



# **New Stories New Audiences Evaluation for the Association of Independent Museums (AIM)**

## **Evaluation Headlines**

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## 1. INTRODUCING THE NEW STORIES, NEW AUDIENCES PROGRAMME

AIM has more than 1,000 museum members, of which, around three-quarters (more than 75%) sit within the smallest museum category, with fewer than 20,000 visitors per year. It is these museums that were eligible to apply to New Stories New Audiences.

AIM's New Stories New Audiences (NSNA) scheme offered grants of up to £15,000 to its smaller members (i.e., museums with up to 20,000 visitors per year) to deliver projects that tell new stories about heritage, work with new partners and develop new audiences. Successful grant recipients are allocated a project mentor who can provide support in areas such as community engagement and co-curation that the museums may initially lack.

Each of the three annual grant rounds forms a New Stories cohort that are brought together at the end of each cycle to share learning, contribute to the evaluation of their experience, and inform the creation of new resources. Projects share experiences – building their skills and confidence in applying to funders and in effective project management – and in working confidently with new audiences, through cohort meetings.

The overarching aim of the New Stories New Audiences programme was to support AIM's smaller members (i.e., museums with up to 20,000 visitors per year) to deliver projects that tell a new story that will attract a new audience for their organisation. This linked to, and contributed towards, AIM's Strategic Goals. As noted in the National Lottery Heritage Fund application, this area of work was originally identified as a strategic goal for AIM during the planning cycle of 2018-2023, contributing towards Strategic Goal 2 – "AIM members are more committed to and have taken some actions to diversify and/or grow their visitor numbers".

Furthermore, the aims of New Stories New Audiences also aligned to a range of key sector strategies and priorities around diversifying and broadening audiences – including Arts Council England's Creative Case as well as the three outcomes of Let's Create and the Investment Principles – most notably Inclusivity and Relevance. In addition, it contributed and aligned to MGS's priorities in the National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries – most notably around all aspects of Aim 2 (Strengthen Connections Between Museums, People and Places to Inspire Greater Public Participation, Learning and Well-Being), but also across the other Aims.

Finally, all the projects needed to contribute to the National Lottery Heritage Fund's mandatory outcome: "*A wider range of people will be involved in heritage*" as well as contributing to at least one more of the other outcomes for the Heritage Fund.

## INTRODUCING THE MUSEUMS

NSNA had three cohorts (2023, 2024 and 2025). Table 1 summarises the organisations in each cohort, with further detail to be found in Annex 1.

Table 1: New Stories New Audiences cohorts		
Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3
Castle Bromwich Hall and Castle Gardens	Bawdsey Radar Trust	Bath Industrial Heritage Trust (Museum of Bath)*
Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath, (CEUT) North Uist Historical Society	Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum of Primitive Methodism	Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings
Edeyrnion Heritage and Cultural Society (Corwen)	Foxfield Light Railway Society*	Brook Rural Museum (The Wye Rural Museum Trust)
Judges' Lodgings Museum	Groundwork South and North Tyneside	Chatteris Museum
National Paralympic Heritage Trust	Hundred Heroines	Chertsey Museum
Provan Hall Community Management Trust	Ledbury Places – The Heritage Centre	Crofton Beam Engines
Royal Crown Derby Museum	Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation	Delepre Abbey Preservation Trust
Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome	Museum of Royal Worcester	Finlaggan Heritage Trust
Sturminster Heritage Trust	Royal Engineers Museum	Gordon Russell Design Museum
The Scottish Fisheries Museum Trust	St George's Hospital Medical School	Hayle Heritage Centre
UK Antarctic Heritage Trust	Teign Heritage	Marx Memorial Library & Workers School
Under the Clock Bradford - Bradford Police Museum	The Mixed Museum	Milton's Cottage
Wirral Museums Service - Birkenhead Priory*	Turner's House Trust	Rivington Heritage Trust (Groundwork)
Youth Club Ltd	Wiltshire Museum	Stourbridge Glass Museum

**Note:** \* denotes project that did not complete.

A selection of case studies from participating projects can be found in Annex 2.

### About the evaluation

The Association of Independent Museums commissioned DC Research Ltd and Durnin Research Ltd as evaluators of the New Stories New Audiences (NSNA) programme in late 2021. The evaluation has run alongside the NSNA programme, assessing the impacts of supported museums each year.

The overall evaluation approach maximised the use of existing data – e.g., information provided by applicants in their reporting to AIM – and avoided consultation and data collection fatigue to make the evaluation as effective and efficient as possible for the projects and for AIM.

The evaluation involved the efficient collection of consistent evidence to show specific project impacts and overall scheme impacts. It used the 'Theory of Change' based NSNA Evaluation Framework to guide the study, and then the following took place on an annual basis:

- Participation in cohort briefings, catch-up sessions and workshops.
- Evidence capture proformas for each project.

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- Consultations with projects to capture the wider, qualitative impacts.
- Annual reporting for AIM and NLHF, and preparation of selected case studies.

This focused and pragmatic summative report celebrates NSNA's achievements and captures overall outcomes and achievements by:

- Summarising the evaluation work carried out.
- Understanding the nature and extent and sustainability of the new audiences.
- Capturing the longer-term legacy impacts and lessons from the projects.

It is based on a survey sent to all projects in the spring of 2025 which received a response from 37 of the 39 completed projects (a response rate of 95%), and a series of consultations with those involved in funding and managing the programme and supporting the project.

## 2. ABOUT THE NEW STORIES AND THE NEW AUDIENCES

### NEW STORIES

Identifying the **stories** *"that matter to people is really important"* – and taking this lesson forward into future practice for the museum is a key lesson highlighted by a number of the NSNA projects. **Some museums highlighted that NSNA has changed their approach to storytelling and what stories they tell.**

The survey provided useful insight into the way museums have incorporated the New Stories into their collections.

Part of your collection and currently on display in the museum (78%)	78%
Part of your collection but not currently on display in the museum (11%)	11%
Part of your collection, currently on loan to a partner (6%)	6%
Not part of the collection (6%)	6%
<b>Source:</b> Durnin Research and DC Research NSNA Programme Survey, May 2025, n=34	

Those New Stories that are not now part of the collection and on display are:

- Awaiting display, or in store.
- On loan and on display with the partner, or touring.
- Digital in nature, and therefore available online.
- Periodically used as the basis of short-term exhibitions.
- Displayed externally (trails etc).

With regard to the future, projects indicated that they would like to expand their stories and continue gathering oral histories and community stories. Some planned to make NSNA content accessible online or through audio guides and video shorts.

Most NSNA projects wish to further integrate materials into permanent or travelling exhibitions to further engage their new audiences. This includes:

- **Exhibitions and Displays:** Integrating new stories into permanent and temporary exhibitions, touring exhibitions, and shared community display areas. Extending exhibition runs (e.g. for award-nominated projects) and embedding stories into interpretation materials.
- **Events and Talks:** Using new stories to shape talks programmes, and developing special event days, pop-up exhibitions, and community talks.
- **Oral Histories and Community Engagement:** Continuing to collect oral histories; expanding outreach with groups that engaged with projects.
- **Educational Programmes:** Enhancing school workshops and youth engagement, including developing resources for underrepresented stories and engaging younger age groups.
- **Digital and Online Content:** Creating dedicated project websites, video archives, and interactive resources. Using digital content to boost online presence and develop audio/video formats for new audiences.

- **Special Projects and Collaborations:** Launching new initiatives building on existing work; and developing new frameworks for storytelling around contemporary issues like climate change and neurodiversity awareness.
- **Legacy:** Embedding stories into future museum tours, dressing-up stations, and interpretation materials; and seeking additional funding for interactive displays, further exhibitions.

**NEW AUDIENCES**

The survey asked if the museums were still working with the New Audiences that they engaged with during their project.

<b>Table 3: Are you still working with these audiences?</b>			
	<b>Cohort 1</b>	<b>Cohort 2</b>	<b>Cohort 3</b>
Yes, we have continued to actively engage with them	27%	46%	75%
Yes, they have become part of our core audience	18%	31%	17%
We have kept in touch but not as actively as we hoped	36%	23%	8%
No	18%	0%	0%
<b>Source:</b> Durnin Research and DC Research NSNA Programme Survey, May 2025, n=36			

Those projects that have continued to actively engage, and those that have brought their new audiences into their audience core have tended to continue to work with their partners after the end of the project.

Museum closure, and poor response to aspects of the project offer were responsible for the two 'no' instances in Cohort 1. A pattern of active engagement declining over time is evidence from the Table 3 results – emphasising the importance of the continuing efforts required of museums to maintain this active engagement.

The survey also asked museums whether that has experienced a sustained change in visitor number as a result of their NSNA project.

<b>Table 4: Have you experienced a sustained change in visitor numbers as a result of NSNA?</b>				
	<b>Cohort 1</b>	<b>Cohort 2</b>	<b>Cohort 3</b>	<b>Aggregate</b>
Yes	64%	64%	42%	<b>56%</b>
No	36%	36%	58%	<b>44%</b>
<b>Source:</b> Durnin Research and DC Research NSNA Programme Survey, May 2025, n=35				

Projects that noted a sustained change in visitor numbers following their project reported increases of between 5% and 77%, although many acknowledged that their NSNA was unlikely to be responsible for all of the increase, but had certainly made an important contribution.

### 3. NEW PARTNERS, NEW APPROACHES

#### WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Working with partners was an important part of the NSNA programme. The survey found that over three quarters (76%) of projects are still working with their NSNA partner in 2025.

Those that are continuing to work with their partners reported a variety of benefits of doing so:

- Support with funding applications.
- Ongoing content generation and development.
- Making further introductions to new partners, and further sharing of knowledge.
- Hosting more meetings at the museum.
- More visits from other local schools.
- Bringing work and collections to the attention of different audiences.

Where there were issues, these were with individuals (for example illness at key points, variances of commitment etc). Of those that are not still working with their partner, a number had disengaged or individuals had moved on. One project mentioned that new project work was taking precedence, and another cited that their partner did not have the resources to continue to work with them.

In the main, projects had a good experience working with partners, although some partners had different objectives and priorities. Most projects gained confidence from this process and a number are continuing to collaborate either to extend the NSNA activity or work together on other activities.

Projects found that it was important to get a partner that could commit to a plan for the project. Some projects ended up working with different partners than planned as their original partner did not, or could not, commit, with one project suggesting it is helpful to *"informally gauge their commitment to it"* when selecting a partner.

As noted above, many of the projects are continuing with the partnerships that have been developed through NSNA and NSNA has enabled them to test and develop new collaborations that they expect will last – providing a clear legacy of the projects – *"the seeds that the project has sown will carry on growing"*.

Cohort 2 and 3 projects have also benefited from the findings in the first evaluation report about the need to be clear with partners at the outset in terms of priorities and working arrangements. The use of a 'memorandum of understanding' to underpin a new partnership or collaboration was helpful for some, whilst it was found to be too formal for others.

A few of the partners that projects worked with helped host organisations develop their understanding of the needs of specific audience groups.

For those that included a co-curation aspect to their projects a key lesson was about the time it takes to do this. Working with an established group rather than bringing together individuals into a new group is helpful as it can build on the prior trust that the group already has amongst themselves. One project reflected that *"our NSNA project taught us a huge amount about co-curation" whilst another reflected that "co-production takes time...you don't have to co-produce everything, be picky on what you co-produce"*.

Table 5 shows that the vast majority of projects (91%) were more confident in working with new partners as a result of NSNA, with most having strengthened in confidence even further since the end of the project.

<b>Table 5: More confidence in working with new partners?</b>	
Yes by end of project, and strengthened further	71%
Yes by end of project, but stayed same	20%
Yes by end of project, but since diminished	6%
No by end of project, and stayed same	3%
<b>Source:</b> Durnin Research and DC Research NSNA Programme Survey, May 2025, n=34	

### Developing new approaches and different ways of working

Projects benefited from a range of new and different approaches and ways of working whilst delivering their NSNA projects, little of which would have happened without NSNA. This includes engaging with audiences (new and old), partnership working, collaboration and co curation/production, capturing and presenting stories, developing exhibitions, developing stories, etc.

Many of the approaches learnt by projects and partners for engaging new audience groups are likely to be sustained. This could be 'as is', or adapted to suit the circumstances of activities as they go forward.

Projects found that it was important to have the ability to adapt as circumstances changed.

*"As a project manager there are always times when you need to adapt to make a project a success. In this project it has been much more unstructured than I had anticipated, so learning to "go with the flow", whilst still moving forward is a challenge sometimes".*

## 4. SUPPORTING THE PROJECTS, KEEPING THE PROGRAMME ON TRACK

### **The role of the mentors assigned as part of the NSNA programme were almost universally praised by NSNA projects.**

The approachability of the mentors; the flexibility as to how the projects were able to work with mentors at the project's convenience; the advice, guidance, and support mentors provided to project leads; and the practical suggestions mentors made to help the development and delivery of the projects were all well recognised and emphasised by the projects.

The role of the mentors assigned as part of the NSNA programme is a key success of NSNA. This was supported through:

- The approachability of the mentors.
- Flexibility as to how the projects were able to work with mentors at the project's convenience.
- Practical suggestions mentors made to help the development and delivery of the projects were all well recognised and emphasised by the projects.

More than three-quarters (80%) of projects reported that mentors were very helpful in supporting delivery.

Some projects benefited greatly from working with mentors, with others having light touch (or very light touch) engagement. For any future projects, whilst a mentor should be allocated, agency should be with the project as to the extent to which this support is called upon.

### **The cohort meetings were valued by many projects, particularly the residentials.**

Whilst there was a notable range of projects in terms of subject matter, and also varying levels of experience amongst project leads, participating projects benefited from sharing experiences and project journeys within the cohort.

The cohort meetings were valued by many projects, particularly the residential element. Participating projects benefited from sharing experiences and project journeys within the cohort.

*"So nice to get to talk to other people"*

A minority of others felt them less useful, with a couple frustrated with the time involved, and one questioning whether it was fair to compel those in volunteer roles to attend.

Despite this, the vast majority (85%) found them to be useful, many of these describing the meetings as very useful. On balance, these meetings are an important part of the programme, and of benefit to many. Fundamentally cohort meetings are a formal part of the programme, and participation is, and should be considered as, a grant condition.

### **AIM's approach to delivering NSNA is highly respected by projects, by mentors and by the Heritage Fund.**

Several projects reported that they had originally applied unsuccessfully to NSNA for the first cohort, but had considered the feedback received from AIM, refined and improved their approach, and were subsequently successful in applying to future cohorts.

All projects, without exception, found AIM to be helpful, with three quarters describing them as 'very helpful'.

A few of the more experienced museums questioned whether the reporting required was commensurate with the level of grant awarded. However, on balance, it is a helpful lesson for

the less experienced museums to become used to the reporting requirements of funders as they develop as fundable organisations.

## 4. OUTCOMES AND SUSTAINABILITY

### Projects were involved in delivering a range of NLHF outcomes through NSNA.

Table 6 highlights which Heritage Fund outcomes the projects reported that they contributed towards. Whilst 'A wider range of people will be involved in heritage' is a mandatory outcome, this had likely slipped the mind of a couple of the responding projects.

<b>Table 6: Which Heritage Fund outcomes did your project contribute to?</b>	
A wider range of people will be involved in heritage	94%
Heritage will be better identified and better explained	71%
People will have developed skills	40%
People will have learnt about heritage leading to a change in ideas and actions	40%
People will have greater well-being	23%
The local area will be a better place to live, work and visit	23%
The funded organisation will be more resilient	11%
<b>Source:</b> Durnin Research and DC Research NSNA Programme Survey, May 2025, multiple response, n=34	

<b>Table 7: Which Heritage Fund outcomes did your project <u>most</u> contribute to?</b>	
A wider range of people will be involved in heritage	51%
Heritage will be better identified and better explained	31%
People will have learnt about heritage leading to a change in ideas and actions	11%
People will have greater well-being	6%
<b>Source:</b> Durnin Research and DC Research NSNA Programme Survey, May 2025, n=35	

Table 7 shows the outcome that projects most contribute towards. Over half reported that they contributed towards 'A wider range of people will be involved in heritage', and just under a third contributed towards "Heritage will be better identified and better explained".

### Many projects reported that they developed a range of new skills as a result of their NSNA project.

*"Great levels of confidence to create meaningful opportunities for young people, we learnt the importance of being able to adapt activity and be flexible with our approach to ensure we can engage on a level that suits audience needs"*

80% of projects reported staff developing new skills working with new audiences and different groups. This included:

- Running events and tours.
- Community engagement and working with hard to reach groups.
- Promoting through social media.
- Co-curating/participatory practices.
- Managing partners and relationships.
- Graphic design and audio editing.

*"Our project involved co-curation with a group of young people and we learned a lot about managing relationships, expectations and the importance of timely and consistent communication"*

77% of projects reported volunteers developed new skills working with new audiences and different groups. This included:

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- Trail and pathway design and management, landscape management, interpretation.
- Interpretation and planning exhibition and display of heritage.
- Creative arts, including writing poetry, sculpture and filmmaking.
- Communication and liaison skills across age groups.
- Mounting displays.
- Welcoming and supporting workshops and celebration event with neurodivergent and disabled participants and visitors.

*"Increased confidence in Museum staff working with neurodivergent visitors and those living with disabilities and developed skills and experience in community co-production and artist commissioning. Skills used in subsequent bids and projects"*

Museums that participated in NSNA report that the programme has given them **more confidence** in engaging new audiences, developing new stories, and delivering projects in the future.

*"Be happy to trial things through the project"*

*"Don't be scared to get in touch with – and keep in touch with – funders"*

*"Be bold and go for it".*

The **additional visibility** that some museums now have due to being a NSNA project was acknowledged by a number of projects, highlighting that this increased/higher profile has provided a range of benefits including increased confidence, better engagement and profile with local (non-museum) partners, being featured in local and museum-specific publications, engaging with national museum partners, etc.

**NSNA has also generated sustainability and resilience impacts for those organisations delivering projects.**

<b>Table 8: Has increased sustainability of your organisation been a lasting impact that your project generated for your organisation?</b>	
Yes by end of project, and strengthened further	50%
Yes by end of project, but stayed same	35%
No by end of project, and stayed same	12%
No by end of project, but improved since	3%
<b>Source:</b> Durnin Research and DC Research NSNA Programme Survey, May 2025, n=33	

Table 8 shows that 85% of museums with NSNA projects felt they were more sustainable at the end of their project, with half reporting this has been further strengthened.

<b>Table 9: Has increased resilience of your organisation been a lasting impact that your project generated for your organisation?</b>	
Yes by end of project, and stayed same	42%
Yes by end of project, and strengthened further	39%
No by end of project, and stayed same	9%
Yes by end of project, but since diminished	6%
No by end of project, but improved since	3%
<b>Source:</b> Durnin Research and DC Research NSNA Programme Survey, May 2025, n=32	

Table 9 shows that the majority (81%) of museums with NSNA projects felt they were more resilient at the end of their project, with 42% reporting this has been further strengthened.

## 5. IMPACTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Projects were asked for their 'top three' lessons learned by the museum as a result of their NSNA project.

In terms of **project management**, many projects have learned the importance of being flexible and open to adaptation and change. Building in enough time for research and reflection was highlighted by many, as was the time and effort needed to effectively deliver a project.

**Partnerships and collaborations** were a key feature of NSNA. Projects learned that the selection of partners required care and patience and good judgement, and partner relationships require work and flexibility. Many projects particularly valued working with partners outside the museum/heritage sector, finding them particularly beneficial in bringing new perspectives.

Projects learned a range of nuances in engaging **communities and audiences**. This included not being disheartened if some groups did not engage with projects as expected. Projects found it was important to use creative, practical, and digital methods to engage people, and in particular to be open to ideas and preferred formats suggested by young people.

*"Take the collection into the community before expecting them to visit the museum".*

Projects learned that delivering projects requires **capacity**, and it is important to be clear and realistic on the additional demands that project work can entail. **Good communication** was an essential part of project delivery, particularly in times of challenge. Being open and honest with mentors, funders, and partners, and listening and learning from new audiences and collaborators were vital skills learned by many projects.

Many projects found it important to balance ambition with being realistic about what can be achieved. For example, some originally planned too many events and learned to focus on quality over quantity.

### **Cohort 1 projects, in particular, found timescales to be tight in delivering their projects**

Cohort 1 museums found *"timescales were tight throughout"* – so a key lesson for was to *"give yourselves time at the beginning"*. In addition to which, a number of museums admitted that they *"underestimated the speed at which things happen"* – i.e., that it takes longer than anticipated to get things done on NSNA projects – especially because they are about new stories and new audiences and working with a new partner.

Furthermore, some NSNA museums (especially those that are volunteer-run or volunteer reliant) struggled to deliver the project in the timescales due to capacity and resources issues, and it was recommended at the end of Year 1 that AIM and future cohorts need to be sure that projects are fully aware of the amount of additional time needed to effectively deliver an NSNA project.

As a result, AIM supported Cohort 2 and 3 projects in better ensuring that capacity and resources issues did not impact on project delivery (again, especially for those that are volunteer-run or volunteer reliant). Whilst some projects still had timescale issues, most seemed better aware of the amount of additional time needed to deliver their NSNA project.

**There is good evidence that NSNA has successfully reached museums and heritage groups that couldn't, or wouldn't, have applied directly to the Heritage Fund for support at that time.**

NSNA has successfully created the right circumstances and support for meaningful experiences for the participating projects in working with funders, meeting expectations and deadlines, delivery and reporting.

The programme has successfully supported many participants to better prepare their organisations to be directly funded by funders such as the Heritage Fund. This includes learning from adversity and failure as much as success, in particular the importance of adapting to changing circumstances, and to the needs and priorities of partners.

Providing simple steps, such as programme management support, mentoring, and facilitating peer to peer networking for projects has worked well for smaller independent museums in particular. Participants have learnt about the importance of communicating delivery issues quickly, and being transparent and open.

The ongoing networks with cohorts and mentors also important outcomes, with many relationships continuing after the projects have finished.

AIM have developed significantly as a result of managing and delivering NSNA. They are much better at grant panels and decision making as a result of NSNA. This has resulted in positive impacts in AIM's approach to subsequent grant panels (both for NSNA and panels for other projects and programmes managed by AIM) in terms of challenge and active debate.

AIM is also now more empowered to deal with projects that are underperforming, in crisis, or uncooperative, as a result of its experiences in managing and delivering NSNA.

The Heritage Fund has been supportive throughout, empowering AIM to manage and tweak its approach as the programme progressed. The 'no surprises' approach worked well in both directions, and this way of working was passed onto the projects.

Perhaps one of the strongest outcomes of NSNA is the confidence that museums have gained through successfully delivering their project. NSNA has boosted the confidence to apply for funding for future projects for many of the NSNA museums across all three cohorts. Projects highlighted the effectiveness of collaborative, audience-focused approaches, the benefit of working with mentors, and working with partners to develop new ways of presenting stories and collections.

**Nearly half (47%) of projects are currently considering a Heritage Fund application, and over a quarter (26%) are working towards an application.**

NSNA has also enhanced skills in project management, evaluation, and audience engagement. It identified the importance of actively seeking visitor feedback and adapting project delivery based on audience needs, and shaped ideas for new community-focused exhibitions:

*"The project was the very first funded project we embarked on and gave us the basis of our community engagement programme. This has allowed us to develop further funding applications and use this programme as evidence".*

*"Working through the project, from application to delivery to reporting and evaluation, have added to our confidence in the process and in our ability to deliver the required outcome. In particular, working with the external mentor helped us to plan and to recognize the impact of our activities and to record these realistically".*

*"Our NSNA project has greatly helped thinking about how we better frame and undertake our work with communities and volunteers in ways that meet NLHF requirements".*

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In conclusion, NSNA has resulted in some great outcomes and lasting legacies for many projects. It represents strong value for money for the Heritage Fund in terms of managing cohorts, 'packaging' projects, and allowing museum specialists to provide advice and support.

The Heritage Fund trusted AIM to deliver, and recognised AIM's long-established expertise and credibility in dealing with small independent museums.

Looking to the future, the NSNA approach is now a 'tried and tested' model that can be rolled out into further areas. A key success factor is a programme managing organisation (like AIM) that properly understands, and had a dynamic relationship with, its membership/congregation.

## ANNEX 1: INTRODUCING THE PROJECTS

### There were 14 museums in Cohort 1 of NSNA:

- Birkenhead Priory – A virtual experience.
- Bradford Police Museum – Diversity and Policing: A Shared History.
- 'Collecting Home', Royal Crown of Derby Museum.
- 'Cry of the Forth – Forgotten Stories and Future Voices', The Scottish Fisheries Museum.
- 'Discovering Stories of Provan Hall', Provan Hall.
- 'Facing the Past', Judges' Lodgings Museum.
- 'Home is Here Now – global stories of plants and people', Castle Bromwich Hall and Gardens Trust.
- 'Immersive Antarctica: pioneers of climate science & discovery', UK Antarctic Heritage Trust.
- 'Island Hands Across the Atlantic', Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath (CEUT).
- 'Le Chi - Slate and the Making of Glyndyfrdwy Village', Corwen Museum.
- 'Nature: Near and Now', Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome.
- Paralympic Stories – The Finmere Show, National Paralympic Heritage Trust.
- 'Swanskin Seafarers of Sturminster Newton', Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust.
- 'Tell 'Em: Representing Young People's Perspectives in Museums', Museum of Youth Culture.

### There were 13 museums and projects in Cohort 2 of NSNA:

- **Bawdsey Radar Trust:** Creating a unique national collection of stories and details of some of the many thousands who worked, trained or served at RAF Bawdsey 1936 to 1991, including online and f-2-f community events.
- **Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum of Primitive Methodism – Root and branch:** A travelling exhibition beginning at Englesea covering the other three Methodist Heritage sites (London, Bristol and Epworth, Lincs), as well as universities, faith settings such as mosques, gurdwaras and other places of worship, and the NAPO annual conference.
- **Groundwork South and North Tyneside – Climate emergency project:** Sessions (incl. carbon literacy) for young people focussed on the climate emergency to develop blogs, social media content, and a digital exhibition hosted on the Jarrow Hall website, also making use of a temporary exhibition space to project images and content.
- **Hundred Heroines:** Exhibition of Dorothy Wilding's work and legacy, including a series of podcasts and creative workshops, marking 130 years since her birth in Gloucester.
- **Ledbury Places – The Heritage Centre – Ledbury education through time:** To link existing displays and artefacts covering education from the 17th to 19th centuries with the experiences of local older residents, and current school children, through filmed interviews.
- **Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation – Forging a family – Caribbean harmony in Letchworth:** Addressing a substantial gap in collections, which overlooks the representation of global majority communities within Letchworth - particularly Caribbean - with permanent online resources, including for local schools.
- **Museum of Human Diseases at St George's, University of London – Deadly diseases:** The Museum of Human Diseases will connect with local community groups in

Tooting to share the stories of deadly diseases from the past and explore how they are relevant to the lives of people today. Themed workshops, co-hosted with local artists Meet and Make, will examine different diseases and their treatments, with a focus on the human experience. Through this project we will identify stories of significance that will be shared through an online exhibition and through a film documenting the project shared with a wider audience at a celebratory event in Tooting Market.

- **Museum of Royal Worcester – Taste, touch and smell:** exploring Worcester porcelain's food and drink stories through sensory experiences including workshops, performances, field trips and the website.
- **Royal Engineers Museum:** Celebrating 75th Anniversary of the Queen's Gurkha Engineers by increasing content, material and the relationship with the local Nepali community through workshops with the QGR.
- **Teign Heritage:** Looking to appeal to 18–30-year-olds by partnering with Teignmouth Rugby Football Club to trace the origins of their sport from earliest times to the present-day using artefacts and memorabilia on loan from the club, original research and a digitised record of the final result.
- **The Mixed Museum:** Targeting 13-18 years by co-establishing a digital resource for TMM – a digital museum archiving the history of racial mixing in Britain – that shares Manchester's history of racial mixing through a focus on SuAndi's (poet / artist) life and creative work.
- **Turner's House Trust:** Capturing and sharing memories and experiences of the travels of JMW Turner. Working with local refugee centres and residents to share stories, improve wellbeing and bring them closer together.
- **Wiltshire Museum – Lest we Forget: Black People's Contribution to the World Wars in Wiltshire:** Working with the local race equality council and the army to tell stories of the black community's experiences in WW1, WW2 and after through oral testimony, creative projects and an exhibition.
- **Wirral Museums Service – Birkenhead Priory:** Develop 3D tour of priory grounds and learning resources for KS1 & 2 by collaborating with multiple faith communities and schools in local area<sup>1</sup>.

### There were 15 museums and projects in Cohort 3 of NSNA<sup>2</sup>:

- **Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings** - To reinterpret the story of the showman's wagon through research, oral history, new interpretation and sound installations.
- **Bath Industrial Heritage Trust Ltd** - Research, exhibition and oral history project recording memories of West Indian Community with the Bath Ethnic Minority Senior Citizens Association.
- **Brook Rural Museum** - to work with the university and local students to research and gather oral histories around hop picking theme to form new exhibition with traditional interpretation + audio-visual.
- **Chatteris Museum** - To gather Roma and Traveller stories around the area, working with communities. Creation of a travelling exhibition of work by those communities.
- **Chertsey Museum** - Research and archive development into the stories of the people involved in St Peter's Hospital, culminating in temporary exhibition in the museum.

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<sup>1</sup> Wirral Museums Service – Birkenhead Priory was originally part of the first cohort of NSNA projects, but the project delivery was extended into the timescales for the second cohort of NSNA projects.

<sup>2</sup> Bath Industrial Heritage Trust did not complete their project.

- **Crofton Beam Engines (Kennet & Avon Canal Trust)** - To create 40 models of the engines for children to build and engage with. Creation of short videos by the children to include animation, model building and stop-motion design.
- **Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust** - The Bouveries – descendants of refugees.
- **Finlaggan Heritage Trust** - A project to link heritage and climate change through the exploration of Celtic crosses using citizen science with school students - primary and secondary.
- **Gordon Russell Design Museum** - Will work with Broadway Museum on oral history project, gathering the stories of people who worked at the factory through filming and audio files to be used in exhibitions and on website.
- **Hayle Heritage Centre** - Hayle HERstory: history of West Cornwall's remarkable women. New exhibition, workshops for younger people, open event for 20 families.
- **Marx Memorial Library** – Working with local residents to co-curate portable exhibition about Clerkenwell Green's radical protest history.
- **Milton's Cottage** - To explore the international legacy of Milton, documenting street names etc through readings, artworks and storytelling, all held online. A cohort of digital volunteers will take part.
- **Rivington Heritage Trust** - An accessibility and wellbeing project connecting more people with nature through accessible walks and mobile exhibitions to be shared between 3 sites.
- **Stourbridge Glass Museum** - Commissioned artworks from 2 artists to augment exhibition co-curated with students and featuring artwork by local children around climate change, following workshops with another artist.
- **Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum** - To hold a series of workshops and events for younger audience and families, culminating in a celebration event, an exhibition and the creation of a handling kit.

## ANNEX 2: A SELECTION OF CASE STUDIES

### Case Study: 'Swanskin Seafarers of Sturminster Newton', Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust (Cohort 1 2023)



Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust worked with young people in the town to strengthen community understanding and empathy for the stories of people who leave their homeland to seek better lives. The project represented the lesser-known lives of those who left Sturminster from the 1600s-1800s to work in the fisheries of North America and drew links with more recent 21st migration into the town.

Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust worked with Sturminster High School, and partners arts company Emerald Ant and Dorchester Archive. The partners helped instigate the initial collaboration with the High School, and their creative expertise acting as a catalyst for the interaction with Newfoundland and the inspiration for interpreting the story. The Trust has been able to build on the partnership with the school and extend the collaboration with staff by supporting further planned curricular and pastoral activities.

NSNA introduced Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust to collaborating with more than one partner at a time to deliver a project. This project depended on diverse groups from outside the Trust working together to interpret the story in a new appealing way, and each partner offered different ideas, enabling the Trust to deliver a multi-faceted presentation of the story. The project has given Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust the confidence to have continue to reach out to different expertise and experiment.



Figure 1: Pupils engaging in session

Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust reached nearly three times the number of pupils originally envisaged, including two entire year groups at the High School, the research group and the students in Newfoundland. Local residents have begun to show interest, and the Trust reported increased footfall from the students at the High School bringing their family and friends to view the interpretation boards developed by the project.

One pupil made a presentation to the Trust's AGM. He finished his presentation by explaining to the audience that he had used the project experience when applying for work experience at the Hampton Court. He has also exchanged letters with Historian Ian Mortimer and others and most recently the Archbishop of Canterbury.

*"Being involved with the project has given me a huge boost of confidence. I feel that I can approach people and ask questions, something I would not have been brave enough to do before"*

Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust presented the story of the Swanskin Seafarers using film and modern interpretation boards. After input from a graphic artist, the students understood the need for carefully selected illustrations and clear text to create storyboards, with a shadow puppet film proving popular and helping the Trust share the story via social media.

Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust reported a range of people have developed new skills as a result of the project:

- Students interacted with a variety of professionals in order to develop the skill of adapting their research material for different audiences.
- Trustees acquired better management and liaison skills dealing with a number of different artistic personnel, and improved technology skills, communicating through social media and using Zoom.
- Volunteers had experience of adapting their communication skills for specific groups, undertook initial training sessions for the Oral History and took part in discussions with other museums.

Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust found that their project helped to raise the profile of the Trust amongst a younger cohort and this continuing co-operation should help to sustain the role of the museum in the future. Students are beginning to interacting on their own accord now and asking for work experience opportunities. Additionally, the Trust reports more instances of engagement with family groups and some parents being ready to volunteer.

The NSNA project enabled Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust to take their heritage story out into the community and used different venues, using the innovative materials created by the students and having the students as champions of the story. As a result, the Trust has attracted interest from a variety of audiences, including increased school visits, families as a result of student involvement and requests from specific groups for repeat presentation.

Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust valued the relationship developed with their mentor, who was available throughout, and able to anticipate when support was most needed and ready to suggest solutions.

Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust's trustees will be proactive in maintaining the links with new audiences gained during this project and look to extend the outreach aspect of communicating with different groups. The success of the film, boards and students collaborating on presentations has given the Trust the confidence to be more adventurous in the way future heritage stories can be presented beyond the museum and out into the community.

Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust reported that Trustees acquired better management and liaison skills and improved technology skills. Volunteers gained experience of adapting their communication skills for specific groups, undertook initial training sessions for the Oral History and took part in discussions with other museums.

Click the link to see the story collaboration between Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust, Sturminster Newton High School, J M Olds Collegiate in Newfoundland, and Emerald Ant with artist Tom Hughes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lp-JvUge1KM>

For more information, see <https://sturminsternewton-museum.co.uk/>

### Case Study: 'Discovering Stories of Provan Hall', Provan Hall (Cohort 1 2023)

**Provan Hall** is an A-listed medieval building in the heart of Easterhouse in Glasgow. It is one of the oldest buildings in Glasgow and has journeyed from being a medieval country retreat for the Glasgow Cathedral clergy to being enveloped by the modern city. In living memory, Provan Hall has provided an important venue for community celebration and is loved by the Easterhouse community. The building is currently undergoing a £2million restoration which will revitalise it as a hub for heritage learning and engagement, and a visitor gateway to the Seven Lochs Wetland Park. The Hall is scheduled to re-open in Summer 2023.



Following restoration, the building will be managed by Provan Hall Community Management Trust. The Trust will use the building renovation as a **catalyst to engage and inspire local people in their heritage by providing opportunities that connect local people to the past and stimulate further learning and activity**. Provan Hall will provide a community facility to support building knowledge, skills, and capacity in the local community, increasing access to lifelong learning and improving health and wellbeing.

The stories of Provan Hall have been at risk of being forgotten during the building's renovation over the last five years, and the **New Stories New Audiences project enabled the Hall to revive local community interest and delve into the history of Provan Hall**.



As part of the NSNA project, the local history group conducted a review of the research sources related to the history of Provan Hall and recommended 14 proposals for exhibitions, each with a different theme and perspective of Provan Hall's history. In addition, drama students from the project partner – Glasgow Kelvin College – have produced performances inspired by the history of Provan Hall, resulting in a creative interpretation which is a unique method of storytelling for Provan Hall. The NSNA project also supported the **development of an education pack**, produced by a heritage project intern, which focusses on storytelling and the people of Provan Hall. The education pack encourages school pupils to produce their stories of Provan Hall by creating comic strips and postcards relating to the historic residents of the house.

Provan Hall's partnership working with Glasgow Kelvin College was nurtured by an enthusiasm between the project freelancer, in house staff, and students and staff of Glasgow Kelvin College. The project freelancer liaised with college staff and students, providing advice on historical accuracy for their creative productions, and verbal feedback from the students (following an onsite rehearsal at the Hall), has already indicated their interest in performing at Provan Hall and continuing to participate in activities beyond the NSNA project by becoming volunteer costumed interpreters. Furthermore, the tutor from the College is keen to share their experience as well as encourage other departments at the College to work with the Trust.

Given Provan Hall's current situation (reopening after a refurbishment during which there was no, or limited, engagement), the Hall is essentially starting its audience development from scratch, and **the NSNA project supported the opportunity for the Hall to reach out to local community and partners** to gauge interest, seek feedback and their input in designing the engagement programme, bringing the local community into the heart of the operations. This has established the Trust as a community-led organisation which responds to local interest and developed community support in bringing life to Provan Hall.

Provan Hall had a range of people involved in the project from local residents to students and tutors – all of whom were involved in shaping and producing the stories that will be told about Provan Hall. The local history group are continuing as exhibition research volunteers and the performing arts students are keen to be costumed interpreter volunteers. The project has ignited a new local history group, engaged young people who would not usually have been drawn to participate in heritage, and the Hall now has an education pack to offer to schools so pupils can interpret and get involved in telling more stories of Provan Hall.



All of those involved in the Provan Hall NSNA project have **developed skills in various ways**. For example, the drama students have learned creative heritage interpretation skills, transferred from their performing arts skills and knowledge, the local history group has developed skills in exhibition designing and research as a development to their history research skills, and the heritage intern who developed the education pack was supported to learn heritage project management skills, heritage interpretation skills and knowledge of the Curriculum for Excellence, and they have since gone on to secure their first entry level job in heritage as an archives assistant.

*"With support from this grant we have established ourselves in the community, making connections with residents, students and establishing volunteers. We now have an actively engaged and participating audience before we have opened our doors to the public and so we have a foundation to build on as we grow as an organisation and heritage attraction."*

For more information, see: <https://www.provanhall.org/>

## Case Study: 'SussedBlackWoman', The Mixed Museum (Cohort 2 2024)



The Mixed Museum is a digital museum and archive dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of racial mixing in Britain for future generations. Its mission is to widen knowledge about the multiracial history of Britain.

**SussedBlackWoman** is a collaboration between The Mixed Museum, Manchester Metropolitan University's (MMU) Saturday Club programme, and SuAndi – one of Britain's leading Black mixed-race writers and poets – to share her life and work with a brand new audience for The Mixed Museum.

**SussedBlackWoman** is a collaboration between The Mixed Museum, Manchester Metropolitan University's (MMU) Saturday Club

The project targeted the Gen Z demographic (13-18 years) by co-establishing a digital resource for The Mixed Museum that provides insights into Manchester's history of racial mixing through a focus on SuAndi's life and creative work. The project engaged with letters, poems, photographs, narratives and other materials provided by SuAndi to produce a digital resource guided by the project's Gen Z cohort on what captures their eye and imagination.



The SussedBlackWoman project benefited from feedback received from AIM after an unsuccessful application to Cohort 1. The Mixed Museum found the feedback really helpful, and with AIM's encouragement to apply to Cohort 2, were able to refine and improve the project by better defining their intended new audiences.

The Mixed Museum were experienced in collaborative project delivery, so had a light touch relationship with their mentor. Their mentor very helpful at the very beginning of the project, including helping to reflect on the contributions to the project from the school workshops. More generally, their mentor provided helpful clarification on AIM and NLHF's requirements and expectations of the project.

The Mixed Museum were experienced in collaborative project delivery, so had a

Whilst always working collaboratively, Sussed Black Woman was the first time The Mixed Museum collaborated directly with young people. It was quickly apparent that The Mixed Museum's co-curation approaches needed to be flexible and adaptable to the young people's interests and circumstances, as well as the hosts of the workshops. The Mixed Museum felt this created a better final output because of the young people's input and the requirement to be flexible in their approach to working with this group.

The Mixed Museum found input from the participating young people to be incredibly useful for shaping storytelling. It facilitated a shift from 'third person' storytelling perspective to a 'first person' perspective. As a result, the digital resource was created so that SuAndi speaks directly to the visitor (sometimes in recorded form too). This approach means the heritage is shared from an authentic, engaging perspective, and corrected a number of errors about SuAndi's life and work that are in the public space.



The Mixed Museum's young volunteers – who came from MMU's Saturday programme and beyond - gained creative experience as part of the project, including being guided in writing poetry by SuAndi, and learning about sculpture that emerged as part of the 'Two Halves One Heart' work pupils created under the steer of artist Faith Bebbington. Their film student volunteers (one of whom became a freelancer on the project) gained new learning about working to commission using existing material

and a directive, rather than their own footage.

Inspired by the conversations that emerged from and around the workshops, The Mixed Museum has created a digital archive. This resource contains photographs, video and poetry from SuAndi's personal archive, audio recordings of SuAndi reflecting on aspects of her life, as well as the photographs and video of the young people's workshop process and outputs.

In addition, The Mixed Museum were delighted by the unexpected participation of four men of mixed Black African heritage who volunteered to be part of a roundtable with SuAndi discussing identity and what it was like to grow up in Manchester in the 1960s and 1970s.

These conversations shape a chapter in the resource.

There were unexpected benefits for cataloguing for The Mixed Museum, who commissioned a recent MA graduate intern to help label and organise the material for upload. The graduate's knowledge of SPECTRUM procedures has allowed The Mixed Museum to better understand this process and to improve its cataloguing system more widely.



The Mixed Museum have received very positive comments regarding participation in the workshops, which were noted as having helped build confidence and esteem, and noted an engagement rise among a younger audience.

The Mixed Museum is confident that the project will have a strong legacy, particularly in wake of SuAndi receiving a Special Recognition Award in the Manchester Culture Awards 2023, and more recently the [Benson Medal for the Royal Society of Literature](#). More material is being offered for the SussedBlackWoman resource. In the wake of interest about the resource, The Mixed Museum and the National Black Arts Alliance supported an online panel discussion with speakers (including SuAndi) reflecting on the importance of the resource and the history behind it. The webinar will be added to the resource and is also [available to view on The Mixed Museum's YouTube channel](#).

The digital resource now provides the most comprehensive overview of SuAndi's life and work that is freely accessible on the web. It provides material that has not previously been available in

## New Stories New Audiences (NSNA) Evaluation Headlines

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the public sphere. The Mixed Museum hope to build on this by undertaking a *full audio recording of the SussedBlackWoman resource, to make it as accessible as possible.*

For more information, please see <https://mixedmuseum.org.uk/sussedblackwoman/>

### Case Study: Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum (Cohort 2 2024)

Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum is in the village of Englesea-Brook, Cheshire. Built in 1828, the chapel was one of the earliest chapels of the Primitive Methodist movement, and the Sunday school was added in 1914. Since 1986 it has been the Museum of Primitive Methodism.

The Museum tells the story of this 19<sup>th</sup> century working class movement which transformed people's lives, with its message of 'Freedom, Equality and Fraternity'. The exhibitions and displays at the Museum change regularly, and recent exhibitions have been on Temperance, and Conscientious Objectors. The Museum explores the links between its heritage and contemporary issues.

Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum is one of four key Methodist heritage sites, which are all Accredited Museums. The others are Wesley's Chapel in London, The New Room in Bristol, and John Wesley's birthplace at Epworth.

For Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum of Primitive Methodism, the original aim was that the NSNA **Root & Branch** project would be a travelling exhibition, beginning at Englesea Brook Museum, then travelling across England and Wales exhibiting in the other three Methodist Heritage sites, as well as exhibiting at universities, faith settings such as mosques, gurdwaras and other places of worship, and at the National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO) annual conference.

An important element of the New Stories New Audiences programme is about developing new approaches and different ways of working and, in this regard, a key element of the NSNA project for Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum was the opportunity to partner with a national organisation (the Probation Service). This was a different approach that positively impacted on both organisations, helping to raise the profile of the Museum, the confidence of the Museum in working with partner organisations, as well as providing an example of how a small niche museum can impact on a national organisation and national conversation.

Whilst the original idea for the project came about via a *"very serendipitous moment"*, (where a visit to the Museum from the Chief Probation Officer for England and Wales highlighted the role that Methodism and temperance had played in the establishment of the Probation Service), the partnership between a small museum and a national organisation proved to be very successful for both partners. Although the different organisational cultures did mean that there were some challenges to overcome, the partnership benefitted from the *"different skills and expertise each partner brings"*.



The Museum and the Probation Service agreed they would partner together to research and create an exhibition to tour around England and Wales. *'ROOT & BRANCH, how five shillings, faith and belief inspired the beginning of the Probation Service'* opened at Englesea Brook in August 2023 and will continue touring until at least December 2024. This is an extension of the original plan, which reflects that interest in the little-known roots of Probation and its connection to the church, which had not been publicly told before, *"has been immense"*.

The story has now been told throughout England and Wales in over 15 diverse venues, and throughout the world thanks to the dedicated website and digital legacy of the project.

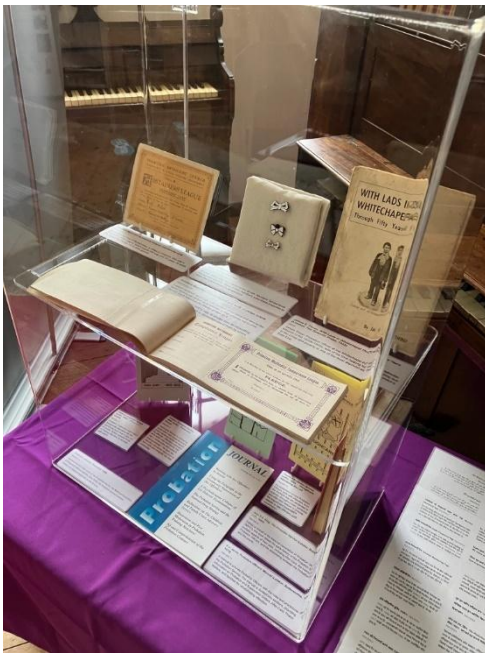
In terms of what has been achieved through the Roots & Branch project, a wider range of people are now involved in heritage – including the members of the Probation Service that the Museum worked with on the project.

First, the Museum emphasised that the project helped them reach a different audience, and in particular that the wider public engagement has been great – *"we reached people we didn't imagine would be the audience"* – something that would not have happened without the NSNA project.

Second, the diverse range of venues that have hosted the exhibition have fed back to Englesea Brook Museum that they were grateful for the opportunity to tell the story to their communities, and they have observed the interest taken by younger people who are invested in social justice.

In particular, the Museum feels that having the opportunity to see a heritage exhibition in faith and community centres, especially in localities where access to museums or heritage venues may be limited or considered elitist, has had an impact on widening the range of people involved in heritage.

Although the Museum found it difficult to evaluate visitor numbers and demographics as most of the host venues did not record such information, informal feedback suggests that hundreds of visitors have seen the exhibition across England and Wales, and the exhibition has attracted a diverse audience. In addition, the digital aspect of the exhibition has seen the website attract more than 2,000 visitors and almost 6,000 views from across the world.



The selection of the venues for touring the exhibition was based in part on where there is a greater need for understanding of the Probation Service, and towards more marginalized communities who would not normally access heritage. The exhibition has been free for venues and for the public to make it available to all people of all ages. Anecdotally, children and young people, people on probation, and minority ethnic groups have had access to the exhibition, which the Museum feels gives a foundation to build on to involve more people in heritage, and it *"hopefully will not be seen as elitist or irrelevant to them as they have been able to access it in their own communities"*.

It is also clear that through the project people have learnt about heritage, leading to changes in ideas and actions. For example, working on the project has inspired the Probation team to press for a national Probation archive, and helped develop an understanding of the importance

of preserving documents and artefacts.

The Museum has also had reports, from the Probation Service, of a peak in interest in the origins of the Probation Service, which has prompted staff to reflect more on the history of the service, understanding similarities with those early missionaries and the belief that people can change. There was also the hope that the exhibition would have a positive effect on the Service's image and would encourage recruitment. Anecdotally, there has been greater sympathy with the work of Probation and more interest in careers.

The Museum reflects that without the NSNA project, they would not have been able to engage with a national partner like the Probation Service whose securing of many of the venues (such as Worcester Cathedral, the Ministry of Justice, etc.) enabled a much more diverse engagement with the story.

In terms of legacy impacts from the project, the Museum highlights that it now has a permanent interpretation board that has been added to the social justice exhibition at the Museum. In addition, the Museum has duplicated the interpretation banners used for the exhibition, and this will enable either a permanent display at the National Justice Museum or further opportunities for touring the exhibition in the future.



The learning resources developed through the project will be used to create new learning offers (both in person and online), and the Root & Branch website (<https://rootbranchexhibition.co.uk/>) will continue to be administered by Englesea Brook and linked permanently to the Museum website as a research tool. Finally, the Probation Service has also agreed to permanently loan artefacts to the Museum.

Other skills developed by the Museum through the project include improved abilities around recording data, such as demographics, and listening and evaluating what visitors want. The staff at the Museum are more digitally confident, having learnt from the communications team at the Probation Service what is possible and are considering how to have a greater online presence.

In summary, the Museum reflects that:

*"It has opened up our vistas and we are digging into our resources to find other surprising stories that are relevant to today that may appeal to a wider audience – we are no longer satisfied with what is perceived of our nicheness."*

For more information, please see: <https://engleseabrook.org.uk/>; and also the exhibition website: <https://rootbranchexhibition.co.uk/>

## Case Study: Crofton Beam Engines (Kennet & Avon Canal Trust) (Cohort 3 2025)

### CROFTON BEAM ENGINES



Crofton Pumping Station is one of the most significant industrial heritage sites in the United Kingdom. The station was built between 1807 and 1809 to supply water to the highest point of the Kennet & Avon Canal which links London and Bristol. It is a rare survivor of the technology which enabled British engineers to drain mines and supply towns and cities with water throughout the world.

Crofton Beam Engines (part of The Kennet and Avon Canal Trust) **Crofton for Kids** project intended to tell the story of the pumping station, how it came to be, how it works, and future, in an accessible way for children as told by children. The project planned to partner with local schools to develop and share the story, encourage their input, development and production of the final product.

Crofton Beam Engines are in the early stages of growing their school outreach program and developing learning sessions to offer. This project provided purpose to engage local schools, involving the children in their local community and raising awareness of Crofton to local families and schools. The combination of the scientific principles behind the Beam Engines, coupled with the building of the model and seeing it work in action, has improved children's understanding of how Crofton works. As a result, Crofton Beam Engines now have resources to tell the story of Crofton to kids in a relevant and interesting way.



Crofton partnered with four local primary schools, working with one class from each school. Each school came to Crofton for a guided tour of the station, worked alongside staff and volunteers to research their topic and write a short script, and then came back to Crofton for a day of recording. There was a 'reveal event' at the June Steaming weekend, when the videos were shown at set times. Crofton also visited each school afterwards to share their video with the wider school, as well as recognising the children who took part with a medal, with almost half of all the participants attending.

Crofton found mentoring very helpful to project delivery. Their mentor has been an encouraging presence throughout the grant project, celebrating delivery points with them along the way, offering helpful suggestions and resources at key points in the project.

*"Verity was a wonderful mentor throughout the project. She asked helpful questions, offered guidance and support, and celebrated our successes with us. The mentorship relationship significantly enriched the project."*

Crofton Beam Engines are now able to tell the story of Crofton for children in a relevant and interesting way, achieved through their partnership with four local schools. The four videos explain their topics in child-friendly language, with each video made by children for children, focusing on the history of the station, the restoration and future of the station, how the station works, and people who have impacted Crofton. This has been complemented by the working models of the beam engine which have been highly engaging for all those that built one.

Crofton had 87 children from four partner schools take part in the project, along with staff from each school. In addition, the resources developed through the project have been used with visiting school and community groups as well as at steaming weekends with visitors of all ages. They enhance existing explanations of Crofton for visitors of all ages.

The videos made by partner schools focused on four different aspects of Crofton Beam Engines – history; various people associated with Crofton; exploring how different components in the station work; and looking at how Crofton was restored and why it is important to maintain it today.

Crofton Beam Engines' project led to some existing volunteers stepping out of their normal volunteer roles (typically focused more on the practical side of maintaining a heritage site), into engaging directly with young people, which they enjoyed. Many volunteer hours have been spent on highly skilled work, including designing the working models and working lock model, making bespoke pieces for it, videography and editing work, building working models of the pumps and designing and delivering participatory demonstrations for a learning session. Crofton now has a wider base of confident volunteers to call upon for further school and community outreach initiatives.

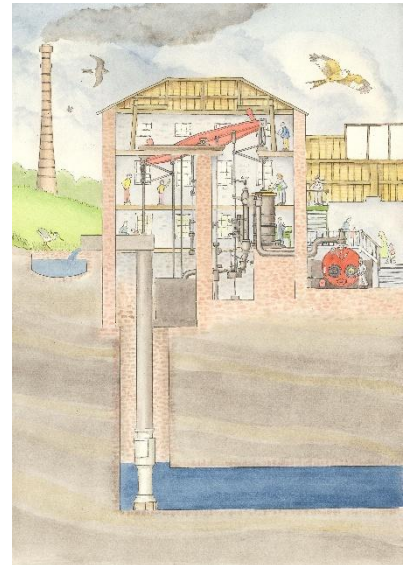
*"Without our amazing volunteers, this project would not have been possible"*

Coming to Crofton on a steaming day is a unique experience, although it is a very different experience visiting Crofton when the engines are silent. The resources developed through the grant help them to bring Crofton to life when the engines are not running, whether at Crofton or in another location, helping audiences to better understand how the pumps and engines work together and why the station was built in the first place.

Crofton will continue to use the models, videos and artwork as part of its outreach offer to schools and community groups. These will continue to be used and further developed for their younger audience, from primary up to A-level students, as Crofton seeks to expand its reach to local communities and to its audiences.

For more information, please see <https://www.croftonbeamengines.org/crofton-for-kids/>

(Photographs provided by Crofton Beam Engines)



## Case Study: Marx Memorial Library & Workers' School (Cohort 3 2025)

Marx Memorial Library & Workers' School (MML) was founded in 1933 with the aim of advancing education, knowledge and learning in all aspects of the science of Marxism, the history of Socialism and the working class movement. At the heart of the British Labour Movement for over ninety years, the Library is home to a unique collection of published and archival sources on related subjects including the trade unionism, peace and solidarity movements and the Spanish Civil War.



### Marx Memorial Library

#### Through the People & Protest: Radical Clerkenwell Reinterpreted

project, MML aimed to work with local residents to co-curate a portable exhibition about Clerkenwell Green's radical protest history.

The Peel Centre and Finsbury Estate were new partners for MML, and the relationship proved to be a very fruitful one. The community engagement leads fed into workshop planning and advised on ensuring maximum engagement with their members. Both the Peel and the Library contacts at Finsbury Estate played a critical role in recruiting participants. They distributed flyers and posters and invited MML staff to attend community events to speak to people about the plans. In this way MML successfully recruited people to attend the sessions and some of them featured in the final display. For MML the partnership *"was easy"* – there was a clear division of work, and the partner was excellent at engaging local people and helping MML plan the most effective ways to engage with the target community/audience.



MML reflect that the approach taken for the project was innovative for them in various ways. First, it was MML's first co-curation project. This took *"a lot of planning"* but worked well as an approach. It was an *"eye-opening"* experience for MML – requiring an awful lot of thought on the best way to give agency and voice to partners and participants, requiring MML to be agile and adaptable, responding quickly to areas of interest discussed at the

workshops. It also required a sensitive and open-minded approach, and letting stories develop and people speak without restriction or timetable. Second, the new paradigm of approaching MML's archives – putting aside a narrative, chronological approach and looking at HOW people have banded together to make positive change has been transformative for MML. This is a new methodology which they plan on using with other audience engagement work.

The project was successful in various ways in engaging a wider range of people – the key outcome for NSNA. This included engaging a group of 13 people who had never visited the Library before in the archive workshops which led to the co-curated exhibition. Critical to this was the depth of the engagement – the new audience were given the time and space to think, speak and reflect. Attendance at the exhibition featuring the new stories and reflections on local radical history was: Opening – 42; Tours and visits – 271; Drop in – 43; Events in exhibition space – 177. Feedback received from visitors showed that the majority (over 60%) were new to the Library and were overwhelmingly positive in their feedback.

MML had a team of three volunteers working on research and digitization who learned how to access the collections through the catalogues and finding aids and also received training on

digitization procedures including use of the scanner and MML's house-style. The Archivist and Volunteer Coordinator and the Workshop Facilitator learnt a lot through their involvement in the project including how to work as part of a group, encouraging people new to the subjects to speak freely, and how to analyse the archives in different contexts. The project lead (the MML Director) also enhanced their skills, including how to deal effectively with different stakeholders.

MML feels that the project has played a critical role in embedding the Library within the local community. For MML, ensuring the cultural heritage in the borough is truly accessible and speaks to the local community is of great importance in ensuring that it is a better – less divided and more inclusive – place to live. Participants told MML that they view the Library as their resource; a place for the local community and this is something that MML intend to develop further.



The NSNA project also prompted a separate initiative. Inspired by feedback from the local community that the Library's facade is anonymous and imposing, MML successfully applied for community funds from the local authority to create new vinyl stickers in the windows to improve the visibility of the Library to local passers-by. The images used were directly inspired by the participants discussions in the workshops and MML now have images from the archives displayed on the windows, which they know speak to local people.

MML highlighted various ways in which audience engagement has improved including having a new partner in the local community that MML intend to continue to work with closely, through jointly promoting events and participating in future fairs and community events. MML have learnt lessons through the co-curatorial process which they are taking into future outreach and engagement work which will assist them in meeting the needs of target audiences. MML have also developed a new framework for presenting their archives across the collections – looking at how people have tried to change the world – which will help the Library to work meaningfully with new audiences. The exhibition itself brought new people to the Library including group visits from people who work in the local area. Strengthening ties to local networks like this enhances MML's ability to reach out to new audiences.

One key lesson from NSNSA for MML was that in future they would not spend as much time planning for the sessions, people come thinking pre-conceived ideas, and the success came about not from spending so much time on design, but from going out to speak to people – and they would do more of this in the future.

In terms of project legacy, the partnership with the Peel is on-going, as are the relationships with workshop participants. These are regarded as important gateways into the local community – MML's target audience. The exhibition is viewed as a lasting resource with plans for touring in local venues. MML also have the digital files which they intend to make available online at the end of the tour; meaning new people will continue to engage with these new stories into the future. The re-vamp of the signage – an unplanned but critical outcome of the NSNA project – is a lasting physical manifestation of MML's keenness to reach out locally. MML's NSNA project and its evaluation are feeding directly into an NLHF development phase application, particularly the draft interpretation plan. Drawing on NSNA learning, MML are currently working on incorporating a co-curated component of the permanent exhibition space in plans for the redeveloped building.

## New Stories New Audiences (NSNA) Evaluation Headlines

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For MML, a key impact internally was that the project helped to demonstrate to trustees that this type of approach works, and it "*validated this type of engagement*" – resulting in the trustees seeing the value of this type of work. MML also found that the approach taken for the NSNA project was an important aspect – the "*depth of engagement*" that it enabled was really impactful in terms of the quality of what was achieved. Finally, the Library feel that they achieved more than they thought they would, and that NSNA gave a rationale to try out this approach – it "*was an excuse to do something different*".

For more information, please see: <https://www.marx-memorial-library.org.uk/>

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**ANNEX 3: LIST OF CONSULTEES AND LIST OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS**

<b>Consultee Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Tonia Collett	Project Officer	Association of Independent Museums
Margaret Harrisson	Head of Programmes	Association of Independent Museums
Simon Lewis	Senior Investment Manager	National Lottery Heritage Fund
Iain Watson		Mentor
Kate Rodenhurst		Mentor

<b>Survey Respondent Projects</b>
Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings
Bawdsey Radar Trust
Bradford Police Museum
Brook Rural Museum
Castle Bromwich Hall and Gardens
Chatteris Museum
Chertsey Museum
Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath, (CEUT) North Uist Historical Society
Crofton Beam Engines (Kennet & Avon Canal Trust)
Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust
Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum of Primitive Methodism
Finlaggan Heritage Trust
Groundwork South and North Tyneside
Hundred Heroines
Judges' Lodgings Museum
Ledbury Places – The Heritage Centre
Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation
Marx Memorial Library
Milton's Cottage
Museum of Human Diseases at St George's, University of London
Museum of Royal Worcester
Museum of Youth Culture
National Paralympic Heritage Trust
Provan Hall
Rivington Heritage Trust
Royal Crown Derby Museum
Royal Engineers Museum
Scottish Fisheries Museum Trust
Stourbridge Glass Museum
Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome

## New Stories New Audiences (NSNA) Evaluation Headlines

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Sturminster Heritage Trust
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Teign Heritage
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The Mixed Museum
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The UK Antarctic Heritage Trust
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Turner's House Trust
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Wiltshire Museum
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Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum
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