



PRESS RELEASE

Gipsy Moth takes flight as it finds new home in Hull

The full-scale replica of Amy Johnson's Gipsy Moth crafted by prisoners of HMP Hull during Hull UK City of Culture 2017 has found a new home in the city.

The plane was originally installed in Paragon Station in February last year as part of Hull 2017's Creative Communities Programme during the *Made in Hull* season. Since then it has welcomed around 30,000 people a day, including the Queen, Sadiq Khan and Goldie. Now it is set to move next door to St Stephen's shopping centre for a year.

The model celebrates the legacy of Amy Johnson, the Hull-born pioneering aviator who was the first woman to fly solo from England to Australia in 1930 in a Gipsy Moth named Jason.

Former Prison Governor Steve Murray came up with the idea to create a full-scale model of the straight-winged, two-seater aircraft, designed by Geoffrey de Havilland in the 1920s, in the prison's engineering workshop.

The project, which took seven prisoners 3,600 hours to make, was part of the prison's Reducing Reoffending initiative.

Gary Sword, Head of Reducing Reoffending at HMP Hull, said: "We are always looking for new ways to engage the prisoners and develop their skills so when we found out about the Hull 2017 funding, we thought it would be a great opportunity to get involved.

"Due to security restrictions, the prisoners didn't have access to the kind of tools you would use to build such an ambitious model in the outside world so it has been a real blood, sweat and tears exercise. They've not only gained transferable skills such as team-building which will help them secure future employment when they get out but they've developed an enormous sense of pride.

"When Hull was announced as City of Culture, I don't think the prisoners could have dreamt of being part of it, so to have created something that has been so well received and is set to become part of the Hull 2017 legacy is just incredible."

Jim Harris, Centre Manager at St Stephen's Hull, said: "The model of Amy Johnson's Gipsy Moth celebrates the creativity and culture in every single corner of Hull, and the incredible legacy of Amy Johnson. We are delighted to help the plane on the next leg of its journey, and offer it a place at St Stephen's Hull. With 12 million visits a year the model will continue to be enjoyed, and tell its fascinating story, to all our customers"

The Gipsy Moth was one of 60 new projects which received funding through the Hull 2017 Creative Communities Programme, delivered in partnership with the Big Lottery Fund, a Principal Partner of Hull 2017.

Martin Green, CEO of Hull UK City of Culture 2017, said: “The Gipsy Moth is a great example of how Hull 2017’s Creative Communities has involved people who might not otherwise think arts and culture is for them, to be part of Hull’s special year.

“We are delighted that the model plane has found a new home in the city. It is not only an opportunity for residents and visitors to learn more about one of the city’s revolutionaries Amy Johnson but also a chance to reflect on another milestone in Hull’s history - its tenure as UK City of Culture.”

The plane will be taken down from Paragon Station next month and will be cleaned and touched up before being relocated in St Stephen’s. There are also plans to create an interactive interpretation board to enable visitors to find out about how the model was created.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The Culture Company was set up to deliver the Hull UK City of Culture 2017 programme, a nationally significant event drawing on the distinctive spirit of the city and the artists, writers, directors, musicians, revolutionaries and thinkers that have contributed to the development of art and ideas. It is an independent organisation with charitable status.

It raised £32 million, with over 70 partners supporting the project, including public bodies, trusts and foundations and local and national businesses. Key contributions are coming from: Host City - Hull City Council; Principal Partners - Arts Council England, BBC, Big Lottery Fund, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, KCOM, KWL, Spirit of 2012, Yorkshire Water and the University of Hull; Major Partners -Associated British Ports, Arco, BP, the British Council, British Film Institute, Green Port Hull, Hull Clinical Commissioning Group, MKM Building Supplies, P&O Ferries, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Sewell Group, Siemens, Smith & Nephew and Wykeland Group. The National Lottery has contributed more than £10m of this funding, making it the largest single funding body for Hull 2017.

The Culture Company is carrying on as a permanent national arts company based in the city. Building on the success of Hull 2017, Culture Company’s core purpose will continue to be commissioning world-class arts programming aimed at residents and visitors and it will work strategically with partners inside the city and across the UK to cement Hull’s reputation as a centre for culture and creativity.

Culture Company will also develop its role as an independent organisation specialising in culture and cities, which in addition to commissioning work, will offer unrivalled expertise, consultancy and advocacy, across the UK and internationally.

For information go to www.hull2017.co.uk or follow us on Twitter: [@2017Hull](https://twitter.com/@2017Hull), Instagram [@2017hull](https://www.instagram.com/@2017hull) and Facebook: [HullCityofCulture](https://www.facebook.com/HullCityofCulture).