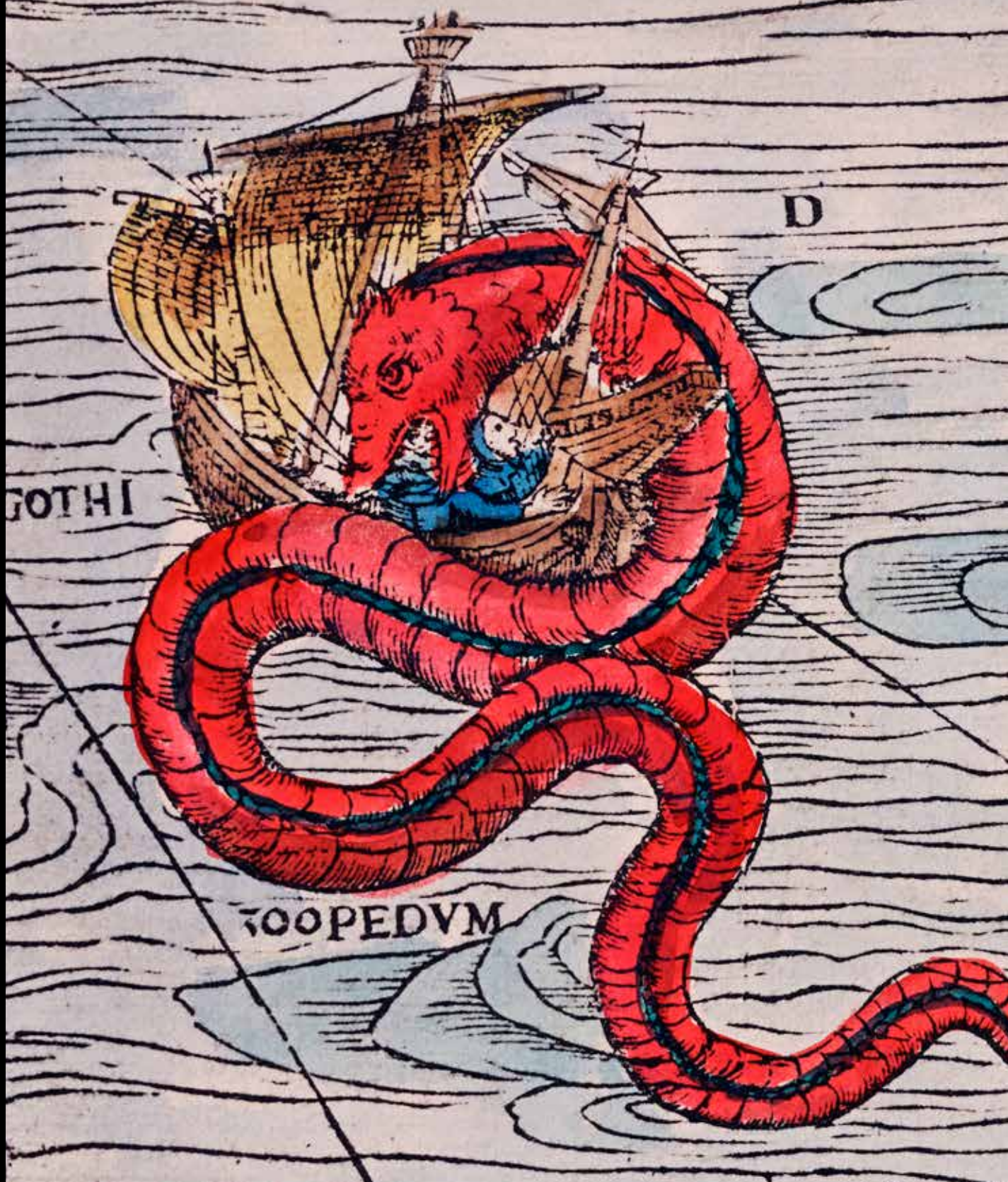


# Fathom

The Journal of The National Maritime Museum Cornwall





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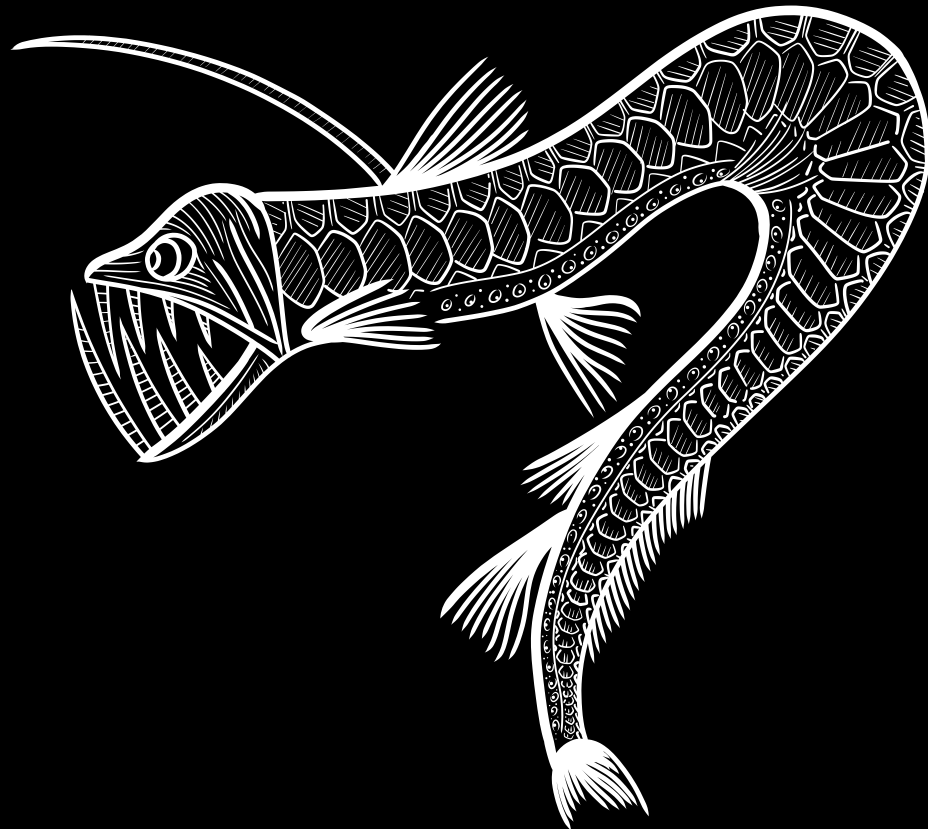
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Front cover image:  
Detail from Olaus Magnus'  
*Carta Marina* Map. Courtesy of  
The James Ford Bell Library at  
the University of Minnesota

Right: Viperfish. Artwork  
courtesy of NOC



## Director's Foreword

In every conceivable way, Covid-19 dominated 2020. For us and a great many others, the pandemic brought unprecedented challenges and economic uncertainty, impacting us in profound and previously unimaginable ways. Across the museum sector, our role as safe spaces, where cultural ideas and historical identities can be explored and reimagined, seemed at one point under an existential threat. Fortunately we were able to adapt quickly to new ways of working.

Many of the changes Covid-19 forced us to implement are here to stay. We are now looking at a far more mixed programme in which both physical and digital audiences can experience live performances, follow interactive themed gallery trails and listen to specialist lectures. While we had to cancel public performances by Yskynna Vertical Dance Company, they were filmed in action inside the Museum and now their visually stunning aerial performances are available online. We commissioned the live science demonstration company Explorer Dome to deliver an *Aliens of the Deep* Zoom webinar as part of our *Science of the Sea* family programme, and our *Cornish Voices* living history drama performances are being adapted so they can be live-streamed to schools. Digital-led initiatives such as these enable us to enrich our online presence and give us the potential of reaching and engaging new and wider audiences who may be unable or reluctant to make a physical visit to the Museum.

In 'normal years' Cornwall entices millions of holiday-makers and National Maritime Museum Cornwall plays a pivotal role in attracting visitors to Falmouth. It has been estimated that the total value our Museum adds to the local economy exceeds £6.5 million a year. However, this prosperity belies the fact that the county suffers from poor infrastructure, rural isolation and harbours pockets of extreme economic and cultural deprivation. Reaching out across the county through our award-winning learning and engagement programmes will always be one of our top priorities and digital interventions are helping us to achieve this. However, welcoming visitors through our doors will always be at the heart of what we do. Thanks to help from the Headley Trust and The National Lottery Emergency Fund we were finally able to reopen the Museum safely on 27th July, after four excruciating months of closure. Since reopening we also benefitted from Arts Council England's Cultural Recovery Fund and a Weston Culture Fund grant which have given us confidence and resources to plan for the future.

In February 2020 our museum was amongst the first in the country to be awarded full Museum Accreditation, following a major overhaul of the scheme by Arts Council England. The assessment process reviewed how the Museum

Image: A cock-eyed squid and an anglerfish from National Oceanography Centre's Discovery Collections.



is governed, how we manage our collections, engage with our visitors and other users and how our plans will shape the Museum's future.

In September we were honoured with a very special visit by HRH The Princess Royal to celebrate our critically acclaimed temporary exhibition *Monsters of the Deep: Science Fact and Fiction*, which had been due to open just days before the March lockdown. This exhibition was designed by DesignMap and built with the help of two creative Cornish companies: Parc Signs, the exhibition fabricators who were responsible for the exhibition fit out and Engine House, an animation studio responsible for creating the giant 'kraken eye' at the entrance to the show.

In recent years our Museum has worked hard to mount national-quality, thought-provoking and culturally relevant exhibitions built on cross-sectoral collaboration, rigorous academic research and a commitment to bring world-class artefacts from national collections to Cornwall. In this issue we take an in-depth look at our latest exhibition, *Monsters of the Deep*, which boasts a host of amazing loans including a coelacanth, *Boaty McBoatface*, hundreds of deep-sea creatures and the *Hortus sanitatis*, the world's first natural history encyclopaedia. But perhaps the most extraordinary exhibit is the 'unicorn skeleton'. It takes pride of place in *Viktor Wynd's UnNatural History Museum*, an artistic installation visitors encounter as they leave the main exhibition. Here the quirky displays challenge the viewer to think about what is natural or unnatural, real or fake, beautiful or grotesque, provoking us to think about the objects we collect, the meanings we ascribe to them, the stories we recount, and the voices of the people who tell those stories. Such challenges will be a recurring theme in our future programmes.

Finally, at the close of this very challenging year, we were thrilled the national tour of *Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed*, our ground-breaking exhibition which challenges long-standing myths, stereotypes and pre-conceptions about tattooing and celebrates the rich artistic heritage of tattooing as an art form in the UK, was shortlisted for the prestigious and widely respected 'Museums Change Lives' award, by the Museums Association, the industry's national body. The impact of our original exhibition and the three year national tour cannot be underestimated. Indeed it is no exaggeration to say our Museum's cultural work has been transformed by *Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed* because it had such a profound impact on our cultural and artistic ambitions and the way we now think about how our institution can be socially relevant.

Richard Doughty, Director  
National Maritime Museum Cornwall, January 2021









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ABOUT NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM CORNWALL

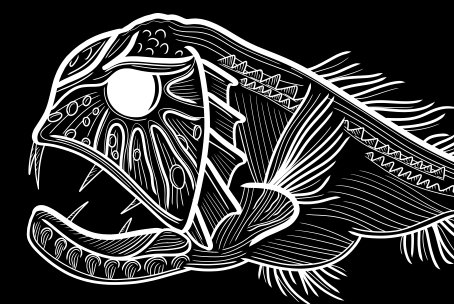
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Opposite: A giant Isopod from NOC's Discovery Collections.

Right: A Fangtooth fish. Artwork courtesy of National Oceanography Centre.



# Monsters of the Deep

Delivering  
national-quality  
exhibitions for  
Cornwall

**M**onsters of the Deep: Science Fact and Fiction is the most ambitious and logistically complex exhibition ever mounted by National Maritime Museum Cornwall. It is a visually stunning, ground-breaking exploration of our fascination with the ocean depths. It is also an unashamedly entertaining and surprising visitor experience, mixing circus theatrics with cutting-edge academic research to explore the historical, scientific and cultural impact of underwater discovery, set against the persistent belief in sea monsters.

The exhibition delivers national-quality design and production values, including the experimental use of digital and multi-media technology, to showcase iconic artefacts on loan from major regional and national collections. The loans, together with a wider planned programme of cross-arts events and specially commissioned performances, have been achieved through highly productive cross-sector partnerships, including national science and regional arts organisations such as the National Oceanography Centre and Miracle Theatre. »

MARINA MAP

HERE BE  
MONSTERS.

SEA MONSTERS  
SEA FISHES  
SEA MONSTERS

SIDE SHOW  
UNEQUALLED  
ENTERTAINMENT



The exhibition builds on the popular and critical success of previous temporary exhibitions, particularly *Viking Voyagers*, *Captain Bligh: Man, Myth and Mutiny*, *Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed* and *Titanic Stories*. These exhibitions were very effective in attracting and re-engaging our traditional audiences, but also in meeting the needs and interests of new and very diverse audiences, many of whom would not consider themselves traditional museum visitors.

In the case of *Monsters of the Deep*, our aim is to continue to break down social and cultural barriers – not only by appealing to a wide, popular audience (i.e. local and tourist families, school groups and adults interested in underwater exploration, mermaids and sea monsters) but also by engaging more diverse communities of place or interest (in this case, those interested in marine biology, the mysterious and unexplained, the gothic and paranormal).

*Monsters of the Deep* is being promoted through a high profile marketing and national PR campaign, and represents a major financial investment not just for the Museum but also the wider cultural and heritage offer for Cornwall.



“  
This is a show to plumb  
the imagination. For the  
adults it might be almost as  
philosophical as it is fun for  
the kids ... I took two 11-year-  
olds along and the pair of  
them couldn't talk about  
anything else for the entire  
journey home.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Times



#### Academic excellence and critical partnerships

Building on the approach developed with previous exhibitions, the master narrative for *Monsters of the Deep* has been created with the critical input of leading academics, either on a freelance basis or via an informal partnership with relevant university departments. This has enabled the Museum to draw upon the latest academic expertise and critical perspectives, often featuring them as distinct, counter-pointing voices within the narrative. We worked with the following subject specialists:

**Dr Darren Naish:** principal guest curator responsible for shaping the master narrative. Dr Naish is a renowned palaeontologist and expert on cryptozoology. He has published several popular books on prehistoric animals, and contributed to the BBC's highly acclaimed programme *Walking with Dinosaurs: The Evidence*.

**Dr Tammy Horton,** Curator of the National Oceanography Centre's Discovery Collections. Dr Horton provided the scientific framework for the interpretation of the deep-sea specimens.

**Dr Jon Copley,** Associate Professor in Ocean Exploration and Public Engagement, University of Southampton, and one of the world's leading oceanographers, helped produce the historical timeline of scientific discovery.

**Isabel Stevens,** film critic and Production Editor at *Sight & Sound* magazine, provided a

critical perspective on the role and social impact of sea monster movies within popular culture.

**Dr Bryony Onciul,** Associate Professor in History and Museum Studies, Exeter University, produced a series of panels linking the main exhibition and a specially commissioned artist installation entitled *Viktor Wynd's UnNatural History Museum*.

#### Successful partnership working: institutional lenders

*Monsters of the Deep* continues the Museum's proven track record in partnership working with regional and national institutional lenders, in this case The British Museum, Science Museum, Royal Museums Greenwich, Cambridge University Library, Great North Museum: Hancock, Leeds Museums and Galleries, Cornwall Record Office, Booth Museum of Natural History, Toulouse Museum of Natural History and The Viktor Wynd Museum of Curiosities, Fine Art & UnNatural History.

Crucially, we were also able to develop a highly productive 'science and heritage' partnership with the National Oceanography Centre (NOC). NOC enriched the exhibition with the latest oceanographic research, audio visual material, scientific models and over 500 deep-sea specimens from their internationally important research collection, which is not normally accessible to the general public.

Opposite: Entrance to *Monsters of the Deep* with animated kraken eye.

Above: Part of a juvenile fin whale skull on loan from the Booth Museum of Natural History.

Overleaf: A demonstration model of *Boaty McBoatface*, courtesy of National Oceanography Centre.







### Object lessons: bringing iconic artefacts to diverse audiences in Cornwall

It is one of NMMC's strategic aims to bring important artefacts, and the stories they tell, to new and diverse audiences in Cornwall, many of whom are unable to travel out of the region to see and appreciate them.

The *Monsters of the Deep* exhibition has taken this ambition to another level with the quality, range and complexity of the material borrowed, including:

- Scientific equipment from the 1872 HMS *Challenger* expedition from the Science Museum. Hailed by John Murray as ‘the greatest advance in the knowledge of our planet since the celebrated discoveries of the 15th and 16th centuries’, this expedition laid the foundations of the modern discipline of oceanography. The artefacts have been juxtaposed next to a 3D recreation of *Challenger*’s Naturalist’s Laboratory.
- A complete killer whale skeleton from the Booth Museum of Natural History. This has been placed in a new - and surprising - narrative context, being hung over a giant, glowing reproduction of the 1536 *Carta Marina* map by Olaus Magnus. The aim is to inspire visitors to make visual and emotional connections between the ‘monsters’ illustrated on the map and ‘real’ monsters from the deep.
- A fin whale skull, manatee skeleton, narwhal skull with tusk and a rare early example of a ‘feegee mermaid’, also from the Booth Museum of Natural History. The feegee mermaid and manatee skeleton have been displayed as an integral part of an innovative digital installation which re-imagines a Victorian circus sideshow performance.
- A number of rare and important celestial globes and atlases – notably a 1551 celestial globe by Gerardus Mercator and examples of Abraham Ortelius’ *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, from Royal Museums Greenwich. These will be displayed in rotation throughout the life of the exhibition as part of an extensive conservation plan agreed with RMG.
- An early Greek bowl (dated 500BC) which illustrates Poseidon riding a seahorse or ‘hippocampus’, on loan from The British Museum.
- A rare, spirit preserved coelacanth specimen (over 1m long) from the Great North Museum: Hancock, Newcastle. It is a real coup for the exhibition to secure such a natural history ‘superstar’, particularly as one has never been displayed in any museum in Cornwall before.

- A rare and fragile copy of the 1491 *Hortus sanitatis* on a six month loan from the Cambridge University Library. Described by Sir David Attenborough as ‘one of the great treasures of the library’, the *Hortus* is the world’s first natural history encyclopaedia, as well as being an early medicinal reference and an icon of the natural history illustrator’s art. It embodies a significant moment in the birth of scientific history - a time when unicorns, serpents and mermaids could be described alongside elephants and whales as wonders of the world.
- A full-scale model of a juvenile giant squid from Leeds Museums and Galleries.
- Over 500 spirit preserved deep-sea specimens, including anglerfish, vampire squid, a ‘ghost shark’, a giant bathynomus, a viperfish, a fangtooth fish, a dumbo octopus, a ‘cock-eyed’ squid, a giant sea spider, giant deep-sea aristeid shrimp, a blobfish and a gulper eel, from the National Oceanography Centre. This material forms the basis of the final section of the main exhibition entitled *Meet the Real Monsters of the Deep*, which explores the different ways life has adapted to the extreme, alien conditions at the bottom of the ocean.
- A 17th century Cornwall estate atlas, depicting a mermaid swimming in the midst of fishing boats, from Cornwall Record Office. We have consciously displayed this alongside world-class material from the national collections, highlighting its importance. In this way we continue our strategic objective to bring new and wider audiences to under-appreciated Cornwall collections, and to place Cornish heritage in new, surprising narrative contexts.

### A measure of success: looking to the future

Our most important measure of the success for *Monsters of the Deep*, over and above any earned income necessary for our survival, will be the extent to which the Museum’s reputation for being artistically ambitious and culturally challenging has been enhanced by this new exhibition. In other words, how it takes us to the next level as we continue to strive to deliver popular, ground-breaking and national-quality exhibitions that engage wide and diverse audiences in Cornwall. However, it is critical that each exhibition generates sufficient resources to enable us to invest in our next project. 🐙

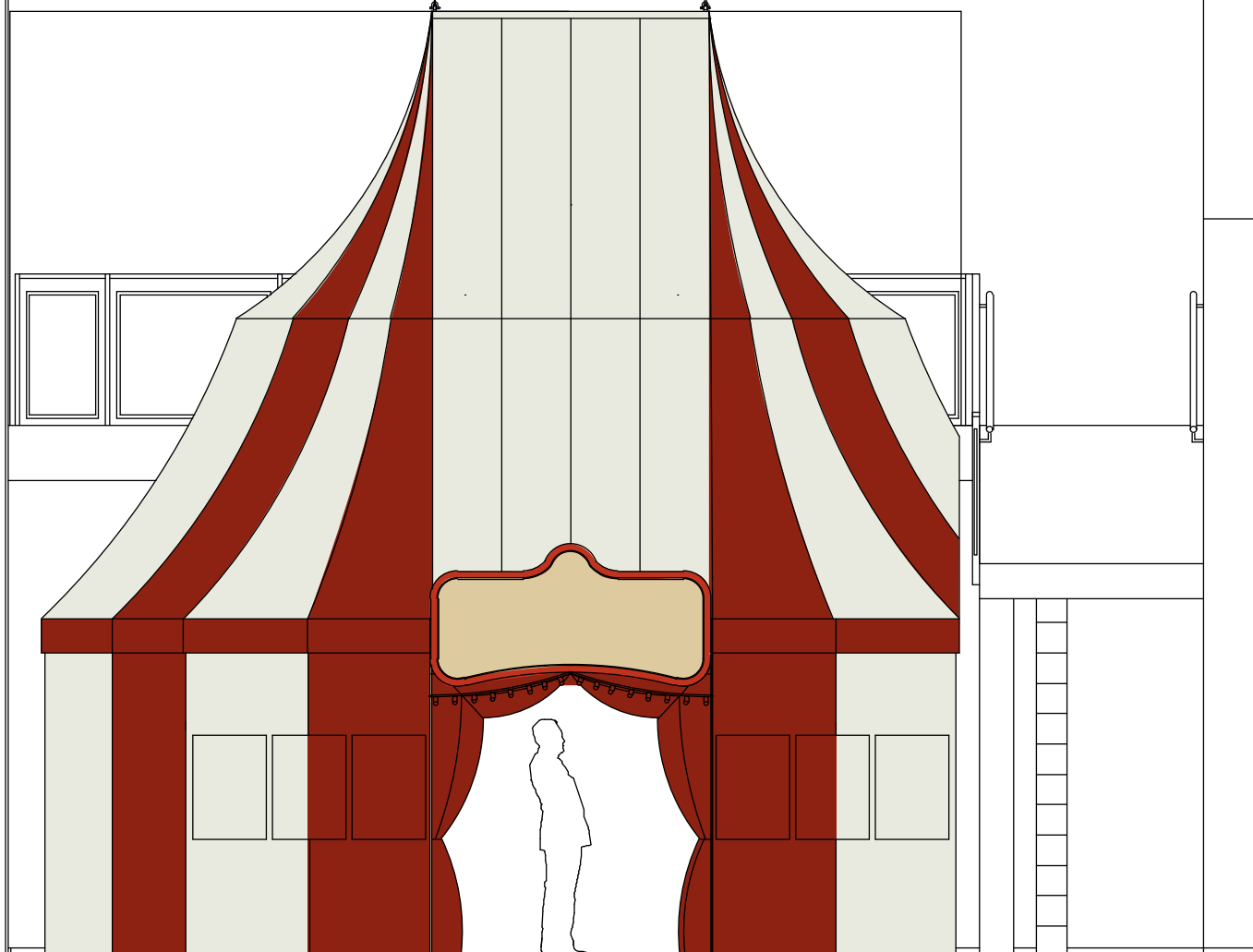
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*Monsters of the Deep: Science Fact and Fiction* runs until December 2022. This ambitious project would not have been possible without the support from the Garfield Weston Foundation and Arts Council England.

Opposite: Anglerfish specimens on loan from the National Oceanography Centre’s Discovery Collections





# Exhibition origins



## How do we set about creating an exhibition?

Every major temporary exhibition we plan is a complex logistical undertaking, involving what seems to be a never-ending list of decisions. But of all the choices we make, the selection of the overall topic is unquestionably the trickiest. Will the topic subject matter appeal? Will it capture the public imagination? Is it suitable for a museum display?

The scale of investment needed to mount an object-rich exhibition of national quality and impact means it is critical that we choose a topic which will attract our core visitors and at the same time have sufficient scope, or an edge, to attract new audiences. Reputation is hard to win and easy to lose and we are only as good as our last exhibition: we have to strive ever harder to push the boundaries of expectation, be artistically ambitious and curate a show which will expand visitors' horizons and challenge their cultural preconception ... and at the same time be hugely enjoyable.

Once a topic has been proposed and looks promising a concept vision needs to be

developed. The first task for the in-house team is to undertake extensive research to identify themes and sub-themes that have the potential to be exciting, entertaining and engaging. This preliminary work will determine the approach, structure and top-line content of the exhibition. The second next major step is to work up the business case and to set out a provisional budget. Each exhibition project we embark on requires an enormous investment of time, creative energy, effort and money. For example, by the time it closes and all the loans have been returned, our current show, *Monsters of the Deep*, will have cost us the best part of £500,000. Fixing the budget is not straightforward because we rely heavily on securing grants to meet some of the costs. Grant givers need to be as excited by the prospect of the exhibition as our visitors! It takes considerable time and effort to submit funding applications and there is no guarantee of success, particularly in an environment which is becoming increasingly competitive. We need to make a judgement call »

Opposite: Technical drawing of the 'Victorian sideshow' tent.

Above: Revised RIBA3 drawings by DesignMap. Exhibition designs undergo several revisions.





Opposite top: Initial exhibition concept visuals.

Opposite bottom left: Parc Signs install the *Carta Marina* map.

Opposite bottom right: Conservator Nigel Larkin installing the feegee mermaid.

Above left: Green screen filming for the 'Victorian sideshow' audio visual installation with production company Spiral.

Above right: 'Victorian sideshow' gallery installation including a 'real' mermaid in a tank of water.

relatively early on in the process to determine how much we can commit to invest, because the next key stage in the process is to assemble the team who are going to deliver the exhibition.

Our preferred option is to recruit a guest curator to support the in-house team. Typically this person will be a recognised expert on the topic, someone with specialist knowledge who can assist us to scope and develop a narrative concept, identify potential loans (especially what we term the 'hero exhibits') and help us to set learning objectives. However, we don't rely entirely on one expert, we also look to incorporate a number of distinct and diverse 'voices' to help shape and challenge the visitor experience. These alternative voices may be other academics, artists, scientists, young people, or representatives from communities of interest and identity who can bring different perspectives to the stories we want to tell.

As the project develops, these contributors work with us to develop the content: the script panels, the labels and digital content based on

their own original research. Linked to this, our Museum has set a strategic aim of bringing highly significant artefacts from national collections to raise awareness of this national heritage to Cornish audiences, many of whom would be unable to travel outside Cornwall to see this material. Identifying potential loans is an early priority in the project because it can take up to 18 months to negotiate a loan from a national museum, or even longer if we have to allow for conservation work to be carried out.

The next big step is to commission a design company to produce a concept design and exhibition layout. Working closely with the design team to develop the look and feel of the show, the visitor journey will be developed. Making the right appointment is critical because so much depends on achieving a close synergy between us, our in-house team and the designers. Exhibition planning is an iterative process, requiring many adjustments and changes, but it is invariably one of the most rewarding parts of the project because





Above: Lighting is critical, it can make or break an exhibition.

Opposite top: Recreation of the Naturalists' Laboratory on board HMS Challenger.

Opposite bottom: Dr Tammy Horton installs hundreds of deep-sea specimens.

this is when the exhibition properly begins to take shape on paper and computer screens for the first time. The designer has to be able to manage our expectations and propose a number of solutions, from interactives and digital content through to graphic design treatments. The design company will also provide cost estimates for their proposals and work out the programme which will allow us to deliver the exhibition in a timely fashion. The marketing concepts also need to dovetail with this process, and therefore a close collaboration between everyone is vital.

The job of building the exhibition is awarded to a fit-out contractor. This company takes the designer's scheme, liaises with specialist suppliers and works out the likely cost. It is not uncommon to find our expectations have been raised far beyond the affordable. This is always a disappointment and it means we have to start 'value engineering' - cutting things out, reducing specifications or finding cheaper alternatives. There are always compromises to be found, and

sometimes they can lead to even more creative solutions. There is then a flurry of activity, not least signing off final designs and proof-reading all the content.

Once the fit-out contractor's work is underway it's all hands to the pumps to ensure we stay on programme. Our in-house facilities team prepare the site for hand-over but continue to provide support throughout the build period, assisted by the professional team and volunteers. Once the exhibition set has been constructed, one of the last jobs to complete is the object installation. This is usually done by our curator working alongside specialist curators from the lending institutions, who have to satisfy themselves that all the environmental and security standards have been met.

And then finally, almost magically, everything is completed just in time for the public opening. For a brief moment when visitors come in for the first time, there is a hugely rewarding feeling ... before we're back to planning the next exhibition. ☺





# Making a monster

Bringing our monster to life

At the entrance to *Monsters of the Deep* a huge menacing eye keeps watch. The giant eye blinks, is still, then swooshes terrifyingly towards you – it is certainly not for the faint hearted! This monster kraken eye has also been cropping up all over Cornwall (and beyond) in the most unlikely of places – in service station toilets, on park and ride buses and on train station platforms as part of the marketing campaign. It is well-travelled, unique and instantly recognisable.

We identified early on in our planning that the eye would be central to our communications, something strange and intriguing to really capture people's imaginations.

We took our ideas to A-Side Studio, our incumbent design agency based in Redruth, Cornwall, who recruited Engine House, an animation studio, also based in Redruth, to help us bring the monster to life.

From their research and concepts, A-Side Studio created a beautiful set of hand-drawn illustrations. These mapped out the tone and look of the eye and how it will work compositionally. From here Craig Rothwell, one of the team from Engine House, picks up the process.

'As is the case with most of our work we try and get a working concept going very quickly to allow us to get a clear vision of what will work, and what won't. This allows everyone to visualise the creative direction early on. Lots of research was done into squids, octopuses and eyes from various other creatures to try and get that feeling of something watching you. We got a couple of base models of octopus tentacles and eyes and started to rough out the layouts.

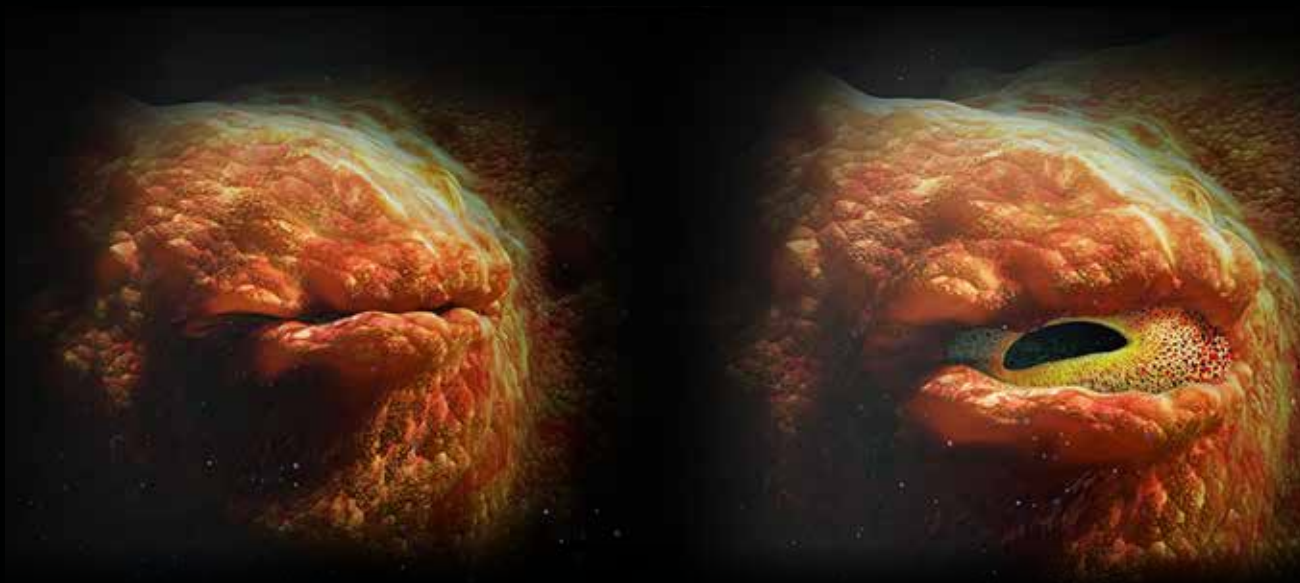
Once we had these it started to become a working process of sculpting in software called Z-Brush (a 3D digital sculpting programme, think digital clay) to refine the look of the monster's skin.

With this project one of the biggest challenges was the sheer size of the renders (computer graphics), it needed to hold up on a large scale projection – and the banners that hang on the front of the Museum are 10 meters high!

There were no simple texturing options as the texture resolution needed to be extremely large. We started off sculpting the details in Z-Brush to give us the bumpy warty texture we were after. We added colour using another programme called 3D Coat (a 3D digital texturing programme). However, once we started lighting the monster it was soon realised »

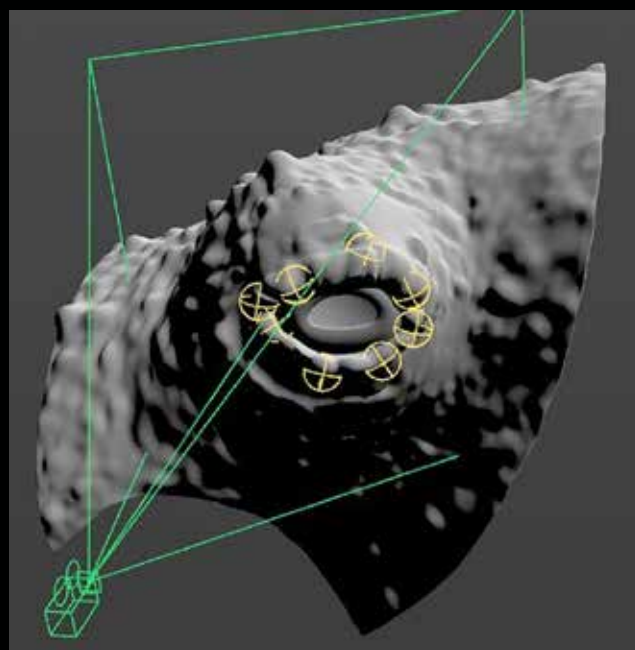
Image: The monster eye created by A-Side Studio and animated by Engine House.





“  
As is the case with most of our  
work we try and get a working  
concept going very quickly to allow  
us to get a clear vision of what will  
work, and what won't.

— Engine house



Images clockwise from  
opposite top left: The  
monster eye opening;  
Craig Rothwell, lead  
creator of the eye from  
Engine House; the eye  
under construction.

that to get the fine details, and to allow us to change it quickly, a more procedural approach needed to be taken and this is where Octane came in.

Octane is a high end render engine that allows lighting to be updated in near real-time, and the scales and textures could be manipulated on the fly. By fusing the broader details sculpted in Z Brush and 3D Coat with the finer texture detail in Octane we got the look we were after.

The lighting process evolved with a fusion of compositing (bringing all the visual effects together in one digital document) in After Effects (a digital effects programme). We looked to create an ominous feeling where the focus was all around the eye. We spent quite a bit of time playing with different variants of the eye to create a sense of emotion and character.

Once we had achieved the look we animated the monster eye to interact with the audience, slightly inquisitive but always watching.

The bioluminescence particles were animated following some night-time paddles with the bioluminescence at our local beaches – this provided a great reference point for us.

Finally, with all the key elements in place, we rendered the images and composited them together – fusing underwater bioluminescence particles, light rays and enhancing details to give the final, dramatic look.'

Cornwall is a hotbed of creativity and a mecca for artists and creatives. Just like our commitment to invest in cross-cultural programming, such as performances with Yskynna Vertical Dance Company, we also remain dedicated to use the best local talent across our other creative outputs, and behind the scenes. ☺

With huge thanks to the teams at A-Side Studio and Engine House for bringing our kraken to life.



# Managing national loans

Bringing internationally significant objects to Cornwall

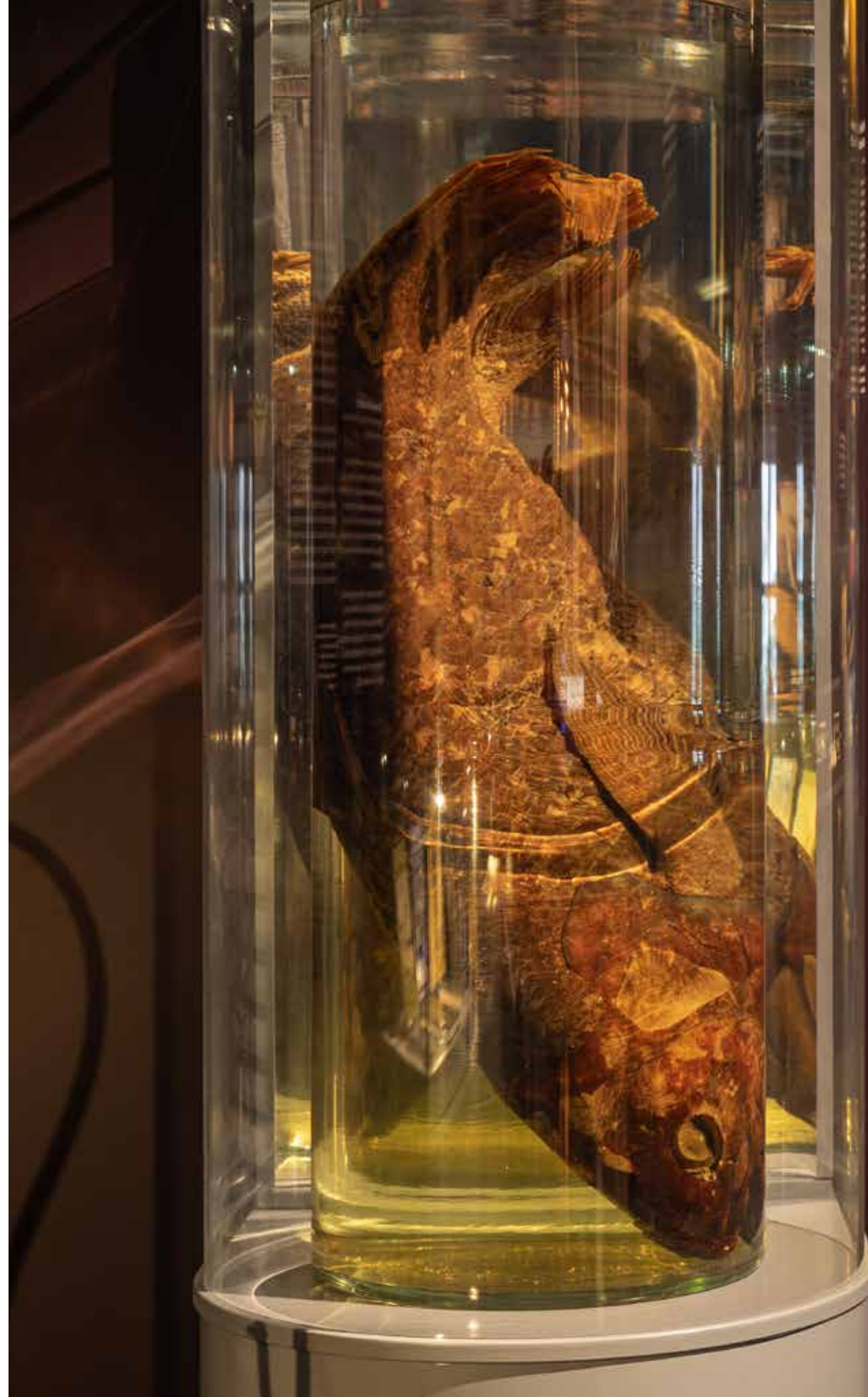
Below: The coelacanth being lifted from its travel case. Opposite: The coelacanth on display.



In *Monsters of the Deep* we explore the discovery of the coelacanth which was thought to have been extinct and only known by fossil. However, in 1938 a live specimen was caught and later identified by Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer, a curator at the East London Natural History Museum in South Africa. In the exhibition, we ask the question, if a group of fishes, known only as ancient fossils, could survive to the present without there being any intervening fossil evidence, could the same be true for other animals known only as fossils? To help us illustrate our question we needed a real coelacanth specimen.

We regularly borrow loans from national museums, but perhaps the greatest challenge posed to our team for our latest project was the courtering and installation of the Newcastle coelacanth.

Dan Gordon, Keeper of Biology at Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums said, 'One of the things that became apparent while we went through the loan process is that these specimens are very rare in UK collections - perhaps as few as six complete adult specimens nationally.'







Our specimen is the only one in the country that is not on permanent display. I couldn't find any other example of a coelacanth being loaned for exhibition, even in countries that have many more specimens, like South Africa. As such, this is likely the very first time a coelacanth has been loaned, transported and displayed as part of a temporary exhibition, certainly in the UK, probably in Europe and possibly in the whole world.'

With the need to keep spending to a minimum and having a successful track record of using our in-house team to courier objects, we made the decision to move the specimen ourselves. Managing and meeting the expectations of the Newcastle team was difficult. Finding a suitable air ride vehicle that could accommodate a large, delicate specimen and two representatives from the lending institution over a 400 mile distance was no mean feat.

The necessity of providing two drivers to cover this distance, yet only having space for three in

the vehicle entailed the hiring of a second vehicle and finding a third driver, to ensure that no driver would be driving more than the legal maximum driving time.

Installing the specimen was a nerve-wracking moment, gently sliding the fish into the bespoke jar nose down and slowly raising it upright. We held our breath as the spirit was pumped in – were our calculations correct? Had we bought enough to fill the jar? With five litres to spare we drew a sigh of relief and stood down our first aider and fire watcher. It was a dangerous procedure for both us and the coelacanth.

We all learned a great deal about how to care for, handle and install a large rare specimen in spirit, transferring it from its bath and moving it into a bespoke jar, then re-spiriting it. It is an experience that none of us will forget, especially when set against the pandemic, where we raced against time to install the exhibition and return our couriers home safely. ☺

“

This is likely the very first time a coelacanth has been loaned, transported and displayed as part of a temporary exhibition.

Dan Gordon, Keeper of Biology at Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums



Above: Coelacanth specimen courtesy of the Great North Museum: Hancock. Opposite: Coelacanth being installed.



One of the most successful aspects of *Monsters of the Deep* lies in its open, creative and even entrepreneurial approach to partnerships. This can be seen in the highly productive cross arts/science partnership with the National Oceanography Centre (NOC). »

Image: Dr Tammy Horton at work in NOC's Discovery Collections.

# The Discovery Collections

Arts and science:  
bridging the great divide





There are more than 70,000 jars of specimens in this internationally important collection, which is continually expanding as research cruises explore more of the deep oceans, gathering new data and samples.

The oldest samples were collected in the Southern Ocean in 1925 by the RRS *Discovery*, the same ship used by Captain Robert Falcon Scott for his first Antarctic expedition in 1901.

As Dr Horton explains, ‘The Discovery Collections differ from other natural history collections in that they are dedicated solely to samples and specimens taken from the open ocean and the deep-sea. They contain many unique, rare and exotic animals. Deep-sea specimens are extremely valuable not only intrinsically but also since they are so technically challenging to collect. This material has played an important role in advancing our understanding of the biology of the oceans.’ 🐟



### About National Oceanography Centre

The NOC is the UK's centre of excellence for oceanographic science, with a remit to provide national capability and leadership for ‘big ocean’ science at a global level. It does this on three fronts:

- Securing and protecting ocean resources and ecosystems.
- Protecting people and property from natural disasters and climate change.
- Understanding climate change and variability.

NOC also plays an important role in the education and training of future generations of scientists and informed citizens, especially through its extensive outreach programmes.

### Partnership working

*Monsters of the Deep* represents a strategic, mutually beneficial partnership. For NOC, the exhibition provides a high profile, accessible and popular public space to engage wider and more diverse audiences with ocean science, especially those from a non-

academic or non-science background. For National Maritime Museum Cornwall, we were able to enrich the exhibition with the latest scientific research data, audio-visual material and expertise.

It also gave the Museum unprecedented access to NOC's internationally important research collections – the Discovery Collections - which are not normally accessible to the public.

This material is looked after by Dr Tammy Horton, who played a crucial role as both a project champion within NOC and as a guest curator and scientific voice in the *Meet the Real Monsters of the Deep* section of the exhibition.

### About the Discovery Collections

The Discovery Collections consist of biological samples from many areas of the world's oceans. It is the only collection consisting solely of deep-sea and open ocean invertebrates in the UK and provides vital insight into the species that live at extreme ocean depths.

Above: Giant Isopod from the NOC's Discovery Collections.

Opposite top: Dr Tammy Horton.

Opposite bottom: A fangtooth fish from the NOC's Discovery Collections





Image: Specimens from NOC's Discovery Collections on display at National Maritime Museum Cornwall.

“

The Discovery Collections differ from other natural history collections in that they are dedicated solely to samples and specimens taken from the open ocean and the deep sea. They contain many unique, rare and exotic animals. ... This material has played an important role in advancing our understanding of the biology of the oceans.

Dr Tammy Horton



# Seeing is believing

## Viktor Wynd's UnNatural History Museum

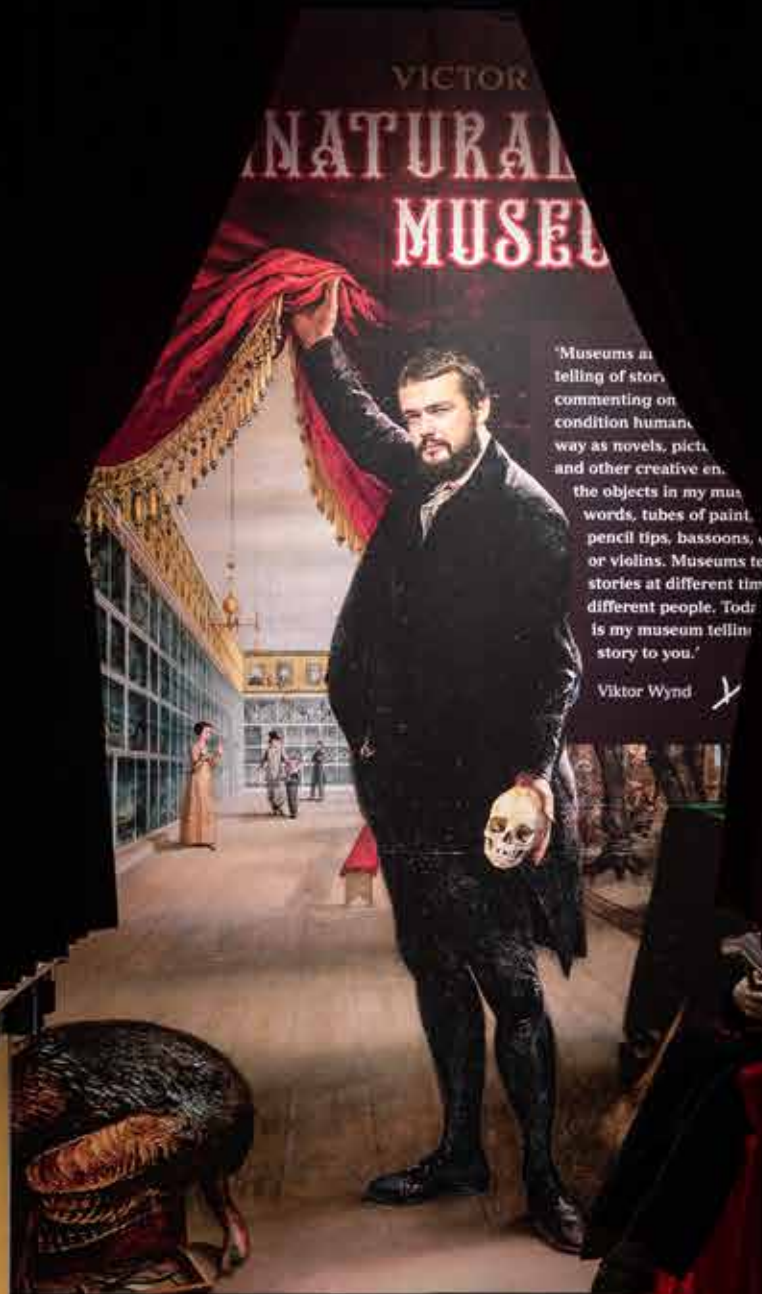
**M**onsters of the Deep continues our commitment to artistic risk-taking and culturally challenging work which began with *Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed*.

In this case, the Museum worked with artist Viktor Wynd to create *Viktor Wynd's UnNatural History Museum*. This uncanny, some may think disturbing, installation picks up and plays with many of the ideas, themes and displays in the *Monsters of the Deep* exhibition, presenting objects that question what is natural or unnatural, real or fake, beautiful or ugly, with labels and stories that play with our comfortable acceptance of 'truth' in museums. As Museum Director Richard Doughty explains:

'Working with Viktor Wynd is rather like experiencing an antiquarian cabinet of

curiosity for the first time. Both the man and the extraordinary objects he has assembled, generate a palpable sense of awe and delight. The bewitching world he presents to his viewers is as wonderful as it is bizarre but then Wynd is no ordinary museum curator, he is a magician, adroit at breathing fresh life into his exhibits, often with a flamboyant flourish but invariably with an imperceptible sleight of hand.

Wynd's playfulness gives him licence to be open to the infinite possibility of meanings he ascribes to objects he has collected. However, his sense of mischief, devilment and humour (rarely evidenced in museum spaces) bely the true nature of his passions – a desire to disrupt, disturb and ultimately transgress our 'normal' connections to the physical world around us. »





As an artist and collector, this is what Wynd has brought to National Maritime Museum Cornwall with the reincarnation of his 'UnNatural History Museum'. Wynd presents the viewer with objects, some seemingly mundane, some astonishing, some shocking, that cause us to question what we think of as natural or unnatural, real or fake, beautiful or grotesque (though, with Wynd it is never as simple or binary as this). Encountering stories and 'hand-written' labels that are at once wilfully idiosyncratic, blatantly untrue and true (for a certain value of 'true') our casual acceptance of evidence and

authority in a museum space is unsettled.

At the risk of sounding pompous (something I suspect Wynd would find both amusing and irresistible), I would argue museums, as cultural organisations, are better, more relevant and more interesting when we constantly question the objects we collect, the meanings we ascribe to them, the stories we recount, the voices who tell them and the audiences they reach....And besides, where else would our visitors get an opportunity to gaze upon an actual unicorn skeleton...I mean what more could you ask for?

Below: unicorn skeleton

Opposite top: Artist Viktor Wynd

Opposite bottom: Visitors enjoying the exhibition.

“

Working with Viktor Wynd is rather like experiencing an antiquarian cabinet of curiosity for the first time. Both the man and the extraordinary objects he has assembled, generate a palpable sense of awe and delight.

Richard Doughty, Museum Director





### What's in a name? Challenging the role of museums in our culture

Transitioning to this space and pivotal to the whole exhibition narrative and visitor engagement, are a series of deceptively simple display panels that challenge visitors to reflect on the role museums play in creating meaning with our culture and society i.e. raising questions about the objects we collect, the meaning we ascribe, the stories we tell, who tells them and what audiences they are for.

This was produced in partnership with Exeter University and was written by Dr Bryony Onciul, Associate Professor in Museology and Heritage Studies, who explains her intention:

This was an exciting opportunity to open up thinking about what museums are, who they are for, and what they do. By posing questions I wanted the audience to step back from consuming what was on display and reflect on what they had seen.

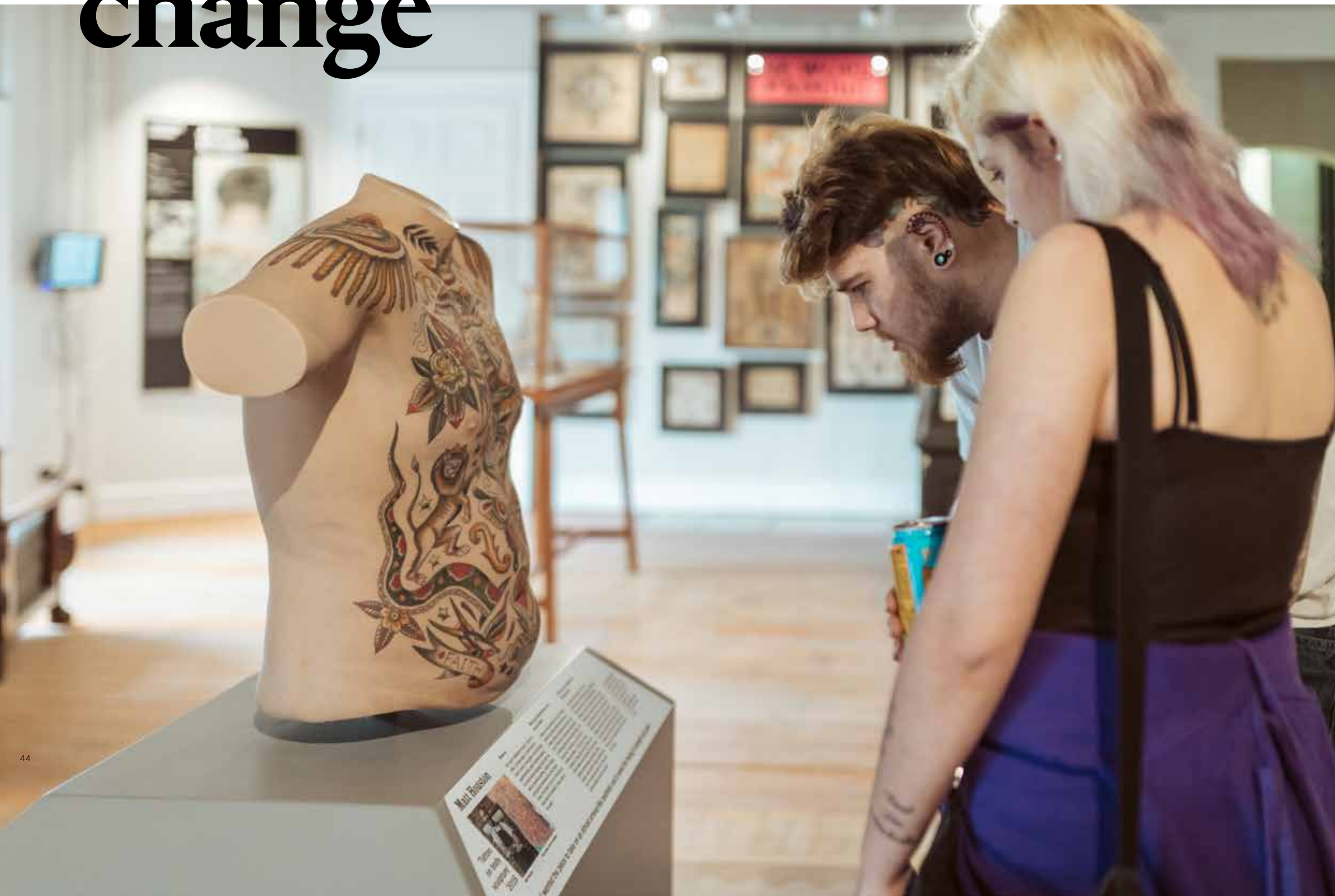
Questioning whose stories are told, what is included and excluded, and how this exhibition relates to their own experiences. Museums are traditionally places of education, knowledge, and wonder, but Wynd's installation disrupts this with this playful and challenging interpretation – encouraging visitors to question the reliability of the labels and artefacts on display. The *Monsters of the Deep* exhibition as a whole asks us to question the limits of current knowledge, consider what is yet to be known, and explore the role of imagination and storytelling. The exhibition emphasises that knowledge is not static but situated in time and place with the ability to be radically reconsidered when new information is revealed. This opens up space for thinking beyond today to future possibilities, questioning and renewing the role of museums.



# A catalyst for change

## Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed on Tour

Image: *Tattoo* exhibition at Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery



Opening at National Maritime Museum Cornwall (2017-18), and then as a national tour (2018-2021), *Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed* (*Tattoo*) offers a genuinely ground-breaking and comprehensive history of British tattooing.

Featuring leading designers, cutting-edge academic research, historic and contemporary tattoo artists – as well as loans from private and national museum collections – *Tattoo* tells a story that challenges long-standing myths, stereotypes and preconceptions about tattooing when it comes to class, gender and age, whilst at the same time giving a voice to and celebrating the astonishingly rich artistic heritage of tattooing as an art form in the UK.

*Tattoo* resulted in the largest gathering – and then touring – of artefacts and original tattoo artwork ever assembled by a museum in the United Kingdom (over 400 artefacts). This achievement provided a rare opportunity for audiences to see cultural material, images and faces not otherwise on public display in a museum or gallery context, including artefacts relating to the incredible story – long marginalized – of Britain's pioneering female tattoo artist, Jessie Knight.

The impact of *Tattoo* has been incredible: most dramatically in terms of attracting new, diverse or 'non-traditional' audiences into museums and galleries around the UK. A full report on the original *Tattoo* exhibition and its national tour has been commissioned by NMMC, and will be published in 2021. In the meantime, some of the facts and figures below illustrate the range and scale of the project's achievements: »



**Knowledge transfer/visitor numbers:**

**109,085 visitors attended the original exhibition at National Maritime Museum Cornwall.**

- Over 100,000 visitors attended the three year national tour programme (2018-2021).
- Over 17,000 people watched BBC's Culture in Quarantine online documentary on *Tattoo* at The Historic Dockyard Chatham.
- Visitor research carried out by Terry Watkins Research on behalf of National Maritime Museum Cornwall showed that our temporary exhibition programme was the main influence to visit for independent adults in our high season. Furthermore, a 22% increase in spend-per-head retail and catering income is indicative of a significant increase in 'new' adult ticket sales, against our typically 'family' visitor profile during the summer.

For the national tour venues, a detailed statistical breakdown in terms of diversity and audience reached will be detailed in the forthcoming report.

**Marketing and PR impact**

*Tattoo* generated unprecedented media coverage, including huge social media interest and activity. Together with word of mouth, this raised awareness among people who had not heard of NMMC before. *Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed* generated £780,000 Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE) and secured high profile coverage across all regional and national media. This included *The Economist*, *The New Scientist*, *Big Issue*, *Stylist*, *Shortlist*, *Huck*, *Topshop*, *The Sun*, *The Daily Express*, *Art Fund*, *Topman*, *Total Tattoo*, *Art Quarterly*, *BuzzFeed* – as well as regional TV and press coverage throughout the tour.

Some notable highlights:

- BBC TV News – 6pm & 10pm - syndicated to BBC World Service and BBC America, viewing figures: 200 million (combined).
- BBC Radio 2 – Jonathan Ross Show, 24 March 2017, audience figures: 15 million weekly listening figures (across all shows, no show specific information).
- Plus full or double page spreads in *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Financial Times* and *The Telegraph*.

Above: Naval cadets at National Museum of the Royal Navy.

Opposite: Locations the exhibition visited

“

Torbay Tattoo Tales helped us have confidence in our direction, including the curation of 'Torbay Rocks'. It has also given us evidence towards our HLF phase 3 redevelopment.

Anna Gilroy,  
Exhibitions & Programmes Officer, Torre Abbey

**Celebrating the Impact of 'Tattoo on Tour'**

*Tattoo* generated an incredible response, not just from visitors but also colleagues from museums and art galleries across the country. Inspired by this powerful feedback, and National Maritime Museum Cornwall's own strategic ambition to be a regional museum with a national impact, we decided to produce the exhibition as a national tour – another first for us, and indeed any museum in Cornwall.

In total the tour visited seven museums over three years, Torre Abbey (Torquay), National Museum of the Royal Navy (Portsmouth), Rozelle House Museum and Galleries (Ayr, Scotland), M Shed (Bristol), Time and Tide Museum of Great Yarmouth Life (Norfolk), The Historic Dockyard Chatham (Kent), Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery (Cumbria).

All the museums and galleries who have hosted *Tattoo* have had a similar profile: they are ranked in the top percentile of the most deprived areas in the country. All have taken the opportunity that *Tattoo* provides i.e. to attract diverse visitors and to challenge perceptions of them as a cultural organisation – and have used the exhibition as a springboard to create extraordinary artistic and community work, all shaped by their capacity, collections and communities.







“  
A ground breaking  
exhibition... what emerges  
is no less than a mass,  
mobile art form through  
which the history of Britain's  
larger cultural shifts  
can be observed.

*Daily Telegraph*

#### Critical acclaim

'Backroom tattooists, professional tattoo collectors and sailor culture have all been scrutinised in one of the most extensive reappraisals of body art put on in the UK.' *The Guardian*

'A ground breaking exhibition... what emerges is no less than a mass, mobile art form through which the history of Britain's larger cultural shifts can be observed.' *Daily Telegraph*

*Tattoo* is the first time our Museum has received critical reviews and major coverage from the national media, including a feature with the BBC's Arts Correspondent Will Gompertz for the 6pm and 10pm BBC News. We also received our longest, most positive review for any of our exhibitions in the Museums Journal (the main publication for the UK museum sector).



#### Reputation/awards:

##### Short-listed, Museums Change Lives Award

As a national tour, *Tattoo* was short-listed for the prestigious and widely respected 'Museums Change Lives' award, run by the Museums Association, the industry's national body.

##### Torre Abbey: Winner, Best Local Authority Art Initiative, National Campaign for the Arts

The community engagement work at Torre Abbey won the National Campaign for the Arts award for 'Best Local Authority Art Initiative'.

The judges praised the work as an 'Excellent example of a museum working with a community. It's great to see a project like this being a response to a community, rather than something being parachuted in. The acknowledgement of the increase of tattoos in the community, and their importance to that person's identity; then being able to tie that to other arts and cultural experiences is really quite novel. No wonder the gallery saw a change in demographic. This project has two characteristics key to innovation: uniqueness and human connection.'

##### M Shed: Winner, Best Merchandise Range, Cultural Enterprise Awards 2020

M Shed in Bristol commissioned a local artist to create merchandise inspired by *Tattoo*, which won 'Best Merchandise Range' (organisations under £1m turnover) in the 2020 Cultural Enterprise Awards. Judges praised the '... creative exhibition range offering the opportunity to work with artists not traditionally associated with museums, broadening M Shed's appeal and attracting new visitors. A brave, creative and successful campaign.'

##### Tullie House: Young artist commission, EMERGE visual arts competition

Emerging artist Rosie Woolaghan won Carlisle's Festival of Hope 2020 EMERGE competition for aspiring young artists. Inspired by tattoo art, she was commissioned by Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery to create new content for *Tattoo* which was showcased as part of the touring exhibition.

Opposite: Tattoo sculpture in Georgian ballroom at Torre Abbey.

Above: Visitors queuing at the M Shed.





“  
It was fabulous –  
we loved it, and we  
are still living on its  
energy and kudos!

Pamela McIntyre, Project Development Officer,  
Rozelle House Museum and Galleries

**National cultural discourse and debate:  
Black Lives Matter (BLM), #metoo and  
diversity in representation.**

*Tattoo* directly challenges cultural perceptions of tattooing as an art form, as well as social stereotypes of the ‘type’ of people who have them, particularly in terms of class and gender. In doing so, it has also challenged and changed public perceptions not just about National Maritime Museum Cornwall but, more widely, the role museums and galleries play in defining what is art, what stories to tell and who those stories are for. In this respect, the fact that *Tattoo* has toured to diverse audiences in rural and urban areas of the UK has further generated socially pressing questions and debate, particularly in the light of the challenges posed by the BLM and #metoo movements. Such questions and challenges – particularly around the lack of BAME representation within the history of British tattooing, which is partially addressed in the exhibition narrative, are raw proof of *Tattoo*’s social and cultural relevance, and its important connection to the wider national discourse around diversity.

In this respect, and as a final legacy of the incredible project, we are now planning to bring back *Tattoo* to National Maritime Museum Cornwall for a year. This will provide an unexpected opportunity to explore these complicated and contested issues further. This will be done partly through new historical research and interpretation by guest curator Dr Matt Lodder, but also (funding permitting) through a major new art commission that will explore some of the personal meanings and cultural complexities of tattooing on black skin.

**Art historical/national heritage intervention**

*Tattoo* represents a major art historical intervention in how tattoo art and history has been displayed and interpreted in a public museum or art gallery space.

Bringing the Jessie Knight archive to the public has directly led to a wider appraisal of her work as an artist and female pioneer in tattoo history. This national and international interest has also placed the Jessie Knight collection at risk of leaving the country. The work of the exhibition’s guest curator, Dr Matt Lodder, in leading an initiative to save the collection for future generations represents a significant national heritage intervention – and has resulted in the work being acquired by the National Museum Wales.

**Stakeholder impact**

*Tattoo* represents a watershed moment in our relationship with our key stakeholders (i.e. Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund, Cornwall Council, and also major regional and national trusts and funds), and how they perceive the artistic quality and cultural value of our work. From the exhibition’s use of new sculptural tattoo art commissions to the award-winning public engagement work, *Tattoo* has established a track record that demonstrates National Maritime Museum Cornwall’s commitment and ability to deliver radical artistic, cultural and social agendas set by these stakeholders.

Opposite top: Another museum first – live tattooing as part of a national ‘flash day’ event.

Opposite bottom: *Tattoo* at NMMC.

Above: ‘Tattoo Jack’ by local Portsmouth artist Gary Coole, commissioned by National Museum of the Royal Navy as part of its outreach work with veteran groups. Courtesy of NMRN.





“  
*British Tattoo Art Revealed*  
 made M Shed cool –  
 it changed perceptions.  
 The Museum at Night  
 event was incredibly  
 successful with queues  
 around the block...

Amber Druce & Steven Bradley,  
 History Curator & Exhibition Officer,  
 Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives.

#### The Legacy of *Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed* for National Maritime Museum Cornwall

*Tattoo* has had its most profound and seminal impact on National Maritime Museum Cornwall. The cultural and academic decisions - indeed the risks - taken with *Tattoo* represent a step-change in how the Museum works as a heritage organisation, and how we approach our cultural programming.

Following *Tattoo*, it is no exaggeration to say that the Museum's cultural work has been transformed. This can be seen in new exhibitions that now platform diverse and socially challenging perspectives, and which diversify cultural decision-making through co-curation.

Likewise, the public and critical success of the original exhibition and subsequent national tour has demonstrated to our trustees, staff, volunteers, stakeholders and wider public the real benefits of taking cultural risks with our exhibition choices and narratives.

In this way, *Tattoo* has changed how we think about being socially relevant, as well as our cultural and artistic ambitions for the future, regionally and nationally.'

**Richard Doughty, Director, National Maritime Museum Cornwall**



#### Tattoo in Lockdown: digital delivery

In year three of the national tour, the *Tattoo* team had to cope with the impacts of the pandemic. This affected everything – from the way we unloaded the lorry to how we worked with the venue staff – and challenged us to draw on all our ingenuity and reserves of ‘can do’ instincts. However, we could do little about the complete or partial closure of the last two venues on the tour – The Historic Dockyard Chatham and Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery.

For the team at Chatham, the first lockdown came the day before the show was due to open. However, they proved undaunted. Within two weeks the team were able to create a ‘home-made’ digital version of the exhibition – starting with just an iPhone. As Lynnette Crisp, from Chatham's marketing team, explains:

‘We were determined to make the *Tattoo* digital exhibition accessible as quickly as possible. Everyone felt passionately about it. We had put a lot of work into getting it ready for opening and created a lot of interest and excitement, and we didn't want to disappoint our audience’.

The results were remarkable:

- The *Tattoo* content on the Chatham website had 15,300 page views, of which 5,466 were

specifically on the online exhibition content.

- Social media support for the online exhibition and the physical exhibition (when open) had a reach of over 116,000 users, with over 2,000 users actively engaging with it.

Chatham's social media activity about *Tattoo* attracted the attention of the ‘Culture in Quarantine’ team at the BBC who contacted Chatham. Due to lockdown they were not able to visit *Tattoo*, so once more Lynette and the Head of Marketing used their phones to capture the necessary content.

Again the results were remarkable with over 17,000 views on BBC iPlayer, with complementary clips on the BBC Arts' social media channels.

The list of ground-breaking achievements, of audience engagement, new artist commissions and of awards won by the host museums is almost overwhelming and will be published in full in a forthcoming case study. One thing is clear: *Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed*, and the wider engagement work around it, has been and continues to be a real catalyst for change. 🌀

Opposite: *Tattoo* on tour generated award-winning community engagement programmes. Event at M Shed.

Above: Screenshot from BBC's *Culture in Quarantine* at The Historic Dockyard Chatham.



# A royal visit

The Princess Royal celebrates the most ambitious exhibition in the Museum's history

In September Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal visited the Museum to celebrate the most ambitious exhibition in the Museum's history, *Monsters of the Deep: Science Fact and Fiction*.

The visit didn't have the usual fanfare due to the pandemic. However we were still deeply honoured to provide Princess Anne with a guided visit of the exhibition. During the tour the Princess was introduced to a number of the local companies and lenders who helped create *Monsters of the Deep*. This included our VIP guests Karen Barnett, the Managing Director of Parc Signs, Deborah Tritton from Kresen Kernow, Dr Darren Naish, Guest Curator, and Professor

Ed Hall and Dr Tammy Horton from the National Oceanography Centre.

The Princess Royal also met the team responsible for the restoration of Emma, including Paul Braddock who has been instrumental in the restoration of the boat. Emma is a 1912 steam launch from the Museum's collection and a small team of staff and volunteers have worked since 2019 to bring the boat back to its former glory and ready for sea trials in 2021.

A small group, including staff, trustees and volunteers from the Museum were presented to Her Royal Highness, and highlighted the vital work they do. 🐟



THE MONSTER IN THE ROOM

# The monster in the room

The impact of  
Coronavirus

THE  
CARINA  
MARINE  
& THE  
MEDIEVAL  
MIND

MONSTERS  
OF THE DEEP

FACT & FICTION

depths of the ocean  
to us - a place of  
mystery ... what

known world  
modern and  
ancient

The story  
of the Carina  
Marine & the  
Medieval Mind  
is a tale of  
discovery and  
adventure.

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The installation of *Monsters of the Deep* was in full-swing – couriers and lenders were travelling across the country to deliver the final loans, the fabricators were completing the finishing touches to the exhibition sets and the marketing campaign had been rolled-out. Then Coronavirus hit, a shocking blow for us, for our community and for the industry as a whole. The Museum closed on 17th March, just two days before we were due to open the most ambitious temporary exhibition in our history.

The lights switched off, the doors closed, and the monsters put into hibernation. The next few months were about survival.

When it became clear that museums could reopen, a small team was assembled to navigate how to safely reopen the Museum, and a new major temporary exhibition, during a global pandemic.

At this time the National Lottery Heritage Fund awarded the Museum a substantial Emergency Grant to assist with the costs of reopening. Without this funding we would have struggled to make the Museum a Covid safe environment.

A one-way route was implemented with all new signage and wayfinding, an online booking process was created with timed ticketing, additional cleaning staff were recruited and sanitisation stations were installed throughout the Museum. This does not account for the time taken to create the necessary risk assessments, detailed standard operating procedures, adaptations to the café and the gift shop, staff training, or the lengthy conversations about how we ‘sanitise the building, not the experience’.

After four months of closure we reopened on Monday 27th July, and welcomed visitors into *Monsters of the Deep* for the very first time – relieved, happy and grateful.

The summer of 2020 was like nothing the county had ever experienced before. The volume of people who came to visit Cornwall was exceptional. For some locals it meant they felt more vulnerable, for the tourists who had expected to escape Coronavirus regulations it was frustrating. For the Museum, the capacity restrictions meant that at a time when the organisation would normally expect to generate a significant amount of its annual income, it just couldn’t. To enable social distancing strict capacity restrictions were implemented, equating to a 73% reduction in admissions.



This wasn’t the only challenge we faced. Managing queues in the torrential rain and high winds, dealing with a fire evacuation in a Covid secure way and regularly reviewing our standard operating procedures as new regulations were enforced. A time of constant change, learning and reviewing.

As we entered the autumn another lifeline in the form of a grant from Arts Council England’s Cultural Recovery Fund arrived. This second tranche of funding meant, amongst other things, we could remain open as we entered the trickier months ahead. However, Coronavirus had other plans. In November came the next national lockdown and our second closure, and we now find ourselves in the midst of a third lockdown. Once again, the lights switched off, the doors closed and the Monsters put back into hibernation. In March 2020 our focus was on survival but today we face the next few months with hope and optimism.

This last year has brought into sharp focus the role that museums continue to play in people’s lives. How through careful adaptation we can still be places of inspiration, imagination and reflection but also a safe sanctuary in a world that has become unfamiliar and scary to so many. Our ability to harness change, along with the support we have received from the sector, our community, our visitors and our staff and volunteers, means that like many seafarers over the years, we will weather this storm. ☪

..... A huge thank you to The National Lottery Heritage Emergency Fund, Arts Council England’s Cultural Recovery Fund and the Weston Culture Fund



Opposite: Face masks became mandatory in museums.

Above: The Covid-19 measures in place at the Museum.



# Yskynna Vertical Dance Company

New ways of  
experiencing the  
museum space

“

The support and understanding of National Maritime Museum Cornwall, their trust in the work, process and the company was essential for the rehearsals to have great creative freedom, which is an integral part of developing a responsive and emotive work.

David Greeves, Artistic Director of Yskynna  
Vertical Dance Company

By working with other arts organisations we bring our collections, exhibitions and stories to life through music, theatre and dance and we're committed to a culturally ambitious cross-arts programme, including the commissioning of major new artworks.

Our approach is to complement the quality of our exhibitions and our heritage offer with a wider, high quality cultural and artistic offer, delivered through a growing number of cross-arts partnerships. By doing this, we aim to enable new and existing visitors – many of whom might not consider themselves traditional music, dance or theatre audiences – to connect with our building and collections (and the human stories they contain) in ways that are unexpected, artistically ambitious, thrilling and enjoyable.

The Museum's long-term partnership with Yskynna Vertical Dance Company began in 2017 with *Bligh Spirit* on the outside of our Lookout Tower and continued through the eerie *Ghost Ships* in 2018

and the evocative *The Girl and Her Shadow* in 2019. It is proof of what such partnerships can achieve.

Building on the creative and professional trust established between both organisations, we decided to take the commissioning of a new piece of work to the next level by linking it to the narrative being developed for *Monsters of the Deep*. The result was *Into the Deep Blue*, the most practically challenging, artistically ambitious and spectacular show ever mounted in the Museum.

Yskynna's Artistic Director, David Greeves, brought together a team of talented aerial performers, actors, writers and technicians to create a truly spectacular work that takes audiences into an alien, watery world of mermaids and monstrous creatures of the deep. Originally *Into the Deep Blue* was due to be staged over the Easter and summer holidays in the Museum, but was cancelled due to the pandemic. It has since been filmed in full and can be viewed by visiting [www.vimeo.com/525439526](https://www.vimeo.com/525439526)



Opposite: Yskynna's latest show *Into the Deep Blue* commissioned by NMMC.

Above: *The Girl and Her Shadow*, 2019.



# A new home for *Walrus*



National Maritime Museum Cornwall is home to the National Small Boat Collection of 152 vessels, which gives us the opportunity to explore the role small boats have played in maritime cultures and communities around the British coast, and indeed the world. No other museum tells this story. We also manage the National Small Boat Register of the UK's 1,475 most significant small craft and run a specialist maritime research centre library and archive which publishes the academic journal, *Troze*.

As well as being custodians of these collections the Museum also builds boats, primarily to support our exhibitions, using traditional boatbuilding skills. One such vessel is *Walrus*, a full scale, waterline replica of a small Viking trading ship. Created for the *Viking Voyagers* exhibition in 2015,

the boat design was based on the plans of a real vessel, *Skuldelev III*, excavated in Denmark and now displayed in the Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde. *Walrus* also acts as an example to illustrate the Vikings' skills as master shipbuilders and seafarers.

*Viking Voyagers* closed in 2017 and *Walrus* went into storage. However, this isn't where the story ends. In 2019 *Walrus* was sold to the South West Heritage Trust and it now has a new home at the Avalon Archaeology Park at the Avalon Marshes Centre. Here there are two replica buildings – the dining room of a Roman villa and a Saxon longhall. *Walrus* is positioned near the Saxon longhall as though it has been beached for a bit of peaceful trading. It will now continue to provide a fascinating insight into the world of the Vikings where visitors and school groups can have a hands-on experience of their heritage. 🐋

Above: *Walrus* in her new permanent home at the Avalon Archaeology Park.

Opposite top: *Walrus* being hoisted into location.

Opposite bottom left: *Walrus* in the *Viking Voyagers* exhibition at NMMC.

Opposite bottom right: *Walrus* being placed into location.







# Communities of the sea

## Porthleven historic harbour project

Participants: 23. Delivery: Two years (2017-2019)

In recent years the Museum has participated in several co-curated and community consultation projects. We were beginning to think about how we might take these initiatives to the next level and wanted to explore whether there was any interest in co-producing a series of living history events. Our idea was to partner with smaller, volunteer-run museums holding maritime collections and to support them to celebrate their community's historic and enduring relationship with the sea in new ways. However, in 2017 we were approached by

representatives of a local history group from Porthleven, enquiring whether we could offer them gallery space in the Museum to curate their own exhibition.

Porthleven is a fishing town on the west coast of the Lizard Peninsula and the group had already successfully mounted an impressive photographic exhibition in a local pub called *Out of the Blue*. They were keen to reach a wider audience and encourage visitors to come to their village to explore their heritage and wanted to know whether we could help them.



Their original idea was to focus on the family histories of seven prominent Porthleven families, who had strong links to the construction of the dock, boatbuilding, fishing and net-making. However, as more local people became enthused and wanted to contribute to the project, they decided this was too restrictive and decided to broaden the scope of the exhibition.

The Director and curator attended a series of brain-storming meetings and skill sharing workshops to provide research tips, ideas about interpretation techniques and to give practical guidance on selecting objects and how to set about drafting copy for interpretation panels, captions and labels. In this way we were able to help the group coordinate their

efforts. For example, by assisting them to determine a timeline, identify the stories they wanted to tell and to give advice about the selection and display of exhibits and images.

The graphic design for the exhibition was undertaken by Aawen Marketing and Graphic Design in Truro and the end result *Porthleven: A Journey Through Time* is an excellent example of community engagement and co-production. The Museum commissioned two sets of information panels so that one set could be mounted concurrently in the town itself. We are thrilled to learn that the group has since successfully applied for a National Heritage Lottery Project Grant to digitise their local history archive. 🐚

Opposite: Community co-curators: the team behind the exhibition.

Above and below: The story of the town and its people brought to life through a rich array of objects and perspectives.





NEW ACQUISITIONS



The Falmouth Dock Archive

One of the most important archives to arrive this year is the Falmouth Docks Archive, comprising of a register of shareholders, calls book, two sets of reports and statements of accounts from 1859-1886 and 1887-1914, and a ledger, which complements our existing holdings of the history and operation of the Docks. Of particular interest is the list of those initial shareholders, their professions,

location and the number of shares they were buying. It is not surprising to find a number of the great and good of the area on this list, such as the Fox and Broad families and Evelyn Boscawen, Viscount of Falmouth, but also small local businessmen and women with typically one or two shares in what would become a flourishing and profitable company. »





### The Captain Hill Collection

The Captain John Hill collection is different again, focusing on the career of the aforementioned merchant navy man, from Polruan, near Fowey. He came from a long line of seafarers. This archive dates from 1870s – 1920s with log books, letters of reference, identity cards, letters, photographs and other documents. It also includes portraits, Hill's sextant and other small objects providing a tangible link to the man himself.



Above: The Captain Hill Collection.

Opposite: The AutoNaut prototype, courtesy of AutoNaut.

### The AutoNaut prototype

Each year the Museum is offered many small boats for its collection. The majority of candidates tend to be traditional wooden craft, under 30ft (9.144m) long, propelled by oar, sail or motor. Recently however, we were offered, and accepted into the collection the prototype of a hi-tech, wave powered vessel, the AutoNaut.

Despite being unusual, wave powered craft are not a modern concept. In 1895 Herman Linden noticed that a wave passing by a boat caused the boat to rise and fall. He thought he could use that

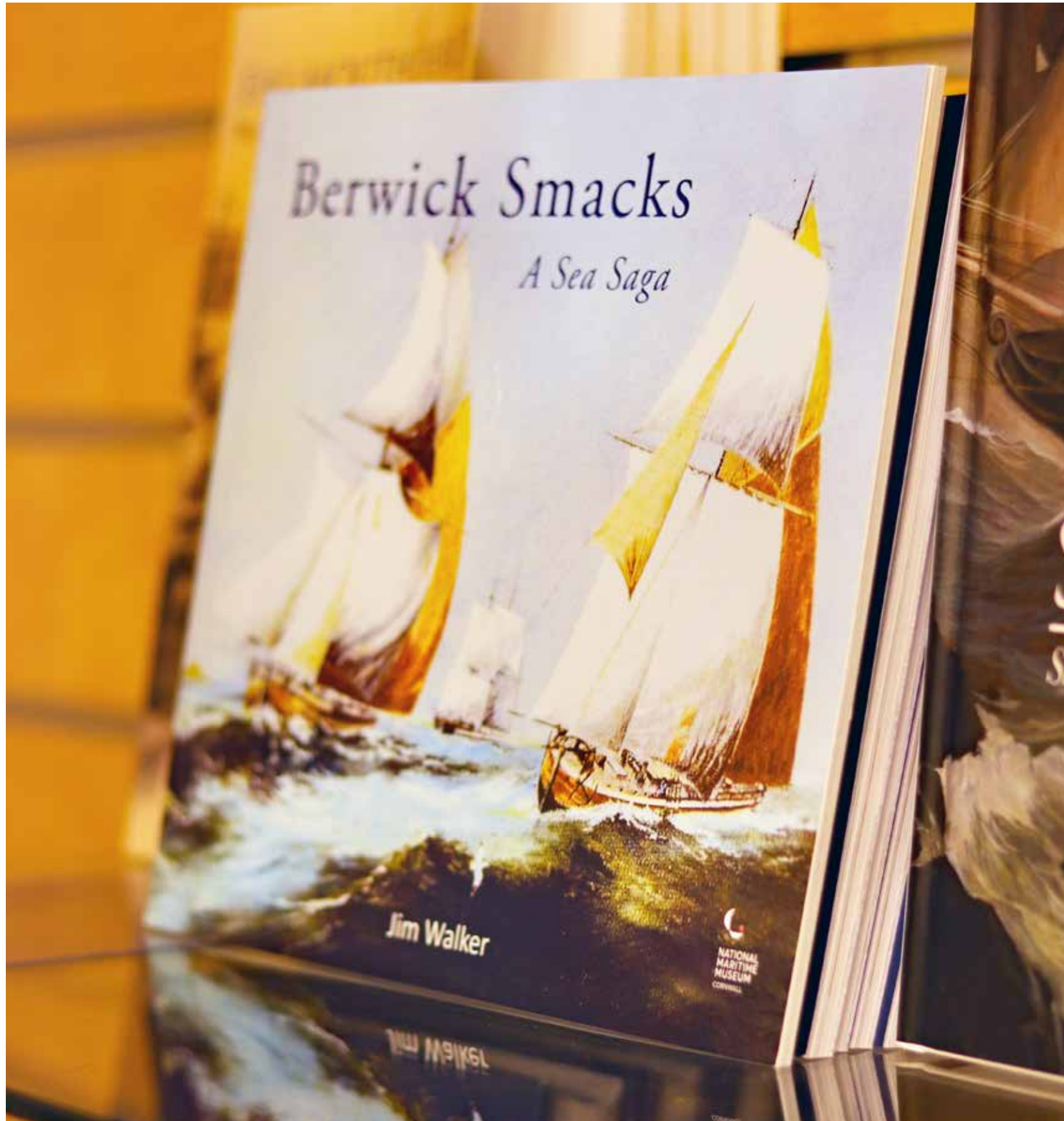
phenomenon to power a vessel, and to prove his theory he designed and built his 'Autonaut'.

In the words of the 21st century AutoNaut company founder Mike Poole, 'Renewable energy allows the completion of missions at sea over many weeks - with no carbon fuel emissions or costs. A range of sensors on-board are powered by solar energy to collect valuable oceanic data'.

At the Museum we believe it's important to reflect modern trends and technology in our boat collection, as well as looking further back in history. After all, today's vessels will be part of tomorrow's maritime history. ☺







# Berwick Smacks

**B**erwick Smacks, *A Sea Saga* by Jim Walker FRPS, is the latest book published by National Maritime Museum Cornwall. It follows in the wake of *Titanic Stories*, written by Dr Eric Kentley, the guest curator for our exhibition of the same name.

It is our Museum's business to tell stories of the sea, many of which have now been forgotten. One such story is that of the Berwick Smacks. These sloop-rigged vessels built on the banks of the Tweed were the fastest cargo vessels afloat in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, capable of reaching London in less than two days, a speed that could not be matched until the coming of the railways. With their cargoes of fish, grain and passengers these vessels made an enormous contribution to the prosperity of Berwick-upon-Tweed. We were therefore thrilled to have the opportunity to collaborate with Jim Walker. His research throws new light on the economic background to the emergence of these sailing smacks, vividly describes life on board and argues convincingly that the form of these unique vessels influenced the design of the *Cutty Sark*.

The publication of *Berwick Smacks* is a good example of how our Museum plays a

proactive role in raising awareness about the significance of maritime cultures and communities around the British coast. It also serves to strengthen our reputation as a nationally significant museum in Cornwall.

Jim Walker is a celebrated photographer, historian and author. *Berwick Smacks* is his 10th publication, chronicling the development of these sailing ships which were all built in Berwick-upon-Tweed. Over the past seven decades Jim has researched and documented the history of this remarkable border town. For example, during 1987 he made a unique photographic record which captured the demise of the commercial salmon fishing industry which had prospered for centuries on the lower reaches of the River Tweed. He went on to curate an exhibition of his work at Berwick Museum and Art Gallery entitled *Awake for the Salmon* and, in collaboration with the Museum and Northumberland County Library, published an accompanying book of his photographs under the same title in 1988. 🐟

“

It is our Museum's business to tell stories of the sea, many of which have now been forgotten. One such story is that of the *Berwick Smacks*.

Richard Doughty

Opposite: *Berwick Smacks*, the Museum's latest publication.





# Going digital

With the help of the Weston Culture Fund the Museum is reaching new audiences.

We place learning at the heart of National Maritime Museum Cornwall and we're incredibly proud of our achievements.

The Museum boasts an award-winning schools programme that delivers hands-on curriculum workshops to approximately 50% of primary schools in Cornwall. This award-winning programme is run by Museum staff and supported by a small but dedicated team of volunteers.

In March 2020, our schools programme was put on pause due to the pandemic and we now aim to have the schools programme back up and running for the next educational year.

In the meantime, while we are unable to deliver our on-site schools programme, the priority has been to develop alternative ways to maintain

contact with schools and provide new forms of learning resources for teachers. We are currently in the process of producing an exciting new online learning programme which will offer virtual curriculum workshops to classrooms via online video conferencing platforms.

Like our existing on-site workshops, the online workshops will focus on curriculum-based topics such as Viking traders, Tudor explorers or shipwrecks and sea rescue. They will tell real stories by investigating objects and artefacts, and include interactive class-based activities. The workshops will be streamed live to the classroom which will enable interaction between the children and the workshop leader, making it more engaging and dynamic.

There are of course challenges with delivering online workshops: we cannot recreate the unique experience of physically visiting the museum, exploring the gallery spaces or handling real objects. We also recognise the limitations of screen-based learning, of maintaining the attention of children for any prolonged period while they sit in the familiar surroundings of their classroom. Our aim, however, is to provide a fun, affordable, engaging and interactive resource to support and enhance in-class learning.

One of the advantages to the online format is that it offers exciting and creative opportunities that aren't possible with our on-site delivery. For example, we can record from different locations, include interviews with special guests, and incorporate theatrical or musical performance.

The long-term plan is to continue developing content and workshops that cover a broad range of subjects relating to Cornwall, the sea and the Museum's collection. Rather than replace the physical visit to the Museum, the hope is that the online workshop will complement the visit, serving as an additional learning resource.

Looking beyond the pandemic, this online format allows us to deliver workshops, talks or live performances to new audiences without geographical restriction, beyond Cornwall and the UK. It makes connecting with schools and teachers much easier and will allow for additional contact to be made either before or after a visit for preparatory or follow-up resources. For teachers wanting to attend 'Museum Lates' or CPD events but struggle to find the time, online events offer a convenient alternative in which they would be able to participate from their classroom or home at a time that's more suitable. 🐙

Above: Filming for the new digital programme.







# ABOUT NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM CORNWALL

## What we do

- Major exhibitions
- Family learning
- Award-winning education programme
- Boat building and conservation
- Preserving and promoting Cornwall's maritime heritage
- The Bartlett Maritime Research Centre and Library
- Curate ambitious and unexpected exhibitions
- Develop partnership projects with national and international museums, bringing new connections with world cultures to Cornwall
- Bring artefacts from national and international collections and cultural heritage rarely seen outside London and the UK's other metropolitan centres
- Spearhead unique collaborations between national organisations, collectors, artists and leading academics
- Reach out to engage with all our communities, to include their voices, and their stories. We have ambitions to position ourselves at the forefront of challenging preconceptions about what museums can and should be curating and collecting
- Aim to make Cornish maritime history inspiring for everyone
- Bring new and diverse perspectives to maritime issues – and give them contemporary relevance.

Located beside the third largest natural deep-water harbour in the world - Britain's traditional gateway to the Atlantic and one of Europe's finest sailing waters, the building was custom designed and built on land that was once covered in the sheds of boat builders. These sheds inspired the design of the building which is clad in green oak.

There are 15 galleries over five floors. Exhibits explore the overwhelming influence of the sea on local, national and global history and culture. Visitors can climb to the top of the 100ft Lookout Tower for breath-taking panoramic views over Falmouth's harbour, docks and estuary. Then travel down to the Tidal Zone and go underwater to peer into Falmouth's harbour from a different perspective.

## Boatbuilding workshop

Visitors can see shipwrights at work restoring and building boats in the boatbuilding workshop, which is respected as a centre for restoration, conservation and repair of traditional boats.

## Collections

The Museum's collections consist of a range of objects, boats, art, books and archives.

### The National Small Boat Collection

The National Small Boat Collection was originally developed by the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich. This is now housed in Cornwall where it has been extended by the addition of other craft. This collection is representative of boats from the UK and around the world. A maximum length overall of 30ft (9.144m) is set for the collection, although there are exceptions. A collection of objects and archives support the National Small Boat Collection.

### Cornish Maritime Collection

Much of the Cornish Maritime Collection came from the former Cornwall Maritime Museum in Falmouth. It contains objects, pictures, models and archives relating to the history of Cornwall and the sea, and Falmouth in particular.

### The Bartlett Maritime Research Centre and Library

The Museum's research work is led by The Bartlett Maritime Research Centre which incorporates the Bartlett Library. The library houses a diverse collection of maritime reference books, periodicals and archive material for public consultation and reference. The main themes are: Cornwall maritime history, British and international shipping, and the history of boats.

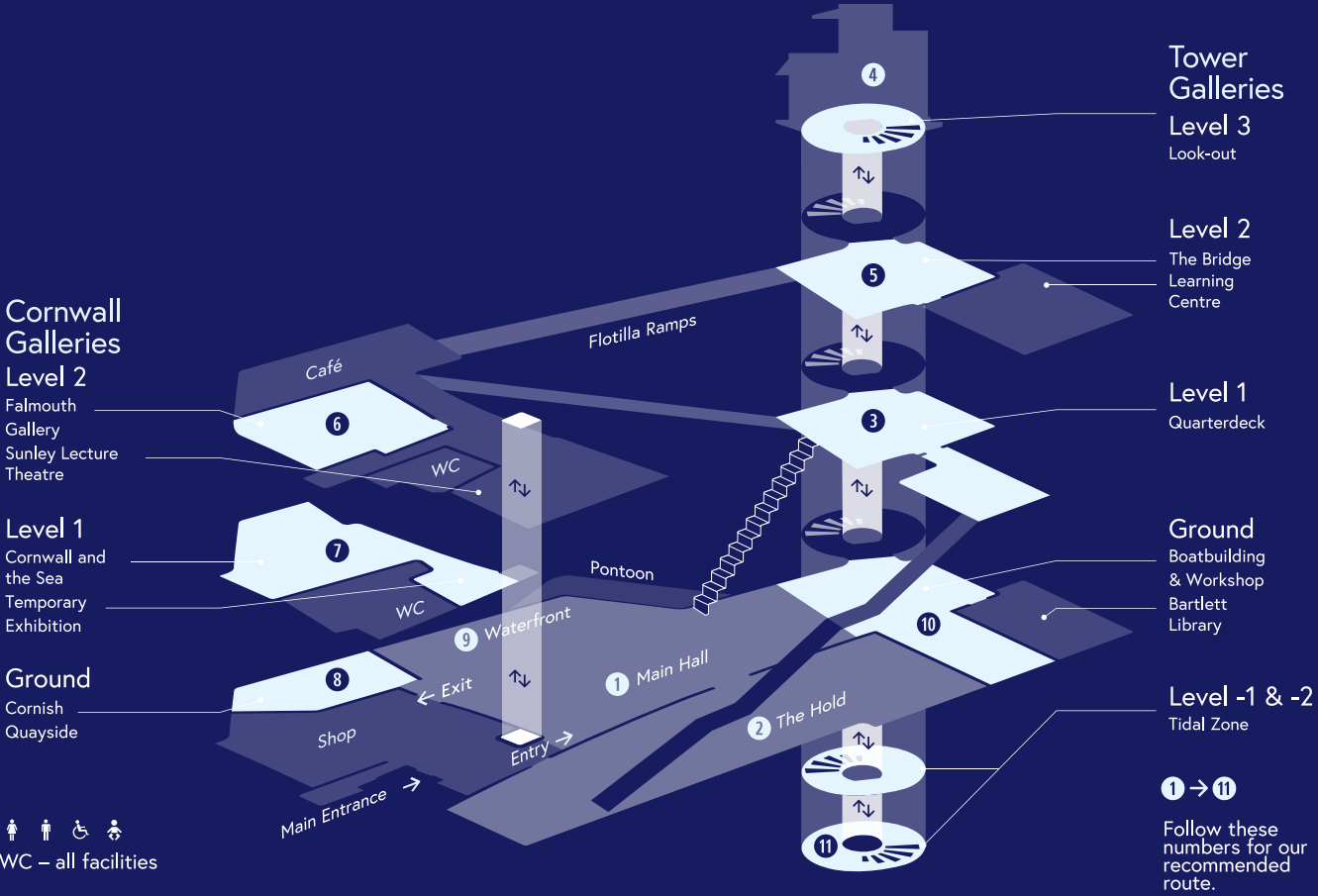
### Formal education programme

Our award-winning learning programme is the largest and most varied of its kind in Cornwall.

### Family programming

The Museum delivers 118 days of free family learning activities every year.

# MUSEUM MAP





# 2021 LISTINGS

Despite ongoing restrictions we are determined to provide new exhibitions and family learning opportunities throughout 2021.

## MAJOR EXHIBITIONS

**Monsters of the Deep: Science Fact and Fiction**  
Until December 2022

Deep in the dark murky depths of the ocean bioluminescence dances and shadowy figures loom. Something’s there. But what? Could it be krakens with tentacles two miles long and giant sharks as big as skyscrapers? Legends, folklore and modern day science present Monsters of the Deep - you decide what lies beneath.

## CONCURRENT EXHIBITIONS

**Hegarty’s Boatyard**  
Running until Sunday 5 September

This photography exhibition is a celebration of traditional wooden boat builders but especially the craftsmen of Hegarty’s Boatyard.

**Memories of Falmouth**  
**The Weller Collection**  
Running until Sunday 3 October

A wonderful collection of photographs from Falmouth taken between 1934 – 1969.

**Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed**  
Opens Saturday 16 October

*Tattoo: British Art Revealed* opened at the Museum to huge acclaim in 2017 and after touring nationally we are delighted to bring back some of the key artworks from the exhibition.

## FAMILIES

**Science of the Sea with Explorer Dome**  
February half term

This February half term become an astronaut and rocket into outer space. Along with Explorer Dome discover whether aliens really exist and the fascinating links between space and our deep seas.

**Tales of Oshi, the Cornish Sea Sprite**  
Easter holidays

Have you heard of Oshi the Cornish sea sprite? Full of wonder and mischievous fun, she’s about to take the Easter holidays by storm – and we mean this quite literally when you hear her story!

**Mini Monsters of the Not so Deep**  
May half term

Learn and discover more about the sea life in our Cornish waters with The Rock Pool Project – offsite and online.

**Into the Deep Blue with Yskynna Vertical Dance Company**  
Summer holidays

Yskynna Vertical Dance Company return to National Maritime Museum Cornwall this summer holiday. Encounter a mermaid as she swims and dives amongst the flying flotilla, and bump into an anglerfish as it scuttles around the Museum.

Listings subject to change. Additional events, exhibitions and programming will be added during the year. To keep up to date with our latest news check **nmmc.co.uk** for details, sign up to our newsletter or follow us on social media.

## FAMILIES continued

**Silhouettes & Shadows**  
October half term

Enjoy shadowy silhouette sea monster tales using spooky shadow puppets from the deep.

**Halloween at the Museum**  
Halloween

Dress up as ghosts and ghouls this Halloween for tricks and treats in the Museum.

**Lanterns and Lights**  
Christmas holidays

From merry Take and Makes to glistening star trails, Lanterns and Lights signals Christmas time at the Museum and in Cornwall.

## OTHER THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR

**Heritage Boat Charters**  
Monday 17 May – Sunday 26 September

Charter a gentleman’s launch or a steam launch for a tour of Falmouth from the water.

**Tall Ship Tours**  
Tuesday 17 – Thursday 19 August

Charter one of the Museum’s heritage boats for a tour of the Tall Ships.

## LECTURE SERIES

**Maps, Globes & Monsters with Dr Megan Barford**  
Thursday 23 September, 7.30pm

Looking at 16th and 17th century globes and atlases, curator and historian Dr Megan Barford will ask: why are there sea monsters in the stars?

**Hunting Monsters with Dr Darren Naish**  
Thursday 21 October, 7.30pm

Join Dr Darren Naish, zoologist and *Monsters of the Deep: Science Fact and Fiction* guest curator, to explore the intriguing work of a maverick group of monster experts – the cryptozoologists.

**Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed with Dr Matt Lodder**  
Thursday 25 November, 7.30pm

In this talk, Dr Matt Lodder will discuss both the research content of *Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed*, and the practical issues of creating an exhibition of a marginalised art form.

**G7 Leaders’ Summit**  
Friday 11 – Sunday 13 June

National Maritime Museum Cornwall will become home to the International Media Centre for the G7 Leaders’ Summit in June. During this time the Museum will be closed.



# NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM CORNWALL IS INDEBTED TO:

National Lottery Heritage Fund, Emergency Heritage Fund  
Arts Council England Cultural Recovery Fund  
Weston Culture Fund (Garfield Weston Foundation)  
Headley Trust  
Coastal Community Fund  
Lois Cumbers Foundation  
The Tanner Trust



## OUR VOLUNTEERS

We are extremely grateful for the continued support of our volunteers whose time and effort contribute so much to the Museum.

Our crew of volunteers are highly valued members of the Museum team, helping in almost every aspect of what we do and contributing their time and skills to the successful running of the Museum, working alongside our staff team.

We would like to thank our volunteers for their support during what has been an extremely difficult and challenging time.

## OUR TRUSTEES

Alexandra Bolitho <i>(President)</i>	Tamsin Mann <i>(retired December 2020)</i>
Simon Sherrard <i>(Chairman)</i>	Anthony Pawlyn
Rob Holmes <i>(Chair, Audit and Finance Committee)</i>	Sara Pugh
The Hon Evelyn Boscawen	Peter Searle <i>(retired December 2020)</i>
Jonathan Cunliffe	Helen Stembridge
Peter Davies	Simon Tregoning
Michael Griffiths <i>(appointed December 2020)</i>	David Williams <i>(appointed December 2020)</i>
Sam Hunt	Honorary Stowaway: Captain G A Hogg RN Retired



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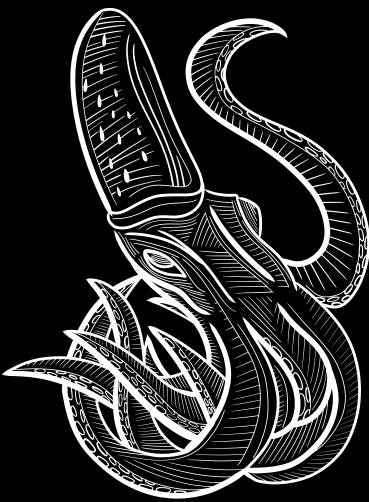


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Above left: Previous editions of *Fathom*.

Above right: A Bonnell's Cock-eyed squid. Artwork courtesy of the NOC.



### VISIT US

**OPENING TIMES:**  
Open every day of the year, 10am - 5pm, except Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

**ADMISSION FEES:**  
See [NMMC.CO.UK](http://NMMC.CO.UK) for details or call us on 01326 313388

**FIND US:**  
National Maritime Museum Cornwall  
Discovery Quay  
Falmouth  
Cornwall

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TR11 3QY



[NMMC.CO.UK](http://NMMC.CO.UK)  
01326 313388



# Fathom



The annual journal of writing, art and photography  
from National Maritime Museum Cornwall.

Inspired by and expanding on, the Museum's  
permanent collections, temporary exhibitions and  
wider cultural connections, the magazine brings  
together essays, articles, unseen imagery and arte-  
facts, which further bring to life the award-winning  
National Maritime Museum Cornwall's nautical  
heritage and collections housed within its land-  
mark building in Falmouth, Cornwall.

