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Burnley's Thompson Centre frieze unveiled in new home - PHOTOS

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Thompson Centre Frieze at Crow Wood Leisure Centre in Burnley. Photo Ben Parsons

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FOR years Burnley's iconic Thompson Centre frieze inspired sportsmen and women – and now it is set to spur on a new generation.

Saved by entrepreneur Andrew Brown, the huge frieze which hung for years on the former Thompson Centre before its demolition in 2006 was officially unveiled at Crow Wood Leisure Centre.

It is the first time the frieze has been seen in public for five years, and its original creator Charles Anderson travelled from Scotland to see it.

Mr Brown, who kept the frieze in storage, said: "This frieze has a massive place in our community. It gives me enormous pleasure to give this magnificent artwork a new home. It breathes new life into the legacy of William Thompson who did so much for Burnley."

The huge frieze now hangs proudly near Crow Wood's football centre.



Music from Burnley Alliance Silver Band provided the backdrop for the unveiling of a plaque in front of the frieze by Mayor of Burnley Coun. David Heginbotham.

He said: "I would like to thank Mr Brown for providing a new home for this outstanding piece of artwork. It is commendable that the frieze will once more be associated with a renowned sporting venue. I would also like to thank Mr Anderson for creating such a magnificent piece of art, which I believe is the largest frieze in Europe."

Mr Anderson, who designed the sculpture over months at his studio in Paisley, said the design was inspired by the original Olympians of Ancient Greece and the sculptures on the legendary Parthenon in Athens.

"It's a great pleasure and honour to be here at the unveiling. I was a young man of 34 when I was approached by Burnley Council to design a frieze for the centre.



"It's one of my proudest pieces of work and definitely one of the most challenging. I was inspired by the sculptures of the Parthenon so perhaps this is Burnley's own Elgin Marbles. It features the Three Graces from Greek mythology as well as sporting scenes such as wrestling, weightlifting, fencing, archery, football, tennis and cricket.

"I am so relieved Andrew has saved it. We were all worried at one stage that, because of the economic climate, the frieze might be lost forever. It is fitting it has a new home in a sporting environment."

See Friday's Express for more on the iconic frieze.

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