



PRESS RELEASE
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£7.4m Heritage Lottery Fund grant and thousands of public donations save iconic Elizabeth I portrait

A major public appeal by the Art Fund and Royal Museums Greenwich – attracting 8,000 donations totalling £1.5m - to help the museum acquire the Armada Portrait of Elizabeth I, has succeeded thanks to a major grant of £7.4m from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The painting, sold by the descendants of Sir Francis Drake, enters public ownership for the first time in its 425-year-history, and in the 90th birthday year of our present Queen. As part of the national collection it will hang in the Queen's House, on the site of the original Greenwich Palace, which was the birthplace of Elizabeth I herself. The Queen's House will reopen on 11 October following major restoration.

The groundswell of public support for this masterpiece of the English Renaissance, one of the most famous images in British history, was recognized by HLF in its decision to offer substantial support.

The campaign began on 23 May with a £1m grant from Art Fund and £400k contribution from Royal Museums Greenwich. An overwhelming response from the public saw 8,000 donations in just 10 weeks, with every donation matched pound for pound, raising £1.5m in total. Major contributions were made by the Linbury Trust, the Garfield Weston Foundation and the Headley Trust. In total, £10.3m has now been raised. The extraordinary level of support from the public makes this one of the most successful ever campaigns for a work of art.

The portrait commemorates the most famous conflict of Elizabeth's reign (1558 – 1603), the failed invasion of England by the Spanish Armada in summer 1588. One of the definitive representations of the English Renaissance, encapsulating the creativity, ideals and ambitions of the Elizabethan era, it is amongst the most famous images of British history, the inspiration for countless portrayals of Elizabeth I in film or on stage, and a staple in school textbooks.

The campaign received backing from high profile advocates. Historian David Starkey called on the public to donate generously in order to prevent this work from being lost from public view. Historian Sir Roy Strong said, "Such an icon of England should not leave the country and for it to find its final resting place on the walls of the museum that celebrates our maritime heritage would seem only right and proper."

Up and down the country people helped the appeal. Christina Ryder, 7, who attends Wakefield Girls' High School Junior School, started a fundraising campaign for the portrait by selling cupcakes iced with Elizabeth I faces, whilst wearing a magnificent costume inspired by the painting. St Paul's Girls' School in London held a bake sale in aid of the Armada Portrait of Elizabeth I. History teacher Blanche Girouard said, "We study the portrait when we teach Elizabeth I and the Armada, so the girls [were] very keen to help save it for the nation".

The HLF grant means the millions of people who play The National Lottery have now brought this treasured work into the national collection.

The national importance of the painting will be celebrated by Royal Museums Greenwich through a network of local and national partnerships with educational institutions and heritage organisations. This will ensure that the stories of the painting in its broadest cultural and historic context are shared and celebrated across the UK.

The portrait will be the centrepiece of the opening of the Queen's House this autumn (11 October 2016). The painting will undergo a period of necessary conservation to restore its fragile painted surfaces in 2017, and will then be part of an exhibition programme and outreach activities.

Sir Peter Luff, Chair of HLF, said:

"The Armada portrait is a compelling historic icon, illustrating as it does a decisive conflict, inspiring female leadership, maritime power and the emergence of the Elizabethan 'Golden Age'. This image has shaped our understanding of 'Gloriana', the Virgin Queen, for over four hundred years and I am delighted that it will now have such an appropriate permanent home in Greenwich.

"HLF's grant of £7.4m was only possible thanks to National Lottery players. They have enabled us to secure a stunning piece of our national heritage for this perfect location and, very happily, in the year of the second Queen Elizabeth's 90th birthday too. The National Maritime Museum are the ideal custodians of the portrait. Crucially, they will do their utmost to share the painting and its fascinating story with as many people as possible."

Kevin Fewster, Director, Royal Museums Greenwich, said:

"Through this generous donation from HLF, Art Fund and others, Royal Museums Greenwich has been able to secure this remarkable portrait of Elizabeth I for the nation. We are overwhelmed and extremely grateful for the response and great support we have received, and wish to thank everybody who has donated. This support enables us to bring the painting into the national collection thus safeguarding its future, and also allows us to make it the centrepiece of future displays, talks, tours, and education initiatives. Elizabeth I was born at Greenwich Palace in 1533, of which only the 1616 Queen's House remains. The portrait will be displayed in the Queen's House when it re-opens to the public in October. With 2016 being the 90th birthday year of our present Queen, there could not be a more appropriate way to celebrate the second great Elizabethan era."

Stephen Deuchar, Director, Art Fund, said:

"This campaign has been a triumph of popular will. The painting captured the

national imagination in 2016 as surely as the defeat of the Armada itself had done in 1588. Record numbers of donors, large and small, stepped forward with determination and generosity, creating an irresistible momentum that has brought this great work into public ownership at last. Our heartfelt thanks to everyone - whether £10 text donors, National Lottery players, trusts, foundations, Art Fund members or RMG supporters – who together made this possible. Special thanks are due to the trustees of the Heritage Lottery Fund for matching this wave of support with their magnificent grant of £7.4M, allowing us to close the campaign today.”

Minister of State for Digital and Culture Matt Hancock said:

"It has been fantastic to see the overwhelming generosity and support, particularly from National Lottery players, for bringing this famous painting into the public domain. I'm absolutely delighted that everyone will be able to enjoy this stunning portrait of Elizabeth I at its new home at the Queen's House in Greenwich, and I can't wait to go and see it."

Ends

Notes to Editors

About Royal Museum Greenwich

Royal Museums Greenwich incorporates the National Maritime Museum, the Royal Observatory Greenwich, the 17th-century Queen's House and Cutty Sark. Royal Museums Greenwich works to illustrate for everyone the importance of the sea, ships, time and the stars and their relationship with people. This unique collection of attractions, which form a key part of the Maritime Greenwich UNESCO World Heritage Site, welcomes over 2 million British and international visitors a year and is also a major centre of education and research. For more information visit www.rmg.co.uk.

About Art Fund

Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art. In the past five years alone Art Fund has given £34 million to help museums and galleries acquire works of art for their collections. It also helps museums share their collections with wider audiences by supporting a range of tours and exhibitions, including ARTIST ROOMS and the 2013-18 Aspire tour of Tate's Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows by John Constable, and makes additional grants to support the training and professional development of curators.

Art Fund is independently funded, with the core of its income provided by 122,000 members who receive the National Art Pass and enjoy free entry to over 230 museums, galleries and historic places across the UK, as well as 50% off entry to major exhibitions. In addition to grant-giving, Art Fund's support for museums includes the annual Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year (won by The Whitworth, Manchester, in 2015), a publications programme and a range of digital platforms. Find out more about Art Fund and the National Art Pass at www.artfund.org

About Heritage Lottery Fund

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. [@heritagelottery](http://www.hlf.org.uk). For more information, please contact Katie Owen, HLF press office, on tel: (020) 7591 6036/07973 613820

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