

£2.5million Vehicle Conservation Centre opens to the public

18/09/2013

The 40,000 sq. ft. Vehicle Conservation Centre, which will house over 100 armoured fighting vehicles, was built with the assistance of a £2.5million Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant. The new hall, includes a public observation gallery and `Conservation in Action` exhibition, and will contain vehicles which have never been on public display before.

Museum Director, Richard Smith, said: “The Vehicle Conservation Centre will provide us with much needed space; enabling us to add new exhibitions, and ensuring that our collection is stored in a dry and properly heated environment. This new centre also gives us the facilities for an on-going volunteer led conservation and preservation programme, further guaranteeing the long term future of our collection.”

Nerys Watts, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South West, said: “The Tank Museum holds one of the, if not the finest collection of tanks and armoured fighting vehicles in the world. We are thrilled that this project is now open to the public and will provide new facilities to help conserve vehicles, whilst transforming the way visitors interact with The Tank Museum’s impressive collection.

"This is a great opportunity for everyone to get involved and learn about these complex machines and is bound to increase the number of visitors to this ever popular museum. In the run-up to the centenary of the First World War, where tanks played a historic role in the conflict, this project is opening just in time for commemorations in 2014.”

The work of The Tank Museum's workshop volunteers will be the focus of the opening event, with examples of their conservation work on display for invited guests.

One of the museum’s most dedicated volunteers, Darren Parsons from Southampton, will be co-opening the Vehicle Conservation Centre with HLF representative Doug Hulyer.

Mr Parsons, an engineer for Exxon Mobile, said: “Volunteering has allowed me to both learn and share my knowledge with other volunteers. We all have a different range of skills and abilities but we all find it rewarding to make an important contribution to keeping this heritage alive for visitors to enjoy.”

Museum Trustee Dan Snow and Lord Lieutenant of Dorset Mrs Anthony Pitt-Rivers will be among the guests at the opening, which will be followed by a Tanks in Action display – featuring vehicles maintained and crewed by museum volunteers.

Future projects for The Tank Museum

- Warhorse to Horsepower exhibition, Easter 2014
- Making Tanks exhibition, 2015

Further information

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