

Ulster Museum event

08 December 2005

The National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) celebrated its Silver Jubilee celebrations today (8th December) with a very special event at the Ulster Museum.

The event saw organisations, from across Northern Ireland who have benefited from NHMF funding, gather together to celebrate the achievements of this unique fund.

NHMF grants totalling over £220million have helped save some of the nation's finest items from the Flying Scotsman to the Mary Rose. In Northern Ireland NHMF projects have included the acquisition of Patterson's Spade Mill, Slieve Donard, the Stanley Woods Motorcycling trophies and the Somerville Papers.

The NHMF was set up in 1980 to save the best of our heritage in memory of those who gave their lives for the UK during wartime. Over the past 25 years, NHMF has played a vitally important role in saving some of the most iconic collections, landscapes and places in the country. Today the heritage saved is arguably the most original and extensive 'war memorial' in the world, made up of over 1,200 items from Tyntesfield Estate to the Waterloo Dispatch and the Three Graces.

The Ulster Museum itself has benefited from funds from NHMF which has assisted them to acquire several important pieces for their collections such as the Kildare Toilet Service, Queen Anne Silver Charger and William Leech's painting 'Aloes'

Primrose Wilson, Trustee of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, said: "What better way to celebrate NHMF's Silver Jubilee year than to celebrate its achievements. This event represents the treasure trove of heritage saved by NHMF over the last 25 years, which acts as a lasting reminder of the rich history of the UK and as a poignant memorial to those who gave their lives for this country.

Over the last 25 years, the National Heritage Memorial Fund has played a decisive part in saving a diverse range of national treasures. We are very proud of its achievements and we are particularly delighted that the Government has recognised the work of the Fund by promising to increase its support for the Fund

to £10million per annum in 2007-08.”

Commenting on a quarter of a century of the NHMF, David Lammy MP, Minister for Culture, said: “The NHMF has done a fantastic job of saving some of our very best heritage over the last 25 years. It is particularly fitting to celebrate this legacy in the year of the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II.”

Guests to the Silver Jubilee event were given a preview of a special exhibition which features some of the treasures from Northern Ireland that have been saved by NHMF.

Notes to editors

The V&A, and the Ashmolean Museum received grants in the first year of NHMF, helping them to acquire a reliquary vessel thought to have been given to Mary Queen of Scots to one of her supporters and Matteis’ The Choice of Hercules painting, respectively.

Further information

Sam Goody, NHMF press officer.

Phone: 020 7591 6033. Email: samanthag@hlf.org.uk