

Fathom

2022 — ISSUE 6



The Journal of National Maritime Museum Cornwall

Fathom was written by
Richard Doughty
Director
Stuart Slade
Head of Public Programming

Contributors
Linda Frost
HR Manager
Giles Gould
Head of Commercial Operations
Seth Hall
Formal Learning Manager
Jenny Lee
Assistant Curator
Sarah Riddle
Curator
Lindsey Skinner
Head of Marketing

Thanks to
Anne Adams
Geoff Douglas
Susan Pester
Daniel Sutton

Photography
Paul Abbitt
Sally Adams
Simon Burt
Seth Hall
Jolyon Holroyd
Michael Kelland
Ian Kingsnorth
PixelRain
Kirstin Prisk
Sarah Riddle
Storylines
Steve Tanner

Design
A-Side.Studio

Cover Image
*'The buccaneer was a
picturesque fellow'* by Howard
Pyle (1905). Courtesy of
National Maritime Museum.

Director's foreword

At the time of writing, we are putting the finishing touches to *The Museum at 20*, a new temporary exhibition which is being mounted in the Balcony Gallery. The exhibition looks back at some of the highlights and challenges we have faced over the past 20 years (pages 10–27).

Although the formal, royal opening of the Museum was on Monday 14 March 2003, the soft opening took place 100 days earlier on Wednesday 4 December 2002. Consequently, we are celebrating our 20th anniversary in this 2022 edition of Fathom.

Inevitably any retrospective of 2022 is overshadowed by the sad death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Her Majesty was a constant in our lives, and everyone associated with the Museum shares the deep sense of loss at her passing.

Admission charges to the Museum were introduced on 16 February 2003. During the previous 74 days of free entry, we welcomed an astonishing 108,657 people. That is an average of 1,468 visitors a day, attendance numbers we now only surpass on wet days during school holidays. Despite this unprecedented level of interest, many local people doubted whether the Museum would bring the cultural and economic regeneration benefits promised. Some even dismissed the Museum as a white elephant, parachuted into Cornwall from London, which would fail to address the economic issues facing Falmouth at the time. Consequently, in June 2008, Roger Tym and Partners (RTP) were commissioned

by the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) to conduct an economic impact assessment (SWRDA had purchased our waterfront site in 1994 and secured planning permission to build the Museum in 1998). RTP calculated the Museum was contributing £6.4m in gross value added (GVA) output to Falmouth's economy and £1.4m to Cornwall's economy. Today, the scale of our contribution is considerably greater. Independent visitor research carried out during the summer and autumn of 2022, by Exeter-based research agency Power Marketing, found 42% of our audience travelled to Falmouth specifically to visit National Maritime Museum Cornwall (pages 40–47). ➡➡

Image Her Majesty The Queen visited the Museum during her Golden Jubilee tour.



For many of our staff and volunteers it seems like only yesterday the Museum was celebrating its 10th anniversary. In 2013, the then-Director, Jonathan Griffin, rightly praised staff, volunteers and supporters for how much they had achieved with so few resources. It is worth reflecting that everything we undertake, then as now, we do without revenue support from central or local government (despite having ‘national’ in our title and being charged to look after the national collection of small boats). We are an independent, regional museum, relying solely on earned income, project grants and donations.

We started 2022 with an exhibition mounted in partnership with HM Maritime Coastguard Agency and National Emergency Services Museum, to celebrate the Coastguard’s bicentenary (pages 38–39).

In late February the Museum hosted a visit from Alok Sharma, COP26 President. He attended presentations on the G7 Legacy and the UK City of Culture bid.

The Trustees of the Weston Culture Fund awarded the Museum a grant in 2020 to improve the Museum’s digital capacity and capability. Part of this funding was set aside to upgrade our lecture theatre, to enable us to deliver a variety of talks, performances and presentations as well as blended lectures to an onsite and online audience. Our first blended adult lecture undoubtedly proved to be one of the highlights of our year. The talk was given by Douglas Robertson on 15th June, to mark the 50th anniversary of his family’s incredible survival in a dinghy called *Ednamair*, after their schooner, *Lucette*, had been sunk by three killer whales. Working in partnership with BBC news presenter Jemma Woodman and Storylines, Douglas’s talk in our lecture theatre was also made available live online and included a panel discussion and the opportunity to see objects from our *Ednamair* collection (pages 48–51).

Another highlight was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with University of Exeter to create ‘a framework for engagement across education, research, and representation, addressing individual and shared priorities, and extending the reach of culture to those previously not engaged’. It is intended this academic partnership will give the Museum access to the latest academic research and support for the content development of future exhibitions. In return the University benefits from reaching a wider and more diverse range of new audiences (pages 72–75).

During 2022, we have continued to consider how we can best implement climate positive measures to address sustainability in our operations, programming, and facilities management. Following an invitation to join a bootcamp, we have begun to use the B Corp framework to help us review our

environmental and social actions in all that we do, including our public programming. For example, over the summer we commissioned the Cornwall-based theatre company, Illyria, to produce a fun, family show called, *I SAW A MONSTER* to complement our *Monsters of the Deep* exhibition. The show followed a ‘lecture-gone-wrong’ format, in which the viewpoints of Cryptozoology and Science were presented. The production highlighted the devastating impact of pollution in our oceans and delivered a strong environmental message about the danger of marine plastics. There were four daily, 20-minute performances, seven days a week, throughout the school summer holidays (pages 56–57).

Over the course of 2022 we have been working on the detailed design of *Pirates*, our next major temporary exhibition which is due to open on 31 March 2023. This project is being progressed as a coproduction with Royal Museums Greenwich. I give an insight into how we have approached this project elsewhere (pages 30–37).

In January 2023 we will be saying a heartfelt goodbye to *Monsters of the Deep*. Market research showed, even in its third year, this temporary exhibition remained the main driver for footfall during 2022. We are delighted the show will have a stay of execution, following Chatham Historic Dockyard’s decision to hire the substantive part of our exhibition. The revamped exhibition is scheduled to open in Kent in early April 2023.

Both the *Pirates* and *Monsters of the Deep* exhibitions represent innovative delivery models which are, by their nature, extremely complex and time-consuming to manage. We are very conscious that dismantling *Monsters of the Deep* will be the most logistically challenging undertaking we will have ever attempted due to the complexity of objects involved. There are literally hundreds of individual loans, including potentially flammable and explosive spirit-preserved specimens, and huge but fragile hanging skeletons. At the same time we need to schedule the replacement of the fire wall curtain at the entrance to our major exhibition gallery and new ‘fire break’ upgrade inside the former audio-visual wall, which separates the temporary exhibition gallery from the Boat Hall.

2022 finished on a positive note when we learnt our application to DCMS and the Wolfson Foundation for an improvement fund grant had been successful. The Museum was awarded £237,000 to help us revitalise the Boat Hall, another ambitious project we will be tackling in the New Year.

Richard Doughty, Director
National Maritime Museum Cornwall, December 2022



Image Parrot featured in the new *Pirates* exhibition.



Contents

Fathom — Issue 6

THE MUSEUM AT 20

- 10 Introduction
- 12 20 Things to be Proud of
- 16 Timeline of a Millennium Museum
- 24 20 Objects That Sum up the Museum

EXHIBITIONS

- 30 Pirates
- 38 Coastguard 200

REFLECTIONS

- 40 Understanding Our Visitors
- 48 Reconnecting with the Robertsons
- 52 New Publications
- 56 New Commissions in 2022
- 58 Celebrating Our Volunteers
- 62 New Acquisitions

TRANSFORMATIONS

- 69 A New Play Zone
- 70 A Gift Shop Refit
- 71 A New Library Store

CONNECTIONS

- 72 Partnership Agreement with the University of Exeter
- 76 Adult Learning
- 80 Seth Lakeman
- 82 National Small Boat Register

BELOW DECK

- 86 About National Maritime Museum Cornwall
- 88 2023 listings
- 90 Thank You



Image
The Museum under
construction.



The Museum at 20

In 2023 the Museum will celebrate its 20th year – a milestone that provides an exciting opportunity for reflection and celebration. Throughout the year, in one of the Museum's temporary exhibition spaces, will be a small exhibition looking at the highs and lows of the last 20 years, highlighting all that we're deeply proud of and uncovering some fascinating Museum facts. This section of Fathom brings together the exhibition's content so you too can join us in celebrating our birthday and take a peek behind the scenes. ➡➡

20 things to be proud of

In the 20 years since we opened, the Museum's achievements have gone beyond what anyone could have imagined in 2003. To summarize our cultural ambitions, our local and national impacts, as well as our passion for Cornwall's maritime heritage in just '20 things' has been a real challenge for the team. Nonetheless, here is our list:



OUR REPLICA HISTORIC BOAT BUILDING PROGRAMME

Our boat team are experts at building full-scale, authentic historic boats.

Recent examples include a Viking 'trading' ship, the ship's launch from HMS *Bounty* and a lifeboat from the *Titanic*.

This work has helped us, and our visitors, to gain a practical, intimate and hands-on insight into the technology, skills and lives of the people who built and depended on such vessels.



OUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

Our amazing volunteers come from all walks of life.

They bring with them a wealth of knowledge, skills and interests. They are all motivated by the same thing: a passion for the Museum's work. This spirit of giving back to future generations makes it such a special place for our visitors.

Our volunteers work across the whole organisation. Each year they give over 30,000 hours of support, which makes our volunteer programme one of the most active in Cornwall.

BRINGING ICONIC ARTEFACTS TO PEOPLE IN CORNWALL



It is our mission to bring important artefacts to people in Cornwall, many of whom would not be able to see them otherwise.

We have borrowed from regional, national and international museums, including the British Museum, Pitt Rivers Museum, the Great North Museum, the Science Museum, the V&A and The National Museum of Denmark.

Recent loans include silver coins from a Viking treasure hoard, a *Titanic* thermos flask, a complete killer whale skeleton and Tahitian tattoo tools from Captain Cook's voyage to the Pacific.



SHOWCASING OTHER CORNWALL COLLECTIONS

We showcase important material from Cornwall's great heritage collections.

For *Monsters of the Deep*, we borrowed the iconic Elerky Estate Atlas from the Kresen Kernow collection, placing it next to Cambridge University Library's 1491 Hortus sanitatis, considered to be the world's first natural history encyclopaedia.

In this way, we are enriched by the expertise and objects held by Cornwall's museums who, in turn, reach new and wider audiences.



CORNISH VOICES

Cornish Voices is a unique living history programme celebrating Cornish people's historic and enduring relationship with the sea, based around specially commissioned 'museum theatre' performances. With generous support from the Garfield Weston Foundation, we are now able to deliver these programmes digitally to schools across Cornwall, the UK and beyond.



BEING FAMILY FRIENDLY

Being family friendly is at the very heart of our Museum.

By being family friendly, we attract a wide range of ages, backgrounds and interests – not just younger and older children but also their parents, carers, grandparents.

We do this through an exciting programme of family-focussed events, hands-on activities and spaces, including our hugely popular holiday programme of 'Make & Take' craft activities, adventure trails and live performances. During term-time we deliver Minnows Tales, a weekly storytelling and sing-along drop-in session for pre-school children and their carers.

In these and other ways, we are committed to inspiring the next generation of museum lovers.



OUR AWARD-WINNING SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

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

We believe that the highest quality learning and engagement is achieved through highly skilled, passionate museum educators delivering hands-on, inspirational learning experiences in our galleries.

Our learning team delivers curriculum enrichment workshops to nearly 60% of Cornwall's primary schools. It is an important way we engage with rural, often isolated communities across Cornwall.

In 2021 the learning team achieved a Sandford Award for its 'outstanding contribution to heritage education'.



THE BARTLETT MARITIME RESEARCH CENTRE & LIBRARY

Much of the Museum's research work is led by the Bartlett Maritime Research Centre which incorporates the Bartlett Library.

The Research Centre houses a rich collection of maritime reference books, periodicals and archive material for public research. It is run by a knowledgeable team of volunteers who answer enquiries for members of the public and who work on a range of research projects.



OUR COMMUNITY CO-CURATED EXHIBITIONS

The Museum is dedicated to working with a wide range of communities to create exhibitions that reflect their particular histories, perspectives and identities.

We are especially keen to engage Cornwall's coastal communities, who make up a vital part of Cornwall's rich and evolving maritime heritage.

In 2017-2019 the Museum's curatorial team worked with participants from Porthleven to create an exhibition exploring the town's maritime history, and its legacy today. A year-long exhibition was held at the Museum, with a concurrent display in the town.

We are currently planning more community co-curated exhibitions.



THE MUSEUM TEAM

Our Museum is more than its building and its collections, it is also the team who make it work, shape its values and drive its ambitions.

As a cultural organisation, our instinct – to take risks, to do our best, to challenge ourselves and our visitors – comes from our team, and their desire to test what is possible. They are genuinely amazing.



ATTRACTING HIGH PROFILE
EVENTS TO FALMOUTH

Working with a range of local and national partners, our marketing and operations teams have helped to bring important, high-profile events to Falmouth. Starting with the arrival of Ellen MacArthur in 2005, examples include the International Tall Ships Festivals, BBC *Children in Need*, BBC *Antiques Roadshow* and, most recently, the national Armed Forces Day in 2023.

These events attract tens of thousands of visitors to Falmouth, raising its profile with global media audiences numbered in the millions.



BEING A ‘BIG EVENT’
RESOURCE FOR CORNWALL

Our building is big enough to be a unique resource for Cornwall.

Our inside and outside spaces are capable of supporting large scale events of all types.

In 2021 the Museum supported Cornwall’s bid to host the G7 Summit, transforming the whole building into a global media centre for thousands of international journalists.



CELEBRATING CORNWALL’S MARITIME HERITAGE

From packet ships to pilchard fishing, the Museum celebrates the rich maritime history of Cornwall.

Our Cornwall Galleries are brimming with artefacts and stories revealing how the sea has shaped Cornish identity. We also host the ‘Morek’ research network, which brings together a wide range of research (and researchers!) exploring Cornwall’s maritime heritage. We are planning to extend this work as part of a major re-development of our Cornwall galleries which will, we hope, re-imagine how Cornish maritime history is displayed – with new stories, hidden histories, different perspectives and insights.

BRINGING PEOPLE TO FALMOUTH

Twenty years after opening we are now Cornwall’s most visited museum.

We make a significant contribution to Falmouth and Cornwall’s economy, running into millions of pounds throughout the year. Independent visitor research shows that 42% of our audience come to Falmouth specifically to visit this award-winning Museum.



CONTRIBUTING TO
CORNWALL’S CREATIVE
ECONOMY

The Museum works with a huge range of Cornwall-based creative practitioners.

They help us deliver our programme of exhibitions, events and activities, from special effects studios, filmmakers and theatre companies to graphic designers, fabricators, lighting and software specialists. In this way we directly contribute to Cornwall’s increasingly important creative economy.



OUR REGIONAL AND
NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

We could not achieve so much without working in close partnership with other organisations - sharing skills, resources and expertise.

Our exhibitions, publications and programmes are developed with the knowledge and latest research from a growing number of academic institutions, including Falmouth University, University College London, University of Exeter, University of Southampton, Falmouth Marine School and University of Essex.

We also work with other marine, maritime and heritage organisations, including RNLI, Trinity House, Maritime Coastguard Agency, UK Hydrographic Office, National Oceanographic Centre, the National Trust and English Heritage.



OUR CROSS-ARTS
COMMISSIONING
PROGRAMME

The Museum continues to re-invent itself as a unique cross-arts venue for Cornwall.

We are a place where our maritime history is brought to life through spectacular, artistically ambitious performances. We do this by commissioning new works of art from writers, artists, choreographers, poets, and musicians who are inspired by our collections and incredible public spaces.

We aim to make connections with our diverse visitors – many of whom may not consider themselves traditional music, dance or theatre audiences - in ways that are surprising, thrilling and thought-provoking.



CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED EXHIBITIONS

The Museum has embarked on a programme of artistically ambitious, culturally challenging exhibitions.

In 2017 our critically acclaimed, ground-breaking exhibition *Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed* challenged long-standing cultural stereotypes about tattooing. In 2018, *Titanic Stories: Contemporary Voices* juxtaposed stories of the Cornish diaspora with stories of migration to Cornwall today, allowing visitors to make their own connections between seemingly different historical events. For *Monsters of the Deep*, we commissioned artist, collector and provocateur Viktor Wynd to create the *UnNatural History Museum*, an installation that disturbs our comfortable ideas of what is natural or unnatural and, ultimately, how museums define meaning for visitors.

Our ambition is to continue to create visitor experiences that are both entertaining, unexpected and thought-provoking, attracting a broad and diverse range of people - many of whom would not think of themselves as traditional museum visitors.



THE NATIONAL SMALL BOAT REGISTER

The National Small Boat Register (NSBR) was set up as a publicly accessible way of tracking, recording and searching small boats of historic value.

It contains a growing database of over 2,500 craft held in private and public collections, many of which represent the best in their class.

The NSBR is an important means by which the Museum, supported by volunteer boat enthusiasts around the UK, helps preserve our small boat heritage.



TAKING RISKS

Our successes have involved taking artistic and organisational risks.

Just some of the things we had never done before include: deciding to put on a national exhibition tour for *Tattoo* (with live tattooing!); commissioning a ‘vertical dance’ performance on the outside of the Lookout Tower; bringing a complete killer whale skeleton across the country to Cornwall; borrowing a Viking treasure hoard; live-streaming evening talks and events to a global audience, and taking on ambitious and logistically complex ‘co-productions’ with national and regional partners.

Timeline of a millennium museum

IN THE BEGINNING

Falmouth’s social and economic regeneration needs, particularly towards the derelict Docks area, had been recognised for many years before the Museum opened. More widely, across Cornwall, many voices were calling out the need for a culturally vibrant ‘all weather’ heritage attraction to strengthen and extend Cornwall’s seasonal tourism offer. National Maritime Museum Cornwall (NMMC) was created, in part, as a response to these cultural, social and economic needs.

It was also created as a major regional museum that would help solve the problems facing two important maritime collections: the National Small Boat Collection owned by National Maritime Museum, London and the growing collections owned by the volunteer-run Cornwall Maritime Museum, in Bell’s Court, Falmouth. Both collections urgently needed significant funding for new, more accessible homes. At the suggestion of the Heritage Lottery Fund a ‘cunning plan’ was hatched: to create a ground-breaking, 21st century museum for Cornwall that would house both collections.

This solution underpins our evolving mission which began with the dual aim to promote an understanding of the design and importance of small boats and Cornish maritime history, to become something more interconnected and visionary: to be ‘a place to enrich your understanding of the sea, and Cornwall’.

Built on Falmouth’s historic waterfront, on the tidal lands of a derelict boat yard, NMMC would be a museum that is both ‘of’ the sea and ‘in’ the sea - submerged and re-connected to the ocean at each high tide.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE MUSEUM BUILDING



1990s

- The Falmouth International Maritime Initiative, later National Maritime Museum Cornwall, is set up to take care of the National Small Boat Collection and the Cornwall Maritime Museum collection
- £23m is secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund, South West Regional Development Agency, the EU Regional Development Fund and other private and corporate sponsors
- October 1999 construction work begins
- May 2002, millions of TV viewers watch as the Queen visits the nearly completed building at the start of her Golden Jubilee Tour
- With Cornwall Council support, NMMC will become the third ‘big’ regeneration investment for Cornwall, alongside Tate St Ives and the Eden Project
- Ambitious (and, in hindsight, unrealistic) visitor targets are set in the business plan: over 180,000 visitors each year

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM CORNWALL



2003

- Museum opens officially in 2003
- 160,000 people visit during the first year (mostly during free period)
- The idea that changing the display of hanging boats will be enough to attract new and repeat visitors is put to the test

ELLEN MACARTHUR ARRIVES IN FALMOUTH



2004

NATIONAL SMALL BOAT COLLECTION



2005

- The Museum achieves Full Accreditation status with the Arts Council
- The Museum supports Falmouth Town in hosting the arrival of Ellen MacArthur following her record breaking, single-handed voyage around the world. Thousands of people gather in Events Square to celebrate
- Museum recognises lack of provision for families in the original design. It begins to experiment with floor games and summer ‘play areas’. These evolve into the much-loved programme of ‘Playzone’ exhibitions, activity trails and live events
- *Surf’s Up* exhibition opens in the Main Hall

ENDURANCE AND SURVIVAL TEMPORARY EXHIBITION OPENS

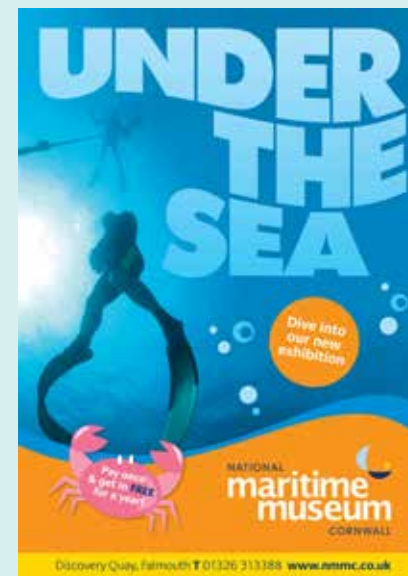


- First time the Museum's Learning Team wins the Sanford Award in recognition of their 'outstanding contribution to heritage education'
- First time the Museum wins 'Gold' for Best Large Visitor Attraction at the Cornwall Tourism Awards
- Your Falmouth exhibition opens, inviting local people to share their stories
- Mad Dogs and Englishmen exhibition opens, exploring eccentric boats (and sailors)
- The Cornwall Galleries are re-configured to improve physical access and visitor orientation, and to increase workspace in the café. The problems are not fully solved, and challenges remain

THE INTERNATIONAL TALL SHIPS FESTIVAL



UNDER THE SEA MAJOR TEMPORARY EXHIBITION OPENS



LIGHTHOUSES: LIFE ON THE ROCKS MAJOR TEMPORARY EXHIBITION OPENS



ON THIN ICE MAJOR TEMPORARY EXHIBITION OPENS



2006

- Museum invests more resources and creativity into its hands-on learning programme for schools and families
- Endurance and Survival exhibition opens in the Main Hall

2007

THE MUSEUM DELIVERS AN AWARD-WINNING EDUCATION PROGRAMME



2008

- Stormy weather ... the 'credit crunch' financial crisis batters the economy
- Under the Sea major exhibition opens in the Main Hall. It explores the underwater world from shipwrecks to submarines, from diving to underwater photography and warfare
- Museum works with Falmouth Town to support the International Tall Ships Festival, becoming the media centre and operational hub
- 'Cornish Voices' live drama and living history programme is launched for Cornwall schools
- Regional winner, British Museum Marsh Trust 'Volunteers for Learning' Award
- Museum closes the immersive 'Set Sail' black box gallery. In its place a huge, flexible temporary exhibition space is planned, with a new ground-floor entrance from the Main Hall

2009

- Major temporary exhibitions are now possible in The Hold, and become key to attracting new and repeat visitors
- Under the Sea is extended for a second year, and moved into The Hold
- The team experiments with 'buying in' a touring exhibition, with Titanic: Hope and Glory on display for three months
- Museum becomes fully licenced for weddings and civil partnerships (over 300 weddings so far!)

2010

- Lighthouses: Life on the Rocks major exhibition opens, in partnership with Trinity House
- 150 Years of Falmouth Docks exhibition opens

2011

- Winner, 'Volunteer Host of the Year' Award, Volunteer Cornwall
- On Thin Ice exhibition opens, celebrating the history of Polar exploration, in partnership with the Scott Polar Research Institute and the British Antarctic Survey

SEARCH AND RESCUE
MAJOR TEMPORARY EXHIBITION OPENS



2012

- *Search and Rescue* major exhibition opens, in partnership with the RNLI, Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and HM Coastguard
- Museum builds its first replica historic vessel: a Bronze Age sewn-plank boat, in partnership with Exeter University's Dept of Experimental Archaeology. Sea trials prove the design and construction is seaworthy
- BBC's *Antiques Roadshow*, reaching a global audience of millions
- Museum helps to preserve and repatriate the 'Enys Canoe' back to Canada. The canoe is found to be one of the oldest surviving examples of a Native American birch bark canoe – nearly 250 years old
- *The Breton Connection* exhibition opens
- *Waterline: Cruising Photography, 1925-70*, exhibition opens
- *Sail for Gold* touring exhibition opens, produced by Royal Yachting Association

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS CELEBRATE THE MUSEUM'S 10TH BIRTHDAY!



2013

- The Museum is 10 years old!
- Museum invests significant resources in upgrading its environmental and security systems to be able to borrow artefacts from national and international collections
- The building becomes a Cornwall hub for the BBC's *Children in Need* celebrations – over 600 adults, children, BBC staff and performers take over the building

MUSEUM WINS THE PRESTIGIOUS 'FAMILY FRIENDLY MUSEUM OF THE YEAR' AWARD



2014

- National winner, Kids in Museums *Daily Telegraph* 'Family Friendly Museum of the Year Award'
- Winner, Best Museum in Cornwall, *Cornwall Today* Awards
- *Smuggling* exhibition opens
- *Kurt Jackson: Line Caught and Local* artist exhibition opens

VIKING VOYAGERS MAJOR TEMPORARY EXHIBITION OPENS



2015

- *Viking Voyagers* major exhibition opens. The Museum builds a full-scale Viking trading ship in the Museum workshop. Visitors can walk on board, giving them a unique insight into the 'Viking' world
- Museum borrows objects from the British Museum's 'Cuernale Hoard' of Viking silver. This marks the start of the Museum's strategic aim to bring iconic artefacts from national and international museum collections to audiences in Cornwall
- *Mermaids: Women at Sea* exhibition opens. It features the Museum's first-ever 3D printed exhibit: the famous Mermaid of Zennor carving
- *Jo Atherton: Stranded* artist exhibition opens, inspired by objects washed up on beaches

- Stormy weather... the Museum faces financial challenges and responds with a difficult but necessary staff re-structure. A smaller team continues to deliver the Museum's ambitious forward plan
- 'The Great Big Cornish Gig Project' is launched. Supported by the Armed Forces Community Covenant Scheme, 40 wounded, injured and sick veterans work with the Museum boat team to build a pilot gig, and row it to the Isles of Scilly for the World Pilot Gig Championships.
- 'Medal Winners Hall of Fame' opens in the Main Hall, celebrating British success in water sports at the Olympic and Paralympic games
- *The Mysterious Loss of the Darlwyne* exhibition opens, marking the 50th anniversary of one of the worst British sea tragedies of modern times
- RNLI – *Hope in the Great War* exhibition opens
- Captain George Hogg completes a detailed audit of the Museum's growing archive
- *Skeleton* artist exhibition opens, featuring wooden sculptures inspired by old boats by artist and museum volunteer Rob Johnsey

SOME OF THE TEAM FROM 'THE GREAT BIG CORNISH GIG PROJECT'



TATTOO: BRITISH TATTOO ART REVEALED
MAJOR TEMPORARY EXHIBITION OPENS



2017

- *Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed* opens. This ground-breaking and critically acclaimed exhibition receives unprecedented national and international media coverage
- *Capt. Bligh: Myth, Man and Mutiny* exhibition opens concurrently in The Hold. The centrepiece is a replica of the *Bounty* launch, built in the Museum workshop
- First spectacular 'vertical dance' performance by Yskynna Vertical Dance Company takes place on the outside of the Lookout Tower. Two free-to-view performances of 'Bligh Spirit' attract thousands of spectators
- *Tattoo Tales* community engagement project records the stories behind local people's tattoos. This inspires the team to reflect critically on the stories we tell – and collect – and who those stories are for, now and in the future
- Winner, Best Gallery, *Cornwall Today* Awards
- Hosts a touring production of *The Coastguards Daughter* by Canvas Theatre
- *Fathom*, an annual journal of the Museum's activities, is launched

REPLICA *TITANIC* LIFEBOAT
WITH THE 'UPSIDE DOWN ICEBERG' ART
INSTALLATION BY DAN ARNOLD



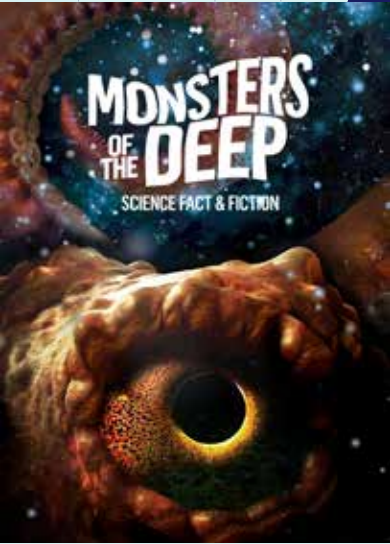
2018

- *Titanic Stories* exhibition opens, placing the 'small boat' story of the lifeboat survivors at the heart of the narrative. The exhibition is based around a full-scale replica of *Titanic* Lifeboat 13, built in the Museum's workshop
- The co-curated exhibition *Porthleven: A Journey Through Time*, opens. It marks the first of a dedicated programme of genuinely collaborative 'co-curated' exhibitions produced with coastal communities and other heritage organisations
- Museum begins its ambitious contemporary artist commissioning programme, inviting artists to create thought-provoking artistic responses to our exhibition spaces and narratives
- *Titanic Voices: Contemporary Stories* community co-curated exhibition opens. It makes thought-provoking links between Cornwall migration past and present
- *Tattoo on tour!* The exhibition is repurposed as a national-touring exhibition – something not attempted before by any museum in Cornwall
- Museum co-hosts the 2018 Cornwall Contemporary Poetry Festival
- Museum takes out a 25-year term loan to acquire the Maritime Car Park, a vital asset for its long-term operation and financial future

- Completion on the acquisition of the Maritime Car Park, ending a lengthy period of uncertainty
- *James Dodds: Wood to Water*, artist exhibition opens. The work is inspired by the vernacular boats of Falmouth and Cornwall
- RNLI 'Rescue Zone' opens, produced in partnership with the RNLI and supporting their Respect the Water campaign
- Nav Station Gallery is re-developed as a mid-size temporary exhibition space, suitable for artist, mixed media and single theme displays. Work is supported by the DCMS Wolfson Foundation
- The Museum is awarded a Coastal Communities Fund grant to trial heritage boat trips in Falmouth Harbour using boats from the collection
- Museum commissions Yskynna Aerial Dance Company to create 'Ghost Ships', a spectacular aerial dance performed high among the hanging boats in the Main Hall
- 'Pirate School', interactive performance by Rattlebox Theatre, proves hugely popular with local and tourist families during the Summer

2019

WOOD TO WATER BY JAMES DODDS,
THE FIRST ART EXHIBITION IN THE NEWLY
CREATED 'BRIDGE GALLERY'



MONSTERS OF THE DEEP
MAJOR TEMPORARY EXHIBITION OPENS

2020

- The Museum is again awarded Full Museum Accreditation by the Museums Association
- Museum plans to open its major temporary exhibition, *Monsters of the Deep: Science Fact and Fiction*. Developed in partnership with the National Oceanography Centre, it is to be the most ambitious, theatrical and logistically complex exhibition the Museum has ever mounted
- Stormy weather... the Covid Pandemic forces the Museum to lockdown two days before *Monsters of the Deep* is due to open
- Things look grim. Museum takes proactive steps to reduce expenditure, renegotiating contracts where possible
- New Covid-safe measures and messaging enable the Museum to open to the public on 27 July 2022, to heart-warming public feedback
- New, flexible job descriptions and an 'all in it together' attitude means that the Museum is able keep most staff in employment.
- Museum receives emergency funding from the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Headley Trust and the Govt's Cultural Recovery Fund. The team plans for a 'new future' with greater certainty and confidence
- Museum takes over the management of Falmouth 'Park and Ride' operation

VISITORS EXPLORING THE MUSEUM DURING
THE PANDEMIC



2021

- The Museum supports Cornwall and the UK's bid to host the 2021 'G7' event. The whole building is re-purposed as the G7 global media centre
- Cornish Voices goes digital!
- Stormy weather ... During the Covid lockdowns the Pontoon is found to have suffered structural – and expensive – damage. Heritage boat trips are suspended
- *Hegarty's Boatyard*, a photographic exhibition of the last surviving traditional wooden boatyard in Ireland by Kevin O'Farrell, opens (despite Covid and post-Brexit customs restrictions!)
- *Memories of Falmouth* exhibition opens. It is co-curated by museum volunteers during and in-between lockdowns

2022

RECLAIMING THE NARRATIVE, ARTIST-LED
RESPONSE TO THE ORIGINAL *TATTOO* EXHIBITION



- Winner, Cornwall Heritage Awards for the mental and physical health outcomes of *Memories of Falmouth* volunteer-led project and exhibition, largely produced during Covid restrictions
- 50th anniversary of incredible survival story of the Robertson family in the tiny boat *Ednamair*, now held by the Museum with other objects kept by the family during their ordeal. The family's stories are recorded, including memories evoked by holding these objects again, to form a unique historical archive. An evening lecture and panel interview with the family is live-streamed from the Museum's newly furnished Lecture Theatre to a local and global audience
- *Coastguard 200* exhibition opens
- *Reclaiming the Narrative* tattoo artist-led response to the original *Tattoo* exhibition opens
- The Museum works with Queer Kernow to create an artist and community-led installation, titled *Queer Pirate*. This will form part of their wider engagement with the narrative development for our major temporary exhibition, *Pirates*, in 2023
- *Skull Island Play Zone* opens
- The replica of HMS *Bounty's* ship launch, *Bligh's Tribute*, is transported to a new museum on Norfolk Island, in the Pacific Ocean

PIRATES MAJOR TEMPORARY EXHIBITION



2023

- The Museum is 20 years old!
- *Pirates* major temporary exhibition opens. This is the most expensive and ambitious exhibition ever mounted by the Museum. It is developed in an innovative 'co-production' partnership with Royal Museums Greenwich, based on the sharing of objects, skills and cultural decision-making between the Cornwall and London teams. The exhibition will travel to London to be on show at Royal Museums Greenwich in 2025
- Museum looks to the future!

20 objects that sum up the Museum

The Museum in 20 objects is a collection of 20 interesting and surprising objects that provide an insight into who we are and the things we do.

▼ VIKING TEDDY BEAR

The shop is another way we connect with our visitors, providing a memento of their visit or further information about our displays.



◀ ST AUSTELL ALE 'PROPER JOB' BEER BOTTLE AND GLASS

The Waterside Café is an essential part of the visitor experience – with great views! We source suppliers from Cornwall, and all income goes towards running the Museum.

▼ 'MINNOWS TALES' FINGER PUPPETS

Our 'Minnows Tales' programme is run for our youngest visitors with their parents, grandparents and carers. Starting from the children's own sense of wonder and curiosity we hope to build confidence and a lifelong love of museums.

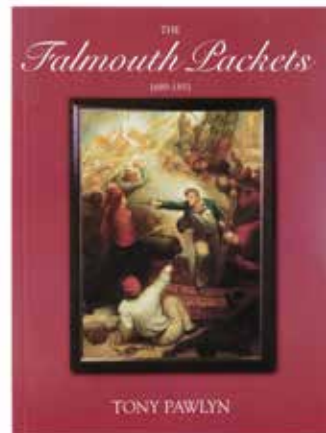


▲ RECREATED BRONZE AGE AXE, USED IN THE BRONZE AGE BOAT CONSTRUCTION

The Museum's on-site workshop is a key part of any visit, showcasing and preserving traditional boat skills through an ambitious programme of boat conservation and building historic replica boats. Recent examples include a Viking faering, the ship's launch from HMS *Bounty*, a lifeboat from the *Titanic* and a Bronze Age sewn-plank boat in partnership with the University of Exeter.

▶ THE FALMOUTH PACKETS 1689-1851 BY TONY PAWLYN

Much of the Museum's research and enquiry work is delivered through The Bartlett Maritime Research Centre & Library. With over 20,000 books and 30,000 pamphlets, magazines and journals, it is one of the leading maritime history libraries outside London, and a significant historical resource for Cornwall. The team also publishes the Bartlett Blog, academic journal *Troze* and other books and articles.



▶ PORTHOLE PICTURE BY ROBYN GIBSON

The Museum offers over 100 days of free family learning activities ever year, including treasure hunts, storytelling, science shows and live performances. Our popular 'Make & Take' craft activities provide an opportunity for families to spend some creative time together.



▼ HUER'S HORN USED TO ALERT FISHERMEN OF APPROACHING SHOALS OF PILCHARDS, 1800S

Cornwall is synonymous with the sea, which has played an important role in defining Cornish identities. We preserve Cornish maritime historic objects which could otherwise be lost and give voice to the people of the past.



◀ RAT, SCHOOLS OBJECT HANDLING COLLECTION

Object handling is an important way we engage different learners. One of our most popular objects is this stuffed rat which features in our 'life on board' workshop. Our award-winning learning programme delivers curriculum workshops and facilitated visits to a range of education groups, including primary and secondary schools, further education and higher education groups, SEN groups, home education groups and informal groups such as Cubs, Brownies and Sea Cadets.



▼ IRONBRIDGE CORACLE

The Museum is the home of the National Small Boat Collection, a nationally and internationally important set of boats. We are a leading authority specialising in the care and history of small boats.



▼ PAIR OF WELLINGTON BOOTS BELONGING TO MARGARET DYE

Even the most ordinary object can tell an amazing story. These wellington boots were used by Margaret Dye on *Wanderer* (a small Wayfarer dinghy). They are size 8, but Margaret's feet were much smaller. She wore larger sizes so she could kick them off quickly if she capsized as she wasn't a strong swimmer. Margaret would often send postcards to *Wanderer* at the Museum.





▲ LANTERN SLIDE AND PRINT SHOWING BOAT PH393

The Museum's archive is the fastest growing of all our collections. We collect journals, diaries, boat plans, registers, photographs, audio recordings, film and documents of all sorts. This research material is invaluable for students, academics, historians, and other enquirers, as well as the Museum's own exhibitions. It is our ambition to publish more of our artefacts in store to enable more people to access this hidden treasure.



◀ QUEER MOTIFS ON CORNISH DRIFTWOOD PIECES, DECORATED BY THE LGBTQI+ COMMUNITY

A multitude of these pieces make up the bones of the pirate art installation in the current major temporary exhibition, *Pirates*. The installation, created by artist Ica Niemz in collaboration with Queer Kernow CIC, represents the lost stories of LGBTQI+ history within the Golden Age of Piracy. Our aim with this piece is to start openly re-inserting LGBTQI+ experiences back into the mainstream historical narrative.



▲ FALMOUTH CUSTOM HOUSE SAFE C.1820, DONATED BY HM CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

This safe or 'King's chest' held Government and other valuable items and was featured in BBC's *Antiques Roadshow* when they visited in 2012. It had not been unlocked in living memory (due to loss of the keys) and had to be opened by a specialist locksmith – under the eager eyes of Fiona Bruce and millions of TV viewers. Despite wild rumours of 'hidden treasure', the only thing it contained was a BIC biro pen lid (probably lost by some unknown person trying to get inside).



▲ BOUBOU, PRESENTED TO CHRISTIAN MINSANSA

The Boubou was presented to Christian Minsansa for taking part in a traditional Djolof ceremony in Senegal, marking his ascent into manhood. It is important that we collect objects and stories that reflect different perspectives or reveal hidden histories.



◀ RNLI HELMET, COLLECTED AS PART OF 'THE SEA AND ME' YOUNG VOICES PROJECT

We recently worked with groups of Y9 students in St Ives and Redruth to record and include what is important to them in the Museum. We asked: What should museums be collecting today? What stories should we be telling... and for who?



▲ VOLUNTEER NAME BADGE

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of the Museum. They invigilate our galleries, undertake research in the Bartlett Library and Maritime History Resource Centre, assist with schools' workshops and family learning activities and help care for our collections – especially the boats. Without our volunteers we could not do the things we do – and we are always looking for more people of all ages and backgrounds to come on board!



◀ MONKEY FIST KNOT FROM 'HEAVING LINES' SCULPTURE BY DAN ARNOLD

The Museum is developing a reputation for commissioning local and international artists to create artistic thought-provoking responses to its collections, its building – and the narratives contained in our exhibitions.

▼ WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHS, LUKE AND MILLY KNIGHT

With stunning views and a unique setting, the Museum is a venue for all sorts of life's meaningful events including birthday parties, graduation celebrations and weddings.



◀ AWARD, BEST GALLERY, TATTOO MAJOR TEMPORARY EXHIBITION

We are proud of all our awards – whether it be for increasing access and inclusivity in our programmes, sustainable tourism, family-friendliness or the quality of our exhibitions. Our ground-breaking, critically acclaimed exhibition *Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed* achieved awards for Best Gallery and for Artistic, Cultural and Learning Experience of the Year.



▲ '3D PRINTED' REPLICA OF WOODEN CARVING

This 3D printed replica is of a wooden carving of a mermaid from the famous 'Mermaid Chair', St Senara's Church, Zennor. The original carving is closely bound up with the legendary story of the 'Mermaid of Zennor'. The scanning and printing of this piece was undertaken by Tom Goskar at the Cornwall Research Centre, Redruth. 🐙

Image
The Museum under
construction.





Pirates

Getting an idea for an exhibition off the ground.

We have several broad criteria for selecting a theme for a major exhibition. Whichever topic is proposed, it must be relevant to our mission; be popular, engaging and accessible to ensure commercial success; be of interest to our non-family audiences; have the potential for us to bring important artefacts to Cornwall (which otherwise would not be seen here); and, finally, offer us the scope to be culturally ambitious and socially relevant.

We identified pirates as a viable exhibition subject when drawing up our six-year business plan in 2018. *Pirates* ticks all our boxes, not least because these swashbuckling reprobates have captured popular imagination for close on 300 years. They are synonymous with romance, escapism and adventure with an enduring, powerful and theatrical appeal in both historical and contemporary popular culture. The reality was of course very different. People were mostly driven to piracy by poverty and lack of opportunities, much as the pirates of today.

Selecting piracy of the so-called Golden Age (roughly 1680–1730) as the theme for our next major exhibition not only gives us the opportunity to probe the origins of the glamorous image these pirates have acquired, but also to investigate a range of cultural issues they raise, such as their role in slavery, the experiences of black pirates, the adoption of the pirate identity by marginalised groups and the appropriation of the pirate costume as a symbol of rebellion and anti-authoritarianism. We pose the questions why pirates have persisted as icons of freedom and transgression and whether it is appropriate to continue to revere these thieves and murderers in the 21st century.

For each of our major exhibitions we develop a brief setting out our ambitions for the content, the approach and the major

storylines. We then engage specialists as guest curators to ensure the exhibitions are informed and shaped by the latest academic research. For *Viking Voyages* we were fortunate to secure the assistance of Dr Gareth Williams from the British Museum, for *Captain Bligh* our guest curator was Dr Pieter van der Merwe MBE, DL, from Royal Museums Greenwich, for *Tattoo* we turned to Dr Matt Lodder of Essex University for his incisive insights, for *Titanic Stories* we persuaded Dr Eric Kentley, a maritime historian and author and Swedish historian Claes-Göran Wetterholm to share the role. Most recently for *Monsters of the Deep*, we benefitted from the contributions of three guest curators, Dr Darren Naish, a vertebrate palaeontologist and research associate at the University of Southampton, Dr Tammy Horton, a Research Scientist at the National Oceanography Centre and Professor Bryony Onciul of Exeter University.

However, from the onset of our *Pirates* project, we took a conscious decision to consult with a wider pool of critical friends because of the complexity of the subject matter. Certainly, we wanted to immerse adults and children in fun stories about deeds of derring-do and adventure, but we were equally excited by the idea of incorporating alternative guest voices to help scope and shape our narrative, so that we could present culturally challenging insights into the pirate phenomenon.

During the first lockdown, in April 2020, with the newly completed *Monsters of the Deep* exhibition and the entire Museum closed to the public, I happened to have a telephone conversation with Paddy Rogers, the Director of Royal Museums Greenwich (RMG). We discussed the financial challenges facing both institutions but then it suddenly


~~~~~

“This project probably represents the first time a small regional museum has partnered with a national museum to co-produce a major exhibition on equal terms.”

Richard Doughty

occurred to me – should National Maritime Museum Cornwall and Royal Museums Greenwich collaborate on a joint exhibition project to reduce costs? Paddy agreed to at least consider a proposal.

In July 2020 we formally appointed Dr Eric Kentley to be our Principal Guest Curator for *Pirates* and in the autumn of that year Eric helped us to prepare a case to Royal Museums Greenwich to co-produce the exhibition. Early in 2021 we began a series of meetings with colleagues in Greenwich to discuss how the collaboration might work, tackling practical issues around roles and responsibilities, sign-off procedures and most importantly, the scope of the exhibition.

It was evident from the start that we shared the ambition that this should not just be ‘another pirate exhibition’ but the fundamental question was how ‘radical’ did we want the exhibition to be? If we aspired to do something culturally important, the project offered an exciting opportunity for us to reinforce our relevance. At the same time however, it was essential we balanced this with engaging, entertaining, family friendly and thought-provoking content to appeal to as wide and diverse an audience as possible.

Although the subject matter would appeal to children we decided early on, that the pitch and tone of the exhibition should be primarily targeted at as wide and diverse audience as possible. We did not want to try to tell visitors what they already knew but rather to help them to question and challenge their preconceptions about pirates. We were also keen to include wider and more diverse input, which would address contested histories and contested objects. It was therefore important we identified a long list of potential experts we could approach as part of a wider advisory group.

In February 2021 we entered a three-month development phase, under a memorandum of understanding (MoU), to tease out a concept vision which could inform funding applications

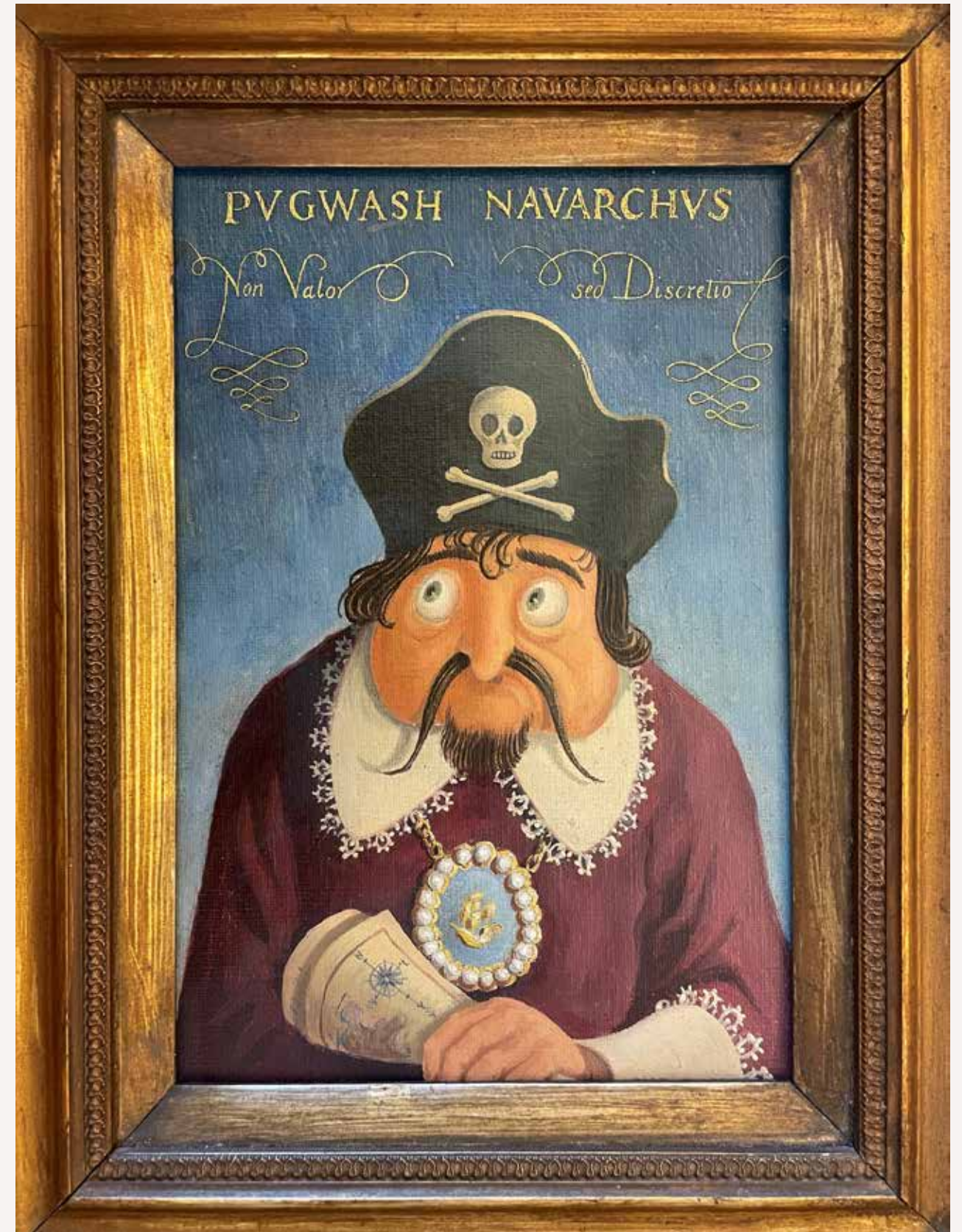
and loan requests for ‘star objects’, identify an indicative budget and define the organisational outcomes for a *Pirates* exhibition. By the end of the MoU period, we had developed an exciting vision and concept proposal, which could be refined by diverse curatorial voices.

This project probably represents the first time a small regional museum has partnered with a national museum to co-produce a major exhibition on equal terms. As such this approach has proved to be an ambitious and innovative way of working. Understandably, we have very different ways of operating and making decisions: inevitably both teams have made concessions to successfully manage our respective institutional expectations.

During the exploratory period, we set out to agree the ‘top level’ guiding principles which would determine the cultural ambition, tone, and audiences of the exhibition. Our aim was to produce an outline of intent before inviting other participants to help us critique, improve or change the outline content and we were therefore anxious to avoid becoming wedded to a concept until this process has happened. Specifically, we needed to agree how we could devolve cultural decision-making through wider consultation and co-curation, actively bring in non-museum voices to tell stories, reveal hidden or marginalised histories from different perspectives and tackle how we would address the experience of piracy for women, LGBTQI+ people, enslaved people and Caribbean communities, in order to clarify what stories of piracy mean to these groups today.

Our commitment to this approach was demonstrated by our initial consultation around the key narrative ‘framing questions’ with Dr Rebecca Simon (an authority on female pirates and the wider role of women at sea), Professor Jana Funke (who gave us a steer in terms of addressing queer history) and Dr Hannah Robbins (an expert on pirates within popular culture, especially film and television).

**Image** A portrait of the 1960s-1970s children's television character, the pirate Captain Pugwash. Painted long after his 'retirement' from the small screen by his creator John Ryan in the style of 18th-century naval portraits, the inscription shows that he has been promoted to Admiral.





**This page** Captain Teach commonly called Black Beard from *A General History of the Pyrates*, 1734, Joseph Nicholls and Isaac Basire (engraver). National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

**Opposite** One of the pirate characters who populates the *Sea of Thieves* alternative world.



~~~~~  
“Queer Kernow agreed to coordinate the creation of a visually stunning ‘Pirate King’ costume for the exhibition, inspired by the transgressive nature of pirate identity, lost stories and the marginalised history of drag kings”

Richard Doughty

In the event our time scales turned out to be a little optimistic and it was late May before we had reached a consensus of the kind of exhibition we wanted. We agreed it would contrast how a relatively small but violent episode in history has influenced and been reconstructed by writers, artists, playwrights, filmmakers, gaming producers, minority groups and educators; to create alternative worlds which have delighted audiences with the real evidence of the golden age of piracy, which often led to a brutal end for many pirates.

By the end of June 2021, Eric Kentley had drafted the first detailed outline of the exhibition and a couple of weeks later, armed with this document, we approached Simon Prodger, Marketing Director, of Rare Ltd – the company behind the action-adventure Xbox game *Sea of Thieves*, with more than 30 million players worldwide, to enquire whether they would work with us to integrate an immersive experience into the exhibition.

Collaborative play is integral to *Sea of Thieves*, much as it was in the real world of pirates. Crews were governed by codes of conduct that, for example, defined compensation for injuries and even gave them the power to elect their own captain. Simon immediately grasped the parallels and the company has since committed time and resources to enable us to incorporate Rare’s colourful world of cannon-firing ships, sword fights and buried treasure to ensure the exhibition starts with a bang.

At about the same time we started talking to Queer Kernow, a Cornish LGBTQI+ community organisation, to interest them in an outreach programme to garner wide scale responses to the pirate exhibition from a non-museum setting.



They initially agreed to deliver workshops to key organisations within the LGBTQI+ community in Cornwall (Intercom Trust, Cornwall Pride, and Transparent Presence) and a second workshop with an open invite to members of the wider LGBTQI+ community. As a result of these sessions they agreed to coordinate the creation of a visually stunning ‘Pirate King’ costume for the exhibition, inspired by the transgressive nature of pirate identity, lost stories and the marginalised history of drag kings.

The original costume of one of the greatest pirates of the stage, Captain Hook, has long been lost but there is a visual record. So we commissioned Lucy Williams to project manage the production of a replica of the 1904 costume, worn by Gerald Du Maurier in the first stage production of *Peter Pan*. The costume is being made by Ninya Mikhaila, a historical costumier, who has a first-class reputation for making high quality reconstructions of historic dress.

In early September 2021, after lengthy discussions, Paddy Rogers and I signed a Letter of Agreement to coproduce the exhibition. A curatorial advisory panel, drawn from our two institutions, was quickly set up and the detailed work began to develop the exhibition content, identify a wish list of objects and select key images. The panel comprised Dr Eric Kentley, Dr Robert Blyth, Sophie Nibbs and Stuart Slade.



Left Pirate plastic building blocks (1989), illustrating the depiction of pirates.

Right Frontispiece in illustrated edition of *Treasure Island*, 1886, Robert Louis Stevenson, Illustrations by Georges Roux. (1886).

Invitations to tender for the exhibition design were immediately issued to several companies and, following a joint assessment process with RMG, Designmap, who had designed our wonderful *Monsters of the Deep* exhibition, were appointed. The start-up meeting was hosted at Greenwich at the beginning of November 2021 and Designmap were tasked with developing a design which would work in two very different locations before the Christmas break.

Meanwhile we searched for alternative voices. These included Alexis McDavid, a museum educator at the Museum of Jamaica, who explained how the Golden Age pirates are regarded in the Caribbean, Professor Charles Ewen of East Carolina University, who gave us a refreshing view of Blackbeard, Rebecca Simon who provided insights into female pirates and Isabel Ryan, who tells the story of her father's creation of the legendary Captain Pugwash.

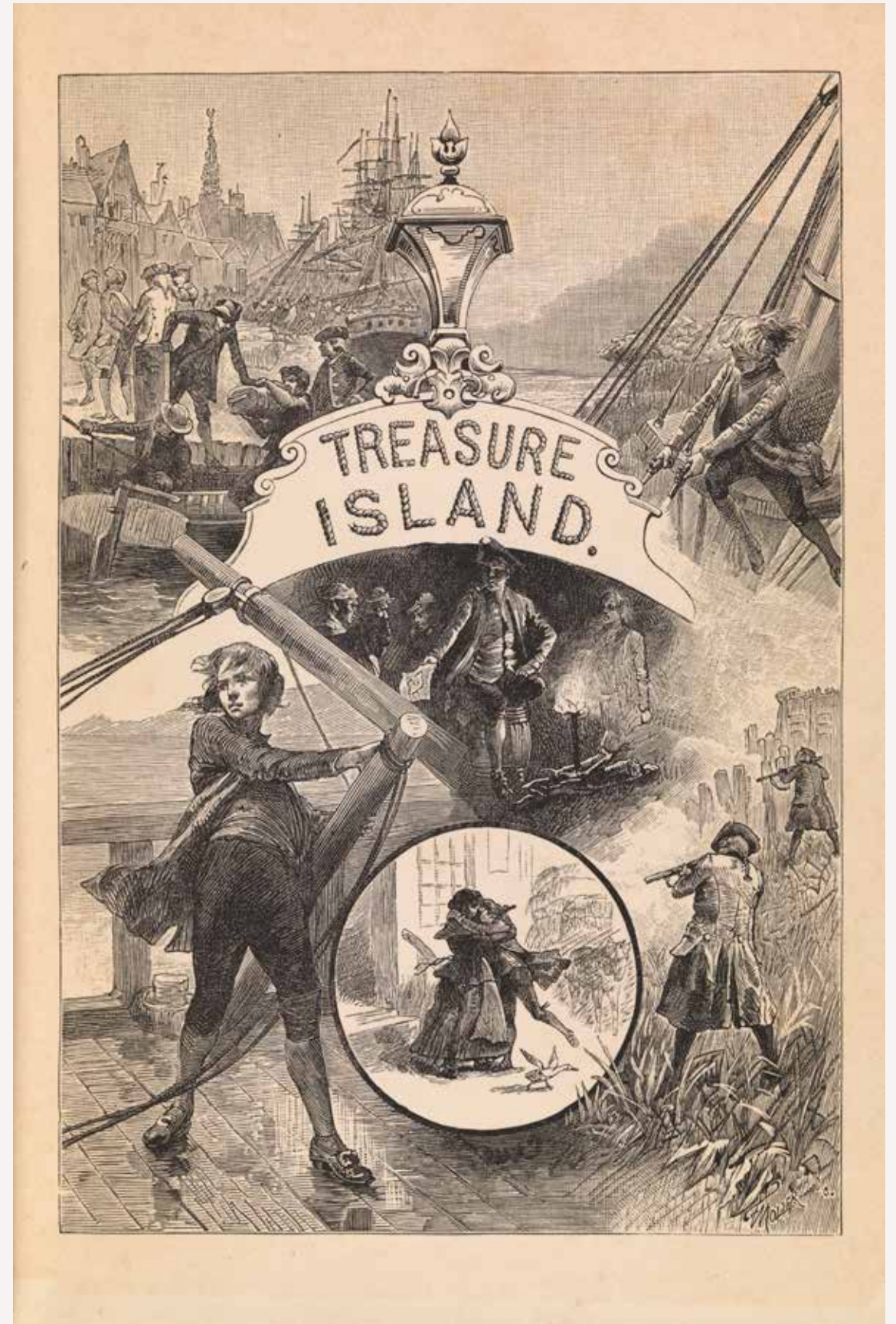
A major thread of the exhibition is the influence of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* on our perception of pirates. Sir Andrew Motion, the former Poet Laureate (1999–2009) not only agreed to a recording explaining why he had written a sequel – *Silver: Return to Treasure Island* – but visitors to the exhibition will also be able to hear why he considers Stevenson's original book a masterpiece of literature.

Wherever possible, our major exhibitions include a local element and *Pirates* is no exception. We were delighted that Dr Helen Doe of University of Exeter has agreed to help us tell the Cornwall story from Lady Killigrew and the Barbary Corsairs to the name of the Penzance local rugby team.

Requesting permission to borrow objects from national collections is rarely straightforward for small, regional museums. Even when a loan is approved, the associated costs, such as conservation, special transport and couriers, can be prohibitive. For example, we were keen to borrow one of Rodin's sculptures of W.E. Henley because Robert Louis Stevenson based Long John Silver on his friend. Unfortunately, our loan requests to two national galleries were unsuccessful. However, St Paul's Cathedral did give us permission to make a laser scan and produce a 3D print. We appointed Gala Creations to undertake this project so that our visitors can gaze upon the 'face' of a character who has contributed so much to the image of the pirate in popular culture.

Without doubt, this major project is our most ambitious undertaking to date. The exhibition sheds new light on the pirate story, challenging what visitors think they know about the lives of pirates and exploring how cultural myths are created, by drawing on the wealth of iterations in popular culture, literature and film.

So, with just over three months to go before we open the exhibition, we have our hands full. However, thanks to all our major contributors we are confident *Pirates* will be a thought-provoking exhibition balancing the latest scholarship and iconic loans with creative methods of interpretation and public engagement. ☠️



Coastguard 200

200 years of HM Coastguard

Below *Coastguard 200* exhibition at the Museum.

Right Guests from the Coastguard's long service medal ceremony.



To mark the 200th birthday of HM Coastguard in 2022, this temporary exhibition tells the story of the Coastguard and explores its role as one of the UK's emergency services.

Through original objects, evocative images, inspiring stories and interactive touchscreens, the exhibition celebrates the people who have dedicated themselves to saving lives at sea. It also explores the changing technology of the last two centuries and highlights the continuing contribution of the Coastguard at sea and on land.

The exhibition was developed and co-produced with the National Emergency Services Museum (NESM), Sheffield. Both NMMC and NESM are similar in having regional and national remits, with complementary aspects to their collections. The 'Coastguard 200' anniversary presented an exciting opportunity for both museums to work together, sharing skills and expertise, objects and making cost-effective use of resources – in this case in producing a duplicate or 'clone' set of exhibition panels to display concurrently at both venues, for audiences at either end of the country.

In this way, *Coastguard 200* can be seen as another successful example of NMMC's commitment to working collaboratively with community groups and regional and national partners.

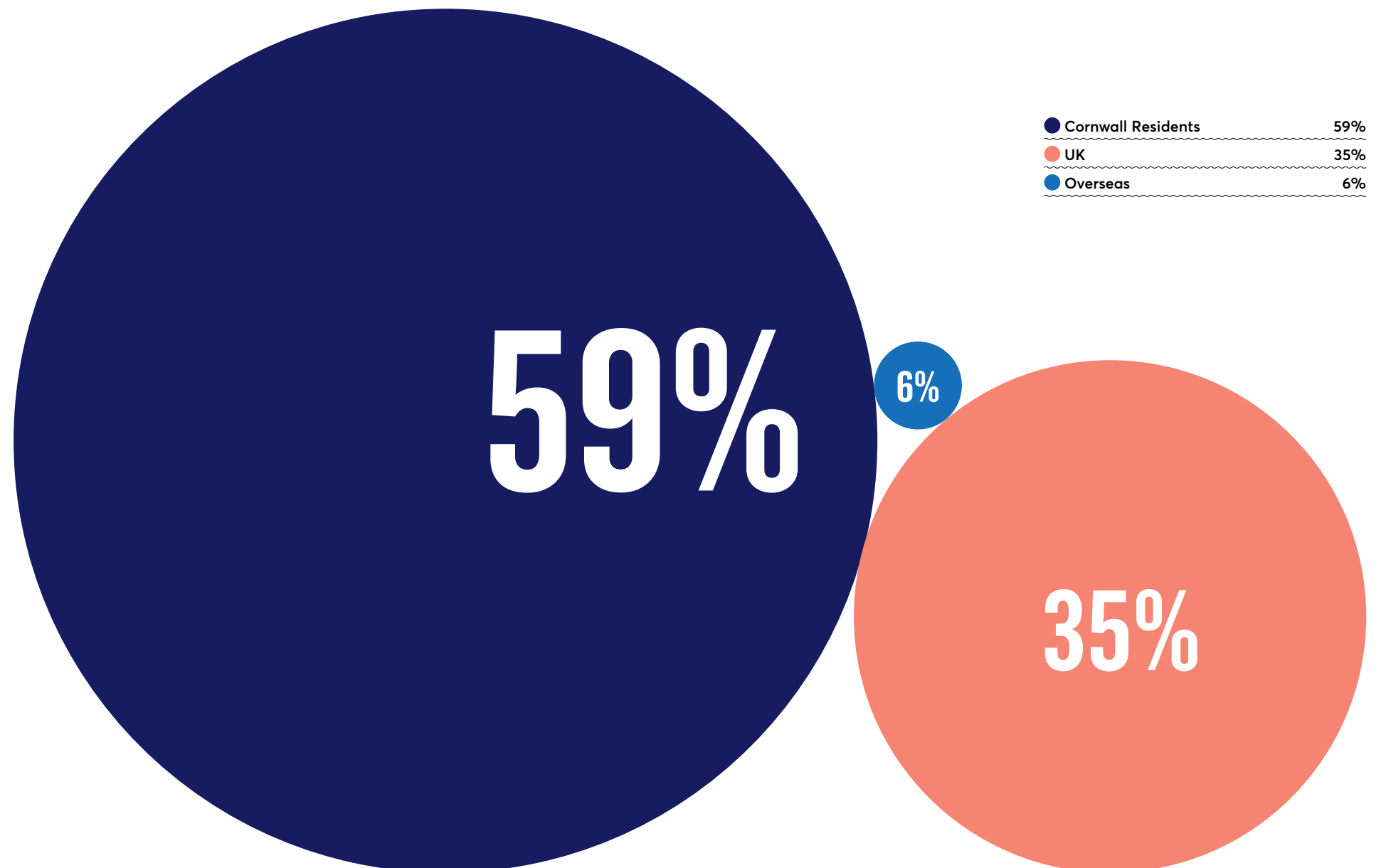
The initiative itself was funded by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) as part of its wider 200th birthday celebrations.

As part of the collaboration with MCA, the Museum hosted a special 'long service' medal ceremony in April. This was attended by around 70 staff (and some family members) from every Coastguard station in Cornwall, as well as a number of VIPs, including HM Coastguard's Divisional Commander, Operations Director and the Chief Coastguard. The event was organised by Martin Leslie (Area Commander, based at Falmouth) and resulted in a number of other, very positive outcomes, not least the offer of some interesting local artefacts – including a rare working scale model of a 'breeches buoy' rescue, which was used for training until the late 1960s. ↺



Understanding our visitors

During the summer and early autumn National Maritime Museum Cornwall embarked on a new programme of visitor research. The brief was to help us better understand our visitors – who they are, what they want and need from the Museum and if the experience of the Museum meets their expectations. Here is a snapshot of some of the findings.

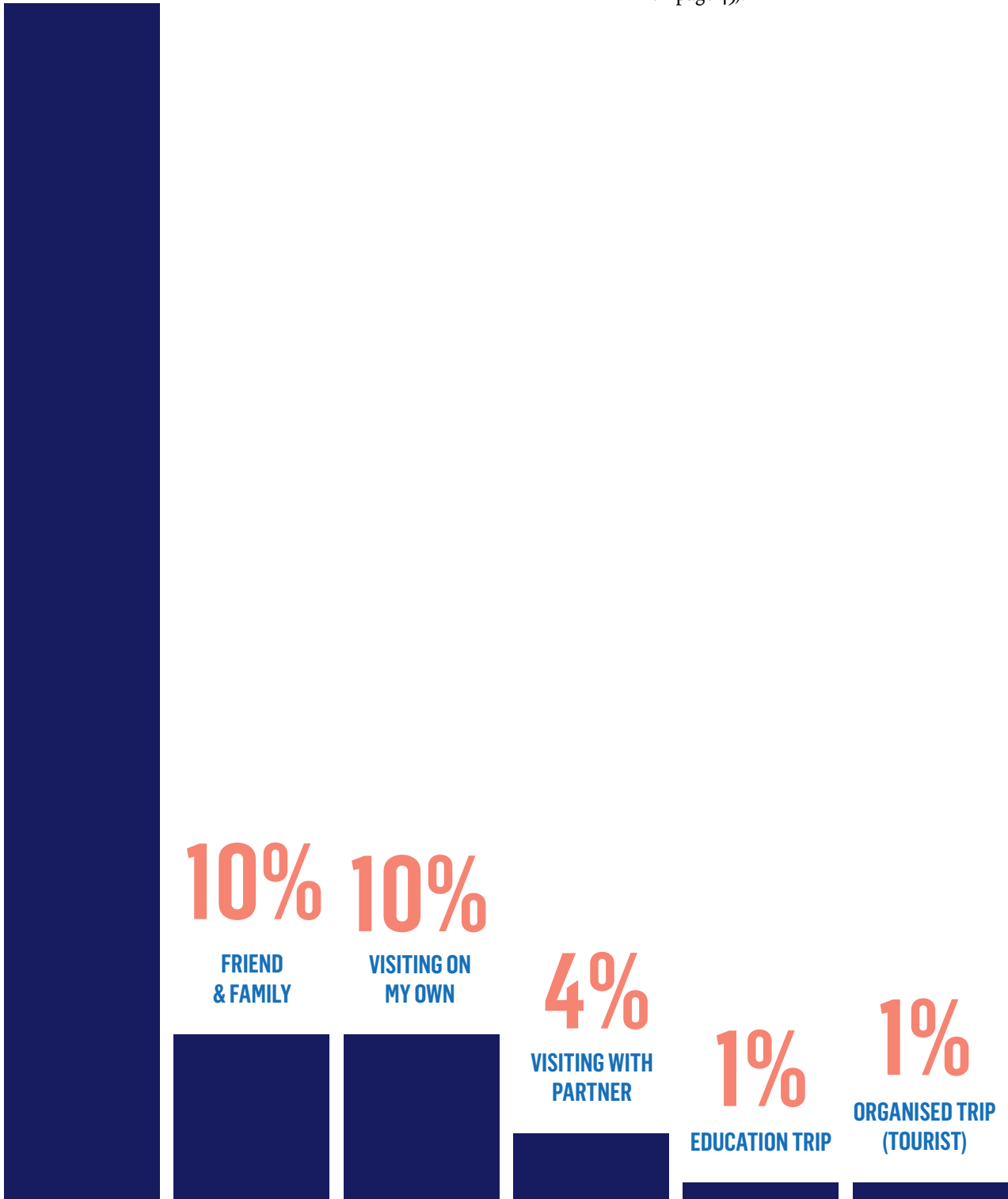


ARE YOU LOCAL TO CORNWALL OR A VISITOR?

The Museum's audiences change across the year and in the summer and early autumn it's not unusual for the Museum to see a much higher proportion of visitors from outside of Cornwall. During this time 6% of visitors were from overseas and it will be interesting to see how this changes as overseas travel gradually returns to pre-pandemic levels.

75%

FAMILY GROUP

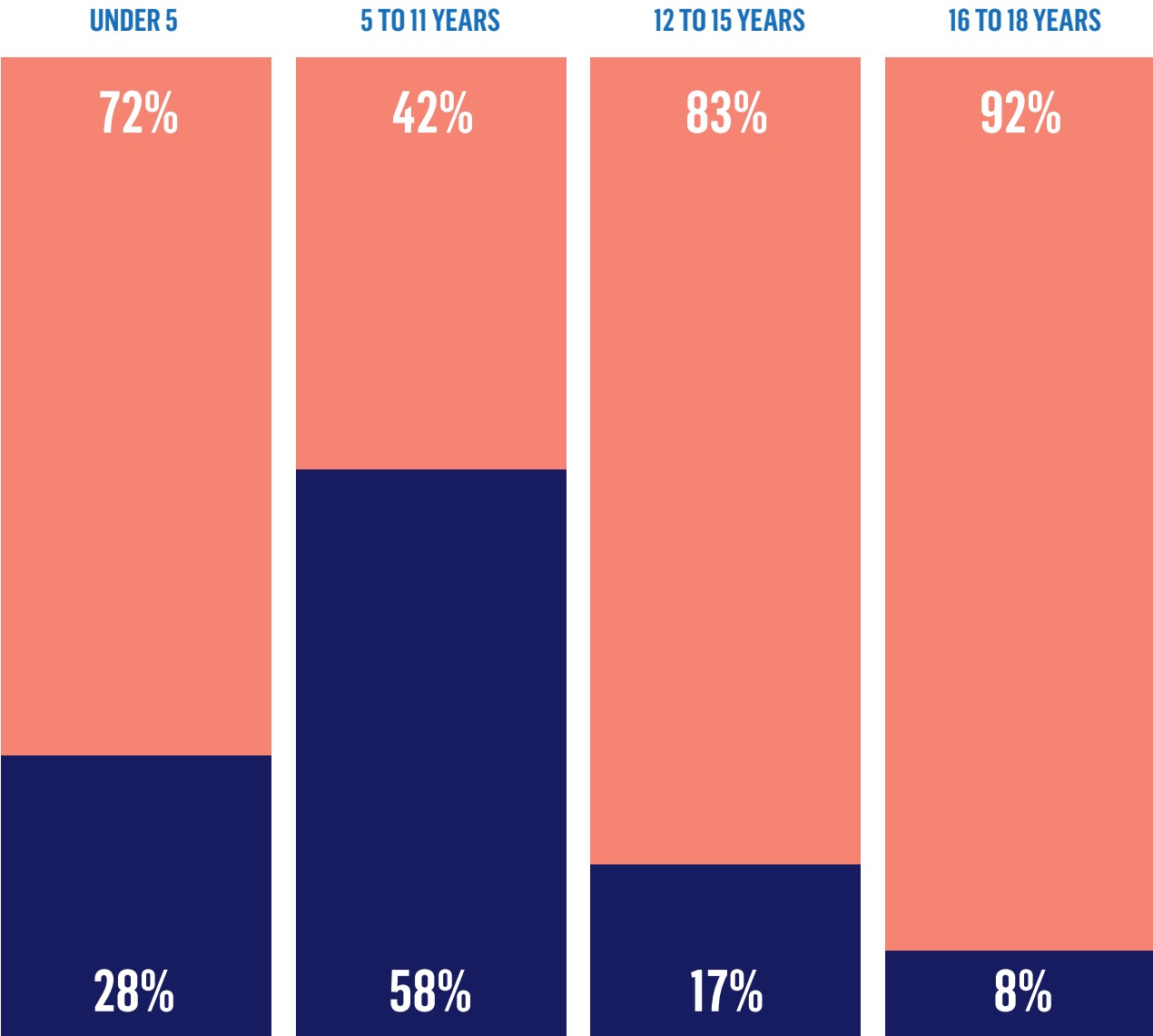


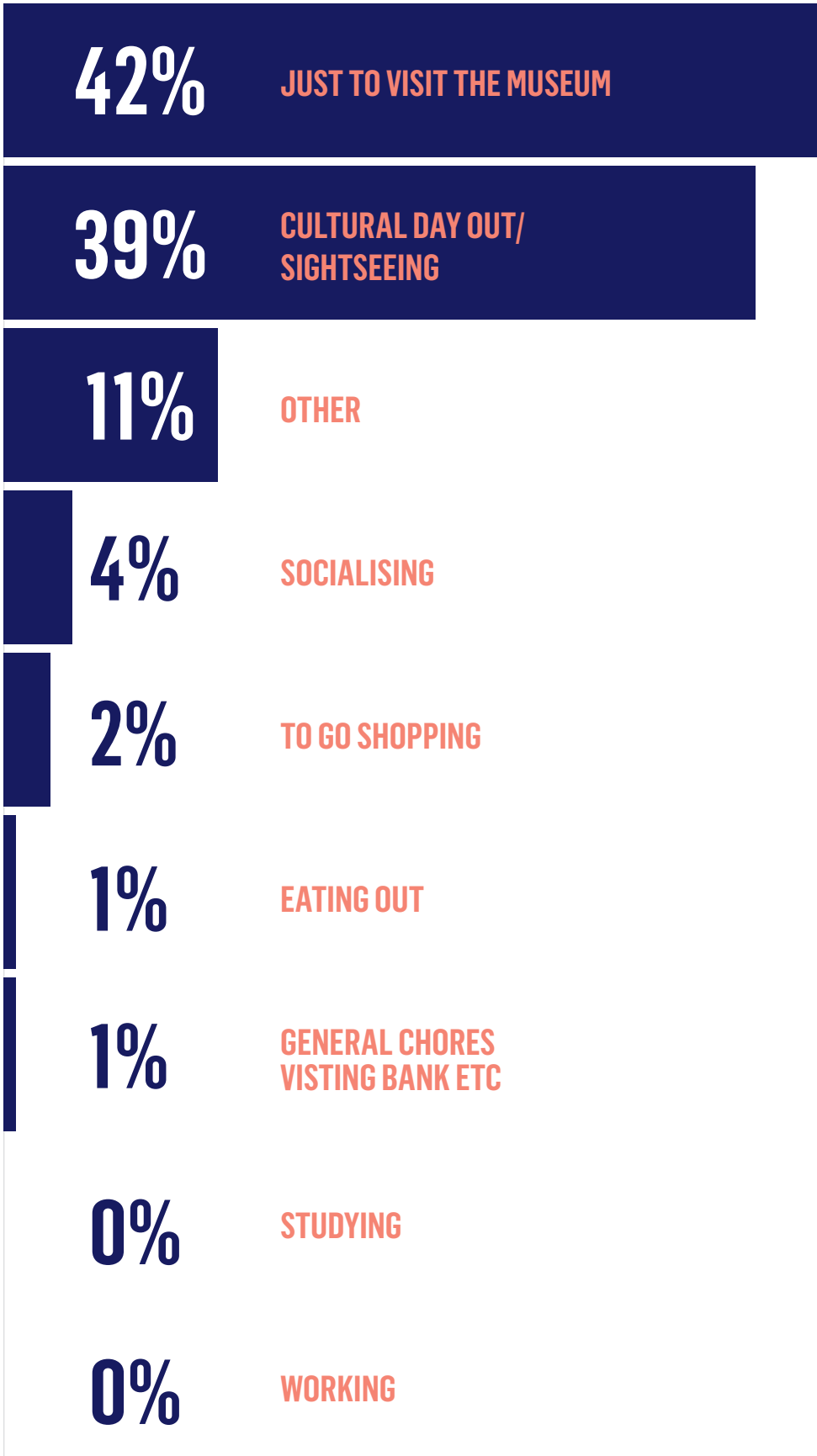
WHO ARE YOU VISITING WITH?

75% of those visiting the Museum came as part of a family group (see chart below). Of those family groups 86% visited with children under the age of 11 (see chart on page 43).

ARE YOU VISITING WITH CHILDREN THAT FALL WITHIN THESE AGE GROUPS?

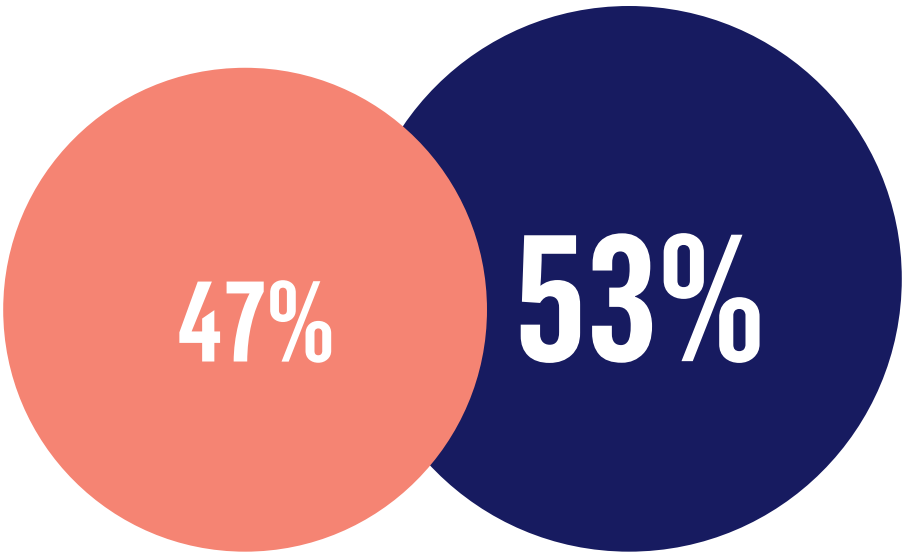
Yes
No





WHY DID YOU COME TO FALMOUTH?

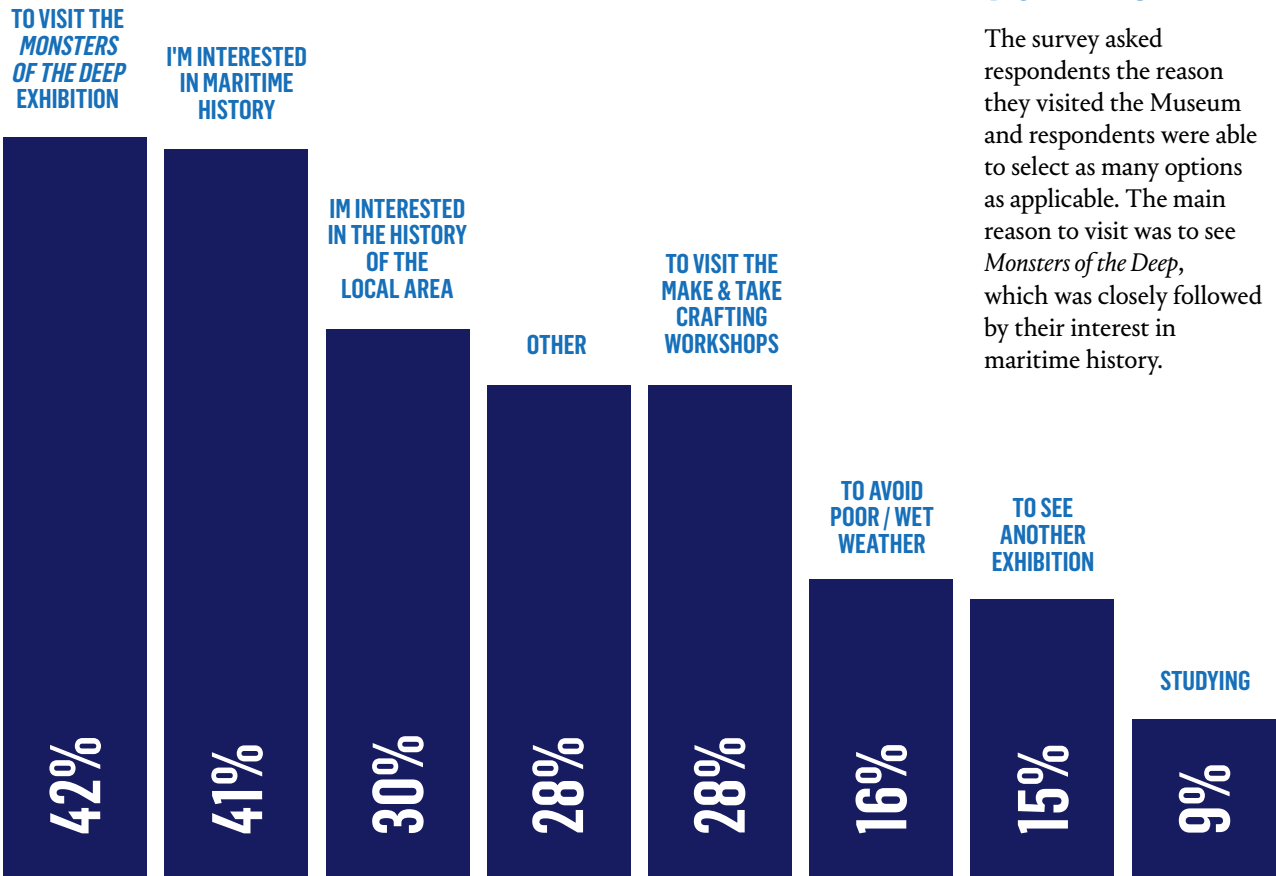
42% of people said they came to Falmouth just to visit the Museum. This highlights the volume of additional visitors the Museum brings into the town and begins to demonstrate its wider, and significant, economic impacts.



HAVE YOU VISITED THE MUSEUM BEFORE?

53% of visitors to the Museum have been before, demonstrating the Museum's ability to retain visitors and provide new reasons for them to visit.

- Yes
- No

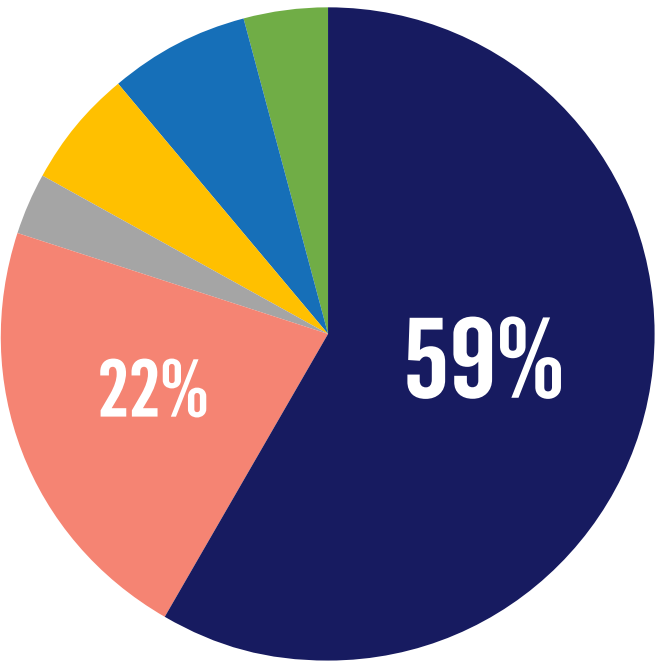


WHAT WAS THE REASON YOU VISITED TODAY?

The survey asked respondents the reason they visited the Museum and respondents were able to select as many options as applicable. The main reason to visit was to see *Monsters of the Deep*, which was closely followed by their interest in maritime history.

HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO REVISIT?

81% of respondents claimed that they would be ‘very likely’ or ‘likely’ to return to the Museum again in the future with 91% either ‘very likely’ or ‘likely’ to recommend a visit to their friends or family.

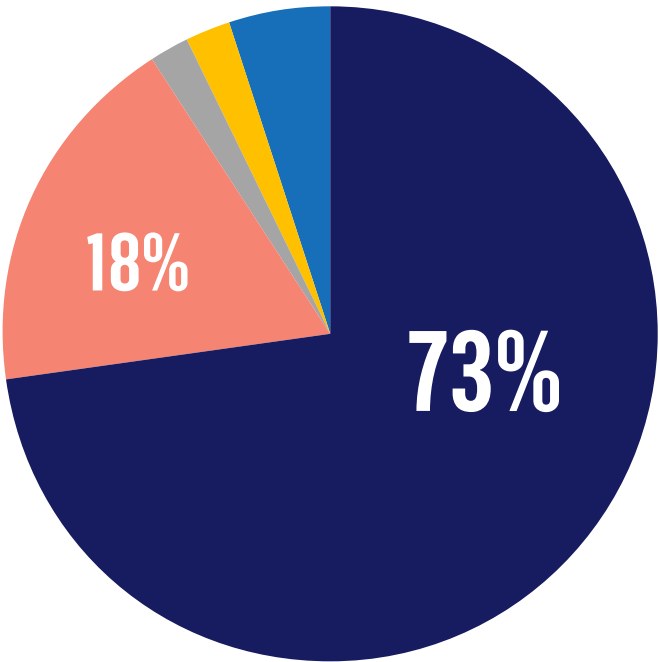


LIKELIHOOD TO REVISIT THE MUSEUM

Very likely	59%
Likely	22%
Neither	3%
Unlikely	6%
Very unlikely	7%
Don't know	4%

LIKELIHOOD TO RECOMMEND A VISIT TO FRIENDS OR FAMILY

Very likely	73%
Likely	18%
Neither	2%
Unlikely	2%
Very unlikely	5%
Don't know	0%

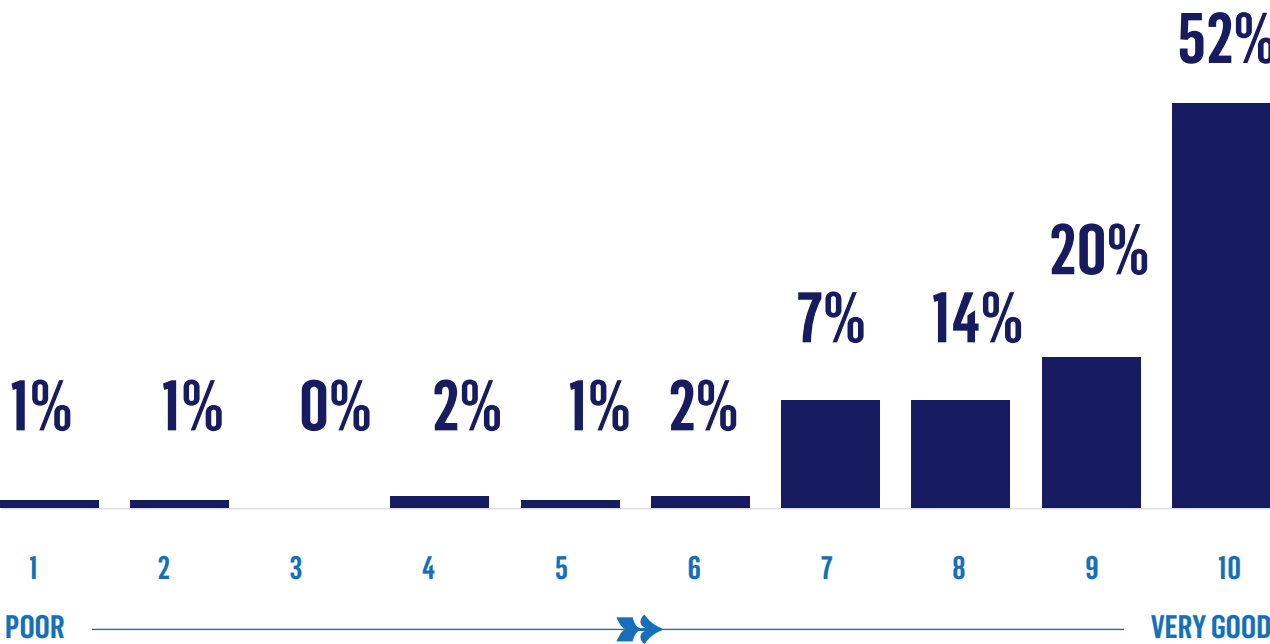


SATISFACTION WITH THE MUSEUM

Respondents were asked to rank a variety of aspects of their visit out of 10 with 1 being ‘very poor’ and 10 being ‘very good’. Areas included staff knowledge, quality of information, digital screens, Waterside Café and the Gift Shop. The findings have provided useful next steps in terms of improvements, such as renewing digital interpretation and reinvigorating the offer in the Waterside Café.

The ambition is to repeat the research in 2023 (and beyond) and monitor the impact the changes we implement have on results.

The table below looks at overall satisfaction with the Museum and suggests that 86% of respondents rated this at 8 or above.



CONCLUSION

Overall, the research provides a solid foundation for the Museum to better understand its audiences, to grow attendance in key areas and to maintain and adapt its programming to meet the needs of visitors. It enables the team to better understand areas of concern and create a programme of improvements to increase visitor satisfaction levels.



Reconnecting with the Robertsons

In 2022 it was 50 years since the *Lucette* sank and the Robertson family found themselves aboard a life raft fighting for survival in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. They spent the anniversary of ‘Sinking Day’ at the Museum, reconnecting with the objects, the dinghy that eventually helped save their lives and their stories. ➡➡

Image Anne Jaff (nee Robertson) reconnects with her family objects, filmed and recorded by Storylines.



In January 1971 the Robertson family left Falmouth on their yacht, *Lucette*, on an exciting journey to travel around the world. Only Dougal, the father, had any experience of sailing. For the rest of the family, Lyn (the mother) and the children Anne, Douglas and twins Neil and Sandy, it was a true baptism of fire. They had adventures as soon as they left Falmouth, running into storms and putting into ports for repair. They made firm friends as they travelled to the Caribbean, Venezuela and the USA. Anne left the yacht and a hitchhiker, Robin Williams, took her place.

It was after leaving the Galapagos islands bound for New Zealand that the yacht was attacked by three killer whales, who punctured the hull. The Robertsons and Robin managed to survive, initially aboard their time expired inflatable life raft, and latterly their small dinghy, *Ednamair*. They survived for 38 days adrift before they were rescued by a Japanese trawler crew. Their lives were shaped by this profound experience.

In 2006 the Robertsons gave their collection of objects, including the *Ednamair* to the Museum and we have had these on display ever since, where they are a firm favourite with our visitors, who are astonished by the survival story.

In 2022 we celebrated 50 years of the survival of the Robertsons (and Robin). We commissioned local team, Storylines, to interview the survivors to preserve their stories in audio and video formats using the objects to spark memories. It

was an extraordinary experience to hear them recounting their experiences. Sandy even opened the turtle oil to smell and taste it, which was quite horrifying to some of the observers! None of our risk assessments had covered this eventuality. Douglas thought the smell of the objects took him back to 1972.

We also interviewed Anne to gain her thoughts on their extraordinary family adventure and her memories of the dinghy *Ednamair*. Anne had had no knowledge of the sinking of *Lucette* and the recovery of her family until they were rescued.

The event concluded with a talk given by Douglas Robertson detailing the journey but focussing on how they all survived. This was one of the best attended talks we have ever held. It was also followed by a panel discussion with Douglas, Sandy and Anne led by BBC presenter, Jemma Woodman, who skilfully drew out the thoughts and feelings of the family on what was the 50th anniversary of 'Sinking Day'.

38 days later, on 'Rescue Day' we hosted Douglas Robertson and hitchhiker Robin Williams in a second set of interviews. Reconnecting with the Robertsons was a wonderful opportunity to re-engage with donors to enrich the stories behind the objects we have in the collection, but also the *Ednamair*, the life-saving little vessel. We hope to use these interviews alongside the objects using the words of Douglas, Sandy, Anne and Robin to tell their stories. 🐬

Left
Douglas Robertson reading his father's notes made in the life raft's instruction manual.

Right Sandy Robertson smelling the scraps of food or 'Little Supper' left in the family's ration box.

Below
BBC's Jemma Woodman leads a discussion with the Robertson family in front of a live audience.





New Publications

Creating online and print publications for our audiences.

The Museum communicates information about its work and collections to different audiences in a number of ways. This includes our popular programme of exhibitions, lectures, public engagement events, as well as the ‘behind the scenes’ research and enquiry service of The Bartlett Maritime Research Centre & Library.

We also disseminate knowledge through social media and a growing range of popular, academic and specialist publications, both in print and online. For the period 2022-23, this included:

Tattoo: A Catalyst for Change

This richly illustrated report captures in detail the extraordinary impacts – and lessons learnt – generated by both the original, ground-breaking exhibition *Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed*, and its subsequent three-year national tour.

The author, Mary-Anne Edwards, has taken pains to interview a truly diverse range of people – academics, collectors, tattoo artists, museum staff, people from different communities and locations – to create a record of cultural

achievement that grew organically. Crucially, it grew in response to genuine need from communities long marginalised by mainstream museums and art galleries.

In total the exhibition was hosted by seven museums over a three-year period, mostly based in coastal communities facing similar challenges. All were ranked in the top percentile of the most deprived areas in the country. As Mary-Anne argues, ‘all institutions took the opportunity to use *Tattoo* to attract diverse visitors and to help challenge public perceptions of them as a cultural organisation ... host venues used the exhibition as a springboard to create extraordinary artistic and community work, all shaped by their capacity, collections and communities’.

Truly a catalyst for change, and something National Maritime Museum Cornwall is enormously proud to have helped create.

- Available to stakeholders and anyone with an interest in the arts, culture or heritage sector ➡➡



National Maritime Museum Cornwall Guidebook

This new 36-page souvenir guide will be published in February 2023, selling for £5 in the Museum’s Gift Shop. It is planned to last for two years and includes a section on the new temporary *Pirates* exhibition.

The Museum commissioned an independent author, Gill Knappett, who specialises in guidebooks for museums and visitor attractions, to write the text and shape the overall narrative structure, which is designed to reflect and enhance the visitor journey and experience. The production was supported by a team from across the organisation, to ensure that the Museum’s collections and interpretative approach were appropriately represented in an accessible and engaging way.

- Available from the Museum for £5

The Infected Museum:

Viktor Wynd at National Maritime Museum Cornwall

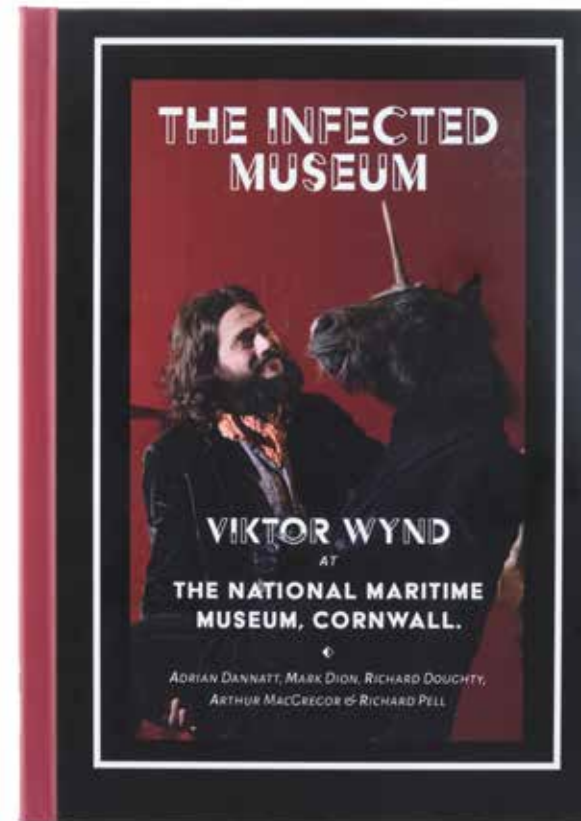
A fully illustrated hardback catalogue to the exhibition *Viktor Wynd’s UnNatural History Museum* at National Maritime Museum Cornwall, March 2020 – January 2023.

Introduced by the Museum’s Director Richard Doughty, with essays by art historian Adrian Dannatt, artist Mark Dion, historian of museums Arthur MacGregor and Director of The Centre for Postnatural History Richard Pell.

- Limited stock available on Amazon

Left The cover of the Museum’s new guidebook.

Below The cover of *The Infected Museum*.



Maritime Views: Maritime History from the Bartlett Maritime Research Centre

‘We welcome contributions and suggestions from all.’

This site has been created by the team in The Bartlett Maritime Research Centre & Library at National Maritime Museum Cornwall for those interested in maritime history.

In the words of the team ‘the work covers a broad range of topics and is designed for all, although we will admit to a prejudice for our own favourites: the maritime history of Cornwall, the history of boats and British and international shipping’.

The focus is on primary source material – diaries and journals which have been transcribed by volunteers – articles written by a variety of researchers, and even the transcription of a printed book.

- Find out more at maritimeviews.co.uk

Bartlett Blog

Led by the volunteer team from The Bartlett Maritime Research Centre & Library we have developed the Bartlett Blog. The blog was created to complement and enhance the existing website content, link to Maritime Views (where appropriate) to drive traffic to this site as well as highlight the Library facility and the work the team do. The blog posts cover local maritime history and are designed to be informative and accessible with more academic articles produced for *Troze*.

- Find out more at nmmc.co.uk/category/bartlett-library/

Troze

Troze is an online refereed journal, with an editorial board consisting of academic specialists from many different universities and the Museum. The publication covers a range of topics, many to do with Cornish and West Country maritime history. The articles, published on the Museum’s website, cover two themes: general maritime matters and the stories of Cornwall’s maritime past.

The title of the journal uses a traditional Cornish word ‘troze’, the sound made by water about the bows of a boat in motion.

- Find out more at nmmc.co.uk/collection/troze 

New commissions in 2022

Cross-arts programming

In 2017 *Yskynna*, a Cornish vertical dance company, approached us about using our building. They went on to perform a spectacular ‘aerial dance’ on the outside of the Lookout Tower. In the same year, Canvas Theatre Company, mounted a production of *The Coastguard's Daughter* in our Boat Hall.

These performances came at a time when we were thinking about how we could make more effective use of our spaces, stories and resources. Against a rapidly changing heritage, tourism and funding environment, we were beginning work on a six-year business plan. We reviewed our vision, mission and belief system and realised if we wanted to attract and engage a wider range of paying audiences, either for the first time or as repeat visitors, we would need to be prepared to take creative risks.

Our business plan (2018-2024) set out our intention to develop a culture of experimentation, with the aim of diversifying and increasing earned income. One component of this approach was to incrementally increase our investment in public programming and shift the focus of creative activity to the Boat Hall.

The Museum’s learning team already had extensive experience of working with actors, storytellers, puppeteers, and science-technicians. However, budgets were tight, and shows were essentially bought-in off-the-shelf. Despite being popular, all too frequently these activities suffered because they were delivered ‘out-of-sight’ in side-galleries or the Learning Centre.

During 2018, we showcased several new and surprising art forms at the centre of the Museum, including choral music, contemporary poetry and dance. These performances encouraged us to be more culturally ambitious and we started

to think of the Museum as a cross-arts commissioning body.

In 2019 the Museum began its ambitious contemporary artist commissioning programme, inviting artists and arts organisations to create thought-provoking artistic responses to our exhibition spaces and narratives. For example, with a Heritage Lottery Project Grant from ACE, the Museum was able to continue its creative collaboration with *Yskynna*. The company responded to a brief and devised an aerial dance show called *Ghosts Ships*, which was performed in the Boat Hall as the centrepiece for our October half-term holiday programme. We also commissioned a local artist, Dan Arnold, to produce an installation as a response to *Titanic Stories*, a new temporary exhibition reclaiming the sinking of the *Titanic* as a small boat story (because all the survivors owed their lives to the lifeboats). Dan created a visually stunning ‘upside down iceberg’ over our reconstruction of lifeboat 13, with the involvement of 700 community participants.

Ghost Ships proved to be immensely popular, and it led to us talking to *Yskynna* about developing a performance to complement our next major temporary exhibition, *Monsters of the Deep*. However, we also commissioned *Illyria* in 2021, to create a live production called *I Saw a Monster* to explore the conflict between cryptozoology and mainstream scientific research. Four performances were delivered daily over the entire summer holidays in 2022. Independent market research found this was one of the main drivers of footfall to the Museum.

We have commissioned both *Illyria* and *Yskynna* to develop a response to *Pirates*. In 2023 the theatre company will be mounting a show called *A Pirate's Life for Me!* and the aerial dance company are developing a swashbuckling production, which will be performed in the rigging above visitors’ heads in 2024. 🐙



Celebrating our volunteers

We are immensely grateful to be supported by a team of wonderful volunteers who help us in the work we do in so many areas of the Museum.

When we opened, it was always our intention to involve the local community in the Museum and one way we have achieved this is through our volunteer programme.

Even before we welcomed our first visitors, our volunteer team were assisting us with preparations for our opening. As we reach our 20th anniversary, we are extremely proud that some of our original volunteers are still involved with helping us today, celebrating over 20 years' voluntary service.

On average since opening our volunteers have provided the Museum with over 30,000 hours of their time each year; if our volunteers were paid at the today's national minimum wage, the cost would be in excess of £280,000 a year.

Wide variety of roles

Our volunteers work across a wide variety of roles, with the largest proportion helping with our visitor experience, by engaging with visitors, providing information on the exhibitions, and invigilating the galleries.

The Bartlett Maritime Research Centre and Library is run entirely by volunteers who support with research and reference enquiries from the public; a valuable resource which is open Tuesday-Saturday every week.

Volunteers also provide support with our learning activities, boat collection maintenance, boat building and curatorial tasks. Over the past 20 years, other roles have included marketing, administration, fundraising, IT support, and exhibition installation.

Changing nature of volunteering

Inevitably, the nature of volunteering has changed over the past two decades, and we have been faced with challenges along the way to ensure we continue to attract and recruit new volunteers.

People are retiring later than before, and when we opened in 2003, it was still largely a requirement to retire at 65. When the Default Retirement Age was scrapped in April 2011, we noticed a gradual decrease in people wishing to volunteer. When you were required to retire at 65, you suddenly found yourself with spare time and energy. Many people wanted to put their skills to good use by giving something back into the community, and so became involved with the Museum.

We therefore needed to evolve our volunteer programme as we faced the steady decline in numbers. In August 2019, we began a recruitment drive with several new initiatives to increase awareness of our volunteering opportunities. By February 2022, these new initiatives had begun to pay dividends.

We had managed to recruit 20 new volunteers during the period November 2019-February 2020, and were back to having a total of 180 volunteers on the team.

However, the biggest challenge to our volunteer programme was about to happen.

The pandemic

Just 10 days before our annual volunteer party arranged for March 2020, a great opportunity for us to thank all our volunteers, we were forced to close due to Covid-19.

Right Our volunteers support the Museum in many different ways and we can't thank them enough.

Over the next 18 months, the Museum closed for three periods of lockdown, a total of 10 months. This had a devastating impact on our volunteer team, reducing our number of volunteers from 180 volunteers to 120 volunteers. Some volunteers were nervous to return, especially before the vaccination programme, and more so if they were vulnerable or lived with someone who was vulnerable.

The pandemic also made people re-evaluate their life priorities, so many of us were unable to see our families during this time. This prompted some to move away from Cornwall to be closer to family, or realise a desire to spend more time with their loved ones. Some decided to continue with the new hobbies they developed during lockdown and felt they wanted a break from volunteering.

We were faced with a huge recruitment challenge. Therefore, in October 2021, we appointed a paid Volunteer Coordinator, to assist the Human Resources Manager, with the recruitment, training, and administration of the Museum's volunteer programme.

The Future

It took over a year, but the new initiatives introduced by the Volunteer Coordinator are coming to fruition. We introduced some short-term volunteer placements for university students, and some volunteers now support us remotely with tasks such as proof-reading, curatorial projects and marketing.

It takes time to recruit and train new volunteers, but we are now delighted to have over 130 volunteers supporting us, and we are busy processing new enquiries from potential volunteers.

The pandemic also stopped us celebrating and acknowledging the voluntary service many in the team had provided. So, on the 29 September 2022, we were delighted to be able to host a volunteer afternoon tea, where those in the team were awarded with their long-service voluntary certificates for five, 10, or 15 years' service.

We are now in the process of organising our 2023 volunteer party, the first for three years, which will celebrate and thank the 20 volunteers who have been with us from the very beginning. We can't thank them all enough. 🍷



New acquisitions

Each year we add new and fascinating maritime objects to our collection. Here's a selection of our new acquisitions in 2022. ➤

Building our Cornish maritime collection

Over the past year, we have acquired a bounty of items for our collection. Three, however, stand out because they provide a rich and fascinating insight into Cornish maritime history and help us develop this area of our collection and display. From the account book of a pilot from Coverack in the late 1700s to medals honouring bravery in a shipwreck and service to a Lloyds signal station, these three all curiously link to different aspects of maritime life on the Lizard Peninsula.

Barker Manuscript

The beautiful handwritten account book, which was bought at auction from Bonhams earlier in the year with money from the Barker family, details the trading activity of James Barker, a pilot based in Coverack on the Lizard Peninsula. The entries in the account book span from 1736 to 1796, and within this period, we notice a shift from traded goods, such as cloth, sugar, and rum, to payments for piloting. Indeed, in 1809 James Barker was listed as a registered pilot (second class) for Falmouth when the government sought to regulate pilotage.

This manuscript can help reconstruct the Coverack trade landscape and maritime life, providing rich details of people, traders, ships, goods, and events, providing an invaluable resource for developing the stories within our Cornwall galleries. This manuscript not only gives an insight into maritime life on the Lizard but also provides a glimpse into James's personal life. On one of the pages, where there was a spare space, he recorded the birth dates of two of his children, George and William.



Left Descendants of James Barker seeing the manuscript for the first time.

Below left Bay of Panama Medal.

Below right Emmott Medal.



Bay of Panama Medal

William Fisher, a coastguard from St Keverne, was awarded a medal by the Board of Trade for bravery in rescuing people from the shipwreck of the *Bay of Panama*. The ship was wrecked on the Manacles, a treacherous stretch of rock on the Lizard coast, during the Great Blizzard of 1891, the worst blizzard experienced by Cornwall in 200 years. This medal complements our existing display in our 'Cornwall and the Sea' gallery, which already includes a photograph of the wreck in the panels.

The *Bay of Panama* was returning from Calcutta with a cargo of jute bound for Dundee when the weather quickly deteriorated, with driving snow and a strong north-easterly gale forcing the ship onto the rocks late in the afternoon of the 9th of March. The captain, his wife, the steward, and four apprentices were swept overboard during the night. The rest of the crew had become soaked by the sea spray after climbing into the rigging to escape the icy sea, and many had frozen to the rigging itself. A local farmer discovered the wreck early the next day. Under Fisher's leadership, the Coastguard was summoned, and rocket launchers were deployed. By 9am, the Coastguard had rescued only 17 survivors from the crew of 40.

The medal shows a bust of Queen Victoria and, on the reverse, a very intricate scene of a shipwreck, reminiscent of *The Raft of the Medusa* by Géricault. The medal was designed by Benjamin Wyon, who came from a large and illustrious family of engravers and medallists. Indeed, Allan Gairdner Wyon, Benjamin's grandson, designed another medal that has recently entered our collection.



Emmott Medal

The granddaughter of John James Emmott donated another medal. Emmott was awarded the silver medal for 'Services to Lloyds' on his retirement in 1951, having worked for Lloyds of London, the important shipping insurer, for 48 years. He spent the last 34 years at the Lizard Signal Station, 30 of those as Signal Master.

Before the advent of wireless ship-to-shore telegraphy, ships passing the Lizard peninsula communicated with the signal station using semaphore. Outward and homeward-bound ships reported their names and other vital information about cargo and conditions. This information was then transmitted to the ship owners in Falmouth via overland telegraph. The shipping agent G. C. Fox and Company first set up the station before being taken over by Lloyds of London in 1883.

The medal is in good condition and has its original ribbon and presentation box. On one side, it shows Neptune with his trident riding a chariot of seahorses.

Expanding the National Small Boat Collection

The Burling Dinghy

Our latest boat acquisition is a fairly ordinary looking 12ft teak wood sailing dinghy but it has a truly fascinating history.

In the mid-1930s three sailing clubs were formed in Singapore for British Forces personnel. The dinghy was designed by Group Captain E.J.P Burling, Station Commander of RAF Seletar. Burling, whose parents owned the Holgates Hotel on St Mary's Isles of Scilly, was educated at Truro School. He had a distinguished career as a pilot in the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force and was decorated many times during the First World War.

A Burling dinghy identical to ours was used by three British soldiers to evade capture by the Japanese when they invaded Singapore in 1942. They sailed the little boat for 650 miles through hurricanes across stormy seas before its occupants, by this time starving and seriously dehydrated, were taken prisoner by the Japanese Navy.

In 1932 when he was officer commanding RAF Mount Batten, Plymouth, Burling asked Uffa Fox to design an 18ft sailing dinghy, *Wizard*, so that it could be carried under the wing of his aircraft when he flew home from Plymouth to Scilly. The concept became the forerunner of the Airborne Lifeboat, which saved the lives of many downed airmen during the Second World War. 🐦



Images The Burling Dinghy.



Transformations

From a major refit to more subtle but transformative interventions, in 2022 we adapted, updated and renovated a number of key spaces in the Museum.

Images Play zones at the Museum.



A new play zone



Our play zones are one of the most popular features of the Museum and form a key part of our commitment to support and nurture the development of young children. They provide creative, safe spaces where children can benefit from opportunities to develop large and fine motor skills through physical activities, imaginative play and problem-solving.

When the Museum was first designed, little provision was made for toddlers or younger visitors, beyond a handful of interactive exhibits and the boating pool. We did have an education room and handling collection for formal school visits but sadly these were as much about keeping children out of the galleries as they were about making a serious commitment to creating positive learning environments within the Museum. A case of ‘children could be seen but not heard’.

In a bid to make the Museum more family-friendly we decided to address these shortcomings by providing a designated play space. The origins of our Play Zone date back to 2006 when we first launched a summer play offer. Initially these were a series of stand-alone activity areas designed for use by pre-school toddlers and children up to the age of 11, with limited parental supervision. They were characterised by a mix of games utilising bright colours and different textures. They included floor games, soft play equipment and sorting and shape-matching, supported by a broad mix of crafting activities.

Over time these early experiments led to the creation of our first recognisable Play Zone, which was introduced in 2014. Located on the Quarter Deck, in a space previously used for mini temporary exhibitions, the first Play Zone was linked thematically to our *Viking Voyagers* exhibition. Entitled *Dragon's Den*, it incorporated all the recognisable features of what we now think of as a Play Zone. It included a climbing platform, a slide, soft play equipment, multi-sensory exhibits, shiny surfaces, LED coloured lights, soft weapons, a dressing-up area and themed seating for adults. Importantly this was a

specifically designed play area where almost all surfaces and equipment were covered in thick padding, to provide a soft environment where it was safe for children to play.

Treasure Island, our previous Play Zone, was almost four years old and was looking tired, hardly surprising given the heavy usage it had absorbed. We decided we wanted to invest in an upgraded Play Zone which would link to and complement our forthcoming *Pirates* exhibition. A key feature of *Skull Island*, is that it has been designed to form part of the welcoming area and first floor entrance to *Pirates*. We felt it was important to reinforce some of the key messages in the main exhibition, so the graphics are inclusive, presenting a range of characters from diverse backgrounds.

The new facility includes a large buggy park (with sightlines from the Play Zone). It is multi-sensory and promotes child-centred learning, with wall-to-wall safety flooring, safety padding wraps for the pillars, colourful illustrations, a climbing frame, a slide, hoisting games with flags and buckets, pirate toys and books, a dressing-up area, themed music, seating for grown-ups and a very large skull activity platform with a spooky ship's bell and wheel. There is also a treasure chest inset into the floor, packed full of pieces of eight, a theme which is picked up by a series of interactive pirate chests children will be able to find throughout the main *Pirates* exhibition.

Our Play Zones have been widely welcomed by visiting families and are especially appreciated by locals who make regular use of these facilities throughout the year. *Skull Island* offers the perfect way for children to burn off steam before entering the main exhibition. It also provides a great space for developing skills such as balance, coordination, imagination and problem-solving, whilst creating an opportunity for children to learn about sharing, taking turns, and communicating with their peers. We are confident *Skull Island* will form an important addition to our public offer. ➡➡

A gift shop refit

Below The Gift Shop update is now complete.
Right The new Library store.



Retail performance is critical to the financial sustainability of The Museum, and the retail space we have needs to cater for the dual markets of the local community and visiting tourists. How we succeed in these endeavours is intrinsically intertwined with how we pitch our ranges, the creative process behind these and the balancing of fashion and trend with the point of emotion purchasing that traditional museum visitors face as they subconsciously seek completion of their visit.

With all of this in mind, we worked with Arantxa Garcia, a retail merchandiser, from Exhibeo, who spent four days with us to revitalise our offer and take us through the process of crafting our ranges and approaches in line with our customer demographic. Arantxa has significant heritage experience, working previously with, amongst others, Royal Museums Greenwich, The National Museum of the Royal Navy, Science Museum and the British Library.

The results have been undeniably successful. The space has been transformed for a relatively low cost, with performance improving significantly across several metrics, with the cost of investment into the process recouped within ten weeks. Very few new products have been added, but we have taken a much more scientific approach to how we lay out the space, and the customer routing and journey, both visually and physically. Visitors pass through thematically merchandised areas and carefully coordinated colour and product zones, drawn from one product to another, all carefully curated to encourage our visitors and customers to purchase, yet at the same time understand that such purchases support the Museum’s core charitable objectives.

A new library store

In October, the Bartlett Maritime Research Centre and Library’s duplicate volumes were moved from the upper object store at Ponsharden to a new space on the ground floor. This move provides a dedicated room for the library to use, making the books more accessible. Furthermore, this frees up valuable and much-needed space in the object store, which is timely as we have recently acquired the Falmouth Surf Life Saving collection, containing some larger objects. ↶



Image Front Row from left: Professor Helen Berry UoE and Sara Pugh, NMMC Trustee. Back Row from left: Professor Bryony Onciul UoE, Alexandra Bolitho President NMMC, Cllr Steve Eva Mayor of Falmouth, Cllr Martyn Alvey and Stuart Slade Deputy Director NMMC.

Partnership agreement with the University of Exeter



In 2022 we were honoured to commit to a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Exeter to strengthen and formalise our existing partnership. ➡



Image Professor Bryony Onciul UoE and Stuart Slade NMMC at the Memorandum of Understanding ceremony.

“The potential of this collaboration for both organisations is enormous. The Museum is able to benefit from cutting-edge academic research for its exhibitions – not least around Cornish maritime history – and visitors can see the University’s world-leading research.”

Stuart Slade, Deputy Director and Head of Public Programming at NMMC

Over the years, the Museum has offered case study visits, ‘masterclass’ talks and work-related learning for students from the University of Exeter. This has often taken the form of student placements and internships, both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. In addition, our curatorial team has increasingly collaborated with academics from the university to co-create new temporary and permanent exhibitions, thereby showcasing their latest research.

In recognition of this long-standing relationship – and the huge potential that it contains – a ceremony took place in the Museum on 25 May to formalise an institutional partnership with the University of Exeter. In the presence of NMMC President, Alexandra Bolitho, Trustees Peter Davies and Sara Pugh, Cllr Steve Eva, Mayor of Falmouth and Stuart Slade, Deputy Director and Head of Public Programming,

a Memorandum of Understanding (also referred to as a Partnership Agreement) was signed by Professor Helen Berry on behalf of the University.

The Partnership Agreement sets out a ‘framework for institutional engagement’ for a wide range of individual and shared priorities, across a wide range of subject areas. It covers a number of ambitious outputs, including scope for new research, knowledge transfer and cultural representation, with the overarching ambition of extending the reach of culture to those previously not engaged.

Speaking at the event, Professor Bryony Onciul, Associate Professor of Museology and Heritage Studies, who had contributed to the *Monsters of the Deep* exhibition said, ‘Working with National Maritime Museum Cornwall on the exhibition was an enjoyable and rewarding opportunity.

It built on a decade of collaborative work that focused on student experience and education. We are delighted to be able to continue and enrich this important partnership in the future. This agreement marks an exciting next step in our collaboration.’

Speaking on behalf of the Museum, Stuart Slade said, ‘The potential of this collaboration for both organisations is enormous. The Museum is able to benefit from cutting edge academic research for its exhibitions – not least around Cornish maritime history – and visitors can see the University’s world-leading research.’

The Partnership Agreement covers a wide range of subject areas and expertise, including marketing and economic research, as well as history and heritage. In return, the University benefits from reaching a wider and diverse range

of new audiences. In future staff from the University of Exeter and the Museum will continue to work together on teaching, exhibition development and audience engagement, as well as public lectures. There will also be joint research to reveal hidden and marginalised histories within Cornwall’s maritime heritage. The University will also provide advice for the Museum to increase diversity and inclusion in its own organisational culture and practice, supporting a re-assessment of museum collecting priorities, interpretation, new exhibits and displays, and audience engagement.

This partnership and the collaborative discussions which underpin it, mark an important development in the relationship between the Museum and the University. Equally importantly, it also further enhances the Museum’s reputation as a significant, culturally ambitious heritage organisation. 🌊



Adult Learning

Image Gail McGarva delivers the workshop *Disappearing Lines*.

The Museum continues to deliver its popular programme of blended lectures, events and workshops to both onsite and online audiences. ➤➤



Left Gail McGarva delivers the workshop *Disappearing Lines* in the Museum's boatbuilding workshop.

Below The Museum's Lecture Series welcomes both a live and online audience.

Lecture Series

Our Autumn Lecture Series was designed to explore and extend key themes within our major temporary exhibition, *Monsters of the Deep*. Expert and nuanced insights were provided by two of the exhibition's guest curators – David Thomas, archivist with the Archives and Cornish Studies Service, and Dr Tammy Horton, taxonomist and scientific researcher at the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton.

In his talk, *Treasures from Kresen Kernow*, David Thomas explored some of the 'jewels' in the Kresen Kernow archives, including the Elerky Estate Atlas, which was on display here at the Museum as part of the *Monsters of the Deep* exhibition. Through his knowledgeable and enthusiastic guidance, David helped the audience discover insights into Cornish history to be found in the often obscured or overlooked details contained in the archives' beautiful maps, charts and records.

Dr Tammy Horton works on a variety of deep-sea biodiversity projects at the National Oceanography Centre (NOC) and is Manager of its Discovery Collections – a globally important research collection of deep-sea specimens. Dr Horton was instrumental in brokering the partnership between NMMC and NOC and securing us unprecedented access to rare and

important specimens for the *Monsters of the Deep* exhibition.

In her talk, *The Discovery Collections*, Dr Horton invited the audience behind the scenes of the National Oceanography Centre, detailing the historical and scientific importance of the collection, and revealing some of her personal favourite specimens. Audience members included students from the University of Exeter for whom the talk offered valuable guidance for a career in taxonomy and deep-sea research.

Disappearing Lines

On the 19 & 20 October, Gail McGarva returned to the Museum with her boatbuilding workshop *Disappearing Lines*. Taking place in the Museum's own, publicly visible boatbuilding workshop, this activity was based around practical hands-on activities interwoven with stories, captured by Gail, of craft in danger of extinction. Adult learners had the chance to try their hand at two key processes in traditional wooden boatbuilding – steam bending using oak and copper-rivet fastening. Through Gail's demonstrations and tutoring, they created their own miniature oak ribcage of a boat, a 'ghost ship' symbolising the disappearing lines of the craft. 🐉



Friday 30 September saw the Museum's Boat Hall transformed into a concert venue, with staging and lighting rig assembled, as Seth Lakeman, along with Benji Kirkpatrick, Ben Nicholls and Geoff Lakeman performed maritime folk songs under the Flying Flotilla. The concert was held the day that Seth's latest album, Sea Song Sessions, a collaborative album with a nautical theme, was released.

The concept for the album came about in 2021, when they were asked to prepare an evening of sea-related songs for the Folkestone Festival, and drawing on all of their sizeable oceanic repertoires, these all formed the natural foundation and inspiration for these acclaimed musicians to conceive the Sea Song Sessions. They chose to record material from each artist's repertoire, traditional songs and some newly written for the album.

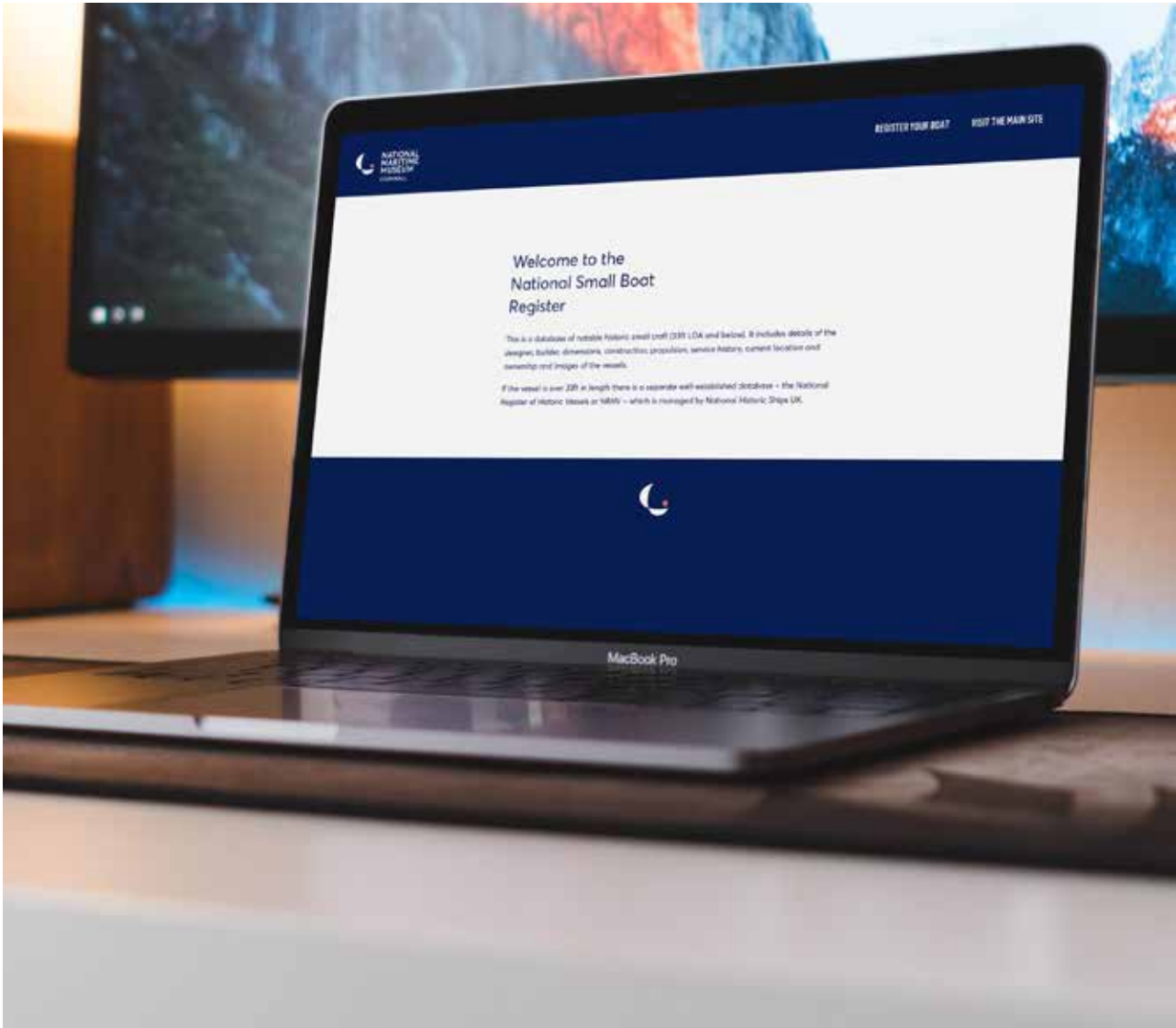
Around 200 fans enjoyed a two-hour concert as Seth and the band took them through the album along with favourites from their back catalogues. The Museum co-promoted the concert with Seth's management company, DMF Music and Charlestown Harbour, operating the bar and sharing the ticketing revenue. Our volunteers provided a combination of event stewarding duties and collection interpretation for those attending. It was wonderful to see how the concert brought in new audiences to the Museum with a genuine interest in the collection. 🌊

Image Seth Lakeman performs at National Maritime Museum Cornwall. Photo by Jolyon Holroyd.

Seth Lakeman

National Small Boat Register

The first steps in upgrading the National Small Boat Register.



~~~~~  
“Boat owners can now register their boats online, significantly improving the administration of the register and adding to our existing database of over 2,500 small boats.”



**Left** Processing registrations through the NSBR is now easier and simpler.  
**Below** The Crandell hydroplane in the Museum's Boat Hall.

In the previous issue of Fathom, we discussed the National Small Boat Register (NSBR), which records nationally and regionally important small craft of 33ft and under, and the ambitions of its co-founder and pioneer, the late George Hogg. We have since completed the website's upgrade and have contacted over 70 boatowners who have expressed an interest to register their boats while the system has been down. Boat owners can now register their boats online, significantly improving the administration of the register and adding to our existing database of over 2,500 small boats. The register captures details of the designer, builder, dimensions,

construction, propulsion, service history, current location, and ownership, along with images of the vessels. Our next steps will be to expand the site, allowing users to browse through the boats on the register and conduct detailed searches. The register will provide a valuable resource for those who own a small boat, boat enthusiasts and researchers, giving us a clearer picture of what small boats are out there. The significance of small boats to maritime heritage has been overlooked in the past, and the National Small Boat Register will help to redress this balance. ↶





# Below Deck

**Image** The Museum at night.  
Photo by Michael Kelland.



# ABOUT NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM CORNWALL

### What we do

- Major exhibitions
- Family learning
- Award-winning education programme
- Boat building and conservation
- Preserve and promote 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.

### 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.

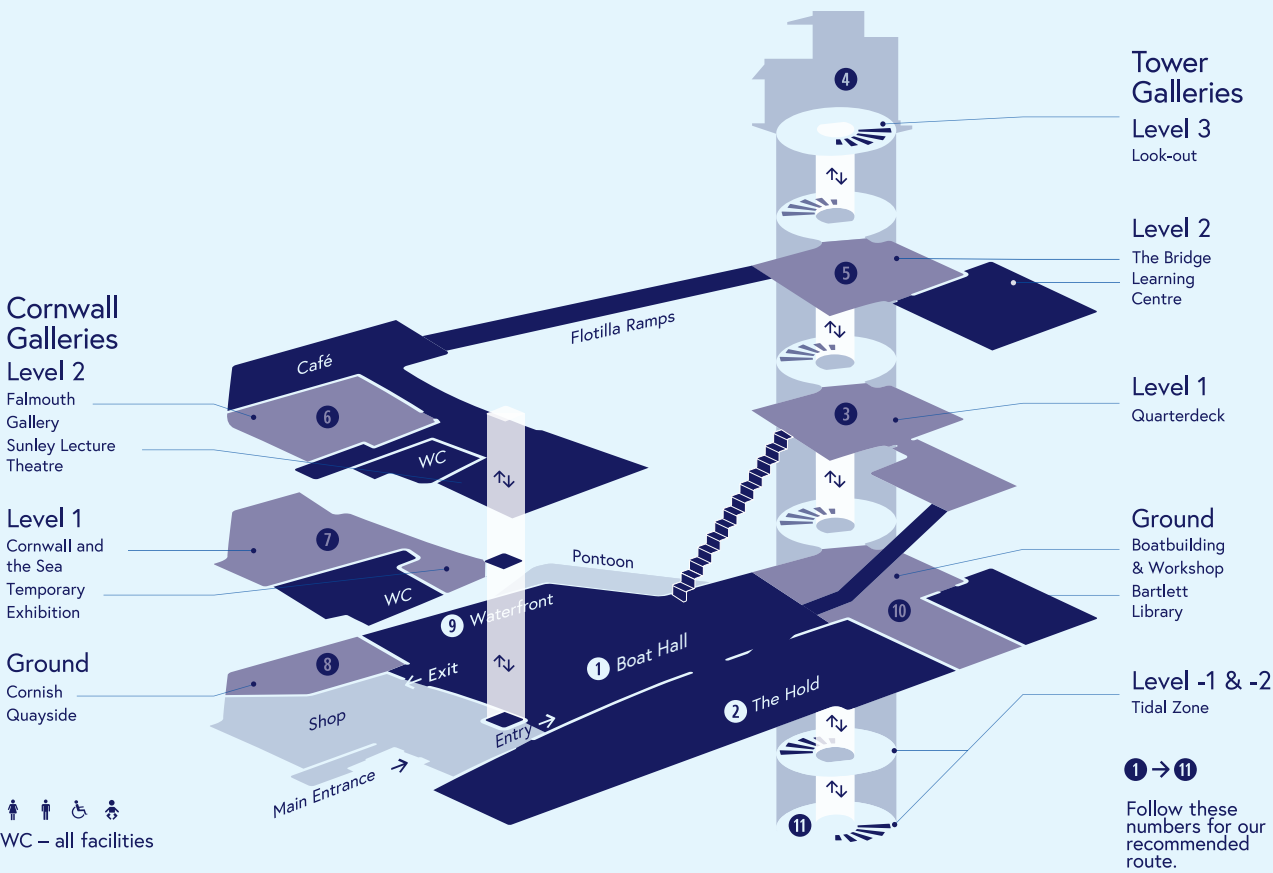
#### Formal education programme

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





# 2023 LISTINGS

Our 2023 programme is as ambitious as ever, providing a diverse range of events and exhibitions throughout the year.

## MAJOR EXHIBITIONS

**Pirates**  
New major exhibition  
*Opens 31 March 2023*  
Explore beneath the surface

**Dashing, daring and adventurous or bloodthirsty, immoral and greedy – were pirates of the 18th century heroes of the age or no more than callous cutthroats?**

For generations, pirates have been portrayed in film, fiction and fashion as symbols of freedom and adventure. But how and why has this image been created? To find out, immerse yourself in the digital world of the *Sea of Thieves* game, land on *Treasure Island*, meeting the man behind Long John Silver and dance a hornpipe with Horatio Pugwash before discovering the dark world of the real pirates of the Caribbean.

In this latest major exhibition, explore how popular culture has shaped how we think of pirates today, and dive beneath the surface to unearth the harsh and terrifying truth.

**The Museum at 20**  
*The Museum at 20* exhibition celebrates all that we're deeply proud of and uncovers some fascinating facts you may not know. It's a chance to get to know the Museum a little better and tell us how you see the 'museum of the future'.

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

**Science of the Sea**  
February half term  
*Saturday 11 – Sunday 19 Feb*  
Explosive hands-on science demonstrations with Bristol Explorer Dome.

**Pirate Academy – Join our Pirate Crew**  
Easter Holidays  
*Saturday 1 – Sunday 16 April*  
All aboard to join our pirate crew! Become a budding buccaneer with Rattlebox Theatre.

**Rock Pool Explorers**  
Spring half term  
*Saturday 27 May – Sunday 4 June*  
Discover the curious creatures found along the Cornish shore with the Rock Pool Project.

**A Pirate's Life for Me**  
Summer Holidays  
*Monday 24 July - Sunday 3 September*  
*A Pirate's Life for Me!* is Illyria's brand-new interactive show exploring the lives – and possibly deaths – of the most notorious pirates in the Caribbean. And the best thing about it? You, the audience, get to decide what happens!

**Silhouettes & Shadows**  
October half term  
*Saturday 21 – Sunday 29 October*  
Pirate shadow puppet stories and songs magically told using a boat sail.

## LECTURE SERIES

**Red Sails & Pilchards**  
**with illustrator Matt Johnson**  
*Thursday 25 May, 7.30pm*  
Creating an illustrated book about Cornwall's fishing history.

**Forward and Courageous**  
**with Dr Elaine Murphy**  
*Thursday 14 September, 7.30pm*  
Female pirates and the experiences of women at sea.

**The Lamentable Cries of at Least 1500 Christians**  
**with Dr Jo Esra**  
*Thursday 12th October, 7.30pm*  
North African pirates and west country captives in the 17th century.

**Did Pirates Bury Their Treasure?**  
**with Dr Richard Blakemore**  
*Thursday 9 November, 7.30pm*  
Myths and reality in the history of piracy.

## 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** for details or call us on 01326 313388

**Find us:**  
National Maritime Museum Cornwall  
Discovery Quay  
Falmouth  
Cornwall

Sat nav: TR11 3QY



**nmmc.co.uk**  
01326 313388



NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM CORNWALL IS INDEBTED TO:

National Lottery Heritage Fund,  
Emergency Heritage Fund

Arts Council England Culture  
Recovery Fund

Weston Culture Fund  
(Garfield Weston Foundation)

The Headley Trust

Coastal Community Fund

Lois Cumbers Foundation

The Tanner Trust



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



**THE  
HEADLEY  
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.

OUR TRUSTEES

- Alexandra Bolitho *(President)*  
Simon Sherrard *(Chairman)*  
Rob Holmes *(Chair, Audit and Finance Committee)*  
The Hon. Viscount Evelyn Boscawen  
Peter Davies  
Coralie Green  
Michael Griffiths  
Sam Hunt  
Anthony Pawlyn  
Sara Pugh *(retired September 2022)*  
Ben Statham-Wilkins *(appointed March 2023)*  
Helen Stemberidge  
Simon Tregoning  
David Williams

CORPORATE MEMEBERS

Thank you to our Corporate Members: A & P Falmouth, Falmouth Harbour Commissioners, Hayes Parsons, Pendennis.



Printed by Pureprint Group on FSC certified paper, using fully sustainable, vegetable oil-based inks, power from 100% renewable resources and waterless printing technology. Print production systems registered to ISO 14001, ISO 9001, EMAS standards and over 97% of waste is recycled.



© 2023 National Maritime Museum Cornwall Trust  
Discovery Quay Falmouth  
Cornwall TR11 3QY

A company limited by guarantee  
Registered in England and Wales  
Reg no: 3446298  
Charity no: 1067884



# 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  
artefacts, which further bring to life the award-  
winning National Maritime Museum Cornwall's  
nautical heritage and collections housed within its  
landmark building in Falmouth, Cornwall.

