

National Railway Museum's Wonderlab to Receive £2.5m from The Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation

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The National Railway Museum in York has received £2.5 million from The Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation to fund a new interactive gallery for families called Wonderlab.

The gift from the Yorkshire-based charitable foundation is the largest single donation to be received by the museum, excluding lottery grants.

Due to open in May 2023 on the site of the museum's former workshop, the gallery will be known as *Wonderlab: The Bramall Gallery* and will host family and school visits.

The gallery will be packed with interactive exhibits with a rail engineering theme and is based on successful Wonderlab galleries installed at the Science Museum in London and at the Science and Media Museum in Bradford.

The gift will enable young people to learn about science and engineering through hands on learning and

at 1,466m², Wonderlab will be the museum's most significant new family offer since opening in 1975. Up to 81,000 people are expected to visit the gallery in the first year.

Dr Terry Bramall CBE said: "It is my pleasure to support the creation of the new Wonderlab gallery to the sum of £2.5 million spread over 10 years. Liz and I are thrilled to pledge this significant investment which will benefit many young people in the region, and we hope that this gift will enable its work to continue for many decades."

The funding announcement was made at the National Railway Museum on Wednesday 16 March, following a tour of the proposed Wonderlab site by Liz and Terry Bramall and other Foundation trustees. During the visit, the trustees were able to take part in the museum's 'prototyping' sessions which are giving groups of families the chance to try out and shape the final interactives.

Judith McNicol, Director of the National Railway Museum, said: "Wonderlab: The Bramall Gallery will be a ground-breaking interactive gallery for children that will celebrate the inventiveness and wonder of engineering, science and the railways. From the success of Wonderlab galleries elsewhere in the Group, we know that children will have great fun while also developing a lifelong interest and appreciation of engineering that will enrich us all.

"Thank you, Liz and Terry, for your most generous support which will create a lasting legacy and I look forward to welcoming you along with our first visitors when we open next year."

In October 2021, the museum announced that Yorkshire artist Pippa Hale had been appointed to create one of two art installations to feature inside the gallery. The museum is currently seeking contractors to build the exhibition space, with contracts expected to be awarded in May. Installation of the exhibits will take place from February 2023 and the gallery is scheduled to open in May 2023.

Wonderlab: The Bramall Gallery is part of the museum's 'Vision 2025' masterplan which will see widespread regeneration at the National Railway Museum in York and at Locomotion in Shildon. As well as the new Wonderlab, Vision 2025 will include a new Central Hall building and 'Railway Futures' gallery as well as improvements to South Yard, Great Hall and North Shed, and a new collection building at Shildon.

Wonderlab will be constructed on the site of the museum's Workshop and as part of the development, locomotive maintenance facilities on site will be upgraded and split across three areas which will include a refurbished prep bay for visiting locomotives to use.

Funding for the £5m Wonderlab gallery has also been provided by the Friends of the National Railway Museum, Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851, and The Holbeck Charitable Trust.

The National Railway Museum is seeking additional funding to complete the Vision 2025 project.

Julie Moody, National Railway Museum Campaign Director, said: "I would like to thank Liz, Terry and the Trustees for their generosity in supporting Wonderlab. We are now more than halfway to achieving our fundraising target for Vision 2025, which will demonstrate the cutting-edge innovations shaping our world today alongside the extraordinary birth and growth of the railways."

Terry Bramall was previously a civil engineer and Chairman of Doncaster-based urban regeneration construction firm Keepmoat, as well as a Director of Doncaster Rovers Football Club. Terry and Liz set up The Foundation in 2007.

Terry was awarded a CBE for charitable services in the 2013 Honours List. The Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation is a major supporter of numerous charitable organisations in the whole of Yorkshire.

Photo credit: Railway Museum