

**GEM**

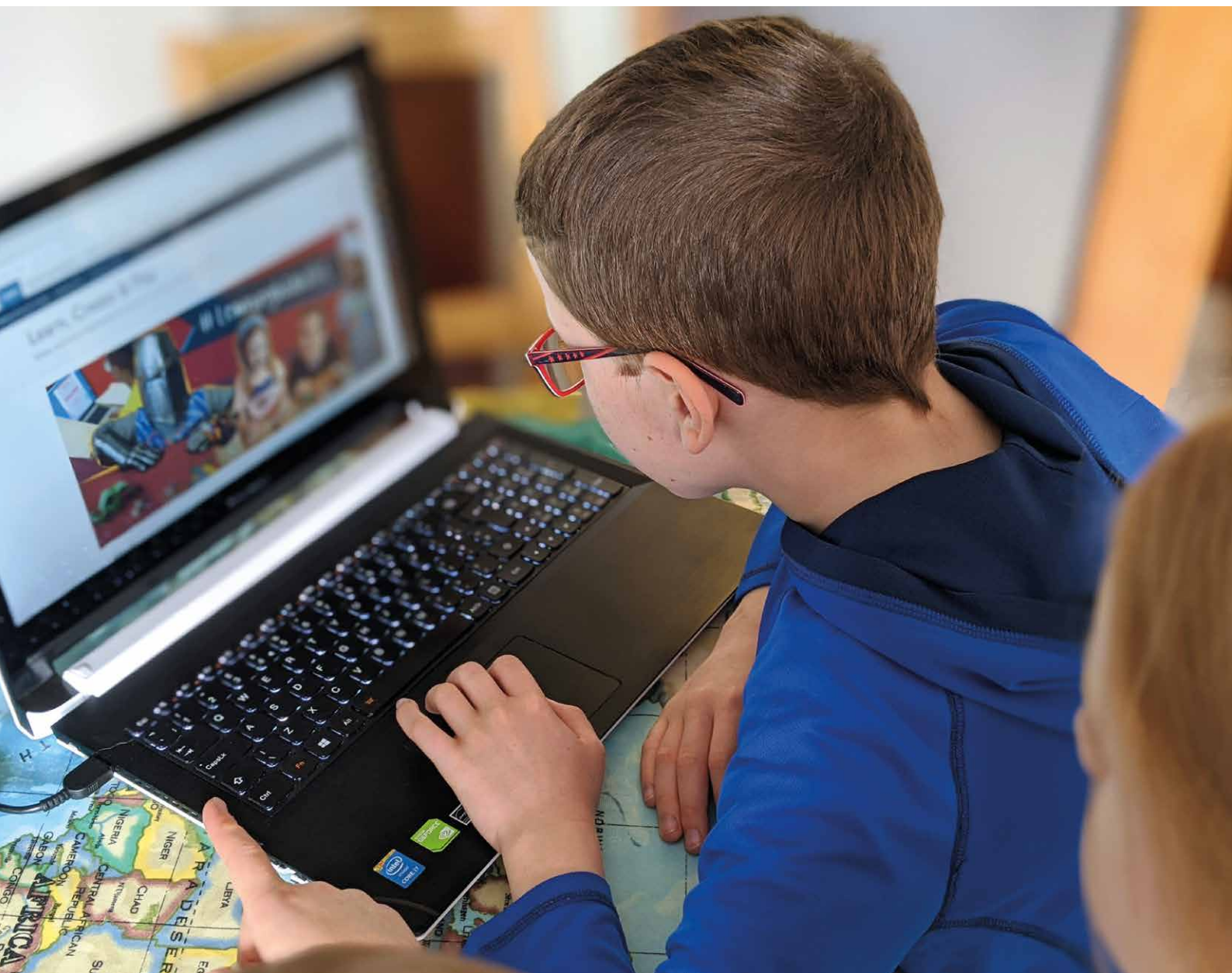
We connect &  
learn together

Art Fund\_

# Case Studies

**Remote learning in museums,  
heritage and cultural settings**

Vol.26 2020



## About GEM?

GEM champions excellence in learning within museums, heritage and cultural settings. As a professional membership organisation, GEM members connect and learn together through training courses, continuing professional development, networking opportunities and publications like *GEM Case Studies* and the *Journal for Education in Museums*.

Our **VISION** is of a connected and equipped community of people enabling learning across museum, heritage and cultural settings, creating inspiring experiences, relevant for everyone; that promote equality – transform and enrich lives.

Our **MISSION** is to support and empower our community of colleagues to connect and develop their knowledge and skills to deliver learning.

Our **SERVICES** to deliver our mission include; professional membership for everyone delivering learning across museums, heritage and cultural settings; training and professional development opportunities; 1-1 support; annual conference and events; dedicated representatives across all four Nations of the UK; publications and digital resources, support for sector recruitment; conversations and advocacy about practice and the development of learning.

## Editorial

By **Devon Turner**,  
*Case Studies Editor*  
Communications Manager, GEM

Welcome to our remote learning themed edition of *GEM Case Studies*. There are a myriad of projects and activities highlighted that are sure to inform and inspire. Thank you to the Art Fund for supporting this edition. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has encouraged the sector to pivot and provide increased opportunities for remote learning both digitally, through delivering resources like webinars, videos and podcasts, and physically through posting out packs and providing engagement resources through libraries, schools and food banks.

The lockdowns of 2020 have left many people isolated and susceptible to anxiety, depression and other mental health issues. Creativity and culture have provided a lifeline to so many, and are particularly important for the most vulnerable among us including older generations, dementia patients and children and adults with SEN/SEND. The tireless work of museum and heritage education professionals to respond and reimagine what cultural engagement looks like during a pandemic continues to inspire and inform definitions of remote learning, as we navigate this new and socially distant terrain.

Remote learning is a broad term that has taken on a number of meanings within different contexts. When the teacher and learner are separated by time or distance, it's understood to be remote learning. However, this experience can manifest itself in very different ways as is evidenced within the pages of this *GEM Case Studies*. The Museum of London brilliantly demonstrates how to engage dementia patients with their community remotely

through digital activities and physical packs, while university museums in Oxford and Cambridge highlight best practice in using culture to support adults and young people experiencing ill-mental health, and adults in drugs and alcohol rehabilitation and young people with SEN/SEND.

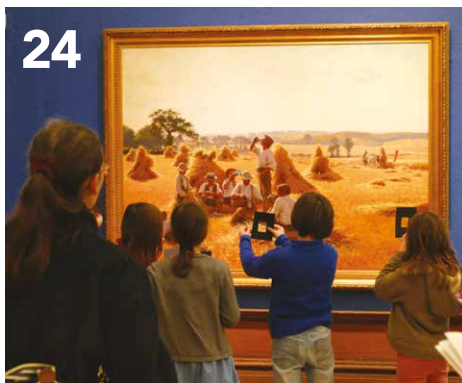
Digital has become essential to the museums and heritage sector in recent years, however this year digital has come to the absolute forefront. Organisations like Historic Environment Scotland, Leeds Museums and Galleries, Egypt Centre at Swansea University, National Videogame Museum, Fitzwilliam Museum and Horniman Museum stepped up to the digital plate to use materials on hand to create engaging videos to inspire creativity and keep children, families and community active through cultural engagement.

Museums like the Jewish Museum London who had their successful remote learning programme already in place, used the first 2020 lockdown to debut their new virtual classrooms programme to great success. Other organisations like The Laing Art Gallery, part of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums and Archaeology Scotland used lockdown as an opportunity to expand pre-existing programmes like Arts Award and Heritage Hero Awards online to reach out to new audiences.

We conclude this edition of *GEM Case Studies* by hearing from organisations like Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) Heritage Services and The Queer Heritage Forum who have turned challenges into successes by working out alternative ways to host remote work placements – finding new ways to celebrate Pride month and highlight LGBTQ communities through digital engagement.

We hope you enjoy learning from these case studies. At GEM, we connect and learn together. Let's continue to remain strong as a sector and advocate for the universal power of learning within museums, heritage and cultural settings.

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# Memories of London: Lockdown Lessons

## Project

Memories of London aims to promote the wellbeing of those living with dementia. Prior to Covid-19, we offered a face-to-face onsite programme and an extensive outreach programme with community partners.

## Background

Over 72,000 people live with dementia in London today and as a museum we aspire to be inclusive, accessible and a force for good. We developed Memories of London in response to the mayor's pledge to become a dementia-friendly city and are working to change our organisation. The Covid-19 crisis acutely highlighted the plight of our older generation. Dementia is the most common pre-condition to Covid-19 deaths with a surge of non-virus-related deaths due to isolation. Lockdown brought considerable challenges including lack of digital access, loneliness and the immediate closure of vital wellbeing initiatives. Our work became more urgent than ever before.

## Approach

Our approach was flexible and responsive. We aspired to create resources that genuinely helped and undertook consultation with our dementia reference group, community/health partners and care homes. Our findings directly informed the resources we developed, and we pivoted our programme to meet an immediate need.

## Intended outcomes

- To reduce loneliness and create a sense of connection
- To stimulate creativity to promote wellbeing
- To replicate our face-to-face programme
- To connect personal memories to the story of London

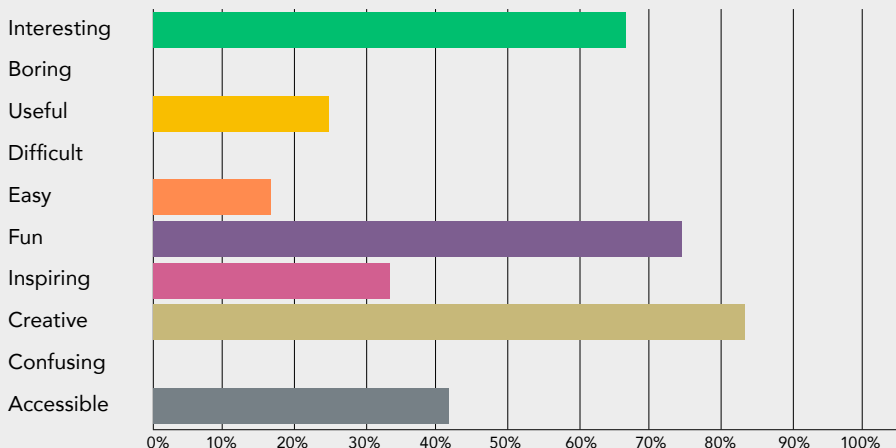
## Intended outputs

- Creative & Connected monthly hard-copy activity booklet
- London Lives podcasts with the voices of those affected by dementia
- Monthly live, online sessions led by artists
- Online videos

## Challenges

We faced multiple difficulties in pivoting our programme. Trying to translate a sensory programme to platforms that don't permit touch or smell was challenging. We embedded sensory engagement through various prompts, for example asking participants to collect herbs to smell in our live sessions, but this relied on carers to facilitate and necessitated access to resources. Tailoring our programme to suit different stages of dementia was impossible. Due to the demand for our paper packs, they were generic and sometimes too challenging for those living with advanced dementia. We also struggled with evaluating our impact on wellbeing. We did not have the immediacy of face-to-face delivery and relied on second-hand accounts from carers through questionnaires.

Q10: Which of the following words and phrases would you use to describe the resource packs? Please choose 3 words.



**“ This service is a valuable asset to the centre and others living with a dementia. It reaches out to the most vulnerable in our community when clients have been isolating for such a long time. It keeps people engaged with paper packs and podcasts, and online sessions ensure people with dementia don't feel they're on their own.**

### Outcomes

The outcomes for the project were positive. We were successful in helping to alleviate loneliness caused by Covid-19. Partners sighted our activity booklets as a 'godsend' for those clients who were housebound.

'The pack complemented the online sessions ... All together they were like threads weaving a web of care seemingly light and fragile, and yet so bouncy and bright!'

Our survey also revealed that the resources impacted positively on wellbeing. This graph reveals that people felt overwhelmingly 'happy' and 'relaxed' and we successfully connected individuals with the story of London.



**CREATE AND MAKE**

Notting Hill Carnival, 1957

Notting Hill Carnival is an incredible procession and celebration held each August on the streets of the Ladbroke Grove area of London. In 1959, Activist Claudia Jones, held a Caribbean Carnival in St Pancras Town Hall. It aimed to show solidarity and strength in the growing Caribbean community. Inspired by its success Notting Hill Carnival grew and in 1966 the first street festival was held.

Create your own costume design for Notting Hill Carnival here! You could draw, paint, use glitter, stickers or even add a sample of the material you'd like to use...

Our actual outputs included the following:

- Monthly, printed booklets (also downloadable)
- Monthly podcasts with interviews of those affected by dementia
- Monthly live online session led by an artist
- All resources were linked to one object/theme from our collections

### Lessons learned

- Cultural provision is not just a nice add on, it's essential to combatting social isolation and loneliness.
- Actively engaging in creative processes through museum learning is vital to wellbeing.
- A blended approach for remote learning is most effective; digital engagement is ideal for reaching those with advanced dementia who cannot travel, and non-digital resources are critical to those with limited internet access.



**From Curry to Carnival**

This episode we forage through the fantastic world of food and identity, sharing captivating conversations with Londoners from different generations and backgrounds.

[LISTEN NOW >](#)

- Co-creation is vital to creating meaningful learning experiences, a sense of connection and community.
- Cultural institutions have a responsibility to advocate for the vulnerable in society, recognise their contributions and offer a way for their voice to be heard, such as our London Lives podcasts.
- Not everyone has access to resources. If budget permits, include simple items such as scissors and pens to ensure equitable access.
- As cultural learning institutions we need to think bigger, robustly evaluate and advocate for increased investment. We really can change lives.

We are continuing to offer these resources until the end of 2020 and are frequently adapting. In the future we will consider offering a combination of onsite, outreach and online resources.

### Find out more

Memories of London is funded by the Greater London Authority

[www.museumoflondon.org.uk/memories/creative-connected](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/memories/creative-connected)

[www.museumoflondon.org.uk/memories/london-lives](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/memories/london-lives)

[www.museumoflondon.org.uk/memories](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/memories)

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# Out of Touch?

## Flexible Connections with Community Partners

### Project

During lockdown, the Community Engagement Team tested new methods to support community groups with activities for wellbeing. Each activity was developed by listening to long-term local partners and working with Community Ambassadors.

### Background

Pre-pandemic, we delivered face-to-face creative outreach sessions across Oxfordshire in collaboration with community partners. The projects below supported adults and young people experiencing ill-mental health, adults in drugs and alcohol rehabilitation, Multaka Oxford volunteers and their families and older people – all who faced varying levels of social isolation during the pandemic.

Lockdown prompted many museums to move engagement activity online. This approach was not appropriate for most of our community partners. Our main challenges were:

- How do we continue to engage with people who have little or restricted/prohibited online access?
- How do we maintain the personal connection between the museums and our audiences without face-to-face interactions?

### Approach

As far as possible we wanted our community partners to have the same quality experience as an “in-person” session, albeit from a distance. Instead of translating our existing sessions to virtual, we focused on supporting groups with physical resources and new, tailored approaches.

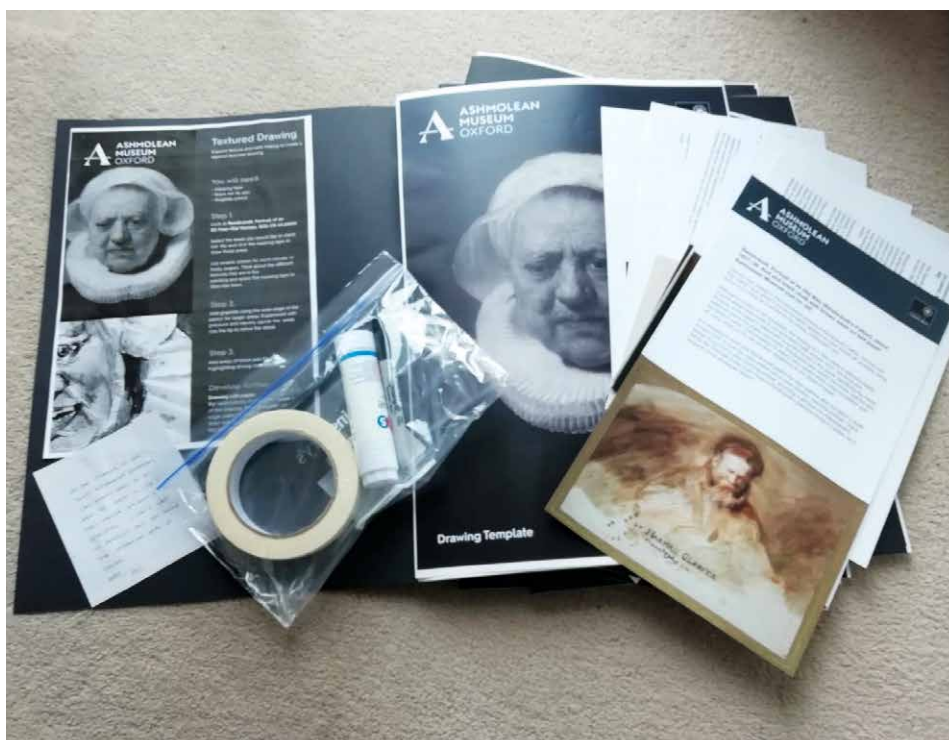
### Intended Outcomes

- Provide engaging and relevant activities to support mental health and wellbeing
- Trial new ways of working

- Continue to stay connected and engaged with our audiences
- Provide an alternative to online content
- Develop resources deliverable to multiple community partners

### Intended Outputs

- Physical packs of art resources and digital support materials for local MIND groups
- Art Packs for local families
- Online and hard copy newsletter made with/by and for older people






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### Challenges

- Short deadlines
- Remote working including remote colleagues
- Staff furlough
- Emotional strain of lost contact with longstanding community partners and individuals
- Working within infection control guidelines

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### Outcomes

- Ashmolean *Young Rembrandt* exhibition packs and digital support materials for young people and adults experiencing ill-mental health and adults in Drugs and Alcohol Rehabilitation
- Multaka Art Packs and linked social media for local families
- Older People's newsletter, developed in collaboration with the Museum of Oxford, Banbury Museum Trust and Oxfordshire Community Hospitals

The *Young Rembrandt* resources were developed with artist Dionne Freeman, and curator, An Van Camp. These included online and offline versions of tailored art activities,

instructional videos on USB drives, painting descriptions, a handwritten introduction from An, and art materials. Each offline pack was hand delivered to our partners to distribute to their clients.

The pack response was mixed – without 'normal' access to Key Workers/Teachers, many of the participants from the Adult Rehab group and Young People's In-Patient Unit lacked motivation or confidence to complete open-ended, self-led activities. However, the well-established MIND Art Group really engaged with the activities.

The Multaka Oxford programme also delivered art packs to volunteers and their families with craft materials inspired by staff-made online videos. Community Ambassador, Nuha Abdo explained that, culturally, many Middle Eastern families have little/no arts and craft resources at home. From feedback, the volunteers were happy to receive the packs and enjoyed the contents, which supported children's creative learning and kept adults occupied during lockdown. However, we are unsure if people accessed the videos.

Finally, the *Keeping Connected* newsletter has been well received

in both online and hard copy. The content is designed in collaboration with the Museum of Oxford, Community Hospitals and Older People's groups. One challenge has been encouraging Older People to contribute articles – often due to confidence, as well as variable online access. To encourage contributions, we now collect stories over the phone and through the post.

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### Lessons learned

- **To be more tailored in our approach.** Even if the 'in-person' content and delivery method would be similar for groups this might not be the case when trying to engage remotely.
- **Support for community partners is even more crucial.** We are unable to build personal rapport with groups and individuals in our normal way. We are relying even more heavily on key workers within organisations to advocate and help deliver content on our behalf, most of whom are under huge pressure. We need to make sure we are actively supporting our partner organisations.
- **It's ok to stop and take a breath.** We ran with ideas too quickly. Sometimes it's better to step back and wait for the right time, rather than rushing in because you feel like you should be doing something.

We will be listening and learning. We are taking the time to reconnect with our community partners, understanding how things have changed for them and working with them to create relevant programmes.

### Find out more

For further information contact **Beth or Susan** at [outreach@museums.ox.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@museums.ox.ac.uk)

**The *Young Rembrandt* activities can be viewed at:**  
[www.ashmolean.org/young-rembrandt-learning-resources](http://www.ashmolean.org/young-rembrandt-learning-resources)

**Multaka online resources:**  
[www.youtube.com/channel/UCKY2WDJQm47NfEFxI6bBSUw/videos](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKY2WDJQm47NfEFxI6bBSUw/videos)



# Engaging children and young people with SEND virtually through lockdown



## Project

During the Covid-19 lockdown, the University of Cambridge Museums (UCM) wanted to engage remotely and maintain relationships with our pre-existing audience of children with special educational needs and disabilities. Intended outcomes were to create accessible, fun, virtual resources for families at home suitable for children with special educational needs and disabilities as well as to offer ongoing support to young people with SEN and their parents who might be experiencing isolation during lockdown.

## Background and approach

UCM is a consortium of the eight University Museums and the Cambridge University Botanic Gardens supported by Arts Council England as a Band 3 NPO. According to government statistics in January 2020, 12.1% of all school pupils have a special educational need, and we have two main programmes for children with special educational needs and disabilities. Arts Pioneers, for young people aged 11-19, is commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council. They attend the Fitzwilliam Museum on a monthly basis, then rotate around the museums for holiday sessions. The UCM also deliver 'disability friendly openings' aimed at children with sensory sensitivities and their families.

The structure for the virtual resources was the same for both programmes, but with added personalisation for the Arts Pioneers. Each resource had three



“The range of projects helped to give me more ideas for creative things J and I could do at home and so we were creating things together all the way through lockdown we could also incorporate art things we'd done to support things like writing practice.



sections; look, copy and make. Artist educator Kaitlin Ferguson designed art activities and created short instruction films and templates. There were two 'levels' of art activity, based on the child's concentration levels; instant or detailed.

As Arts Pioneers is a reoccurring group, we could post out art materials to everyone at the beginning of lockdown and send out additional items as required. This meant the activities could be more creative with bespoke materials. For the other SEND resources, we picked materials likely to be found at home.

### Challenges and obstacles

Kaitlin Ferguson reflects *"Before lockdown, our in-person sessions were always designed to be sensitive, warm and dynamic. Our approach isn't prescriptive but governed by responding to the group's needs.*

*As we moved to online activities, the challenge we were faced with was how to ensure that our offerings kept the same warmth and personal touch as our in-person sessions.*

At a time where food and art supplies were in short supply across the country, the disability friendly art activities were based on what was likely to be in the house which limited how creative we could be. We were aware of not designing activities that required expensive materials.

At times we struggled to get feedback, so we felt like we were creating

activities in a 'bubble' rather than being led by the young person's interests. It would have been useful to have developed an easy way for people to upload any work they created, like an online gallery.

### Actual outcomes and outputs

One young person completed a Bronze Arts Award, while others completed Bronze units. A parent said, *"The range of projects helped to give me more ideas for creative things J and I could do at home and so we were creating things together all the way through lockdown. We could also incorporate art things we'd done to support things like writing practice."*

Two artists; Kaitlin Ferguson and Jason Ions alternated creating monthly activities for the arts pioneers inspired by artworks and objects in the museum collections, helping us to maintain our relationship with all the participants.

Young people created artwork and shared it with us by email. In one case, artwork created by a member of Arts Pioneers was used to offer inspiration for families engaging with the Fitzwilliam Museum's Look, Think, Do family resources.

### Lessons learned

- Buy basic kit – We used our phones to shoot the films but invested in cheap equipment such as a ring light and phone tripod to improve the quality.

- Make it 'drop in' – one parent said *"It was good for us not to have a set time we had to be available for a Zoom type session – other groups and school were using these and as lockdown wore on, it started to feel like we were under a bit of pressure to fit in with sessions and he was finding communicating with Zoom difficult."*

We will continue to maintain a virtual offer for both groups during the pandemic, as well as move to in person delivery when appropriate.

### Find out more

**Marie Kennedy, Learning Associate: Young People**

mfk25@cam.ac.uk

[www.museums.cam.ac.uk/activities](http://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/activities)

**Kaitlin Ferguson, Artist Educator**

[www.kaitlinferguson.com](http://www.kaitlinferguson.com)

**Background to Arts Pioneers pre-lockdown:**

[www.museums.cam.ac.uk/blog/2018/02/22/arts-pioneers-a-monthly-club-for-young-people-with-physical-and-learning-disabilities](http://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/blog/2018/02/22/arts-pioneers-a-monthly-club-for-young-people-with-physical-and-learning-disabilities)

**Background to disability friendly openings pre-lockdown:**

[www.museums.cam.ac.uk/blog/2020/06/08/in-an-ideal-world-museums-would-make-visiting-easier-by](http://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/blog/2020/06/08/in-an-ideal-world-museums-would-make-visiting-easier-by)

# Learn at Home:

## Digital resources for lockdown learning

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### Project

In response to the switch to home learning prompted by the UK lockdown in March 2020, the learning team at Historic Environment Scotland (HES) created a new section of the website called 'Learn at Home'.

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### Background

With learners and learning practitioners all at home, and our historic sites closed, we wanted to make digital access to our learning resources more straightforward. As learning activities are typically carried out by several different teams across HES, learning resources could be found in different sections of our websites. We also had many resources that were not yet available online.

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### Approach

New and existing resources were gathered from across the organisation to support learning from home. Mindful that many resources were originally designed for learning practitioners and would now be accessed directly by young people or parents/carers, we adjusted the language and content where possible.



## Challenges

Given the software and skills we had available, PDFs were the most flexible and achievable format for our resources. However, trying to get all of the accessibility features right for PDFs was challenging and we tried to make printing optional.

Our budget was paused so we couldn't commission any new design work. However, we had previously worked with our designer to create style guides and an illustration bank, so we managed to format resources in Microsoft Word or Adobe InDesign ourselves with mixed success. We also created new 'Craft Knight' films from home using a phone, homemade props, and the invaluable directing and editing skills of a photographer colleague.

In the first few weeks of this project, colleagues from our own Learning & Inclusion team as well as several other teams across HES all rallied via Trello to provide resources in a short space of time. However, at the end of April many of our colleagues were furloughed, limiting the experience, knowledge and expertise available.

A better understanding of what teachers and families required would have been invaluable to guide our planning. However, due to time constraints and messages that teachers especially were feeling overwhelmed, we decided to postpone this research until Autumn 2020.

## Outcomes

### Promotion

We created promotional social media content but found HES social media channels did not have a large audience looking for learning. This led us to explore developing new partnerships with organisations like the Children's University and Cranachan Publishing to develop themed activities hosted on their websites.

### Analytics and audiences

Google Analytics suggested the most popular resources were the more 'light touch' activities such as colouring sheets, craft activities and games. Assuming it was largely families accessing our content, we grounded



playful content into themed summer activity weeks. This new content did not get the views we had hoped for, which made us question whether it had in fact been learning practitioners driving the April–June views.

### Digital first

We created 15 web pages that collectively host 19 Gaelic resources, 17 games resources, 35 'make & create' activities, 18 'draw & colour' activities, 12 educators' resources, 11 'investigate' resources, 7 videos and lots of links to partner resources.

To combat the limitations of delivering learning activities via PDFs, we explored new options for creating more genuinely 'digital first' online learning. Virtual Visit templates have been created to house and display digital assets to support learning (videos, 3D models, 360 photos, audio files) and will be ready to share soon.

### Lessons learned

- Collaboration is key! None of this would have been possible without support from colleagues across the organisation (Donna – thank you)
- It's fine to experiment and try new things. Some will work and some won't – you'll learn things from both
- Learn from other people. When you find something great, consider what it is that makes it great
- You don't need to put everything you have online – think about the audience/relevance

- Explore which channels to use to best reach your audiences

When Scottish schools returned to the classroom in August, we renamed the section 'Learn, Create and Play' as this better reflects the themes of the resources.

The team is now preparing to undertake a full-scale re-evaluation and rebuild of our entire learning programme – which will involve robust audience consultation. We will then embark on a strategic overhaul of our online resources using our own recent learning about creating, presenting, and promoting digital resources.

## Find out more

You can find Learn, Create and Play (previously Learn at Home) at: [www.historicenvironment.scot/learn/learn-create-play](http://www.historicenvironment.scot/learn/learn-create-play)

We welcome feedback and collaboration ideas!

You can contact us at [catriona.hood@hes.scot](mailto:catriona.hood@hes.scot) and [amy.mcdonald@hes.scot](mailto:amy.mcdonald@hes.scot)

# Leeds Museums and Galleries:

## #MuseumFromHome Learning Videos and Additional Resources

### Project

At the start of lockdown, Leeds Museums and Galleries (LMG) looked to our pre-existing school loans box scheme as a way of being able to continue to engage with the public, and to support teachers and parents with home schooling.

The Museum From Home videos were made daily, and promoted by LMG through Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Each week is complimented by an additional resources sheet, giving the videos a legacy as accessible learning resources for the future.

### Background

In September 2018, LMG launched its Primary School Membership Scheme to enable local primary schools to access accessioned objects from the Museum's collections to support their classroom teaching. This led to the creation of over 50 topic-linked boxes containing accessioned objects from the collections. Each box was risk assessed to be loaned into primary schools unaccompanied by museum staff. These were the basis for our Museum From Home videos, as they were able to be accessed by our Leeds Discovery Centre Learning and Access Officer despite lockdown, were topic-linked, and contained accessioned objects from the collections.

### Approach

The Learning and Access Officer at the Discovery Centre was able to take loans boxes home during lockdown to make a 2-minute video each weekday looking at a different object. Each week had a different theme.

To make it interactive, topics were chosen using weekly polls on Facebook and Twitter. The videos were short enough to fit within Twitter's time parameters and formed a set of resources that were snappy and engaging for all ages.

### Intended outcomes

- Engage and interact with audiences (pre-existing and new)
- Support teachers and parents with home schooling

### Intended outputs

- Create a set of resources that have a legacy beyond Covid-19, and support members to use loans boxes in the classroom

### Challenges

Although Leeds Museums and Galleries already has online education content through MyLearning.org, our education and family programmes have always been based on face to face interaction. Lockdown challenged us to put together a programme of learning and engagement online, with very little warning.

The project was very time consuming, as it relied on the Learning and Access Officer spending every





weekday morning researching, filming and subtitling each video. The amount of time this took often varied, and there were some complications to start with about what software and hardware to use. The videos were filmed in the least technical way possible, in one take through a laptop camera with very little editing. The setting was chosen to be as generic as possible, so that it was unclear whether they were in an office or home location. The decision to create additional supporting resource sheets came slightly later, and added to the demands of the project, meaning that they were always a few weeks behind the videos themselves.

### Outcomes

There are currently 77 *Museum From Home* videos on the Leeds Museums YouTube playlist. The films and the brief 'Disco snapshot' videos showcasing the Museum Store itself had generated over 466,341

impressions on social media by the 9th July 2020, as well as 91,825 video views (of all lengths). There had been 17,508 engagements with the content, including retweets and likes. Overall, 1,015 people engaged with the topic polls. Social media comments showed that the Discovery Centre was reaching new audiences who hoped to visit when we reopen, and that the people accessing the content were a mixture of adults, families with children, and schools. Anecdotally, a number of member schools reported using or signposting parents to the videos, and when returning to school after the summer holidays, are intended to continue using the videos in their teaching. A further outcome has been a partnership with a local arts and events organisation, running a series of adult education events focused on Leeds' History, which came directly from the organisation watching the *Museum From Home* videos.

“ Social media comments showed that the Discovery Centre was reaching new audiences who hoped to visit when we reopen, and that the people accessing the content were a mixture of adults, families with children, and schools.

### Actual outputs included:

- 77 *Museum From Home* videos
- 16 additional resources sheets available on the LMG Website, and on the Historical Association's new Resource Hub

### Lessons learned

- There is a real appetite for remote learning, across an audience of all ages
- We need to continue to cater for this need as a learning team by continuing to generate engaging digital/social media content based around our collections
- Creating opportunities for led and self-led remote learning can help build our relationships with local schools

### Find out more

[www.youtube.com/user/leedsmuseums/playlists](https://www.youtube.com/user/leedsmuseums/playlists)

<https://museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/virtual-visit/online-activities>

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# Starting from Scratch:

## Creating a Digital Learning Programme in Response to Covid-19

### Project

The Egypt Centre is Wales' only museum of Egyptian Antiquities based in Swansea University. Before closing due to Covid-19, the Egypt Centre ran a popular learning programme which was also the museum's biggest source of income. Overnight, we saw all our income vanish as we had to close our doors and cancel events and school groups. This case study is the story of how creativity came out of a crisis and how we digitised a learning programme in a matter of months with a limited budget.

### Background

Before the pandemic, we ran a popular museum-based learning programme, which was fully booked for months in advance. Our most popular offer was our school visits, especially Key Stage 2. We also offered loan boxes, outreach and a host of family learning activities programmed throughout the year. Our challenge was to create an engaging, enjoyable and useful online learning programme.

### Approach

Our approach was to create digital learning resources to aid those who were learning from home. We wanted to create a range of activities that could support all aspects of home learning. This included worksheets that linked to the curriculum and fun activities that supported wellbeing.

The intended outcome of the project was to create several bilingual, learning resources that would enhance home



learning, foster engagement and support creativity and wellbeing. We aimed to create a series of resources that could be downloaded from the Egypt Centre's website for free. These activities would be rooted in the Welsh curriculum but ultimately be fun and easy to do from home.

### Challenges

I did not have a lot of resources in my home. In the museum, we have a cupboard full of resources. However, during lockdown I was limited to what I had in my flat.

Creating resources for a wide range of ages and advertising them properly was a new challenge. We had to rethink how we measured impact as we didn't have a way of telling who was using the activities unless they specifically told us.

Additionally, time was a factor as creating resources takes a lot of time – especially when creating them in English and Welsh.

### Outcomes

We created several free learning resources which are available on our website. We also responded to requests for live sessions with our "Log on and Learn" family workshops.

We measured impact by using Google Analytics to study the visits to our website. We also used the number of views on the video content on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. This meant that we were using more quantitative data than before lockdown. We also ran a survey using Survey Monkey to add to our qualitative data.



“ We engaged a wider audience than our ‘regulars’ including people from a wider geographical area than we would in the Museum.

- Now is the time to be creative and play around with new software and ideas. There is no rule book on what is happening now.
- Be gentle with yourself, especially if you have competing projects. It was frustrating to see other Learning Teams digitise and create things in the blink of an eye. This situation is new and stressful and comparing yourself to others is unhelpful.

The outputs from this project provided a springboard for the development of our Virtual Classroom. This includes exclusive worksheets and video content as well as a one hour live facilitated session with Museum staff. This is now up and running and generating income for the Museum.

We engaged a wider audience than our ‘regulars’ including people from a wider geographical area than we would in the Museum. We are currently researching how these new audience members found us.

The Egypt Centre now has a dedicated Learning from Home page on our website with a variety of worksheets, activities and crafts that can be downloaded for free. These include a range of worksheets and our digital Come and Create activities, the online version of our monthly craft activities. The Come and Creates include a downloadable craft template and a ‘how-to’ video that shows you how to assemble the craft. Some of these

worksheets were based off activities we did in-house and some were brand new.

#### Lessons learned

- Our most successful activities were the simplest.
- In the end, it was a good thing that I didn’t have access to a cupboard full of resources. I was determined to create crafts and activities that would not require any specialist equipment.
- We needed to change the ways we measured engagement. Our old methods were not sufficient or appropriate for digital engagement.

#### Find out more

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Our Learning from Home page can be found here:  
[www.egypt.swan.ac.uk/learning-from-home](http://www.egypt.swan.ac.uk/learning-from-home)

# Creating Pixelheads:

## The National Videogame Museum at Home

### Project

Pixelheads is the National Videogame Museum's informal community for children who want to learn about, talk about and create videogames. In the summer we ran virtual Saturday Pixelhead club in weekly live-streamed sessions on our YouTube channel.

### Background

The National Videogame Museum opened in Sheffield in 2018. In the first year, we welcomed 40,000 visitors, school groups and families. Before lockdown, we were in the process of redeveloping our education strategy working with Dr Becky Parry at the University of Sheffield.

Initially we anticipated the focus of our work being on face to face activity with children and their teachers, but we took the opportunity (and challenges) of the Covid-19 lockdown to prioritise online learning for children and families.

The key challenges we wanted to address were:

- Maintaining engagement and delivering remote learning opportunities to our family audiences while the museum was closed
- To enable online learning and social experiences for children

### Approach

To make these sessions sociable we opted to mirror the styles of online videogame-based content through live-streaming, a format that many children are already familiar with. Using the chat function and moderation within the livestream itself, we could enable co-design, collaborative making and walk-through tutorials.

### Intended outcomes included:

- Maintaining connections to local family audiences while closed

- Enabling isolated children to work together and build a videogame community
- Introducing inclusive and accessible activities which could prompt further independent creative activity

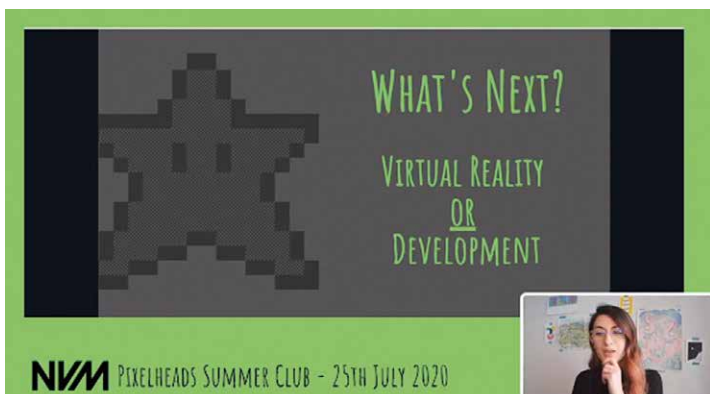
### Intended outputs were:

- 6 facilitated livestreams on YouTube throughout summer holidays in July/ August 2020
- Increased engagement in the 'NVM at Home' programme

### Challenges

The key obstacle has been keeping up with and responding to the ever-changing needs of our audience over lockdown. In relation to Pixelheads, this included:

- Understanding and mitigating technical challenges, both for our team and those for those taking part. Many families struggled with lack of technology or internet access.







- Challenges of remote engagement and working from home.
- Performing – setting the right tone. While we took inspiration from existing videogame media, it was important to distinguish ours as more family focused content.

### Outcomes

- Throughout the sessions we have seen children and their families return each week with parents also following up on social media.
- The enthusiastic feedback demonstrated that families who engaged had appreciated the community aspect of Pixelheads, with one family stating they took part *'so [their] children could learn and engage with other young people during lockdown'*.
- The sessions supported meaningful engagement with collections; for example, we asked participants to vote for one of two objects from the collection to discuss in the following session and used participants' suggestions for activities each week.

### Outputs

- 6 live-streamed sessions on YouTube facilitated by the Learning Officer, with 1.2k views and counting. Each livestream

was 'attended' by 25 families on average with an initial watch time of 300hrs (approx.), with hundreds of comments and the busiest session reaching over 750 comments.

- Generation of new content developed by our Learning Officer who facilitated each session which included exploration of the museum's collection, industry interviews and creative making.
- The establishment of an enthusiastic community for Pixelheads who would like to see the programme continue.

### Lessons learned

- Developing weekly sessions took significant time and preparation, but this meant we were able to incorporate suggestions by the community.
- Harnessing the enthusiasm of young people through Pixelheads, we were able to engage their families in the possibilities for learning within videogames.
- Using a moderated chat function worked well to include audiences and allow for interaction, but we want to explore better accessibility and management.
- The livestream format itself can be restrictive for families without easy access to the internet or technology.

Looking into other modes of interactivity that would still be accessible is the next challenge.

- We discussed rules for the chat, and this proved highly useful to encouraging children to ensure that the chat was kinder than can often be the case in this context.

Our next steps are to build on the lessons learned to develop the Pixelheads programming both on and offline. We plan to continue to create digital content alongside reopening and future gallery activities, opening up opportunities for inclusion, access and reach. Through this, we hope to keep engaging with audiences built up over lockdown, developing this community and provide additional opportunities for co-production between young people and families.

### Find out more

National Videogame Museum:  
[www.thenvm.org](http://www.thenvm.org)

Contact: **Leah Dungay** (Learning Officer) [leah@thenvm.org](mailto:leah@thenvm.org)

Twitter @LeahDungay

[makeproject.eu](http://makeproject.eu) and  
[makerfutures.org](http://makerfutures.org)

# Look Think Do:

## creating accessible and relevant content for schools and families during lockdown

### Project

Look Think Do are digital learning activities for students and families to do together. They are designed to encourage them to look closely at an artefact, to think, and do an activity.

### Background

The Fitzwilliam Museum is the lead partner of the University of Cambridge Museums consortium. The museum houses a collection of over half a million works of art, which date from antiquity to the present day. Typically, the museum welcomes about 14,000 school visitors a year.

With the museum closed due to lockdown, we pivoted from on-site provision to the creation of digital resources. We were concerned about the limitations imposed by Covid-19 but were determined to create quality resources with legacy beyond the immediate lockdown period. Resources were designed and constructed at home by members of the schools' team.

### Approach

Previous research with schools and teachers had revealed that they were interested in starter activities and questions to support them to use objects in their teaching. The format of 'Look, Think, and Do' took inspiration from the approach we take daily when teaching from objects in the galleries. We were also interested in how working digitally enabled us to profile works which were not usually on display and artists or objects from under-represented groups.

### Intended outcomes included:

- To sustain engagement with local schools during lockdown
- To enable children and families to access the collection remotely
- To develop our digital skills

Our intended output was a set of digital resources for schools and families with hi-res images and videos.

### Challenges

Fortunately, the schools' team were not furloughed and could thus dedicate significant time to the project. We also had support from colleagues in various departments including digital, marketing, curatorial, photography and the image library.

As we coped with the practical and emotional stress of lockdown, we encountered many challenges.

How do you keep in touch with and collect feedback from audiences when the museum is closed?

How can we provide opportunities for families who don't have access to art or digital resources?

Are the traditional boundaries between our schools and families programmes still relevant when engagement is happening at home?

What is achievable with limited budget?

What new digital skills do we need to learn to enable us to create content of this kind?



“ We created Look Think Do activities for 36 objects – about 108 different activities. We also created 14 'how to' videos and 5 story videos, with simpler image collages and instructions or suggestions for smaller scale 'Do' activities.



### Lessons learned

- **Museum educators are very creative!** Make the most of what you have easy access to and play to your individual strengths and talents
- **Think ahead** Evaluate your existing offer and plans for the future.
- **Start with what you know** – what are the most popular themes and objects in your collections?
- **Be playful** – the extraordinary situation we found ourselves in during lockdown forced us to take a more playful and iterative approach to content creation.
- **Expand the possibilities** – what does the digital realm enable you to do differently?
- **Don't be too hard on yourself** – be realistic about what you can achieve with the resources you have available to you during a global pandemic.

### Outcomes

It is difficult for us to know the actual outcomes of Look Think Do, but we do know via Google Analytics that we had over 25,000 page views between March and July 2020. We know, through friends and families, that activities were being sent home by schools during lockdown, and analytics showing strong local usage suggest that our well-established network of schools were important in reaching individuals across the region. At the end of the summer term, we set up a primary teacher panel to help us to develop and evaluate future resources.

We created Look Think Do activities for 36 objects – about 108 different activities. We also created 14 'how to' videos and 5 story videos, with simpler

image collages and instructions or suggestions for smaller scale 'Do' activities.

In order to reach families who didn't have access to a home computer, we successfully gained funding from the Fitzwilliam Museum Marlay Group and repurposed other budgets to create over 1,000 Look Think Do activity packs. These were distributed to local families via our community partners and city council foodbanks under the co-ordination of Miranda Stearn, our Head of Learning, and Nicola Wallis, who runs our Early Years programme.

### Find out more

[www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/lookthinkdo/about](http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/lookthinkdo/about)

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Further information on the University of Cambridge Museums Blog: [www.museums.cam.ac.uk/blog/2020/09/16/look-think-do](http://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/blog/2020/09/16/look-think-do)



# Getting 'Hands on' with Digital

## Project

In March 2020, The Horniman's Schools team produced 5 curriculum-linked videos for home educating families. These new resources were created over a week in response to the Museum's closure.

Whilst the videos have had over 4,000 views and received fantastic feedback, the steep learning curve (starting with few digital skills) has taught us many useful lessons.

## Background and approach

The Horniman Museum and Gardens has a long-established, charged-for Schools Programme. We have around 41,000 school visitors a year (pre-Covid).

We decided to produce a series of short videos, filmed within the galleries, featuring objects from our Handling Collection. To reduce development time, we recycled content from existing workshops and spent a day filming as much as possible before lockdown.

From home, we designed complementary activities for mixed-aged learners that utilised readily available resources.

The videos were posted on YouTube and advertised through Facebook Home Education groups, social media and existing mailing lists.

## Challenges

Our schools offer revolves around hands-on learning. When the Horniman closed, our only digital resources were designed to support pre and post-visit teaching or gallery visits. Covid-19 highlighted this weakness in our programme and left us little time to create new content.

## Obstacles

- **Equipment:** With very limited time and budget, we recorded with mobile phones rather than proper filming equipment, so the videos are sometimes shaky or muffled.
- **Communications:** Co-creation was clunky as the Schools team worked from home and relied on emails, which are slower and less effective than other messaging platforms.
- **Lack of digital know-how:** We didn't have software that would have enabled the team to collaborate simultaneously on the same content. All editing work was done by one person on basic video editing software.
- **Museum closure:** With just a day to film, we didn't review our videos until we got home, so issues were not picked up until lockdown had been announced and it was too late to return to the Museum.

- **Going 'Digital':** With the Museum suddenly focused on digital output (and a new website due to launch), our small Digital team was swamped. We didn't have the ability to publish content, or to share work on the Museum's social media pages. This caused delays and meant we were unable to reach schools before lockdown (as we had hoped).

- **Evaluation:** We focused on producing the videos quickly but didn't consider ways to capture data or meaningful engagement, instead relying on YouTube views. We conducted a small teacher consultation after the videos had been launched, when little could be changed.

Our intended project outcomes included sustaining engagement with learners during closure and supporting home educating families, especially those doing this for the first time.

Science, Geography, Literacy

HORNIMAN MUSEUM & GARDENS

### Adaptations Challenge

Press Pause!

1. Animal adaptations

Can you locate the Arctic Circle on a map?

Which other animals live in the Arctic?  
How are their bodies adapted to an extreme Arctic habitat?

Research an Arctic animal and write a fact file about it.



## Lessons learned

### Think ahead

To finish this project quickly, we recycled content from our schools workshops in the videos, however this now means that we cannot use them as pre-visit resources for booked classes. In future, we'd like videos to offer a 'taste' of our workshops without duplicating material.

### Measuring success

We are delighted with the number of views that the videos have received but, with hindsight, should've captured more valuable data and encouraged longer-term engagement with the Museum. In future, we will set clearer goals for digital work so it is easier to measure success, gather more audience data, and ask users to join our mailing list.

### Invest in digital

The videos have given us a better idea of the equipment, staff training and software needed to support a digital offer. We've brushed-up on the Museum's style and digital guidelines, are looking for better platforms for co-creation, and are seeking the permissions to upload and edit digital content ourselves.

### The format works

Introducing simply worded activity slides with short videos worked well for children and adults alike: *"As a parent I really love the fact it's short and snappy and that [my daughter] could go do the activities independently."*

### We can do it!

For us, this project has demystified 'going digital' – it doesn't have to be expensive and isn't as difficult as we'd thought. Our USP has always been hands-on engagement, but the videos have been a real success and we're now excitedly seeking new ways to facilitate object interactions that don't rely on touch.

Our next steps include:

- Staff training
- Conduct evaluation to inform future output
- Create more videos and develop a blended Schools programme

**“As a parent I really love the fact it's short and snappy and that [my daughter] could go do the activities independently.”**

### Find out more

Our videos can be found on the Horniman's YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/user/horniman](http://www.youtube.com/user/horniman)

If you would like more information, please contact me: [lucym@horniman.ac.uk](mailto:lucym@horniman.ac.uk)



# Virtual Classrooms: Facilitated Teaching to Schools

## Project

The Virtual Classrooms are our flagship digital programme launched in the middle of the lockdown. This is a new, and now permanent, aspect of programming for schools.

## Background

Last year the museum welcomed over 20,000 student visits. We teach complex subjects including religion, war, politics, racism, stereotyping, intersectionality of identities and grief and loss.

Our schools audience has a high percentage of secondary students (40%) and around 70% of visiting schools are from inner-London state schools who rely on our bursary schemes and using free public transport. Facilitated learning is essential to our learning theory and time with our expert educators is not replaceable. With “going virtual”, our challenge was how to stay true to our learning theory and ensure face to face learning whilst social distancing is paramount.

## Approach

We had a simple approach to deal with the complexity of the situation.

- Decide that Virtual Classrooms would become a core part of our permanent schools’ programme going forward so we could allocate resources
- Start with audience research with teachers
- Cannibalise our resources
- Recognise that our biggest asset is our expert team of educators

## Intended outcomes were as follows:

- To launch a new permanent programme for schools
- To build on our established learning theory

- To income generate and deliver to our funders
- The retention of our core audience
- To ensure the experience is multisensory through use of
  - Immersive environments
  - Interpretative videos
  - First-person encounters

## Intended outputs were as follows:

- Create and integrate new digital safeguarding guidelines
- Create 16 virtual workshops that based on our current programmes
- To pilot the Virtual Classrooms with 500 students before August 2020



**WE FACILITATED LIVE SESSIONS TO OVER  
600 STUDENTS BETWEEN MAY AND JULY**

# WHAT'S ON OFFER



## Virtual Classrooms

These innovative online facilitated sessions connect straight into your classroom. Your students will see authentic objects in beautiful detail and have the chance to ask questions live to our educators. All sessions include both pre/post activities.

Our Virtual Classroom sessions are 45–60 minutes.



## Outreach Visits

Bring the Jewish Museum into your classroom to enable your students to participate in authentic and immersive experiences with our expert staff.

Our Outreach Visits are 45–60 minutes and available within the London area.



## Museum Workshops

Our award-winning interactive workshops are founded on object handling and the opportunity to see our world renowned collection in person. Learn outside the classroom to bring new understanding of Judaism and Jewish history.

Our Museum Workshops are 1.5–2 hours.

## Challenges

- **Realistic expectations from key stakeholders**

There was considerable pressure to launch faster and increase the number of students in the pilot.

- **Teaching from our homes**

Safeguarding, but also the professional look and the recognition that not all staff are in the same situation when it comes to their home environment.

- **Using multiple platforms**

Some schools were banned from using certain software, so our team had to be prepared to use a wide variety of platforms.

- **Audience research**

Teachers were under enormous pressure, so creating focus groups in our usual method was not possible. We used social media polls, Survey Monkey feedback and one to one chats instead.

- **Tracking impact**

We needed new ways to track the statistics and to collect narrative

- **Mental health of staff**

The museum was undergoing substantial change and the stakes were high on this programme. Being physically separated from other learning team members was tough as we usually team teach and sit round a shared office table.

## Outcomes

- The programme is now launched as permanent and bookings are taken on a regular basis

- Feedback shows the programmes match our learning theory

- We have, and continue to generate income through the programme

- We have delivered on our targets for funders

- We have engaged our core school audience but also welcomed new schools

### Actual outputs were as follows:

- Our Safeguarding Policy was updated, approved and circulated to 50 other museums to use as a template

- 16 workshops were originally created and 7 more have been created since that are specific to GCSE audiences

- We piloted the Virtual Classrooms with over 600 students before August 2020

## Lessons learned

- **Expectation setting is key**  
Understanding the expectations keep changing. What was considered success, soon becomes old news!
- **Sessions are, so far, more popular with secondary schools**  
We already have this core audience, but primary schools usually make up to 60% of our visits so this is on our radar.
- **Confidence is key**  
Our team are encouraging and supportive of one another and we designated time to practice.
- **Invest in skills building the team**  
I had invested time into digital skills building the team over the past years, it meant we were in a good position to take some risks.

- **Cannibalise assets**

Looking at what can be reformatted is not only an efficient use of time, it is good for morale.

The Virtual Classrooms are now a core part of our programme for schools and will run alongside our in-house and outreach programme. The charging structure is the same across all services showing our belief that it is time with our educators that is valuable regardless of the location.

## Find out more

**Frances Jeens**, Interim Museum Director (formerly Director of Learning and Engagement), Jewish Museum London

[learning@jewishmuseum.org.uk](mailto:learning@jewishmuseum.org.uk)

### Virtual Classrooms

<https://jewishmuseum.org.uk/virtual-classrooms>

### Lockdown Impact Report

<https://jewishmuseum.org.uk/about-us/reports>

### Secondary School Brochure

<https://jewishmuseum.org.uk/schools/plan-your-visit/secondary-schools>

# Home Education and Arts Award: Remote Learning and Progression



## Project

A home education project to establish provision and progression through all levels of Arts Award through remote working and gallery visits, and its adaptations for Covid-19.

## Background and approach

The Laing Art Gallery, part of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, is a fine art gallery in Newcastle Upon Tyne. For over 10 years Arts Award has been embedded into our core programming.

Work with home educated families has always existed within the gallery,

however in 2016 *Arts Award in a Day* was piloted, initially focusing on Discover and Explore.

Over 3 years levels were slowly introduced to make families aware of the progression opportunities. It became apparent that this would become a long-term project, spanning years and so needed to be written into our annual programme. Briefings were to be held every six months for lower levels and annually for higher levels. These would give families the confidence and information required as well as opportunities to see finished portfolio examples.

## Intended outcomes and outputs

- Maintain interest in progression through creativity and independent visits to the gallery
- Run regular feedback sessions
- Initial offer of 20 places per briefing
- Bi-annual face to face briefings and hand-ins with a progressive roll out: 2017 Bronze and Explore, 2018 Silver, 2019 Gold

## Challenges and obstacles

We consulted with families after our pilot; families found there was too much work to complete in one day, they wanted more freedom to develop their own creative portfolios and progress to the higher levels.

The project ran smoothly with students working happily and confidently on awards. With the nature of a project, things don't always go as expected with unconsidered challenges appearing. The main difficulties encountered were:

- Ensuring time to moderate and mark whilst supporting families
- Supporting students to refine and refocus projects
- Project popularity
- Maintaining student interest and drop-off
- Parental confidence of their arts knowledge
- Making it work during a pandemic



“ Ensuring families viewed high quality finished portfolios was important. It helped establish expectations of quantity and quality and helped to stall submissions that were not quite complete.



#### Actual outcomes and outputs

- Annual introduction of levels went as planned
- Some students progressed quicker than anticipated
- Interest and opportunities for progression with current and new students was maintained
- Opportunities were provided for skills development, and life experiences that students would not have had the chance to do otherwise
- Gallery interaction increased with some users participating in further project opportunities
- Interest in the work dipped during the pandemic due to momentum slowing
- 48 students completed the award
- 65 awards completed to date
- 16 students completed two awards or more
- 5 progressed to silver or gold
- 7 silver and gold awards completed
- 10 awards in progress
- Students built confidence, gained skills, planned, researched and ran their own exhibitions and projects
- Young people had an impact on the life and experiences of people around them

16-year-old Harry worked from bronze through to gold. He supported an older gentleman with mobility issues, holding the pencil and guiding his hand. He taught an older lady who having reached 60 had never used a paintbrush. He increased the confidence of a user who spent their life being told they were stupid. His name became one of only a handful of words one adult could say.

#### Lessons learned

Interest in the project was high and at first, I accepted new families regularly. I soon learned that people were happy to wait if we were fully booked.

Ensuring families viewed high quality finished portfolios was important. It helped establish expectations of quantity and quality and helped to stall submissions that were not quite complete. This also helped encourage families to start at lower levels, gradually working up.

During Covid-19, we attempted briefings at lower levels with low interest. In retrospect, moving in with the higher levels would have been more beneficial as this is where our groups interest currently lies.

Reinstating the project virtually only with a focus on silver and gold are our next steps. This will have impacts on the opportunity to view completed work and one to one planning, both usual aspects of briefings.

These briefings will be a trial with opportunity to adapt following conversations and feedback. As is everything at the moment, we are learning how we can alter what we do but still provide a high quality and high performing service.

There are so many important stories and experiences that have come out of the project. It's such an invaluable award and more than just a qualification, its life experiences and skills.

#### Find out more

##### Morgan Fail

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[morgan.fail@twmuseums.org.uk](mailto:morgan.fail@twmuseums.org.uk)

Laing Art Gallery  
<https://laingartgallery.org.uk>

Arts Award  
[www.artsaward.org.uk/site/?id=64](http://www.artsaward.org.uk/site/?id=64)

# Heritage Hero Awards: Through lockdown and beyond

## Project

How Archaeology Scotland's Heritage Hero Awards were adapted to support educators and young people during lockdown.

## Background and approach

Heritage Hero Awards, a wider achievement award for history, heritage and archaeology projects, were formally launched by Archaeology Scotland in 2017. Since then they have proved popular in school and youth work settings, encouraging young people to engage with local heritage, celebrating their successes in doing so.

The Archaeology Scotland team provided expert advice on starting or adapting Award projects during lockdown. A new guidance document, designed to support safe lockdown projects, was produced and published on the Heritage Resources Portal. The guidance utilised the existing Awards framework whilst providing project ideas, activities and resources that could be safely and easily used during home learning sessions.



## Intended outcomes and outputs

- Support existing Awards groups to adapt and complete projects under lockdown
- Inspire young people to get out and discover their (very) local heritage
- Increase awareness of how to access local heritage
- Support teachers, parents, guardians and youth workers during the transition to home learning
- Maintain numbers of completed Awards
- Publish guidelines for completing Awards remotely



## Challenges and obstacles

The pandemic presented a new challenge for Awards groups which are specifically designed to encourage group working. Existing projects had to be quickly adapted for individuals/families working from home.

With lockdown measures in place the 'heritage' at the heart of many projects became inaccessible. Groups required support to access heritage sites remotely or change projects to suit more local sites.

With short notice of school closures and a tidal wave of digital resources being released, temptations were there to jump on the bandwagon, creating a digital offering for the Awards. With limited resources and staff time, due to furlough and home working, we decided to adapt the existing structure.

It was important that any new guidance was useable without adding to already significant teacher/family workloads. We didn't anticipate how much more support groups might need to give them the confidence to adapt projects. Effective communication proved key here, we directed more staff time to meetings and email correspondence with group leaders.

# “Being more lenient with awards requirements (removing the group element), whilst still maintaining a high standard of project has opened doors for new audiences.

## Actual outcomes and outputs

Pleasingly, many groups were able to adapt their projects successfully. In the majority of cases this meant young people working on projects individually at home and sharing their findings with peers using digital means. We've seen more young people engaging with the heritage on their doorsteps (including brickworks and battlegrounds) as well as exploring heritage sites and museums online.

The optional Award Workbooks, designed for tracking Award progress proved exceptionally popular during lockdown. Teachers adapted workbooks for class topics and pupils completed them from home. The structure was appreciated by teachers, who mentioned they helped with development of remote lessons, as well as repeatedly praising the awards for their help engaging pupils during lockdown.

Being more lenient with awards requirements (removing the group element), whilst still maintaining a high standard of project has opened doors for new audiences. We previously had no uptake from family groups, but saw parents using the award with their children during lockdown.

## Outputs

- Guidelines for using the Heritage Hero Awards from home hosted on the Heritage Resources Portal
- 12 projects completed since the start of April. A total of 382 participants
- 38 projects in progress

## Lessons learned

- If it's not broken, don't fix it. Focussing on the existing Awards framework worked best for us.
- Not everyone will be comfortable continuing projects when things change.
- Resources tend not to be designed for wide age ranges. However, this is important for family learning groups.

As lockdown restrictions ease, we hope the Awards continue to thrive and act as a support tool for project groups. Outdoor learning is encouraged through the awards, they can be used to maximise the use of local outdoor spaces and support health and wellbeing agendas – a Scottish government priority.

We will continue to develop the awards for use by new audiences attracted during lockdown – home schoolers and family groups, reworking the current documents and guidelines to suit these groups better and creating/adapting resources which work for them.

We also hope to harness technologies used during lockdown to run bespoke Awards training sessions. We hope that this will enable us to reach more Awards partners, including those who might have otherwise struggled to attend training sessions.



## Find out more

Details of the Awards, including case studies, are on our website: <https://archaeologyscotland.org.uk/learning/heritage-hero-awards>

Guidance for undertaking a Heritage Hero Award from home: <https://archaeologyscotland.org.uk/heritage-resources-portal/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2020/03/Heritage-Hero-Award-remote-.pdf>

Contact:  
[awards@archaeologyscotland.org.uk](mailto:awards@archaeologyscotland.org.uk)  
0300 012 9878

# Facilitating Remote Work-Placements:

## When work is something that you do, not a place you go to

### Project

My role as Community Engagement Officer encompasses recruiting, managing and training volunteers for Bath's new World Heritage Centre due to open in 2021 as part of the NHLF funded Archway project. Acutely aware that the Covid-19 pandemic will have had an impact on potential volunteer concerns and motivations, I wanted to explore this area further. Working with MA students remotely, changing attitudes to volunteering during the Covid-19 pandemic was explored. This research will feed into the design of the new volunteer offer.

### Background and approach

Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) Heritage Services is a business unit within BANES District Council responsible for a variety of sites, including The Roman Baths and Pump Room, The Fashion Museum and The Assembly Rooms.

BANES Heritage Services has hosted Masters degree placement students onsite for a number of years. This 'real world' experience is invaluable in understanding the heritage sector. I wanted to offer students an opportunity to be able to research and contribute to current developments remotely during the coronavirus pandemic.

In consultation with the University of Leicester Museum Studies department, I devised a research-oriented work placement project proposal. 3 students completed an 8-week work placement between July and September 2020. The students worked to produce a survey and consequential report that was circulated to known volunteer groups linked to our site and other sites in the local area.

### Challenges

Part of the project proposal given to students.

To assist with the advertisement and design of the new volunteer offer, it will be important to ensure that we meet the needs of volunteers and our local communities.

To do so, it would be useful to know:

- What would encourage/discourage people from volunteering? Will Covid-19 influence this?
- What people have liked / disliked about volunteering previously?
- Social demographic data of Bath and North East Somerset – are there any pertinent points to consider or recommendations that can be made?

- Group meeting conversations didn't always have the natural rhythm of an in-person conversation due to the nature of remote online communication. Building in time to have 1-1 meetings with the students was crucial.
- With students not being on-site, it was a challenge to ensure that they felt part of the organisation, also compounded by the fact that many of my colleagues were furloughed.
- Working collaboratively and remotely meant that some tasks took longer than expected e.g. finalising the wording for the data collection survey led to a long chain of emails.
- There were a few 'lean weeks' during survey circulation. This led to the formation of optional 'mini-projects' that followed the students' skills and fed into the wider objectives of the Archway project.

“Technology is only useful when it works! Ensuring that a colleague is able to contact students if your own technology fails is a must. Establishing which virtual communications platforms work best for the majority is essential.

### Outcomes

A survey was produced and circulated online and with 'known volunteers' and local volunteer-groups. The range of responses was diverse, leading to an interesting and comprehensive report and presentation of findings being shared with interested parties which will influence the volunteer offer at Bath's new World Heritage Centre.

In two cases, students are continuing to volunteer and remotely contribute to ongoing projects.

### Lessons learned and future changes

Due to changing pandemic circumstances, this placement was reactive rather than proactive, without the usual lead in time plan a project. However, with adjustments this model could be used again in future.

With time to plan and subject to circumstance, I would identify staff meetings and updates that may be suitable for students to attend and 'remotely connect' with colleagues across the department and organisation.

The questions in the project proposal acted as a starting point for the student research. I encouraged them to apply their skills and areas of interest to their project. This meant that the project 'worked for them' as well as for the organisation.

Technology is only useful when it works! Ensuring that a colleague is able to contact students if your own technology fails is a must. Establishing which virtual communications platforms work best for the majority is essential.

2020 has been difficult, and it was recognised that the students may have faced competing time-demands. Weekly 'checking-in-points' to set regular objectives were scheduled, but flexible if needed. Sometimes it was convenient for students to complete their work outside of office-hours. Aside from meetings, I did not require them to be online at set times/days.

Finally, myself and colleagues were impressed by the willingness and adaptability of Angus, Lizzie and Xuefei to enthusiastically and professionally complete a work-placement in these strange times, in an unconventional manner.



**Bath & North East Somerset Council**

### Find out more

For further information, please contact **Laura Nicholls**,  
Community Engagement Officer:  
[laura\\_nicholls@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:laura_nicholls@bathnes.gov.uk)



# Queer Heritage Forum:

## Taking Museum Pride Online During Lockdown

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### Project

How can an online Pride be put together with short notice and no budget? The Queer Heritage Forum discuss how they approached this challenge.

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### Background and approach

The Queer Heritage Forum (QHF) began in April 2020 in response to the UK's lockdown, providing a supportive digital space for LGBTQ+ people working in heritage. In June we launched #QHFPride2020 – a digital programme offering resources, activism, and celebration.

To tackle social isolation, we themed the festival: "Being Together." We encouraged discussion that could happen on or offline and decentralised QHF in these conversations to empower community voices.

Uplifting others' voices was more important to us than broadcasting our own. We approached several specialists for collaboration to ensure a range of representation for #QHFPride2020.

QHF decided a resource-oriented approach was the best way to demonstrate inclusive values and provide tools to mobilise digital activism and encourage independent learning. We hoped this would encourage participation from LGBTQ+ families who rarely see themselves in cultural offers.

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### Intended outcomes and outputs

#QHFPride2020 was a pilot, so all outcomes are benchmarks for future projects.

QHF wanted to:

- Raise awareness of LGBTQ+ figures from past and present
- Develop an online community
- Enable self-expression for queer people during lockdown
- Create opportunities for heritage organisations to celebrate Pride

We organised:

- Carefully researched threads exploring LGBTQ+ history
- Online conversations with heritage organisations sharing LGBTQ+ work
- Videos and podcasts exploring queer history and culture
- Resources including craft activities for all ages

This enabled remote learning embracing different learning styles.

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### Challenges and obstacles

Pride is a time for museums to show support for the LGBTQ+ community, these were cancelled to prioritise public safety during Covid-19.

We faced crises of social isolation and institutional side-lining. Those responsible for Pride programming were furloughed or had competing priorities, so little celebration was possible from an institutional perspective.

QHF had to respond; despite lacking funding and requiring voluntary energy to produce resources, which had to reflect our inclusive values, demonstrate our support for Black Lives Matter and tackle issues of unequal representation in the LGBTQ+ community and its history.

We set a challenging brief: how to create meaningful learning moments around these issues in an engaging, inclusive, and accessible way?

#QHFPride was a last-minute project with limited lead-in time before Pride season. All of the work and research was done by QHF members for free in their own time, which sparked an ethical quandary around fair payment. We are exploring funding to develop future projects. A lack of clear external messaging was another issue. Some were unsure whether contributing would violate furlough protocols.

Although several of us are learning professionals, creating experiences that were hosted completely digitally without the foundation of a museum's collection was new. We had to teach ourselves marketing skills and operate in a saturated digital space; heritage sites were clamouring for online attention and we were concerned we would be lost in the virtual cacophony.

Collaboration was difficult because our non-furloughed collaborators faced additional strains at work: despite personal buy-in, at the institutional level, would celebrating Pride be considered a priority?



“ Our Twitter channel received over 368k impressions, 500 mentions and 400 new followers during the project. Now our future projects will have greater reach and impact online.

### Actual outcomes and outputs

We fulfilled our brief and had unexpected boosts during #QHF Pride including mentions from Olympian, Greg Louganis.

The podcasts led to the development of @queerdisrupt, with QHF members who produced them continuing to develop content. Additionally, we hosted a Twitter takeover with Dr Dominique Bouchard and Benjamin Salmon discussing live performance bringing queer heritage to life.

Our content grew our platform. Our Twitter channel received over 368k impressions, 500 mentions and 400 new followers during the project. Now our future projects will have greater reach and impact online.

### Lessons learned

As our celebratory, activist, locked-down festival ended, we learned:

- Time for planning is essential
- Getting messaging right before starting is key
- Celebrating others' work leads to a richer learning experience
- Enthusiasm in voluntary organisations isn't always followed up by action so workload often fell to a core team
- It is difficult to assess the full engagement figures as participation didn't require sharing
- Resources last longer than anticipated, they are still being used now, beyond #QHF Pride



Building on #QHF Pride, we are working on plans for LGBTQ History Month 2021, Pride 2021 and an LGBTQ+ history project exploring Hallowe'en.

### Find out more

Email: [QueerHeritageForum@gmail.com](mailto:QueerHeritageForum@gmail.com)

Twitter: @QHForum

## To learn even more about remote learning, refer to the following projects:

### **Amy Cotterill, Coram**

The programme *Voices Through Time: The Story of Care* will preserve and digitise at-risk documents from their historic archive, which dates back to the founding of the Hospital in 1739.

### **Chloe Phillips/Vicki Aimers,**

**Kresen Kemow**

Due to lockdown, Kresen Kemow moved their existing ARTchive programme to an online format of downloadable guidelines and social media posts.

### **Clare Lawlor and Olivia Murphy,**

**Imperial War Museums**

Every Friday throughout lockdown and summer holidays, IWM have shared exciting challenges rooted in the curriculum and IWM's collections for the whole family to enjoy.

### **Virginia Arrowsmith, North Yorkshire's County Record Office**

County Record Office have connected with new audiences during the pandemic through their digital engagement programme which explores how consultation has informed the understanding of the barriers to accessing heritage for non-traditional user groups.

### **Stefania Savva, Synthesis Center for Research and Education**

The overall aim of the Museum Affinity Spaces project in Cyprus is to offer culturally and linguistically diverse students with opportunities to gain experience of museums and cultural heritage and enhance their literacy repertoires.

### **Victoria Smith, Museum of London**

The Museum of London adapted the existing Great Fire of London live stream to suit both families at home and children in school.

### **Caitlin Douglas, Preston Park Museum and Grounds**

In response to lockdown, Preston Park Museum and Grounds created a section of their website dedicated to online learning for schools, home learners and families.

### **Ruth Clarke, University of Cambridge Museums**

By embedding co-creation within inclusion practices, pre Covid-19, set the scene for collaborative ventures to explore new, remote, ways for adults to share, explore, imagine and create.

### **Roz Wade, Museum of Zoology, University of Cambridge**

The Zoology Live festival focused on the local wildlife aspects of the programming, to provide engagement opportunities with the world on the doorstep as the Museum was still closed to most staff as well as the public.

### **Louise Bragan and Steph Webb, Wakefield Museums and Castles**

Due to lockdown, the Council's events team looked to deliver the Roman Festival online. They used this as a platform to share Castleford Museum's Roman collection, develop their online audience, and pilot a new way of working.

### **Melanie Hollis and Lisa Stephenson, Colchester and Ipswich Museums**

Colchester and Ipswich Museums collaborated with a group of creative practitioners from Story Makers Company to explore the benefits of an immersive, online, real time story experience.

### **Gillian Johnston and Sara Bird,**

**Newcastle University Library**

In the last 3 weeks of the school summer term of 2020, Newcastle University Library Education Outreach Team worked with a local middle school to try out a remote, archives-inspired STEM challenge.

### **Doug MacBeath, Susanna Hastilow, Sarah Takhar, Museum on the Mound**

The Money Marvels video project aimed to support classroom learning about money when visits to Museum on the Mound were not possible.

### **Zahra Dhalla, Aaron Paterson and Sian Shaw, Westminster Abbey**

This project helped create a unified and integrated digital learning programme for families across multiple platforms, optimising resources: adapting advertised programmes from onsite to digital and building a digital legacy.

### **Anna Husband, Freelancer**

*The Age of Revolution* project provides unique, curriculum-linked resources for teaching and learning about the extraordinary people, events and ideas of this period (1775–1848).

### **Victoria Robb, National Mining Museum**

The learning offer during the Covid-19 lockdown took a community-led approach with support being at the heart. Two highlights from this were the new resource called "Learning at Home with NMM" and the community art project.

### **Lydia Baldwin, Royal College of Music**

RCM Sparks Explorers course was a creative 5-day Zoom course for young people aged 8-11, led by music leader Anna Jewitt and storyteller Anna Conomos.

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