

Reacting to a new curriculum  
**Chris Jarvis**

Babies at the Fitzwilliam  
Museum  
**Nicola Wallis**

Fantastical Furniture  
**Natalie Wallace**

It's child's play  
**Madeline Farmer and  
Helen Cook**

We Will Remember Them  
**Laura Davison**

De Montfort project marks UK  
Parliament's 750th birthday  
**Kirsty Fife**

Acting out the archives  
**Steve Illingworth and  
Lynette Cawthr**

Lest we forget Belton's  
Bravest: 1915–2015  
**Melissa Maynard**

Breaking down barriers  
with a telepresence robot  
**Jennifer Ross**

Excellence and the visitor  
programme  
**Anna McCarthy and  
Colly Mudie**

Fashion Archives on Film  
**Zoe Dennington**



GEM champions  
excellence in  
heritage learning

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# Case Studies

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# What is GEM?

**GEM champions excellence in heritage learning to improve the education, health and wellbeing of the general public.**

GEM believes that involvement with our rich and diverse heritage is an enriching and transformational experience that provides distinctive opportunities for learning. We aim to make that learning accessible, relevant and enjoyable for all. GEM works with its members and collaboratively with other learning organisations across the UK and internationally to:

- champion excellence in heritage learning and participation enabling people to be inspired by, value and enjoy their and other's heritage;
- advocate the power of heritage learning in transforming people's lives to sector organisations, national agencies, funders and government;
- influence sector organisations to deliver excellent learning and participation for their visitors;
- promote and explain the benefits of learning through heritage which is inclusive, sustainable and respectful of communities;
- develop creative partnerships with other organisations to share effective practice in heritage learning and participation;
- research and pioneer innovation in heritage learning and participation;
- inspire and support the work of heritage learning practitioners;
- provide opportunities for practitioners to develop their practice through networking, mentoring and learning together.

# Editorial

Welcome to volume 17 of *Case Studies* with 11 articles covering topics as varied as furniture, fashion, robots and a 750th birthday. There's so much to learn about museum education professional practice from the successful and not-so-successful experiences of our colleagues. I urge you to **READ IT NOW!** If you put it aside to read later, then in my experience that time often never comes.

The eagle-eyed amongst you may be wondering what happened to volume 16 and, if you are receiving this edition by post, why you have the luxury of two editions of *Case Studies* arriving at the same time. We are very grateful to Arts Council England's Museums and Schools programme for sponsoring a special edition of *Case Studies* (volume 16) to share the wide range of approaches and insights arising from the programme. It's great that the Department for Education is continuing to fund the programme for a further year.

Project funding enables us to try out new ideas and get things going, but it is not a replacement for core funding. I am not alone in believing that we need to find a long-term sustainable solution for funding what we do.

Running great projects that benefit a variety of audiences and raise their expectations is not very efficient if we then struggle to keep things going when the project funding comes to an end. If we truly believe in the substantial and lasting benefits of what we do – improving the education, health and well-being of the general

public – then we need to Adapt and Thrive. This is, coincidentally, the theme of this year's GEM conference in Edinburgh.

The workforce has changed too. We have more part-time staff, self-employed freelancers, volunteers and more staff with multiple skills. GEM is responding to the need for more multi-skilled staff by developing and enhancing its training provision.

It is vital that we share our experiences and learn from them in order to improve our professional practice, and in the process avoid re-inventing too many wheels. GEM's reputation of sharing best professional practice and providing high-quality value for money training within the museum sector for 68 years without core funding is unsurpassed.

GEM has changed, is changing and will continue to change with the help and support of its members for at least another 68 years!

Enjoy reading this edition of *Case Studies* and let it inspire you to write an article for the next edition. The deadline for submissions is 16 September 2016.

**John Stevenson**

Group for Education in Museums  
54 Balmoral Road, Gillingham  
Kent ME7 4PG  
Tel/Fax: 01634 853424  
office@gem.org.uk  
www.gem.org.uk

Reacting to a new curriculum  
**Chris Jarvis**  
Oxford University Museum  
of Natural History



# Reacting to a new curriculum

## Summary

Evolution entered the primary national curriculum for pupils aged 10 to 11 in 2014 and Oxford University's Museum of Natural History responded by developing a range of resources to support both teachers and students.

## Background

Oxford's Natural History Museum has been a hotbed of evolutionary research and education since the first debate of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* took place here in 1860. Teachers were worried about the resources and expertise required to deliver evolution satisfactorily.

## Challenge

To develop new resources for visiting schools and support teachers in delivering the new evolution curriculum.

## Approach

The education team decided to respond with a three stranded approach to:

- design a new, taught session to complement the established programme of taught sessions using our handling collection;
- develop a new trail complementing the taught session;
- consult with teachers and teacher trainers, to develop a training day to improve the confidence and ability of those teaching evolution in the museum and classroom.

## Intended outcomes

- Skills and knowledge sharing with teachers of students aged 10 to 11.
- Strengthened relationships with teachers and teacher training bodies.
- Production of high quality resources to encourage teachers to use the museum as an accessible resource when teaching evolution.

## Intended outputs

- New resources that matched the demands of the new national curriculum.
- A teacher continuing professional development (CPD) day to support teaching and learning in the classroom.

## Obstacles and issues

Identifying teachers' needs was an issue as the final curriculum was not released until October 2013 for implementation in 2014. Our resources,

whilst in development, had to be flexible to respond to the final draft. Discussions with Oxford Brookes School of Education and their teacher trainers were invaluable as they looked to integrate the subject into their curriculum. These discussions led to the CPD day being delivered in tandem with them, strengthening of relationships and furthering opportunities for skills and knowledge sharing.

Evolution was previously taught in the secondary curriculum and the museum had sessions and resources dedicated to it. A new primary session had to ensure that there was no repetition in specimen use or subject style and matter.

A paper-trail required a wordy explanation before a task or observation, which made it impractical for children. Instead we produced a

trail using iPads as "treasure hunt" to find specimens with concepts explained in short films triggered by i-beacons. This allowed us to include more information than a paper trail and to develop secondary and primary trails. i-beacons are a new and they had to be tested several times, and cleaners reminded not to remove them, before they worked satisfactorily.

## Actual outcomes

Both the new session and teacher CPD have been very popular, increasing our visits from children aged 10 to 11. Our ties with Oxford Brookes education department have strengthened and we have contributed several times to their teacher training and CPD days.

"An excellent course with great ideas and practical ways of teaching evolution. Thank you."

## Actual outputs

- A new taught session on evolution.
- A new type of trail using iPads.
- Teacher CPD sessions.
- Strong links made with teachers and teacher trainers.

## Lessons learned

A holistic approach involving teacher training bodies and practising teachers was very effective in developing resources, sharing skills and expertise, and increasing uptake of a new session.

Embracing new technology can vastly improve both the quantity and quality of children's self-guided time in the museum.

## Next steps

We plan rolling out the iPad trail on smartphones and other devices for all visitors. The primary/secondary differentiation has lent itself to "family" and "adult" versions.

**Chris Jarvis**  
Education officer, Oxford University  
Museum of Natural History

## Further information

chris.jarvis@oum.ox.ac.uk  
01865 282537

# Babies at the Fitzwilliam Museum

## Summary

We have developed teacher-led sessions for babies (0 to 2 years) in our galleries and education studio.

## Background

The Fitzwilliam Museum houses Cambridge University's collection of art and antiquities. The education department is continually looking for new ways in which to encourage connections between the museum objects and the widest possible audience among the local community.

We have a particular commitment to quality engagement with children and young people as part of our work as an Arts Council England major partner museum, and wanted to make sure this included cultural opportunities for the very youngest children. For a number of years we have delivered story and making sessions for pre-schoolers (aged 2 to 5), but the structure of these is not suitable for younger children who require a less abstract way into the collections.

## Challenge

We needed to find meaningful ways for very young children to engage with and understand aspects of our collection, while ensuring that the safety of the objects and the quality

of experience for other visitors was not compromised.

## Approach

Using my experience as a nursery teacher, I tried to match up the interests and capabilities of babies with ideas and objects presented within the museum galleries. It is important for young children to be able to touch, move and manipulate objects in order to understand them. The objects in the museum are not suitable for babies to touch, and so I needed to provide additional resources.

These would not be replicas, but baby-safe items that would allow exploration of aspects of the collection in ways appropriate to babies' stages of growth and development. I also planned a number of interventions such as stories, nursery rhymes and simple shared games to provide a bridge between the babies' familiar world of home activities and the new world of the museum.



## Intended outcomes

To provide an enjoyable way for babies and their carers to experience the museum together.

## Intended outputs

Teacher-led sessions for babies programmed every two months.

## Obstacles and issues

For practical reasons, we needed to limit the sessions to 12 babies. Many more families were interested in coming to the sessions but we just could not accommodate them without compromising on the quality of the experience, which led to some disappointment when all the places had been booked.

Based on the structure of our preschool sessions, we offered a studio-based making activity following time in the galleries. It has been challenging to find activities in which the babies can be active creators while remaining totally safe, given their propensity for eating the art materials! However, we have managed to come up with a number of innovative solutions such as exploring colour through paint contained in Ziploc bags, finding out about containers using a tea set in a pool of tapioca pearls, and investigating the botanical world by crawling through a sensory trail of edible and fragrant plants.

So far, all our sessions have been delivered in English although



participants come from a wide range of language backgrounds. We have tried to provide opportunities and an atmosphere in which home languages are encouraged as we recognise the importance of this in early childhood development.

## Actual outcomes

We have delivered sessions as planned, but also additional ones for community groups, such as the children of a group of young parents who had recently completed Arts Award supported by the museum.

As well as engagement with the collection, adults have enjoyed the opportunity to spend quality time with their babies in a new environment. Carers and also staff have been intrigued to experience the objects in a new light by trying to view them through babies' eyes.

## Actual outputs

We have delivered four different sessions so far (repeated for different

groups): *Owl Babies and Nursery Rhymes* based on ceramics, *Weather and Places* focusing on impressionist paintings, *Containers and Boxes* using the *Treasured Possessions* temporary exhibition and *The Hungry Caterpillar* centred on Dutch flower painting.

## Lessons learned

It's important to communicate widely that these events are not about using the galleries purely as a venue, but are genuinely enabling babies to enjoy the museum and its collections. Advocating for babies as current and future audience members helps colleagues and other visitors to understand and value this work, which can look surprising at first glance!

It's also vital to listen to carers regarding practicalities such as session timings and space to store pushchairs.

## Next steps

We plan to continue these sessions, working with collections colleagues and early years practitioners to ensure

that information and experiences offered to our youngest visitors are of the highest quality. To address the issue of limited places I am building on our experiences to work with others in the University of Cambridge Museums partnership and other local museums and heritage settings to establish provision for 0 to 2 year olds.

Nicola Wallis  
Fitzwilliam Museum

## Further information

Nicola Wallis,  
nlw30@cam.ac.uk

# Fantastical Furniture

## Playful interpretation of an historic house

### Summary

*Fantastical Furniture* is a series of installations providing interpretation for families as part of Stowe House's *Enlightenment for All* project. It is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the World Monuments Fund (Britain) and seeks to open the house to a wider audience.



### Background

Stowe is a beautiful and important example of an eighteenth century estate. Today, the house is managed by Stowe House Preservation Trust and the gardens by the National Trust. Stowe School is also onsite. The project is an exciting new phase for the house, offering new activities, exhibitions and visitor facilities.

### Challenge

The family audience has been very small at Stowe House; consultation showed they thought it wasn't appropriate and had little to offer. *Fantastical Furniture* is one of the new ways to engage young children with the house.

### Approach

The project aimed to work with families to develop and trial ideas, bringing these together with artists who would fabricate the installations. We wanted to reflect Stowe's creative history and produce something beautiful that may have once inhabited the house. Equally, we wanted to give families a playful, open experience that would achieve a light-touch interpretation of the house.

### Intended outcomes

- Involve community in the interpretation of the house.
- Engage local families.
- Combine creativity and heritage to achieve inspiring output.

### Intended outputs

- Four installations, each one specific to one of the house's historic rooms.
- High quality, original pieces that offer interactive, creative play.
- Procure resources for some of the installations that promote imaginative, open play.

### Obstacles and issues

- The first community group that we worked with was a children's centre but this ended when they re-organised.
- We moved to working with a local school's family art club and their "more able in art" 5 to 11 years-old cohort. This meant that we didn't have a consistent audience.
- At the same time, we began to struggle with the budget being adequate to deliver the number of installations we wanted, of the quality we wanted and with interactives.
- Problems at the same time meant that we separated the consultation with families from the design by artists.
- A later date for commissioning an artist meant that there was a shorter lead time.

### Actual outcomes

- We worked with a wider range of families than we originally intended to, even though they didn't follow the project through.
- The trialling and consultation was successful in identifying themes and creating activities that families enjoy.
- Our final installations are original and bespoke, they work very well in context and have received great use and visitor feedback.
- Families spend lots of time playing with them and using them to connect to the room.
- All visitors enjoy these kinds of installations. Our column and floor mirror is used by visitors of all ages as well as visiting rugby coaches and an arts reception! Resources such as a range of shiny materials, neon fur and feathers are also loved by teenagers, usually girls.

### Actual outputs

Three *Fantastical Furniture* installations:

- Wardrobe with focus on creating images – contains dressing up, materials, felt face portraits and treasure basket.
- Lion's casket with focus on treasure – contains coin drop, marble maze, portrait gallery, metallic materials and treasure basket.
- Viewing column and floor mirror – series of telescopes with different effects and walk-on acrylic mirror.

### Lessons learned

- This was always an ambitious activity that wanted to explore something different. We started with lots of ideas such as including interactives, open play resources and creating an original piece. Once we decided to try and include all elements, we realised that the budget was tight.
- We benefited from discussing our budget and ideas with both independent artists and commercial companies. In the end, we commissioned a local, independent team as we felt they would deliver a bespoke piece.



- We couldn't keep bringing families in to do the same activity so they missed direct contact with the artists. Ideally, we needed to appoint the artists earlier in the project.
- Families love this kind of experience in an historic house! One told us that their son wanted to go round twice, but normally hates these trips!

### Next steps

- We have ideas for at least another three installations that we will be seeking funding for. We will keep our principles of a creative piece that offers imaginative and playful interpretation.
- We will be creating some light touch, written interpretation for those families who would like to know more.
- We are training our volunteers in facilitating families with the installations.



**Natalie Wallace**  
Community & learning manager,  
Stowe House

### Further information

nwallace@stowe.co.uk  
01280 818171

# It's child's play

## Summary

The River & Rowing Museum supported 14 year olds studying health and social care to understand child development and create activities for early years children as part of their coursework.

## Background

The River & Rowing Museum has close links with the Langley Academy, the only UK school with a museum learning specialism. The museum uses its collection to inform creative activities that aid learning and wanted to help the students use this approach. The Langley Academy has its own museum displays and the project provided the ideal opportunity for students to use familiar objects to inspire their activities.

## Challenge

- Students struggle to make the link between theory and practice in health and social care.
- The BTEC course runs over two years but the course content does not provide enough stimulus. Students start excited but can become disengaged.
- Students who want to take health and social care further lack the real life experiences needed when applying for jobs or further training.

## Approach

The River & Rowing Museum and the Langley Academy worked together to design a scheme of work for the students. This included:

- An initial session for the museum tutor to meet the students and class teacher. Older students attended as mentors to the group.
- Museum tutor-led sessions in school linking the health and social care theory with practical input on basic areas of child development (physical, intellectual, language, emotional and social).
- Students assisting with the regular under-fives' group at the museum to gain experience of working with this age group.
- Students using their knowledge of child development to create their activities and link theory with practice.
- Students developing their own creative activities and piloting them with an early years group from a local primary school.
- Langley Academy and museum staff highlighting aspects of the project that could be used as evidence for the vocational qualification.

## Intended outcomes

- To make the vocational health and social care course more exciting, engaging and relevant for students.
- To re-inforce the link between the theory and practice of health and social care.
- To equip students with knowledge and confidence to present safe and exciting activities for early years groups linked to museum objects.
- To provide students with meaningful and practical experiences beyond the classroom that will help them when applying for work or further study.

## Intended outputs

- The River & Rowing Museum and the Langley Academy to build a bank of creative activities that could be used again in the school.
- An early years session for local reception pupils led by students from the Langley Academy.
- Physical resources created by the Langley Academy students for the workshop (story boxes).

## Obstacles and issues

- Facilitating the sessions in a busy secondary school environment was challenging as the working area was not always designed for messy activities and rooms had to be left clean and tidy for the next lesson.
- All sessions had to be within the health and social care curriculum time which meant the project was

spread over a longer time span and could feel quite protracted.

- The project had to adhere to the course curriculum and guidelines.
- There were logistical issues in managing the pilot visit with the early years group, specifically moving young children in a busy environment in a measured and safe way.
- Liaising with the school, the group teacher, the primary school and the museum learning team in the school took time and had to be carefully planned.

## Actual outcomes

- The students showed increased confidence in working with young children, particularly in finding the best way to communicate with under-fives. They gained valuable experience in working independently.
- The students demonstrated continued enthusiasm for the health and social care BTEC and they were proud to share their work with family and friends.
- Teachers not involved in the project were supportive and fascinated by the students' work. The enthusiasm was such that the partnership continued with students planning and creating story boxes.
- The museum staff gained greater understanding of working with teenage groups and the requirements of vocational qualifications.

- The Langley Academy now has a strengthened link to their partner primary school.

## Actual outputs

- The project activities and resources are now embedded in the school's health and social care curriculum.
- The students have left their legacy of activities and story boxes for future use and inspiration.
- Other subject teachers have put forward proposals for museum learning projects with the museum.

## Lessons learned

- Students needed time and space to prepare themselves to present their activities, particularly at that age (14 years). They were very nervous about putting forward their ideas to the adults involved in the project and would have benefited from time discussing this.
- The time invested in maintaining links and communication with all establishments involved is essential.
- It is better to build singing and storytelling skills slowly to develop students' confidence.
- Such projects benefit from blocks of time (rather than single lessons) to develop creativity and consolidate learning.

## Next steps

- The museum tutor on this project will now identify other schools that may welcome the project approach in their health and social care curriculum.
- The project continues at the Langley Academy with closer links to vocational course outcomes and with a new group of students. The project participants will act as occasional mentors.

**Madeline Farmer**  
Museum tutor

**Helen Cook**  
Head of learning, River & Rowing Museum

## Further information

madeline.farmer@rrm.co.uk  
helen.cook@rrm.co.uk

Megan Barker,  
megan.barkwer@langleyacademy.org  
Jenny Blay,  
jenny.blay@langleyacademy.org  
www.langleyacademy.org

# We Will Remember Them

## North Primary School Roll of Honour

### Summary

*We Will Remember Them* took place at North Primary School in Colchester, Essex. On the centenary of the first world war, the project sought to commemorate the school's heritage, by researching and retelling the lives of former pupils who had served and died in the first world war.

### Background

A roll of honour had been installed in the school hall in 1915 commemorating the lives of 50 pupils who were conscripted or had volunteered for action in the first world war. The whereabouts of the roll of honour was unknown, as were the names, identities and stories of the individual pupils.

### Challenge

The challenge of the project was how to research and develop a project about the first world war that was meaningful to the pupils, as well as leaving a lasting legacy for the school.

### Approach

The project was developed in partnership with the school and project manager, with £10,000 awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund's *First World War then & now grant*.

The funding enabled a specialist team to be recruited, including a historian, creative writer, photographer and volunteers, working with pupils aged 9 to 10 to research, record and retell the lives of the former pupils. The project evolved over one academic year which allowed time to develop in-depth and quality research that promoted awareness and understanding of the former pupils' lives in the context of the first world war.

### Intended outcomes

- Heritage of the school identified and recorded, promoting new perspectives and understanding through stories previously untold.
- Pupils and staff have a greater understanding of their school's heritage.
- The heritage made available to a wider audience.

In addition to these outcomes, the specific learning outcomes of the programme were to enable visitors to enjoy learning about the longitude story, understand how the modern world has been shaped by the 1714 Longitude Act, understand that solving longitude was an important issue in Georgian Britain and increase understanding about the importance of Greenwich to the longitude story.

### Intended outputs

- Roll of honour on permanent display in the school hall.
- A publication.
- Teachers' resource notes.
- An exhibition.
- Research shared on the Imperial War Museum's *Lives of the First World War* website.

### Obstacles and issues

The project took far more time than was estimated. The teachers' approach was to make the project their dedicated topic.



The recruitment of the project team took considerable time, but the right selection was critical to the success of the project.

New pupils joined the school during the year. In some cases English was a second language. The teachers made time to ensure they were included in the project.

### Actual outcomes

Unexpected outcomes were the pupils' intense pride and ownership of their individual case studies and the cultural heritage of their school. Maria Gray, Year 5 (ages 9 to 10) teacher describes the achievements:

*"There have been so many incredible moments on this project. From the very beginning, seeing the children's excitement to take part in the project, them being paired to their own individual soldier. They became so close to these soldiers it was like they really knew them, they became so excited about the historical research, many continuing that research at home".*

The project highlighted the value of learning outside the classroom and the value of working with an external team to deliver a creative approach to teaching history, empowering the children's individual responses to analysing archive material and use within their own creative thinking.



The community involvement and response to the project has been way beyond expectations.

### Actual outputs

Seventy-five former pupils were identified and their stories retold through historical analysis, creative writing and poetry.

A new roll of honour was commissioned, the brief written by the pupils, and is now on permanent display in the school hall.

The exhibition was originally planned as two information panels for the school. As the project progressed and grew, we realised it had far greater potential. The project was showcased at Firstsite gallery during July and August 2015 with over 4,000 visitors.

Headteacher Alan Garnett describes the success of the project:

*"We Will Remember Them has been one of the best projects I've been involved in. The exhibition successfully acknowledged the children's knowledge of their subject and captures the children's engagement of the whole project. Most importantly, the children have learnt work as real historians and have brought to life the life stories of the names on the roll of honour. To see the roll of honour re-instated in the school is one of the proudest moments of my life".*

A photographic archive, teachers' notes and resources have been developed for the school to support use of and understanding of the school's heritage for pupils and staff in the future.

A former pupil of the school created a prototype poppy plaque for displaying on the houses of the former pupils.

### Lessons learned

Ensure enough time is allowed for the development of the project, for example in-depth research, team building, commissioning artwork, and curating an exhibition.

Ensure there is a clear vision for the project within the funding application.

Ensure the project reaches a wide audience, enabling the public to share their stories.

Ensure that everyone involved has ownership of the project, enabling them to input and develop ideas.

### Next steps

The success of the project has led to further funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the project *Discovering Their Footsteps*. The pupils will go on a field trip to the Somme, to research and make a film about former pupils who served on the Western Front.

We aim to develop a memorial plaque for each of the former pupils' homes. A mobile app will be developed with an interactive map for people to discover the former pupils' homes and information retelling their stories.

**Laura Davison**  
Project manager, *We Will Remember Them*

### Further information

lauradavison68@hotmail.com  
livesofthefirstworldwar.org/  
community/2142



# De Montfort project marks UK Parliament's 750th birthday

## Summary

The De Montfort Project was an outreach project run by the Parliamentary Archives as a strand within the UK Parliament's 2015: *Parliament in the Making* programme. Inspired by the 750th anniversary of the meeting of the De Montfort Parliament in 1265 the project consisted of a series of collaborative projects with regional archive services, which focused on the impact on communities in the past of members of both Houses of Parliament.

## Background

The Parliamentary Archives provides access to the archives of the House of Lords, the House of Commons and to other records relating to Parliament. We also provide a records management service for both Houses of Parliament. We are committed to developing a range of different audiences for our collections through programmes of regional working as well as through onsite and online delivery of services.

## Challenge

This work challenged the perception that Parliament's collections do not hold materials of value to regional communities. It also addressed the

challenge of engaging with communities outside of London.

## Approach

Since 2009 the Parliamentary Archives has adopted a different approach to the way it engages with the public. In recognition of the fact that many of our collections reflect the history of local communities, we have built relationships with regional archives and museums, and delivered activities at those venues.



## Intended outcomes

The project aimed to widen awareness of the Parliamentary Archives' collections and of the history and work of Parliament, engage with new audiences, and build contextual knowledge of our own collections through collaborations with other organisations holding collections relating to the work of members of both Houses of Parliament.

## Intended outputs

The intended outputs for this project work were educational workshops, community engagement events, an exhibition and touring display, lectures and accompanying digital case studies. The project partners were Tyne and Wear Archives and the Discovery Museum, Norfolk Record Office, the Keep (East Sussex Record Office), Glamorgan Archives and Kent Library and History Centre..

## Obstacles and issues

- Reductions in local government budgets impacted upon our ability to work with a potential partner.
- It was sometimes difficult to maintain an overall political balance when selecting certain subject areas or political figures.
- It was harder than anticipated to achieve a range of subjects which were spread across both Houses and all genders.



## Actual outcomes

The touring *Magna Carta and Parliament* display at our partner venues had 17,000 visitors, and 420 participants took part in workshops, lectures and events. Of the workshop participants:

- 74% said they were more interested in the Parliamentary Archives.
- 84% said they would be interested to visit or consult the Parliamentary Archives again.
- 93% said that their understanding of the history and work of Parliament had improved.

## Actual outputs

The partnership work delivered 18 separate workshops and events, five lectures, and one co-curated exhibition featuring original objects.

Subject matters included the representation of Norfolk in Parliament, the legacy of radical politics in the North East, S O Davies MP and workplace compensation legislation, Charles Stanhope (third Earl Stanhope) and the rights of the individual, and Sir Tufton Beamish MP and environmental campaigning.

Legacy case studies are available on Parliament's Living Heritage website – these share the research findings from this project work.

Alongside this, the touring display, *Magna Carta and Parliament*, accompanied the activities. A digital display of the exhibition was also available at the Hive in Worcester.

## Lessons learned

- Planning, particularly around risk management, needs to take into account funding cuts to regional archive and heritage services.
- When working with schools, workshop offers need to clearly communicate relevance to the national curriculum, otherwise there may be less take up than desired.
- A clearly defined communications plan can help enhance the impact of project work.

## Next steps

The Parliamentary Archives plans to continue to build on the legacy of this and previous outreach projects over the next few years. Future planning will focus on the anniversaries of the first world war and the Representation of

the People Act (1918). A series of mobile workshops about the Parliamentary Archives' collection of protestation returns is planned for late 2016.

**Kirsty Fife**  
Parliamentary Archives,  
North Primary School

## Further information

Full case studies from this project work are available at: [www.parliament.uk/demontfortproject](http://www.parliament.uk/demontfortproject). You can also follow the Parliamentary Archives on twitter @ukparlarchives. If you would like to discuss potential partnership working with the Parliamentary Archives, contact [fifek@parliament.uk](mailto:fifek@parliament.uk).

# Acting out the archives

## Summary

The project was to create an exhibition and a drama performance on the subject of conscientious objectors in the first world war, based on the rich material in the archives of the Working Class Movement Library in Salford. The play was performed both for the local community and for secondary schools, with a learning pack produced to support the teachers and pupils who saw the performances.

## Background

The Working Class Movement Library is based in Salford, Greater Manchester. Its aim is "to collect and preserve material produced by or about the working class of Britain and Ireland and to promote the role and contribution of the working class as widely as possible to the public". The collection contains books, archives and artefacts associated with working class history from the early nineteenth century to the present day. The main purpose of this Heritage Lottery Funded project was to provide wider access to this collection through a drama production, that could present original source material in an engaging way.

## Challenge

Although the centenary commemorations of the first world war have been extensive and well-publicised on a national level, there has been relatively little focus on the story of the conscientious objectors. A recent survey of secondary school history teachers found that fewer than 5% cover the topic when teaching about first world war. This project aimed to address this, both with the community and with schools.

## Approach

One of the most interesting stories contained in the library's archives was that of James Hudson, a Salford geography teacher. The idea was to commission a writer/director and an actor to produce a drama about James Hudson's role as a conscientious objector, using a large proportion of the authentic dialogue found in the original transcript of Hudson's hearings in front of education committees and military service tribunals.



## Intended outcomes

- People – particularly school students – will have learnt about working class heritage, and will be able to articulate a greater understanding of a previously "invisible" aspect of the first world war.
- People will better understand the motivations behind the refusal of some to fight in the first world war.
- More people and a wider range of people will have had access to the material in the library's archives.

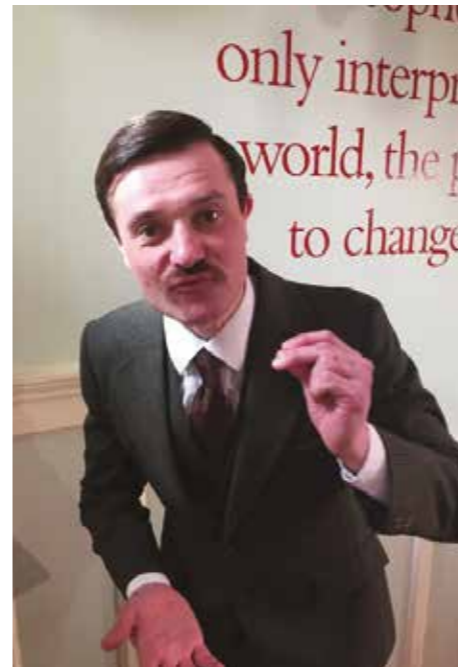
## Intended outputs

- An exhibition about conscientious objectors to be displayed in the library from November 2015 to May 2016.
- About ten free performances of the play for the community and for schools.
- A learning pack freely available for schools.
- A digital copy of the play script on the library's website.

## Obstacles and issues

Schools were reluctant to disrupt their normal timetable so that pupils could view the play. To overcome this obstacle, the play was delivered within a normal classroom, usually to 30 pupils at a time, within a 50 or 60 minute lesson.

There were concerns about how well the audience – adults as well as school pupils – could sustain their concentration for the whole length of a play delivered by just one actor with hardly any props. The original script was reduced from 50 minutes to 30, with the general



feeling expressed by audiences that this was just the right amount of time.

## Actual outcomes

Three of the four schools involved evaluated their pupils' learning experiences from the performances in detail. Two described it as "fantastic" and one was "very impressed". The learning pack was said to be "very useful".

The specific learning gains were explained by the teachers. One said that her pupils "gained a much more detailed understanding of the impact of war on conscientious objectors ... and continued to ask questions about the topic in the following lesson". Another said that "it made an abstract topic we did in class more tangible for (the pupils)".

As well as the project helping people to understand better the motivation of those who refused to fight, the opposing point of view was also treated sympathetically in both the play and learning pack. This balance is important especially for schools'.

The project provided the library's volunteers with a central role. They wrote panels for the exhibition, helped



with the historical details of the play's script and were involved in the auditioning of the actor. It was the enthusiasm of the library volunteers that initiated the project, as they became fascinated by the stories they unearthed as they researched library material about conscientious objectors.

## Actual outputs

An exhibition was produced in the library, receiving hundreds of visitors.

Over the space of two weeks, in February and March 2016, the play was seen by about 140 people at three public performances in the Salford area and by about 210 school pupils (ages 12–15) in four different schools.

A learning pack was produced, with paper copies distributed to all the schools involved and a digital copy on the library's website.

On 2 March 2016, a hundred years to the day since conscription was enforced in Britain, the exhibition and the play were featured in a substantial item on the BBC North West Tonight programme.

## Lessons learned

Some teachers felt that some of the play's vocabulary may have been

difficult for lower ability pupils. With similar projects in future, the idea of two slightly different scripts could be considered, with modifications to the vocabulary for the school version. Alternatively, the learning pack could address more directly some of the more challenging words in the script so that pupils are better prepared.

Both school and community audiences suggested that more consideration of Hudson's life after the first world war would have enhanced the play and the learning to be gained from it.

Overall, the idea of using a performance to bring to life the library's archives was a great success. As one teacher put it, "I really was very impressed with the quality of performance and the depth of knowledge and understanding which was delivered in the 30 minute session".

## Next steps

At least two people who came to the public performances requested that the play be performed for their particular organisation, so there will be further performances.

An evaluation of the impact of the play and learning pack will take place with the schools, to look at the longer term gains made in pupils' understanding of this topic and of the first world war in general.

There are plans to deliver a workshop about the project at a Historical Association conference in November 2016.

**Steve Illingworth**  
Senior lecturer in history education,  
Edge Hill University

**Lynette Cawthra**  
Manager, Working Class Movement  
Library

## Further information

[www.wcml.org.uk](http://www.wcml.org.uk)





# Lest we forget Belton's Bravest: 1915–2015

## Summary

From February to December 2015, young people aged between 14 and 19 years old led a project funded by a £24,900 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). *Lest we forget Belton's bravest* was about all the soldiers who trained in the park, recuperated in the hospital and the civilians who worked and volunteered at the camp.

This was a year-long engagement project for young people within the local community in partnership with the Explorer Scouts attached to the 7th Grantham Scouts (St John's).

## Background

Belton House is a 17th century mansion set in a landscape of formal gardens and deer parkland, and is owned by the National Trust. Throughout the twentieth century the Brownlow family and the property has had strong links with the then War Office. The parkland was used during the first world war as a training camp and during the second world war by the Royal Air Force (RAF). Although these two periods are the most recent of our history, we know relatively little about them.

In February 2015 seventeen young people aged between 14 and 25 years old were recruited to investigate the training camp of the Machine Gun Corps which was located in Belton's parkland from when the corps was raised in October 1915 until it was disbanded in 1922. The young people's role was to lead the design of the project, the archaeological dig and subsequent exhibition and remembrance walks.

## Challenge

We knew that soldiers as young as 12.5 years old trained at Belton Park during the first world war. We wanted to make the project relevant to young people today and also find a way to tell that story through their eyes. We also wanted to find out more about the archaeological site of the training camp.

## Approach

With consultation with local young people, the original project idea and HLF application took almost two years to complete. This was to ensure that we had the capacity on-site, funding available and also buy-in from stakeholders such as Natural England as the parkland is Grade 1 listed.

The structure of the project was modelled on "service-learning", where there were two key objectives: a progressive learning outcome for the young people combined with

volunteering to help preserve part of their local heritage.

Each part of the project was split into smaller parts with a mixture of classroom and fieldwork. The slow build up to each activity ensured the young people felt involved in everything without being overwhelmed. This was cited as one of the best aspects of the project by the young people.



## Intended outcomes

- To uncover some of the archaeological secrets of the site, revealing the stories of the young people who trained at the camp through the eyes of their contemporaries today.
- To provide an opportunity for young people to develop skills in archaeology and interpreting the past, and delivering a range of community engagement activities.
- To create meaningful and emotional connections with the first world war narrative of the site and today's Belton House.
- To record the archaeology of the Machine Gun Corps camp to increase our knowledge and understanding of the camp, thus informing future conservation management of the site.

## Intended outputs

- An archaeological understanding of the site and a new handling collection of artefacts from the excavation.
- A meaningful interpretation of the story and site from the viewpoint of contemporary young people as remembrance over November 2015.

## Obstacles and issues

- With hindsight, the diary should have been set at the beginning of the project as the young people found this aspect extremely difficult to co-ordinate. Additional dates were added towards the end of the project to aid with the interpretation element of the project.
- Last minute appointments of external providers towards the end of the project to help the young people with their chosen interpretation ideas (i.e. the sculptor) highlighted the benefit of them being involved in the project from the beginning to champion the ethos of the project more.
- More local community participation during the excavation was not possible due to our changing understanding of the site as work was carried out. Local communities were invited to visit the site and be involved in the project in other ways.



- The partnership with Grantham Explorer Scouts did not work as well as we had hoped due to the scout leader over-committing herself. With a positive relationship in place we hope to work together on a less intensive and time heavy project.

## Actual outcomes

The project met all of our outcomes and more. Our local paper, the Grantham Journal, supported us throughout the year and ensured that both the local first world war heritage and the work of the young people were highlighted within the community. We hadn't realised how much of the story had been lost from the local community due to the changing population.

## Actual outputs

As well as the archaeological survey and meeting our conservation aims, the young people who completed the project all gained their Bronze Arts Award.

The way in which the story was told came from the young people. During September and October the young people worked with a range of artists, creating a *Remembrance Walk* inspired by poetry and knowledge, a film about their own experiences and two pieces of artwork as remembrance, including a machine gun made from the 739 nails and bolts that they uncovered during the excavation.

## Lessons learned

- Hold regular fortnightly meetings and set the full timetable at the start.
- For an archaeological or similar project, we might condense the experience into a summer camp to bypass issues of study conflicts that did occur at times during the year.
- For a future HLF Young Roots project, if there were concerns about the commitment and availability of an outside partner we would argue that the learning and community departments within National Trust properties have the relevant experience, expertise and qualifications amongst their staff and volunteers.

## Next steps

Eight young people involved in this project have asked to continue volunteering with the learning department to look at different ways in which they can be engaged.

Melissa Maynard  
Learning manager, Belton House

## Further information

<https://youtu.be/ocCO9Hbils4>  
(end of project film)

<https://youtu.be/dh4nzWC3jZ4>  
(*Remembrance Walk*)

melissa.maynard@nationaltrust.org.uk  
01476 542 974

# Breaking down barriers with a telepresence robot

## Summary

Imperial War Museums (IWM) was approached by Denis Roche, who has been exploring wellbeing and cultural institutions by connecting patients in hospital to various museums via a telepresence robot.

The telepresence robot is a remote controlled, wheeled device with an iPad attached to enable video chat. The patient controls the robot from their hospital room and can move freely around the museum. Grant Rogers, informal learning manager welcomed the participants and engaged them in exploring the museum's collections.

## Background

IWM is one of the world's leading authorities on conflict and its impact on people's lives. Our collections are filled with personal stories and experiences, inspiring powerful and often conflicting emotions. We aim to share these stories with as many audiences as possible across the world in a way that engages and challenges them; increasing understanding of why we go to war and the effect that conflict has on people's lives.

## Challenge

IWM wanted to:

- Explore how telepresence robotic technology could enable us to reach audiences who were physically unable to reach our branches.
- Provide an experience that goes beyond the novelty of technology. How this technology could be used as a platform to the museums stories so that the patients could understand their impact and relevance.

## Approach

We started by exploring how the successful gallery object based engagement framework could be adapted to the video conferencing format. We developed this framework over a series of three trials, whereby we connected to hospitals, other museums and IWM staff across the UK. Each trial;

- built upon current good practice,
- explored how to resolve previous issues,
- tried a new approach to develop engagement.



## Intended outcomes

- Engage audiences who cannot visit IWM branches.
- Provide a meaningful experience for each participant.

## Intended outputs

- A set of guidelines to support learning and engagement via video conferencing event.

## Obstacles and issues

Telepresence robot issues:

- As the driver you have no spatial awareness of how close to objects the robot is and you cannot see any low stanchions.
- Large objects (e.g. V2) cannot be taken into view.
- Museum lighting caused glare on some objects.
- Wi-Fi black spots within the museum caused the robot to lose connection.
- At times it was difficult to hear the other person due to poor internet connection and the noise within the museum.

Physical visitors:

- The robot gathered huge interest from visitors within the museum. At times the robot was surrounded.

## Actual outcomes

- Engaging activity that encouraged participants to question the collection, "Being in the galleries also created a more engaging environment (compared to other live streamed events) and felt more exclusive as an experience, the

opening shot being something dynamic instantly caught the attention." Josh Blair, Museum of London.

- Link-up with the patients involved much discussion, asking follow-up questions of their guide.
- Only one group fed back that they experienced some issues connecting and using the robot. All other nine link-ups reported no issues. "It feels very intuitive to use" visitor service assistant, IWM London.

## Actual outputs

- A set of guidelines for using live streamed activities that support audience's engagement.

## Lessons learned

Guided experience was favoured by participants:

- "Having an expert-led talk and being directed to points of interest lead to a better experience ... without prior knowledge about galleries it would be less engaging (for self-led exploration)" Josh Blair, Museum of London.
- One patient when offered free navigation, remarked, "I'm not sure where to go". Having a guide helped her engage with the collection.
- "Having Grant to drive towards made the navigation easier. I stopped worrying about crashing" IWM staff member.

Patient wellbeing:

- One patient was very enthusiastic for the experience, as a welcome distraction from the hospital procedures.
- "The consultant haematologist thought it was fantastic and everyone was really impressed with Grant!" Denis Roche.
- Another patient found the experience very moving and cried afterwards.

Technology:

- The set-up at the remote link-in location needs to be considered just as much as IWM. Each participant used different browsers, headphones and microphones. As a result each had varying experiences.



Museum and galleries:

- What works well physically does not always translate. Objects that are key in tours of gallery, did not always work for the robot.
- Darker galleries overall were more successful.
- Aspects of the gallery we assumed would not work, were actually really successful, such as projections.

## Next steps

To continue to work in partnership with the SMT and the RNLI.

**Jennifer Ross**

Digital learning manager,  
Imperial War Museum

## Further information

[jross@iwm.org.uk](mailto:jross@iwm.org.uk)

Denis Roche,  
[www.roschprojects.com](http://www.roschprojects.com),  
[info@roschprojects.com](mailto:info@roschprojects.com)

# Excellence and the visitor programme

From informal learning to visitor engagement



## Summary

Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery seeks to transform the visitor programme from an underachieving “poor cousin” to the formal learning programme, to occupying its rightful place as one of the key tools to attract visitors, increase income generation and ensure an enjoyable visitor experience.

## Background

A local authority Arts Council England (ACE) major partner museum, we sit within a ten museum service across Norfolk.

We are concerned with a quality visitor experience and how we thrive in a challenging financial climate.



Our visitor programme is for all ages and supports access to collections and exhibitions through an array of tours, talks, trails, performances, arts and crafts, themed holiday programmes and special events, as well as self-led interactives.

## Challenge

- To increase visitor numbers through high quality programming.
- To create a framework to ensure quality and establish an evidence-based professional practice.
- To manage change and support often resistant longstanding staff.
- To revise the perception of the visitor programme.

## Approach

Cross-service consultations explored what we understood by “informal learning”. Using the Arts Council’s seven quality principles as a basis, and after a sector search for best practice, we developed and piloted the Excellence in Learning Framework (ELF), a planning, monitoring and evaluation tool which provides a framework for professional practice and demonstrates our aspiration for excellence.

## Intended outcomes

- To increase visitor numbers and income generation.
- To re-establish and clarify purpose of the visitor programme.
- To develop team practice and evidence excellence.

## Intended outputs

- The ELF for informal learning.
- The Learning Library.

## Obstacles and issues

- Persuading resistant staff that change is necessary and being clear about the rationale for these changes can be a challenge – ensure that you have organisational sign-up to support you.
- Support staff morale and appreciate any small changes and developments they make.
- Terminology – the term “informal learning” proved inherently problematic.
- Advocacy is key – seek allies within and without your organisation.
- Any small change is a cause for celebration and recognition in a very busy workplace.

## Actual outcomes

- Record breaking visitor numbers and income generation.

- Shift in team and working culture knowing why, what and how we do things.
- Increase in strategic partnerships and commercial awareness.
- New models of working emerging.

## Actual outputs

The ELF a framework to support museums to achieve excellence in visitor programmes and informal learning through:

- Defining quality and developing a shared understanding of what it means.
- Embedding quality in the learning process.
- Enabling continuous improvement by using evaluation to inform planning.

The ELF is an invaluable tool which establishes a professional practice for informal learning, consisting of a four step plan planning, monitoring and evaluation

The Learning Library – A repertoire collection of our programmes and sessions. This has led to increased efficiencies in working mode, reduction in duplication and improved understanding. It also allows us to share our practice and programmes across the organisation and to enable

an increased dialogue with curators as an aid to development.

## Lessons learned

- Explore existing best practice and look outside your own organisation.
- Consult within your organisation.
- Identify strategic partners and role models to inspire and sustain you.
- Act as an advocate.
- Unpick language and terminology to ensure shared understanding as a starting point; understanding what is meant by key terms is a very important foundation. We found the term “informal learning” inherently misunderstood both within and without the organisation.
- Take time to explore ideas with colleagues both within and without immediate team – unexpected people can be critical allies and this is a strategic tool so breadth of understanding is key.
- Be comforted by small improvements and changes and don’t underestimate how destabilising change can feel to staff.

## Next steps

We will be disseminating the ELF at regional training days run by SHARE Museums East.



**Anna McCarthy**  
 Informal learning officer

**Colly Mudie**  
 Learning manager, Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery

## Further information

Colly Mudie,  
 colly.mudie@norfolk.gov.uk,  
 01603 493 662

Anna McCarthy,  
 anna.mccarthy@norfolk.gov.uk,  
 01603 495 902

# Fashion Archives on Film

## Summary

A partnership project between the Fashion Museum and American Museum in Britain, *Fashion Archives on Film* aimed to catalogue and digitise the Fashion Museum's archive of the Illustrated London News and the personal archives of Beatrice Pratt, New York socialite and mother of Dallas Pratt, one of the American Museum's founders. Create Studios worked with a group of students from Bath Studio School, an academy which specialises in creative media studies, to make short films inspired by the archives to be shared online.

## Background

The project was funded by a Small Grant Big Improvement grant of £5,000 from the South West Federation of Museums, and £3,500

match funding from the partner museums.

## Challenge

Both the Fashion Museum and American Museum in Britain hold fashion archives that were largely inaccessible to the public and in need of detailed cataloguing, transcribing, and digitisation. Both museums wanted to build their online presence and create a model for working collaboratively with young people.

## Approach

Volunteers and staff at both museums catalogued, transcribed, and scanned pages from the Beatrice Pratt and Illustrated London News archives. A group of five students aged 16 to 17 from Bath Studio School carried out archive research sessions and then made a series of short films about Beatrice Pratt, filming at the American Museum and in the Fashion Museum's stores. They drew inspiration from contemporary fashion "vlogs" to share Beatrice's story, as well as creating a stop-motion animation and documentary piece.

## Intended outcomes

- Greater public access to fashion archives held at both institutions, through cataloguing, digitisation, and online films.
- A model for working collaboratively with young people.
- An enhanced partnership between the museums.

## Intended outputs

- 800 archive pages catalogued, transcribed, and digitised across both museums.

- A talk about the Illustrated London News at the Fashion Museum, to be filmed and shared.
- A short film about Beatrice Pratt to be shared online.

## Obstacles and issues

- Because of the short project timeline, the students had to begin working on the films while volunteers were still transcribing documents. Without transcriptions, students found it difficult to interpret archive material.

- Students produced five films in a very short time frame, and afterwards commented that they would have liked more planning and script-writing time.
- Communication with students was via email, with files uploaded to Dropbox. Staff sometimes struggled to get a response to emails promptly. Facebook or WhatsApp messages might have been more effective.

## Actual outcomes

- A strong partnership with Bath Studio School. Students, who are all studying creative media, gained workplace experience and learned to use specialist equipment. "We gained lots of new skills that we never had before – the audio mixing, and using the Ronin, the tracks, the steady cam, all the new equipment", student.
- A closer relationship between the two museums, with increased understanding of the connections between our collections. For example, the Fashion Museum holds some of Beatrice's personal items, including her colourful stockings.
- An increased awareness of how films can be used to increase online presence and share "hidden" collections.

## Actual outputs

The project succeeded in increasing engagement with schools across the region. In the first full term of operation, twelve times more school children engaged with CoastEd than the previous year and there was a fivefold increase in income generation. Another fantastic element was a schools art project, delivered by Creative Waves, which worked with 130 children and all the museum partners. This led to 64 children being moderated for the Bronze Arts Award and 18 gaining the Explore Arts Award.

## Lessons learned

- Our archive cataloguing "strike rate" was over-ambitious considering the complexity of the archives and the fact that much of this work was delivered by volunteers.

Youth  
Engagement



- The project went towards the students' BTEC Level Three Diploma in creative media, and allowed them to work alongside professional filmmakers. Students had a strong interest in film and brought existing skills to the project, in part because they were studying at a specialist academy.
- It is important to have a plan in place for sharing film content online in order to maximise its impact.

## Next steps

Students will co-produce the American Museum's marketing films on an ongoing basis, embedding youth engagement in an area of the museum's core activities.

## Zoe Dennington

Head of visitor experience,  
American Museum in Britain

## Further information

zoe.dennington@americanmuseum.org

To watch the Beatrice Pratt films, visit: [www.americanmuseum.org/news/videos](http://www.americanmuseum.org/news/videos)

To watch the Fashion Museum films, visit: [www.fashionmuseum.co.uk/videos/fashion-archive-film-project](http://www.fashionmuseum.co.uk/videos/fashion-archive-film-project)

## GEM Foundation Course: Museum Learning

This ground-breaking course is aimed at developing the core skills and knowledge required of those at the beginning of their museum education career.

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"thoroughly stimulating and enlightening ... have come home with so many ideas and an enormous enthusiasm"

"gave me lots of ideas for new developments at work"

"much more confidence in working as a freelance museum educator"

"inspirational to think broadly how to interpret and engage with a collection"

To find out more please visit the GEM website or contact the GEM office.

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[www.gem.org.uk](http://www.gem.org.uk)



**Editor**  
John Stevenson  
GEM  
54 Balmoral Road  
Gillingham, Kent  
ME7 4PG  
  
casestudies@  
gem.org.uk

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# Index

Vol.17 2016

- |    |   |    |   |
|----|---|----|---|
| 3  | Reacting to a new curriculum<br><b>Chris Jarvis</b>                               | 14 | Acting out the archives<br><b>Steve Illingworth and Lynette<br/>Cawthr</b>          |
| 4  | Babies at the Fitzwilliam<br>Museum<br><b>Nicola Wallis</b>                       | 16 | Lest we forget Belton's Bravest:<br>1915–2015<br><b>Melissa Maynard</b>             |
| 6  | Fantastical Furniture<br><b>Natalie Wallace</b>                                   | 18 | Breaking down barriers<br>with a telepresence robot<br><b>Jennifer Ross</b>         |
| 8  | It's child's play<br><b>Madeline Farmer and<br/>Helen Cook</b>                    | 20 | Excellence and the visitor<br>programme<br><b>Anna McCarthy and<br/>Colly Mudie</b> |
| 10 | We Will Remember Them<br><b>Laura Davison</b>                                     | 22 | Fashion Archives on Film<br><b>Zoe Dennington</b>                                   |
| 12 | De Montfort project marks<br>UK Parliament's 750th birthday<br><b>Kirsty Fife</b> |    |   |