

# It's Your Museum

## Case Studies



Photo Credit: Nick Edwards (@submariner)

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**Isle of Wight**  
National  
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# Introduction to *It's Your Museum*

Five accredited museums on the Isle of Wight received funding from Arts Council England for a six-month period (January–June 2024) to strengthen their local community engagement.

Isle of Wight Steam Railway, Brading Roman Villa, Dinosaur Isle, Arreton Shipwreck Centre & Classic Boat Maritime Museum collaborated with Creative Island, the Isle of Wight's Cultural Development Agency, to deliver the project. Additional funding was also secured from Isle of Wight National Landscape to support heritage projects aimed at engaging new audiences.

The museums were supported throughout the project to deepen their knowledge of what their communities need and think about how they can respond to this in a creative way. Each museum had a differing focus for engagement with a particular audience that they had identified they would like to work with.

Lisa Kerley was appointed as project manager for the "It's Your Museum" project. Lisa is an experienced consultant who works in the field of museum and heritage engagement, she is very passionate about making local heritage accessible and relevant for under-served audiences which was a priority for the project.

*"From the outset I encouraged the museum partners to think about how their museums can help to improve quality of life, health and wellbeing of residents on the Island. We explored how crucial community partners are in engagement work and how the most effective way of reaching new audiences would be by networking with community providers. This approach also enabled the partners to reach some of the people in our community with the greatest need who have subsequently benefited most from the engagement."*

Author – **Lisa Kerley**

InspirEd Museum and Heritage Learning – Project Manager for  
*It's Your Museum* – [lisa.kerley@icloud.com](mailto:lisa.kerley@icloud.com)

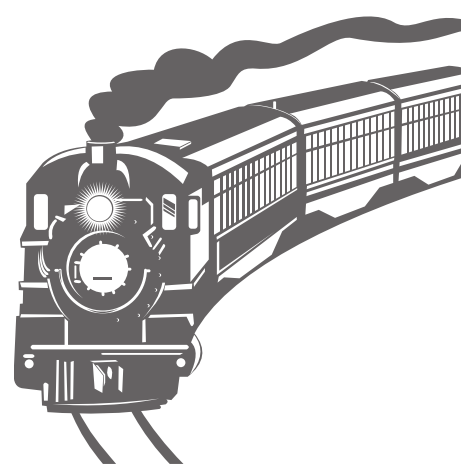
ISLE OF WIGHT  
STEAM RAILWAY



BRADING  
ROMAN VILLA



# Isle of Wight Steam Railway



## Summary

The Isle of Wight Steam Railway (IWSR) focus for the It's Your Museum Project was on older audiences, in particular people with dementia. Dementia is a collection of symptoms that can affect memory, problem solving, language and behaviour and which affect daily life and activities. This project forms part of the museum's work around **audience development, access and inclusion**.

The museum had done some community engagement as part of their ACE funded Island Voices project in recent years, which incorporated some reminiscence work, and the museum wanted to build on this and place more of a focus on the benefits to wellbeing of engagement.

***“This is the best day I’ve had in years, I loved the train ride as it made me think about when I was a little girl”***

Resident at Northbrooke House

## Background

- The Isle of Wight has a significant elderly population, with 21.4% aged 70+ compared to 13.6% nationally, and 1.4% aged 90+ versus 0.9% in England. In 2020, 1,649 dementia cases were recorded, though estimates suggest the true number is around 2,814 (IOW Council JSNA 2022) [[Source](#)].
- The Isle of Wight Dementia Strategy, published in 2022, **aims to improve** the well-being of those with dementia and their carers, based on community feedback [[Strategy PDF](#)].
- **Museums** are becoming **key in raising dementia awareness**, providing safe spaces and tailored activities, as supported by the Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance [[Source](#)].
- Engaging with creativity and culture **enhances mental health**, aiding in the prevention, treatment, and **recovery of physical conditions** (Creative Health Review 2023) [[Source](#)].







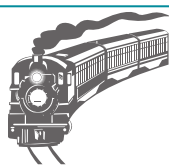
The project **aimed** to raise awareness and build partnerships with community organisations supporting people with dementia, while **providing dementia awareness and reminiscence training for staff and volunteers**. It will develop learning resources specifically for people with dementia, to be used both in the museum and within the community, and **pilot a museum visit programme with care home residents**. Additionally, a railway reminiscence session will be created for outreach and trialled with a local group of people with dementia and their carers.

## Challenges

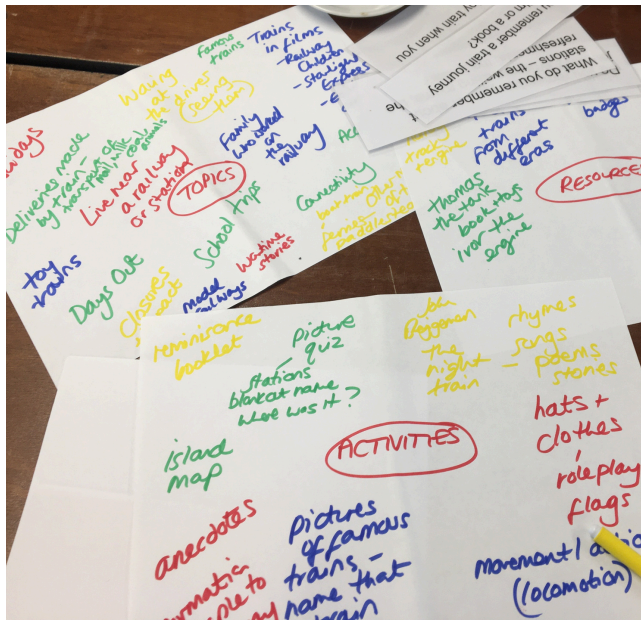
A significant challenge for this project was that there were new personnel at the museum who would be leading the project. Cara Trevor had only just been appointed as Heritage and Learning Manager when the project began. Cara needed time to get to know her colleagues, the site and collection as well as the community which all had to happen in parallel with this project.

There were some existing educational resources available for use inside and outside the museum for the audience. However, a challenge arose to develop and acquire new resources for the handling collection within the projects timeframe, to ensure the resources were ready for the planned activities.

There were some logistical challenges of bringing a group to the site and ensuring their needs could be catered for in terms of physical access.







## Approach

The Project Manager, Lisa, partnered with the Alzheimer Café at Parklands in Cowes, which recently opened a new dementia hub. They offered free dementia awareness training to staff and volunteers at IWSR and partner museums. Lisa also developed a bespoke reminiscence training session for Cara and two IWSR volunteers, involving Parklands volunteers in creating more inclusive resources for a railway reminiscence session.

Lisa and Cara sourced suitable materials, collaborated with Northbrooke House (an Island Healthcare dementia care home in Havenstreet) to plan a resident visit, and prepared a session plan with a risk assessment. Lisa also coordinated an outreach visit with Dementia Adventure at Park Farm in Godshill.

[Isle of Wight Alzheimer Café](#)

[Island Healthcare](#)

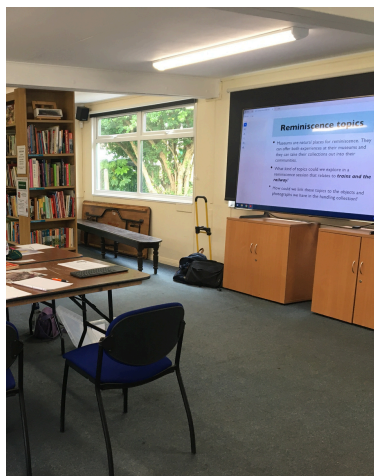
[Dementia Adventure](#)





## Outcomes & Outputs

- Visit to IWSR by Northbrooke House Residents: The visit engaged 3 staff members and 9 residents. The Activities Coordinator expressed deep gratitude, stating, *“The residents were so excited about the visit, we had an amazing time... it was a fantastic visit and the majority loved it. We appreciate all you did for us and thank you from the bottom of our hearts.”* An IWSR volunteer added, *“The visit went really well... one resident in particular warmed up as the day went on. They mostly participated, seemed to enjoy it, and there was plenty of laughter.”*
- Outreach Visit to Dementia Adventure at Godshill Park Farm: This session involved 4 staff members, 6 people with dementia, and their carers. The Programme Manager noted, *“We really appreciated the staff coming out... The session was of great benefit, and the carers enjoyed it more than they expected. It provided a stimulus for conversation.”*
- New Resources Acquired: Training materials for staff and volunteers, talking books, replica handling objects, and costumes were added to enhance the programme's effectiveness.
- Training Attendance: One staff member and two volunteers completed dementia awareness and reminiscence training.



“The residents were so excited about the visit, we had an amazing time thank you so much!”

Activity Coordinator at Northbrooke House



## Next Steps:

The museum aims to expand its community engagement by developing and implementing activities that support local wellbeing. Plans to build on this project include tailored on-site sessions, off-site programs, and initiatives for both individuals with and without local knowledge.

For more information:

- **Cara Trevor**, Heritage and Learning Manager, Isle of Wight Steam Railway – [Cara.Trevor@iwsteamrailway.co.uk](mailto:Cara.Trevor@iwsteamrailway.co.uk)

Following the activities, participants, supporters, and museum staff reflected on their experiences. The museum gained new community contacts, increased awareness of dementia support, and developed a template for future engagement. Participants reported enhanced social interaction, cognitive stimulation, and improved wellbeing, with one describing it as the best day they'd had in years!



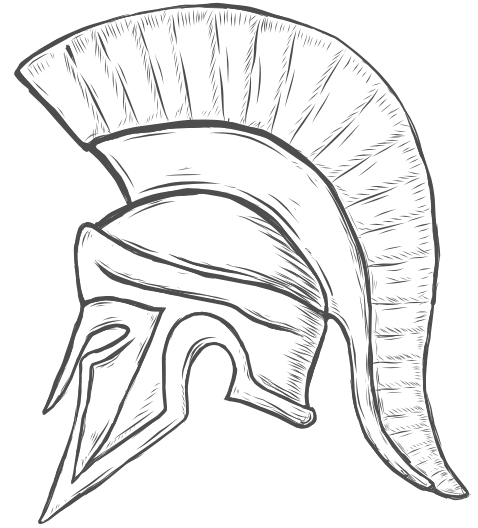
# Brading Roman Villa

## Summary

Brading Roman Villa's focus for the project was on local children, young people and families – in particular those **in receipt of free school meals** and those with **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**.

This project forms part of the museum's work around community engagement and they were keen to develop their knowledge and understanding of the social and financial barriers that local families might face to engaging with museums.

**In addition to the *It's Your Museum Project*, Brading Roman Villa hosted an event as part of the Biosphere Festival, made possible through funding from the Landscape Partnership.**



## Background

- The Isle of Wight ranks as the 80th most deprived authority in England, with six areas in the 10% most deprived, including Brading, which is in the 2nd most deprived decile for income deprivation affecting children. [[Source](#)]
- Children on the Isle of Wight are more likely to live in workless households, with significantly higher eligibility for free school meals compared to the South East average. The number of children receiving free school meals has risen by 63% in the last four years, now accounting for 25% of school children. [[Source](#)]
- The proportion of children with SEND on the Isle of Wight is higher than the regional average, with 18% having SEND and 6% having an Education Health Care Plan, compared to 4% nationally.







## Challenges

A challenge for this project was that Sarah Girling, the member of staff leading at the museum, had only been in post for two months before the project began. Getting to know her role, boundaries and authority within it had to run parallel to the project. Sarah also had a limited capacity to devote time to the project when she was also responsible for the delivery of education on site during high season.

Brading Roman Villa **aimed** to strengthen partnerships with local authorities, community, and voluntary organisations supporting children, young people, and families with SEND and those receiving free school meals. They also sought to consult with SEND families to enhance museum access and inclusion, and to develop and pilot a programme with a Holiday Activity and Food provider to increase access for local children in need.

## Approach

Lisa Kerley and Sarah Girling met with Jo Lawler from Parent's Voice to discuss collaborating on gathering feedback from parents of children with SEND. Lisa attended a March Coffee Morning to connect with forum members, followed by hosting an April Coffee Morning at the museum, where Sarah and Lisa conducted a consultation on making museums more inclusive for SEND children. Parents enjoyed a museum tour, received a free voucher for a return visit, and shared feedback on their experience. This led to the idea of a SEND family picnic during the May half-term, funded by the project.

Lisa also engaged with the IOW Council's Holiday Activity and Food Programme, connecting with the Scallywags Fun Club to plan an outreach session for the upcoming school holiday, offering activities tailored to children of all ages and abilities. Additionally, Lisa met with Beverly Gilbert, Headteacher at Brading Primary School, to understand the school's needs & explore collaboration, particularly for SEND children and those receiving free school meals.



Parent's Voice



Isle of Wight Council

Scallywags Fun Club



## Outcomes & Outputs

- Meetings held with key partners, including Brading Primary's Headteacher, representatives from the Isle of Wight Council Parent Voice, and Scallywags.
- Coffee Morning at the museum for Parent's Voice, engaging 16 parents and children in a consultation exercise.
- Picnic at the museum for Parent's Voice families, with 25 parents and children enjoying free entry, crafts, face painting, refreshments, and goody bags.
- Outreach session for HAF provider Scallywags Fun Club, engaging 50 children and 6 staff in activities like artefact handling, mosaic making, role play, and a clay workshop.
- Creation of a visual story for the museum based on feedback and recommendations from Parent's Voice families.

**“The activities were very inclusive and all children could participate no matter their age or disabilities, as there was something for all and the activities adapted to children's needs”**

Sarah Wherry, Manager of Scallywags

**When thinking of new partnerships, you need to, from the outset, think of how they can be sustained beyond the life of a small project.**





***“By working in partnership with another organisation, we can both benefit from the experience. I look forward to deepening our relationship and seeing what might come next”*** ”

**Sarah Girling** – Heritage & Education Officer at Brading Roman Villa.  
[education@bradingromanvilla.org.uk](mailto:education@bradingromanvilla.org.uk)

## Next Steps

The museum is eager to build on the success of this project by continuing its partnerships and integrating community engagement into its Forward Plan. Sarah has initiated discussions with Brading Primary to develop a Nature Talks session and plans to collaborate with IW National Landscapes and external artists. The museum will further explore opportunities with HAF providers, inspired by the Museums and Schools Programme's adoption of similar outreach activities.

The positive response to the Parent's Voice picnic has sparked ideas for low-cost summer activities, such as a Biosphere Nature Trail and Teddy Bear's picnics, with potential for future school holidays. The museum is hopeful that the partnership with Parent's Voice will continue, aiming to develop sensory bags, SEND-focused activities, and more flexible ticketing for local families. Additionally, the museum looks forward to benefiting from professional development opportunities around SEND issues, enhancing the experience for staff, volunteers, and wider museum partners.





# Dinosaur Isle Museum



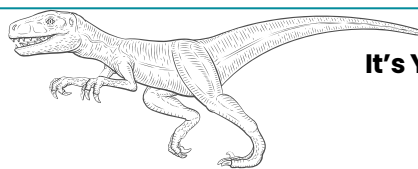
## Summary

Dinosaur Isle focused on engaging secondary school-aged youth for the It's Your Museum Project. While the museum has a strong education program for primary schools, the secondary age group is currently underserved. They aim to increase both formal and informal engagement with these young people by leveraging their resources, skills, and partnerships. Before planning activities, the museum sought input from local youth.

## Background

- Dinosaur Isle is located in Sandown, part of the Bay area. The Bay Place Plan details the history, growth, and economy of the town – [\[Source\]](#)
- The Isle of Wight is the 80th most deprived authority in England (out of 317). Sandown North and South rank in the 3rd decile for overall deprivation, with higher levels of deprivation in employment (1st decile), education, skills, and training (2nd decile), and income affecting children (2nd decile). – [\[Source\]](#)
- The Cultural Educational Profile for the Isle of Wight provides data on deprivation and achievement for children and young people compared to South East averages – [\[Source\]](#)
- The Bay Youth Area Project, funded by Community Action Isle of Wight, started in late 2021 to address the needs of local youth (ages 10–18) in Sandown, Lake, and Shanklin. It offers free activities, youth work, personal development opportunities, youth forums, and targeted interventions – [\[Source\]](#)
- In 2023, the Sandown and Lake Youth Forum created a film expressing young people's concerns about crime, derelict buildings, the cost of living, and their desire for safe spaces and more activities – [\[Source\]](#)

**It's important that museums never underestimate the power of their collections, in particular, genuine objects and how objects can inspire awe and wonder.**



## Aims

- Identify community partners and providers who could help engage with local young people.
- Understand local community priorities, particularly those related to children and young people, and explore whether the museum could develop programmes to address these needs.
- Design and conduct a consultation activity with young people to gather their input on the types of activities they would be interested in at the museum.
- Analyse the consultation results and work with the team to explore potential activities the museum could offer for this audience.
- Initiate discussions with potential partners for delivering activities and assess the resources needed to implement a public programme for this audience.

[The Bay Youth Project](#)

[Island Free School](#)

[Newchurch Scouts](#)

[Brave Island](#)

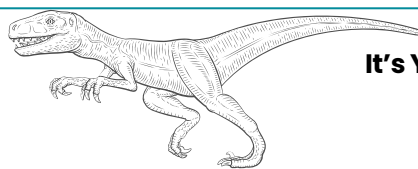
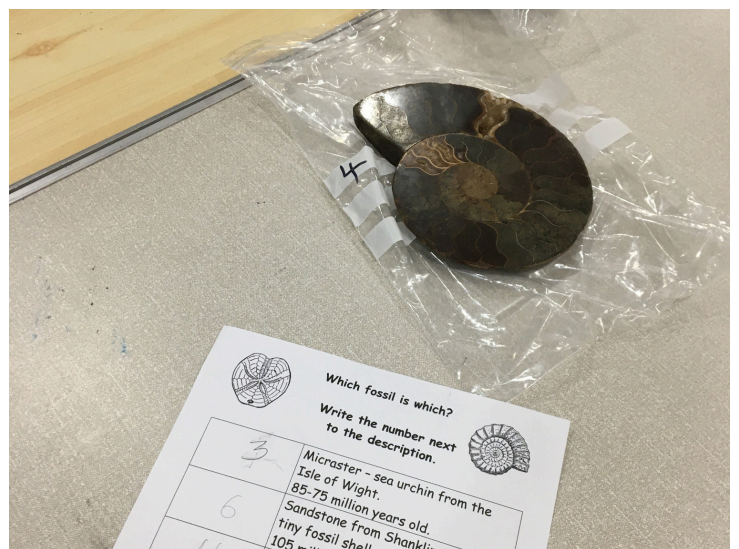


[Arteology](#)

The top three subjects from those listed on the survey that young people were interested in were: **forensic science, archaeology and physical science.** ”

A significant **challenge** for this project was that the museum would not have an Education Officer for the duration of the project.

This meant that Martin Munt, Curator and General Manager, had to take responsibility and find time to work on the project on top of his existing responsibilities, which also included additional educational workload.





## Approach

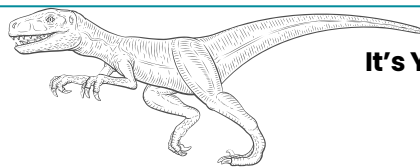
The museum had been considering developing a regular programme of science-based workshops and activities for young people that they could access outside of formal education. As part of this project, it was agreed that Lisa, the Project Manager, would consult with local youth to explore the types of activities they would be interested in and identify community priorities for young people in the area. Additionally, Lisa would reach out to local secondary schools, building relationships with key staff to discuss potential future collaborations.

Community partners who work directly with young people were identified to support the project. Lisa met with Ian Boyd from Artecology, Julian Wadsworth, Community Action Resilience Coordinator for the Bay Area Youth Project, and Gretel Ingham, a local Scout Leader.

These meetings were valuable in shaping the project, highlighting key priorities for young people, such as safe spaces to meet, learning opportunities outside of school (especially for those not in education), life skills, youth voice, cultural and sporting activities, and social and personal development. Lisa also connected with Megan Stisted from Brave Island to explore linking young people for work experience and workshops at the museum.

Lisa and Julian, along with Gretel, organised consultations with youth groups like the Sandown Youth Forum and Newchurch Scouts. She also began discussions with Richard Peace, a geology teacher at the Island Free School, who invited her to speak with Year 9 students.

To gather feedback, Lisa developed a consultation survey and designed an outreach activity using the museum's handling collection, allowing young participants to engage with objects as part of the process. The museum shop provided free gifts for those taking part.





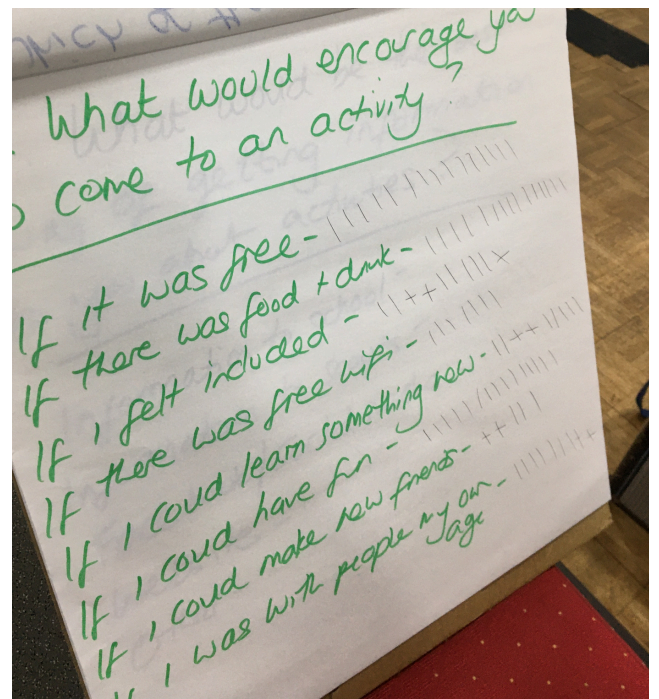
## Outputs & Outcomes

- Conducted a survey with 21 young people (aged 11-18) at Dinosaur Isle's Family Fun Day in February.
- Engaged 18 Scouts and 5 leaders at Newchurch Scouts in March through a group survey and outreach activity.
- Visited Island Free School in March, engaging 12 Year 9 students and 2 teachers in a geology lesson that included a survey and access to a geological loans box from the IOW Council Heritage Education Service.
- Met with Sandown Youth Forum in June, engaging 7 young people, including the Island's Youth MP, through a group survey and outreach activity.
- Analysed survey results, compiled them into a report, and shared the findings with the museum team.
- Shared feedback from Island Free School staff regarding potential museum provisions for KS3&4 with the museum team and the Museums and Schools Programme.
- Began early discussions and planning for a series of masterclasses, to be delivered by the museum team and external partners.
- Procured new educational resources, including Dinolite microscopes.
- Consulted with local experts in fields such as forensics, palaeo-art, archaeology, and palaeontology to explore the feasibility of masterclasses, with a focus on female role models.
- Issued free admission tickets to all members of Sandown Youth Forum.

## Next Steps & Future Plans

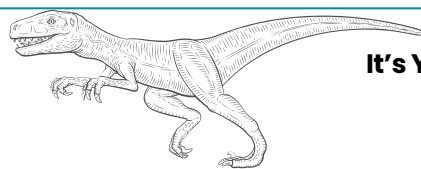
Now that the museum has gathered feedback from over 50 young people and established new relationships with community partners, the team can begin planning an activity programme based on this input. The consultation has sparked interest among participants, who are eager to engage in activities tailored to them. Further investment will enable the museum to fully develop and deliver a public programme for this audience.

The museum will continue discussions with Island Free School, aiming to host visits for GCSE Geology students next year, and is working with the Museums and Schools Programme to develop this provision.

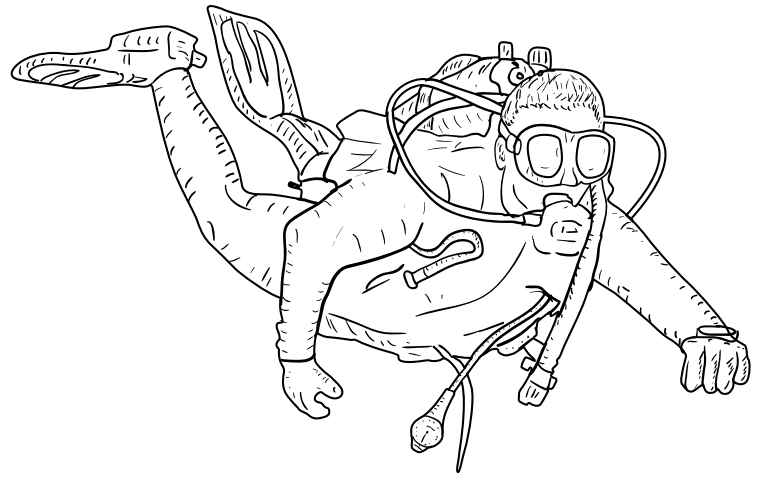


For more information:

**Martin Munt**, Curator and General Manager,  
Dinosaur Isle: [martin.munt@iow.gov.uk](mailto:martin.munt@iow.gov.uk)



# Shipwreck Centre



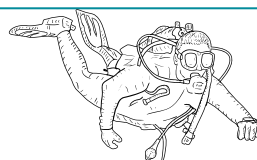
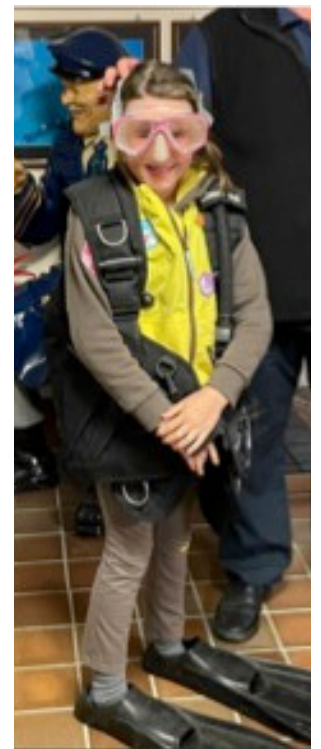
## Summary

The Shipwreck Centre and Maritime Museum's focus for the project was on developing closer relationships with its local community geographically. The museum is situated in the village of Arreton and one of the key aims for the project was to deepen engagement with the village primary school which is only a five minute walk from the museum. The museum was also keen to find out more about community activities and groups, both in the village and surrounding towns, with the aim of providing greater access to the museum and its collection for local people.

“ When offering community outreach it's really important to be as flexible as possible in your approach

## Background

- Museums enhance health and wellbeing, with access to arts and heritage improving both mental and physical health and benefiting communities and society as a whole [\[Source\]](#).
- The Isle of Wight Health and Wellbeing Strategy highlights inequalities in healthy life expectancy, particularly in the most deprived areas where residents spend fewer years in good health [\[Source\]](#).
- The 2019 Cultural Education Profile indicates a greater need for cultural education on the Isle of Wight due to higher levels of deprivation, more children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities, more looked-after children, and a higher number of children eligible for free school meals compared to regional and national averages [\[Source\]](#).



**“To say these guys are passionate about what they do would be an understatement!! They gave a very engaging talk about shipwrecks around the Island as well as many other interesting stories.”**

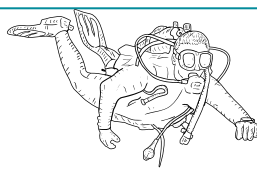
Living Well Service, 2024

The project **aimed** to increase knowledge and build new relationships with community groups and organisations in and around Arreton. It sought to develop resources for adult community engagement, focusing on wellbeing, and to strengthen ties with Arreton Primary School by creating a diverse programme linked to the curriculum. Additionally, the project explored partnerships with local secondary schools and further education providers to develop an Extended Project Qualification at the museum.

A **challenge** for the project was that Ian Vallance, Education Officer and the member of staff leading on the project at the museum, had only recently taken up the post and was appointed on a part-time basis. Another member of staff had been involved in the project initially but they went on maternity leave shortly after the project began. The project being only six months in length meant that work had to begin in earnest to get to know the museum team and collection alongside developing ideas for the project.

### Arreton Primary School

### Our Place Freshwater







## Approach

For the It's Your Museum Project, the Shipwreck Centre & Maritime Museum focused on building stronger connections with local schools and community groups. Lisa met with Nicky Coates, the Headteacher of Arreton Primary School, to explore cross-curricular provision for Key Stage One and Two students.

This led to the creation of a bespoke 'pirates' themed visit for Year One pupils, which was subsidised by the project. The museum also collaborated with Sandown Brownies and Beavers, delivering a special visit including a scuba diving workshop and curator challenges. New partnerships with adult community groups such as Our Place and the Living Well Service were established.

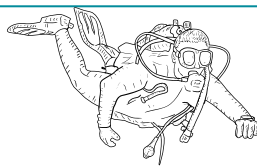


Ian Vallance and colleague Gary developed content and resources for community outreach sessions, which included a PowerPoint presentation and handling objects focusing on themes like 'how we find wrecks' and 'what we find on wrecks'. Three outreach sessions were successfully delivered to local groups, with special attention paid to accessibility for members with vulnerabilities.

The project also allowed for research and consultation. Lisa consulted a local child-minder to explore pre-school provision at the museum, generating ideas for both formal and family-friendly programming. Additionally, Ian conducted research into the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and engaged with staff at Ryde School and Cowes Enterprise College to discuss how the museum could become a resource for EPQ students.

[Arreton Methodist Church](#)

[Living Well & Early Help](#)



## Outputs & Outcomes

- Established new partnerships with Arreton Primary School, Arreton Methodist Church, Living Well and Early Help Service, Our Place, and Sandown Brownies and Beavers.
- Created an audio-visual presentation about the museum, supported by the purchase of a new laptop and projector for community outreach.
- Developed a comprehensive outreach plan for adult groups to introduce them to the museum and its collection.
- Enhanced educational provision and resources for both school visits and outreach activities.
- Conducted a consultation with a local childminder to explore pre-school provision.
- Undertook research and consultation related to the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).

### Delivered outreach sessions to:

- Living Well Service CAMEO group in Sandown – 24 participants
- Our Place in Freshwater – 30 participants
- Arreton Methodist Church interest group – 26 participants


### Hosted museum visits for:

- Sandown Brownies and Beavers – 26 children
- Arreton Primary School – 30 children.

## Next Steps & Future Plans

Now that the museum has gathered feedback from over 50 young people and established new relationships with community partners, the team can begin planning an activity programme based on this input. The consultation has sparked interest among participants, who are eager to engage in activities tailored to them. Further investment will enable the museum to fully develop and deliver a public programme for this audience.

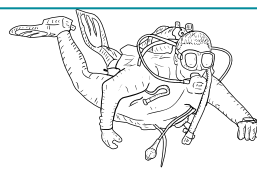
The museum will continue discussions with Island Free School, aiming to host visits for GCSE Geology students next year, and is working with the Museums and Schools Programme to develop this provision.

 ***“I really enjoyed listening to the history, touching the artefacts and learning about what was on the wrecks”***

Participant feedback

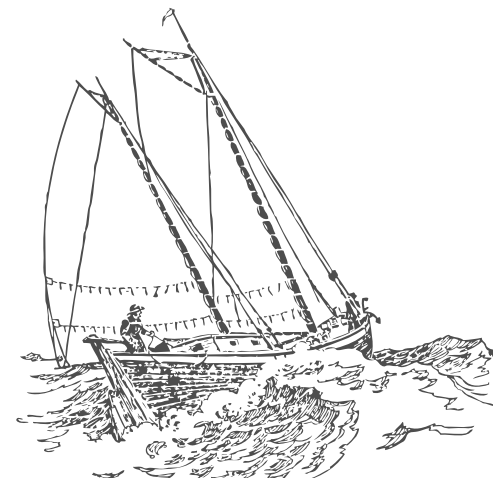
For more information:

**Ian Vallance**, Education Officer, Shipwreck Centre and Maritime Museum – [ian.vallance@maritimearchaeologytrust.org](mailto:ian.vallance@maritimearchaeologytrust.org)





# Classic Boat Museum



## Summary

The Classic Boat Museum's focus for the project was around older people and wellbeing. The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions have both had an impact on the population's mental health and the museum was keen to open up opportunities for engagement with local groups supporting people with wellbeing.

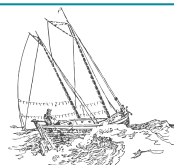
The museum also wanted to make connections with older people in Cowes and East Cowes who may have been involved with shipbuilding locally to form the basis of a future oral history project to record these stories.

***"A wonderfully relaxing way to learn about our history, very enjoyable, thank you"***

Participant feedback

## Background

- People aged 70 and over represent 21.4% of the Isle of Wight's population, compared to 13.6% nationally.
- The Ageing Well on the Isle of Wight Report 2022 highlights the importance of staying physically, socially, and mentally active to combat social isolation and improve mental health. [\[Source\]](#)
- The Isle of Wight Health and Wellbeing Strategy points out the inequality in life expectancy, with those in deprived areas experiencing poorer health for a larger portion of their lives. [\[Source\]](#)
- The 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation indicate Osborne North (East Cowes) as one of the most deprived wards on the Isle of Wight for income. [\[Source\]](#)
- Mental health conditions on the Isle of Wight are rising. In 2022-23, 12.6% of the population (15,409 people) were registered with depression, up from 7.6% in 2016-17. [\[Source\]](#)
- Engaging with the arts and heritage can enhance mental and physical health, improving overall wellbeing for individuals and communities. [\[Source\]](#)





## Approach

The Classic Boat Museum in Cowes approached the It's Your Museum Project by first exploring the priorities around older people and wellbeing in East Cowes, focusing on the town due to its higher deprivation levels. Lisa attended a community network meeting, "*Joining the Dots*," to connect with local partners and understand residents' needs. The museum team, including trustees and volunteers, selected objects and photographs from their collection related to local shipbuilding to **create a handling collection** for community engagement.

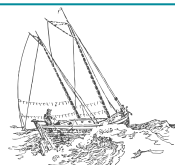
Lisa then engaged with wellbeing groups in East Cowes, Newport, and Cowes, delivering outreach sessions where participants **explored museum objects** and **shared personal stories**. Bespoke visits to the museum were organised for each group, with the costs subsidised by project funding. Group leaders helped tailor the visits to meet participants' specific needs, and some were able to engage in **creative activities** with an artist during their visit.

The project **aimed** to raise awareness and establish new partnerships with organisations supporting older adults and those dealing with mental and physical health issues. It sought to help the museum develop resources for community engagement, such as a handling collection, to be used both at the museum and in outreach activities. Additionally, the project aimed to design and deliver an outreach session, as well as a programme for museum visits, and to pilot and evaluate these sessions with local wellbeing groups

## Challenges

The Classic Boat Museum was run entirely by volunteers when the project began, with no paid staff. A part-time Education Officer, Ian, was later appointed to manage education and liaise with the Project Manager.

Initially, the museum lacked a handling collection and educational materials for adults, so time was spent developing these resources. The museum also faced operational challenges, as it operates across two sites in East and West Cowes, with physical access issues at the Boat Shed, such as the absence of toilet facilities.





## Outcomes & Outputs

- Creation of a handling collection and new educational materials for the museum.
- Outreach sessions delivered in the community for:
  - Senior Moments – engaging 10 people
  - MADAid DOT – engaging 15 people
  - Isorropia Foundation – engaging 9 people
  - Cowes Heritage and Community Group – engaging 12 people
- Visits to the Gallery and Boat Shed for:
  - Senior Moments – engaging 16 people
  - Isorropia – engaging 13 people
  - MADAid DOT – 20 complimentary tickets provided for group members to make visit to the museum in their own time
- A visit to the Boat Shed for Cowes Community Heritage Group and Senior Moments have been organised for future events.

“ This kind of opportunity breaks down the barriers people have to doing new things, especially on their own, it has inspired confidence in them to visit other museums

Group co-ordinator Isorropia

MADAid DOT

Cowes Heritage & Community

Senior Moments

Isorropia Foundation

Community Spirited Cafe

### Next Steps:

Next steps for the museum include continuing efforts to raise local awareness while addressing limited capacity for delivery, as Ian works just one day a week. They aim to build on the project by offering ongoing provision for groups that support community wellbeing and engaging with under-served audiences. The museum plans to further develop its handling collection, making it more interactive and adaptable for different audiences, both within the museum and in outreach settings.

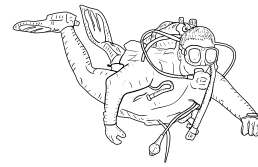
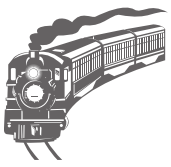
They will continue working with existing museum partners on joint engagement initiatives, seek new collaborations, and explore funding opportunities to sustain and expand this work.

For more information:

**Dr Victoria Preston**, Deputy Chair, Classic Boat Museum – [victoria@maritimeisle.org](mailto:victoria@maritimeisle.org)

**Ian Vallance**, Education Officer, Classic Boat Museum – [vallanceian2@gmail.com](mailto:vallanceian2@gmail.com)





# Project Impacts

This project brought significant **benefits** to both the museums and the participants. By fostering inclusivity, strengthening community partnerships, and enhancing access to cultural experiences, the initiative enriched the museum offerings while providing meaningful, engaging opportunities for all involved.

## IOW Steam Railway

For the museum

- The project led to new community connections, stronger awareness of partners supporting people with dementia, and the development of a template for future engagement activities. It also provided valuable professional development: *"I gained more knowledge on dementia which will enable me to identify other opportunities for the IWSR to engage with this audience"* (Cara Trevor, Heritage and Learning Manager).

For the participants

- The project offered social interaction, cognitive stimulation, and positively impacted wellbeing and quality of life: *"This is the best day I've had in years, I loved the train ride as it made me think about when I was a little girl"* (Resident at Northbrooke House).

## Dinosaur Isle

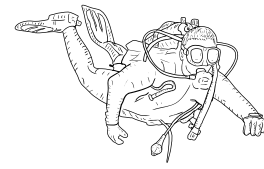
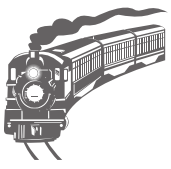
For the museum

- The project helped the museum engage with a new, underserved audience and plan a new activity programme based on consultation feedback. It also expanded the museum's knowledge of the GCSE geology curriculum, leading to new provisions for KS3 and KS4, and increased awareness of community priorities and potential partnerships.

For the participants

- Young people, some with limited access to museums, had the chance to engage with real museum objects in their own spaces. This involvement boosted their self-esteem and fostered new learning: *"This is the best geology lesson we've ever had, the time has gone so quickly"* (Island Free School Student).





## Brading Roman Villa

### For the museum

- Collaborating with partner museums provided valuable insights into their challenges and the benefit of freelance project management. The museum invested in resources to support future visitors with SEND, engaged children who may have faced social and financial barriers, and formed new partnerships. *"I am really pleased that we reached 50 children and young people who might not have visited the Villa with their families, but who got to experience crafts and activities as part of Scallywags holiday club. The conversations that were enabled, led by their own curiosity, were interesting and might not have happened as part of a guided school visit"* (Sarah Girling).

### For the participants

- Participants felt more welcome in the museum and appreciated that their opinions were valued. *"It's good to know you are trying to be more inclusive and that our opinions matter to you"* (Parent's Voice parent). Children and adults gained access to new experiences and learning, with inclusive activities that catered to all needs. *"The children were asking lots of questions and learning so many new things. Some of the children had never experienced a workshop like this and we could see how they built their confidence up to come into the chapel to participate."* (Sarah Wherry).

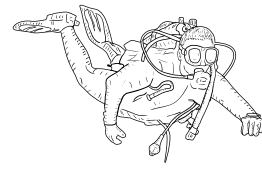
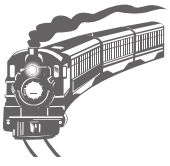
## Shipwreck Centre

### For the museum

- Gained awareness of local groups and a deeper understanding of how museums can positively impact community health and wellbeing. New provision and resources were developed, adaptable for different audiences, leading to increased local exposure and a higher profile. Sharing the collection and expertise with new audiences expanded the museum's community engagement.

### For the participants

- The activities offered opportunities for socialisation, learning, and inspiration through interaction with the collection, fostering confidence to visit the museum. Participants connected with local heritage, developing a sense of awe. *"It was very interesting to hear about the diving. So much history on and around the Isle of Wight."*



## Classic Boat Museum

For the museum:

- The project led to new community connections and a deeper understanding of barriers that prevent engagement. The museum developed a session structure for future activities, gained access to training for professional development, and raised awareness among its local communities, reaching new audiences they might not have otherwise engaged.

For the participants

- The project fostered social interaction, shared memories, and new learning experiences that positively impacted mental and physical wellbeing. Many participants gained confidence, with some considering volunteering in the heritage sector.
- *“This kind of opportunity breaks down the barriers people have to doing new things, especially on their own.”*

# What now?

As a result of this project the museum partners are increasingly incorporating community engagement and audience development into their forward plans, reflecting a long-term commitment to these initiatives. They are keen to continue collaborating with new community partners and explore additional opportunities to benefit participants, both within and beyond the museum space.

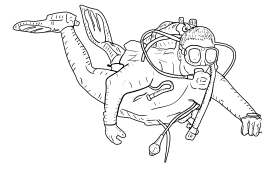
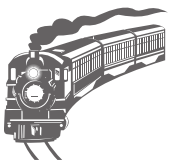
By acting on feedback from new audiences, museums aim to develop new programmes and offerings tailored to their needs. Furthermore, museums are eager to maintain their partnerships, pursue future joint funding opportunities, and invite other museums to join in their community engagement efforts.

Finally, museums are committed to sharing their experiences and celebrating the impact of this work within the heritage, creative, and cultural sectors, as well as across the wider Island community.

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# Special Thanks

## Partners

In alphabetical order, here's some of the community partners we worked with:

- Alzheimer Café IOW
- Arreton Methodist Church
- Arreton Primary School
- Brading Primary School
- Dementia Adventure
- East Cowes Senior Moments Group
- IOW Council Holiday Activity and Food Programme
- Isorropia
- Living Well and Early Help Service
- MAD Aid DOT
- Newchurch Scouts
- Northbrooke Nursing Home
- Our Place Freshwater
- Parent's Voice IOW
- Sandown Brownies
- Scallywags Fun Club
- The Bay Youth Project
- The Island Free School



## What's Next?

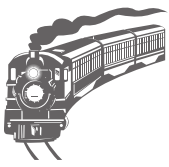
- Community engagement and audience development are **being incorporated into the museums' forward plans.**
- There is a strong desire to continue working with new community partners and explore further initiatives benefiting participants both inside and outside the museum.
- Museums plan to act on audience feedback to develop new programmes.
- The partnership will be maintained, with efforts to explore joint funding opportunities and invite additional museum partners to collaborate on community engagement.
- The experience and impact of this engagement work will be shared with the heritage, creative, and cultural sectors, as well as the wider Island community.

ISLE OF WIGHT  
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# CREATIVE ISLAND



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