections more at the heart of what RGS-IBG does.

Before the major grant project, the collections were spread across thirty rooms on the RGS site. This was not an ideal situation: they were not stored in environmentally controlled conditions; users (members and some scholars) had unsupervised access to the stacks, some items were not catalogued at all, and none were catalogued digitally. The cataloguing system that did exist did not comply with international standards. 'Unlocking the Archives' addressed all of these issues, and the archive had been brought together in a purpose built storage space. The building's layout has been restructured with all the ground floor now accessible to the public.

The result is that RGS-IBG's facilities and activities are now far more public-facing, the society has an increased capacity to conserve its objects, and it is able to

explore new and different ways to present the collections. It is this latter element that contributes to driving the RGS-IBG's public access work. Drawing on its collections and expert knowledge among its staff, fellows and members, its work now reaches an audience of between three and four million per year.

In terms of public engagement work, there have been 17 Society exhibitions since 2004, at its home in London, some touring the UK extensively, and occasionally going abroad. Its London base also hosts 'Collections showcases' looking at particular topics. In 2012, for instance, it ran one to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first ascent of Everest. It has developed special projects that draw on elements of the collection. For example, many RGS-IBG archive items are 'colonial' in origin, and this has proved to be a very successful way to engage and collaborate with ethnic minority communities in the UK. The Crossing Continents – Connecting Communities project created a series of workshops, exhibitions and schools resources exploring different cultural perspectives on the collections; this work continues today. The Society also has a healthy programme of talks and lectures, including a series of public talks relating to research on the collections.

On the research front, although the RGS-IBG has always been used by scholars, it is now actively engaged in funded partnerships with them, such as its AHRC doctoral studentships. Thanks to the online library, researchers are also now more aware of RGS-IBG's holdings. A new education programme for schools includes the online resources 'Unlocking the Archives', which is heavily used.

Through these developments, the RGS-IBG works much more widely with volunteers. It uses them to promote its work, and geography more generally through, for instance, its Geography Ambassadors scheme and its Discovering Britain walks. Such schemes draw in part on the revamped collections for their material.

Overall, the breadth of its activities, and its reach, is much broader, with developing international networks, and branches in Hong Kong and Singapore. The society's policy profile is higher, and a sign of the prestige with which it is viewed is that the Director, Rita Gardner, has been invited to join DCMS's 'Archive Taskforce', BIS's Finch review on open access to scholarly publishing, and to advise education ministers.

The changes instigated by the major grant project involved a big shift in staff culture. Gardner thinks the RGS-IBG used to be much more introverted; whereas now it is innovative and outward-looking, and more accepting of change as a natural process. This has been a case of 'evolution not revolution' though, she says – and in fact the task of reshaping and developing the RGS-IBG has really been a '15-year process'.

Gardner believes the key to a successful major grant is to ensure it is fully integrated in the organisation's strategy – she doesn't think it will work if it isn't. Her analysis of the key ingredients of success for the RGS-IBG were, "[that] we recognised the need for change, identified a particular major project that would help kick-start and achieve that change, and expanded our ambitions." She believes the major grant has 'enabled RGS-IBG to demonstrate what it can do.'

## Royal Gunpowder Mills

The Royal Gunpowder Mills is a unique site: one of three gunpowder mills in the UK, but the only one to have survived intact. The land was heavily contaminated with explosive residues, and once the site had been cleaned up by the Ministry of Defence, the HLF grant was intended to enable wider public access and raise awareness of the history of the site, with a new exhibition about explosives. However, the low profile of the site (it had been virtually secret when it was MOD-owned) and the niche subject matter means that the Mills have struggled to achieve economic viability. The managers are now exploring number of different ways of increasing their appeal.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1996

**Value of grant:** £6,500,000

**Description of project:** To preserve and open to the public the old gunpowder mill site at Waltham Abbey (77 hectares including 21 listed buildings, and 34.2 hectares of SSSI) and to develop a National Explosives Museum.

**Year of completion of project:** 2001

**Interviewee(s):** Andrew Coates, Chief Executive, Royal Gunpowder Mills

The Royal Gunpowder Mills site at Waltham Abbey had been used for the production of gunpowder since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and more recently as the home of a defence research establishment. Formerly owned by the Ministry of Defence (MOD), it was gifted to a charitable Trust in the early 1990s, along with a large sum of money for de-contamination. Its heritage value is in its 21 listed buildings, a scheduled monument, and its designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The proposal put to HLF was to preserve and open up the site to the public, and to develop a National Explosives Museum.

However there have been some limitations on the scale of the project. Even though the MOD committed many millions to decontamination, in the end this wasn't enough to fully clear the site, and so people cannot wander around all of it, and there are no cycle routes serving it. Additionally, as a SSSI, and a recognised heronry, Natural England puts restrictions on the usage of certain parts, particularly the breeding sites.

The business plan that HLF backed was hampered by this failure to clear the site but there were a number of other flaws. Only limited market testing was done as part of the original business plan and current Chief Executive Andrew Coates believes that regarding the entire site as a visitor attraction was inappropriate. The concept for the site was too narrow, the subject matter is too dry for many tastes, and awareness of the location is poor. However, it is not completely inaccessible: just off the M25, and with an affluent catchment area, he thinks it should be able to attract double what it is getting at the moment (60-70,000 visitors, compared with its current 30,000 or so). "The people who come are fascinated by it", Coates says, "but it needs a higher profile".

The governance of the Mills is unusual, and not entirely stable at present. Two Trusts were established after it left MOD ownership – a landlord trust (which had an

endowment) and an operating trust. The operating trust has been battling with poor attendance, and has had to be subsidised by the landlord Trust. The landlord trust, in order to generate some revenue, sold off a major building and invested the funds. The interest on this investment covers the operating subsidy, but this is an unreliable source, due to market volatility, and has fallen over time. The landlord trust cannot keep subsidising the operation indefinitely, and needs a sustainable programme in place for the site.

For some time the trust didn't have a chief executive, just a general manager who focused his efforts on the visitor attraction. During the last 5-10 years, he implemented a series of special events to boost attendance, the results of which were variable. The VE Celebrations did very well but others performed less well and were expensive and dependent on the weather.

Coates is now thinking more strategically about the wider site and its stakeholders, and the local community. The other parts of the site need to be found partners or investors to develop suitable uses for them. The wider site needs funding at least as much as the attraction does: English Heritage is very worried about the condition of some of the buildings, while the canals that cross the site have dried up and need attention. The team has thought about selling off part of the land. "We have thousands of square feet of potential development space, which we could parcel off to developers – house builders would be ideal, but we're in the flood plain."

The attraction has recently re-branded to The Secret Island. It is trying to make more of the scientific achievements that took place on the site, taking a lead from 'wacky science' TV shows to try and attract a much younger, family audience. Education was always part of the programme but it has evolved and is being expanded, and 7,000 visitors now come through school trips. The marketing is much more focused, utilising outside consultants. The team is also exploring the potential of a new 'story' for the attraction – the secret work carried out on site during the post-war years up until the 1980s.

Andrew Coates believes the visitor attraction can be self-supporting within five years, but the business model and the approach taken is a very different proposition to what was originally imagined. "It's a huge jigsaw puzzle but we're moving in the right direction."

## **Science Museum: Wellcome Wing**

The Wellcome Wing was the third and final phase in the planned building of the Science Museum, designed to expand the museum's exploration of contemporary issues in science and technology. The museum team were delighted to find that HLF considered collecting contemporary objects to be a legitimate heritage activity, and recognised the role of the Science Museum in doing so. The Wellcome Wing has proved a great success, winning a number of awards for its design, and success as a visitor attraction, and seeing a huge boost in visitor numbers. It is now a national hub for the communication and discussion of science and technology.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1996

**Value of grant:** £23,000,000

**Description of project:** Creation of a five storey extension to the Science Museum, South Kensington; fitting out this 10,000 sq. m extension with a 450 seat IMAX large screen theatre, a 250 seat lecture theatre, conference facilities, permanent and temporary exhibition space, and a simulator, cafe and retail facilities.

**Year of completion of project:** 2003

**Interviewees:** Ian Blatchford, Director, Science Museum Group; Heather Mayfield, former Deputy Director, Science Museum

The Science Museum has over 300,000 objects in its care, covering the entire history of

Western science, technology and medicine. The Wellcome Wing is a five storey extension to its home in South Kensington that has radically expanded the Museum's ability to explore issues of contemporary science and technology – dealing with topics such as the human genome, brain science, artificial intelligence, and information technology. The new wing – complete with IMAX cinema and lecture theatre – allows for regularly updated exhibitions, and features reflecting science in the news. Previous to the major grant the Science Museum team had tried to bring contemporary and historic items together across the existing space, but it hadn't worked. The new space allowed them to do far more ambitious things.

As well as creating space for discussion of contemporary issues, the museum used the new wing to create a bridge between the past and the present, through a new permanent exhibition, 'Making the Modern World.' This showcases the Science Museum's unrivalled Industrial Revolution collections, with 150 of its historically significant artefacts on display. The gallery tells the story of the industrial revolution, from 1750 to the modern day, and includes pieces such as the Rocket and the Apollo 10 module command from the 1969 moon mission. Located in the room before the entrance to the Wellcome Wing, it is designed so the public has to walk through displays of the history of British engineering, giving an understanding of how Britain has contributed to the making of the modern world, and creating a link between industrial history and contemporary science displays.

Ian and Heather commented that although 'Making the Modern World' is now 12 years old, it has aged very well. "As a narrative it works really well and brings together the industrial and the domestic." But the new space has also given the

museum the capacity to try out different topics and modes of display. Ten years after the development the contents were completely refitted, which was made possible by the flexibility of the space. Both Ian and Heather agreed that if the museum hadn't got the grant it would still be waiting to make the changes now. "The grant allowed the museum to take big steps forward in how gallery spaces are designed, and gives the team room for experimentation – especially with temporary exhibitions."

Both interviewees were very complementary about HLF's open-mindedness with regard to the Science Museum's plans. Collecting contemporary objects might not be thought of as 'heritage', but HLF understood that the act of collecting such objects and putting them on display makes them 'heritage', and is an appropriate activity for a museum of science and technology. "It was an absolute breath of fresh air that the HLF understood the role of the Science Museum in collecting".

The impact of the project has been important. A report by Ecotec in 2006 also found that the project contributed specifically to the local creative economy: "Contracts awarded to SMEs within the creative industries sector, in respect of software and digital technology development, have helped to sustain and grow London's emerging creative economy."

For the museum itself, visitor numbers have rocketed, awards have been won for the design of the building and its exhibitions, and for amenities such as the café and retail spaces. It has seen great success as a corporate hire space, with three events per week contributing considerably to the museum's income. It also has a great national status and profile as a place for science communication, with multiple royal and celebrity visits, and the filming of various television programmes. All of this gives funders more confidence to continue to support the museum.

"This project was profoundly important, because it took the museum into the first division. We know from talking to other countries that it was this [project] that made the museum outstandingly important. (For a time) the Science Museum was seen as the hottest museum in Europe."

## **Scottish National Gallery: Playfair Development**

The Playfair Project created a link between two of Scotland's most renowned galleries – the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA) and the Scottish National Gallery (SNG) – and significantly repaired the former and greatly improved the facilities of the latter. Although some work to secure the foundations of the RSA would have had to be done for safety reasons, the major grant enabled a more far-reaching and ultimately successful project to take place, one that has put the RSA and NGS on an international playing field, and doubled the number of visitors they receive.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2000

**Value of grant:** £7,390,000

**Description of project:** Securing the foundations of the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA); Conservation of the building fabric of the RSA; installation of a goods lift for art movement; creation of a link between the Royal Scottish Academy and the National Gallery, including provision of an education centre, lecture theatre, information technology Gallery and schools room; increased gallery space; installation of air conditioning and refurbished storage; access for people with impaired mobility; creation of visitor facilities, including a restaurant and shop

**Year of completion of project:** 2004

**Interviewee:** Michael Clarke, Director, Scottish National Gallery

The Playfair Project had three main purposes: to restore the existing galleries of the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA); to repair the fabric of the RSA building, and to build a subterranean link between the RSA and another of Scotland's most renowned galleries – the Scottish National Gallery. The project's name refers to the original architect of both buildings, William Henry Playfair, who designed the RSA in the 1820s and the SNG in the 1850s. Situated at the heart of the Edinburgh World Heritage Site, they create the physical link between the medieval Old Town and the Georgian New Town.

However, over the 200 or so years since it had been built, the physical condition of the RSA had deteriorated and it had not been well maintained. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was on the verge of being declared unfit for public use. The space had become not only unusable, but unsafe, and was entirely unfit-for-purpose as an international arts venue. Although some work would have had to be done to secure the building, with or without HLF support, the major grant allowed a much more ambitious and ultimately successful project to go ahead. And of course the impact of the grant went beyond just the money. Michael Clarke, director of the Scottish National Gallery, says the reputational impact of the major grant was high – “It does impress people internationally, it's a seal of approval” – and has been very helpful in attracting other funding: “people know the project has been assessed and they are backing a winner.”

Following the refurbishments and improvements of the major grant project, the RSA has been transformed into a world class exhibition space, able to collaborate internationally, with an enviable learning activities suite, the ability to hire out spaces and generate income, and huge uplift in visitor numbers.

The project has dramatically improved the visitor experience and facilities at the National Gallery complex resulting in increased visitor numbers. The visitor target of an extra 250,000 per annum was easily exceeded: the two buildings now together get 1,200,000 visitors per year, whereas it was 450,000 previously (and 90% of those are now first-time visitors). The National Galleries of Scotland have established a 'Friends' scheme, which has proved very popular with over 7,000 members.

The project has doubled the number and range of education programmes the Gallery can provide. With a dedicated education space the NGS is now able to provide art-based (including new media) workshop sessions for all ages. Lively outreach activity makes a phenomenal difference and could not have happened previously. Now the team works across Scotland, not solely Edinburgh, running national schools art competitions, and involved in national curricula, symposia, public talks, and work in prisons.

The project has also helped to grow one of the city's major visitor attractions and thereby support the continued development of one of Edinburgh's key employment sectors. The site is a significant employer of local people and a number of new posts have been created as a result of the redevelopment: 20 ongoing posts and a number of temporary positions. NGS visitors also contribute towards the local economy of course. The estimated impact of the site on GDP at the sub-regional level is thought to be in the region of £11.9 million, which, in turn, generates employment in Edinburgh.

## Scottish National Gallery: Titian Acquisition

'Venus Anadyomene (Venus Rising from the Sea)' is a Renaissance painting that had been on display at the Scottish National Gallery in Edinburgh for many years, on loan from the Duke of Sutherland. When the opportunity arose to buy the painting, after the death of the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke in 2000, the SNG felt it was imperative to do so, as it is one of the most important Old Master paintings in the United Kingdom and has been accessible to the British public since 1806. At that time, the Gallery also had no paintings by Titian in its permanent collection. Having received a major grant to help it acquire the work, the SNG developed an intensive programme of interpretation, education and touring exhibition work in order to raise the profile of this national treasure and make it more accessible to contemporary audiences.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2003

**Value of grant:** £7,687,000

**Description of project:** Acquisition of 'Venus Anadyomene (Venus Rising from the Sea)' by Titian; improved accessibility of the painting by touring to venues in Scotland and northern England; innovative, thematic exhibition exploring western artists' fascination with the female nude from ancient to modern times; CD ROM on signs and symbols in art, focusing on Renaissance Venice and distributed to every school in Scotland; ground-breaking, interactive learning feature on the National Gallery's website; bespoke education programme for adults exploring the links between literature and art.

**Year of completion of project:** 2007

**Interviewees:** Michael Clarke, Director, Scottish National Gallery; Patricia Allerston, Deputy Director and Chief Curator, Scottish National Gallery; Sir Timothy Clifford, former Director-General, National Galleries of Scotland

'Venus Anadyomene (*Venus Rising from the Sea*)' was painted in c. 1520 by the Venetian Renaissance artist Titian, who was said to have been inspired by Pliny the Elder's description of a painting by Apelles. The painting was one of 32 paintings loaned to the Scottish National Gallery (SNG) in 1945 by the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Ellesmere, later 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Sutherland. This important group of paintings, known as The Bridgewater Collection, is the most important private collection of Old Master paintings on loan to a public museum in the world. The Scottish National Gallery considers Titian's 'Venus Anadyomene' to be "undoubtedly one of the most important Old Master paintings in the United Kingdom".

When the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Sutherland died in 2000, the SNG was offered the opportunity to acquire the painting by private treaty sale, partially in lieu of inheritance tax. The SNG felt it was imperative to retain the painting in public ownership. Titian's depictions of classical myth and literature changed the course of European painting, and in the Bridgewater Collection this process can be traced throughout key stages of his career – from the *Three Ages of Man* (c.1513), to the *Venus Anadyomene* (c.1520) and culminating in the *Diana poesie* (1556-59). If the painting had not been acquired by SNG this clear demonstration of his stylistic development would have been lost to Scotland.

As the Titian was already on show in the gallery, the case for receiving a major grant to help buy it had to rest on other arguments. The NGS's bid therefore emphasised the intention to use it differently. A key thrust of the new plan was to tour it outside Edinburgh – to Glasgow, Inverness and Newcastle – in an innovative, thematic exhibition accompanied by specially designed interpretation, which it did. It also proposed the creation of an engaging CD ROM on signs and symbols in art, designed for distribution to every school in Scotland, and an innovative, interactive learning feature on the NGS website, making use of new software, which was designed especially for young people. A bespoke learning programme for adults, exploring the links between literature and art, was also developed. This four-part plan had a considerable effect on the wider work of the NGS.

The painting's acquisition coincided with the redevelopment of the NGS's website, and this allowed the gallery to experiment with new methods of interpretation, designed for digital audiences. The thematic, interactive eTour, centring on the 'Venus Anadyomene', created a new template for online learning features, which was subsequently used for eight eTours, including one on the Bridgewater *Poesie* by Titian. The success of this initiative has encouraged the SNG to continue to use the latest digital technology to explore Old Master paintings.

Through the touring exhibition, CD ROM and website learning activity, teams across NGS began working more closely together rather than in separate groups. With the thematic and cross-curricular programming inspired by the new acquisition, numerous departments across the National Galleries of Scotland became involved in interpretation. The learning team, online curators, conservators and Gallery curators shared ideas about the history, religious environment, classical context and modern audiences. They found that working together and co-producing interpretation was very effective, with each part of the team contributing their particular expertise. So the challenge of how to interpret this one masterpiece for a range of contemporary audiences developed new, cross-departmental working skills in staff.

This in turn changed how the team approach interpretation. As well as creating new curriculum-related content, they have used Titian's 'Venus Anadyomene' to consider how art can be used for cross-curricular learning (for schools and subsequently for adults). This often involves relating individual works to a meaningful contemporary context – for example the tour 'the Nude in Art' explored modern ideas about body image as well as ideas of beauty in the classical world, where the Venus myth originated, and in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Venice, where the painting was made. They also thought about how a painting can help inform and inspire other forms of arts activity. A wide range of learning programmes was developed in relation to Titian's 'Venus', including a series of creative-writing workshops.

The increased profile of the painting (it was named 'Acquisition of the Year' by the Art Journal *Apollo* in 2003) and associated projects have made Titian's 'Venus' "a star of the collection". It is the cover image of the *Companion Guide to the Scottish National Gallery*, proving how strongly the SNG identifies with this painting. Visitor numbers have doubled – in large part due to the Playfair Project, but also due to the collection being given a greater profile. In retail terms, Titian's Venus has become one of the bestselling postcards for many years, selling over 2,000 each year. The Gallery shop produced a number of themed paper and ceramic products when the

painting was first acquired and this range was one of the mainstays of the National Gallery shop's offer for many years.

The touring programme has led to new relationships with other galleries, such as Inverness Art Gallery, Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle, and The Burrell Collection in Glasgow, prompting two successive thematic touring exhibitions focusing on its Old Master artworks. The painting has also been a key painting in two touring exhibitions to the United States and has recently been on display at the newly refurbished *Mauritshuis in The Hague*, as part of a high-profile exchange of Old Master artworks. This type of activity has helped to raise the SNG's profile internationally.

## Segedunum Roman Fort and Museum

Segedunum marks the eastern end of Hadrian's Wall and is a significant site within the broader World Heritage Site. Before the HLF major grant it was simply an archaeological site, with limited interpretation and access. The grant has allowed the development of a new museum with a reconstructed bathhouse and improved access to the archaeological remains. Within the urban Tyneside area the grant has created an attraction that enriches the offer of the Wall, provides ready access for local people and visitors to the area and provides a significant offer at the eastern end of the Hadrian's Wall National Walking Trail.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1996

**Value of grant:** £5,633,000

**Description of project:** creation of viewing platform, museum and visitor facilities; exhibition of archaeological finds of the area in a gallery space; improvement of visitor accessibility to the archaeological site, and reconstruction of bath house.

**Year of completion of project:** 2000

**Interviewees:** Iain Watson, Director, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums; Alec Coles, former Director, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

Segedunum was a Roman garrison fort, in what is modern-day Wallsend, at the eastern end of Hadrian's Wall. It was in use as a fort until about 400AD. In the present day, North Tyneside Council was managing the archaeological site, and had always wanted to develop it further. Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (which at the time was Tyne & Wear Museums) was contracted to develop plans, and European Regional Development Fund funding was secured, alongside a major grant from HLF.

The project began in 1997, with further excavations in and around the Fort, the reconstruction of the military bath house, and the conversion of former shipyard buildings to house a new museum featuring contemporary displays, significant items from the archaeological digs on site, a temporary exhibition gallery and modern educational facilities. There is a reconstruction of what the Wall might have looked like, and a viewing tower which allows a bird's eye view across the site. All of this means Segedunum can successfully work as a gateway to Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, somewhere to understand the Wall and navigate from. Importantly the site is accessible from urban Tyneside and, by public transport, from the centre of Newcastle.

In terms of heritage outcomes, both the archaeological remains of the fort – including those that were revealed during the project – and the collections – are in significantly better condition as a result of investment in conservation. Segedunum is now the most thoroughly excavated fort along Hadrian's Wall. For the visitor, the site, which was previously hard to understand, is now fully accessible and interpreted throughout.

Segedunum receives around 50,000 visitors per year, half of whom are tourists to the Wall. The number of visitors to Hadrian's Wall continues to grow, and Segedunum is thought to have the potential to grow steadily too. Tyne and Wear

Archives and Museums works with the Hadrian's Wall Management Plan Committee, local authorities and other agencies to develop use of these sites, drawing in particular on the success of the National Walking Trail.

Some questioned the wisdom of investing in a major attraction in Wallsend, which, because of its location, had been considered by some difficult to promote as a destination. But Segedunum has been an important investment. Its visitors help put money into the local economy. The temporary exhibition gallery has also enabled loans of items or shows from the British Museum and the development of a relationship with Tullie House (the complementary museum at the western end of the Wall) to take place.

Segedunum is now a thriving site with strong local support in particular through an active Friends group. In 2015 the Chancellor of the Exchequer allocated funding for further development at Segedunum as part of the Northern Powerhouse project. None of this would have been possible without the HLF grant.

Many factors came together at the same time to make Segedunum possible: the HLF major grant, the shipyard site becoming available, and the ambitions of the Council and TWAM. But the interviewees saw being able to develop the site 'in one hit' as critical. It maximised the 'step change' impact that brings in new audiences, it allowed investment in high quality facilities, and both of these things help justify the spend in the eyes of the public and funders.

## **Shetland Museum and Archives**

On Shetland, the HLF major grant has enabled nothing less than the creation of a new purpose-built museum and archive centre, on a site that was itself worthy of heritage protection. The move out of local authority control, and the investment of capital, led to an ambitious development that has become the heart of a new cultural quarter, and a popular destination for locals and tourists alike.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2006

**Value of grant:** £5,115,000

**Description of project:** Creation of new-build museum and archive centre;

**Year of completion of project:** 2008

**Interviewee:** James Moncrieff, General Manager, Shetland Amenity Trust

The need for a new home for the Shetland Museum and Archives was identified in the early 1980s. The existing Museum was popular, with around 50,000 visits per year. But the space was cramped, which wasn't very appealing to locals (who thought of it as a 'dusty and dingy' place) and the facilities were inadequate for the preservation of heritage items. Although the museum had friendly relations with some of the larger national collections, it was always difficult to arrange loans because of the lack of the necessary facilities and expertise. However until the late 1990s the Museum was managed by Shetland Islands Council, for which a massive building project carried too many risks, and which had other more pressing priorities.

However, in 1999, the local authority asked Shetland Amenity Trust, whose remit is the provision of heritage and cultural services for the islands, to take forward a project for a new Museum and Archive. This change in governance allowed a more ambitious project to develop.

With 50% HLF funding and 50% local government funding, the build went ahead. An appropriate site had been identified: Hay's Dock, the last original part of the Lerwick waterfront, which would almost certainly not have been protected without the investment of the project. The design of the new building was sympathetic to the Shetland and heritage context, mirroring the form of the 'Lodberries', the old merchant houses which once lined the foreshore. The original boat-building shed was preserved at one end. And new modern facilities were installed across the museum and archive, telling a coherent story throughout.

Although the project was of a scale that none of the team had handled before, it was a resounding success and it was delivered on time and on budget. It has since won numerous accolades: a BURA Award (British Urban Regeneration Association), second-place in the Art Fund prize, a nomination for European Museum of the Year, as well as maintaining a five-star VisitScotland rating. It now receives around 84,000 visitors per year, both tourists and locals; which is remarkable for an island of 22,500 inhabitants.

It is also commercially successful. The museum generates income through hire for birthday parties and weddings in the gallery spaces as well as the restaurant. This is a new and valued community resource, but it also attracts international conferences:

for example hosting the fifth Maritime Museums Forum. The shop brings in money selling local goods at the museum and online, and the catering offer supports local produce. It is now regarded as one of the best restaurants on the island, with a veranda overlooking the harbour.

The success of the project has been in part due to the confidence boost that comes with an HLF major grant, and the long-term security it provides, not only in having a new building with a design life of 70 years but in cementing some of the support structures around the museum. HLF pushed for longer term support from the council (25 instead of three years) and a longer term business plan. As a result of the development – which as well as being a museum is a community centre, education hub, meeting place, and a venue for talks and seminars – a new cultural quarter has grown up in Lerwick, with the addition of an arts centre following on from the new museum build.

The new improved facilities have meant that collections from elsewhere can be loaned to the island. The Museum now has a strategic partnership with the National Museum of Scotland and the British Museum, which brought the Lewis Chessmen there, and the equally stunning Gayer Anderson Cat. Previously, although the museum had a good relationship with those national museums it wouldn't have been able to mount such an ambitious exhibition.

The development has given Shetland Amenity Trust the confidence to develop other big projects, including the recent £5.4 million restoration and development of Sumburgh Head Lighthouse which received £270,000 HLF funding. They are now building a boat store as the boats that have been preserved as part of HLF are at risk of rotting away from weather damage. They are also considering loaning out clusters of items to other parts of the mainland with satellite museums and education services. This in part has been enabled by the reorganisation of the archive, which has also had benefits within the museum. It is now used much more thoroughly across the displays, and the expansion of space means the collection has room to grow. It also means the team can do more work with communities and local history groups.

Finally, the major grant project has meant a diversification and growth in skills within the organisation: in marketing, in education, and in preservation and maintenance, (particularly in woodwork). The museum is providing a broader range of educational services – as well as the customary visits from school groups, there are apprenticeships in boat building, and links with the University of Highlands and Islands.

James Moncrieff, General Manager of SAT, is unequivocal about the importance of the major grants programme:

“Without HLF the community – in Shetland and across the UK – would be a poorer place. HLF supports strategic, ground breaking projects, combining with Historic Scotland and European Structural Funds, and that's vital now and in the future.”

## **Somerset House & the Gilbert Collection**

The two grants received by Somerset House contributed to the restoration of the building and to the creation of galleries to house the Gilbert Collection, a renowned collection of silver and objets d'art previously kept in Los Angeles, together with an endowment to support it. The gallery spaces did not ultimately work for the Collection, and it has been moved to the Victoria & Albert Museum. However, the changes that the grants initiated have led to Somerset House becoming one of London's great public spaces, with its courtyard hosting performances of music and film and its galleries being used for a wide variety of temporary exhibitions.

**Project:** Somerset House Restoration

**Year of HLF grant:** 1997

**Value of grant:** £10,278,750

**Description of project:** Restoration of the Great Arch; protection and restoration works to the floors and building shell in public areas; improvements to visitor access facilities, including installation of three lifts.

**Year of completion of project:** 2004

**Project:** Gilbert Collection

**Year of HLF grant:** 1996

**Value of grant:** £30,750,000

**Description of project:** Refurbishment and refitting the Terrace Building into a museum space; greater public access to the building of Somerset House; provision of a £10 million endowment for the Gilbert Collection.

**Year of completion of project:** 2004

**Interviewees:** Gwyn Miles, Director, Somerset House Trust; Duncan Wilson, former Director, Somerset House Trust

The Gilbert Collection had been built up over many years by Arthur Gilbert, a Briton resident in the United States. It was kept in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), but disagreements between the Arthur Gilbert Trust and LACMA led to the Trust offering the Collection to the UK.

Jacob Rothschild (the then chair of HLF) thought that the Collection would be a great way to open up Somerset House to the public. This was a long-held ambition of his and others (including the former Cabinet minister Michael Heseltine), as Somerset House is 'one of the great buildings of London that had been degraded by its occupation by various government organisations – it had been looked after, but not in a way that was conducive to a publicly accessible building'. As an example, protective cages had been attached to the staircases in the Lord Chancellor's Office. At the time of the grants, the Inland Revenue occupied three-quarters of the site. While the Courtauld art gallery, close to the entrance, was accessible, the public wasn't really encouraged to come into rest of the building. The courtyard was

covered over and used for a staff car park. The Inland Revenue did spend money on refurbishment but there was no long-term maintenance plan for the building and site.

“Without someone like Jacob making it happen, we could still be a government office.”

All the capital works at Somerset House – both the small works planned by Somerset House itself and the major exhibition/museum fit-out undertaken by the Gilbert Collection Trust – were completed very quickly to meet a demanding timescale. After the award in 1997, building work started in 1999 and the exhibition opened in April/May 2000 (there was a clause in the gifting of the Collection to the UK that it had to open by then). It was ‘a very short amount of time and there was loads to do’.

The organisation struggled at first to understand its market. Duncan Wilson, previous Director of Somerset House Trust says, “I always thought that we needed a major cultural tenant as an anchor destination and to make the place a real cultural hub.” However, the team learnt the hard way what works in their spaces and what visitors come for, which wasn’t as originally envisaged.

The Trust was not able to capitalise on the initial buzz of the Gilbert Collection’s opening. Marketing was a problem, as was the configuration of the galleries over two floors. By 2006, when Gwyn Miles became Director of Somerset House, the Gilbert Collection was struggling to attract 30,000 visitors per year, in a central London site that was then attracting over one million people. (Today, Somerset House attracts 2.5 million a year.)

The Gilbert Collection didn’t work as a standalone visitor attraction, and was moved to the Victoria and Albert (V&A). While this is a negative outcome in one sense, both interviewees agreed that the V&A, as the world’s leading collection of decorative art, was the obvious home for the Collection.

A second privately-funded initiative, creating a small satellite museum to show treasures from the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, had also failed. The team has learned that permanent collections just don’t work on this site. Instead the current offer revolves around temporary exhibitions on contemporary themes: architecture, fashion, photography and contemporary design: ‘In the Embankment Galleries – big, glitzy temporary exhibitions which we charge for. In the rooms on the ground floor – what we call displays, which we don’t charge for – we like to feel that we always offer ‘something for nothing’’, Miles says.

The exhibition programme is supplemented by a major events programme in the courtyard that includes outdoor films, music and a food festival.

The Inland Revenue has moved out entirely and tenants are now focused on the creative and cultural industries, including associations and organisations such as UK Fashion and the Clore Leadership, as well as some small businesses, plus Kings College. All the space that is currently available is let: “Rents drive our economy. People imagine that we should have exhibitions on all floors but that would never work,” Miles says.

“This has to be one of the most successful HLF projects, but for slightly perverse and peculiar reasons! It raised the profile of the space so that we could host events, have

an ice rink, put on cinema and opera screenings etc... There would have been no raison d'être to the Somerset House Trust without the Gilbert Collection." Duncan Wilson

## **ss Great Britain**

ss Great Britain gets no public revenue funding, and was at a 'make or break' point at the time of the HLF major grant. Visitor numbers were down to 70,000 and it wasn't generating enough money to invest back into the ship. The grant funded an ambitious, pioneering scheme – the 'glass sea' – which has been a great success. The ship's condition is now secure for decades, and erosion has stopped as far as is measurable. The organisation has re-thought the way it presents the ship's history, and the number of visitors has grown dramatically.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2000

**Value of grant:** £9,205,000

**Description of project:** Significant conservation work to the ss Great Britain and to the surrounding historic dockyard; improved visitor facilities, such as the installation of a 'glass sea' for conservation, increased access to the ship, and creation of a new cafe; employment of an education officer, with the development of an education centre to follow.

**Year of completion of project:** 2005

**Interviewee:** Matthew Tanner, Chief Executive, ss Great Britain Trust

"The change has been so colossal it's almost unbelievable to see how far we've come. It's totally transformative – physically and mentally. She was the archetypal sleeping giant."

In 1995 the ss Great Britain Trust submitted a bid to HLF for funds to construct a new visitor centre, with a small portion of the money allocated to repairs to the ship itself – what Chief Executive Matthew Tanner calls 'a shipyard repair'. HLF rejected this approach; a decision that made the ship's board of trustees aware of the problems the ss Great Britain was facing, and pushed them to consider more radical change. Tanner was recruited at that point, and he quickly came up with a much more ambitious restoration idea – the glass sea.

ss Great Britain was to be installed in a dry dock surrounded by glass as if she were afloat, to let people see below the waterline and remove any moisture from the ship. Tanner had worked on a similar proposal for small boats in Liverpool, but that hadn't been built. Nothing like it had been attempted with such an important and big ship before. Tanner felt that a shipyard repair – scraping away the rust and patching up – wasn't sustainable. "The danger was you would end up with a replica ship rather than the real thing".

Some people saw the glass sea idea as too risky and too unorthodox. Initially the HLF were cautious about spending more than £5 million on a ship and anxious about the risks of the strategy. A lot of scientific research was undertaken to get robust answers to technical questions. If the Trust hadn't secured the grant, Tanner thinks the Trust would have failed, and the ship might well have been dumped on to Bristol City Council, with 'who knows what fate'.

But the project went ahead, and as the site couldn't afford to close during the work, the staff devised a way to let people (in hard hats) visit the ship during the restoration

and see what was going on. Surprisingly, visitor numbers actually went up during this period: people were curious to see what was happening.

Phase one (the ship and the dockyard) was open to the public in 2005, it consisted of the glass sea, the dry dock and the museum building. Now, visiting the ship is much more about the immersive experience, the story being told on board and the authentic fabric and content of the ship. One big change has been that it is not focused just on the 'Brunel's ship' element anymore; exhibits focus on its whole life and wider context. Tanner says he rescued material from skips on the site to help tell this longer story.

On re-opening visitor numbers rose from 70,000 to 200,000 – the ship's capacity, and far more than the expected 120,000. It has stabilised at around 170,000 since then. This is despite ticket prices doubling in that time (since 2005). ss Great Britain has been an exemplar for the sector. It was the first ship to be analysed and conserved in this way – it has become a flagship in many senses. In 2006/7 the project was awarded the UK Museum of the Year Prize (Gulbenkian Prize), the Large Visitor Attraction of the Year Award, and the European Micheletti Prize, and has earned around 30 other prizes since then.

Audience research shows that all parts of the experience are liked by at least some of the visitors, and women now like the visit as much as men, whereas previously ss Great Britain had appealed more to men. The ship is getting a lot of return visitors from Bristolians who may not have been for many years, when the site was very different.

The major grant has changed the perception of the Trust in the city. The organisation is now seen as an institution within the city, not just a visitor attraction, and it has become more important to the identity of the city.

## St George's Hall

St George's Hall is a huge, Grade I listed neoclassical building in the heart of Liverpool city centre. The Hall and the Plateau in front of it are an important gathering point for Liverpudlians when they want to mark significant moments, such as the death of George Harrison or the launch of Liverpool's year as European City of Culture. Yet the Hall had been in decline for decades, and in the 1980s there was even talk it might be demolished, a controversy which caused the Prince of Wales to take an interest in the building's fate. The journey back from that point has been long, but with the support of a major grant great progress has been made.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2005

**Value of grant:** £14,598,000

**Description of project:** Wind and water-proofing of building; improvements to fire compartmentalisation; the creation of disabled access, public and good lifts; restoration of small concert hall, kitchens, south entrance hall; improvement of support facilities for these rooms; creation of a learning suite for schools.

**Year of completion of project:** 2007

**Interviewees:** Claire McColgan, Director of Culture, Liverpool City Council; Alan Smith, Managing Director, St George's Hall; Graham Boxer, former Director, St George's Hall

Located on Lime Street opposite the city's main railway station, St George's Hall is a spectacular building, referred to by architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner as, "one of the finest neo-Grecian buildings in the world". The hall and its surrounding areas are a key part of Liverpool's World Heritage Site, along with the likes of the Walker Art Gallery, the World Museum and the Central Library. It contains a number of grand rooms, concert halls and law courts. However towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, only about a third of this space was usable: the Great Hall, the Western Rooms, and the kitchens. The rest of the building was in a very poor state and not open to public. Claire McColgan, the council's Director of Culture, says her memories of the Hall before the restoration are of 'complete decay'.

In the 1990s a trust was formed to fundraise for the capital necessary to start restoring the Hall, and this included developing an application to HLF. The original request to HLF, for £40 million, was knocked back. However, the trust persisted and was eventually granted £15 million towards the project. This smaller application allowed all the original public spaces of the building to be brought back to operational use. The objectives of the revised bid were to make the building weatherproof, and fully accessible, to identify some priority spaces for restoration (the Small Concert Room, the South Entrance Hall), and to enable the building to start generating its own income.

All of this was achieved, and the Hall was re-opened in 2007 (by the Prince of Wales). Though the project was a troubled one in some ways, former director Graham Boxer believes it was worth the struggle simply to reverse the years of decline that had progressed through the Hall. The Small Concert Room in particular now 'is a gem', an example of what could be done in future with the other un-restored parts of the building, particularly the Great Hall.

The Grant also led to the creation of a Heritage Centre in the South Entrance Hall to tell the story of the building, and to place it in the wider historical context of Liverpool. The Heritage Centre “helped locals to understand the Victorian ambitions of the city”, Boxer says.

There have been other benefits too, for example, under the wooden floor of the Great Hall is a second floor of Minton tiles. The Hall staff are now able to lift the wooden floor more frequently to show the Minton floor. (It has been shown around six times since the restoration, compared with only six times in the entire 20th century.) More recently, the basement space has been opened up. St George’s Hall was the world’s first air conditioned building and some of this new gallery space lets you see the industrial plant up close. There are four new gallery spaces in the basement. It is the first time this space had been publicly accessible for 150 years.

The full restoration of the Hall would be a huge project. While there are obvious projects to do, such as the restoration of the Great Hall back to its original paint finishes, or the installation of a glass floor to show the Minton tiles all the time, Boxer thinks there are no definite plans to do any of these. Liverpool City Council, which still owns the Hall, is facing budget pressures and is looking to cut the costs of its estate. St George’s Hall was ‘operationally immature’ in 2007 after its re-opening, and it is still finding its feet even now.

Maintaining a building as large as St George’s Hall is an ongoing battle. The major grant ‘was in effect stage one of St George’s Hall’s revival’, and there are plenty of opportunities for further development. A change in council leadership, including the introduction of an elected mayor, has been a turning point. The new administration is “passionate about heritage and culture”, according to Claire McColgan, Director of Culture at Liverpool City Council.

St George’s Hall underwent its own change as part of council reorganisation, when it was moved from leisure services to the culture portfolio. This is in keeping with a shift in emphasis for St George’s Hall: for example, the Small Concert Room is now seen as a cultural venue rather than just a room for hire. There is a gap in the market for a mid-sized arts venue in Liverpool – the room, which can seat up to 300, could fill that gap. The team is also looking at additional revenue possibilities from ancillary businesses. Weddings offer a great opportunity to ‘upsell’ to other spaces in the Hall, as the civil registrar is based in the Hall, and they are also looking at the idea of a champagne bar and hosting VIP receptions.

The Hall now gets about 240-250,000 visitors a year (including wedding guests). It has become a focus for a variety of events, such as World Book Night, film location shooting, and the Antiques Roadshow. The management team is thinking hard about who their core audiences are for their various venues. More and more people are accessing the Hall, and it is being used for major festivals such as the Biennial.

Despite the remaining challenges, the project has succeeded in many respects. Boxer says that “Without the major grant, nothing would have happened to St George’s Hall – it would be even more dilapidated, and might even have been demolished.” The grant “has saved one of the world’s most important Victorian buildings” and secured its future for the foreseeable future.

McColgan adds: “Don’t lose sight of the fundamental achievement of the grant. While the building is not fully restored, getting it to its current usable state has been a huge achievement”.

## **St Martin-in-the-Fields**

St Martin-in-the-Fields' position overlooking Trafalgar Square, its work with London's homeless and the concerts it hosts have made it one of the country's most high-profile churches. Yet as the Millennium approached, the condition of the building was deteriorating, hampering the church in its work, and putting the staff and congregation under ever greater pressure to raise funds. The church faced an uncertain future. The HLF major grant helped the church unlock further donations from the UK and abroad, and the resulting project has produced a 'beautifully restored' church, open for long hours from the morning onwards. Allyson Hargreaves, the Executive Director, says 'the building is now fit for the next 100 years as a church'.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2003

**Value of grant:** £ 15,365,000

**Description of project:** Restoration of the exterior; replacement of the roof; cleaning and repair of the interior; opening-up of the 1720s crypt by removal of the kitchen and shop; creation of a new foyer to provide visitor interpretation space and access to the crypt; removal of the existing market in Church Walk and widening of the pedestrian area; construction of a new covered crypt entrance and light well.

**Year of completion of project:** 2009

**Interviewee:** Allyson Hargreaves, Executive Director, St Martin-in-the-Fields

St Martin-in-the-Fields is a church at the corner of Trafalgar Square in London. The present neoclassical building was designed by James Gibbs in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, but there has been a church on that site since the medieval period. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century it began its programmes to support the homeless, and this mission is reflected in its ethos: 'church of the ever open door'. In the late 1980s, it was in trouble, and was on the verge of bankruptcy with a dwindling congregation being barely sustained by donations.

In 1987 a new vicar, Geoffrey Brown, came to the church and introduced a number of innovations. He created a Business Enterprise trading subsidiary providing food, hospitality, a craft market and a bookshop. In 1993 he introduced music concerts at the church. This staved off disaster, but the church and the rest of the site's 'footprint' were not in good condition. The burial vaults in particular, where the church carried out its work with homeless people, was a damp, claustrophobic and threatening space – little better than the streets the homeless came from. As Hargreaves notes "it wasn't life affirming". The building was still leaking, and bursting at the seams in terms of capacity.

The idea of renewing the church for the Millennium emerged in the 1990s, but the church soon realised that it needed a substantial grant to pay for it, and turned to HLF. The major grant paid for all the heritage improvements: the roof, the floor, new windows, the portico and the steps, the cleaning of the exterior – including repairing the impressive plasterwork and church pews, the Old Vestry Hall, the railings and the exterior courtyard. A special consistory court gave permission to St Martin's to

demolish the original burial vaults and dig out another level, which required a lot of structural engineering.

The new vault space is much more suitable for both the location of the café and the work of the homeless charity: “The working spaces for The Connection are just so much better – and that is a key part of what we do here”, says Hargreaves. Also, the grant has arrested decay in the building, making it safe for the public (previously some masonry had fallen from the roof, while sections of the railings had fallen over).

Hargreaves says the church does not record the number of non-paying, non-ticketed visitors, but she estimates it gets roughly 700-750,000 visitors a year. Within this it gets 350,000 a year in the café, 35,000 for lunch concerts and 85,000 for evening concerts.

St Martin’s recognised that it couldn’t undertake such a project without external help. The trading subsidiary didn’t have the experience in either fundraising or building management, so the church set up two special purpose vehicles: a Building Development Trust and the St. Martin’s Development Trust, which was in charge of fundraising. The latter raised money from private donors, the public, central government, and from Hong Kong and the USA. St Martin’s has historically been the church of the Chinese Christian community in nearby Chinatown, which has a strong Hong Kong contingent, while American donors were interested because of the chamber orchestra (the Academy of St Martin in the Fields), which has toured extensively in America, and because the original architect of St Martin’s, James Gibbs, produced a book on church design that subsequently became very influential in the design of American churches.

Without the HLF major grant, there is a very high possibility that the church wouldn’t even have started the project, Hargreaves believes. In the current economic climate, for instance, it would have really struggled to raise the other funds.

## Stanley Mills

Stanley Mills is a series of cotton mills and buildings that were once an important industrial site at the centre of the planned village of Stanley. After many years of neglect, and several failed re-development proposals, Historic Scotland and HLF combined to secure the site and turn part of it into a museum of industrial history. Together with the conversion of other parts of the site to residential units, the result has been the rehabilitation of a troubled but historically significant complex of buildings.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1998

**Value of grant:** £5,110,000

**Description of project:** Extensive restoration to the shell and fabric of Bell Mill and East Range building; conversion of the Bell Mill into an interpretation centre; landscaping of Stanley Mills site; improvements to visitor accessibility; appointment of an education officer.

**Year of completion of project:** 2008

**Interviewee(s):** Ian Walford, Chief Executive, Historic Scotland; Chris McGregor, Deputy Director Conservation Group at *Historic Scotland*

Stanley Mills, established in the 18<sup>th</sup> century industrial revolution, is a set of cotton mills located on a bend in the River Tay, which eventually closed its doors as a working industrial site in 1989. Historic Scotland had subsequently tried to engage with the owners of the Mills, and the site had been subject to various development proposals. In the meantime the derelict mill had become an 'adventure playground', which was dangerous, and had been systematically stripped of metal and slate, resulting in prosecutions. The failure of the last development proposal, which involved demolishing all but one of the mills, led to a local public enquiry. Historic Scotland then put forward its own ideas for the site, and the enquiry ruled that the site be kept for heritage. Supported by HLF, Historic Scotland took on the whole site and began to look for sustainable partnerships for the various parts.

The centrepiece of the site, the Bell Mill, is one of the oldest surviving factories in the world, and is largely intact. It is the only Arkwright mill in Scotland and is a fine example of this once-revolutionary technology. The Mill now offers a visitor attraction and education facility. It tells the stories of the industrial revolution in working practices, how people worked, education at the time, and the conservation of the site.

The Phoenix Trust converted a number of the ancillary buildings to flats and townhouses. While that process was not without some difficulty, it has ultimately worked, and the mid, east and north ranges are in use as residential units.

The major grant was 'fundamental'.

"Nothing could have happened without that major injection of capital. The Scottish Government would not have come on board without it – only the first phase which made the buildings wind- and watertight might have been undertaken to save the buildings."

Historic Scotland finds it hard to engage large numbers of visitors at more recent heritage sites, such as Stanley Mills, as more ancient sites tend to attract bigger numbers. Nevertheless, a very good education package is provided for local schools. The schools programme is interactive and allows children to follow young workers through the dangerous place that is the Mill, telling the story of their work, their education and the conservation story.

There are Junior Guides, children who take younger ones around the site, and local young people are actively encouraged to come along to learn, for example, how long it takes to cut a stone and what skills and stories there are around it. In turn this generates a sense of pride and leads to less likelihood of vandalism.

Stanley Mills has involved people with a wealth of expertise in archaeology, project management, education and learning, property management, even bat specialists. Although people don't come in large numbers, the historical significance of the site is immense and Historic Scotland has learnt much from the project that it has used for other sites. This was a tough site to manage and taking it all on was a brave decision – Historic Scotland could not have faced that without HLF's help and backing.

“Before the major grant none of this could be done and the site itself was a source of concern for villagers. Now it has pride of place in Stanley.”

## **STEAM**

**Year of HLF grant:** 1997

**Value of grant:** £8,460,000

**Description of project:** creation of a new museum location; transferral of material from previous Great Western Railway Museum into new site; creation of new temporary exhibition site, cafe and shop.

**Year of completion of project:** 2002

**Interviewees:** Helen Miah, Commissioner for Leisure, Libraries & Culture, Swindon Borough Council; Alan Greer, General Manager STEAM Museum, Swindon Borough Council

STEAM in Swindon, the heritage centre that resulted from a major grant in 1997, houses over 400,000 objects relating to the Great Western Railway (GWR), the pioneering project of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, and regarded at the time as the most advanced railway in the world. Previously, there had been a small council-run museum displaying a fraction of the collection (although all items were well looked-after). A second concern was to find a long term use for the Grade II Listed building, in the heart of the former railway works, that now houses the museum.

Although there were some initial struggles due to changes within the local authority, and budget cutbacks, the museum is now thriving, and is Trip Advisor's 'No1 Visitor Attraction in Wiltshire'. Success is in part due to the entrepreneurialism of new management, "breaking out of the heritage marketplace to more commercial activity". Building on the globally recognised brands of GWR and Brunel, they partner with Lego on major events, collaborate with other museums, develop limited edition products, and have increased the commercial offer on site (café, retail, conferencing facilities). The quality of the original project has also put them in a good position "because high quality fittings were used in the original build, it hasn't required any major subsequent investment to-date".

Alan and Helen are particularly proud of STEAM's 'healthy and vibrant' education offer, with 20,000 school pupil visits annually, as well as lifelong learning opportunities. Much of this would have been impossible previously.

"We came through difficult times – we now have a high quality, audience-focused product – not just in terms of the railway heritage sector, but the wider museum sector."

## Stonehenge

Stonehenge is one of the world's most iconic and best known archaeological sites. In use between around 3,000 BC and 1,600 BC, the Stonehenge monument was constructed and reconstructed over a period of more than 1,000 years, culminating in what the World Heritage Committee has described as *the most architecturally sophisticated prehistoric stone circle in the world*. The site was given to the nation in 1918, and is managed by English Heritage. However – due to the proximity of two main roads, and the poor quality of ageing visitor facilities – the experience of visiting this major British attraction was often a disappointing one. By careful and lengthy negotiation with landowners and those with a stake in the surrounding area, major improvements have now been made, with the site reopening in late 2013.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2009

**Value of grant:** £10,000,000

**Description of project:** removal of the A344 adjacent to the Stones and the nearby visitor facilities, construction of a new visitor centre at the Airman's Corner site with associated parking provision, and new education and exhibition facilities within the new centre.

**Year of completion of project:** 2014

**Interviewee:** Magdalen Fisher, Development Director, English Heritage

Stonehenge is a highly popular visitor attraction, but up until recently the site was poorly equipped to manage the numbers it drew every year. English Heritage's Development Director, Magdalen Fisher, said that, "On a busy weekend you had to fight to get through the turnstiles... there was very poor access for families, and buggies... and the feedback from visitor surveys was poor." People who were expecting to see one of the wonders of the world left feeling disappointed at the poor quality of their experience, and the minimal interpretation. In addition, the site was severely compromised by nearby roads: the A303, and the even closer A344, which ran so near to the Stones it almost touched the Heel Stone, and whose construction had cut through the ancient avenue linking the stone circle to the River Avon. This precious ancient landscape – and visitors' appreciation of it – was compromised by both traffic noise, and the visual clutter of the old visitor facilities, in the form of 1960s prefabs attached to the car park. It was difficult to get a sense of this spectacular site in its natural setting.

In the early 2000s, a scheme to remove both the nearby A303 and the A344 had fallen through, but the necessity of improving the site was still pressing. In the late 2000s, the Stonehenge Environmental Improvements Project, a scheme reliant on the stopping up of only the A344, was developed, and received a major grant from HLF in 2010. Following negotiations with the complex network of landowners around Stonehenge (the National Trust, the Ministry of Defence, Wiltshire Council, and private owners), the A344 has been grassed over, and a new high quality visitor centre built at 'Airman's Corner', 1.5 miles west of where it had been, with visitors transported to the Stones on an unobtrusive transit system. The monument has now been reconnected to its landscape, and the former shortcomings – around not only

physical access, but intellectual access, interpretation and understanding – have been addressed.

Given that many visitors move quickly through the site, the new interpretation strategy had to identify and prioritise its messaging. The focus is now on two displays: the ‘standing in the stones’ experience, and a landscape wall that shows the development of the site. For those who want to delve more deeply, permanent and special exhibitions have been developed through a pioneering partnership with Salisbury Museum (which has human remains from the site) and Devizes Museums (which has other excavated objects). All three sites now cross-promote each other. “We’ve tied together our individual stories of Stonehenge... each partner had an important role to play, and has their own content,” Fisher says. The new centre borrows items from both Salisbury and Devizes – so that a visit to the Stones is enhanced by access to hundreds of objects found onsite. Finally, after the reopening in late 2013, development continued through the experimental construction of a set of Neolithic houses, which tell the story (or what is known of it) of where people might have lived, what technologies they used, and the lives they led.

“Researchers are finding out new things about Stonehenge all the time. English Heritage provides access to researchers and works with them to disseminate findings. The temporary exhibition gallery will be able to display new finds.”

The immersive educational experience is matched by an extended community engagement programme and a suite of teaching aids for groups, including schools and overseas groups. Tours are conducted by TEFL-accredited volunteer guides. The topline result of the improved visitor centre and learning programmes, is that now people understand Stonehenge isn’t just the stones, it’s the whole landscape – and they have a clearer impression of the community that lived there.

Consequently, responses from visitors have improved dramatically. An evaluation done straight after opening had very positive results. Returning visitors said they were surprised by how much more there is to learn. English Heritage has also noticed an increase in visitors using free passes (National Trust, CADW, and local residents). In fact, the business plan didn’t predict an increase in visitor numbers, as the primary objective was to improve the learning experience, enjoyment, and dwell time. But in the event, the site has seen an increase, and is expected to reach 1.3 million visitors in the first year of opening. The team is already considering how to respond. Resolving the issue with the nearby A303 would further enhance the site, and the masterplan has been designed with this possibility in mind.

The business plan did provide for more commercial opportunities on site: there’s now a bigger shop, a spacious café, and a membership kiosk. Admission prices are now benchmarked to other major attractions like the Tower of London. As a result, earned income has significantly improved, and Stonehenge now accounts for 20-25% of English Heritage’s turnover. The site is also making better use of volunteers, with a new volunteer and trainee programme across heritage and site management. Their approach to integrating volunteers draws on other HLF-funded projects, and they have developed a new management structure at Stonehenge, which will be rolled out across other English Heritage sites.

Given that the project is now such a success, it would be easy to forget how bumpy the road was at times. The stalled 2001 project threw up some major challenges.

Key turning points in delivering a workable scheme included the agreement with the National Trust over the relocated site for the visitor centre and stop-off point; Margaret Hodge convening a ministerial project board to galvanise action; and the adoption of the 2012 Olympic Games as a 'seriously useful deadline'. Fisher also credits a 'certain grit' within English Heritage to get the job done. And HLF was instrumental to the project going forward at all. In 2010, when the new Coalition Government announced its withdrawal of £10 million from the project, HLF increased their grant to help cover this loss without requiring English Heritage to re-apply. HLF stepping in promptly in this way helped to keep other funders engaged: "Without the grant the project would not have been possible. It'd not have won the confidence of the other funders." They in fact exceeded their fundraising targets, which helped reassure funders that English Heritage wasn't pouring all its resources into Stonehenge. Magdalen Fisher says HLF were invaluable in other ways too: "HLF's assessors and monitors provide great advice – it's important to take it on board."

Fisher is clear about the ongoing need for major grants: "They're very necessary to transform sites." She thinks that organisations tend to step up to deliver on the promise of a major grant, which has knock-on benefits for the recipient: "If you are sensible you get the very best out of it for your organisation."

## **Stoneleigh Abbey**

**Year of HLF grant:** 1996

**Value of grant:** £8,226,000

**Description of project:** Acquisition of the property and chattels; significant and extensive repairs, for example to the stone work and roof; conversion of out buildings for renting to businesses; replacing of previous low quality repair-work; conversion of upper floors into apartments; restoration of building for public access.

**Year of completion of project:** 2002

**Interviewee:** Tony Bird, Chairman, Stoneleigh Abbey

Stoneleigh Abbey is a large country mansion in Warwickshire. Although Grade I listed, it was in a precarious state at the time of the major grant. Water was coming into the building, lead had been stolen from the roof, and the stables were starting to collapse. Tony Bird, the chairman of the estate, estimates the main building was a year or so from becoming too expensive to restore. The house had ‘virtually zero’ visitors at the time. It was privately funded, but was not making enough to maintain the estate.

The property is now in ‘mint condition’. It attracts around 8,000 visitors a year, to guided tours of the State Rooms on the ground and first floor of the Abbey, which include the Vaulted Hall, the Saloon, the Library, the Gilt Hall and the Chapel. The Saloon in particular is noted for its superb Georgian interior. It has a much higher profile, back on the circuit of country houses in the West Midlands.

The wider estate around the Abbey has also been brought back to life. The land is farmed and outbuildings have been converted into offices. It’s a working estate again, with public access to the Repton-designed gardens.

The legacy of the major grant has been profound – “It saved the Abbey from destruction and made it into what it is now for the country”. It has allowed the Trust that runs it to turn it into a sustainable business, one which is able to plan ahead and safeguard its future as a stately home and working estate.

## **Stowe House**

**Year of HLF grant:** 2002

**Value of grant:** £5,528,000

**Description of project:** Removal of two water tanks and aluminium over-sheeting in the Marble Saloon; re-establishing the marble dome above the Marble Saloon; installation of a lift; rebuilding the Hornton Stone Steps; repairs and restoration work to the walls and ceilings of central pavilion and south portico

**Year of completion of project:** 2006

**Interviewee:** Nick Morris, CEO, Stowe House Preservation Trust

Before the major grant, Stowe House – a former home of politicians and dukes, with stunning Georgian interiors by William Kent – was in dire shape. It was acquired in 1922 by Stowe School, who saved it by doing so, but despite their efforts it was deteriorating. Its plaster ceilings were hanging down and the exterior was blackened. Consequently, access was poor – it was only open by appointment. So in 2002 Stowe House Preservation Trust began a major renovation.

Although access is still restricted in term time due to the House's function as a school, HLF encouraged the Trust to prioritise visitor involvement as part of its future life, and now it is accessible to the public 220 days a year. Physical deterioration has been stabilised – it is wind- and water-tight and restored externally – and in its new condition it is a much better partner for the National Trust, which runs the garden. The restored buildings add to the combined offer and Nick Morris, CEO of the Trust, would like to see even closer collaboration between house and garden, allowing visitors to more easily move between the two.

The renovation also had an important impact on pupils. The school took care to involve pupils in the progress of the restoration, encouraging sensitivity to their surroundings. "As an institution formed by enlightenment thinking, the environment of the school is integral to teaching", and they now send high numbers of pupils to study art history, architecture and other liberal arts subjects.

Morris says the HLF legacy is still evident 11 years on, and will continue. "The restoration has helped all – staff, students and visitors – respond in a positive way to their environment."

## **Tate Britain**

The Northwest Quadrant development was planned as part of an initiative to restore Tate Britain to its original purpose as a national gallery for British Art: 'At the time that Tate Modern was being built, it was important that Tate Britain wasn't neglected.' The intention was to invest in the British collection and lift its profile. The development was also urgently needed to bring the standards for the collection up to visitor expectations. The grant supported the development of improved public facilities, better access (including disabled access), a shop, seminar and auditorium.

**Project:** NW Quadrant, Tate Britain

**Year of HLF grant:** 1997

**Value of grant:** £18,447,102

**Description of project:** To renovate and to create new galleries on two levels of the northwest of the Tate Britain building. At the upper level there were six major galleries that had been built 1906-1920 and they were completely renovated and new ventilation, environmental management and lighting control was put in. A new building was created in the former courtyard.

**Year of completion of project:** 2001

**Interviewee:** Sir Nicholas Serota, Director, Tate

The major grant funded work to Tate Britain – the 'Centenary Development' – took place on two levels of the gallery. On the lower level, a number of previously 'very sub-standard' galleries were re-built and were linked to new galleries from the courtyard. On the upper level, galleries were refurbished, and a new entrance to the whole building, plus a new staircase were created. The intention was that the lower floor would be for temporary exhibitions while the upper floor would house the permanent collection. This in turn enabled Tate to re-think the way it showed its collection.

Sir Nicholas Serota, director of Tate since 1988, described the various challenges the organisation faced in delivering this ambitious project. The first was to persuade the board of trustees, and then the staff, that a scheme of this magnitude could be executed. The Centenary Development was by far the largest project that the institution had managed since the Clore Gallery in 1988, and that work had been managed by the Government's Property Services Agency (as had all previous building work). The second challenge therefore was to build a team within the organisation to conceive, plan and then carry through the building work. The third challenge was to raise the necessary funds, and develop the skills in-house to do so. The fourth challenge was to do all of this while building Tate Modern at the same time.

Serota says forward planning (on the build) was critical to the scheme's success. There was "a long period of gestation and planning of the curatorial teams and architects to ensure we had absolute clarity about the specification and brief." Once the drawings had been completed and tendered there were very few changes, which meant few additional costs and no delay, so the project came in on time and budget.

Since the opening of the Northwest Quadrant, visitor numbers have risen back up to 1.6 million annually. The museum has been transformed by the additional entrance, the new shop, and the way the displays have been re-thought: "We didn't just re-hang, we re-conceived the displays."

The capital work provided the impetus for this re-conception, and that led on to a new commitment to research into the collection and to a reorganisation of the way the curatorial team operate. "It wasn't all triggered by the physical development, but undoubtedly this was a major part of the process. So the HLF scheme – and the size of the grant – was fundamental to achieving our larger goals".

The grant gave additional authority to the launch of Tate Britain, "enabling us to secure important loans from private collections."

The Centenary development's success has given Tate the ability to keep raising money for the other parts of the site. On the more recent Southeast Quadrant development, for instance, out of a total project cost of £45 million, only £3 million has come from HLF and other government sources, with the rest coming from the private sector and foundations. A number of these patrons – for example the Weston Foundation, the Linbury Trust – were engaged in the previous development, and have now committed to this second phase. The Centenary development provided a template for these later developments.

## The Tank Museum

The Tank Museum in Dorset has perhaps the most comprehensive collection of tanks anywhere in the world. At the time of its major grant, while still a popular museum attracting a broad audience, including young families, its exhibitions had become stale and it could not generate sufficient income to maintain a visitor experience in keeping with its collection quality. The major grant allowed the museum to address this challenge.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2006

**Value of grant:** £10,044,500

**Description of project:** Creation of a new visitor centre; re-organisation of display space; improved environmental conditions for collection; new centre for schools/learning space; refurbishment and redevelopment of existing exhibits, including the Trench Experience and children's play area; landscaping of outdoor area; enhanced public access to conservation workshops.

**Year of completion of project:** 2010

**Interviewee:** Richard Smith, Director, The Tank Museum

"The grant has been transformational – we have gone from being a 1970s museum to a 21st century museum."

The Tank Museum opened to the public in the 1940s. The collection of 300 tanks is probably the most comprehensive in the world, with only a handful of significant gaps. However, the tanks were kept in old army sheds or 'cheap as chips new buildings'. These 'kept the rain off', but conditions were not ideal for preserving the vehicles, and the set up did not provide a great visitor experience. Visitors could walk around the sheds, but they were crowded with exhibits and nothing was displayed to its best advantage. The museum was also seeing a drop in numbers. It began charging for entry in the 1980s, which was initially a success, but visitor numbers began to fall from the mid-1990s onward. Director Richard Smith says if it hadn't been for the major grant, the museum would have faced 'a long, slow death rattle'.

From 1998, a long term plan was in place, of which the major grant was a significant part in the aim to break the 'death spiral' affecting the museum. Richard Smith was brought in as director in 2006 to manage the major grant project. Previously he had worked in shipping in Hong Kong, and had the kind of business expertise the board were looking for: he was the first non-soldier to run the museum.

Eventually, the project was delivered on time and slightly under budget. However it was not a smooth road. The Tank Museum needed to get a longer term lease sorted out before HLF would approve the grant. Negotiations with the Ministry of Defence allowed them to convert their ten-year rolling tenancy into a 50-year lease, which enshrined existing support arrangements and extended them. As an organisation with a £2 million turnover, managing a big capital project was a new experience. Smith's predecessor brought in consultants and other outside experts to write and deliver their bid, rather than relying on the museum's internal resources. Breaking even during the build period was hard too, and more difficult than had been expected, even though the museum only closed for about 30-40 days. There was

also some scepticism from some parts of the organisation initially, with people unsure about the project until they could see that it was working. Since then, there has been a more business-like attitude adopted, there are greater numbers of staff, and they are more agile and flexible in their attitudes.

The major grant primarily sought to address the poor quality of the visitor experience. Around 150 or so tanks were on display before the grant; this is now 170. But the footprint of the buildings is 50% greater, so the tanks have more room, and there are more supporting artefacts shown alongside. There are better information panels for visitors and more explanation is given. Around half of visitors get to see vehicles moving as part of their visit, a higher percentage than before the grant. The museum now creates exhibitions, including a recent one on Afghanistan, and hosts 'behind the scenes' tours of its Study Centre and workshops. Visitor numbers have risen – to 185,000 in the first year after grant - and people are visiting repeatedly. The extra visitors mean more revenue, which means reinvestment, and an even better visitor experience – a virtuous circle. One board member described extra visitors as the 'means and ends of what we do'.

Unusually, their audience mix was already representative of the population – the military theme cuts across social classes – and the mix has stayed broadly the same since the grant. Visits tend to be initiated by dads bringing their families, rather than mums, which is different from most museums. School visits bring in 7,000 people, and they expect this to rise from 2014 onwards, as they are leading Dorset's WW1 schools education programme.

The major grant also gave the team a critical mass to start thinking about and researching degradation issues: it 'propelled them into collection care'. The condition of the bulk of heritage did not change hugely, but work to slow deterioration has begun: "bringing them indoors is the big thing that you can do to protect tanks". The museum uses radiant panels in the halls to maintain the environment. This effectively turns the tanks into 'heat sinks'. As they are warmer than the ambient temperature of the halls it avoids condensation in the vehicles.

Smith thinks the major grant brought the museum much greater credibility in the sector.

"It is in a different league to most similar museums now, and is regarded as a leading museum in the South West. We have been selected as a 'mentor museum', and are mentoring other museums in our region and sector."

## **Victoria & Albert Museum: British Galleries and Medieval & Renaissance Galleries**

With the introduction of free museum entrance in the 1990s, the Victoria and Albert Museum in South Kensington reoriented its approach to display, interpretation, and communication with the public. The refurbishment and reorganisation of the British Galleries at the front of the Museum was the largest project undertaken for fifty years, and kickstarted the Museum's 'Future Plan'. As well as around 45 other capital projects, Future Plan also led to a second major-grant-funded project, the reconfiguring of the Medieval and Renaissance galleries. The result of both projects has been not only a large increase in visitors, and an improved visitor experience, but also significant new relationships with funders and donors.

**Project:** British Galleries

**Year of HLF grant:** 1998

**Value of grant:** £15,000,000

**Description of project:** Refurbishment and re-display of the British Galleries; transferral of current exhibitions to storage for the duration of works; refurbishment of architectural fabric; installation of plenum floor and ventilation, power and IT services; installation of visitor lifts at either end of the galleries.

**Year of completion of project:** 2003

**Project:** Medieval and Renaissance Galleries

**Year of HLF grant:** 2006

**Value of grant:** £9,750,000

**Description of project:** Reconfiguring of the south-east quadrant of the museum; refurbishment and enhancement of existing architecture to increase usability of space; technical examination and conservation of exhibits in the medieval and renaissance galleries; digitisation of some material so it can be accessed online.

**Year of completion of project:** 2011

**Interviewees:** Martin Roth, Director, V&A; Moira Gemmill, Director of Design and Future Plan, V&A; Gwyn Miles, former Director – Major Projects, V&A; Mark Jones, former Director, V&A

“This museum has been reinvented in a modern way, according to what the founding fathers wanted.” Martin Roth, director of the V&A

The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) was established in 1852, following the Great Exhibition of 1851, as a resource for manufacturers and makers, and to educate the public about design. Over the 20<sup>th</sup> century it had evolved into something of a 'connoisseurs club', with a scholarly but inward-looking attitude, and less of a commitment to catering for non-experts in design. During the 1990s, a time of transition nationwide in the museums sector, new ways of thinking about the galleries, spaces, management and administration of the V&A began. The decision

by Mark Jones (then Director of the V&A) to bring free admission in early marked a reorientation of the culture of the museum.

At around this time, the V&A opened its refurbished British Galleries, an ambitious project the scale of which the museum had not tackled for fifty years, and which was part-funded by a major grant. The British Galleries tell the story of “the island [of Britain] going from the poor man of Europe to being the workshop of the world”. The refurbishment project opened up spaces previously used only for storage, improved access and circulation around the museum (including the installation of new lifts), upgraded environmental controls so more items could be out on display (1,000 more than previously), and tackled the presentation of objects in an entirely new way.

With a renewed focus on communicating to a wider public, the museum recognised the need to provide for a variety of learning styles. Audience research into how visitors learn was fed back to the design team (exhibition designers Casson Mann, and some historic interior specialists), and the museum, which had previously been mainly catering to the ‘analytical learner’, diversified its presentation of objects. This included interactive exhibits, and objects that could be handled. Mark Jones suggests that HLF’s ‘insistence on access and diversity’ was hugely influential on the V&A’s approach to the project, and was a real benefit of receiving the major grant.

Following the reopening of the British Galleries, the V&A established its long term strategy for the care and display of collections, ‘Future Plan’. Martin Roth observed, “The whole plan is about clustering collections and arranging them in the right way to make the museum more logical”. For Mark Jones it is about encouraging their three million visitors “to act in a different way when they enter the museum”, and this is partly to do with subliminal messaging, to do with the arrangement of spaces, and to do with making the experience of the museum a tranquil one. The Future Plan roadmap laid out an ongoing programme of renewal, and over the next few years the V&A raised £130 million in support of the Plan, delivering around 45 projects. The team credit the initial grant from HLF for the British Galleries with driving the success of Future Plan. “Having one big success meant people trusted us to deliver. If you have public support you attract private donors.”

Both the HLF and the V&A learnt a lot from the British Galleries project that they could apply to a second major-grant-funded refurbishment: that of the Medieval and Renaissance galleries. This seven year project was a more conventional one in some ways, with the emphasis being simply on ‘getting objects out on display’. However the team built on what they learnt from the British Galleries refurbishment: visitors like daylight, for instance, and they made more of an effort to find ways to bring daylight into the ten new gallery spaces, while managing the control of environmental conditions efficiently. The skills acquired during the preceding years of Future Plan works also allowed the team to avoid a number of procedural problems that had dogged other projects. And perhaps most importantly, the British Galleries project endowed the museum with an increased ability to raise funds. “Fundraising for the British Galleries was hard and there was a deficit right up until it was opened. For the Medieval and Renaissance Galleries we managed to raise all the funds in advance.”

Taken together, the British Galleries and Medieval and Renaissance Galleries projects are major elements of the V&A’s Future Plan, which has resulted in a real

change in the museum's culture and attitude to communicating with the public. Gwyn Miles commented: "We really used the British Galleries to do things in a different way... we gave real thought to the story, the narrative, it wasn't just about the objects and dusting them down ... but using objects to show something new, a discovery, a connection." Miles suggests that this approach has since been emulated by other museums. Martin Roth credits the HLF with driving the quality of the projects: "Having an arm's length body that is a heritage specialist forces us to interrogate our ideas; what it's going to do, how we're engaging, how we're solving physical and intellectual problems." The scale of the projects has also transformed the popular image of the museum, and in turn has led to a trebling of visitor numbers over the last 15 years.

Today, the V&A is still progressing its Future Plan, creating more space for temporary exhibitions and thinking about how it can continue to be seen as a museum that is about contemporary design as much as design history.

## Wallace Collection

The Wallace Collection was one of the earlier recipients of a major grant. The project did very little to the permanent collection, rather the focus was on the spaces within the house, and the ways they were used. The internal courtyard was glazed over - giving the building a new central focus - and a number of other spaces were created that allowed for more flexibility in programming, conservation, education and public access. The dramatic central courtyard has been a boom to the organisation on many levels. And with this reorientation of the organisation's relationship to the public, the internal culture changed too.

**Year of HLF grant:** 1997

**Value of grant:** £7,743,000

**Description of project:** refurbishment of basement area; excavation of courtyard; creation of customer facilities such as a cafe and sculpture garden; creation of a study centre, new gallery spaces including a new conservation gallery, photographic study.

**Year of completion of project:** 2000

**Interviewees:** Christoph Vogtherr, Director, Wallace Collection; Rosalind Savill, former Director, Wallace Collection

Dame Rosalind Savill, who had been a curator at the Wallace Collection for many years before becoming Director, had had the idea of glazing over the courtyard for some time. For her it represented a dramatic intervention that – without losing any of the “townhouse feel of family domesticity” – would move the museum on from its comfortable status as a “quiet backwater”. Visitor numbers were not high, the museum had a distinct curatorial and professional bias, but there were no real public facilities – no restaurant, no education spaces, no proper shop, and an inaccessible library. There were also some infrastructure challenges: there was a major problem with damp in the basement. The Centenary project was a timely solution to a number of difficult problems.

The project refurbished the entire basement and excavated the courtyard of Hertford House, providing a new Study Centre, new Galleries – including a temporary exhibition gallery and conservation gallery, better access all round, and improved back-of-house facilities. In the courtyard, the floating clear glass roof created a central sculpture garden, a space which improved circulation, and offered the visitor ‘a comfortable place to relax and catch his breath’. By day it contains a café and in the evening it is hired out, together with the lecture theatre.

The Centenary development is, in Savill's words, “the new heart and hub of the house”. It has brought a new energy to the house and to the collections, and it has substantially improved revenue. This aspect has been vital to the financial survival of the Wallace Collection. Current Director Christoph estimates 20-25% of the organisation's income is connected to the courtyard in some way. This provides a sustainable income stream for re-investing in other activities. Whilst it was predicted that this would happen, the level of income has far exceeded expectations.

Vogtherr says the Courtyard has also given the museum greater prestige, and it's the place he first takes guests and potential donors. "It's the public gathering space for the Wallace Collection – it shows it at its best." The new high calibre space has meant that, even though the Wallace Collection is unable to loan under the terms of its bequest, they have been successful in attracting loans from elsewhere.

Savill credits two consecutive chairmen of the trustees in helping make the project go smoothly, advising on architects and catering offers. The museum also kept its doors open throughout the build, which helped maintain interest. Savill says, given the perception of it as a backwater, it risked being forgotten about if it had closed; instead the building work was visible to visitors, and the potential of diminished presence over that time was avoided.

Although little was done to the permanent collection, the major grant project had an impact on its interpretation. As they are now able to provide more information in the basement spaces (e.g. the Conservation Gallery), the approach to labelling in the galleries is very simple, and the townhouse feel is maintained with no conspicuous 'ropes and barriers'.

The skillset of the organisation has changed too. They now have a professional education department, made possible by the new dedicated spaces. At the same time, the curators' roles have shifted, to engage with the public more. The education programme is much more creative, working with a huge range of groups – 'teenage refugees, mums on maternity leave, deaf people, and people with Alzheimers'. In general this culture shift was embraced by the staff. As a result of ambitious outreach work the museum demographic is much younger and more diverse (ethnically and in many other ways), although there are still gaps in their audiences. On the whole though, visitor numbers have boomed. The museum attracted 160,000 visitors pre-1992, and almost 400,000 in recent years.

"Getting the major grant was a watershed for the Wallace. Everything is now seen in terms of before the grant or after it." - Christoph Vogtherr

## **Wedgwood Museum**

**Year of HLF grant:** 2005

**Value of grant:** £6,090,680

**Description of project:** To build a new museum and archive.

**Year of completion of project:** 2008

**Interviewee:** Gaye Blake-Roberts, Director, Wedgwood Museum

The Wedgwood Museum is one of the world's earliest company museums, in operation since 1906, and has been a Charitable Trust independent of the commercial Wedgwood company since the 1960s. Its collection includes ceramics from 250 years of manufacturing production, as well as 300 pattern books and 70,000 manuscripts and letters relating to the life and work of founder Josiah Wedgwood. At the time of the major grant, although it was in a sound financial position, the old museum had been closed, and less than 0.5% of the collection was out on display.

The grant was for an ambitious new building to house much more of the collection than was previously possible, with dramatically enhanced interpretation in the galleries. It was also to add a reading room, an archives storage centre, and a dedicated education centre for the first time.

Gaye Blake-Roberts, the museum's Director, says the HLF was crucial to driving the ambition of the project: pushing for a bigger vision and greater reach, and in particular to include the archive as a core part of the new building. The scale of resource allowed the museum to present the collection in a new way, incorporating social history, slavery, commerce and the global connections of Wedgwood (sourced directly from archival material), as well as manufacturing history.

"Without the major grant, we would have had a much smaller, quite ordinary little gallery."

Although it experienced a 'golden period' just after the opening, the museum has since been dragged into a legal dispute between the bankrupt Wedgwood company and factory, and the Wedgwood Pension Protection Society. At the time of writing the fate of the Wedgwood Museum and this world-class collection remains to be seen.

## Weston Park Museum

Sheffield's museums became a trust in 1998, following a period during which the service had been at a low ebb. The trust identified the City Museum and Mappin Art Gallery (which became Weston Park Museum) as a priority, and applied to HLF for a grant to restore and enhance this complex. Following the grant, the museum has become 'an icon for the city'. It has become what Nick Dodd, the previous CEO, calls a 'learning institution', telling the story of the city to its young people. This new learning approach has since influenced and underpinned the organisational philosophy of the wider group of Museums Sheffield.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2001

**Value of grant:** £14,153,500

**Description of project:** restoration of the Grade I listed facade, and rebuilding of the rear to match the front; structural work to the roof and floors; joining the two halves of the museum and gallery; installation of new security, heating, electrical and IT systems; creation of a new off-site storage facility; creation of new visitor facilities, such as a cafe and entrance hall; renovation and reorganisation of existing exhibition and staff spaces.

**Year of completion of project:** 2003, 2008

**Interviewees:** Kim Streets, Chief Executive, Museums Sheffield; Nick Dodd, former Chief Executive, Museums Sheffield

"It put the city's heritage on the map in the way it hadn't been before, especially for children – it has become part of growing up in Sheffield. It gives children a sense of their city's history."

Weston Park Museum (previously known as The City Museum and Mappin Art Gallery) is part of a Grade II\* listed building complex in Weston Park, which is included in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens. The museum opened in 1875 and the public art gallery was added as an extension in the Greek revival style in 1884, following the bequest of a collection of Victorian art from John Newton Mappin.

When Sheffield put its museums into a trust in 1998, the trust identified the complex at Weston Park as a priority for investment. At that time the City Museum and Mappin Art Gallery were operated as separate, although adjacent, sites. The Mappin was a 'white cube'-type gallery for a mix of Victorian and contemporary art, while the City Museum was 'fairly gloomy and quite traditional'. The buildings were in a bad way: 'every time it rained staff had to put 40 to 50 buckets out; in a storm they could end up with two inches of water in the exhibition gallery.' The City Museum and Mappin Art Gallery also weren't working as a destination, being a mile outside the city centre and not particularly accessible by public transport. Audience numbers were declining – down to 110-120,000 a year at the time it closed for refurbishment, which meant the museum was losing money.

Without the major grant, The City Museum and Mappin Art Gallery might well have closed permanently. It was in a bad state at the time, and had experienced a partial closure before the stage 2 grant. The biggest problem was the 1960s extension,

which was ‘appallingly built’ and on the point of being condemned. It had a huge design fault – its gutters were faulty, bringing water into the building rather than taking it away. “HLF had never seen a museum in such poor condition”, former CEO Nick Dodd says.

The capital project effectively gutted the museums, and redesigned the public spaces so that they would work for the intended audience. Museums Sheffield undertook a number of consultations, and worked with a focus group on issues such as the layout, the use of language, the colour of the walls, the texture of the carpets, the height of exhibits and information panels – ‘everything was considered’.

This user-centric approach was key to the long-term strategy for the place. Nick Dodd had a vision for the complex to be much more about the heritage of the city, rather than ‘just another art gallery’, and to be at its heart a place of learning, especially for children, young people and families. He wanted the new museum and gallery to become ‘a learning institution’ and through it Museums Sheffield to become ‘a learning organisation’. In re-launching the museum and gallery, Dodd took on and promoted staff who pushed this learning-centric approach. The team grew over time, until at one point around a third of the staff were working on learning-related activity.

The process of redesigning the museum was not without opposition. There was resistance externally to the closure of the contemporary art element of the Mappin (the Victorian galleries are still there) from the city’s ‘visual art crowd’, who were attached to it. Internally there were tensions over who had what space – every curator had their own agenda, “they were quite territorial”. There was, though, an acceptance of the idea that the museum should tell a broader story of Sheffield.

The new Weston Park Museum was loved almost instantly from the first day of re-opening, seeing a surge in visitor numbers, which has largely been sustained. This is unusual – most revamped museums see a dip after the first year – but Dodd suggests the consistency in numbers is down to the (informal) learning agenda, which created a strong engagement between Weston Park Museum and its communities.

Weston Park Museum has been key to the success of Sheffield Museums as a whole. It changed the mindset of the wider organisation: “It was a test bed for everything we wanted to achieve”. The grant and the learning approach made Museums Sheffield a regional leader: it led Yorkshire museums in the Renaissance in the Regions programme. The grant’s success also boosted staff morale, and went down very well with local politicians and communities.

Though Museums Sheffield still faces challenges, from budget cuts to the higher than expected level of wear and tear at Weston Park Museum (reflecting its higher visitor numbers), the major grant has left a legacy on which the organisation can build.

Current CEO Streets says the major grant, “delivered a fantastic museum for Sheffield. It raised the profile of history in the city, and has connected with young people’s growing up.”

## Whitworth Art Gallery

The Whitworth, a Grade II listed building and an important institution for Manchester's art and design heritage, undertook a substantial project incorporating new build, refurbishment, and external landscaping. However, this was one of the first major grant-funded projects that wasn't primarily about saving the heritage. Rather, the objective at the Whitworth was access, public engagement and quality of experience. The capital project built on years of good work growing and diversifying the institution's audience, and is set to reopen to the public in 2015.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2009

**Value of grant:** £8,500,000

**Description of project:** Creation of a contemporary extension at the rear of the art gallery; refurbishment and reordering of the existing building; relocation of storage and services; overall expansion of gallery footprint of 30%.

**Year of completion of project:** 2015

**Interviewee:** Jo Beggs, Head of Development, Whitworth Art Gallery

"We were doing well, and we would have continued. But now we can be exceptional."

The Whitworth is located on the south side of Manchester City Centre, part of Manchester University. The art gallery is the legacy of Manchester industrialist Sir Joseph Whitworth whose fortune when he died in 1887 funded the establishment of the Whitworth Institute – a school of technology, an art gallery and a public park. The Institute opened as a public art gallery in 1889, showing tapestries by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones and some major historic watercolours. It continued to expand its collections throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, acquiring works by Picasso, Van Gogh and Cezanne, and became part of the University in 1958. Its collections – now numbering some 53,000 items – include a range of historic, modern and contemporary fine art, textiles and wallpapers.

Unlike some other HLF beneficiaries, the Whitworth was in the enviable position of being highly successful at the time of requesting the grant. It was an increasingly popular museum that was reaching its limits in terms of capacity. In fact, numbers continued to increase right up to closure for refurbishment, and hit the initial post-project target before the work had even begun. This surge was due to consistent efforts in the preceding years, innovating the exhibitions programme, and undertaking a lot of audience development work. The gallery introduced a strong range of events and activities, focused learning and outreach efforts on the surrounding (historically underprivileged) neighbourhood of Moss Side, and developed bespoke sessions for target groups such as young families and BAME audiences. Head of Development, Jo Beggs, says that "People were regularly doing more than just visiting. 54,000 of some 180,000 visitors participated in some sort of activity." These initiatives had both broadened the visitor base, and achieved a 50% increase in numbers in four years.

But this increase was really stretching the material resources of the institution, and it was clear that further improvement wouldn't be possible without radically changing

the building. Additionally, the uplift in visitor numbers was starting to impinge on the quality of the experience.

‘Activities were quite literally crashing into one another due to lack of space. School sessions couldn’t be held in front of the art works. There was no separation between noisy, messy activities and people trying to do quiet study.’

The museum was getting feedback indicating lower levels of visitor satisfaction than desired. Visitor surveys also often revealed a desire to see more of the collection on display: due to the limited space, only around 8% of collections were on show, and the study rooms were difficult to access and not very user-friendly, with no computers and limited space for viewing large items such as wallpapers. All of the excellent outreach work had set high expectations that weren’t always being met, especially in regard to auxiliary services such as the café. So whilst the Whitworth wasn’t especially looking to diversify or dramatically expand audiences, it was increasingly concerned about its ability to continue providing a good service.

The major grant-funded capital project – opening in February 2015 – will both extend the gallery into the park, creating an ‘art garden’, and refurbish and reorganise the existing building, adding around 30% more floor space, a large café, a learning studio, a study centre and four major new galleries for the display of permanent collections and exhibitions. Some problems in construction – mainly relating to the structural complications of working within a historic building – have caused delays in the timetable for delivery, however the team have kept public engagement in the project going through regularly blogging and tweeting progress. They also ran an extensive programme of “Whitworth pop-up” work during closure, included family workshops at ASDA, a learning session in the hospital and a major exhibition of works from the collection in Selfridges.

Although not yet complete, the heritage outcomes are easy to define. The world class collection will be far more accessible, with more items on show, greater access to the collection through the more visible public Study Rooms and Collections Centre. The designated collection will overall be in better care. And the building itself will be restored to something resembling its early 20<sup>th</sup> century state. For example, the Grand Hall, which had been subdivided and had a lowered ceiling fitted, will be opened up again making a great space for lectures, performances, learning activities, and corporate hire (an important part of the business plan). Through the process the relationship with the university has also been strengthened, and there is now better recognition from the university of the museum as cultural asset. Jo Beggs cites the support of the university, with their experience and clout, as very helpful in making the application to HLF and undertaking the entire project.

The range of people-related outcomes remains to be seen, but the aspiration is to bring people and collections together and, toning down the academic flavour slightly, to connect locals with this aspect of Mancunian heritage. The impact on the organisation itself, though, has already been significant.

First, because the whole process was managed (largely) internally, skills and knowledge within the team have developed. There was a lot of ‘learning on the job’, but new responsibilities also unlocked latent knowledge and capacities. This approach also harnessed the team’s existing deep knowledge of the institution, which was undoubtedly an advantage for the project. Second, as senior staff were

put to work on the conservation management plan and activity plan, these 'blueprints' were really owned by the team, making delivery much smoother. Third, the period of public closure has given the staff a chance to regroup, rethink, and reshape the organisation for the future. They have been able to stop and take stock, considering what would be best for the visitor – particularly in the case of the curatorial team and learning team. Some staff have taken advantage of the hiatus to undertake placements, and a new visitor services team has been trained all together in the mode of the refreshed organisation.

Beggs states that, in light of the team's decision to manage things themselves, the support of HLF was crucial. "It was reassuring to have someone keeping an eye on the project", and she says the relationship truly felt like a partnership: "Everyone wanted the project to be a success". Like many other grant recipients, she also credits the involvement of HLF with unlocking funding from other sources. "Now, after 20 years, HLF grants have a very strong reputation. The grant gave other donors trust in the project and opened doors." However she reflected that more knowledge-sharing across other major grant projects would have been useful, and perhaps helped them avoid some of the troubles they ran in to with the Whitworth (for example advising on consultants and services, or planning for more time and budget to be spent on the R&D process). Learning from this, and nearing the end of their own process, the Whitworth team are now trying to do some knowledge-dissemination of their own across the region.

## **Woodhorn Museum and Archives**

Woodhorn had been a colliery for 80 years. In 1989 it re-opened as a museum, run by Wansbeck Council, and archive, run by Northumberland County Council. In 2002 it was awarded a major grant to overhaul the site, which, taken together with a decision to make the museum and archive an independent trust, has enabled Woodhorn to address many of its challenges. The Woodhorn Charitable Trust has been so successful that it now manages a number of other museums in the county.

**Year of HLF grant:** 2002

**Value of grant:** £10,258,750

**Description of project:** Conservation of the surviving 19th Century colliery buildings and mining plant; creation of new building to house county record office; creation of new gallery and storage space; improvements to access and security.

**Year of completion of project:** 2009

**Interviewee:** Keith Merrin, Director and Chief Executive, Museums and Archives Northumberland

The Woodhorn colliery had been open as a visitor attraction for over ten years by the time of the major grant, which funded a project to provide a new building for the County Records Service, extend and improve Woodhorn Colliery Museum, and conserve and restore the surviving colliery buildings.

Before the project to revamp the colliery site, Northumberland County Council's tourism initiatives were mainly in other parts of the county. The colliery was only attracting 20-30,000 visitors annually, and there was a strong desire to create a substantial heritage attraction to draw visitors to the south, and thus bring the economic benefits of tourism to the lesser visited, less affluent area (Woodhorn lies close to Ashington, a former pit village). But the colliery buildings were in poor condition, and the archives – which boast 800 years of Northumberland history – were difficult to access. The two elements were also run by separate councils, so a decision was taken to bring them together under the management of a new independent trust.

The Major grant was the catalyst for a big change: the creation of a completely new organisation with the ability to encourage people to access heritage. The colliery buildings are better interpreted and more of them are open. (The HLF grant left one building untouched but that has since been refurbished with RDA funds.) The permanent exhibition on coal-mining (which is free to enter) is supplemented by temporary galleries which draw on the archives, and help drive visitor numbers. The Archive is now kept in state-of-the-art conditions and incorporates good visitor facilities.

The site needed much doing to it - the colliery is big and Woodhorn was a small museum that simply could not have taken on the large scale maintenance needed – so the establishment of a strong new governance structure was crucial. The Trust has worked well, and they have been able to sustain the success of the site. Becoming a Trust early on also gave the team some capacity to support and lead others, and they have since taken on three more museums, and an arts

development project worth £2.5 million. The impact on the profile of the Woodhorn Museum was enormous. Nevertheless, a major injection of funding was required to fulfil the Trust's vision for the colliery site, and that came from HLF.

In its first year after reopening Woodhorn attracted 120,000 visitors. It now averages around 90,000. It has a broad range of both local and international visitors. Turnover has risen to £2 million from £500,000, and local authority funding accounts for 60% of revenue, down from 90% before. The museum tells the story of Northumberland (not just its coal industry) and visitors to the archive have doubled. Director of museums and archives Keith Merrin says, "More people understand the significance of the archive for the first time", and donations of material to the archive have trebled.

"Without the HLF Major grant, the Trust would not have been formed and the other museums it manages might have closed."

## **World of Glass**

**Year of HLF grant:** 1996

**Value of grant:** £8,300,000

**Description of project:** The creation of a national glass centre in St Helens to house the Pilkington Glass Collection, the St Helens Museum & Art Gallery and the Pilkington Glass Archive; development of a new building incorporating the 1887 Grade II\* listed Cone Building,.

**Year of completion of project:** 2001

**Interviewee:** Ron Helsby, Executive Director, The World of Glass

The World of Glass was formed from the amalgamation of two museums: the Pilkington Glass Museum (containing decorative, industrial, optical and some scientific objects) and the council-owned heritage collection. The new museum moved into a warehouse building belonging to Pilkington's, part of which dated back to the original factory of 1887.

The current director Ron Helsby is ambivalent about the achievements of the grant-funded project. He believes World of Glass was rushed into opening, during the excitement of Millennium celebrations, without due consideration of a long term strategy. This has become particularly apparent in the face of the recent recession and ensuing public sector cuts, which have both taken a toll on the museum's revenue. And the projection of visitor numbers was wildly optimistic given the competition from nearby cities that are 'awash with national museums'.

However these difficult conditions have forced Ron and his team to be entrepreneurial and innovative in their approach, experimenting with marketing, new types of gallery, retail offers and special features, including a two-ton chandelier that has been conserved and re-hung. He also recognises that World of Glass wouldn't even exist without the HLF grant.

"It has enabled us to tell a very good story about our town and how it changed glass-making forever. Our collections help us to inform people about social history."