



NATIONAL
MARITIME MUSEUM
GREENWICH

WELCOME



ABOARD

Creating a more inclusive Museum

Learning from the Endeavour Galleries Project



LOTTERY FUNDED

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Foreword

The Endeavour Galleries Project has been a response to the National Maritime Museum's (NMM's) ever-increasing visitor numbers and the public's growing fascination with the subjects of the Museum – 1.5 million people from Britain and all over the world now visit NMM annually. The project converts 1000m² of space to public use, providing an additional 40 per cent of permanent gallery space, thereby affording our audiences better access to our world-class maritime collections.

An extensive programme of local, national and international activities has been undertaken to accompany the development of four new galleries: 'Pacific Encounters', 'Polar Worlds', 'Tudor and Stuart Seafarers', 'Sea Things', and a UNESCO World Heritage Site project space 'My Greenwich'. We hope the new galleries will appeal to a wide range of people.

The approach to increased access, relevance and representation has been made possible with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and the players of the National Lottery. We are tremendously grateful for this opportunity to reflect, experiment and grow as an organisation. I also thank the many volunteers, individual

participants, project partners and community organisations that have collaborated with us on this extensive programme of gallery development over the past four years.

Dr Kevin Fewster AM
Director
Royal Museums Greenwich



'I would describe the National Maritime Museum as a people-centric museum which strives to make their collections relevant, engaging and representative of the people who visit the museum.'

Producer (Participation & Learning), Emergency Exit Arts

Background

Royal Museums Greenwich brings together four world-class attractions at the heart of a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Greenwich: the National Maritime Museum, the Royal Observatory, *Cutty Sark* and the Queen's House.

The National Maritime Museum has the most important holdings in the world on the history of Britain at sea comprising more than two million items. It includes maritime art (both British and seventeenth century Dutch), cartography, manuscripts including official public records, ship models and plans, ethnography, scientific and navigational instruments, and instruments for time-keeping and astronomy.

The buildings of the National Maritime Museum have long been a place of learning; before its

opening in 1937 it had a rich history as a naval school. The *Neptune Court* redevelopment, completed in 1999, was one of the first museum capital projects funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Redevelopment centres around this space, when 11 new gallery spaces were created by redesigning the wings around the courtyard with the addition of adding the glazed roof.

As the museum is not purpose-built, there have been a variety of strategic projects to improve access, both intellectually and physically. With additional support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the *Sammy Ofer Wing* was opened in July 2011. This significant architectural addition provided a new entrance from the Royal Park, state-of-the-art facilities for our research library and archives, a custom-built Special Exhibitions Gallery and greatly improved visitor amenities.

In visitor evaluation, circulation around the main building was defined as confusing. Visitors are frequently forced to change levels and backtrack with the East Wing office accommodation and former library space creating a 'dead end'. These challenges in navigation led to short dwell times. Our ability to create a more comprehensive narrative was limited by the constraints of the building and its designated uses.

The new *Sammy Ofer Wing* provided an opportunity to move the library, which was a catalyst for change in our use of the Museum's East Wing. Office accommodation was relocated to the Park Row Wing which gave us the opportunity to develop the space into galleries for a clearer visitor route and bring more collection items out for display. This inspired a reappraisal of our ability to represent the wealth of communities contributing to Britain's maritime history, a truly unique opportunity for us to redefine our position as a relevant national collection representing the identity of our island nation.



What did we set out to achieve?

The scale of the Endeavour Galleries Project provided us with a catalyst for meaningful, transformational change.

Building on the Museum's work to draw out relevance for audiences, this project marked a step change in the way we connect with our communities and how we embed an audience-led focus in all that we do.

The project was about much more than displaying objects; it was about self-reflection, examining who we are and our purpose. It was about being brave and thinking outside of the traditional museum ideology. It has extended beyond our museum walls; it has required local, national and international collaboration and careful future-proofing in order to create sustainable change.



We wanted to...

- Shift perceptions
- Become more useful and relevant
- Become embedded in our local community
- Reach out to our national audience

To do this we needed better...

- Understanding of potential barriers
- Ways of listening to people and having dialogue
- Representation of multiple perspectives
- Forums for collaboration

Due to its scale, the project has enabled significant change in the intellectual navigation of our collections and audience orientation of our site. It demanded cross-museum involvement in its delivery, prompting a revision of policy and our approach to brand strategy and recruitment, as well as increasing the quality of dialogue undertaken with our stakeholders.

To truly transform our approach we had to collaborate more. We needed to be open to change and to acknowledge that to grow, we had to collaborate. We also needed the opportunity to not be defined by our outcomes, but to be shaped by our journey.

The transformation of our organisation will take time to manifest itself in full. There is no shortcut to unlocking more meaningful engagement with communities. However, the immediate impact is already being seen in the use of our space by communities, changes in perception of the Museum and our deeper understanding and representation of our audiences.

Project vision

We established the following vision at the outset of the project in 2014:

*Exploring the world,
discovering ourselves*

Voyages of exploration – historical, cultural and personal – lie at the heart of the four new Endeavour galleries: 'Tudor and Stuart Seafarers'; 'Pacific Encounters'; 'Polar Worlds' and 'Sea Things'. In different ways, they examine how men and women ventured beyond Britain's shores to explore the ends of the Earth in a quest for knowledge, riches and adventure, from the late fifteenth century onwards. The galleries will not only reveal how the peoples

and cultures encountered by explorers were irrevocably changed by this contact, but also how Britain was, and continues to be, transformed in the process.

By working with communities to unlock the full potential of the Museum's rich collections, the galleries will inspire and challenge new generations to set sail on their own voyages of imagination, discovery and understanding. These individual and collective voyages, highlighting hidden histories and demonstrating contemporary relevance, will create a sea change in the organisation, making it even more inclusive, empowering and inspirational.

Overcoming barriers – strategic audience development

*'It's not my history.
It's your history.'*

Front end consultation participant

Our national collection represents a shared heritage. The histories within weave across all seven continents, a multitude of countries and global cultures. People of all origins should be able to connect to the histories and legacies told through the Museum's objects and archives relating to our maritime encounters.

Despite this, research showed that our audience did not reflect the demographic of residents in our local boroughs. This indicated large numbers of potential audiences were not visiting us. To become more representative of our local residents we needed to engage with them to find out how we could be more relevant. Consultation revealed the biggest barrier to visiting was perception.

A collection relating to the legacy of an imperial history is complex, but once past the imposing architecture of the building, there are connections to be made. We needed to create a plan that considered how to overcome the perceived barriers through more inclusive practice.

Through a process of audience research and consultation, we came to understand there are additional barriers created in the way we categorise our under-represented audiences. It was important for us to recognise that labels such as BAME and C2DE categorise audiences through one common characteristic and become an unhelpful grouping if we



truly want to understand the complexity of needs amongst our potential audiences. To change our own approach in audience development we needed to create a new way of talking about audiences and to become better at considering the breadth and depth of diversity.

To understand how the different elements of an individual's identity create commonality with others we created a Community Engagement Strategy around a framework of motivations, needs and interests.



Building relationships

We took a layered approach to connecting with communities – research into local organisations, mailouts via the local borough council and a series of meetings and open days – which enabled us to reach out to leaders of local community organisations. Through this we built a picture of how we could support the work they do, create initiatives to open up the Museum for their service users and draw out relevance.

These initial conversations led to more in-depth discussions with organisations to explore expectations, barriers and opportunities and to develop ideas further. Some people who attended the events had specific short-term

projects in mind and were not keen to take the conversation further if these could not be accommodated. Part of this process was learning how to let go of our short-term project mindset and to focus on long-term impact.

Following consultation we collaboratively designed programmes and projects that focused on sustainable long-term relationship-building to create impact and move forward. We continued to work closely with different communities throughout the development and delivery of this project to pilot, adapt and refine this along the way.

'Our members were really happy with the discovery that there are staff within the museum that want to make a positive change for the community.'

Vocational Tasters Course Leader, London South East Colleges

Project framework

With our collaborators we created a framework for activities and initiatives focused on areas of change. This was useful to communicate to both internal and external stakeholders.

Removing barriers to make our Museum more accessible

Meeting audience needs

Working with our community to shape their own museum experience:

- Teacher and family forums
- *Radical Fun Advisors*
- *Re-think Your Museum* digital tool
- Consultation and testing with target audiences
- Documentation and dissemination of lessons learnt
- Updating Museum policies and procedures

Creating community ownership

Becoming a useful resource

Becoming a useful resource to our community and supporting the work of local community groups at the Museum:

- *Your Future in Place* skills development programme
- Volunteering, work experience, student placements and internships
- Activity hosting
- *Learning the Ropes* training for community workers
- Digital skills project



'The project leaders were fully involved in all steps of the process. They adapted with us, and together we went on a fantastic journey of discovery'.

Executive Headteacher, Linton Mead Primary School and Hawksmoor Primary School

Representing invisible histories

Exploring our identities

Creating opportunities for engagement and participation in interpretation development and community-led research:

- Critical friends
- *Invisible Histories* community research projects
- Co-curation projects
- *Collections Stories* museums partnerships project
- *Maritime Memories Machine* national tour

Collaborating to create a social and inspiring place

Working and learning together

Empowering people to lead on their learning through co-developed, co-designed and co-delivered programmes and events including:

- On-gallery handling collection
- *My Greenwich* UNESCO World Heritage Site projects
- Public programmes for families, communities, adults and access audiences
- Programme for schools and young people
- Practitioner residency and artist commissions



Our approach to creating agency

Initial consultation revealed our local community leaders wanted varying levels of engagement and agency – from using Museum spaces to feeding back on prototypes and interpretation, or co-developing programming and gallery

content. We took a layered approach to working with people and created multiple pathways for people to get involved with the Museum.

Hosting groups

Perception of what was inside the Museum behind the 'big old white' façade was a barrier for our local audience. So we opened up our learning spaces when not in use for local groups to use for their own activities. This has enabled our local community to increase their confidence in using the Museum on their own terms. They have been coming back to explore further with families and friends.

Consultation and testing

Many groups were keen to contribute ideas in response to interpretation or content rather than working in a more formalised way with us. We developed a programme of consultation and testing which included going into local community group meetings, setting up in libraries and shopping centres, and holding drop-in sessions at the Museum.

Critical friends and peers

To learn from current best practice on particular subjects outside our own expertise we engaged a series of critical friends and invited peers to share their experience with the team at key moments. This included looking at under-represented histories in the collections, practicalities of co-curation, and embedding audience-led practice. This helped to build staff confidence and understanding in these areas.

Collaborative programming

Many groups and individuals were keen to share their ideas for programming to ensure events and activities would appeal more to their users. We took a more collaborative approach to programming, focusing on 'by them, for them'. This has enabled us to work much more closely with different people in a more meaningful way and develop new audiences and shared expertise.

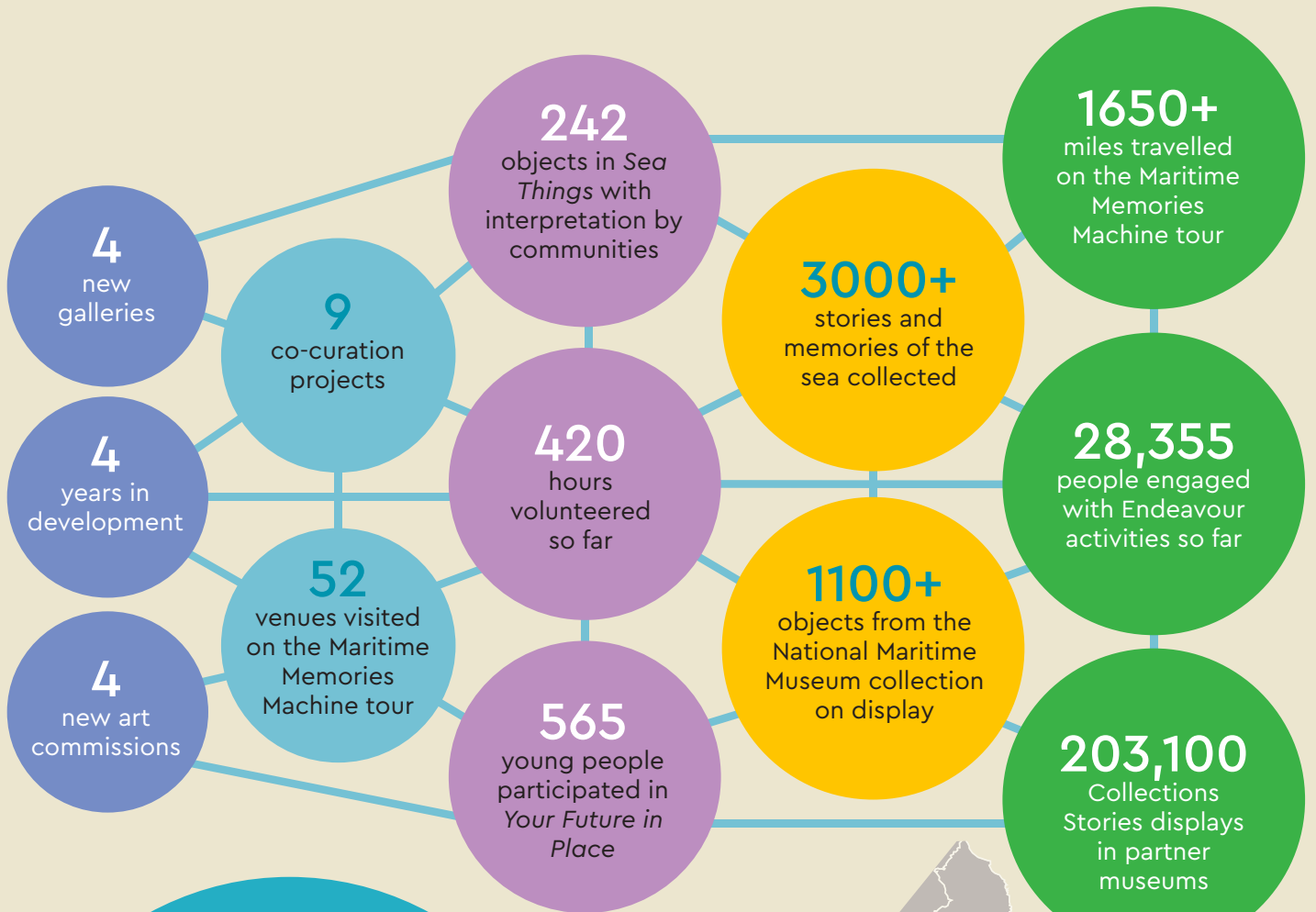
Co-curation

We wanted to include new perspectives on the histories being told in the galleries so we created space in the galleries for communities to work with us and develop creative outcomes. We designated spaces in the galleries linked to different areas of the narrative which aligned to the interests of groups who were keen to work with us. We left the outcomes open for co-curators to develop with us.

Formal partnerships

Some people were keen to have more formalised partnerships that suited the structure and processes of their organisations and groups. This included much more defined outcomes, timelines, resources and a Memorandum of Understanding.

Who we engaged with



International

Artists and film commissions
Research and consultation

National




National tour:
Maritime Memories Machine

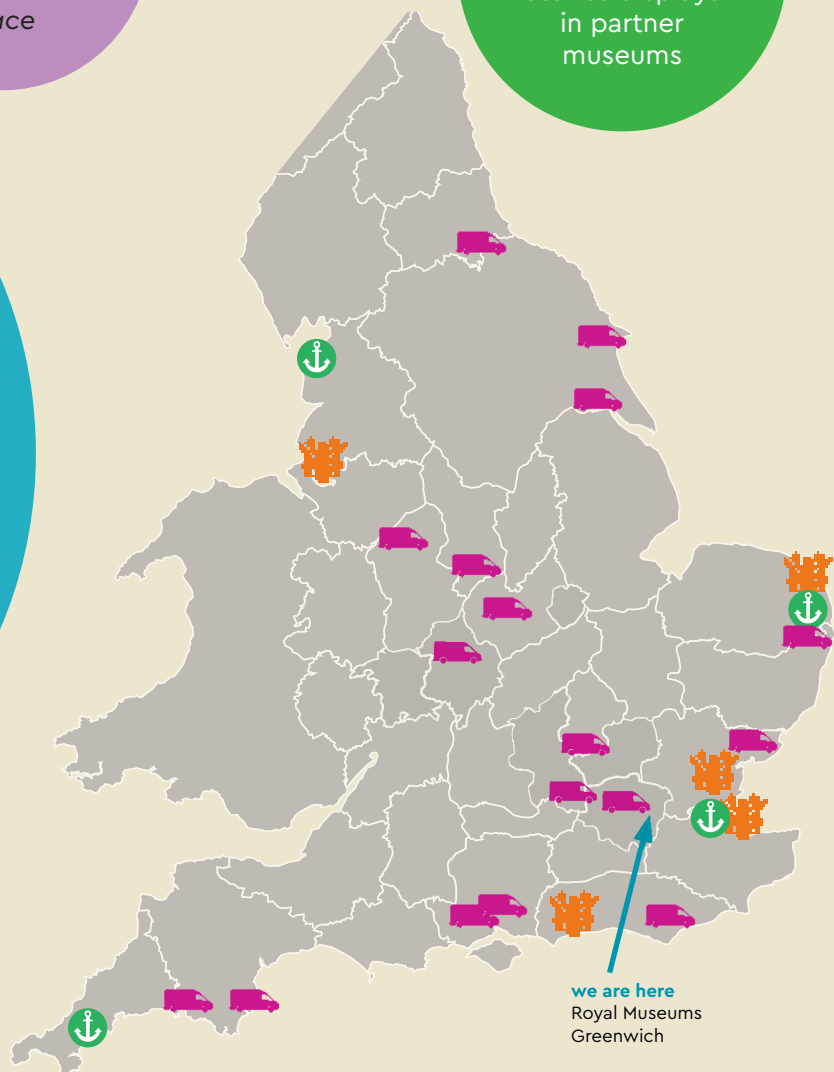
Regional

Partnerships with museums:
Collections Stories

Local

Youth programme
Collaborative programming
Hosting
Community workers' training
Testing and consultation
Co-curation
Volunteering

-  national tour locations
-  collections stories locations
-  activities locations



Working together to understand audiences

Collections Stories

We worked collaboratively with four partner museums to support and facilitate the loan of objects from the national collection, and associated dynamic and experimental programming. The object loans acted as a catalyst for partners to present new perspectives on maritime histories relevant to their local residents. Partners integrated the loans into plans for existing exhibitions or created new exhibitions, some using the loans as leverage for further funding and additional loans from different organisations.

The loans inspired new research and creative thinking, enabling partners to focus on a range of themes, such as slavery, tattooing, migration and identity. Each partner brought unique elements to the project both for mutual benefit and the benefit of audiences nationally. This provided new interpretations and responses to the objects in the national collection and shared expertise in new programming models. The project encouraged partners and the Museum to take risks and develop practice, for the benefit of audiences.

'It's about mutual respect. A sense of acknowledging that each party can bring things to the table. A project like this one goes beyond loans – so much more can be gained from it if it is an active partnership.'

Director, Royal Museums Greenwich



4 objects on loan

6,344 participants engaged in Collections Stories programming across partner museums

203,100 visitors to Collections Stories displays

Partners and collaborators: The Beacon Museum, Whitehaven; National Maritime Museum Cornwall in Falmouth; The Historic Dockyard Chatham; Norfolk Museums Service, Time and Tide Museum, Great Yarmouth

'Getting a national object into Whitehaven and Copeland raises our profile and helps with accreditation. It presents a message that we are a bona fide museum... audiences respect the Museum more, in terms of what we're trying to do for Copeland and for them... and it raises the profile with our elected members, partners and the local council.... It helped us hook in the local and regional media as well and attract new funding streams.'

Director, The Beacon Museum

Historic Dockyard Chatham

Objects: Eight photographic prints depicting early European encounters with Inuit people

Exhibition: *Pole of Cold*

Public programme: Outreach object handling sessions with schools, older people and families, talks and debate for young people on climate change, UK/Polar music event.

Audience development area: Young people and adults



Time and Tide Museum

Object: Pocket watch belonging to *Titanic* passenger Robert Norman

Exhibition: *Titanic Stories*

Public programme: Migration stories interpretation projects with ESOL students including tours and display alongside the pocket watch, Take Over Day project with young people including creation of multi-lingual trails and display, photography project and display with migrant communities, international dance and story-telling event, immersive schools literacy workshops, Vox Pop recording event at the Out There festival.

Audience development area: Newly arrived community



National Maritime Museum Cornwall

Object: *Tahiti Revisited* painting by William Hodges

Exhibition: *Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed*

Public programme: Student late event, museum late events, oral history project with films displayed in the exhibition.

Audience development area: Students and older people



The Beacon Museum

Object: 'Barbary pirate' bust

Exhibition: *Hero or Villain: Myth-busting piracy*

Public programme: Key stage 3 school workshops and display, Reception and key stage 2 school workshops, family workshops, glass-making project with adults, talks and lectures.

Audience development area: Adults and schools



The new galleries

Polar Worlds

The 'Polar Worlds' gallery looks at British endeavour in the Arctic and Antarctic within a wider world-view of collaborative scientific investigation, cultural encounter, international economies, and national political rivalries. Through different Polar expeditions the gallery illustrates the varying scales of motivation for conducting those journeys – personal, national and international. The gallery explores the Arctic as a home for Inuit communities for thousands of years, and looks at the historic depth of Inuit culture and contemporary vitality as well as challenges brought about by climate change.



1 soundscape commission by Inuit throat-singer Tanya Tagaq

3 co-curation projects

10 object labels written by primary school students

531 people participated in co-curation projects

Co-curation project: Melting Ice – Polar Poetry Challenge

Partners and collaborators: The Poetry Society Young Poets Network

We partnered with the Young Poets Network to challenge young people to creatively respond to the complex topic of climate change, which is dramatically impacting the Polar regions and the entire ecology of our world. Our younger generation are the most at risk, and they will be the ones to find and implement a global solution. An online resource hosted by the Young Poets Network, along with an inspiration day at the Museum resulted in 60 young people submitting their poems. Entries were received from poets aged 7 to 25 from the UK and as far afield as the USA, Canada, Pakistan, Singapore, Sweden, India and New Zealand. The winning poem is displayed in the gallery and shortlisted poems showcased in an anthology.

'The children are more interested in visiting the Museum than they were before and it has definitely enhanced their writing and literacy skills. They seem to have a greater passion for historical enquiry.'

Year 4 teacher, Linton Mead Primary School



Film commissions

We commissioned films for the Polar gallery showcasing Harriet Cluelow, a Penguin Scientist working at British Antarctic Survey and the University of Exeter. In another film Sammy Kogvik, a Northern Ranger of Inuit descent based in Nunavut, Canada tells visitors about his involvement in the discovery of HMS Terror. The illustrations accompanying the film were designed by David Pudlat, a young person from Cape Dorset, in conjunction with the Embassy of Imagination.

Soundscape commission: Tanya Tagaq

With the support of Arts Council England, the National Maritime Museum brought award-winning Inuk musician Tanya Tagaq to Greenwich in June 2017. She performed as part of Border Crossings' Origins Festival of indigenous culture, and undertook a brief residency at the Museum resulting in two new pieces of music for the 'Polar Worlds' gallery.



© 'Border Crossings' ORIGINS Festival
and Photographer John Cobb

Co-curation project: *Polar Ice*

Partners and collaborators: Newham Community College

Working with the Tailoring course leader at Newham Community College we developed a brief for students to create work inspired by the gallery and themes of survival using skills needed for their coursework. Over two terms students developed creative responses taking inspiration from sessions at the Museum and collections store with the gallery project team. At the end of the project students presented their final designs and creative process to a panel of judges including curators and conservators from the Museum and representatives from the college and fashion industry. The winning student's design is on display in the gallery.





Co-curation project: Extreme Survival

Partners and collaborators: Linton Mead Primary School

Teachers at Linton Mead Primary School worked closely with us to develop an all-school approach. All staff attended twilight meetings at the Museum and collection store to learn about 'Polar Worlds', met curators and creative facilitators and viewed objects and paintings due for display. Following these sessions all school year groups visited the Museum, met a Polar explorer actor character, investigated handling objects and explored the galleries to find out 'what makes a museum'.

Visual artist Hannah Cushion and storyteller Olivia Armstrong worked with pupils from years two and four, visiting the store, meeting the gallery curator and investigating some of the objects and paintings going into the gallery. Pupils worked with Hannah and Olivia over three sessions to create the final outcomes for the gallery. Teachers across the school worked on the 'Polar Worlds' topic for the entire term, creating their own Polar Worlds exhibition in the school atrium. Artwork by the students is on display in the gallery.

'The staff have really developed creative planning. They became immersed in Polar Worlds – the learning environment in our school has been transformed.'

Deputy Head, Linton Mead Primary School

Pacific Encounters

The commission aims to give voice to inhabitants of the Pacific today, to give visitors a sense of a vibrant, thriving and global community with rich connections to the past. Ngāti Rangi i Waho are a collective of artists and makers and their artwork tells of the South Pacific, where the Museum's collections are particularly strong, with themes of science and collecting running throughout. There is a sense of the vastness and diversity of the Pacific, and the many ways in which these encounters were experienced.



2 artist commissions

2 co-curation projects

31 co-curation participants

Artist commission: Ngāti Rangi i Waho

Artist collective Ngāti Rangi i Waho of Ngāi Tamanuhiri were commissioned to create an installation piece for the bookcases at the end of 'Pacific Encounters'. The collective includes artists of different disciplines and their artwork tells of the relevance of Ngāti Rangi i Waho told in three phases of time:

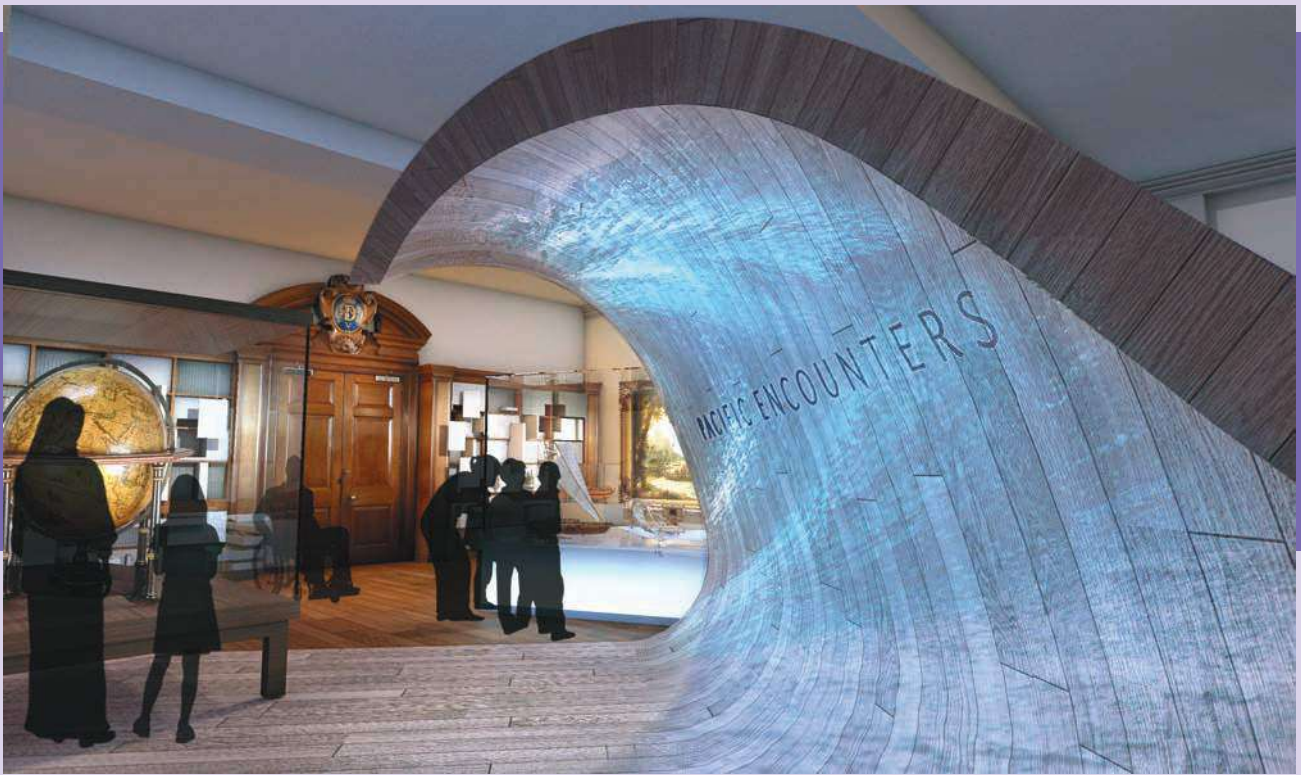
A tera waa – their beginning to 2018

Ko tenei waa – new growth from our past for the future

Ngā waa e heke mai nei – the time ahead



Four of the participants are now involved in developing and delivering Pacific sensitivities training for Museum staff.



Artist Ashia Moananui has created illustrations as part of a display about Pacific voyaging. Her artworks are displayed alongside quotes from early navigators to celebrate traditional Pacific navigation.



We worked closely with the Pacific diaspora community in London. Consultation throughout on the interpretation of Pacific objects influenced many of the labels in the gallery and uncovered information new to the Museum about objects in the collection.



Four screens in the gallery show an ever-changing stream of images that represent the Pacific today. The screens show the richness and diversity of the Pacific using representations of the Pacific from 1945 to the present sourced from both the NMM collection and people around the world. The intention for the piece is to give the Pacific a voice, giving local communities and the Pacific diaspora curatorial influence.

Co-curation project: Lost Collections

Partners and collaborators: SaVAge K'lub

The SaVAge K'lub is an open group of Pacific artists who are interested in activating installation spaces and objects. They worked with Pacific diaspora communities in London and Museum visitors to create an artwork for display in the gallery investigating Museum spaces, object collection, Pacific objects, and colonial legacies. We asked the SaVAge K'lub to respond to a quote by George Tobin:

'...the natives laughed at the avidity with which we coveted all their household and other goods. Yet have they at Tahiti their collectors, and their European curiosities, and you will hardly credit it, that old Ha'amanemane, the high priest, was in possession of a volume of the Statues at Large, which he had procured from a vessel that had touched at the island, on which he placed as much value as some among us do, on a brass oto, a petrified periwinkle, or even (as you and I once heard a showman say) a 'stuffed baboon from the mines of Golconda.'

Lieutenant George Tobin, 4 May 1792



The artists met with the gallery project team to talk about stories and objects related to collection and exchange in the Pacific, conducting research at the Museum and the British Library. They held two workshops and an 'activation day'. This included a performance focused on trade and exchange between Europeans and Pacific Islanders. This was to support understanding of the complexities around trade and exchange in the Pacific and to give the artists inspiration for developing their piece in the gallery.

A lei making workshop involved the Pacific diaspora community in creating fabric adornments for display in the gallery. During the 'activation day' the artists brought their finished artworks to the Queen's House. They dressed in their pieces and photographs were taken. A ceremony was held which involved a procession around the House while a prayer was recited. Each artist addressed the room, and sometimes the portrait of Captain Cook. This empowered the objects for the next stage in their journey and display in the gallery. The final artworks are entitled *Captain Cook was a Pirate* and are on display in 'Pacific Encounters'.



Tudor and Stuart Seafarers

This gallery tells the story of Britain's emergence as a maritime nation through key events and personalities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, giving visitors a chronological start to the master narrative of the Museum. Compelling stories of exploration, encounter, adventure, power, wealth and conflict help visitors experience key narratives around the growth of global trade, the Spanish Armada and pirates and privateers, these have been brought to life through a variety of personalities, both familiar and unfamiliar.



Co-curation project: Sailor Stories

Partners and collaborators: Southend Museums, Historic England, Mary Rose Trust, Southend Adult Community College, Chase High School

This project revolves around the London, a Stuart warship which sank in 1665 in the Thames Estuary. The wreck of the ship was rediscovered in 2005 with much of its structure and contents well preserved. Ongoing excavations have recovered hundreds of objects from the wreck which provide a window into life in the Stuart navy. Students from Southend Adult Community College and Chase High School took part in a series of workshops and practical sessions to choose and suggest interpretation for objects from the London for display. After learning about this period of history from archival material at NMM and Mary Rose Trust, they went into the stores at Southend Museums to see the objects first-hand and get involved in their conservation and treatment for display. After making their final shortlist selection for the gallery, they worked with Historic England and the interpretation team at the NMM to develop skills in interpreting objects for different audiences and label-writing

'Seeing all the artefacts from the London was really great because it's interesting to see what has survived and it makes you feel close to the people that were on board.'

Sailor Stories participant



3 new films working with Native American film company SmokeSignals and the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

2 co-curation projects

61 people participated in co-curation projects



Southend Museums won Southend Adult Community College's 'Partner of the Year' award as a direct result of this collaboration.



Families of naval personnel selected petitions to the Admiralty from wives and widows of sailors during this period, which are held by The National Archives. These were recorded for visitors to listen to in the gallery.

Co-curation project: Film commission

Partners and collaborators: Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

Members of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe of Massachusetts have helped the Museum tell stories of early contact between their people and English colonists in the early seventeenth century. The Native American film company SmokeSignals have produced three films which feature in the gallery, in which Wampanoag people talk about the devastating effects of these early encounters.

Co-curation project: Documenting Deptford

Partners and collaborators: St Stephen's C. of E. Primary School, Thames Discovery Programme, Deptford X

We worked with St Stephen's C. of E. Primary School to reveal Deptford's maritime past, its significant role in the UK's development as a maritime nation, and its contemporary relevance. After visiting the Queen's House to learn about Tudor life pupils collected objects from the Thames foreshore to investigate what these might tell us about the site's history. With artists Alice Wilson and Helen Barff they cast their found objects and created a timeline of Deptford's dockyards. Pupils found traces of Deptford's maritime history on a walk around the local area and made drawings of what they discovered, which were combined into a visual journey map. Following discussions around memorialisation of the past they created a vessel representing their experience. It used a palette of colours that would be typical to Tudor times and a shape that looks like it could have been a historic vessel washed up on the foreshore. This was displayed with the original visual journey map and cast objects in a pop-up exhibition in local gallery Deptford X. It is now on display in 'Tudor and Stuart Seafarers'.



'The children now have a much deeper understanding of the historical significance of Deptford. This in turn has increased their sense of pride about their locality'.

Teacher, St Stephen's C. of E. Primary School



Elements of the project have been incorporated into ongoing schemes of work at St Stephen's C. of E. Primary School.



Sea Things

'Sea Things' is a playful, quirky gallery where visitors can explore, interact and find their own connection to the sea. It is an engaging and welcoming space that balances objects and personal stories with a strong focus on visitor-led participation. Visitors are encouraged to create their own route around the gallery, finding objects, ideas and activities that capture their imagination or which have a personal resonance. Dramatic mass displays showcase the Museum's rich and diverse collection in a non-narrative visual spectacle of over 600 objects, many on open display. At the heart of the gallery a changing digital sea laps back and forth around objects and spills out of the current confines of the gallery space, reflecting its open and inclusive ethos.



Co-curation project: Beachcombers

Partners and collaborators: Caribbean Social Forum, Queen Victoria Seaman's Rest, London and South East Colleges, Invicta Primary School, Marine Society and Sea Cadets, and East Coast Colleges

Artist Maria Amidu led a series of creative workshops with three co-curation groups to explore objects using critical enquiry skills. Each participant chose an object they felt should be displayed in the gallery and presented their argument to the gallery team. Three further groups joined the project and all six groups studied the objects chosen to go on display. Each participant created their own interpretation for visitors to read about an object. The resulting interpretation and photographs of each collaborator with their chosen object are on display in the gallery on digital labels beside the interpretation with the 'Museum voice'.

'Our participants were able to record and share their stories of coming to live in Great Britain from other countries. Many had not engaged with museums and heritage before.'

Caribbean Social Forum



1 artist commission

2 co-curation projects

242 objects with dual interpretation

538 people participating in co-curation projects





Artists commission: Tom Berry

We commissioned Tom to read through the thousands of memories and stories collected as part of the Maritime Memories Machine tour and draw them into six themes. The themes guided six artworks he made that hang in boxes at the entrance to the *Sea Things* gallery.



Co-curation project: Sea People

Partners and collaborators: Girl Guides, Mermaids, Action for Refugees in Lewisham

Three local community groups worked with sculptor Eve Shepherd to explore the collections from their own perspective, identity and lived experiences. They took part in creative workshops to investigate stories from the collection, understand who was missing and reflect on how their own identity could be represented. Each group designed their own new figurative bust, drawing out how they collectively want to be represented and the physical form this might take. These new busts were created and cast in bronze and are displayed in the *Sea Things* gallery. They sit alongside a selection from the Museum's collection of busts, which mainly represent a singular section of society – high ranking men in the Navy.



'This gave our girls an opportunity to see their ideas realised on a national level and that they have a direct impact within the project.'

Girl Guides leader

Reaching out and increasing relevance

Maritime Memories Machine

Our history is firmly rooted in our relationship with the sea and how it has shaped lives and our society – no matter where people live in the UK they are never more than 70.2 miles from the sea. To promote greater relevance within the collection and develop a sense of common ground with people across the country, we drew on our shared identity and history as an island nation. We created a story collecting machine to tour the country engaging people in playful participatory experiences, breaking down the meaning of the word 'maritime' and collecting stories of their connections to the sea. We commissioned Emergency Exit Arts to take up residency in the van for the three-month Maritime Memories Machine tour, through which we captured a picture of the nation's



relationship to the sea today. Participants from across the country took part in creative activities and explored their own connection with the sea.

All the contributions from the tour have been included in a digital interactive in 'Sea Things' and have informed a creative commission by artist Tom Berry, drawing together key themes found in stories collected during the tour.



12 creative practitioners became Maritime Memory Catchers

52 venues participated including parks and open spaces, community centres, libraries, schools, landmarks, charities and museums

87 days on tour

1650+ miles travelled

3000+ participants took part and shared their stories and memories





'People felt that we provided a safe space for them to share some quite personal narratives from navy stories to immigration stories.'

Maritime Memory Catcher

'My family is from Liverpool. Many worked on the dock or for Ellermans. In the late 70s and early 80s they were all out at work. My grandfather was a carpenter on board and shored up a torpedoed ship.'



'Our first date was on Brownsea Island. We had such happy memories I wanted to propose there. The day we went back turned out to be when thousands of Scouts were there on a Jamboree. Luckily we found a quiet place for just long enough to say yes.'

My uncle Raymond Pattenden survived a direct hit on his navy ship in WW2. Thousands died, a handful survived in the burning sea. Raymond was 19 years old!



'The best thing about being part of the project was finding some new library users as a result. I particularly love the van with the memories written on them. It looked very colourful and almost like a mini escape. Fantastic!'

Slough Libraries, Slough Borough Council



Representing invisible histories

Community-led research

We wanted to involve and support communities who are under-represented in our visitor demographics to find relevance in the collections through research. We structured projects around these areas, which translated



to African and Caribbean histories, Islamic histories and women's histories. We identified research facilitators with expertise in each area and formed a research community through call-outs via different organisations and individuals. The project start dates were staggered so we were able to use feedback from each project to inform the next.

During each project researchers took part in an initial information session at the Museum where we discussed the opportunities and limitations of the project and talked about concerns and ideas. They explored archival material first-hand and got to grips with how to access the archives and investigate materials. Together the researchers chose one or more research questions and undertook research in their own time with support from the Museum and project



55 participants so far

70 archival materials investigated

'Through the project I have found a real sense of belonging.'

Researcher

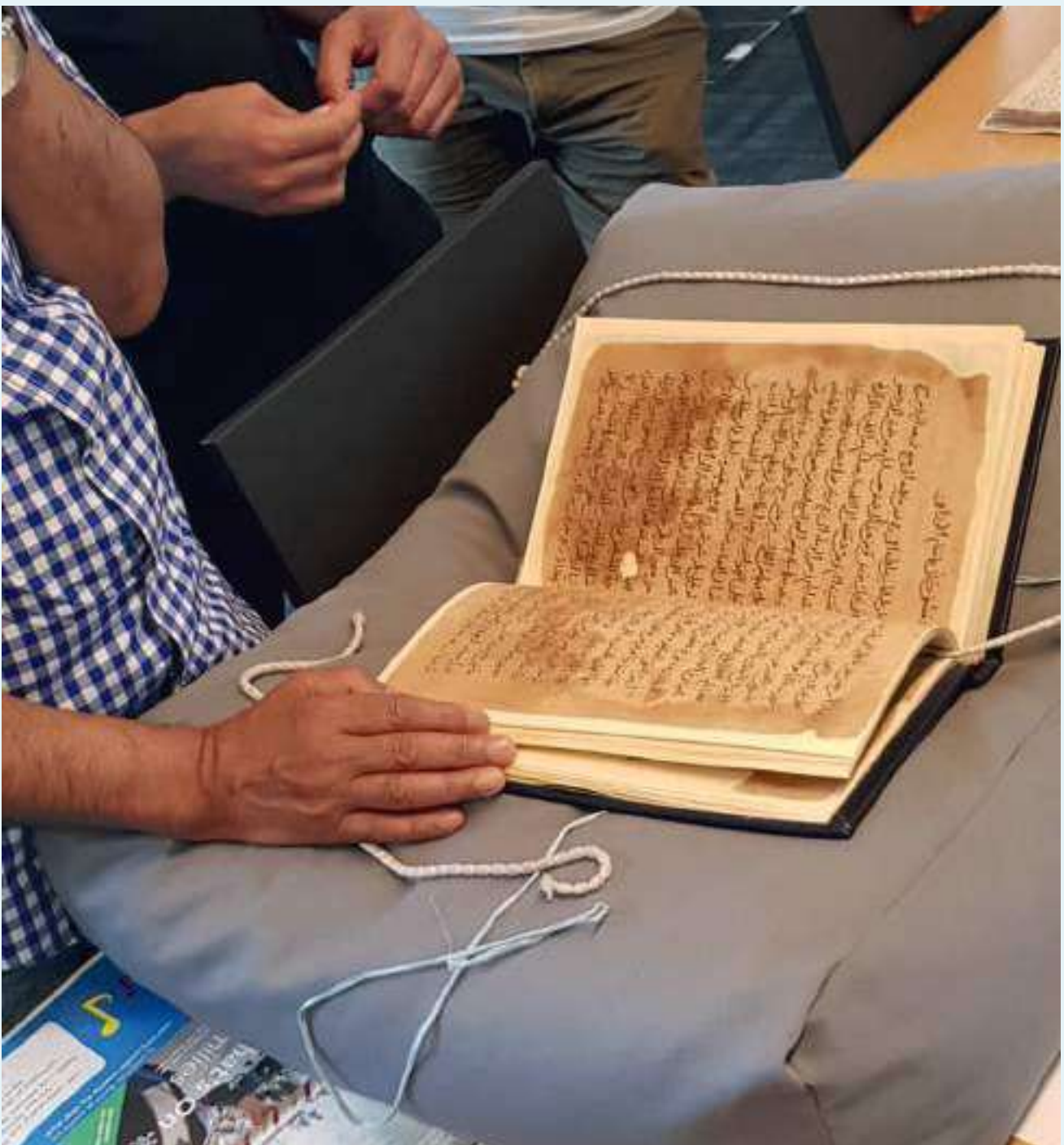
research facilitator during regular check-in meetings. The outcomes were left open and only decided when the research was complete, guided by what had been discovered and how the group felt it was best to communicate findings more broadly.

This model was adapted with each group to suit their needs and fit their way of working and interest areas. We are continuing to work with communities of identity in this way. Projects have included working with the African Caribbean community in relation to how the archive can support African Caribbean family history research. Working with groups that have an affinity to, and identify as being from, East Africa, North Africa, UAE and South Asia, we have carried out research into the Museum's Islamic collection. This collection is defined as items relating to culture and peoples from locations around the world where Islam is the dominant faith.

Partners and collaborators: History Talks – Paul Crooks, John Eversley, Swadhinata Trust, Numbi Arts.

'I hope that we inspire greater interest in African Caribbean history amongst 2nd, 3rd, 4th generation black British people and beyond, and show how this knowledge can inspire disaffected youth searching for identity/a sense of belonging and detailed knowledge of their history in a positive light.'

Researcher



Creating a social and inspiring place

Collaborative programming

We developed a more collaborative approach to programming and focus on representations of gender and sexuality, migration, race and disability that have in the past been under-represented at the Museum. To do this effectively we worked much more closely with local and regional stakeholders developing programmes in partnership and through collaborations.

We looked closely at the cultural calendar and aligned our informal learning offer with key events that focus on celebrating people, including different histories, Women's History Month, LGBT History Month and Refugee Week. Working with a range of partners each year,



'I was at the Museum for the LGBT day and would like to express my thanks for the great day. The decision to make it friendly to families was a particularly important step to make and the organisers should feel proud of what they achieved.'

Parent at LGBT history event



we trialled different approaches for each event and were able to develop the expertise of the team, bring in new audiences to the Museum and embed the work into our core programme. We are expanding this to include Disability History Month, Big Draw and Pasifika.

We signed up to Fun Palaces – the national campaign for culture by, for and with all, where arts and sciences are a vital catalyst for community engagement and participation from everyone. We set up a panel of *Radical Fun Advisors* recruited from our local community who co-produced events at the Museum, showcasing the work of local community groups and organisations over a weekend of activities.

Taking the same approach to develop our families, schools and youth offer we set up informal forum groups for these audiences who have worked with us to develop and test new programming. This has led to a more consistent offer for families and a more embedded and sustainable youth programme. This includes an annual project based on the UNESCO World Heritage Site that the Museum sits within, a new SEND programme and a revised schools offer.

Partners and collaborators: Action For Refugees Lewisham, Girl Guides, Herstory, Iranian Youth Development Association, Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network, LGBT History Month, Numbi, Pride London, Schools Out UK, Sydenham High School.

Becoming a useful resource

Your Future in Place

Consultation and research with local schools revealed that young people in the borough of Greenwich need practical opportunities to explore and trial different career paths. Young people want to gain hands-on experience which supports and evidences the development of their skills and aspirations. Consultation revealed that most young people have never considered a career in museums, and do not have any understanding of the types of careers in this sector. We wanted to develop a programme which would introduce young people from non-traditional backgrounds to the museum sector and provide a broad overview of museum careers.



18 local schools and colleges involved

565 participants so far

Participants are supported to learn new skills and gain an accreditation (ASDAN or Arts Award) as part of the project. Past projects have seen young people create films, produce public events, design a trail and choreograph a dance performance. A new learning traineeship will give the opportunity for a young person





to work with the Museum over a longer period of time to develop their work experience and skills, supporting the design and delivery of the youth programme. The programme has been embedded into the core work of the Learning team and departments across the Museum.

We developed a multi-layered programme for students to develop skills, get to know the Museum and have a better understanding of roles in the sector. During Picture Yourself challenge day key stage 3 to post-16 students were challenged to step into different job roles at the National Maritime Museum and work in teams to create their own exhibition in just one day. Secondary school students can sign up to week-long work experience placements over the summer term to experience up to eight different job roles at the Museum. During school

'It was a really fun two weeks! We visited loads of different places and I made new friends. I'm now more confident and have improved my communication skills, and now I know about the history of Greenwich!'

Young volunteer

holidays young people aged 15–18 who live or study in the Royal Borough of Greenwich can sign up to take part in intensive one or two-week volunteer projects to work alongside other young people and complete a live brief.

Partners and collaborators: Blaenavon World Heritage Site (ASDAN Award), Charlton Athletic Community Trust, Daisy Farris Dance Collective, English Heritage, Futureversity, Greenwich Dance, Greenwich Heritage Centre, Haringey Shed, local secondary schools and colleges, MOZfest, National Citizenship Service, Old Royal Naval College, Oxford International School, Ravensbourne College, Royal Borough of Greenwich, Tall Ships Festival, Thames Discovery Programme, Tower of London, Trinity College London (Arts Award), Westminster Abbey, Wilmott Dixon

'The experiences provided by the National Maritime Museum have been invaluable for our students because they have given them a real-life insight into careers in the arts and heritage sectors. It has helped our students to shape their aspirations and inspire their decisions about future career pathways.'

Assistant Head (Post-16),
Plumstead Manor School

Community workers training



4 training sessions

54 training session participants

391 people taken part in hosted sessions so far

Through consultation we found our spaces and facilities were as valuable a resource for local community groups as skills and knowledge development opportunities. We set up a structure for hosting local not-for-profit groups whose values align with the Museum's to use the learning spaces for their own activities. This included a set of guidelines, booking system and agreement about how the spaces can be used. The offer has been popular with our local community, providing an invaluable resource as well as an inspiring setting. We now host monthly group sessions from Hearing Voices group run by Greenwich Mind, and health and wellbeing training for organisations in Greenwich led by the local council.



Activity hosting

Learning the Ropes

Community workers training is another way of making the Museum more accessible for groups to support their own activities and use the galleries and wider Museum as a resource to draw on. The free training takes place three times a year and builds the confidence of community group leaders to come and use the Museum for self-led visits with their groups. The sessions cover practicalities of facilities at the Museum, introduce the collections and galleries, and provides printed resources to plan visits. The day includes practical activities for group leaders to develop skills in object-based learning to unlock critical and historical enquiry. The training has been really popular and in some instances has led to groups becoming part of the activity hosting programme, others have brought their groups back and led sessions in the galleries.

Organisations represented:

Cardinal Hume Centre, Caribbean Social Forum, Cultural Connections, Deptford Working Histories, Good Food in Greenwich, Greenwich Mind, Henna Asian Women's Group, MICAH, NUTKHUT, Parent & Family Support Service London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Recovery College Greenwich, Royal Borough of Greenwich, Scout Association, Shadwell and St Katharine's Collaboration, South East London Wool and Textile Festival, Swadhinata Trust, The Three Cs, The Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, Up Your Street for Seniors.

'I am trying to target social isolation in particular with my group. The day has been really useful in this with regards to providing ideas of what to do and where to go to combat isolation around the Museum.'

Training participant

Volunteering

Taster Volunteering

Course leaders from London and South East Colleges expressed an interest in creating volunteer opportunities for students with English as an additional language to develop their skills and get to know their local area. Together we created a new lighter-touch volunteering strand for students to shadow Visitor Sales Assistants for six days over a six-week period, fitting around their studies and family commitments. Students learn about the practicalities of running a museum from a Visitor Experience team perspective and develop customer service and English language skills. To complement their spoken language skills they are challenged to explore the objects on display, choose their favourite and write and present back to their Museum Mentor, college tutor and peers.

Partners and collaborators: London and South East Colleges

'It really improved my personal confidence.'

Taster volunteer

'I enjoyed interacting with people and will enjoy telling my friends about the Museum.'

Taster volunteer

Story Merchant Volunteers

The four new galleries provide a wealth of complex stories, objects and historical narratives, through which there is the opportunity to unpack further, beyond text labels and interpretation panels. The Story Merchants Volunteers programme enables visitors to the galleries to look more closely at the gallery narratives and particular objects through informal conversations with volunteers structured around a handling collection. Volunteers use the handling collection to initiate conversations with visitors about their own connections to the themes in the galleries. Both strands enable volunteers to develop skills and experience in historical and critical enquiry using objects, and visitor experience within a museum context.





Legacy and impact for participants

- Volunteers and participants have since visited the Museum with their friends and family.
- New progression routes have been developed for all ages to access the Museum and continue their relationship with us.
- A wide range of skills developed including confidence in speaking English, research and communication, historical enquiry and critical thinking.
- Raised aspirations of young people in Greenwich.
- Deeper confidence in using the Museum as a resource including planning group visits, using spaces, how to access the collection and records and skills development opportunities.
- Increased sense of ownership, pride and trust in the Museum.
- Deeper understanding of what maritime means.
- Feeling their stories, memories and expertise are valued and included in the national narrative.
- Changed perceptions of the Museum as somewhere a multitude of voices can be heard.
- Increased knowledge of and confidence in explaining local history.
- Understanding of the processes that take place in the Museum to display and interpret objects and the overall purpose of the Museum.

'Our partnership with NMM has given young people the opportunity to raise their awareness of their local heritage. NMM are a valued partner who brings a unique service to our youth provision within the Royal Borough of Greenwich.'

Youth Service Partnership Manager, Charlton Athletic



Legacy and impact for Royal Museums Greenwich

- New sustainable relationships with local colleges, schools, careers services and community groups.
- New perspectives on the Museum collection included in the galleries encouraging visitors to find their own connections with the collection.
- Partners, collaborators and participants have been acting as advocates for the Museum.
- Deeper engagement has led to longer term interest and further partnership working.
- Deeper understanding of what maritime and the sea means to people today and histories from a non-Eurocentric view.
- A new 'living' archive created to record and preserve memories of the sea for future generations.
- Embedded and manageable programme for every department in the Museum to host work experience students.
- Sustainable approach to programming with collaborators for audiences of all ages.
- A new user-base for the library/research facilities at the Museum.
- Increased visibility of historically under-represented 'invisible' histories in the collection.
- New collections management processes for co-curated outcomes.
- More confidence in working with communities and methods in place to do so.
- New strategies and policies across the Museum including a multi-themed long-term research strategy addressing contemporary issues, an updated collections development policy, community engagement strategy, volunteers strategy and policy and approach to brand.



Recommendations

- Work with external organisations to track organisational transformation.
- Understanding the profile and needs of your audience is key. Take time to research who is currently engaging with you and who is not, understand their needs as well as potential barriers.
- Use key insights from your research to shape the way you communicate with audiences, thinking about written and visual language.
- Create partnerships to put your collections in a new context, reach new audiences and understand what makes your collections relevant to people today.
- Celebrate the Museum as a unique multi-disciplinary working environment and create opportunities for young people to explore this.
- Invest time and energy in raising awareness and developing relationships with gatekeepers.
- Champion existing experimental practice in the sector and emphasise the learning process over outcome to encourage others to come on the journey and take risks with you.
- Create a layered approach for audience agency that is sustainable and the responsibility of staff across all teams.
- Don't expect things to change overnight – small changes add up to big transformation and embedded long-term.
- Allow time to reflect and revise with collaborators.
- Don't underestimate the importance of defining your audiences and having a shared language.
- Consider policies, strategies and practical processes that might need to be reviewed as part of the process for developing audiences.
- Build in time and money to ensure activities can be accommodated and legacy of project outcomes is supported.
- Work closely to manage timeframes across capital build and activity plans to synchronise works and achieve the best results.
- Set boundaries and manage expectations of partners and collaborators.

Acknowledgements

This report highlights the partnerships and collaborations with many organisations, community groups and schools without which this project would not have happened. Thank you to all the people who have put so much time, energy and creativity into these collaborations. Partners have been incredibly supportive and patient throughout and fantastic in challenging us to be better listeners and collaborators. We are grateful to our critical friends and colleagues in the sector who have shared their expertise and experience with us throughout the project, who helped us have difficult conversations and push our practice. We are especially grateful to Casson Mann, who designed such inspirational new galleries.

Thank you to everyone at Royal Museums Greenwich who contributed to the project and were open to challenging their practice and taking risks to experiment with new ideas and approaches. Without their bravery and dedication to listening to and working with our audiences the Museum would not be where it is today.

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National tour partners

Albert Park, Blyth Battery, Blyth Market,
Bramblebrook Community Centre, Britwell
Community Hub, Broomgrove Community
Centre, Cambois Primary School, Captain Cook
Birthplace Museum, Chaul End Community
Centre, Chellaston Library, Cippenham
Library, Civic Piazza, Coombe Country Park,
Devonport Guildhall, Edgwick Park, Emergency
Exit Arts, Fratton Community Centre, Great
Yarmouth Library, Great Yarmouth Market Place,
Guildhall Square, Hastings Pier, Hockwell Ring
Community Centre, Hull Maritime Museum,
International Community Centre, Jaywick
Martello Tower, Jubilee Square, Lewsey Library,
Manor Park Community Centre, Markeaton Park,
Mellor Community Primary School, Morpeth
Road Primary Academy, Museums Quarter,
National Museum of the Royal Navy, Plymouth
Hoe, Royal William Yard, Rudyard Lake,
Sailors' Society, Sarisbury Green Community
Centre, SeaCity Museum, Slough Town Centre,
Somersetown Community Centre, St George's
Square, Stade Open Space, Sunnyhill Community
Centre, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, The
Windmill Centre, Tile Hill Library, Torre Abbey,
War Memorial Park, Woodbridge Children's
Centre.

The Sea is full of secrets

The Sea is Jelly & Joy

The Sea is magical

The Sea is The Big Blue!

The Sea is powerful!

The Sea is mysterious

The Sea is full of creatures.

