

£4.4million grants to reveal Yorkshire's hidden treasures

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Four major towns and cities – Barnsley, Sheffield, Leeds and Wakefield – will all benefit from this latest investment of £4.4million into key historic sites. Two cathedrals, an art gallery and a university library will now be able to restore and reveal a rich vein of hidden heritage.

“The combined effect of these major projects awarded funding today is to provide local people and visitors alike with the chance to view works of fine art, ceramics, rare sculpture and beautifully restored buildings and to learn much more about their significance to the region,” said Fiona Spiers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Yorkshire and The Humber.

The four awards are:

Treasures from the Brotherton: inspiring audiences and engaging communities: £1,385,800 grant

The University of Leeds boasts one of the finest collections of rare books and manuscripts in the world. The breadth of the subjects is exceptional from exquisite photographs of pre-revolutionary Russia to books dating from the beginning of printing, as well as the archives of some of the twentieth century's most influential poets and writers and much more. This project will open these collections to audiences in Yorkshire and beyond by creating a gallery where permanent and temporary displays can be supported by a diverse programme of workshops, talks, discussions and activities.

University of Leeds' Vice-Chancellor Sir Alan Langlands said: “We are incredibly proud of our library with its special collections of international importance which have been built up over the past century. I am delighted that this grant will allow us to bring these ‘treasures’ to a much wider audience. We look forward to working with our partners in Leeds and in West Yorkshire to ensure that we make the most of this investment which is of real national and international significance. Of course, we greatly appreciate the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund.”

Wakefield Cathedral: Rediscovering our Heritage: £1,882,100 grant

Following the recently completed restoration work on the cathedral nave, this project will repair and improve the medieval quire and Edwardian East End of the Grade I building. Cleaning of the structure, renewed lighting and electrics, and the addition of underfloor heating will help conserve the heritage of the building. Display cases will be installed in a dedicated exhibition space to enable visitors view treasures from the cathedral, and from churches across the diocese. A comprehensive activities programme, including drama and storytelling events, will also encourage more people to visit the cathedral.

The Very Revd Jonathan Greener, Dean of Wakefield, said: “We are delighted to receive this further support from HLF. The previous work in the nave has allowed us to open up the building to the whole community. This new project will revive and renew the historic heart of the cathedral, and produce a building of which Wakefield and the whole region can be really proud.”

St Marie's Cathedral, Sheffield: Lewis Organ Restoration: £496,200 grant

St Marie's is Sheffield's Grade II* listed Roman Catholic cathedral and dates from 1850. The project will restore Victorian tilework, the Lewis organ, and rare alabaster sculptures as well as providing visitors and

worshippers with a wealth of historic information. The organ, which dates from 1875, is the largest, unaltered instrument manufactured by Lewis & Company remaining in the UK; the beautiful ceramic tiles show pictorial scenes and are inscribed with the names of Sheffield parishioners and the clergy who served in the church; the 15th century alabaster relief panels are among the few in the country that survived the English Reformation in the 16th century.

Father Christopher Posluszny, Dean of St Marie's Cathedral, said: "The whole community of St Marie's is absolutely delighted with the Heritage Lottery Fund's grant, which will allow us to share with the people of Sheffield and further afield wonderful stories and objects that have been hidden until now."

The Cooper Gallery: Creating Connections: £638,000 grant

Barnsley's century-old Cooper Gallery will be transformed by an extension to create additional display space. This will allow a far larger proportion of the gallery's collection of 18th, 19th, and 20th century paintings to be shown – at present only 5% can be displayed at any one time. As well as exhibiting works by artists such as JMW Turner and the Bloomsbury Group, the project will give visitors plenty of opportunities to find out about the collectors – many of whom were local, wealthy figures from the town's great industrial age - who brought the works together over the past 100 years. Much-needed conservation work will also be carried out and better storage facilities provided.

Paul Elmhirst, Chair of the Cooper Gallery Trustees, said: "On behalf of the Cooper Gallery Trustees I can say that we are all delighted to hear that our application (in partnership with Barnsley Museums) to the Heritage Lottery Fund has received final approval. That it should happen in the year of our centenary makes it doubly gratifying.

"The HLF grant will enable us to fulfil our ambitions to transform and promote the Cooper Gallery which will make a major contribution to the cultural experience in Barnsley for years to come. We are sure the original benefactor of the Gallery, Mr Cooper, would approve."

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Notes to editors

Barnsley projects to date have received more than £26.5million; Sheffield projects have received £48.7million; Leeds projects more than £62.5million; and Wakefield projects £32million. Specific investment includes:

- Experience Barnsley is the town's newest visitor attraction and is already proving a hit with visitors. A £2.6million HLF grant has helped create a state-of-the-art museum in the town's 1930s landmark town hall
- Sheffield's Anglican Cathedral welcomes visitors to its permanent displays of local history and achievement thanks to a £1.7m HLF grant
- Kelham Island Museum, Sheffield, is the place to explore the sights, sounds and objects that tell the story of Sheffield's world-renowned industrial past. The museum used an HLF grant of almost £1million to create interactive galleries that feature a range of skills and craftsmanship
- Leeds – City Varieties Music Hall, this nationally significant theatre was restored to its former glory, thanks to a £3million HLF grant
- Wakefield Cathedral – the renovation of the nave and an accompanying education programme was supported by a grant of more than £1.5million

Further information

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