

'Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs - please help!'

This is not an appeal for money; it is not even an appeal for anything of direct benefit to FBHVC, but it is important. This is being sent to everyone in my e-mail address book - if you have had it before, or receive it more than once, please forgive the duplication.

It is an appeal by FBHVC to you to do something to help save, preserve and display the technological and innovative treasures that are held in the collection at the Science Museum and thus effectively belong to the nation.

You can help do this simply by making a phone call or sending a text or an e-mail at the right time. Let me explain.

The Science Museum has around quarter of a million exhibits showing the history of man's ingenuity. This includes a substantial collection related to transport. Presently, the museum has space to display only a small fraction of these items with the remainder in storage in less than ideal conditions in dilapidated WW2 hangars on a 500 acre site at Wroughton, near Swindon.

The Science Museum plans to reconstruct two of these giant hangars and link them with a state-of-the-art atrium to provide acres of exhibition space that will enable it to display the whole collection. The emphasis is very much on using the ingenuity of the past to inspire the developments of the future - and that gives the project its name - Inspired. It is all about stirring the imagination of the young and encouraging the scientists, technologists and engineers of the future. You can see a "flythrough" of the proposed museum on our website, www.fbhvc.co.uk.

I said this was not an appeal for money: it isn't, but money does come into it - lottery money, a £50 million lottery jackpot that is to be decided by a public vote following a series of TV programmes that will go out in December.

The Science Museum Inspired project is one of six projects vying for this 'winner take all' funding. The other projects are all worthy causes, but none is so urgent or so important for our future: as one colleague commented "cycle paths and tree-top walkways can be built tomorrow, endangered artefacts can't wait".

See www.voteinspired.org.uk for more information.

You can help secure this essential funding in any, or all, of four ways:-

1. Commit to vote at the appropriate time - good intentions are no help, it needs you to be certain to act. You can register your intention to vote NOW on the website noted above and you will then receive a reminder nearer the time.
2. Tell your friends, spread the word - perhaps by copying this message to everyone in your address book.
3. If you are able to get some information into a club publication, on a website, or distributed through any other kind of network please do - the staff at the Science Museum will be delighted to help with leaflets, text and links to put on websites etc.

e-mail: Susan.Martin@ScienceMuseum.org.uk or phone 01793 846200

4. If you chat on any web forums, get a thread started.

And if you can think of anything else, please let me or the Science Museum know!

Above all, recognise that unless all of us with an interest in science and engineering take the trouble to vote, £50 million of lottery money may go to fund a tourist attraction leaving national treasures (which, having been received by a national collection, cannot be sold) to moulder and decay.

Please do it!

Jim Whyman.

P H J Whyman, Secretary

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