

Community and Heritage committee meeting – 14.10.26

Update from Community Engagement Officer, Kate Green

The focus of my work has been around the community engagement aspect of the museum's new heritage store extension.

My role in the project, which began in November 2025 and continues for another two years, is to connect the public with the project, our collection of 18,000 objects and to explore activities that can happen in the extended stores when they open in 2028.

As such, I have been connecting with groups who we have worked with over the last 6 years as well as developing new connections to broaden our reach. I have trialled a range of activities and continue to evaluate and develop what our activity offer will be in the future. The project has 5 rounds of activities and I have completed round 1 and am near to completing round 2

The total number of people engaged with since November 2025 = 2,124. (in our application to the National Heritage Lottery Fund we anticipated working with 2,500 people across the 3 years and so we are well ahead of our predictions)

Below is an outline of activities for Round 2 that I have undertaken since June. **In round 2, I have engaged with 975 people to date.**

Of particular interest is: –

- Our Family History Day in June organised in partnership with Devon Family History Society,
- A cultural sharing event in the museum with our local Ukrainian community
- Our new project called Winning the Clay in partnership with both Staffordshire University and University of Arts London that highlights the local, ball clay industry and
- Our new partnership with a local care home, St Benet's, who have raised over £300 for the museum with special events.
- An accessibility Focus group looking at ways in which we can make our new store suitable for people with additional needs
- We have also run a successful Heritage Store information-sharing day on the recent Bank Holiday Monday when 43 local people came into the museum to find out about the project.

Round 2 activities

1.6.26	Ukrainian Community group	8	Working with members of the Ukrainian community to install Your Space and the New Acquisitions case to share objects relating to Ukrainian culture. Also planning for a community sharing event at the end of June.
2.6.26	Wolborough Primary School	23	Picture This. Visit to the museum by a class with the topic of Victorians. Exploration of the museum with a trail focusing on Victorian objects. Dressing up in Victorian clothes and discussing items of clothing. Art activity – sharing two scrap books from the 1840's and follow on activity with the children making their own scrap book with

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			Victorian style printouts and images of objects in the museum.
2.6.26	Wolborough care home	19	Outreach. Visit to Newton Abbot-based care home. A range of objects taken from the handling collection plus requested items from the collections store focusing on themes of WWII and the railways.
4.6.26	Wolborough Primary School	27	Picture This. Visit to the museum by a class with the topic of Victorians. Exploration of the museum with a trail focusing on Victorian objects. Dressing up in Victorian clothes and discussing items of clothing. Art activity – sharing two scrap books from the 1840's and follow on activity with the children making their own scrap book with Victorian style printouts and images of objects in the museum.
6.6.26	Make and Create family workshop	28	Picture This. Looking at archive photos of significant buildings of the town, plus a model of Forde House for the building trail. Participants then created their own version of local buildings, their houses past and present and some, their dream home.
9.6.26	Accessibility Focus Group meeting	8	Accessibility Focus Group. First meeting of volunteers who will advise us on accessibility issues. Attendees were asked to look around the museum and review the space in terms of accessibility from their experience and perspective. This was followed by a discussion about museums and attractions that they had visited and the accessibility issues they had encountered. The store project was shared and this will be the focus of the next meeting in September.
12.6.26	Wolborough School	8	What's in the Box? Tour of the stores and 'What's in the Box?' activity with a small enrichment group from Wolborough primary school
13.6.26	Family History Day	67	Deep Dive. Exploration of various elements of family history run in partnership with Devon Family History Society. 3 speakers. Family history research training run by volunteers. WW1 family history research session run by museum volunteer John Ellis. Family creative activity to build a family tree run by KG.
18.6.26	Staffordshire University project	1	Planning meeting with Sophy Ricketts from Staffs uni about a 'deep dive' workshop and talk about the history and significance of ball clay in Newton Abbot and the story of the Kingsteignton Idol (Zitherixon man)

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	'Winning the Clay'		
18.6.26	Babbacombe Local History Group	20	What's in the Box? Local history group visit to the museum. Explore of the museum, tour of the stores and explore boxes and the collection. Handling table of objects.
18.6.26	Friends of the museum and volunteers	35	Show and Tell. Talk by volunteer John Ellis about Newton Abbot and WW1. Illustrated by 3 x tables of objects from the collection relating to WW1. A very successful outcome with all attending enjoying this new approach to museum Friends' talks
26.6.26	St Benet's care home	35	Outreach. Special cream tea event run by the care home to raise funds for the museum. Families and supporters of the home attending in addition to residents. Handling objects taken to share.
27.6.26	General public	106	Deep Dive. Event run with members of the Ukrainian community. A community event to highlight Ukrainian culture, Cultural and heritage objects on show in Your Space community cabinet and also extra objects on show in the community rooms. Film showing Ukrain. Ukrainian food available. 1 hour performance from local Ukrainian women's choir.
1.7.26	Highweek school	39	School Visit. Theme of the Railways. Exploring maps and showing the growth of the town from before the railways and also after. Sharing railway objects from the collection. The children drew chosen railway objects and created bunting for their classroom.
2.7.26	Collective Crew	10	What's in the Box? First time visit from teenage, after-school group aged between 11 and 14 after developing connection with group organisers. Tour of the museum and also of the stores. Exploring boxes in the collection and viewing and discussing objects.
4.7.26	Make and Create Family workshop	17	Picture This. Creative workshop for families following the family history day organised with Devon Family History Group in June. Inspired by objects in the collection - family trees and Victorian photo albums, participants created their own family tree artworks.
5.7.26	Local community	110	Outreach. Party in the Park event organised by the town council. A creative stall to make floral headresses. Shared Polish headdress from the collection. Talked to people about the stores project.

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24.7.26	Museum Volunteers	45	Store project update. Summer party in the community rooms for museum volunteers. Powerpoint presentation and talking to all volunteers across the afternoon.
27.7.26	Cwtch community cafe	12	Outreach. Monthly history club outreach. Handling collection shared, update on the stores project.
1.8.26	Make and Create family workshop	13	Picture This. Creative activity inspired by floral embroidered textile from the collection. Teaming up with the community shed group, making wooden flower presses.
5.8.26	Proud to Be LGBTQ+ group	8	What's in the Box? First visit to the museum from this group that we have developed new connections with. Tour and familiarisation of the museum, tour of the stores and exploring boxes. Visit to the summer exhibition - 'The Golden Age of Wildlife Filmmaking'. Also, conservation demonstration with Lucy Cokes, curatorial assistant. Aim to reconnect and plan some activities with the group.
6.8.26	Local families	24	Picture This - Creative Thursdays. Weekly creative workshops inspired by the summer exhibition - 'The Golden Age of Wildlife Filmmaking' Week 1 - water colour painting activity inspired by Andrew Cooper's watercolour paintings.
10.8.26	St Benet's care home residents	4	Visit to the museum. Explore of the museum and summer exhibition. Visit is supported by Newton Abbot community Transport.
13.8.26	Local families	24	Picture This - Creative Thursdays. Weekly creative workshops inspired by the summer exhibition - 'The Golden Age of Wildlife Filmmaking'. Week 2 Butterfly pinning using old maps from around the world. Also viewing of a draw of moths from the Entemology collection.
18.8.26	Adults	14	Picture This. Creative activity inspired by the summer exhibition. Sound recording for grown ups! Viewing sound recorders on show in the exhibition and sound installation in the museum space from experimental, Dartmoor-based radio station – Skylark FM. Exploring various technologies for sound recording. Hands on experience of sound recording upstairs and in the museum.
20.8.26	Local families	20	Picture This - Creative Thursdays. Weekly creative workshops inspired by the summer exhibition - 'The Golden Age of Wildlife Filmmaking'. Week 3 – sound recording. Using sound recording equipment to record sounds of

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			natural materials, and under water recording with a hydrophone mic. Creating acrostic poetry inspired by the exhibition and recording reading of the poetry.
22.8.26	Residents and families from St Benet's care home	38	Outreach. Stall with handling collection objects at the care home's summer fete, raising funds for the museum. (the care home has also sponsored an object in the museum (£150) and has raised money from a cream tea event (£50) This event has raised £x) Large banner about the stores project, leaflets and updates about the stores project.
27.8.26	Local families	30	Picture This - Creative Thursdays. Weekly creative workshops inspired by the summer exhibition - 'The Golden Age of Wildlife Filmmaking'. Week 4 – Animal masks. Inspired by the taxidermy on show in the exhibition, participants made animal masks , followed by a musical parade around the museum.
31.8.26	Local community	43	Information sharing day. An open, public event in the museum sharing the Heritage Store project with interested members of the community, running from 1100am – 4.30pm. Letters sent to local residents and social media posts raised the profile of the day. The day included;A welcome desk with the banner, visualisations of the stores, collection booklets, Two activities as examples of the activity plan – A ‘Deep Dive’ into the Mid Devon Advertiser from 1900 and a ‘Picture This’ activity with objects from the handling collection and sketching material available, tours of the stores showing current conditions and explaining the need for a new store building. The store tours were the most popular element of the day. Good feedback and support from people plus a donation to the project of £100!
1.9. 26	community	2	Community Curation. De-install and install of Your Space. Exhibition 1 of 102 fire engines, exhibition 2 of school attendance medals and certificates.
5.9.26	Local families	5	Picture This. Make and Create activity for local families as part of Heritage Open Days and the theme of ‘entertainment’ The theme for the workshop was the Alexandra Theatre built in the town in the 1700’s as a Corn Exchange and changed into a theatre in 1833. Shared objects from the collection relating to the theatre – programmes, leaflets and also a scrap book full of programmes and associated newspaper clipping.

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			Participants made min-theatres from boxes and assorted materials.
11.9.26	Museum Volunteers, Friends of the museum & local people	37	Deep Dive. A deep dive into Ball Clay. A talk and discussion with 'Winning the Clay' project partners – Staffordshire University and University of the Arts, London. An in-depth exploration of the ball clay industry
12.9.26	Local families	15	Picture This. Workshop around the ball clay industry with a focus on the Zitherixon figure. A background, illustrated talk about the figure. Workshop focus on the figure – invent arms for the figure and make the figure out of clay.
14.9.26	Local artists	4	Picture This. The first in the series of the Autumn/Winter Twilight Sketching activity. Participants sketched items around the museum, new items in the Your Space community cabinet plus objects chosen by the Summer Young Curator club.
16.9.26	Care Home	28	Outreach. Visit to a new care home with objects from the handling collection.
28.9.26	Collector	1	Your Space community cabinet. Install new monthly display.
28.9.26	Artists	3	Picture This. Twilight Sketching. Objects from the stores – Railway and trade themed items.
29.9.26	School	34	Deep Dive. Visit to the museum for a local school studying the railways and growth of the town. Downstairs activity = exploring the museum and worksheets. Upstairs – exploring maps from 1798 and 1889 to discuss the growth of the town after the railways. Exploring railway-themed objects from the stores and handling collection. Discussion about the impact of the railways. Creating postcards with artwork and messages.
3.10.26	Residents and visitors to the town centre	45	Picture This. Creative activity based outside in the town centre focusing on Cabinets of Curiosities and the beginning of museums. Art workshop with participants making their own cabinets.