

Cornwall Museums Partnership

By Chloe Hughes

Cornwall Museums Partnership is a charity which promotes collaborative working to help more people enjoy and explore Cornwall's rich heritage. In our remote, rural region access to culture is a challenge for many, in particular older people.

In 2016 we supported three museums to work collaboratively with artists, each museum using their collections as inspiration. We wanted to create more opportunities for older people to be inspired by museums.

Royal Cornwall Museum used a musical score and its handling collections as the springboard for a series of music and oral recording sessions at a nearby care home. The museum are continuing to build upon their relationship with the care home, developing a project which will support more older people in residential care to visit the museum.



Telegraph Museum Porthcurno also worked with a local care home using stories of sending and receiving messages as the starting point for a series of arts and craft sessions with participants. Alongside the creative sessions participants were supported to visit the museum by the care home to see their art work displayed and enjoyed a celebration tea party. The museum is now developing the next stage of the project, with further arts and craft activities linking to the museum's story of the telegram.

Falmouth Art Gallery worked with several different groups which included a day care centre, memory café and two residential care homes. The gallery wanted to make a digital resource for older audiences and to find out if there were particular artworks in their collections that older people responded to. Having realised that a physical resource would be preferred by the groups, the gallery is now developing a series of resource boxes and linked activities which they will share with a number of older people groups within the local area.



The projects have been a great opportunity to explore how museums can increase and build stronger links within their local communities to support older people to visit or take part in museum activities, and we've learnt a lot along the way. We've realised just some of the difficulties involved for older people in accessing cultural activities and created activities that engage with everyone despite sometimes complex health problems. Within all of the projects there have been moments of sheer joy as groups have taken part in activities or experienced the museum or gallery for the first time. It has reminded us of the value of culture to everyone's lives and the feedback from participants and support staff has already fed into our future work, influencing museums plans from creating new resources to the design of future projects.

Our ambition for this work continues. We want to support more opportunities which enable older people to access and participate in brilliant activities across museums in Cornwall.

But it's not just us – see what participants, resident support staff and our museums have to say about the projects in these short films:

https://youtu.be/nD6RICZwInc?list=PL_NxhImD33akIOwyn5IbYsks5WLGnbCVF

<https://youtu.be/yVSJ66B9XHA> <https://youtu.be/vuFHvI5saOo>

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www.cornwallmuseumpartnership.org.uk

<http://www.cornwallmuseumpartnership.org.uk/museums-matter-video/>