

Dr Walter Scott donates £1m to Museum fund

The £46.4 million Royal Museum Project will transform the National Museum of Scotland site in Chambers Street, Edinburgh into a 21st century museum experience. The Project will see the creation of 16 new galleries, two hands-on discovery centres, a larger gallery for international touring exhibitions, new facilities for education and a state of the art learning centre to inspire visitors of all ages.



A former nuclear physicist, Dr Scott was inspired by the collections of the museums which reflect Scots' scientific achievements, including those of Nobel Laureates Sir James Black and Sir Alexander Fleming. Keen to inspire future generations through the stories of such inventive and entrepreneurial Scots he has chosen to fund the Discoveries gallery at the heart of the transformed National Museum of Scotland.

Dr Scott owned Edinburgh-based investment management company Walter Scott and Partners until 2006, when he sold to US-based Mellon Financial Corporation. His interests are wide-ranging including architecture, science, aviation and sport. He is responsible for restoring much of Charlotte Square to its original Georgian splendour.

Dr Walter Scott said,

“I have been amazed by the ambitious vision to transform the Victorian Royal Museum building and the tremendous progress to date. National Museums is returning to us one of the jewels in Scotland's architectural crown.

“I am delighted to help make this happen. I am especially pleased to help fund Discoveries: it sits at the heart of the transformation of the museum and tells extraordinary stories of Scottish engagement with the world and its contribution to

it. In this way, it epitomises the spirit of the new Museum. That is why I am supporting it and it is my hope that these stories will encourage new generations of Scots to aspire and succeed.”

Discoveries highlights Scotland’s impact on the world, its inventiveness as shown by life-changing scientific achievements and its legacy of leadership in diplomatic and military history. It shows treasures which tell extraordinary stories with an irresistible capacity to inspire, inform and excite visitors.

Dr Gordon Rintoul, Director of National Museums Scotland, said,

“Dr Walter Scott is a great supporter of our work and our ambitions. We are tremendously grateful for his generous gift which will allow us to fulfil our aspirations for a major gallery in the National Museum of Scotland.

“We look forward to welcoming visitors to these new displays when the Museum reopens in summer 2011.”

The £46.4 million project is jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (£17.8 million) and the Scottish Government (£16 million), with a target of £12.6 million from private sources to be raised for the re-opening in 2011. Dr Walter Scott’s substantial donation means that the Museum now has less than £2 million left to raise in order to reach the target.