

The Learning and Sharing Centre

A special edition, funded by an Arts Council England Museum Resilience project grant.

Special
Edition



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.

Foreword

GEM's vision is to be universally recognised as the voice for heritage learning: the leading organisation that champions and inspires excellence in the field. In recent years, we have made significant progress in achieving our vision. GEM was identified in *Now and the Future: a review of formal learning in museums* (Arts Council England, 2016) as the "go to" training provider for people working in museum learning.

The *Learning and Sharing Centre* (LSC) project, funded by a £168K Museum Resilience grant from Arts Council England (ACE), has helped significantly in increasing not only GEM's resilience but also that of the learning workforce, as described by the project's independent evaluation consultant:

"What is not in doubt is that this timely investment from ACE has placed GEM on a firmer footing and laid the foundations for future success. GEM is undertaking the critical self-appraisal that will help it become more resilient and, in turn, support the resilience of the heritage learning workforce too. Investment in the people who bring our heritage to life is the surest way of securing its future."

This special edition of *Case Studies* by the project team and participants shows how much was achieved and reflects on where we will go next.

Many people and organisations have contributed to the success of the *Learning and Sharing Centre* project. I am grateful to Peter Carne, a recent Chair of GEM, who voluntarily chaired the project advisory group, and to our

partners and collaborators for lending their invaluable expertise.

Our contractors were also crucial to the success. Sheila McGregor, evaluation consultant, was an invaluable "critical friend". Sheila also led the business training consultancy team of Felicity Woolf, Emma Hutson and Mike Woodward, who responded very well to a challenging brief. Thirty8 Digital did a fantastic job developing GEM's new website, and Tower Pictures produced some excellent video material for it.

Finally, and definitely not least, I thank the GEM team who worked tirelessly to deliver the project. Holly Bee, education officer, did a remarkable job in organising seven training courses and many mapping, networking and sharing events. Jessica Robertson, communications officer and project coordinator, calmly kept us all on track and led the website redevelopment with just four months to complete it. Sara Wallington, administrator, efficiently handled all the event bookings and a multitude of other tasks to ensure the project went smoothly.

The LSC was more than a short-term project. All the outputs of the project are being used or built upon to further improve GEM's resilience. A stronger GEM will lead to a stronger sector.

**Dr John Stevenson,
project director**

Overview of the *Learning and Sharing Centre* Project

Introduction

The *Learning and Sharing Centre* project (LSC) was devised in response to ongoing conversations between GEM and our members about the multiple strains on resources faced by museums. A survey of GEM's members found that 39% had experienced a reduction of learning staff and budget in their organisation and 14% had no learning budget at all, while 79% felt they were expected to do more work for the same or less money. As the "voice for heritage learning", we wanted to provide support for the inspiring workforce delivering learning across England and applied for an ACE Museum Resilience grant of £168,000 to fund the LSC project, running from October 2016 to April 2018.

In 2015, GEM had released our core competencies, a framework of knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to heritage learning work at foundation, intermediate and advanced level, devised with experts across the sector. We had also set up our successful *Museum Learning* foundation course and piloted some intermediate training. We were well-placed to develop our continuing professional development (CPD) provision further. Although we could not stop the reduction of resources in museums, we could provide the essential training and networking to help the workforce meet this challenge.

With the support of our membership and six partners and collaborators – Association for Heritage



Interpretation (AHI), Engage, South Western Federation of Museums and Art Galleries (SWFed), National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums (TWAM), and Association of Independent Museums (AIM) – GEM developed a plan for the LSC. As the name suggests, the chief aim was to promote learning and sharing. We wanted to provide high quality training, but also increase GEM's role as a hub for anyone working or interested in heritage learning. The project included several sharing events to strengthen area networks and connect the workforce, facilitating greater exchange of ideas and experiences and preventing the reinvention of wheels.



At GEM we put our community at the heart of everything we do, the LSC was a vital step for us in being able to meet their needs and bring them together. In this creative, collaborative, public-facing sector, sharing our challenges and solutions is vital to

improving practice and maintaining our wellbeing. GEM used the LSC to solidify our position as the central base for this activity in the heritage learning sector.

Our objectives

In line with ACE's goals, the overall aims of the LSC were to meet the CPD needs of today's heritage learning workforce and ensure a sustainable future for GEM. The LSC promised to build upon best practice to:

- Provide training and CPD at all levels.
- Be a rich online resource.
- Encourage the workforce to network, and share experiences, skills and knowledge.
- Support increased diversity and equality in the workforce.
- Create a digital signpost to training opportunities.
- Provide mentors to support museum learning.

This would be done through providing seven courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced level, running various sharing events across England, redeveloping our website, consulting on fundraising and

income generation, and gathering feedback from our members and the wider sector to inform our ongoing direction.

Outcomes and outputs

We are happy to say that the LSC was an extremely productive project, not just in the amount of short-term project delivery, but in the amount of permanent programmes and services it added to our portfolio. The courses and digital content developed have been fully integrated into self-sustaining activity and the events and consultations added significantly to our forward planning.

Between October 2016 and April 2018, GEM delivered:

A programme of seven new courses, all delivered three times in different locations across England:

- Foundation Course: *Effective Engagement*, in partnership with SWFed.
- Intermediate Course: *Heritage Interpretation*, in partnership with AHL.
- Intermediate Course: *Working with Artists in Heritage Settings*, in partnership with Engage.

- Intermediate Course: *Health and Wellbeing*, in partnership with the National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing.

- Intermediate Course: *Essentials of Leadership*, in partnership with TWAM.

- Intermediate Course: *Fundraising and Income Generation*.

- Advanced Workshop: *The Learning Curve – how leading a learning museum can transform your business*, in collaboration with AIM.

Effective Engagement was four months long, mixing six on-site days with reflective and practical exercises. The intermediate courses were built around a one-day workshop, but with preparatory and follow-up exercises that directly applied to each individual's workplace. The advanced workshop involved making action plans to implement in the workplace, supported by the course director. These models were developed in response to GEM's awareness that one-off training events are often difficult to build on and learning can fade before it is cemented and applied. All training that GEM provides is made relevant to each





participant and is structured to encourage immediate embedding, expansion and implementation of learning.

Redevelopment of the GEM website, including:

- New listing of training events from a variety of providers.
- Improvement of our online resources, suppliers and jobs listings.
- New pages on careers and the value of heritage education.
- New free fortnightly eBulletin for anyone who signs up.
- Refreshed information and tone, presenting a clean, user-friendly and outward-facing online space.
- Images sourced from our membership to showcase their work.

An informal sharing event, *Empower the Educator*, run in every region of England. This event gathered

educators together to share their ideas and challenges and find solutions together in a safe and easy-going environment. It was met very positively in every area and provided GEM with some ways to increase our reach.

Five mapping workshops in different locations to get a snapshot of the heritage learning CPD needs across England. These workshops allowed GEM to produce a map of duplicated and missing training in different areas, which we built on with further consultation. We also gathered feedback for our website redevelopment.

A special event for mentors building skills for our foundation course: *Museum Learning* mentors and gathering feedback on how we can support them more going forward.

Two detailed consultants' reports making recommendations for GEM's future. One was the LSC evaluation,

providing advice on how to take the outputs forward, the other was on GEM's organisational and financial sustainability, providing advice on how to generate income from our training and where to seek further funding and partnerships.

Learning and sharing

The LSC generated a huge amount of learning for GEM, other sector organisations and practitioners. We have incorporated our learning into our forward planning and operations and the ACE grant allowed us to share it widely.

We held the *Learning and Sharing Centre* Conference at the end of March 2018 to gather people together to celebrate the project's achievements. We also produced this special edition of *Case Studies* to disseminate information about the project, as well as specific resources on our core competencies, foundation course mentoring and *Empower the Educator!* top tips.

The LSC has created a multitude of opportunities for GEM to connect, share, collaborate and develop and we are excited to keep moving. We would like to sincerely thank Arts Council England, our team, trustees, partners and members for everything they have done to make the LSC and the future of GEM so positive.

Holly Bee
education officer, GEM
and
John Stevenson
project director, GEM

Find out more...

GEM:
www.gem.org.uk

Arts Council England:
www.artscouncil.org.uk

The LSC Partners

Thank You

None of the LSC project's achievements would have been possible without the support of our partners and collaborators: Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI), Engage, National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums (TWAM), South Western Federation of Museums and Art Galleries (SWFed), and Association of Independent Museums (AIM).

Each of these organisations worked with GEM to lend their expertise to a specific course and help to spread the word about the new activities. They also formed the project advisory group, which gave us invaluable guidance throughout the project. The GEM team and trustees would like to say a huge thank you to them! We look forward to continuing the conversations!



Philip Ryland, trustee, AHI
Partner for Intermediate Course:
Heritage Interpretation

"There is a significant level of overlap between the fields of interpretation and education, so AHI was delighted to have the opportunity to work with GEM to meet the needs of both of these audiences. By collaborating on an intermediate course, we could offer a really high-quality programme to develop skills in interpretation as well as drive a meaningful discussion about what good interpretation means and looks like. Like GEM, AHI is a national organisation supported by a small team and active membership. We look forward to continuing to learn from each other and work together on building strong provision, support, training and advocacy for our members."

Jane Sillis, director, Engage
Partner for Intermediate Course:
Working with Artists in Heritage Settings

"It has been an honour working with GEM and Helen Pike on a new course on how artists can be part of education, learning and participatory work in museums and heritage settings. The course is really stimulating, introducing ideas on how to work with artists in highly practical ways. I'd whole heartedly recommend it, whether you're familiar with working with artists or if this is a new venture. Engage values our partnership with GEM. We're committed to sharing practice across the museum, heritage, visual arts and education sectors. Co-devising the artists in heritage settings seminar with GEM has been a brilliant way of doing just that."





**Laura Bedford, project coordinator,
National Alliance for Museums,
Health and Wellbeing
Partner for Intermediate Course:
Health and Wellbeing**

"The partnership was very beneficial for the Alliance and fitted in with training we were developing for museums who had not yet developed wellbeing programmes. By working with GEM on the intermediate course we were also able to support those who were already delivering this provision. Collaborations like this across sector-support organisations who have expertise in different areas also means that duplication is avoided and resources are shared.

Our Alliance has now become the Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance. We hope to continue to collaborate with GEM and feed into the Learning and Sharing Centre."

**Clare Smith, manager – learning
programmes, TWAM**

**Partner for Intermediate Course:
Essentials of Leadership**

"GEM has a valuable role to play in providing high quality training and networking opportunities for learning and participation professionals in the museum sector and TWAM have been really pleased to be involved in the development of the *Essentials of Leadership* course with Kiz Crosbie. It is important in the current climate to be able to recognise opportunities for leadership development both personally and professionally and recognise these qualities as we bring them to our roles. I hope that the participants all enjoyed the courses and have taken valuable learning which will support their professional development in museums."

**Anna Bryant, chair, SWFed
Partner for Foundation Course:
Effective Engagement**

"SWFed is an independent membership organisation providing a voice for museums, art galleries and the wider heritage sector in the South West. Its uniqueness lies in being the network through which the wider heritage sector can think and act together to deliver a better experience for all its audiences. The LSC project fits with our mission to bring high quality CPD opportunities to the South West, by working in partnership. In return we brought our knowledge of the South West sector to the project, helping to tailor it to our region's ongoing needs."

**Helen Wilkinson, assistant director,
AIM**

**Collaborator for Advanced
Workshop: The Learning Curve**

"AIM was pleased to work with GEM on *The Learning Curve*. It is important to offer people from across the museum sector the opportunity to deepen their understanding of what it might mean to be a learning organisation and how this contributes to resilience. The AIM Hallmarks identify the need for museums to foster an organisational culture which is "open to new ideas and ready to seize opportunities" – being open to the learning agenda can be an important part of that."

**Peter Carne, chair of the LSC
Advisory Group**

"The Learning and Skills Centre project has had a huge impact on GEM, its membership and the wider heritage sector. GEM has developed new foundation, intermediate and advanced training to support all those involved in heritage education. Crucially these courses are underpinned by GEM's competency framework – a first step in establishing professional standards for the heritage learning workforce. The LSC project has enabled GEM to create a new modern website, as well as an exciting business model for a stronger, more sustainable organisation. All this has been done with the support of key partners and collaborators; organisations GEM will work closely with in the future as it builds on the successes of the LSC project."

Find out more...

AHI:
www.ahi.org.uk

Engage:
www.engage.org

National Alliance for Museums,
Health and Wellbeing:
museumsandwellbeingalliance.wordpress.com

TWAM:
twmuseums.org.uk

SWFed:
www.swfed.org.uk

AIM:
www.aim-museums.co.uk



Pete Brown
course director

Effective Engagement

Introduction

The Foundation Course: *Effective Engagement* was developed in partnership with SWFed and directed by Pete Brown, freelancer in museum access, interpretation and learning. It ran in the South West (Museum of Somerset, Somerset Heritage Centre, Roman Baths Museum, Victoria Art Gallery, Bishop's Palace, Wells Cathedral), East of England (Wardown House, The Higgins, National Horse Racing Museum, Museum of East Anglian Life, Ipswich Museum, IWM Duxford) and London (London Canal Museum, Postal Museum, Foundling Museum, National Army Museum, V&A, British Museum) between September 2017 and March 2018. It was a four-month course combining site visits, reflection and practical tasks.

GEM's existing offer

In GEM's pre-existing Foundation Course: *Museum Learning*, there are six days of contact time planned in pairs – with three or four weeks in between to give participants time to absorb what they are learning, share their thoughts with colleagues and

experiment back in the workplace. Each contact day is based in a museum or heritage site, where the hosts showcase and discuss their learning offer.

For the LSC project, I was approached by GEM as course director for *Museum Learning* to develop a learning foundation course for people in more multi-faceted roles, as is common in smaller museums.

Meeting the right needs

Any museum worker in a public facing position faces the same challenges:

- How do you make museums more accessible and appealing to a wider audience?
- How do you fund your work and make resources go further?
- How do you create strong and lasting partnerships?
- How do you progress in a sector that has no clear career paths to follow?

The existing *Museum Learning* course was designed to help participants develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to tackle all these challenges, so I used it as a template, given its ongoing success. Prospective hosts for the new course were asked for their input and we decided to include extra peer support exercises, in order to match with SWFed's strong focus on networking.

Challenges

Museum Learning faced an issue of perception, that it was a "how to teach in museums" course. In reality, it's much broader than that. We therefore chose the broader name, *Effective Engagement*, and included a more general introductory unit. Feedback has been very good, but numbers of participants have been low, which makes me wonder whether that perception problem is still at work. Difficulties with recruitment may also have been time and financial constraints.

Achievements

Despite the difficulty recruiting, participants had a very positive experience of the course. Small groups made it easy for them to form close networks. Participants reported feeling more confident and that their ideas and approaches had been challenged and refined. The course was highly discussion and practice-based, aiming to encourage participants to question received views and be creative.

Top tip

Question everything! Don't do things because it's always been the way, really think how you could do this better, whether there are needs you aren't meeting. Reflect on your work continuously, not just when it comes to writing the report!"



Participant experience

Matthew Studdert-Kennedy,
learning co-ordinator,
Shuttleworth Trust

"Having (many years ago) attained my PGCE / QTLS, it was important to me that I was able to demonstrate an awareness of current museum thinking. I had also been tasked with engaging new audiences at my first appraisal – so the title appealed!

The greatest hurdle to participation was getting the support of my organisation to attend. This said, the clear structure and being able to tie my CPD action plan to the GEM Core Competency Framework made justifying it relatively pain free.

It was interesting to refresh some aspects of my teacher training and, in particular, to draw relevance to current thinking on gallery learning

and heritage interpretation. Plus, going behind-the-scenes with the learning teams at six such diverse, engaging and inspiring host venues was invaluable in its own right. Another key benefit was networking with peers at a similar level who are perfectly placed to offer support and able to suggest different solutions. Our tutor, Pete Brown, has ensured we brought out the best in each other. Having such an inspiring support network meant I returned to work with both renewed vigour and a renewed confidence in my own abilities.

My next step will be to embark on my first GEM intermediate course! I am particularly interested in Heritage Interpretation."

What's next?

Following the recruitment challenges of this course, GEM is opening discussions with Museum Development Officers and Emerging Museum Professionals in the South West and other areas to explore more accessible ways to deliver foundation training. Museum Learning continues to run in Spring (Manchester) and Autumn (London) every year.

Pete Brown
course director, GEM

Find out more...

GEM training:
www.gem.org.uk

Pete Brown:
petebrbrown.co.uk

SWFed:
www.swfed.org.uk



Sarah Oswald
course director

Heritage Interpretation

Introduction

The intermediate course: *Heritage Interpretation* was developed in partnership with AHI and directed by Sarah Oswald, director of The Authentic Spark. A day-long workshop took participants through the principles of interpretation and their practical applications, to prepare for creating an interpretative plan in their own site. It ran three times between September 2017 and February 2018, at Museum of Liverpool, British Motor Museum, Warwick and Kenwood House, London.

Why develop skills in heritage interpretation?

Interpretation is the window into our heritage. It is the interface with visitors and is one of our most public statements. So, if we are going to do it, let's do it well.

Freeman Tilden ('godfather' of interpretation) said: "Through interpretation understanding, through understanding appreciation, through appreciation protection" and he isn't wrong. We all know the power of a charity appeal – think Sport or Comic Relief – telling a story, revealing the issue, provoking you to consider your role in the solution. That's what

interpretation can do – make the connections between people and place, challenge people's thinking, encourage their interest and action.

Objectives and approach

Interpretation is so central to all work in the heritage sector, it was important to create an opportunity to really get to grips with the principles and how to apply them. I structured the workshop thematically to explore different stages of interpretive planning through theory, discussion and practical exercises so that participants left with concrete tools and fresh perspectives to apply in their workplaces. Many participants arrived feeling that they were working in interpretation without being sure of good practice. The aim was to provide this concrete knowledge, but also encourage a holistic, creative and audience-centric approach.

Achievements and lessons learned

This has been an interesting journey, growing my skills as a trainer and challenging my thinking. Here's what I've noticed:

- More people are looking at interpretation through purely digital delivery forms such as websites or apps. So it is great to see that participants were thinking about having a good interpretive plan as its basis and applying all the best principles.

- Working in groups inspires people. The course provides an opportunity to learn from and share with others.
- Letting go of the plan and being flexible is the best way for everyone! I had a minutely detailed plan for the workshop delivery, but I've increasingly gone with the flow. Focusing activity on the best practice principles and responding to need gives the best possible experience.

Top tips

- Always stick to the principles – interpretation should provoke, relate and reveal.
- Start with the audience – who is it for and what do they need or want or aspire to?
- Keep your messages simple and focused (this is the hardest bit, by the way).
- Never be driven by the media, no matter how sexy it seems.
- Match your aspirations to your budget, but don't let budget dull your inspiration.

Quick exercise

Think of an experience you've had at a heritage site. What was good about it? And why? How did it make you feel? What do you remember? What did you feel inspired to do? Now think of a poor experience at a heritage site. Why was it poor? What was missing for you? Make a note of the words that come to mind.

Intermediate Course



Participant experience

Nancy Lyons, project support volunteer, public engagement, Historic Royal Palaces

"I chose to take *Heritage Interpretation* as a detour from collections management to learn more about the art of creative public engagement.

The course allowed plenty of time and took into consideration the fact that most of us are also juggling work and other commitments. There was a timely and informative 'Welcome' email from the course director. Our first task, the interpretative audit, was a good way to assess what was on offer, how and why at our selected place.

The workshop at Kenwood House covered the material necessary to progress to the next phase of the course while allowing us all to meet in a historical setting. Over a tasty lunch I met a range of participants, mostly client side but some freelance, from all over the UK.

I joined the closed Facebook group for the course and would encourage participants to support each other by using it as much as possible. Its value depends on how much people are willing or able to share thoughts and experiences.

The course has really added to my knowledge and boosted my confidence. It supplied the framework and tools for developing an interpretative outlook."

What's next?

Heritage Interpretation now forms part of the GEM annual training programme and will begin running again in Autumn 2018.

Sarah Oswald
course director, GEM

Find out more...

GEM training:
www.gem.org.uk

Sarah Oswald:
www.theauthenticspark.com

AHI:
www.ahi.org.uk



Helen Pike
course director

Working with Artists in Heritage Settings

Introduction

The intermediate course: *Working with Artists in Heritage Settings* was developed in partnership with Engage and directed by Helen Pike, public programmer at the Petrie Museum. A day-long workshop took participants through practical exercises and case studies on working with artists, to prepare for creating an artist-project plan in their own site. It ran three times between September 2017 and February 2018, at SS Great Britain, Bristol, Foundling Museum, London, and East Street Arts, Leeds.

Why work with artists?

Artists have always been fascinated by museum collections: they hold a key to the past, a critique of the present and a view to the future. Artists can bring many different approaches, practices and disciplines to a collection or heritage site. They can offer a chance for staff to increase their skills and creative thinking, interrogate the collection in new and different ways and engage new audiences. Collaborations with artists can also help secure funding and pool resources. This course unpicks some of the rationale behind working with artists, helping participants to

clarify their objectives and maximise the benefits.

Objectives

The aim was to create a course giving practical skills in managing creative interventions and allowing participants to explore their own creativity. Ideas about collaboration would be discussed among participants bringing lots of different experiences to the table. I felt it was important to facilitate a safe sharing space for reflections on projects that haven't worked well and what we learn from those challenges.

Approach, achievements and lessons learned

For such a creative and collaborative subject, it was important to focus on reflective practice. I developed a pre-workshop activity encouraging participants to identify a character or an object in their collections that they would like to spotlight. This encourages thinking differently about your knowledge of the collections. The workshop morning built on this with creative activities and active listening exercises to encourage thinking about the nature of collaboration and what conditions it needs.

I found the barriers to working with artists were often uncertainty around how to go about it and fears of what could go wrong; it takes a lot of

courage to give power over to someone else. I therefore shared a large bank of case studies of creative projects across a wide range of museums, art galleries and heritage sites, larger and smaller organisations with a range of budgets, giving a sense of the scope of projects and their objectives. This offered more insight into the sector and developed knowledge of practice and preparation for challenges. The workshop also looks at practical steps; identifying objectives and key audiences, budgeting, securing support, finding relevant artists, drawing up contracts, undertaking the delivery and producing meaningful evaluation.

I wanted any course dealing with creative collaborations to have a large creative element. A significant part of the workshop afternoon grouped participants to incubate ideas that they could take back to their organisations.

It was great to see the range of ideas and organisations present in the groups. The necessity of peer support and collaboration to this creative process was evident. Through the combination of practical advice and creative group work, many participants expressed feelings of new confidence and produced exciting plans to take working with artists forward.



Top tip

All museums, galleries and heritage sites have the potential to work with artists and find new ways to be provocative and engaging. Be brave – the benefits are myriad, bringing in new practices and creative ways of looking at the collection that benefit practitioners and audiences alike.

Quick exercise

Try reflecting on an artist intervention that has caught your eye...

Participant experience: extracts from feedback

I took the course because...

"I wanted to understand a little more on how to make art accessible to people who hear the word 'art' and shy away from participation because they feel it isn't for them."

"I wanted to discuss how heritage institutions open themselves up to artists, how to find the common language and what protocols/communication mechanisms we need to establish to achieve a fruitful collaboration."

"We are working on putting together an arts strategy. We would like to understand what other organisations have experienced in starting up programmes working with artists and what challenges they faced and/or overcame."

Having taken the course...

"My organisation will now hopefully understand the breadth of art that there is out there, and not focus in on art being 'one thing' – that the possibilities are endless!"

"I feel better equipped to plan future creative projects and will feed back my learning to the wider team, using learning from the course when planning future projects."

"My organisation will benefit from confirming best practice and being able to engage in work involving artists."

What's next?

Working with Artists in Heritage Settings now forms part of the GEM annual training programme and will begin running again in Autumn 2018. It has been renamed to *Creative Collaborations* to emphasise its relevance to all creative practitioners and sites, not just those focused on visual arts.

Helen Pike
course director, GEM

Find out more...

GEM training:
www.gem.org.uk

Engage
www.engage.org



Laura Bedford
course director

Health and Wellbeing

Introduction

The intermediate course: *Health and Wellbeing* was developed in partnership with the National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing and directed by Laura Bedford, project coordinator for the Alliance. A day-long workshop explored current best practice and context for wellbeing work and helped participants identify wellbeing potential in their programmes and site. This was combined with reflective exercises before and after. It ran three times between July 2017 and January 2018, at the School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, Design Museum, London, and Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester.

Why work with health and wellbeing?

Two recent government reports have recognised that the wellbeing agenda is a key way in which museums can support local priorities, such as place-making and community health. This course provides an excellent opportunity for anyone delivering health and wellbeing provision within museums to focus on this significant area and reflect, improve or explore new ways of working.

Objectives and approach

To meet the needs of those who already had experience delivering health and wellbeing provision in their museums, the course needed to:

- Explore the ways that both the health and museum sectors are now defining wellbeing work.
- Gain an updated overview of the health sector.
- Look at how to take a more holistic approach to work.
- Identify current provision that can be reframed as wellbeing programmes.
- Support participants to overcome key challenges.

I took a broad view of health and wellbeing work in museums, bringing in best practice examples. I felt it was important to address common challenges, such as sustainability and partnership working, through discussion-based activities. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences and learn from each other. As wellbeing work is so wide-ranging and individual, reflection-based activities before and after the workshop helped to make the course relevant to each participant's context.

Achievements and lessons learned

Through participant's reflective journals and feedback, the key lessons learnt have been:

- The importance of networking. As this is a relatively new area for the sector there are not many opportunities to discuss the successes and challenges of this work. Participants found this chance to share practice a really useful part of the course, particularly as staff from other cultural and heritage organisations attended, such as the Council for British Archaeology and the West Yorkshire Archive Service.
- The benefits of reflecting. Another key part of the course which people enjoyed was the chance to reflect both with each other and then in the follow-up activities. Even those with very established provision felt it was important to explore what's working and what needs to be improved to deliver high quality provision.
- The value of raising the profile of this work. Participants felt that this provision is often quite hidden within organisations. After the course many participants shared their learning with other teams in their organisations to help to embed and raise awareness of this work.



Top tip

Embed wellbeing across your organisation, as it leads to greater sustainability and visibility of provision.

Quick exercise

How do you, your organisation and the sector define health and wellbeing work? Is it mainly about working with audiences with specific health needs, or do you feel it has a wider remit?

Participant experience:
Katerina Mavromichali,
education, outreach and
public engagement officer, State
Museum of Contemporary Art,
Thessaloniki

"The GEM intermediate course: Health and Wellbeing was inspirational, it helped me realise the potential of museums in the public health milieu and was a springboard for my supporting people-powered approaches and creating hubs. Following it, I entered into a transformative phase of personal and professional growth. I focused on the effective use of the museum setting, rethinking health in relation to the museum assets and new funding opportunities. I have built on the course with further research and participating in conferences. I have become an advocate for changes in museum policy and practice as well as the creation of a national centre for the advancement of arts, health and wellbeing. I am now training in working with children, young people and families in art therapy (BAAT) and developing alliances and programmes for vulnerable audiences.

The challenge for museums is changing the culture; increasing our social-political agendas, reinventing ourselves, making the most of the collections and providing stewardship of the highest order. The intrinsic therapeutic potential of museum collections, as well as the inspiring qualities of a creative, safe and welcoming space, offer an exciting area of future interdisciplinary research.

What's next?

Health and Wellbeing now forms part of the GEM annual training programme and will begin running again in Autumn 2018.

Laura Bedford,
course director, GEM

Find out more...

GEM training:
www.gem.org.uk

National Alliance for Museums,
Health and Wellbeing:
museumsandwellbeingalliance.wordpress.com



Kiz Crosbie
course director

Essentials of Leadership

Introduction

The intermediate course: *Essentials of Leadership* was developed in partnership with TWAM and directed by Kiz Crosbie, artistic director and CEO of the theatre company Mortal Fools. A day-long workshop used practical, interactive exercises to explore and develop personal leadership styles and challenges. This was combined with reflective exercises before and after. It ran three times between October 2017 and January 2018, in Discovery Museum, Newcastle, Museum of London and M Shed, Bristol.

Why explore the essentials of leadership?

We often find ourselves in leadership roles because of length of time with an organisation or because we've done well in other areas. Leadership is a skill; it takes effort, time and a commitment to development to be effective. This course offers a time-out from the busyness of the workplace to consider your role, what you bring to it and how best to use your strengths to maximum effect.

Objectives and approach

This course has a strong emphasis on personal reflection. As leadership is so individualised, based on personal strengths and interactions, I felt it would not be effective to impose a "one size fits all" model. I decided to take participants through a series of exercises designed to help them consider their personality traits, assess their current practice, learn what people fundamentally need from their leaders and apply all of these to a simple strategy to help improve their effectiveness as a leader.

Drawing on my theatre background, I made the workshop as interactive as possible. It was an important opportunity for participants to explore concepts of human interaction in a dynamic and fun way. By analysing your responses to particular stimuli and seeing the different ways others respond, you can achieve a huge amount of learning and growth in a short time. The workshop also provides an opportunity to meet, reflect and share practice with others in comparable positions in the sector.

Achievements and lessons learned

The feedback for this course has been overwhelmingly positive. The major thing to take away was the effectiveness of treating leadership as individual, rather than uniform. Bringing out personal strengths

and approaches makes leadership dynamic and authentic, whereas trying to conform to a model strains relationships and abilities. Quotes from course participants capture this well:

"I not only realised that I had relevant skills and experience already in place, but also developed a framework within which I could identify, describe and, importantly, begin to develop these skills further. It was also useful to be able to apply those ideas to my own managers throughout my career and to understand their leadership qualities – both good and bad – and how they have affected my progression as a leader."

"The one thing I have really taken from the course is the realisation that I do possess valuable leadership qualities – I have always found myself in leadership roles but never really felt I belonged there, thinking I wasn't 'hard-nosed' enough to make it in leadership. I would identify myself as empathic, probably above anything else, so it was good to find this is an accepted leadership quality. The leaders who have 'got the best out of me' and earned my respect have certainly always had this quality. I have also gained a better grasp of the language to use when identifying myself as a leader."



Top tip

Before you can begin to support the development of others, you must first develop yourself. To become an effective leader, you must make time for your own development, reflection and growth.

Quick exercise

Get yourself a pen and paper. For one minute, without lifting pen from paper, list all the good things other people say about you. Which of those things might you use in a leadership context?

Participant experience: extracts from feedback

I took the course because...

"I would like to better balance being 'me' and being 'manager'. I would like to become more at ease with instructing and managing others (without being patronising). I would like to inspire my team and others I work with to have confidence in me."

"As someone who is new to management I wanted some time to critically reflect on what it means to be a leader, identifying areas I may need to work on."

Having taken the course...

"I am a more self-aware member of staff who will now be thinking in more depth about personal strengths and weaknesses and how these can be developed. I feel like I do have some strategies to manage freelance staff more effectively."

"I think it has added to team morale and our way forward."

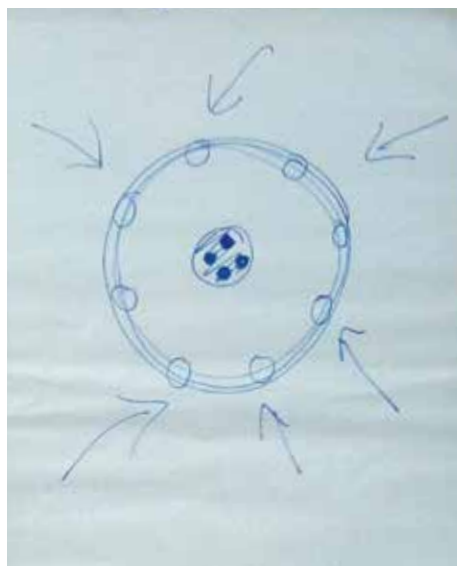
"I have some tools to think and act with, as well as a deeper understanding of myself and where I am happiest in the working environment. Crucially, it also gave me a way in to talk to my managers and gave me the vocabulary to express both my frustrations and where I think we are successful as a team."

What's next?

Essentials of Leadership now forms part of the GEM annual training programme and will begin running again in Autumn 2018.

Kiz Crosbie,
course director, GEM

What we want from today—
Support others, make them feel *
valued, understand their strengths &
weaknesses. * What people need + want.
Coping with leadership challenges. *
Confidence * (and in taking decisions)
Steering different stakeholders in the
desired direction * *
Working with people across disparate
locations.
Balancing needs an expectations of groups
& organisation.
Dealing with difficult personalities, conflict...



Find out more...

GEM training:
www.gem.org.uk

Kiz Crosbie and Mortal Fools:
www.mortalfools.org.uk

TWAM:
twamuseums.org.uk



Jane Avison
course director

Fundraising and Income Generation

Introduction

The intermediate course: *Fundraising and Income Generation* was directed by Jane Avison, business manager of Heritage Learning, Hull. It used a preparatory audit exercise and a day-long workshop to take participants through the steps of creating a financial plan for their organisation or department, which participants then created in a post-workshop project. It focused on making learning self-funding and sustainable. It ran three times between September 2017 and January 2018, at the Postal Museum, London, Leeds City Museum and National Railway Museum, York.

Why work on fundraising and income generation?

An entrepreneurial approach in museums is becoming ever more relevant as core funds in museums reduce. Though challenging, this presents opportunities to build well-funded, resilient and sustainable learning programmes.

Objectives and approach

I developed the course using knowledge and skills from our sector and from the commercial world.

Working in a more business-focused way can be daunting, so I designed the course to tackle these concerns and highlight the potential positives. To encourage participants to think differently about financial sustainability, I incorporated a lot of peer support, discussion, reflection and Q&As.

The learning objectives were:

- Understanding fundraising context, opportunities and barriers.
- Understanding delivery costs and funding needs.
- Confidence in using a range of fundraising and income generation techniques.
- Workplace practice in fundraising and income generation activity.
- Plan for the long-term sustainability of own learning provision.

Achievements and lessons learned

A number of participants have gone on to achieve their fundraising goals, with many more successfully applying the tools and skills within their working practice.

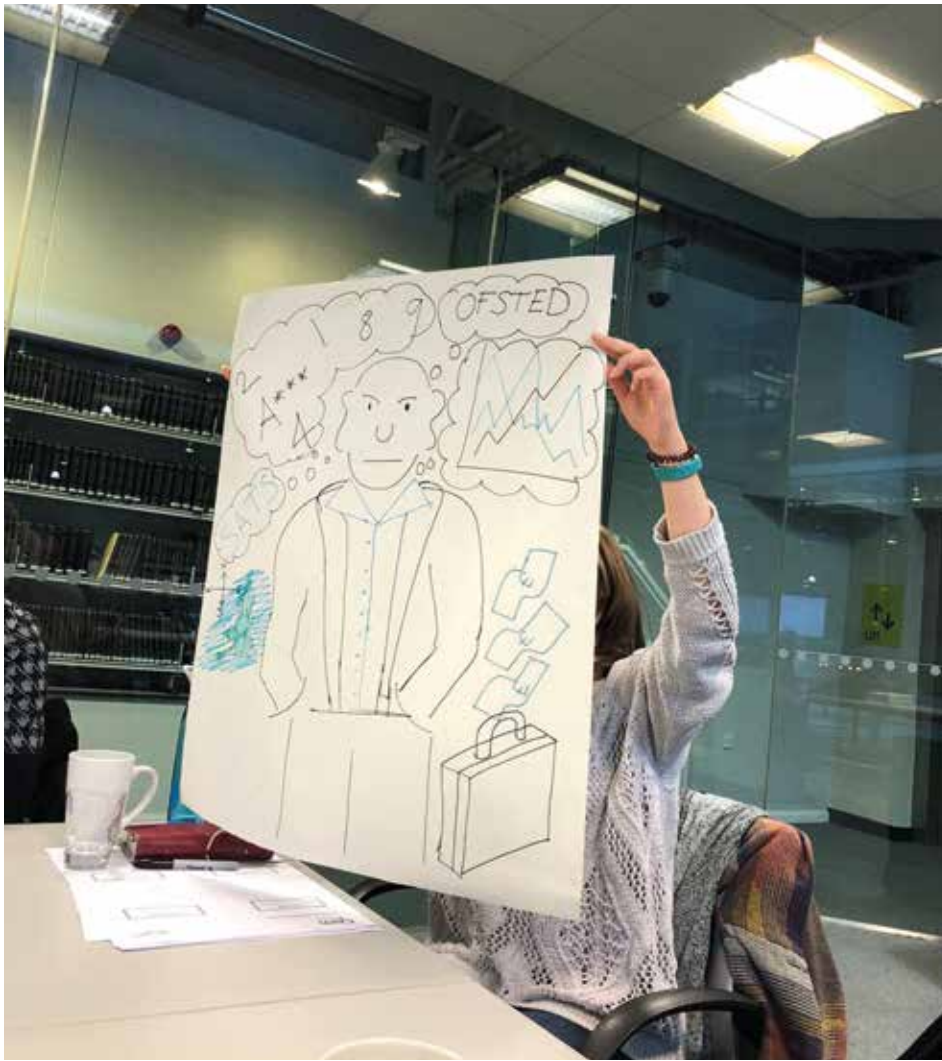
There is a need to support learning professionals in taking risks. Observing the creative energy within our sector has been one of the highlights of running this course. I have met so many committed and passionate individuals who are finding

new pathways to achieve their social objectives. Seeing the breadth of fundraising skills and innovation gives me real confidence and strongly re-enforces my belief that “bespoke is best”. Only by understanding our specific situation and strengths can we maximise our fundraising potential.

Top tips

- Develop a clear vision of what success will look like and then stay focused on the end goal.
- Really understand the context within which you are working, it is the key to managing risk and achieving success.
- Play to your strengths, find your own way and don't be afraid to take risks if they are considered and well-researched.





Quick exercise

A simple SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis will help you form the understanding you need to explore ideas for fundraising and income generation. Here are a few questions to get you started:

- What strengths does your organisation or service have? (e.g., a clear vision, skills and experience)
- What potential weaknesses does it have? (e.g., lack of knowledge or capacity)
- What opportunities do you have now and/or in the future? (e.g., potential new income streams, space, relationships)
- What potential threats are there to your success? (e.g., lack of sales, competitors, relationship breakdown)



Participant experience

Alison Giles, administrator and education officer, Burwell Museum and Windmill

"In my museum, as in many small museums, the education officer role is mostly dependent on external funding. My post is funded by a legacy from a former trustee, which will run out in December 2018, so it has become my top priority to find funding to keep the post going. So I was very pleased to find this course.

One of the main challenges of the course was realising how little I actually knew about the finances of my museum and the education post. Because we've been reliant on external funding we haven't really thought about how we can use the education post to make money for itself. The discussions and the planning frameworks we were given helped me to focus on where we can make money and how we can eventually make the post self-funding.

The course project, writing a fundraising plan for the museum,

was really useful for me. It helped me to find out much more about where money comes from and goes to and will help me to track how well we are doing against agreed targets. I now have plans for both the education post and the whole museum and should be able to sustain the education post for many years to come."

What's next?

Fundraising and Income Generation now forms part of the GEM annual training programme and will begin running again in Autumn 2018.

Jane Avison,
course director, GEM

Find out more...

GEM training:
www.gem.org.uk

Jane Avison and Heritage Learning:
www.heritage-learning.com



Nick Winterbotham
course director

The Learning Curve

Introduction

The advanced workshop: *The Learning Curve* – how leading a learning museum can transform your business was developed in collaboration with AIM and directed by Nick Winterbotham, director of the consultancy Nick Winterbotham & Associates. This day-long workshop brought learning staff and their managers/directors together to explore becoming a “learning museum”. It ran three times between November 2017 and February 2018, at the National Railway Museum, York, Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket, and Black Country Living Museum, Dudley.

Why should we be “learning organisations”?

A “learning museum” is an organisation that learns as part of its core operations. It is not just about supporting learning provision, it asks staff at all levels in all departments to continually reflect and progress. An organisation can only truly claim to promote learning if it, too, knows how to learn.

Objectives and approach

The aim was that through the programme participants would:

- Explore the concept of the “learning museum”.
- Identify new opportunities available to them.
- Make choices in governance, leadership and learning provision.
- Review their 10-year perspective and create an action list and implementation plan.

I found it helpful as a starting point to map where participants stood against a number of criteria. There were ten questions for participants to position themselves on a sliding scale, including:

- Do you consider the learning agenda to be an add-on or believe that learning is your prime function?
- Do you leave learning theory to others or corporately understand how learning happens?
- Do you shy away from developing your governance and leadership or include learning champions in all governance and leadership roles?

The responses to this self-analysis put participants in a reflective frame of mind to consider how learning-based strategies could help them to meet challenges and drive developments in

their organisations. Tasks challenging approaches and perspectives branched out into secondary tasks observing how a team works, communicates, experiments, redoubles effort and, when finally successful, celebrates.

The themes explored included:

- Transformational leadership.
- Learning provision.
- Persuasion strategies.
- Individual and organisational purpose.
- 2, 5 and 10-year planning.
- Measuring performance.

Achievements and lessons learned

Participants were eager to share and find ways forward. Many productive discussions took place and generated motivation to evolve.

The lessons learned were mainly around the time and space needed to create discussion and change. An important component was to offer participants choice about subject matter and the structure of the day. It was also important to allow time for participants to feel comfortable discussing challenges, especially with colleagues and managers present.

As the course continues we will develop ways to encourage director/officer pairs to work together. The



Advanced Workshop

intention was to help implementation after the event and grow relationships between learning staff and museum direction. It was very encouraging to see the depth of conversation this innovation sparked.

To quote Eric Hoffer "In a world of change, the learners shall inherit the earth, while the learned shall find themselves perfectly suited for a world that no longer exists."

Top tip

Walk the talk; show how you learn; encourage it in others.

Participant experience
Caroline McDonald,
museum manager, and
Adam Goldwater, learning officer,
Great North Museum: Hancock

"I have been impressed with the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough." Leonardo da Vinci

It is easy to imagine ourselves as willing, active learners, but the opportunity to reflect can reveal whether we are doing this in reality. This is exactly what The Learning Curve offered: space to stand back, explore, question and set direction.

With both the museum manager and learning officer in attendance, we were able to think and reflect together whilst drawing on the experience of that day's cohort. Through excellent facilitation we looked at our learning function as part of our wider business success, understanding that the two are not mutually exclusive and thinking about key actions we could make in our governance and leadership.

The workshop led us to make routine meetings spaces to scan the horizon

and create 'Learning Museum' action lists, and to include the following in the Great North Museum: Hancock 2018-2021 strategy: 'Declaring ourselves as a learning museum asserts our commitment to exploiting every opportunity to learn by example, know more, to support staff with personal development and to maximise our outputs for the benefit of the public.'

What's next?

The Learning Curve will begin running again in Autumn 2018. We will use this workshop as a starting point to open dialogues between learning and leadership for the benefit of staff and audiences.

Nick Winterbotham,
course director, GEM

Find out more...

GEM training:
www.gem.org.uk

Nick Winterbotham:
www.nickwinterbotham.com

AIM:
www.aim-museums.co.uk

Redeveloping the GEM Website

Introduction

Until March 2018, the GEM website hadn't been redeveloped for nearly 10 years. We knew it was time for change, and everyone else knew it was time too. Furthermore, to ensure the LSC project was resilient and sustainable going forward, we needed a website that was reflective of the current GEM and that encouraged the workforce to share skills and knowledge, network and share opportunities.

Aims and process

The goals for the new website were:

- Clearly communicate our mission as the voice for heritage learning with a fresh look and feel.
- Produce content that will engage our core audiences.
- Increase engagement with our online presence.
- Clearly signpost resources and training opportunities for heritage professionals.

- Support revenue-generating activities for GEM.

We created initial plans for the website based on consultation with our members at the mapping workshops in early 2017. These ideas took shape through working with Thirty8 Digital who superbly guided us throughout the process as our website designers and editors. As the website redevelopment was on a tight schedule (we had just under five months), we were glad to be in their capable hands!

Very simply, the process went something like in the diagram below.

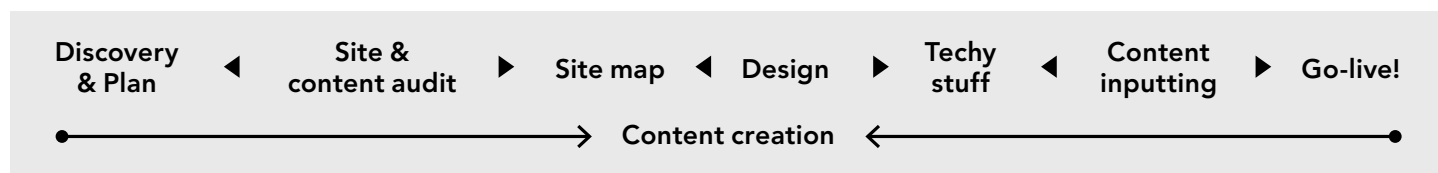
Challenges

The major challenges were:

- Gathering and creating content was more time consuming than anticipated.
- Making sure the team were on the same page.
- Keeping website goals in mind throughout the whole process.
- Realising we couldn't do everything we wanted before the launch date.

Content, content, content

From the get go, our biggest challenge was content. The old website needed a heavy content audit, almost all web pages needed a re-write or refresh, and on top of that we needed to create some new content. In December, our independent website editor moved onto greener pastures, and with only three months to go there wasn't enough time to recruit a replacement. The responsibilities of the website editor were therefore absorbed by the project team and our website designers at Thirty8 Digital.





The final weeks until launch ... dun, dun, duuuun!

One of the first things our web designers said to us was "do not underestimate the time you'll need to spend on content". We didn't truly appreciate this until it came down to the last two weeks, when we realised how much we still needed to tie up. It was stressful, but we prioritised what was essential and let go of the "perfect" launch we had in mind!

The outcomes and what we have learnt so far

- Some things can, and reasonably should, wait until after launch. We now have time to let our users find bugs and suggest further content. Websites are never a finished product!
- We reduced approximately 1,100 old web pages down to just 68 on the new website, we wanted it to be about quality not quantity!
- The website now signposts resources and training opportunities within the sector.
- The website is more outward-facing and showcases the wonderful work of our members – most photographs on the website were contributed by them to illustrate the range of activities GEM supports.
- We've gone from using a simple HTML editor and site management tool (Microsoft Expression Web) to an easy to use content management system (WordPress). This saves time in editing the website and allows us to keep up an ongoing iterative development process.
- And finally, our new website is user and mobile friendly, reflects the current GEM, showcases the value of heritage education, our work and projects, and looks great!

Top tip

I think you'll probably be able to guess my top tip after this: content, content, content – do not underestimate the importance of content!

What's next?

The change has been a long time coming and we're so proud of what has been achieved in just a few months! We love that the website now represents our GEM members and that it has met the project's purpose for sharing training and resource opportunities with the sector.

There's still so much we'd like to do with the website, and with digital changing rapidly I'm sure the work will never stop! But our next priority is phase 2, which is all the things we had to put on the back burner for the launch. Over the coming months we will be exploring functionality, like online payments, increased searchability and more efficient job and event posting, as well as honing our message and growing the representation of our area convenors and members. In the future, we would like to look at using this platform to provide distance learning. We're excited to see where the GEM website will go next!

Jessica Robertson
communications officer, GEM

Find out more...

Check out the new GEM website!
www.gem.org.uk

Follow GEM on social media:
@GEM_heritage

The Value of Heritage Education

Introduction

Following feedback from the sector that we could play a greater advocacy role, GEM commissioned our evaluation consultant to produce a series of webpages making the case for heritage education. They are summarised here.

Heritage education offers a different kind of learning

Learning is fundamental to the purpose of museums and heritage attractions. It is a special kind of learning because of the way it happens: through objects, places and experiences that engage our

intellect, emotions and senses. Museums and heritage sites offer us vivid, experiential opportunities to discover the past and think about how it has shaped the world in which we live today. We remember our encounters with these things because they are moments when something suddenly came to life and we wanted to find out more.

Heritage education matters to the economy

The UK heritage sector is widely recognised as one of our greatest economic assets. It drives overseas and domestic tourism, employs 328,700 people and contributes £21.7 bn to the economy. Audiences are growing. From April to September

2017 74.4% of adults had visited a heritage site at least once. 61.1% of children had visited a museum or gallery in the last 12 months.

Heritage education happens in places that offer a trusted source of knowledge

Research conducted by the Museums Association (MA) shows that people regard museums positively as “guardians of factual information”. This custodianship function and perceived openness to many different points of view is an enduring aspect of their appeal. This is not to say that museums are neutral. No system of interpretation is without bias. But the great thing about our heritage sector is its potential for rediscovery and reinterpretation by each successive generation of curators, educators and visitors.

Heritage education involves people at all stages of life and with a wide variety of needs

Museums and heritage organisations are increasingly responding to the needs of many different audiences. Not only does this commitment to inclusivity build new audiences, but it also compels museums and heritage attractions to reappraise what they do and deliver their public programme in new ways. Data shows that there is much more to be done, but the determination to change is much in evidence.





Heritage education brings out the best in children and deepens classroom learning

Museum pedagogy is based on enquiry, observation, dialogue and a direct physical relationship with objects and spaces. In breaking free from the routine of the classroom, they have to take responsibility for their own behaviour and learning. It may be difficult to prove a conclusive correlation between museum learning and academic attainment. But what is not in doubt is the beneficial impact of learning outside the classroom on cognitive ability, confidence, motivation, problem-solving and communication skills.

Heritage education contributes powerfully to civic awareness and our sense of place

An important aspect of the heritage sector is its role in defining local identity and reinforcing a sense of place. Heritage sites are windows on the past that enhance our own sense of rootedness and belonging. Recent initiatives such as the Royal Society of Arts' Area-based Curriculum and the Heritage Schools programme run by English Heritage/Historic England have developed curriculum models that promote civic awareness and a sense of place. Some cities and regions have even introduced their own "place-based" curriculum.

Heritage education uses the skills of a creative and changing workforce

Heritage education is a broad and varied field, encompassing many different roles and requiring a host of talents. It employs teachers, enablers, demonstrators, technicians, interpreters, storytellers, administrators, programmers, performers, fundraisers, project managers, evaluators, researchers, community workers, volunteers and visitor assistants, all of whom have a part to play in making sure that visitors have the best possible experience.

Heritage education provides a way to wellbeing

A growing body of research evidence suggests that engaging with museums and heritage sites is good for people's mental and physical wellbeing. Museums and heritage sites provide a safe yet stimulating environment where you can learn something new and meet other people. There can be few better places in which to put the so-called "five ways to wellbeing" into practice: Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning, Give.



What's next?

Through our online resources, GEM will continue to signpost advocacy tools. We are also increasing our advocacy activity to make the case for heritage education across and beyond the sector.

Sheila McGregor
evaluation consultant

Find out more...

About the value of heritage education:

www.gem.org.uk/our-work

Find Sheila McGregor on LinkedIn.

Learning and Sharing Events

Introduction

GEM's greatest strength is its people. Informal learning and sharing allows us to shake up our thinking, seek support and solutions, collaborate, build skills, and have a much-needed break.

The LSC learning and sharing events comprised:

- Five CPD mapping workshops.
- Nine *Empower the Educator!* events.
- A special event for mentors.
- The *Learning and Sharing Centre* conference.

Mapping Workshops

Between February and March 2017, the GEM team ran five workshops in the Petrie Museum, London, School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, Leeds Discovery Centre, 21 The Mint, Exeter, and Discovery Museum, Newcastle. The purpose of these workshops was to gather leading sector professionals to map the CPD landscape in their area.

The workshops showed that there were many effective training providers in the sector, but CPD and networking was inconsistent across England, some areas receiving more than others. Loss of Renaissance funding

had diminished local networks, which were only now recovering. Concerns were raised about lack of career movement. Peer support and advocacy within a strong, single network were in high demand and it was here where GEM was viewed as a significant asset.

The responses from these workshops allowed GEM to produce a snapshot map of the gaps and duplication in training across England, which has been a useful starting point for our further CPD development.

Empower the Educator!

In increasingly pressured museums, educators are struggling to find the time and space to speak up for themselves, experiment with their ideas, and take care of their wellbeing. A series of sharing events entitled *Empower the Educator!* was designed to bring educators together to work on these challenges.

The events were designed in collaboration with the GEM area

convenors. The host venues (Leeds Discovery Centre, American Museum in Britain, Bath, Great North Museum: Hancock, Newcastle, IWM Duxford, Freud Museum, London, London Canal Museum, Museum of Liverpool, and Derby Museum and Art Gallery) all ran their own sessions showcasing their work, inspiring participants and advocating their achievements.

The idea was to run highly participatory and flexible events, helping participants to feel in control and relaxed. Ideas and solutions were collectively generated through discussion and practical exercises, building confidence and connections. These ideas have been collated into a resource for the GEM website, so that anyone can turn to it for a helping hand.

The feedback from *Empower the Educator!* was extremely positive. Feedback repeatedly used words to do with inspiration, confidence and reassurance. These feelings show that we should not underestimate the value of informal events.

Special Event for Mentors

For our foundation course: *Museum Learning*, GEM pairs each participant with a mentor. We wanted to give this great group of volunteers more support, so we ran a special event (April 2018, Manchester Museum) for them to build skills and give feedback on how we can develop their role.





Mentors shared their experiences, discussed important skills, and fed back about their needs. It included a session by Tamsin Russel, professional development officer for the Museums Association, giving expert advice on being an effective mentor.

We really enjoyed seeing how passionate mentors were about helping others and advancing the sector. We are using their feedback to create as rewarding an experience as possible for them going forward.

Learning and Sharing Centre Conference

We held the closing *Learning and Sharing Centre* conference in March 2018 at the National Army Museum, London. We wanted to share the project outcomes, but also continue our focus on participation and reflection, taking the opportunity to gather further ideas.

Short talks in the morning were delivered by members of the project team, sharing their work and learning,

these speakers then ran free group discussions on these themes to gather more ideas about evaluation, training, events, business planning and digital development. In the afternoon training was explored through intermediate course taster workshops and a session from course participants. Finally, the project legacy was discussed. The day aimed to give opportunities to ask questions and share ideas, in the spirit of the LSC overall.

Outcomes

The main outcome of all these events has been strengthened relationships with our members. We have been able to share our developments and invite participants to be part of our planning. We have also laid the groundwork for increasing our reach and operating more nationwide.

Participants have strengthened their networks and gained opportunities to exchange ideas and shape support going forward. Many reported increased feelings of wellbeing,

confidence, motivation and inspiration, showing the importance of learning and sharing events.

Next steps

We have been so pleased with the positive reception of these events and are committed to keeping the momentum going. Over the coming months we will be strengthening relationships with the areas, including the other countries of the UK. We will continue to promote the importance of giving time to learning and sharing for more productive and innovative workplaces.

Holly Bee
education officer, GEM

Find out more...

GEM events:

www.gem.org.uk/training-and-events

GEM resources:

www.gem.org.uk/resource

Business Training Consultancy: A Stronger GEM for a Stronger Sector

Introduction

GEM commissioned a team of consultants to analyse the training landscape and make recommendations on meeting sector needs and increasing our sustainability.

Scope and aims of research

GEM commissioned detailed research into the professional development needs of the museum and heritage learning workforce. The objectives were to:

- Audit overall CPD provision in museum and heritage learning.
- Assess the potential for an online learning offer.
- Consider the future use of GEM's Core Competencies.
- Propose new products and alliances, with possible funding streams.
- Analyse how GEM could market and monetise its training services.

Methodology

In early 2018 the team audited all CPD advertised over a three-week period for people working in museums and heritage organisations; distributed an

online survey to GEM members and the wider heritage education sector; assessed the extent of the market for GEM's training in the UK and internationally; explored the potential for GEM to pilot online learning; analysed GEM's business operation; and carried out desk research and telephone interviews with key stakeholders.

CPD audit

The team recorded and categorised no fewer than 137 museum and heritage courses under headings that included: subject, provider, target audience, location, format, and cost.

Only 17 per cent of all CPD on offer was specifically targeted at learning staff. 30 per cent of training took place in London and the South East. Relative to population, the East of England was well provided with training, while other areas in the west and north needed more. Most training is offered in the form of one-day or half-day workshops (76 per cent), although webinars are growing in availability (7 per cent).

Online survey

The online survey attracted 182 responses. Significantly, 32 per cent of respondents were not GEM members and 37 per cent worked in

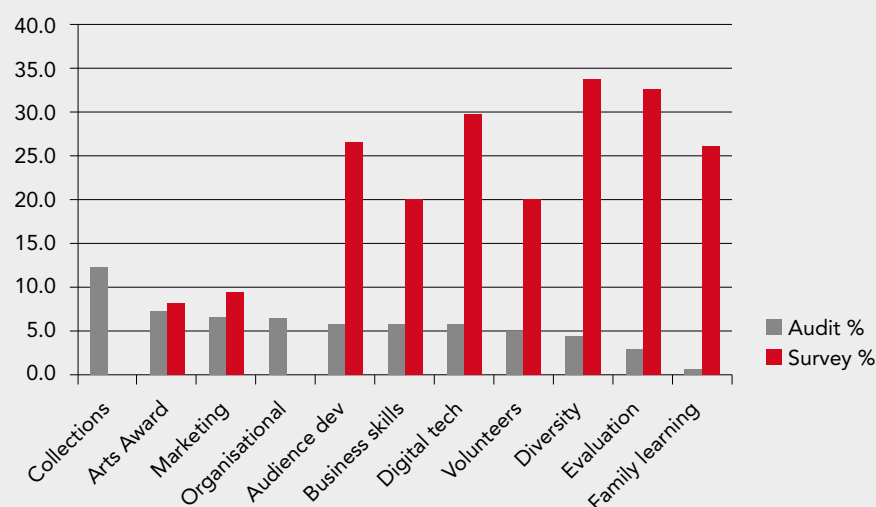
non-museum settings. Clearly GEM has a high profile and potential market among general heritage learning professionals.

The organisations which respondents used most extensively were Museum Development teams (47 per cent), Bridge organisations (30 per cent), and Kids in Museums (28 per cent). Asked to indicate training preferences, respondents prioritised CPD around widening engagement with communities and diversifying audiences. There is also a high demand for training in evaluation and audience consultation. About 30 per cent of respondents would like CPD relating to leadership and career progression. Mentoring was also a popular option. Unsurprisingly, the biggest barriers to taking up CPD were time, cost and distance of travel.

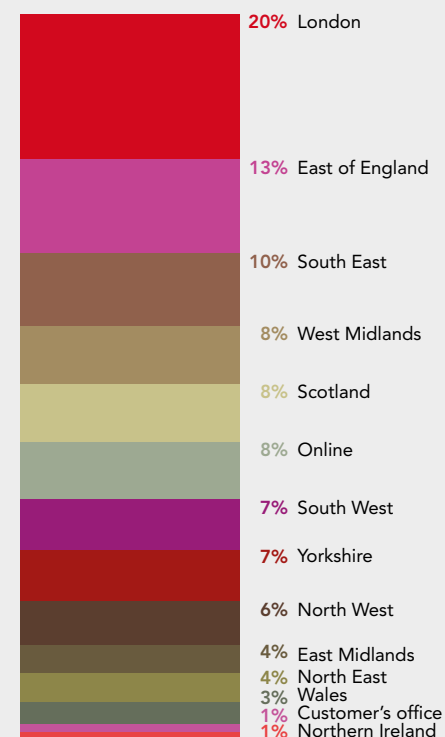
The graphs reveal the gap between professional development needs and what is on offer. In Table Two the blue columns show the top nine types of CPD identified through the audit, while the red columns show what percentage of survey respondents expressed interest in those types of CPD.



Table 12 Comparison between results of CPD snapshot and survey preferences



CPD snapshot: target audience



Wider heritage sector and international working

The research team concluded that there is considerable scope for GEM to offer its services to the wider heritage workforce, including bodies such as the National Trust, the Churches Conservation Trust, historic houses, archives, wildlife trusts and national parks. Over time there is also potential for GEM to offer CPD programmes internationally, but this will depend on finding the right partnerships.

Online learning

Over half of survey respondents favoured online or distance learning as a method of delivering CPD. The research team recommends that GEM should pilot a course with a partner in Higher Education, in order to share the burden of significant up-front production and platform costs.

GEM's Core Competencies

40 per cent of survey respondents were aware of GEM's Core Competencies,

with many using them to frame appraisals and job descriptions. However, it is clear that they could be better advertised, presented and integrated.

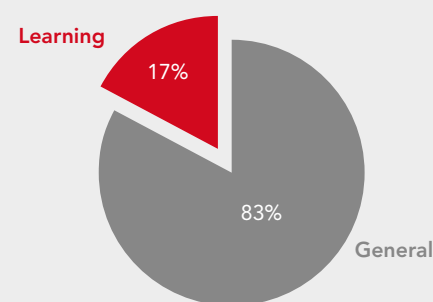
Where next for GEM?

Many would like GEM to step up its advocacy role by working more closely with the sector's lead bodies, influencing debate about cultural and education policy and developing a stronger presence across the UK. Nevertheless, GEM is well loved and supported and its services are highly valued.

The evidence generated by this research has given GEM evidence and ideas that will help it make a powerful case to funders for further investment. To invest in the people who bring our heritage to life is, after all, to secure its future.

Sheila McGregor, Felicity Woolf, Emma Hutson and Mike Woodward
business training consultants

CPD snapshot: target audience



Find out more...

About GEM's new developments: sign up to the eBulletin at www.gem.org.uk

About Felicity Woolf: felicitywoolfassociates.co.uk

About Mike Woodward: woodwardcultural.co.uk

Find Sheila McGregor and Emma Hutson on LinkedIn.

Project Evaluation

Introduction

GEM commissioned a consultant to evaluate the LSC, suggest ways forward and act as a “critical friend” throughout the project.

Scope and aims of research

The aim of this evaluation has been to show how Arts Council England funding has impacted on GEM’s organisational resilience. Evaluation was built in from the outset and has encompassed:

- CPD mapping events in five locations.
- Foundation Course: *Effective Engagement* in three locations.
- Five intermediate courses, each in three locations.
- Advanced Workshop: *The Learning Curve* in three locations.
- Website development.
- Nine sharing events in different areas.
- Final conference.

What is resilience?

For the purposes of this evaluation, resilience has been defined as the ability of organisations to anticipate and adapt to change, so that they can survive and prosper. This has been understood to require:

- Clarity of core purpose and values.
- Strong networks and partnerships.
- Willingness to experiment and learn.

- Viable business model based on analysis of market need.

- Right staff and service offer.

- Efficient delivery.

These characteristics have guided the design of the evaluation methodology, which has included first-hand observation of training events, participant feedback surveys, online surveys and interviews with all delivery partners and course leaders.





Baseline assessment

The LSC programme unfolded over circa 18 months. It is challenging to demonstrate significant change in such a short space of time, but some attempt was made to establish a baseline against which progress could be measured.

Discussion with the GEM board and two short surveys (one internal and the other external) indicated that priorities for development were stronger regional partnerships, greater clarity of purpose, more visible advocacy for the role of heritage learning and a refreshed web presence.

Who benefited from the LSC programme?

Some 230 people took part in training courses, in addition to the 164 who attended roundtable discussions, sharing events and the final conference. A majority came from medium-sized and larger organisations, presumably because they still have budgets for professional development. It is striking how many were from the wider heritage sector (e.g. Historic Royal Palaces, National Trust, wildlife trusts, archive services etc.), indicating that GEM's reach already goes well beyond its core constituency of museum educators.

Just over one-third of intermediate course participants had worked in the sector for less than five years; one-third for between five and ten years; and one-third for more than ten years. These findings confirm GEM's crucial role in supporting the workforce in early and in mid-career.



The LSC courses

Considerable effort went into the design and delivery of the LSC courses. Course directors provided detailed resources and practical workshops and exercises. They adapted their approach to individual needs and often established a close mentoring relationship with participants. Feedback via online surveys was consistently positive, with each course achieving an overall “quality” rating of at least 4 (in a scale of 1-5). Some variation in the take-up of courses indicates the importance of marketing, location and lead-in times.

New website

A central aspect of the LSC programme has been the redevelopment of GEM’s website. The use of WordPress is a leap forward in resilience because it is open-source, gives GEM access to a large community of developers and offers many useful plug-ins. Just as importantly, the website now looks spacious and lively, with plenty of images and calls to action. It also features a user-friendly jobs section and listings of suppliers and training events.

Conclusions

To develop and deliver such a far-reaching programme of training and website development in only 18 months has been an enormous undertaking for GEM’s small team. They have nonetheless carried through the LSC programme with impressive efficiency.

The LSC programme has generated new partnerships, increased the organisation’s visibility and given it a licence to try out new approaches to training. There has been much to learn about the content of courses, as well as marketing, logistics and income generation. With the additional intelligence furnished by the business training consultancy, GEM now has a sharper appreciation of the market for its professional development services.

Feedback from course participants suggests that the programme has contributed in meaningful ways to their own resilience. Many report that the training has boosted their confidence and given them a repertoire of tools and techniques that they can take back to the workplace. Above all, the

programme has helped people learn and share together, reinforcing what one interviewee perceptively described as GEM’s commitment to “the wisdom of the crowd”.

Sheila McGregor
evaluation consultant

Find out more...

About GEM’s new developments:
sign up to the eBulletin at
www.gem.org.uk

Find Sheila McGregor on LinkedIn.

What Comes Next?

Introduction

The *Learning and Sharing Centre* has been a really productive project. It has allowed GEM to build a new portfolio of courses, develop our online presence, expand our activities and evaluate our business. It has been a huge step forward in establishing a Centre of Excellence for Museum Learning, a central hub for sharing, developing and advocating best practice in our sector. Not only has the LSC moved us forward, it has shaped our direction for the next steps.

CPD provision

Using the information and recommendations from the business training consultancy, mapping workshops and event feedback, we will continue to shape our CPD provision responsively to the needs identified by our members and participants. The courses developed for the LSC were on topics identified by previous consultation and now we have a new set of priorities, including diversity and inclusion and audience development. We will be continuing the intermediate and advanced courses developed for the LSC and incorporating the evaluation of the pilots to make them even more high



quality. We will continue to investigate the best ways of delivering foundation level CPD accessibly. This new annual programme begins in Autumn 2018.

As well as formal training, we will be drawing on the informal CPD events funded by the project to grow our area activities and promote the importance of peer support and sharing to career

development and the cultivation of good practice. We will also use the relationships formed during the LSC to signpost training and events across the sector and develop an online "one-stop-shop" for training, to increase coordination between sector supporting organisations.



Organisational development

Through working with evaluation and business training consultants and continually gathering feedback from our members and participants, we have collected a large number of recommendations to shape our direction. We will continue to communicate with our members and incorporate their ideas and needs into our iterative planning.

The partnerships and relationships developed throughout the LSC will remain important to us and we will coordinate with organisations across the sector to share opportunities and prevent duplication. We will also work more closely with our area convenors and other area representatives to grow our provision UK-wide, reaching out into less well-provisioned areas and further into the wider heritage sector. We will keep increasing our advocacy and influencing at policy level to make positive change for educators and their audiences.

Finally...

As we grow, we will continue our commitment to self-sustainability, strengthening GEM to in turn help the resilience of the sector. We will also remain committed to a grass-roots, member-led approach. All of us here at GEM would like to reiterate our thanks to ACE, our partners, our convenors, members and participants for making the LSC such a success and building a future for heritage learning together.

Holly Bee
education officer, GEM

Website

We were very excited to launch our new website, with new signposting to events, suppliers and resources, new pages on careers and the value of heritage education, and refreshed, user-friendly, and outward-facing content and design. The next few months will allow us and our members to identify issues and tighten up the website. We will then implement a second phase of development, which will introduce new features,

like online payments and increased search functionality. We will also look out for small funding opportunities to develop some online distance learning.

The move to WordPress has made ongoing edits significantly easier, so our online presence will now become more iterative as we develop our message, grow the listings and increase representation of our convenors and members.

Find out more...

GEM:
www.gem.org.uk

Arts Council England:
www.artscouncil.org.uk



Training with GEM

Don't miss out on these high quality professional development opportunities at foundation, intermediate and advanced level!

If you are working, volunteering or interested in heritage learning and cultural engagement, then GEM has something for you. Our range of courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced level provide the expert tutoring, lively peer networking and hands-on skill-building to suit a variety of needs.

Every course is designed in line with the GEM Core Competencies – the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours of the heritage learning workforce. They are also flexible to the individual, with each course containing diverse case studies and site visits, and manageable assignments that apply the learning directly to your workplace and fit into your schedule. Our course directors are all experts in their field and will work individually with you to ensure you have the most rewarding experience possible.

For more information and to book:
Visit www.gem.org.uk,
email office@gem.org.uk,
or call **01634 853424**

Foundation course:

Our Foundation Course: *Museum Learning* is for practitioners and volunteers in the early stages of their career. Through six site visits and training days across three months, you will discover the scope of museum learning, develop skills in teaching, interpretation and facilitation, explore key issues, challenge traditional ideas, learn how to manage projects, people and your career, and create your own learning project that will fit instantly into your workplace. You'll also make new friends!

"I think it will really help with the planning and delivery of events and I'll be able to hold my own with the Learning and Engagement Officer. Thank you very much again for making the course so enjoyable, it certainly helped raise my confidence levels!"

Intermediate courses:

Our intermediate courses help mid-career professionals hone their skills in specific areas. Raise your expertise, renew your passion, examine your programming and take a strong step forward with a supportive network of peers.

- *Heritage Interpretation*
- *Creative Collaborations*
- *Health and Wellbeing*
- *Essentials of Leadership*
- *Fundraising and Income Generation*

"I feel that the possibilities are endless!"

Advanced workshop:

Our Advanced Workshop: *The Learning Curve – How leading a learning museum can transform your business* brings museum directors and managers together with their learning staff to explore what it means to learn as an organisation. Take some time to reflect and experiment with new approaches, discover the value of learning, and find solutions to challenges with peers and colleagues.

"It reminded me that change in an organisation is a learning experience – and that much management work can be seen in this way. And that is a good way to view learning."

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GEM Case Studies 23

Copy date:
12 October 2018
Publication:
30 November 2018

Case Studies is
published twice a
year by GEM but all
opinions expressed
remain those of the
named authors.
© GEM 2016

Designed by
Steers McGillan Eves
01225 465546

Cover:
GEM training and
events 2017–18

A large print version is available
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GEM office.

Index

Vol.22 2018

- | | |
|--|--|
| 3 Overview of the <i>Learning and Sharing Centre Project</i>
John Stevenson and Holly Bee | 20 The Learning Curve
Nick Winterbotham |
| 6 The LSC Partners | 22 Redeveloping the GEM Website
Jessica Robertson |
| 8 Effective Engagement
Pete Brown | 24 The Value of Heritage Education
Sheila McGregor |
| 10 Heritage Interpretation
Sarah Oswald | 26 Learning and Sharing Events
Holly Bee |
| 12 Working with Artists
in Heritage Settings
Helen Pike | 28 Business Training Consultancy:
A Stronger GEM for a
Stronger Sector
Sheila McGregor, Felicity
Woolf, Emma Hutson and
Mike Woodward |
| 14 Health and Wellbeing
Laura Bedford | 30 Project Evaluation
Sheila McGregor |
| 16 Essentials of Leadership
Kiz Crosbie | 33 What Comes Next?
Holly Bee |
| 18 Fundraising and
Income Generation
Jane Avison | |