

South West
Museum
Development
Programme

Small Grant Big Improvement

2015 – 16

Grants under £500



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

ACE Goal 1
Excellence: Collections
Care

Small Grant Big Improvement 2015- 16

Museum

Community Heritage
Access Centre

Project

Drying out the
Community Heritage
Access Centre

ACE Goal 1

Excellence: Collection
Care

*"... our new
dehumidifiers have
arrived ... and are
working like Billy-o if
you pardon the
expression but they are
keeping the humidity
down – hurray!"*

Volunteers involved: **0**

Volunteer hours: **0**

Grant award: **£500**

Total project value:
£532.22



What were the project aims and how did they address the ACE Goal?

The project aim was to obtain three dehumidifiers to place in the stores at the Community Heritage Access Centre (CHAC), two in the rear workshop which has a mezzanine floor and one in the first floor of the Environmentally Controlled Store. This was to enable the atmospheric conditions to be controlled better in the Environmentally Controlled Store and to provide control for the rear workshop which had no equipment to control the environment. Obtaining the dehumidifiers addresses Goal 1. Excellence: Collection Care by providing a more stable and correct atmosphere for the objects to be stored in.

Please describe your project:

I obtained the three dehumidifiers as soon as I could after receiving the grant, because the conditions in the rear workshop were causing concern at 88% humidity and at least 23 degrees maximum temperature. I ordered them a week after the acceptance of the grant letter was sent back, they arrived the next day. My colleague and myself immediately put them into action and they work fantastically.

What went well and were there any challenges (any top tips)?

As soon as they started working, the humidity and temperature started to reduce. An average maximum temperature even with the hot weather is now 20 degrees and the humidity has stayed around 45%- 50% and has not fluctuated as much as before. It is amazing how well they are working. The only challenge is that we have to empty them every day, sometimes twice a day but that is not a problem, everyone seems to like doing that! The condition in the rear store is now better than the large object store which hasn't any environmental control but has had better conditions than the rear store due to it's position within the store. We are currently experimenting with one dehumidifier in the large object store and one in the rear store to see the affect on the environmental conditions.

How has your museum improved as a result of the project?

The Environmental Conditions in the rear store are now at optimum level and the conditions in the Environmentally Controlled Store are excellent. We are now very proud of our store.

Small Grant Big Improvement 2015 - 16

Museum

Bath Abbey

Project

Environmental Monitoring

Ace Goal 1

Excellence: Collections Care



“I’m very pleased that we have been able to improve our storage conditions.”

Oliver Taylor, Interpretation Officer.

Volunteers involved: **0**

Volunteer hours: **0**

Grant award: **£410**

Total project value: **£529.99**

What were the project aims and how did they address the ACE Goal?

To improve our collections care by:

- by monitoring the environment in our storage areas
- by installing a dehumidifier
- by writing a procedure and reports

Please describe your project:

We purchased data loggers for storage areas and installed a dehumidifier in the storage area containing wooden objects, to improve the environment there. We wrote a procedure for environmental monitoring and reports summarising environmental conditions for senior management.

What went well and were there any challenges (any top tips)?

The data loggers were very easy to use. The reports it generates are easy to produce and interpret and are useful for advocacy. Other staff involved in installing equipment now know more about environmental monitoring and have offered to help with ongoing maintenance and data collection. Environmental monitoring is now on the agenda of ongoing project meetings.

Tip: allow more time for ordering equipment.

The project was severely delayed because the data loggers took 4 months to arrive. It took another month to install the software because the Abbey has no in-house IT. During this delay the volunteer I hoped would assist me left the Abbey, so I was not able to involve her as I had hoped.

How has your museum improved as a result of the project?

Vital information about storage conditions is now collected. Storage conditions for our wooden objects can now be improved. Procedure for environmental monitoring exists and can be publicised and used for accreditation.

The Bath Abbey Archivist has gained a better understanding of environmental monitoring as a result of the project, and other key staff (Verger and Interpretation Officer) now know more about what is involved.

Small Grant Big Improvement 2015 - 16

Museum

Museum of Barnstaple
and North Devon

Project

Display and Storage
Monitoring

ACE Goal 1

Excellence: Collection
Care

"It's slightly terrifying to know what is going on in our stores and displays for the first time, but this project is giving us much better data to improve our collections care. For the volunteers, having a graphical output rather than just collecting numbers has been a revelation."

Mel Terrell, Museum Assistant

Volunteers involved: **2**

Volunteer hours: **10 (ongoing)**

Grant award: **£500**

Total project value:
£1162.50

What were the project aims and how did they address the ACE Goal?

The project aim was to improve monitoring of displays and storage conditions to assist us in determining areas unsuitable for their current use, or where there are problems with the building. It will enable us to intervene by removing objects, repacking or introducing controls where there are unsuitable fluctuations.

Please describe your project:

We bought 6 additional 'tiny tags' and installed them in locations identified in our Forward plan, completing a network of 11. We connected the network up to a PC and trained volunteers in monitoring the system. The project was carried out by our Museum Assistant and 2 volunteers with support from the Learning and Outreach Officer (IT skills) and Museum Development Manager.

What went well and were there any challenges (any top tips)?

The data loggers are installed and operating well.

We expected to install the data loggers during May/June 2015 and have a volunteer recruited and trained by July. In practice the data loggers were not installed until later in the year due to changes in the council's IT systems which meant we had to identify a standalone PC for use with the 'tiny tags'.

The time input from the new environmental monitoring volunteers is less than originally anticipated.

How has your museum improved as a result of the project?

The loggers are now part of our ongoing collections management, and enable much better data gathering for a relatively small outlay.

We have enabled one of our front of house volunteer to also carry out collections work, improving integration of back and front-of-house functions.



Small Grant Big Improvement 2015- 16

Museum

Saltash Heritage

Project

The Audrey Miller Photographic Collection

Ace Goal 1

Excellence: Collections Care

"It is good to see my previously unprinted journalistic records of photographs ... has been sorted and catalogued by the Saltash Heritage Volunteers over the past six months. I am delighted to see that in my life time this history has been preserved for the future generations of Saltash."

Miss Audrey Miller. Reporter and correspondent for the Cornish Times since 1948

Volunteers involved: **8**

Volunteer hours: **149**

Grant award: **£435**

Total project value: **£434.10**



What were the project aims and how did they address the ACE Goal?

To preserve 50 years of Journalism from a local octogenarian Journalist by using archival-quality sleeves and suspension rods. To provide an external display board and enhance the knowledge of new volunteers.

Please describe your project:

The project was led by our Senior Archivist with assistance from a shadow Archivist and 6 volunteers who were shown how to research and identify the images. They learnt how to handle, store, file and retrieve images, both manually and digitally. All these images and stories have been digitised. The volunteers learnt how to interview visitors who have volunteered information after seeing the images on display.

What went well and were there any challenges (any top tips)?

Working as a group went well, there was always assistance and camaraderie in the Research room. Many of the photographs were undated and had no personal information on the reverse. The team were encouraged to look at old newspapers in our store to identify events. We were fortunate enough to have the Journalist on hand who was able to assist. We have learnt from this experience how important it is to obtain information, photographs and knowledge during the lifetime of the donor and are intending to relate this story to our membership in our quarterly newsletter, in order to encourage others to pass on information, stories and photos during their lifetimes.

How has your museum improved as a result of the project?

This collection will enhance our research database. As the collection has been digitised, future donations from can be added to the collection. This will become a complete history of 50 years of Journalism from Saltash to a major Cornish Newspaper. The external display board has brought new visitors to the museum who are keen to share their knowledge. The volunteers have now received more training, which has developed and enhanced their skills and confidence.

ACE Goal 2
Audiences: Audience
Development

Small Grant Big Improvement 2015 - 16

Museum

Grampound and Creed Heritage Centre

Project

Taking our History out of the Heritage Centre

Ace Goal 2

Audiences: Audience Development

“Carnival is a well established annual tradition in the village and brings the community together. Village organisations vie to make an impact in the Village Hall and our new display equipment enabled us to stand out this year. It had a big spin-off as many people took the trouble to walk up the hill to see more in the Heritage Centre, which often struggles to attract visitors on Carnival Day. This equipment represents a really good and exciting innovation.”

Peter Wootton, HC Volunteer and exhibition curator.

Volunteers involved: **4**

Volunteer hours: **1**

Grant award: **£489**

Total project value: **£491.14**

What were the project aims and how did they address the ACE Goal?

To seek the means to engage with new audiences by taking the Heritage Centre out to people and places through exhibitions in the community.

Please describe your project:

Our project is on-going; our first venture was an exhibition called 'Memories and Connections' staged in the Village Hall over the annual Carnival weekend. There is a high footfall at this time.

Our next exhibition will be about the shops and tradespeople of the village over the last 100 years and that will be displayed in the Village Hall on market day and then in the coffee shop. The grant enabled us to purchase new display equipment.

What went well and were there any challenges (any top tips)?

Creating banners and posters to advertise the exhibitions required advice from the suppliers who were very supportive. The resulting banners are good, one gives an overview of the Heritage Centre, and two more are being produced that deal with specific topics. Using the new equipment was easy, it is light weight and easy to erect. We also realised that A3 posters have more impact than A4.

How has your museum improved as a result of the project?

We can now confidently go out of the centre and set up an exhibition. Our first outside exhibition looked good, was easy to transport away from the Heritage Centre and to set up. It got a significant amount of attention from the local community. We have had some village specific artefacts handed in!



Small Grant Big Improvement 2015 - 16

Museum

Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon
Life

Project

Phase 3: Signage

Ace Goal 2 & Ace Goal 3

Audiences: Audience
Development

Resilience: Financial
sustainability

"This project has made visitor navigation around the reception and shop area much clearer. The opening hours are far more visible which obviously makes it easier for our visitors to access."

**Carrie Thomas, Visitor
Information Officer.**

Volunteers involved: **0**

Volunteer hours: **0**

Grant award: **£500**

Total project value: **£560**

What were the project aims and how did they address the ACE Goal?

To complete installing signage externally and in the reception area. To make the organisation look professional and improve the museum's profile. To promote the museum and Information Service, attract more visitors and improve the visitor experience.

Please describe your project:

This grant enabled us to finish the third phase of our project to improve the signage on the outside of the building and in the entrance area. In the first two phases, (funded by a SGBI grant in 2012, private donations and the County Council Locality Budget), we installed flag-banners, a large permanent sign and graphic panels in the foyer.

The third phase involved installing a pavement swinger sign to the rear of the building where there is a large amount of footfall, (before the sign there was no indication on the rear of the building that it is a museum!) The building is listed, so using a pavement sign meant we didn't have to obtain permission that can be difficult to get. We added vinyl lettering to the glass at the front of the museum detailing our opening times. We installed a new sign that matches the current museum branding inside the lockable noticeboard to the side of the entrance; we use this to promote our current and upcoming exhibitions and events. We added professionally designed graphic panels to signpost visitors to the front desk and information service.

What went well and were there any challenges (any top tips)?

This was a simple project to run and it all went to plan.

How has your museum improved as a result of the project?

Since installing the signage we no longer have visitors trying to gain access when the museum is closed. We have been informed by residents living to the rear of the museum that, since the pavement swinger sign, they no longer have to show people where the museum is. The reception and shop area look more professional. Overall, the museum is better presented and gives a better visitor experience.



ACE Goal 3

**Resilience: Financial
Sustainability**

Small Grant Big Improvement 2015 - 16

Museum

Museum in the Park

Project

Better Access, Less Risk

ACE Goal 3

Resilience: Financial sustainability

"I am fascinated by the Roman coin display – do you have more of these and do you have any more recent tokens? I am interested in numismatics generally but particularly interested in the story of coins as propaganda tools – I didn't even realise you had a coin collection."

John, Visitor



Volunteers involved:
40

Volunteer hours: **2500**

Grant award: **£460**

Total project value:
£465.3

What were the project aims and how did they address the ACE Goal?

To raise the profile of the stored collections and to get visitors closer to the objects in store and on display, whilst providing a training/educational resource tool. This has made us more sustainable by educating the public, and providing something that volunteers can use and refer to, more resilient by raising the profile of stored collections and getting visitors 'closer' to objects, and has built support and understanding of the collections.

Please describe your project:

Archaeology exhibition – Summer 2015: Purchased special display equipment to enable us to show a collection of Roman coins more effectively. Magnification tools meant visitors could see the coins better, whilst the purchase of a digital photo frame meant that we were able to link the coins back to other items in the collection as well as highlighting important features.

Geology display October-November 2015: used magnification tools to highlight features of minerals on display in the *Beautiful but Deadly* exhibition.

Since these two projects were put in place we have also used the digital photo frames to show pictures of the 120 year history of the local Rugby Club in celebration of the World Cup, and to show an extensive collection of Postcards of the local area.

Damage Frames: These are a pair of box frames, in one of the frames there are two piece of red cloth, one behind glass and one exposed with a label encouraging people to touch it. This frame deals with the impact of touch; as the exposed fabric deteriorates visitors will see why we put objects behind glass and ask them not to touch. We have duplicated this format, with one frame showing the effect of pest control, and another showing light damage.

What went well and were there any challenges (any top tips)?

Taking photographs which were suitable for use on the digital frames was a learning curve for us all, as was working out the best way to display the frames themselves. We discovered that the natural light in the room we had chosen for one of the displays meant that the digital projector was unable to be seen – we have since experimented with it in other locations and are satisfied that it will come in useful for similar projects elsewhere in the building in the future.

How has your museum improved as a result of the project?

The profile of the archaeology and geology collections has been raised, as well as the long-term ability of the Collections Team to create high quality temporary displays. As a direct result of the success of the *Beautiful But Deadly* display we have created a permanent mineral display in our 'Collectors Room'. The 'damage frames' have only just gone in to use but will help us to improve our care of objects on open display by allowing us to educate our visitors, staff and volunteers in how to engage with them safely.

Small Grant Big Improvement 2015 - 16

Museum

King John's Hunting Lodge
(Axbridge Museum)

Project

The conversion of the lighting in the museum to LEDs.

ACE Goal 3

Resilience: Financial sustainability



"The modernisation of the lighting system in KJHL has dramatically improved the experience of visitors and custodians alike. The replacement of dated fluorescent tubes ... enhances the atmosphere of this historic building by creating a greater contrast between the illuminated areas and the timber framework. The windows now emerge as more of a feature in their own right, thus emphasising their original importance."

Madeleine and David Roberts,
Volunteer custodians

Volunteers involved: **3**

Volunteer hours: **39**

Grant award: **£500**

Total project value: **£645.36**

What were the project aims and how did they address the ACE Goal?

To convert museum lighting to LEDs in order to reduce electricity usage and future replacement costs, thereby improving the Museum's financial sustainability. The improved lighting should enhance the Museum's appeal to visitors. The improvements to display cases and lower UV levels would reduce damage to exhibits.

Please describe your project:

We replaced fluorescent tube lighting, incandescent and halogen lamp bulbs with LED equivalents.

What went well and were there any challenges (any top tips)?

King John's Hunting Lodge is a historic (Grade II listed) wood framed building which is leased from the National Trust. The permanent flame proof wiring could not be modified in this project. Further, the wooden joists make access to lighting units more difficult and can obscure the light from spotlights (tip - a cranked screwdriver is helpful). The replacement of incandescent/halogen lamp bulbs was straightforward. We were not confident of the reliability of LED 'replacement tubes' for fluorescents so we rebuilt two 5ft fluorescent units to accommodate five 5 watt LEDs each. The result was satisfactory for illuminating the emergency passageway concerned but judged poor in terms of illuminating the contents of display cases. The efficiency gain when LEDs replace fluorescents is much less than when incandescent are replaced. However, LEDs produce efficient, well focussed, spotlights and we have taken advantage of this. With the cash available, we replaced nearly 800 watts of fluorescent tubes with 80 watts of LED spotlights and several instances, achieved significant improvement in the illumination of the displays. As this work did not require opening any display cases, they will now be upgraded in the course of the Museum's annual refit (January - March 2016).

How has your museum improved as a result of the project?

There has been a significant drop in the Museum's monthly electricity bills since the replacements began and a further reduction in costs should come from the greater LED lifetime. The latter is of additional benefit where the spotlight units are difficult to reach. The replacement of the halogen bulbs in the 'Art Gallery' has achieved better light levels whilst reducing UV to zero.

However, the greatest impact is on the ambience of the Museum. The fluorescent lighting that was installed by the National trust in the early seventies, was more suited to a commercial office than a five hundred year old building. As well as the benefits to the exhibits, the changes greatly enhance the internal appearance of building which should increase visitor numbers.

Small Grant Big Improvement 2015 - 16

Museum

Beckford Tower Trust

Project

Beckford's Tower
Emergency Kits

Ace Goal 3

Resilience: Financial
sustainability

"...it really opened my eyes to the issues we may face at the museum ... such as water getting into the building near objects ... which I may not have had the confidence to deal with before now."

**Alana Wright,
Museum
Administrator**



Volunteers involved: 5

Volunteer hours: 64

Grant award: £500

Total project value:
£506.21

What were the project aims and how did they address the ACE Goal?

To create two bespoke emergency preparedness kits for Beckford's Tower & Museum. The kits would form part of a larger project to review emergency preparedness and develop a trained emergency team shared across the four Bath Preservation Trust museums. This would establish a more effective and resilient emergency resource for the organisation.

Please describe your project:

Following a review of the existing emergency plan, two new preparedness kits were designed and created; a small kit designed to be used when small incidents occur in the museum, and a larger kit designed for more serious water ingress and the for the event of an emergency salvage operation. The Tower Curator and Administrator worked with two volunteers to assess the threats, put together the kits and test scenarios when they may be used; they are now the trained emergency responders for the Tower. Reviews will now take place at the other sites to develop preparedness kits across the organisation. Salvage operation processes will be shared to the other Beckford volunteers through training.

What went well and were there any challenges (any top tips)?

Designing and making bespoke kits meant that not only were the resources in them relevant to the needs of the museum, but the emergency responders developed the knowledge and confidence to use them. Doing a full run through of the building with paid staff and volunteers worked really well, as the volunteers brought up issues which changed the emergency plan. Timing proved to be a challenge; while the key elements of this project were completed for Beckford's Tower, the larger Bath Preservation Trust project is still ongoing. Working across four sites to create an integrated emergency team is going well, but organising the training required is taking longer than expected.

How has your museum improved as a result of the project?

We have established an effective resource for dealing with both minor and major incidents. The creation of a brief emergency plan has been one of the most important results of the project. Reducing the length of the plan and including key contacts has made it a usable first response that can be easily distributed amongst staff and volunteers.

The project has achieved an increase in awareness of the need for emergency planning, collection handling and salvage processes amongst the staff, we will continue to build on this.

Small Grant Big Improvement 2014 - 15

Museum

Brixham Museum

Project

Family History and Archiving

Ace Goal 3

Resilience: Financial
sustainability

"Working on the project which will both benefit visitors and increase the opportunity to generate income has been a great opportunity for me personally and will, I'm sure, greatly benefit the museum."

Otto Schnieder

Volunteer – Brixham Museum

Volunteers involved: 5

Volunteer hours: 35+

Grant award: £500

Total project value: £637.22

What were the project aims and how did they address the ACE Goal?

Providing a designated space to offer family history and archive research will increase revenue generated by this service, and also make our archive more accessible.

Please describe your project:

We refurbished the research area to provide a designated space to access archives, photographs and micro fiche readers. We initiated family history research and made archives and displays more accessible.

What went well and were there any challenges (any top tips)?

We underestimated the time required for volunteers to complete the project and the impact on other work that needed attention. We have learned how to better manage time for future volunteer projects.

How has your museum improved as a result of the project?

We can now offer and promote improved access to our archives for disabled visitors and researchers. These developments will add to the sustainability of the museum and help promote our services.



Small Grant Big Improvement 2015 - 16

Museum

Combe Martin
Museum

Project

Digitisation Project

Ace Goal 3

Resilience: Financial
Sustainability

".. it opened my eyes to the need to give as much information as possible.... [on paper based forms] prior to actually using MODES. Sadie was very patient and went over areas I didn't understand."

**Margaret Coward,
Volunteer**

Volunteers involved: **3**

Volunteer hours: **150**

Grant award: **£500**

Total project value:
£500

What were the project aims and how did they address the ACE Goal?

The project has enabled our Museum to be more sustainable, resilient and innovative by:

Increasing the capacity of volunteers to be self-supporting in using a Collections Management database system.

Creating a new database that contains information about the objects we have, where they are located and with good quality images,

Enabling us to be able to achieve one of the goals in our Forward plan, to transfer the records of our Collection onto the MODES system.

Enabling us to begin to work much more effectively with our Collections.

Please describe your project:

Sadie Green worked with the Museum manager and volunteers. She provided 5 days of support to enable this team to create new records in MODES whilst at the same time re-visiting and revising the Collections Management Procedures. Sadie produced a file of Information with help sheets. This will enable us to work independently after her initial five days and for the volunteers taking part to cascade skills down to other volunteers who wish to learn how to use MODES in the future.

What went well and were there any challenges (any top tips)?

The volunteers worked very well together and have supported each other through the challenge of working through the Museums Collections Management Procedures and setting up a new Collections Management database - understanding its place and role within the overall procedure and documentation process.

Formative and summative evaluation with the volunteers and staff shows the positive impact of involving expert support with everyone reporting an increase in confidence and skills.

How has your museum improved as a result of the project?

Volunteer skills - team work, learning a new piece of software, photography skills, IT skills and confidence have improved.

Our capacity for using a Collections Management database system has increased.

One of the goals in our Forward plan, to transfer the records of our Collection onto the MODES system, has been started.

We have become more resilient.



Small Grant Big Improvement 2015 - 16

Museum

Ilfracombe Museum

Project

Flags and New signs for
Ilfracombe museum

Ace Goal 3

Resilience: Financial
Sustainability

*"I have had visitors coming in
and mentioning they have seen
the flags and found us that way.
They are a great improvement"*

**Catherine Smith, reception
desk volunteer.**

Volunteers involved: **19**

Volunteer hours: **20**

Grant award: **£500**

Total project value: **£511.97**

What were the project aims and how did they address the ACE Goal?

The aim was to improve the existing signage at the museum, to increase footfall into the museum and therefore our sustainability financially. The museum building is set down low and not very visible and it was felt a flag on the existing flag pole, plus two matching bendy flags would catch the eye of visitors. We also wanted to change the wording on our sign board to explain why we charge admission, which is sometimes a barrier to entry.

Please describe your project:

Trustees and volunteers were asked for ideas about wording for the new sign boards and locations for the new portable flags. A vertical flag for the flag pole was designed to match existing museum signage in colour and font. Bendy flags were sourced after discussion with the volunteers. A local sign company redesigned our metal boards after consulting with the museum manager. Again, colours and fonts were matched throughout.



What went well and were there any challenges (any top tips)?

The local sign company were very efficient and quick – we always recommend using local business if possible. The flags were not sourced locally however due to high costs. The vertical flag has been very effective, we must take it down during the winter due to high wind speeds on the coast here. Our only problem was with the bendy flags: the proof came miss-spelled and we had to pay for replacements. Tip – triple check the proofs! Also the bases we ordered were liquid filled and split – not durable enough for everyday carrying.

How has your museum improved as a result of the project?

Our new flags attract the eye to the museum building from a distance – we chose a strong colour and they look bold and professional. They definitely 'signpost' the museum more effectively than our old A frame boards. Our new metal signs clearly explain our reason for admissions, and promote the shop. If we want to change the wording then the local company can do this at a low cost. We estimate that in the period June – Nov 2015 during which the flags were first used, we have an increase in visitor numbers of almost 5% compared with the same period in 2014. A recent Trip Advisor review mentioned that the flags helped them find the museum.

ACE Goal 5
Children and Young
People: Youth
Engagement

Small Grant Big Improvement 2015 - 16

Museum

Blandford Museum

Project

Mediaeval history of
Blandford Forum

Ace Goal 5

Children & Young
People: Youth
engagement

*"So lovely to see old
Blandford. A hidden
gem."*

Museum Visitor

Volunteers involved: 6

Volunteer hours: 134

Grant award: £490

Total project value:
£548.29

What were the project aims and how did they address the ACE Goal?

The aims were to engage young people in the work of Blandford Museum and to encourage them to produce a new exhibit to replace an old one. Goal 5 involved work undertaken by a recent school leaver, under the direction of an assistant curator. Together they designed and built a new exhibit on the Mediaeval history of Blandford Forum. They constructed a PhotoFrame loop with the help of a disabled young man who came to us through the Job Centre Ability Programme. He works at the museum as a volunteer one day a week. A local artist helped with the design and painted the background to the exhibit, another volunteer managed the construction.



Please describe your project:

We attempted to reproduce a Mediaeval setting for the exhibit of 12th to 15th Century Blandford Forum. Blandford Museum has a limited number of objects from this period because of the 18th century fires, it is important to display what little we have in a setting that draws attention to the objects without distraction from labelling. This was achieved by reproducing Mediaeval walls and stained glass as a background to the exhibit, and by restricting labelling to a display board. Additional information has been added by means of a PhotoFrame running PowerPoint slides in a continuous loop with slides of local Mediaeval buildings and artefacts. A plastic holder contains detailed accounts of Mediaeval Blandford and its history.

What went well and were there any challenges (any top tips)?

The exhibit was completed despite objections from some museum staff, who objected to the reproduction of the Mediaeval setting. The student working on the exhibit left towards the end of the project as she got a job (for which I am very happy), but she was very conscientious and completed her parts of the project in her own time even after starting her job. In particular she completed a needle-point illustration for the display. Apart from these minor glitches, the project went well.

How has your museum improved as a result of the project?

The exciting new exhibit – our Mediaeval exhibit was formerly a few uninteresting objects in a glass case with limited information about Mediaeval Blandford. The new exhibit is very eye-catching; people now stop to look at the exhibit, before they walked right past it. The work done by the student includes a wealth of information.