

Derby marks Past, Present and Future in 2021

Derby is set for a triple celebration in 2021, marking its remarkable creative and manufacturing history that helped make the city one of the birthplaces of the Industrial Revolution.

It will mark the 300th anniversary of the creation of the world's first factory, at the Silk Mill, as well as the 20th anniversary of the Derwent Valley Mills becoming a World Heritage Site.

And Derby's rich history of making will be celebrated still further when the Museum of Making opens in the city, on the very site of that first factory.

Developed by Derby Museums, the new attraction - in the Derwent Valley Mills UNESCO World Heritage Site - will be a contemporary space telling Derby's 300-year history of innovation and 'making' within the former Silk Mill.

Set to be an inspirational new gateway to the 'city of making', as well as to the World Heritage Site, the historic Mill is being 'reimagined' as a museum designed from the floor up as a place to not only celebrate past and present, but encourage the makers of tomorrow through 'hands-on' experiences and immersive displays.

Revealing the whole building to the public for the very first time, the new Museum will display over 30,000 objects, including the Rolls-Royce Eagle Engine which helped power the first transatlantic flight more than 100 years ago.

Designed and made by the people and industries of Derby, with original features and the façade left in place wherever possible along with a new triple height glass atrium, the new Museum is set to open its doors in spring 2021 (<https://bit.ly/35YZnAu>).

Built in 1721 by the Lombe family, Derby Silk Mill was regarded as a wonder of the world, attracting visitors from across the world - including Benjamin Franklin, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States and an inventor and scientist himself.

In fact, 2021 will also mark the 250th anniversary of the visit by Franklin, while among other visitors was Daniel Defoe, author of Robinson Crusoe, who described the Silk Mill as "a curiosity in trade worth observing, as being the only one of its kind in England...".

The silk throwing machines in this building were based on machines studied by John Lombe in Italy - the designs of these having been copied and smuggled into England in an early example of industrial espionage.

The Museum of Making at Derby Silk Mill is a key part of the UNESCO Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, and 2021 will mark the 20th anniversary of its Inscription, recognising the area as having global significance and being of 'universal value to humanity, both in the present and for future generations' (www.derwentvalleymills.org).

It will also be the 'Year of the Ram' in Derby in 2021.

Thirty decorated rams will create a public sculpture trail across the city centre. The five-foot-high fibreglass sculptures are made in the shape of Derby's mythical ram - which, according to legend, was 10 yards high with enormous horns and a huge flowing fleece. The story goes that people travelled from all over the country to see the huge ram, and the hope is that the new trail will do the same (<https://bit.ly/328SU3j>).

Meanwhile, there is also a special birthday for a Derby original... the 25th birthday of Lara Croft.

One of the stars of an augmented reality self-guided trail around Derby, Lara Croft may be fictional, but the intelligent and athletic archaeologist - beloved by millions in games and films – was ‘born’ at Core Design in Derby. Lara first appeared in the video game Tomb Raider in 1996 and after a couple more games, Crystal Dynamics took over the series in 2003. She holds six Guinness World Records, and was the first video game to make the transition to film. Her home city celebrated her success in late 2019 when it added a Lara Croft star to the Hollywood star-style walk of fame, Made in Derby (<https://bit.ly/3dZ8aDp>).

For tourist information about Derby, and for the latest updates on what’s open, see www.visitderby.co.uk