

South West
Museum
Development
Programme

Small Grant Big Improvement

2014 – 15

Grants under £500



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

ACE Goal 1
Excellence: Collections
Care

Small Grant Big Improvement 2014 - 15

Museum

Saltash Heritage

Project

To store newly acquired Victorian Costumes and train new volunteers in their care

ACE Goal 1

Excellence: Collection Care

"I really enjoyed the costume training...It was so interesting to feel the different fabric samples to enable us to know which archival materials to use in packing. Also the information on the various bugs that can infest fabrics was very informative... Looking forward to attending another one soon."

Maureen Cummings.
Saltash Heritage
volunteer.

Volunteers involved: **12**

Volunteer hours: **34**

Grant award: **£398**

Total project value:
£398



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

To store newly acquired Victorian costumes. Our priority was to provide new storage boxes of a uniform size, on more suitable shelving to remove stress on the boxes and the volunteers. Health and Safety issues were resolved with new lower shelving, with individual boxes now more accessible. The grant also provided practical training for volunteers.

Please describe your project:

Shelving constructed, and a programme of 'Textile Care and Packing' training sessions advertised to existing volunteers. Seven places were quickly booked for the first session and five for the second. The morning started with guidance notes from our Curator including discussions about the environment of the room, how to handle and examine the costumes, check for bugs or other infestation, look at and examine different fabrics and advice given on how to pack, protect and label items. Costumes were removed from quarantine, examined and packed in new boxes with archival quality tissue paper. The Curator and Assistant will continue to re-pack the rest of the collection with the help of the newly trained volunteers. Further training sessions are planned during the year. A 'one day' study and packing day is already programmed for February 2015.

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

The attending volunteers surprised us with their good humor and confidence, all stating they could not wait for the next session. This was definitely down to good planning, simple, confident instruction and hands on experience, plus finishing up with coffee and chocolate biscuits. Though the lack of space restricted the number of volunteers working at one time.

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

The storage area, looks neat and tidy and boxes are far more accessible. As items were repacked they were examined and photographed. These photos will be placed on the front of the boxes and stored digitally, which will provide a more accurate visual description. We envisage the new storage methods will mean the costumes will be in better condition when they are displayed in the Museum in the future. Volunteers involved in the training showed a great deal more interest in the collection.

Small Grant Big Improvement 2014 - 15

Museum

Wotton Heritage Centre,
Wotton-under-Edge

Project

Conservation Of Mid-Glos
Conservative Benefit Society
Banner

Ace Goal 1

Excellence: Collections Care



"It is great to now be able to display the banner without the fear of it being too fragile. The work has brought it to life."

John White , Committee Member

Volunteers involved: 5

Volunteer hours: 5

Grant award: £400

Total project value: £528

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

The aim of this project was to preserve the banner for future generations to see, using a Conservation Expert. We needed easy access , which was only possible if the fabric was stabilized. This gives us more opportunities to put it on display for public access. As we are always promoting education this was an opportunity to give the work to a conservation graduate, undertaking a work based placement.

Please describe your project:

The project was to clean, straighten and stabilize a Mid Gloucestershire Benefit Banner from the late 1880's belonging to Wotton Heritage Centre. Measuring 1.22m long by 0.9m wide, the banner is made of silk, edged on three sides with a wool and silk fringe and has painted scrolls with lettering on. It was soiled and water damaged and the silk fabric was in a state of deterioration and splitting in places. It was also badly creased and distorted by the fringe on three sides. The painted areas were in a poor condition and some letters are illegible. The hanging tabs were damaged. The aim was to make the banner safe to display at the Heritage Centre. The treatment was to remove and clean the fringe. The banner was humidified to remove the creases and distortion. The silk was stabilized with crepeline which was dyed to match. A cotton lining was attached to the reverse and used as a new pole sleeve. The hanging tabs were supported and the fringe was reattached. A report is attached of the work done.

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

The first challenge was to convince the committee that this banner should be conserved. This was made easier as with the help of this grant. Things that went well were the humidification which removed the creases and improved the overall appearance. The crepeline supported the areas of splitting. The wet cleaned fringe looked brighter and fitted back on well. Additional pole sleeve will help with hanging and support the old tabs. Applying crepeline to such a creased fabric so as not to make them permanent was a challenge, but was successful. Preventing the fringe from shrinking when wet cleaned was stopped by tensioning it when drying. The whole project was a challenge because of its fragility.

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

This project has demonstrated to us as a group, the need to use conservation to keep our collection in good order for the benefit of future generations and for our exhibitions which reach the public eye. It has made us aware of the problems in our storage area which we can now address.

Small Grant Big Improvement 2014 - 15

Museum

Chard and District
Museum

Project

Improving Storage

ACE Goal 1

Excellence: Collection
Care

"...managing an entirely volunteer supported museum is onerous and any investment which reduces oversight and deterioration of artefacts is highly welcomed. As a result of this project access to artefacts and photographs has been improved and their life extended; volunteers involved have been stimulated and the trustees are more confident of the museum's sustainability..."

**David Ricketts,
Chairman**

Volunteers involved: **4**

Volunteer hours: **70**

Grant award: **£493**

Total project value:
£493



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

1. Making two boxes to hold the largest size of photographs so that they are interleaved with protective paper and are stored vertically on edge.
2. To install a dehumidifier in the unheated barn so that storage conditions can be improved.
3. To install protective car covers onto outside farm equipment.

Combined, these actions will promote the excellence which is constantly sought regarding the condition and longevity of artefacts.

Please describe your project:

1. It was necessary to make front opening boxes and cut hanging interleaves provided with a folded top hook.
2. It is hoped that the humidistat keeps running time within reasonable limits. The amount of condensate is unpredictable but it is likely that a hose drain will be needed. The exhaust heat from the machine will tend to reduce relative humidity but this may not be a significant effect in this large building. It is a trial type project. No data on similar or comparable projects has been found. The barn houses two of Chard's three National Dispersed Collections.
3. Condensation will occur but it is hoped that protection from rain and with good air circulation an improvement will result.

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

Project completed as planned. The use of brown gummed paper is effective for box construction albeit a little unsightly.

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

Objects are mainly to educate by sight. Photographs (especially Victorian high definition ones) provide a gateway to unexpected facts using modern equipment. Therefore we find that they are much used by those visitors looking to widen information. 'Every picture tells a thousand words' (Thomson 1802). Our photographs have been and are still being scanned but some handling remains inevitable. The folder sizes are getting very large! Now that history is prominent in the curriculum, schools are using the museum more. This project will improve the condition and extend the life and availability of the artefacts involved.

Small Grant Big Improvement 2014 - 15

Museum

Dartmouth Museum,
Dartmouth

Project

Dartmouth Discovery Phase 4

Ace Goal 1

Excellence: Collections Care



“Last year I gave a presentation on Dartmouth ‘Then and Now’ using slides and it was suggested that a book could be made on the same idea. By being involved with the Museum photographic conservation project it all became possible and I have now published ‘Dartmouth through Time’. A real author at last!”

Ginny Campbell.

Museum member, student conservator and author

Volunteers involved: **12**

Volunteer hours: **400**

Grant award: **£500**

Total project value: **£1713**

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

To conserve, catalogue and logically store Dartmouth Museum Archives and thus to make them more generally available to members and to researchers.

Please describe your project:

The Jesse Room Project Manager took the lead with the assistance of the Chairman of the local History Group (also V-C of the Museum) and identified two areas of work; the archives associated with the Henley Collection held and displayed by the Museum and the other Dartmouth Museum archives and photographs. The task started in April and is now virtually complete apart from new items which – now that progress can be seen clearly – continue to arrive. All items that were in any-old cardboard boxes are now in acid-free sleeves and other packaging and are stowed in well labelled ‘buffered’ (anti moisture) boxes. Photographs are in acid free pouches suspended in filing cabinets. The cataloguing was largely undertaken by the two principals. Since then two members who are creating new publications – both using many photos – have used the newly catalogued items to advantage. One, an excellent ‘Then and Now’ book - ‘Dartmouth through Time’ - has very recently been published. A locally created DVD on a similar theme is also now available in the Museum shop and other outlets. Both are a direct result of the availability of properly catalogued (and now conserved) photographs.

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

No major challenges were encountered. The main lesson was to plan carefully in advance and obtain at least the first tranche of materials so that volunteers can be shown the methods and progress immediately to maintain interest – we received advice on materials needed and their use from Helena Jaeschke. A good quality scanner on-site would have been useful as when such work was needed it was mostly done at home by the team members. Considerably more materials were needed than first envisaged.

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

The Jesse Room is a multi-purpose space. A showpiece in its own right; a conservation workshop and store; a research area with large areas to ‘spread’; a meeting room with tables and chairs; with the table folded and more chairs, a small very modern classroom/lecture room. The fact that all the archives are stored in the same place, that the catalogue (digitised) can be accessed and papers can be spread for easy research has added a whole new dimension to what otherwise would be a small museum with little space for additional uses.

Small Grant Big Improvement 2014 - 15

Museum

Padstow Museum,
Cornwall

Project

Black Out Blinds

ACE Goal 1

Excellence: Collection
Care

“Removing a faded yet well loved item from the exhibition was very unpleasant. These blackouts make a huge difference and hopefully will mean that removal is now an extremely rare event.”

**Pat Thomas, Vice
Chair and Volunteer**

Volunteers involved: **8**

Volunteer hours: **30**

Grant award: **£400**

Total project value:
£409



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

To address an issue identified in the collection survey report, carried out by the SW conservation officer. Our aim was to reduce light levels and therefore light damage to the collection in the museum.

Please describe your project:

Initially we planned to install blackout blinds in the exhibition area and the office/store room. Following problems highlighted below we found it better to improve our storage containers in the store room.

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

Our biggest dilemma was gaining permission from the trustees of our building to install the blackouts as they feared for damage to the windows and a potential increase in condensation. We eventually received permission to fit blackouts in the exhibition area and these have proved extremely beneficial. We compromised in the office/store and instead of blackouts we purchased some good quality, light resistant storage boxes to protect the collection.

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

The light levels are now hugely reduced as my photographic evidence shows.

ACE Goal 2
Audiences: Audience
Development

Small Grant Big Improvement 2014 - 15

Museum

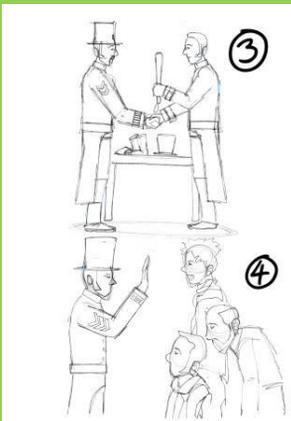
Tetbury Police Museum,
Gloucestershire

Project

Brief Early History of
Gloucestershire Constabulary
Display

Ace Goal 2

Audiences: Audience
Development



“With only a limited budget to cover all running costs the acquisition of new quality display material would not have been possible without this grant. As a result interpretation of the early history of the county force has been brought alive to a wider audience.”

Hon Curator

Volunteers involved: **1**

Volunteer hours: **10**

Grant award: **£500**

Total project value: **£1050**

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

The project aim is to help meet three out of the identified five key aims that are highlighted in the approved Forward Plan to realise the vision for the Museum: 1) Improving visitor attractiveness for all ages and abilities ; 2) Expand displays of local history;3) Create more dynamic displays.

The project specifically addressed ACE Goal 2: “More people experience and are inspired by museums” by providing variety and dynamism to the existing static displays by creating a different form of display intended to reach a wider range of visitors; thus meeting modern standards and requirements.

Please describe your project:

Using cartoon images and accompanying brief text a dedicated display will be created to “tell the story” of the early history of the county police force. Currently this material is in a variety of formats throughout the Museum, including in the archives, and is not readily accessible.

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

Two quotations were sought from graphic designers to create the cartoon images from the museum’s brief; the most suitable was selected. However, due to serious illness and hospitalization of the Hon Curator (the only volunteer running the project) progress was delayed; this was exacerbated when the selected designer (a “one man band”) withdrew at the end of September and we had to approach the second choice company (with a range of artists). The final artist has performed on time and to an excellent standard, the final drafts of the cartoons being approved mid-October; however, because their costing was higher we have had to reduce the number of cartoons from 8 to 7 and make use of a photo instead. Top tip: in the selection process ensure there is adequate back-up if the desired contractor should not deliver or default.

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

The new display material is in a modern, fun style aimed at young visitors/ those with reading difficulties/ those not wanting an in-depth experience. This is particularly important since from a recent visitor survey it has been established that:

1) Most visitors were in groups with children; 2) Most children rated the time spent at the museum as very enjoyable ; 3) Approx. half strongly agreed the visit left them wanting to know more about the museum; and 4) Comments made regarding encouragement to visit again included a desire for more local history.

Small Grant Big Improvement 2014 - 15

Museum

Axbridge Museum ,
Somerset

Project

Improving Our Visitor
Offer

ACE Goal 2

Audiences: Audience
Development

"I was very impressed with this digital frame with regard to its size, picture quality and ease of use, enabling us to increase our engagement with our visitors."

Philip Wookey,
Hon Treasurer of ADM

Volunteers involved: **3**

Volunteer hours: **20**

Grant award: **£361**

Total project value:
£361



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

To enhance the profile of our Museum by the use of new media, to improve temporary exhibitions and to enhance facilities for mobility impaired visitors who are unable to access upper floors.

Please describe your project:

Initially a presentation of display items has been developed for mobility impaired visitors. This will be extended during our close season to include a tour of the historic building, highlighting features of interest, as well as display items. Further presentations will be developed adapting current PowerPoint slide-shows and developing innovative displays around the major theme of our museum, which is the local history of our collection area. Negotiations with outside bodies are on a continuing basis for new developments.

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

After an initial learning curve the products provided excellent display facilities, though siting of the digital frame has not been optimal in our entrance area. During the close season we aim to rectify this by installing the equipment on the wall of our Picture Gallery. One useful tip we had not originally understood is the ease with which PowerPoint presentations can be adapted into .jpg format for use in the digital frame.

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

We now provide a substantially enhanced facility to our mobility impaired visitors and will soon extend the range of offerings . We have also discovered its significant potential for off-site promotions, as, for instance, at a recent Wookey Hole promotion where the way we presented our museum was much admired by many other exhibitors.

Small Grant Big Improvement 2014 - 15

Museum

Helston Museum, Cornwall

Project

New Handling Boxes

Ace Goal 2

Audiences: Audience
Development



'The boxes are a great idea and ensure flexibility, minimal set up time and maximum value for money. They particularly enjoyed being able to handle the items that you brought with you, this encourages interaction and participation, particularly for those who are visually impaired, your visits enable us to enhance our reminiscence sessions and further explore themes we may be looking at.'

**Nichola George, Team Leader,
Reflections South West**

Volunteers involved: 6

Volunteer hours: 100

Grant award: £486

Total project value: £486

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

The project aim was to develop the museum's learning and outreach service, and bring the collections beyond the walls of the museum and into the community. The intention was to develop a flexible learning provision, accessible to all sections of the community, from older people and those who may be suffering from dementia, to other community groups of all ages.

Please describe your project:

With funding from Small Grant: Big Improvement we were able to buy six sturdy handling boxes, which we filled with items from our collections. They are themed around various subjects including 'Schooldays and Childhood,' 'Family Celebrations,' 'Home Life', and 'Local History'.

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

The boxes are a big improvement on the old plastic boxes in use previously – they are far sturdier, roomier and look much more professional. The themes were popular, especially for groups with dementia. However, we have found that we need to be a bit more flexible with the themes, and consequently, we have had to change the objects in the boxes more frequently to accommodate some quite specific topics. This has come about as some schools now follow the National Curriculum, while others, as Academy schools, are following different study topics. This has had a knock-on effect as the notes to accompany the boxes have to be changed more frequently. However, after a few months of running the service, we are learning to accommodate this by having a set of notes for each object rather than for a set of objects.

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

Numbers using the boxes since May totaled 246, and there has been a significant increase in interest from care homes for the elderly. Use of the handling boxes seems to have corresponded with a rise in bookings for school visits to the museum, with interest from previous non-user schools. Memory Cafes have also expressed an interest in bringing their clients on a visit to the museum. This has raised awareness of the museum and contributed to one of our key aims in the Forward Plan – Become a central part of the local community – with the objectives to 'Continue to create links with local organisations such as Volunteer Cornwall, local NHS Trust, Adult and Social care services, schools and colleges' and 'run a continuous programme of community activities, linking to various outside organisations such as local schools, colleges and community groups.'

Small Grant Big Improvement 2014 - 15

Museum

Lostwithiel Museum

Project

Publicity Banners

ACE Goal 2

Audiences: Audience
Development

"My first impression was that the banners looked interesting. They encouraged me to learn more about the history of Lostwithiel. The photographs on the banners aroused my curiosity and I thought they would also encourage others."

**Mrs Judith Steven,
Museum Volunteer
Steward.**

Volunteers involved: 6

Volunteer hours: 500

Grant award: £500

Total project value:
£754



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

- 1) Disseminate information about Lostwithiel's 3 key medieval buildings/sites; the Duchy Palace, St Bartholomew's Church, the Bridge.
- 2) Maximise opportunities to reach a wider audience via participation in key heritage events, locally and further afield.
- 3) Encourage more people to take part in guided Town Heritage Walks.
- 4) Raise the Museum's profile and attract visitors who might not necessarily visit a museum.
- 5) Enhance the visitor experience and promote long-term sustainability.
- 6) Increase use of town's amenities, including shops and restaurants.

Please describe your project:

Visual impact was key to conveying the Lostwithiel story. Capturing a more diverse and discerning audience demanded a more sophisticated and professional solution. Pull-up Roller Banners were chosen to convey the Heritage Interpretations. We supplied the text and photographs to a local professional design group who then made the banners. The banners are easily portable, lightweight, simple to erect and store – ideal for outreach activities and participation in heritage and town events.

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

There were additional demands of volunteer time and availability as well as space, resources and time. We avoided copyright issues re. images (and quality of reproducing others) by taking new photographs. Tips include when presenting the brief to a professional design company, it needs to be very thorough. Likewise their ability to meet expectations needs to be transparent. Allow sufficient time to rectify mistakes and be realistic about the time-scale needed to research and execute, as well as evaluate its success.

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

This is long-term investment so it is too early to fully evaluate its success. Since taking delivery in early October we have displayed the banners at a Museum Committee meeting and at a recent AGM where they received some very positive comments.

Small Grant Big Improvement 2014 - 15

Museum

New Room, Bristol

Project

New Exhibition and Display

Ace Goal 2 & 3

Audiences: Audience

Development & Resilience:

Financial sustainability



“The panels are bright and attractive. During Doors Open Day 2014 many people were signposted to Charles Wesley House through seeing the panels at the New Room.”

**Mandy Briggs, New Room
Education Officer**

Volunteers involved: **10**

Volunteer hours: **300**

Grant award: **£400**

Total project value: **£400**

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

Goal 2: 4 Charles Street was able to be experienced by New Room visitors who ordinarily would not have been able to visit the house. It also made visitors aware of the house's existence, its website, and its annual opening on Doors Open Day (13/9/2014). The resources arising from this project will continue to be used as part of the New Room's school work, thereby developing a new audience from the educational visits to the New Room.

Goal 3: The exhibition will continue to run indefinitely, and will be incorporated into the New Room's education project. The Education Officer will use the panels as demonstration tools to visiting school groups who might not be able to visit the house, alongside outside visits. The continued use of these materials which formed part of the exhibition display excellent long term financial durability.

Please describe your project:

The project involved the production of an exhibition at the New Room, Bristol, about 4 Charles Street. The project's aim was to overcome the current obstacles which prevent the New Room from opening 4 Charles Street to the general public. It achieved this through incorporating a small exhibit about the house into the New Room's current present museum offering. It is envisaged that creating awareness about the house will generate interest, which will contribute positively to the New Room's ambition to open the house for viewing by the general public in the future.

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

We were pleased with the final printing of the designs and the media which were chosen. A challenge was presented to the envisaged timeframe by the preparation: it took a little longer than we anticipated to prepare the banners for printing. It was also a challenge to find space in an already-busy museum where two temporary exhibitions competed for space.

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

The most pleasing improvement has been the chance to showcase more of what the New Room has to offer. 4 Charles Street is a heritage building of tremendous significance for Methodists and Bristol, but is not ordinarily open to the public. The exhibition has allowed New Room visitors, who might not be able to get to the house, to experience it (in a remote way) and to learn more about its significance and the people who once lived there. It has also helped to maintain the New Room's offer of displays while certain parts of the museum are closed due to refurbishment.

ACE Goal 3
Resilience: Financial
Sustainability

Small Grant Big Improvement 2014 - 15

Museum

John Moore Museum,
Gloucestershire

Project

Historic Buildings Children
Interactive

ACE Goal 3

Resilience: Financial
sustainability



“The new interactive jigsaw interpretation has enabled museum teaching staff to engage and hold the attention of visiting education groups more efficiently and in greater depth ... We have already received a great deal of positive feedback from visiting teachers who have emphasised how successful these new elements have been in reinforcing the pupils’ understanding of the aims and objectives of our existing workshops.”

Simon Lawton, Museum Curator

Volunteers involved: **7**

Volunteer hours: **10**

Grant award: **£500**

Total project value: **£660**

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

We applied to the Small Grant: Big Improvement for funding to create two new interactive visual installations in the museum. These new interactives will form the focus of an existing workshop ‘Tudor Buildings’, which we intend to adapt and improve to meet new curriculum requirements and to enable better in-house access, differentiation and to use the role of our education volunteer team more successfully:

Please describe your project:

1) The first installation will take a pre-existing architectural drawing of the historic building in which the item will stand and producing it on a large scale. It will simplify the text and drawing and importantly, allow pupils to reconstruct the building’s many architectural elements such as mortise and tenon joints, the jetty and the A-frame roof to extend their understanding of how these historic and locally-significant buildings were constructed. Pupils will not only attain an improved understanding of the construction but also teach them the key terms, therefore improving their literacy skills and tie in with both DT and History curriculums. All this will be attained through a fun and engaging activity which can be undertaken as either individual, paired or group work. As an additional benefit, the installation will draw links with workshops in the Merchant’s House undertaken in conjunction with the Tudor Buildings workshop.

2) The second installation will take a closer look at how the buildings were constructed. Reproducing a sixteenth century woodcut, pupils will identify the key tools used by Medieval and Tudor carpenters and allow volunteers to extend the pupils’ understanding of wood work and historic construction. This will link with exhibitions located on the top floor of the museum. The installation will also work in isolation allowing pupils with mobility issues to access the key concepts without needing to climb the stairs.

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

The project went extremely well. We are delighted with the completed jigsaws and they have been trialed successfully with two school groups. In hindsight, we should have put more thought into how the objects would be stored.

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

The jigsaws have added another interactive element to the current school workshops. They allow a fun way to extend understanding of historic buildings and construction methods as well as easing problems with high numbers of pupils.

Small Grant Big Improvement 2014 - 15

Museum

Court Barn, Chipping
Campden

Project

Donations Box

ACE Goal 3

Resilience: Financial
Sustainability

“As a museum dedicated to telling the story of designers and makers of the north Cotswolds and being almost totally reliant for income from visitors to sustain its operation it is incumbent on Trustees to promote good design and practice at every opportunity. Commissioning a Donation Box designed and made by a local person fulfils our objectives.”

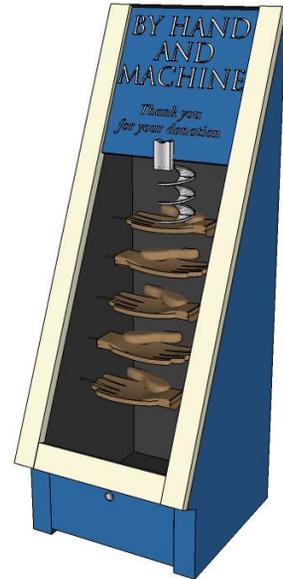
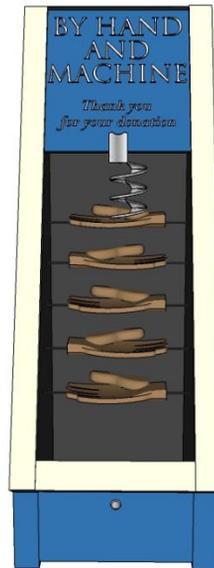
Frank Johnson
**Secretary, Guild of
Handicraft Trust**

Volunteers involved: **8**

Volunteer hours: **30**

Grant award: **£400**

Total project value:
£2000



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

Increased donations would provide valuable additional income for the Museum and contribute towards the Museum's objective of financial resilience and sustainability. As an independent Museum these are vital for the continued success of the Museum.

Please describe your project:

We asked Rod Forss a local craftsman to design and make the donation box as a unique piece of furniture for the Museum as well as reflecting the Museum's commitment to supporting local craftspeople.

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

Rod Forss has vast experience in designing and making toys and donations boxes. His work is on display and being used by The Museum in The Park, Stroud and The Wilson, Cheltenham. Several innovative designs were put forward and the challenge was for Trustees who are also volunteers to decide upon the design, which reflects the ethos of the Museum.

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

The donations box will be installed in the Museum during November 2014

Small Grant Big Improvement 2014 - 15

Museum

Dr Jenner's House,
Gloucestershire

Project

New Signage at Dr Jenner's
House

ACE Goal 3

Resilience: Financial
sustainability



"A positive memory of the entire visit was the well-designed signs and noticeboards all with strong branding".

**Fred Cubbage, VAQAS
Assessor, Visit England**

Volunteers involved: 5

Volunteer hours: 5

Grant award: £400

Total project value: £518

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

- 1) To erect new visitor information signage for the two public entrances to our site and for two key junctions on our visitor route.
- 2) To enhance visitor information and modify visitor behavior to help ensure that all visitors pass through the pay barrier.
- 3) By strengthening the pay barrier, bolster ticket sales income as well as increase visitor dwell-time in the museum, hopefully leading to higher spend per visitor.

Please describe your project:

The signage project had four elements:

- 1) Design of the new signage by our graphic design contractor, based on information supplied by staff and volunteers
- 2) Approval of the signage design and dimensions by the District Council's Conservation Officer
- 3) Production and supply of the signs by a sign writer
- 4) Erection of the signs by a maintenance contractor.

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

The project went well and all aspects of the work were undertaken as anticipated. We received 80% of the total grant applied for and thus provided the remainder from our own funds. There were no specific challenges, however we were not able to get a volunteer to collect the signage on the day in question so had to pay a small delivery charge to the contractor. A tip when building volunteer time into a project is to recognise the possibility that they might not in the end be available to help when needed.

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

Visitor behavior has modified noticeably due to the clearer signage. Through observing visitor movement around the site we can see the information signs are helping them find the ticket area when arriving from the two site access points. We expected some improvement to secondary spend retail sales performance as a consequence of greater footfall after the pay barrier (where the shop is located). Our shop spend-per-head has increased since the signage was erected at the start of the season. We are also a Visit England VAQAS accredited attraction. The VAQAS methodology takes account of signage and visitor information. This year, Dr Jenner's House received an outstanding VAQAS audit result of 84%, one of the highest scores in the scheme nationwide. This is a direct endorsement of the value of the signage funded by SGBI and its positive effect on the visitor experience at Dr Jenner's House.

Small Grant Big Improvement 2014 - 15

Museum

Kingsbridge
Cookworthy Museum,
Devon

Project

Improving Lighting and
Energy Efficiency

ACE Goal 3

Resilience: Financial
Sustainability

"The new row of lighting has really improved the look of farm gallery and has encouraged more visitors to learn more about the farming heritage of this area and our restoration work."

**Alwyn Milburn,
Museum Farm Gallery
Volunteer**

Volunteers involved: **2**

Volunteer hours: **3**

Grant award: **£400**

Total project value:
£497



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

The aims of the project were to improve the lighting in the farm gallery, replace some of our current lighting with LED lamps, and purchase light meters to ensure better monitoring of conditions in the display areas. By starting the process of replacing our standard bulbs with LED lighting the museum has continued the process of reducing our electricity costs, which is one of our major expenses. This will help to make the museum more financially and environmentally sustainable.

Please describe your project:

Local electricians installed a further set of lights in our farm gallery. We also purchased 12 LED bulbs which we have put in 3 of our galleries. We were also able to borrow light meters from Plymouth Museum and Art Gallery via our Museum Mentor which gave us a great indication about the light levels in the museum.

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

By borrowing the light meters from Plymouth early on in the project we were able to discover that in one of our galleries we could turn off 90% of the lighting. Not only was this better for the objects, but as there were over ten 50 Watt bulbs turning them off really reduced our electricity bills. The additional lighting at the far end of the farm gallery, while greatly improving that area, has shown up the poor lighting in the first part of the farm gallery, so we are now looking at improving the lighting in this area as well.

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

This has really improved the lighting in the far end of the gallery. With additional interpretation and conservation of the objects by our Farm Gallery volunteers, it is a far more appealing area for visitors. The LED bulbs in the galleries have not only improved conditions for the objects, but also has helped to reduce our energy costs.

ACE Goal 5
Children and Young
People: Youth
Engagement

Small Grant Big Improvement 2014 - 15

Museum

Dawlish Museum,
Devon

Project

Oodles of Fun for the
Kids

Ace Goal 5

Children & Young
People: Youth
engagement

"When my nieces and nephews visit, they love to go around the museum as you're always assured of a warm welcome. They have a large doll's house, dressing up clothes and quizzes."

Mr Wright, quoted from the Sunday Telegraph 4th May 2014

Volunteers involved: **8**

Volunteer hours: **55**

Grant award: **£467**

Total project value:
£484



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

The aim was to make Dawlish Museum more family friendly by the introduction of fun activities to engage young children.

Please describe your project:

We have introduced quizzes that necessitate children visiting every room to find the answers. Badges, made by our badge machine, are awarded for completed entries. Costumes for dressing up have been provided and coordinate with this year's displays i.e. doctors, Orange Army, etc. There are pictures to colour, teddy bear's picnic tea parties and for older children, magnifiers to study the geological/seashore items.

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

Buying online was more cost effective and less time consuming. We thought that parent would want to see their dressed-up children for promotional/advertising purposes with copies for themselves. This was far from the case and we have received straight refusal so far.

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

Because we have featured all these additions in our current brochure the response from visitors has been very positive to date. The quizzes are extremely popular, especially for families and we know this will continue with our longer opening hours ensuring the school holidays.

Small Grant Big Improvement 2014 - 15

Museum

Holst Birthplace
Museum,
Gloucestershire

Project

All Dressed Up

ACE Goal 5

Children & Young
People: Youth
engagement

"The hats provide an engaging and exciting activity that will get children to use their initiative and discovery skills in the museum. I like the hands-on approach that puts an interactive, modern twist on old paintings making them spark the imagination and intrigue in children"

**Meggie Crawford,
Volunteer and
Education Studies
student.**

Volunteers involved: 5

Volunteer hours: 10

Grant award: £500

Total project value:
£507



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

The aim of the project was to better interpret our collections for young visitors through costume, hats and other tangible objects. By doing so, we aimed to make the Holst Birthplace Museum's collections more accessible and more attractive to young visitors and to encourage a greater youth engagement with the museum.

Please describe your project:

We had a professional costume maker make a Victorian boy's and girl's costume for the Nursery for young visitors to try on to help them experience being a child from that period. Four hats were made for the Regency Room which are copies of hats which can be seen in paintings hanging in this room. These have been placed in the Regency Room with a mirror for children to try on. This was part of a larger project to help to interpret our collections and displays for young visitors, which included providing fluffy toys for very young visitors and books for the Nursery.

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

The hats have proved to be very popular as they are quick to put on and take off meaning several visitors can use them in a short space of time and also adults find them fun too. Time management has been a challenge: not being in control of the time it has taken for the costumes to be made. A top tip to overcome this would be to set interim deadlines as well as a final deadline.

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

The museum is livelier! Young visitors are more aware of the paintings in the Regency Room and can now play with the toys in the Nursery while dressed as Victorian children!