

Fathom

2024 — ISSUE 8



The Journal of National Maritime Museum Cornwall

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Test launching a SOE boat.
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Director's foreword

This edition of Fathom looks back at the many exciting projects we delivered during 2024. In early January, we began the second phase of reimagining the Boat Hall. The first stage included the installation of the hanging boats, drawn from the national small boat collection, and the replacement of all the high-level house and spotlights with LED lamps. Our focus shifted to making improvements to wayfinding and the display and interpretation of boats on the ground floor. These were linked under the theme 'Small Boats, Big Stories'. A 'one-size-fits-all' cradle, was designed to support the ground floor boats. These 'future-proof' cradles can be extended in length and width and are fitted with casters to enable the boats to be easily moved from their display positions/plug-in electrical connections, to accommodate function-hire events in the gallery. During this stage of the project, we successfully applied to the Wolfson Foundation and DCMS for a grant uplift to offset rising material and labour costs. [See pages 14-17]

In February, we acquired an inflatable Zodiac dinghy, which had been used by refugees in an attempt to cross the English Channel. The boat, donated by the UK Border Force, is representative of one of the most significant and socially relevant issues of our times. Throughout history, boats have provided a lifeline for people desperate to escape oppression or to seek a better life. Today, we face the global challenge of mass migration caused by climate change, war, and economic inequality. Migration is now one of the most important political issues in our country, if not the world. Small boats or 'dinghies' have

become the physical symbols of this crisis. They trigger fiercely argued and sometimes deeply divisive beliefs about legal and illegal migrants, the right of a country to control its borders, national security, and human rights. But small boats also carry individual human stories of desperation and hope. In what we believe is the first public exhibition of a boat of this kind in the UK, we hope the Zodiac dinghy will inspire reflection, conversation, and a recognition of the people behind such objects. [See page 17]

In March the Museum was awarded £499,000 from the Museum Estate and Development Fund, administered by Arts Council England, towards an ambitious project to replace the main roof, which has been leaking since the Museum opened in 2002. These capital works, which include the replacement of all high-level windows, will be started in January 2025 with an estimated completion date at the end of March 2025.

In mid-March, we mounted an exhibition of Kurt Jackson's work in the Bridge Gallery. This show documents the important role of the RNLI lifeboats and lifeguards in Cornwall. It formed part of our contribution to celebrating the RNLI 200 anniversary, alongside a new RNLI Rescue Zone on the ground floor of the Museum. The exhibition featured 70 individual works varying in size from postcard sized pieces to large canvases measured in metres. Kurt's work wonderfully captures the distinctive sight of the blue and orange lifeboats nestled into Cornish harbours and coastlines, together with lifeguards at the centre of Cornish beach scenes. The exhibition included Kurt's private collection of paintings of the Penlee lifeboat station, as it was left after the 1981 disaster, when the crew of the Penlee lifeboat, Solomon Browne, were lost attempting to rescue the crew and passengers onboard a stricken coaster. The exhibition also featured 18 original small sketches of refugee boats which Kurt has generously donated to the Museum. [See pages 18-21]



Left Rodney Patisson & Iain MacDonald-Smith.

On 21st March, we hosted a dinner to celebrate the completion of the Boat Hall project. Our guest of honour was Rodney Patisson MBE, a double Olympic gold medallist in the Two Person Heavyweight Dinghy event in the 1968 Mexico City and 1972 Munich Olympics. Four years later, he added a silver medal at the 1976 Montreal Olympics in the same class. His Flying Dutchman dinghy, *Superdocious*, which he sailed with MacDonald-Smith in 1968, is accessioned as part of the national small boat collection and is the leading boat in the 'flying' flotilla. We were also delighted that Iain MacDonald-Smith attended the dinner.

We completed a baseline environmental audit for the financial year ending March 2024, with the assistance of TerraVerde, a sustainability consultancy operating in the Travel and Tourism sectors. Their report identifies the emissions footprint generated by our normal business operations. This gives us a benchmark from which various different factors can be studied, and against which the future reduction of our carbon footprint can be measured. The visitor footprint accounts for 77.6% of NMMC's total GHG impact, and TerraVerde's projections indicate a potential increase to 81.7% by 2030. [See pages 66-69]

In late March, we took the decision to build a replica of a WW2 espionage boat. The suggestion was proposed by Phil Clarke, one of our boat volunteers. Phil had been researching the history of a Special Operations Executive base at Port Navas on the Helford River for several years. The so-called 'surf boat' (because it skimmed over the surf), was designed by Nigel Warrington-Smyth in 1942 to facilitate clandestine operations along the coastline of Brittany. The boat was rowed ashore to drop off supplies and operatives. These boats were also used to evacuate fallen airmen. Work began on the lofting floor in the Museum boat workshop in September. [See pages 52-55]

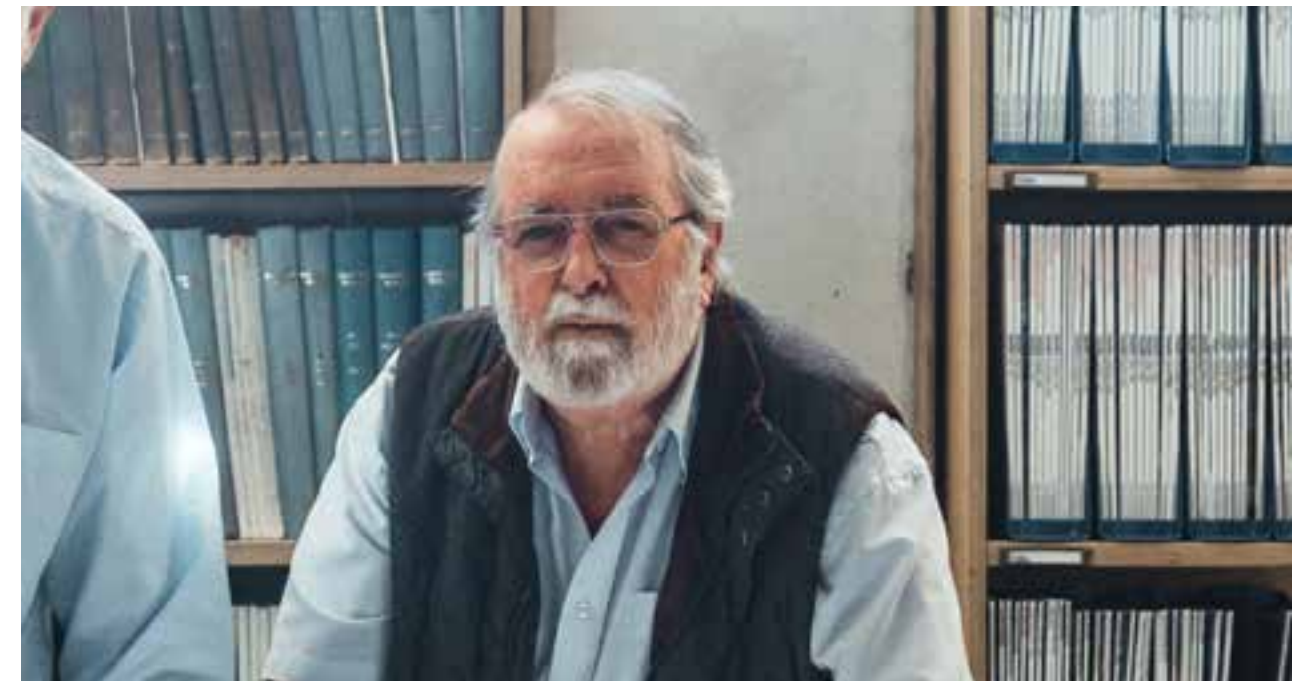
While collections will always remain at the heart of what we do as a museum, over recent years we have invested considerable resources in commissioning culturally ambitious programming. We have developed clearly defined themes for family learning performances and activities over every school holiday. These include 'Science and the Sea' during February half-term, 'Cornish Heroes' at Easter, 'Nature, the Cornish Coast', 'Rockpools' and 'Sea-Safety,' over the summer half-term, 'Shadows and Silhouettes' during October half-term and 'Lanterns and Lights' at Christmas. Our objective is to encourage repeat visits from specific interest groups, whilst also attracting new audiences interested in different subjects and art forms.

Right Tony Pawlyn.

During the Easter holidays this year, we were thrilled to welcome Ed Rowe (aka Kernow King), Jenny Beare and Dan Richards. They performed *The Cornish Caretakers and the Chest of Cornishness*, a hilarious and informative show which brought to life six Cornish men and women from history who changed the world. [See pages 40-41]

In April we opened a co-curated exhibition in our Balcony Gallery, to mark the 100th anniversary of the Sunbeam yachts. Museum volunteer, Dave Owens, was appointed as the guest curator and he secured the majority of the loans. Sunbeams are a classic, one-design racing yacht. The class was designed by distinguished naval architect Alfred Westmacott and his boat building company Woodnutts, at Bembridge on the Isle of Wight. Here they built a total of 39 Sunbeams between 1923 and 1938. Most of these yachts were raced at the Hamble River Sailing Club. However, a number of yachtsmen in Falmouth began to show great interest in Westmacott's design and, in 1924, eight new boats, built by Woodnutts, were delivered by train to Falmouth. One of these boats was *Maranui*, which the Museum acquired into its 'wet boat' collection in 2021. We are currently exploring the possibility of a working partnership with the Falmouth Sunbeam Association to keep *Maranui* in racing condition. [See pages 22-25]

For several years we have also invited artists and arts organisations to create thought-provoking artistic responses to our exhibition spaces and narratives. This summer we were delighted to work again with the Illyria theatre company. We commissioned them to produce a family-orientated show called *Escape from Treasure Island!*, which achieved an incredible public response. [See pages 40-41]



In April we purchased a 1965 VW split-screen camper van, which will form a centre piece for our next major temporary exhibition called *SURF!*. By mid-June we had developed the initial design for the exhibition. *SURF!* will celebrate the rich history and cultural, social and environmental impacts of 100 years of surfing in Cornwall, along with its evolving legacies today, as an innovative form of sustainable leisure, tourism, fashion and blue health. It will explore how surfing has shaped Cornwall's coastal communities and perceptions of Cornwall's identity, how it is challenging stereotypes of disability and how it is changing public attitudes to water safety and the marine environment. It will also showcase several internationally important art boards. [See pages 28-31]

We are sad to share the news that, Tony Pawlyn, Head of the Bartlett Maritime Research Centre and Library, died on 8th May. They say nobody is indispensable, but Tony was. He was a mine of information and our go to for anything to do with Cornish Maritime Heritage. It is no exaggeration to say he will be greatly missed by all of us at the Museum. Tony was one of our original Trustees and previously had been a Trustee of the Cornwall Maritime Museum. Along with Captain George Hogg, he was instrumental in the development and creation of the Museum as we know it today. He was a leading authority on Cornish Maritime History, and, thanks to the efforts of Jonathan Griffen and Anne Pond, his extensive personal archive has been gifted to the Museum. [See pages 74-75]

When the Museum was first established, the National Maritime Museum loaned our institution 104 small boats under 30'. Of these, eight belonged to the Royal Collection Trust. With the consent of the RMG Trustees and DCMS, this core collection has since been reduced to 79. Over the same period, we have added a further 70 boats to the 'national small boat collection', giving us a total of 153 boats – plus a small fleet of 'wet' boats which can be sailed. Due to limited storage space at our outlying boat storage facilities in Penryn and because we have no plans to display them, the decision was taken to return all the loans belonging to the Royal Collection Trust, when our agreement ended. The boats were returned in three batches between May and June, the more delicate seal-skin kayak, being transported by Constantine, art transportation specialists.

This year's Autumn Lecture Series focused on the theme of 'Women and the Sea'. Speakers included Dr Elaine Murphy, who spoke about Women and the Navy in the Age of Sail, Dr Charlotte MacKenzie on Mary Broad/Bryant – The Creation of a Cornish Legend, Elizabeth Dale, who provided an insight into Forgotten Women of the Cornish Coast and Helen Dale and Sharon Auston who spoke about Risk, Reward, Shipwrecks & Secrets. [See pages 46-47]

In September representatives from the Museum Volunteers attended an event at County Hall in Truro. They were presented with a certificate to commemorate the achievement of being shortlisted for the Kings Award for Voluntary Service 2024. [See pages 70-71]

In October, we were delighted to host the UK Maritime Heritage Forum Conference. The forum provides an opportunity to bring together colleagues from the UK maritime heritage sector to reflect on those aspects of maritime heritage practice which connect the broad maritime community that care for static collections or operating vessels, whether they represent a large museum or small volunteer team. This year the conference theme, celebrated Britain's Coastal Experience, from small boats to the politics of contemporary collecting. Topics included coastal resilience, the politics of collecting maritime stories such as coastal economies and climate crisis, the challenges of heritage conservation and interpreting the sea; together with new narratives and ways of presenting our maritime heritage. [See pages 62-63]

Image Delegate attending the UK Maritime Heritage Forum 2024.



On 22nd October, the Museum Director signed a contract with Aberdeen Art Gallery to enable them to mount a modified version of *Monsters of the Deep: Science Fact and Fiction* – as originated by National Maritime Museum Cornwall. The exhibition will form part of a maritime themed offer to coincide with the Tall Ship Races, which will be hosted in Aberdeen from 19th-22nd July 2025.

On 30 October the Arts Council England advised us that our application for a National Lottery Project Grant for *SURF!* had been successful. We were awarded £75,000 towards the cost of mounting the temporary exhibition.

In late November we opened *Resilience* in Cornwall in the Bridge Gallery. This project is the first in a series of experimental exhibitions which will explore different ways to represent Cornish maritime history and heritage, for new and different audiences. These exhibitions will form part of our strategic approach to establishing the diverse range of stories and perspectives which will inform the future re-development of our Cornwall galleries.

Resilience, was conceived as an experimental academic, artistic and heritage collaboration between the Museum, Exeter University and Bristol-based collective Kaleider Studio. The exhibition comprises of an immersive sound sculpture, incorporating five large glass fishing buoys hanging from the ceiling and dominating the central space. Visitors 'trigger' different sounds, comprising a blend of music, ambient sounds and oral history recordings. In addition to panels and touchscreens, the show includes specially commissioned photographic portraits of featured participants by Cornwall-based photographer Steve Tanner. [See pages 26-27]

Background research for an exhibition on Cornish Smuggling, which will form a major temporary exhibition between 2027-2029, is ongoing. We have appointed Dr Jo Esra as the guest curator. She is both a literary scholar and a cultural historian, with experience of engaging with all forms of maritime cultural representation and practice. Jo is well placed to ensure the exhibition addresses Cornish language, Cornish identity and place. She is being supported by our Exhibitions and Projects Curator, Dr Jenny Lee. Our initial objective is to produce in depth biographies, complete with links to primary sources, images, and objects, relating to the key historical 'players' in Cornish smuggling and lesser well-known or hidden characters across society, and across Cornwall. This will form a key strand in the narrative and provide rich content for other outputs such as catalogues, lectures, on-line materials, press and cultural publications.

During 2024, our trustees decided to create a new role of Honorary Commodore to recognise individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the story of Britain's small boats or who have demonstrated a significant commitment to National Maritime Museum Cornwall. We are thrilled to announce that

Ellen Winsor, Rodney Pattison and Kurt Jackson have accepted the invitation to act as our ambassadors, promoting the Museum and extending its influence in the maritime and cultural life of the UK.

Finally, I would like to thank our colleagues at Royal Museums Greenwich for joining us in the coproduction of *Pirates*. We hope their reshaping of the exhibition will prove to be as successful during its run in Greenwich, from 29th March 2025 until 4th January 2026, as the first iteration has proved to be for National Maritime Museum Cornwall.

Richard Doughty
Museum Director

Image Richard Doughty at the UK Maritime Heritage Forum.



Image Aerial shot of National Maritime Museum Cornwall with the docks to the left and Pendennis Castle in the distance.





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Exhibitions



Small Boats

Big Stories

Putting ‘Small Boats, Big Stories’ at the heart of the Museum

In March 2024, the Museum completed a major re-development of its Boat Hall. Part funded by DCMS/Wolfson Foundation, the aim of this ambitious project was to:

‘Transform the interpretation of the National Small Boat Collection, deliver a strong sense of identity, place and narrative and anchor the museum experience.

The wider project objectives were to reimagine our principal gallery, reinvigorate our use space, improve wayfinding, celebrate the architecture, reduce our environmental footprint and enhance our financial sustainability.’

In practice, this involved the creation of two new exhibitions (one hanging from the ceiling and one on the ground floor), with new interpretation for all the boats and some kayaks and canoes, supported by interactive screens positioned to engage visitors on their journey around the building. We also undertook a great deal of necessary curatorial housekeeping and facilities work (cleaning, condition checking and photographing and scanning the boats, pull testing hanging points, electrical testing etc).

At a more strategic level, this was an opportunity to create new signage, and new zoning. The Main Hall has been redesignated the ‘Boat Hall’, reinstating clearer spatial and thematic boundaries with other galleries. While we were at it, we also completely re-displayed our much loved, hands-on children’s ‘RNLI Rescue Zone.’

New touch screens were added to the ramps. These incorporate new features which allow visitors to choose different text sizes, contrast, and aspect ratios to improve visual access. The interpretation has also been updated to be more culturally sensitive and socially relevant. For example, addressing unconscious biases in some of the original documentation – such as highlighting the role of women in the stories of some of the boats. During the development of the project, we have also written new graphic interventions, as well as sourcing and reviewing a selection of images and video files. We have also added subtitles to twenty-five films.

However, our ultimate ambition was to place small boats back at the heart of the Museum and the visitor journey. To do this we decided to create a new impactful exhibition on the ground floor, to be encountered by visitors as they enter the Museum space.

Under the banner heading of ‘Small Boats, Big Stories’, we wanted to show how small boats have been – and still are – relevant to the world we live in. Drawing on years of visitor feedback, and in consultation with staff and our army of volunteers, we selected 11 boats from our collection, each with a unique story to tell, but each also linking to a broader, more socially relevant theme.

The boats we selected are *Irene*, a local haul-tow punt dating from c1950 used for oyster dredging; *Eileen*, the first Mirror dinghy

to come off the production line, *Ednamair*, a 9ft fibreglass yacht tender, which saved the lives of six people in 1972, after drifting for 38 days in the Pacific Ocean; a Zodiac inflatable dinghy (the Channel migrant boat), the Crandall Hydroplane, a racing motor boat dating to the early 1940s, *Sunshine*, a c1880 Sunderland Foy Half Coble, *Auto Naut*, 2017, an uncrewed, pollution-free research boat and Ben Ainslie’s Laser dinghy, *Rita*, in which he won Olympic gold in 2012 London Games; Father’s day, a 1.626m homemade plywood and fibreglass boat, which holds the record for the smallest boat to have crossed the Atlantic Ocean; an Iraqi Quffa, c.1960 made of coils of straw and palm fonds, bound with palm-fibre ropes, used to ferry people and cargo across Euphrates river and last, but not least a replica of a 1,000 year old Viking faering boat.

The themes they are displayed under included **Boats and...** ‘Britain’s coastal story’, ‘climate science’, ‘survival’, ‘innovation’, ‘the will to win’, ‘the spirit of adventure’, ‘traditional skills’, ‘Cornwall’s maritime heritage’, ‘global connections’ and, of course, ‘Migration’, which is perhaps the biggest, most socially relevant ‘small boat’ story in the world today.

Each boat is supported on a flexible and future-proof cradle and each exhibit has a matching panel, hero image, and label. In addition, several of the boats have touchscreen monitors, and all the cradles are fitted with colour-changing digital strip lighting.



Left The Boat Hall from the 2nd floor.

Below The recently acquired migrant Zodiac boat.



Image Richard Doughty, Kurt Jackson & Caroline Jackson at the opening of Kurt Jackson RNLI Cornwall.



Kurt Jackson RNLI Cornwall

An exhibition to celebrate the RNLI's bicentenary

The collection of paintings and sketches by critically acclaimed, Cornwall-based artist Kurt Jackson was created in direct response to the work – and evocative presence – of the RNLI in Cornwall. Kurt sought to capture how much a part of the Cornish landscape RNLI has become – from the familiar blue and orange of the lifeboats and stations embedded in the raw, natural beauty of the Cornish coastline, to the red and yellow flags of the lifeguards dotted reassuringly along its beaches.

Since the RNLI was founded in 1824, its lifeboat crews and lifeguards have saved over 142,700 lives. This achievement is built on the bravery and sacrifice of its staff and volunteers. A poignant reminder of this sacrifice was felt in the selection of paintings that cover the old Penlee lifeboat station, recorded as it was left after the disaster in 1981.

The Museum was proud to host this exhibition as part of RNLI 200, a national celebration of the RNLI's 200th anniversary.

Left Kurt Jackson's painting 'Punching Through'.

Right Visitors enjoying the exhibition.



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“Cornwall is defined by its waters – the seas and estuaries. We are reliant on them for our livelihoods, recreation and well-being. But the sea is fickle, changing her mood rapidly and when the unexpected happens, the RNLI is there. As an artist in Cornwall, I felt I had to paint the RNLI and their vital and dynamic contribution to coastal life, but ultimately this body of work attempts to reflect my gratitude.”

Kurt Jackson





Left Visitors enjoying the Sunbeam exhibition.

Right A Sunbeam transom.



# Sunbeam 100

## A co-curated exhibition

In April National Maritime Museum Cornwall opened a co-curated exhibition in the Balcony Gallery, to mark the 100th anniversary of the Sunbeam yacht. Museum volunteer and Sunbeam sailor, Dave Owens, was appointed as guest curator. Dave worked closely with the Falmouth Sunbeam Association to tell this important local story through interviews, artefacts and memorabilia.





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“To sail a Sunbeam whether in Falmouth, the Solent or Chichester Harbour is a beautifully rewarding experience. Undoubtedly Alfred Westmacott’s masterpiece, these boats reward careful sailing, excellent technique and keen intuition – especially on when to change the fine-tuning of the boat’s many controls as weather or tidal conditions change, which they do continuously. The racing is extremely close and of a high standard with many excellent sailors in the class. May it continue for another one hundred years.”

Dave Owens, Guest Curator & Sunbeam sailor

Left Sunbeams on the water by Simon Perkins.

Right Dan Aston interviewing Roger Wickens.



Resilience

Stories of Change in Cornwall

Resilience: Stories of Change in Cornwall opened in the Bridge Gallery on 23 November. It was conceived as an experimental academic, artistic and heritage collaboration between the Museum, Exeter University and Bristol-based collective Kaleider Studio.



The exhibition comprises of five large glass fishing buoys hung from the ceiling and designed to dominate the central space of the gallery. Visitors moving into and across the space ‘trigger’ the buoys to release different sounds made up of music, ambient sounds and oral history recordings which will create an immersive sound sculpture (‘voices of change’). In addition to carefully written visitor interpretation and touch screen information, the installation is brought to life through specially commissioned photographic portraits of the featured voices of the participants, by Cornwall-based photographer Steve Tanner.

The exhibition was funded by the University of Exeter, with the Museum contributing in-kind support, largely through its facilities team and marketing department. The University of Exeter also sponsored two stakeholder events: a launch night for

community participants, museum and university stakeholders, and an additional event for specialist stakeholders relating to their wider ‘Resilience of the Coastal Communities’ initiative. The latter included many people and organisations not usually associated with the culture/heritage sector e.g. from DEFRA and different scientific/public policy organisations.

Resilience: Stories of Change in Cornwall is the first of a series of experimental exhibitions exploring different ways of representing Cornish maritime history and heritage for new and different audiences. As such it forms part of our strategic approach to establishing the diverse range of stories, perspectives and stakeholder engagement, which will be essential for securing the financial and political support for the future re-development of the Cornwall galleries.

SURF!

A temporary exhibition which explores the cultural and economic impact surfing has had on Cornwall.



Image Surfboards in storage.

In 2022, we engaged Power Marketing to undertake public consultation, to audience test several different exhibition ideas with visiting and non-visiting focus groups. This produced very positive responses from both groups about surfing. On the back of this research, we decided to celebrate the rich history, and the cultural, social and environmental impacts, of 100 years of surfing in Cornwall through 100 boards made or used in Cornwall, and the evolving legacies of surfing today.

SURF! challenges the stereotypical perceptions of what stories a maritime museum tells and who those stories are for. The exhibition, which builds on the lessons learnt from our previous major temporary exhibitions such as, *Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed* and *Titanic Stories: Contemporary Voices* (which linked *Titanic* with migration to Cornwall today) will continue our commitment to taking cultural and artistic risks. It will also highlight different voices and the audiences we engage with, tell stories and reveal hidden histories.

In forming our project team, we wanted to work with a guest curator with the expertise, credibility and lived experience to help us create an exhibition narrative which would reflect the different histories and experiences of surfing and surfers in Cornwall.

We were very fortunate in being able to persuade Dr Sam Bleakley to take on the role of Guest Curator. He is a highly respected Cornish surf author, documentary filmmaker, presenter, and lecturer in sustainable tourism. He is also a former European surf champion, an internationally renowned surf competition judge and commentator. In terms of lived experience, he brings a life-long involvement in surfing, with personal and professional connections across the whole 'surfing scene' around the Cornish coast.

As part of the planning and development, Sam has successfully reached out to secure the involvement and input of key players within the Cornish surfing community: including incredible stories about pioneer surfers (many over 80, together with female surfers and younger pioneers of adaptive surfing), board makers, shapers and designers, photographers, contemporary artists and private collectors.

Through open dialogue and by working together, we have been able to secure access to an extraordinary range of object loans, images, personal stories and insights. In shaping the cultural narrative of the exhibition, we are also platforming the work of Cornwall Surf Ambassadors, Surfers Against Sewage, The Wave Project, Finisterre, Surf Girl and Carve. Each will bring their own take on the story of surfing in Cornwall. For example, Surf Girl magazine brings a distinctly feminist perspective on surfing history in Cornwall, while The Wave Project provides powerful insights into the role surfing can play in physical and mental health. In addition, our collaboration with Surfers Against Sewage will highlight community activist perspectives around surfers and the marine environment.

Public participation includes a commissioned artist intervention by British Sculptor, Abigail Fallis, who is renowned for her commentary about over-consumption and consumerism. This installation takes the form of a visually stunning wave made from plastic collected by Surfers Against Sewage community beach cleans, and a community-created exhibition capturing people's personal memories of surfing.

The history and culture of surfing in Cornwall as a sport, lifestyle or leisure activity has a diverse and inclusive appeal beyond surfing enthusiasts: to students, young people and those interested in contemporary Cornish culture and identity; to everyone with nostalgic memories of surfing holidays in Cornwall; to local and tourist families looking for something interesting to do and, crucially, to people in Cornwall's coastal communities shaped by the growth of surfing.

By including the stories and experiences of a wide range of surfers, we hope all visitors, surfers and non-surfers, will feel welcome and seen, regardless of surfing expertise, interest, age, sex, or in terms of mental health or physical ability and a celebration of all body types.

To support the main exhibition, we are creating a separate, co-curated community exhibition. We see this as an inclusive 'family album of beach memories'. This complementary display will be in a space where people can share their own stories, photographs and objects, which showcase the everyday experience of holidaying or growing-up in Cornwall. It is our intention that this exhibition will develop over the two years of *SURF!*

We hope *SURF!* will engage both our traditional museum visitors and appeal to communities who have not found a relevance to visit before. Importantly, it will also be our greenest exhibition to date. We are grateful to the Arts Council for their support in mounting *SURF!*

SURF! opens in March 2025 and will run until January 2027.



Images Preparations for *SURF!* underway.

Image A young visitor enjoys the Museums February half term activities.

Learning & Engagement

Early years programme

Left Families exploring the Tidal Zone.

Right Families taking part in the May half term activities.



Welcoming children and their families

Our early years programme aims to welcome all children and their families, to explore and share new experiences in an environment immersed in history and culture. In addition to our interactive exhibitions and hands-on play, we offer regular opportunities for our youngest visitors to make, play and discover in the museum space. Our Minnows Tales sessions exemplify this, providing a drop-in space for families to come together to hear stories and sing songs.

In return, children bring so much to the Museum; their appetite for learning, their eagerness to explore and of course lots of smiles and laughter! With this in mind, we are continuing to develop new ways to engage our early years audience, including launching Minnows Makes craft sessions and hosting our very first Toddler Takeover Day, complete with toy shop and ticket office!

Image Taking in the view from the Lookout Tower.



Left One of the science experiments from the February half term activities *Science of the Sea*.

Right Young visitors looking at seaweed under a microscope in the Museum's may half term activities *Rock Pool Explorers*.



Family learning



In 2024, our much-loved family programme featured some exciting new collaborations. In February, we partnered with Wonderstruck, who delivered a thrilling series of live science experiments to bring our *Science and the Sea* event to life.

Over Easter, we welcomed critically acclaimed actor and director Edward Rowe, who presented his hilarious and informative show, *The Cornish Caretakers and the Chest of Cornishness*. The show featured the Cornish language, encouraging families to participate by learning some simple phrases. We are committed to celebrating Cornish history and culture, and this platform enabled us to introduce a wider audience to the Cornish language.

For the October half-term, we commissioned Starbox Shadows and Wilderness Music to create a new show, *Myths in the Mist*. This show drew inspiration from Cornish folklore, featuring enchanting tales of the Mermaid of Zennor and Cormoran, the Cornish giant.

In 2025, we hope to welcome back the Rockpool Project team, who bring a truly engaging live rockpool experience to our Boat Hall.

Accompanying all of our family programming is our 'Make and Take' craft activity series. Delivered by our dedicated team of volunteers, these free activities add real value to our family offerings, and we are deeply grateful to each volunteer who makes this possible.



Left Escape from Treasure Island, a specially commissioned show written and performed by Illyria Theatre for the summer holidays at the Museum.

Right The Cornish Caretakers and the Chest of Cornishness formed part of the Museum's Easter holiday activities with commissions to tell new stories of historically important Cornish people connected to the sea.



Cross-arts commissioning

To coincide with *Pirates*, our current major temporary exhibition, we invited Illyria Theatre back to the Museum over the summer with their hilariously entertaining show, *Escape from Treasure Island!* During the run the show delighted more than 23,000 visitors, with many families returning multiple times to see it.

Looking ahead to next year's *SURF!* exhibition, we have commissioned a new summer show entitled *Wipeout!* We are working with Off The Wall Aerial (OTW) and Cscape Dance. Led by Artistic Director Sally Knight, Cscape will collaborate with the Falmouth-based aerial dance company Off The Wall. Together, the *Wipeout!* performance company will create an impressive, fun, and interactive show, showcasing Cscape's unique style and expertise in physical comedy, character work, and joyful,

interactive experiences for all ages, integrating OTW's expertise in aerial and vertical dance.

The use of aerial dance in *Wipeout!* will capture the sense of athleticism, grace, gravity-defying power, flow, and momentum (with a hint of danger!) that is experienced with waves and surfing. Performers will be able to fly vertically and upside down—just like in a real wipeout!

Over the 2024 festive season, we are also trialling a smaller-scale theatre model, utilizing some of the spaces we have at the Museum. We're working with O-region, who are bringing their performance of *Nadelik* to the Museum. This story, inspired by the heartwarming book *A Christmas in Cornwall* by local author Craig Barr-Green, will be performed in our Learning Centre for small audiences at a modest ticket cost.

Image Children taking part in the Museum's 'Under the Sea' school's programme.



Schools programme

Run by our dedicated team of Museum staff and volunteers, our award-winning learning programme delivers interactive and engaging curriculum workshops to approximately half of all primary schools in Cornwall.

We offer fun and inspiring learning experiences, helping children develop an understanding of the world around them and encouraging exploration, imagination and collaboration. Our broad programme of hands-on curriculum workshops are delivered within the Museum's galleries and celebrate our rich collection of objects and artefacts. The activities facilitate the range of learning styles and include object handling, storytelling and role-play challenges covering a variety of topics.

Of our extensive range of curriculum workshops and hands-on learning activities, the following give a flavour of how we bring our history and collections alive for formal and informal education groups:

Under the Sea, an actor-led programme aimed at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) offers pupils an inspirational first experience of our special Museum. The workshop features ‘Oceana’, a mischievous Cornish sea sprite, who lives to collect things and bring them to the Museum. We invite pupils to find the magical rhyme needed to wake her up to play! The children learn about tides, handle real artefacts from the seabed, take part in an under the sea sound story and make their own boat to sail on our boat pool.

Wreck and Rescue is a Key Stage 1 programme that focuses on shipwrecks and sea rescue. We tell the tragic story of HMS *Anson* that was wrecked on the Lizard in 1807 and the subsequent development of the rocket and Breeches Buoy apparatus by Cornish inventor Henry Trengrouse that went on to save thousands of lives. This session finishes with a ‘real’ sea rescue in which we fire a bottle rocket and breeches buoy over our tidal pool in order to rescue local fisherman “John Henry Pascoe” from his shipwrecked fishing boat. The workshop includes a chance to explore our RNLI Rescue Zone situated in the Museum’s Boat Hall.

Hevva! Hevva! is a Key Stage 2 workshop that builds on the stories told within our Cornish Quayside Gallery, bringing to life the skills, language and traditions of Cornish pilchard fishermen and women in the 1870s. Through a combination of dramatic performance, object investigation and interactive hands-on activities, the children discover how the pilchard fishing industry shaped the coastal communities in Cornwall.



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“Our favourite trip – well run, exciting, informative and so ‘slick’ in terms of organisation. All children concentrating and engaged, a huge amount of learning in a short time. This experience as part of Cornish heritage is invaluable for local children.”

Class Teacher, Gwinear School (Wreck & Rescue)

**Left** The Museum’s Wreck and Rescue school’s workshop.

**Below** Tray boat activity from the Under the Sea school’s workshop.

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“Very engaging – the pre-visit materials really enhanced the visit. The children were so excited and lots of topic learning will easily follow in class. When walking around the Museum, one child said, “Thank you for choosing this trip, it’s the best trip ever!”

Class Teacher, Illogan School (Under the Sea)



Adult lecture series

The Museum continues to build its programme of blended talks and lectures for both onsite and online audiences. Being able to livestream our lectures and panel discussions extends the reach of our programme – and the stories in our collections – to wider, more diverse audiences, not just geographically but in terms of physical access. For example, older people who might struggle to visit the Museum on dark winter nights, or people disadvantaged by poor public transport, can remotely access our programme of talks via the livestream. In this way, we continue to find new ways of meeting the needs of our adult learners.

Continuing our popular programme of Autumn lectures, the Museum's Autumn Lecture Series 2024: Women and the Sea, boasted a strong lineup of speakers.

The series opened with Women and the Navy in the Age of Sail with **Dr Elaine Murphy**, Associate Professor of Maritime History at the University of Plymouth, exploring some of the ways in which women engaged with the navy in the 17th and 18th centuries.

In October, **Dr Charlotte MacKenzie**, former Senior Lecturer at Bath Spa University, told the remarkable story of Mary Bryant, from Cornish convict in Australia to escapee in her talk, Mary Broad/Bryant: The Creation of a Cornish Legend.

November saw Cornish writer, blogger and podcaster, **Elizabeth Dale** (aka The Cornish Bird), deliver her talk, Forgotten Women of the Cornish Coast, in which she discussed her research in Cornish local history, revealed the hidden places and untold stories of Cornwall and introduced some of her favourite female characters from around the Cornish coast.

Concluding the series, Cornish writer, **Clare Howdle**, interviewed **Sharon Austin** in Risk, Reward, Shipwrecks & Secrets, in which they discussed Sharon's career and her experience of discovering and documenting some of the county's most famous shipwrecks for more than 30 years.

Looking ahead to 2025, in an expansion of our lecture programme, we are very excited to be launching our new Spring Lecture Series. The Spring Series will focus on and develop key themes within the major temporary exhibition. For Spring 2025, the lecture series will complement the new *SURF!* exhibition and will aim to offer expert and nuanced perspectives on the theme of surf culture in Cornwall over the last 100 years.

Image Audience member enjoying a lecture as part of the adult Lecture Series at National Maritime Museum Cornwall.



Object handling



Image Visitors taking part in object handling at the Museum.

Learning more about the collection

The role of our expert Visitor Experience volunteer team is to explain our collections and help visitors unlock the Museum's many stories. We have many objects on display, most of them in cases, behind glass. We realise there are many ways we could offer more meaningful engagement for both visitors and volunteers, one of them being object handling activities, themed around our collections. From early September, we began offering object handling sessions to enhance the visitor experience.

In the Boat Hall, a replica of the Gokstad Viking Faering, built in the Museum's workshop between 2015 - 17 seemed like an obvious choice for our first handling collection. The Viking faering is an open clinker-built boat and it forms the main part of the Viking handling collection as we encourage visitors to feel the texture of the boat to understand the various components that were used to build it. In addition, we have a set of replica Viking tools, to help explain how the boat was built.

We were keen to bring other aspects of the Vikings to life and put together a handling collection of everyday objects, including a Viking helmet, cow horn/ red deer antler and combs, and a rope coated in pine tar to help visitors conjure up the smell of a journey on a Viking boat.

Our dedicated team of Visitor Experience volunteers attended training in September and are delivering object handling sessions on a regular basis during term time. This will allow us to generate wider participation with our visitors and deliver active engagement with a broad public. We have had some fantastic feedback from our visitors already, which reinforces the fact that people of all ages learn best through handling items and connecting first-hand with their stories.

Image Bob White in the process of lofting Helford Spy Boat in the Museum's Workshop.

Reflections



Helford Spy Boat

A New Boat Build for our Museum Workshop

Activity in our Museum workshop has now resumed with a replica build of a WW2 'surf boat' known as the S.N.2. It was Phil Clarke, one of our volunteers and a resident of Port Navas, who first brought the story of this boat to our attention. Like many wartime stories, it is a tale of technical expertise and understated heroism.

As early as November 1940, a Special Operations Executive (SOE) base had been established at Port Navas on the Helford River, to undertake operations into occupied France. Small boats were carried on deck or towed by motorboat from the Helford to within 1km of the enemy coast, before being rowed ashore to inhospitable beaches, on moonless nights and often in bad weather, to deliver explosives, arms and ammunition to the French Resistance.

In the latter half 1942, Lt. Cmdr. Nigel Warington-Smyth of Naval Intelligence in Falmouth, undertook 'Operation Slide Rule', to test a variety of hull shapes suitable for rowing ashore in surf. As part of this process, he drew up two new designs, the S.N.1 and S.N.2.

The S.N.2 was famously used on Christmas day 1943 for the evacuation of 16 Allied airmen, five French agents and six sailors. Local boy, Howard Rendle of Port Navas, skippered six men, to make two trips ashore near Île Tariec, Brittany, and successfully brought off all passengers. Howard Rendle was subsequently promoted sub-lieutenant and awarded the DSC, later in life, becoming Commodore of Port Navas Yacht club.

Lt. Cmdr. Warington-Smyth went on to own Falmouth Boat Co. where he designed and built several well renowned cruising yachts.

Our research located a box at the National Maritime Museum, in Greenwich containing the original lines drawings of the S.N.2. Accompanying the lines drawing was a plan indicating the construction and basic fit-out. The original drawings detail a cold moulded, double diagonal construction. This innovative building style was made possible by the development of new adhesives and used in both boat and aircraft construction of the time to produce lightweight and extremely rigid forms.

Research previously undertaken by the late Tony Pawlyn, and subsequently continued by Jonathan Griffin, has unearthed a wealth of fascinating information relating to the secret wartime activity on the Helford. We intend to exhibit our S.N.2 replica, along with much of the other information collected, in a temporary exhibition on the Bridge Gallery, in the spring of 2026. We are also planning to include some of this detail in our permanent 'Falmouth at War' exhibition in the Cornwall Gallery. Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust have an S.N.1 boat in their collection and we are hopeful of being able to borrow it for our temporary exhibition.

Image Bob White in the process of lofting the Helford Spy Boat in the Museum's Workshop.



New acquisitions

Throughout 2024 the Museum acquired a number of objects, enriching the collection. Here are a few examples.

Pegasus dinghy

The Museum is offered a variety of boats as donations to the National Small Boat Collection, some in poor condition but considered important enough to acquire. One such boat is the first production-built Pegasus dinghy, designed by Uffa Fox in 1959. Only 250 were built and it's not known how many are still in existence, so the Museum is fortunate to own No.1. The Boat Team will restore the boat to its former glory.

The Pegasus dinghy marks a departure from the type of boat Uffa designed and built. He was not renowned for major developments in self-build dinghies, preferring to design those boats which would sail as fast as possible and win races. This required building skills and materials which were only available to the professional builder, owing to the complex hull shapes needed

for speed on the water. However, Uffa understood that people's leisure time and earnings were increasing during the 1950s and 60s, and self-build kit boats were becoming very popular.

Through a chance conversation with the managing director of the Bell Woodworking Company, the pioneers of home boat building kits in Britain, Uffa learned that the company had developed a single sheet of plywood that could be bent in more than one direction at the same time to form the desired racing dinghy hull shape, which greatly simplified the building process.

With the new material and his design genius, Uffa Fox created a boat that was fast, within the skills of the home boat builder, and claimed to cut down production time for the professional by two thirds – a huge saving in labour and cost.

Duke of York model

This model is of the RNLI lifeboat *Duke of York*, which was stationed at Polpeor at Lizard Point and operated from 1934 until 1961. It was a 41-foot Watson type with an 11-foot 8-inch beam, built by Groves and Gutteridge at Cowes, Isle of Wight. It represents the move away from using sail power in lifeboats as it was one of the first fully motorised lifeboats. This intricate model was made by David Wellington and donated by his daughter. [See pages 58-59]

Portrait of John William Hill

This beautiful hand-tinted photograph shows the Coastguard Warrant Officer John William Hill and was donated by his great-grandson. Born in Devonport in 1852, Hill was stationed around the southwest coast, including on the Lizard and at Salcombe. It is unclear when Hill was stationed on the Lizard, but in the 1881 census, he is recorded as living in Landewednack. Further research is needed into the life of John William Hill, which will illuminate the work of the Coastguard on the Lizard.



Above Portrait of John William Hill.

Below Sailor's ditty box.



Sailor's Ditty Box

The final object is a ditty box. Sailors used these boxes to keep small personal possessions safe. This ditty box may have belonged to Isaac Mathers, a merchant sailor in the early 1900s who is now buried in Penzance. The box features a variety of carved and painted images, including the Duchy of Cornwall shield.



Connections

Image Delegates being shown round Pendennis Shipyard during one of the study trips as part of the UK Maritime Heritage Forum.



UK Maritime Heritage Forum

In September the Museum hosted over 60 delegates attending the UK Maritime Heritage Forum.

Representatives from a broad range of different maritime heritage settings, including curators, boat builders, conservators, marine consultants, naval architects, vessel operators, nautical archaeologists and volunteers, met in Falmouth to discuss current issues and recent projects.

The Forum provided an opportunity to share the creative, resourceful, resilient and knowledgeable community that the maritime heritage world encompasses. Presentations included case studies of how maritime heritage is improving people's lives through engaging with individual's experiences of ships, boats, lakes, seas, canals and rivers. We also had an opportunity to discuss our latest temporary exhibition, which presents the voices of coastal communities telling their personal stories first-hand and to present a paper on our 'Small Boats, Big Stories' exhibition.

The Forum began with a boat trip from Falmouth to Malpas, on a classic wooden enterprise ferry courtesy of Fal

River Cornwall. Following this there were presentations over the next two days, covering subjects as diverse as oral histories and sea shanties from coastal communities, coastal resilience in Devon and Cornwall, and community engagement from nautical archaeologists working with dedicated volunteers recording wrecks around the UK shoreline.

Delegates also heard about exhibitions celebrating the RNLI's 200th anniversary, co-curation with people with special needs, redisplaying research on pierhead painters, and the recurring theme of the challenges of conservation and heritage boatbuilding skills large and small; from the HMS *Victory* project to the Thames Wherry. Thanks to the generosity of Pendennis Shipyard, our guests were also treated to a tour of the luxury world of superyachts.

We were delighted to welcome Jayne Kirkham MP, who joined delegates for the Forum dinner, in our newly completed Boat Hall. Our thanks to her for supporting the event and a very special thank you to Beckett Rankine Engineering Consultants who generously sponsored the conference.

Extending our reach overseas



Loans to Musée National de la Marine

Several objects from our collection have been loaned to the Musée National de la Marine in Paris for their exhibition 'En Solitaire autour du Monde' (Single-handed around the world). This exhibition celebrates the Vendée Globe, a single-handed, non-stop round-the-world yacht race. It places

the race within the historical context of solo ocean racing and invites visitors to follow the route of the race – setting sail from the Bay of Biscay and ending up sailing up the Atlantic, around the Cape of Good Hope (South Africa), Cape Leeuwin (Australia), Cape Horn (Chile), and finishing in Les Sables-d'Olonne (France).

The items we loaned include:



The **survival suit** used by Tony Bullimore when he lost his keel and capsized in the 1997 Vendée Globe in the Southern Ocean.

The **hammer** used by the Australian Navy to bang on the upturned hull of Exide Challenger, Tony Bullimore's yacht.

The **freeze-dried food** taken by Ellen MacArthur on her single-handed round-the-world voyage in 2005. As she completed her journey in less time than planned, she did not eat all the food.

The exhibition has proved so successful that there is a possibility it will be extended for an additional three months.



Left Hammer used by the Australian Navy.

Above The survival suit used by Tony Bullimore.

Right The freeze-dried food taken by Ellen MacArthur.

Environmental journey

We take our responsibility to support a sustainable future and raise public awareness about the well-being of the planet and the health of the world's oceans very seriously.

One of our core strategic objectives is to become an environmentally sustainable organisation. To address this challenge, we have been working with TerraVerde, a dedicated Sustainability Travel and Tourism Consultancy, to take our first steps towards making this transition.

TerraVerde has helped us conduct a baseline environmental audit which will enable us to measure, monitor and reduce our carbon footprint. They are also providing training to develop staff skill sets in sustainability and carbon literacy and are assisting us with a pilot study of locally based suppliers to measure our upstream supply chain emissions. We have also commissioned Touchstone Integrated Energy Management Solutions, to audit our energy profile to assist us in monitoring our consumption. We hope this invaluable support will help us to mitigate climate change and enable us to be ready, and remain resilient, in the fast-evolving landscape.

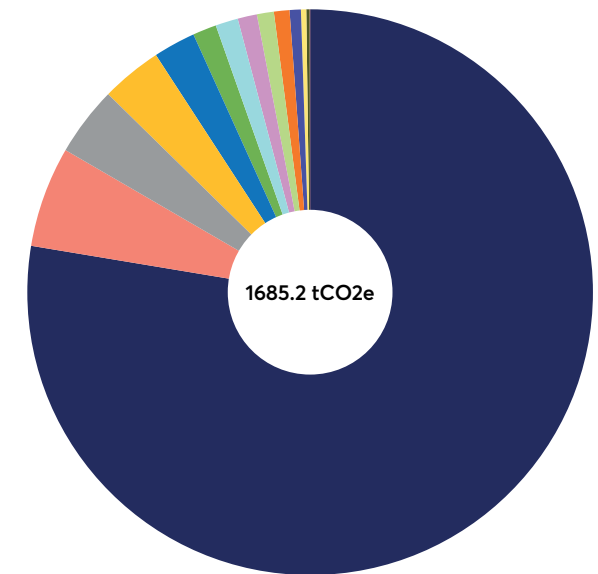
We are also currently using the opportunity of developing 'SURF' to establish a bench mark to measure the environment impact of mounting a major temporary exhibition.

We successfully completed an impact analysis for the financial year ending March 2024. This first audit was based on a desktop analysis of utility bills; BIFFA waste collections, including the various sizes of bins we use, splitting recycling and general waste; retail and catering supplier information (e.g., the percentage of national or local suppliers we use); a breakdown of mileage and travel claims - including volunteer travel claims and staff travel-to-work mileage; the weight of paper used and the wastage in print production; details about print distribution/mileage; percentage of recycled paper; details of all electrical goods purchased; the impact of website/e-commerce/digital hosting platform; IT suppliers, fire walls - all converted into tons of CO₂.

The Museum's current carbon intensity per visitor stands at 13.1 kgCO₂e. This is the intensity benchmark which we will be tracking and will aim to reduce.

Our total Carbon Footprint 2023/24

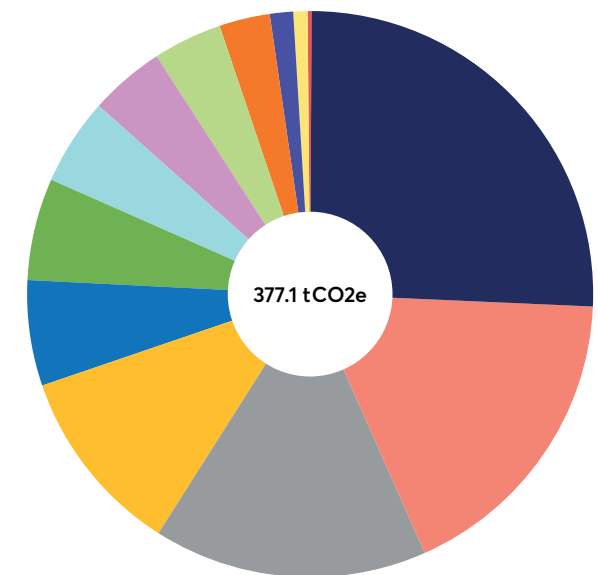
Visitor Footprint	1308.1
Capital Goods	96.9
Electricity	66.8
Gas	58.7
Commuting	40.6
Cafe	22.9
Retail	21.7
Consumables	18.6
Events	16.3
Freight	15
Digital	10.8
Waste	5.1
Business Travel	3.2
Water	0.5



Total GHG Emissions FY 2023 (tCO₂e)

Carbon Footprint: Museum Only 2023/24

Capital Goods	96.9
Electricity	66.805
Gas	58.7
Commuting	40.6
Cafe	22.9
Retail	21.7
Consumables	18.6
Events	16.3
Freight	15
Digital	10.8
Waste	5.1
Business Travel	3.2
Water	0.5



GHG Emissions FY 2023 exclusive of Visitor Footprint (tCO₂e)



Summary of Key Impact Areas

Category	tCO2e (tonnes Carbon Dioxide equivalent)	% of Total Carbon Footprint	% of Internal Footprint
Total footprint	1685.2	100	n/a
Visitor footprint	1308.1	77.6	n/a
Internal footprint (total minus visitor)	377.1	22.4	100
Capital goods	96.9	5.8	25.7
Electricity	66.8	4	17.7
Gas	58.7	3.5	15.6
Commuting	40.6	2.4	10.8
Cafe	22.9	1.4	6.1
Retail	21.7	1.3	5.8

We also wish to inspire conversations about the ecological crisis. For example, next year we are planning to partner with Clean Ocean Sailing, a Cornwall based organisation dedicated to cleaning expeditions. We are proposing to exhibit ‘The Whale in the Room’. A thought-provoking installation which will serve as a stark reminder of the pressing issue of marine plastic pollution and its devastating impact on sea life and coastal systems. The installation has been created by utilising 380 kilo-grams of marine plastic retrieved from the sea by Clean Ocean Sailing, as a powerful symbol of the ecological crisis we face. It will be

mounted in the Tidal Zone gallery, which is the space in the Museum where we have the strongest connection to the ocean which has deposited the plastic waste onto our shores.

The statistics are terrifying. It is calculated that 380 kg of plastic waste enters our oceans every second. This equates to 32,876 tonnes every day, amounting to 12 million tonnes every year. The amount of plastic in the ocean is expected to double in the next 15 years, and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation estimates that by 2050, there could be more plastic in the ocean than fish (by weight).

Kings Award

This year we were delighted to learn that our volunteer team had been nominated for a King's Award for Voluntary Service. Created in 2002 to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee and previously known as The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS), the Award has been shining a light on the fantastic work of voluntary groups from across the UK for many years. Equivalent to an MBE, KAVS is the highest Award given to local voluntary groups in the UK.

In January we were contacted by the Deputy Lieutenant, who would be leading on the assessment of the Museum. Volunteer representatives from all areas of the Museum were able to meet with the assessment team, highlighting the wonderful support they provide to the Museum in a variety of roles, from greeting

our visitors, maintaining our boats, researching enquiries, and supporting our formal and informal learning programme, helping the Museum deliver its objectives.

On Wednesday 4 September a small group of staff and volunteers attended a reception at County Hall for all nominees.

Unfortunately, despite the good work and support our volunteer team provide, which was very much admired by the National Assessment Committee, we were not selected to receive the award this year. However, it was an excellent achievement to be nominated and an appreciation of the support and time our volunteer team have given in so many areas of the Museum, and for so many years.



Images Museum volunteers at the Kings Award reception.



The Bartlett Maritime Research Centre & Library



Image One of the Library's volunteers examines a chart.

Not always, but generally one of the quietest areas of the Museum, The Bartlett Library is located on the ground floor next to one of the noisiest! The Bartlett Library holds a unique, extensive maritime collection which includes 20,000 maritime reference books, many important boat magazines and numerous smaller items. Available to view are the archives of the Falmouth Harbour Commissioners and the Fox's Shipping Arrivals registers. Included are the Falmouth Harbour Master Journals from 1870 - 2001 which record day-to-day activities in the harbour – weather, shipping arrivals, sailings and any incidents? These with Fox's Shipping Arrivals give a fascinating insight into shipping in Falmouth Harbour from the 1870's.

Our collection includes near complete runs of Lloyd's Registers, the Mercantile Navy List and Lloyd's Register of Yachts along with facsimiles and microfilm of Lloyd's List.

The Bartlett Library supports the wider Museum mission and its exhibitions and helps researchers with their research whether it be an author, student or member of the public. Many enquiries received are not only from the UK but overseas. One regular researcher, from the USA, an author, keen to base their novel on historical fact of the time; their latest novel is set in 1840's Falmouth.

We receive many book donations. One recent donation comprised many amazing maritime books including a copy of *The Shipwright's Vade Mecum*. The copy is inscribed 'Thomas Symons, 30th January 1818'. Thomas was the fourth generation of a shipbuilding family in Flushing, Cornwall.

A recent acquisition is a large collection of photographs of shipping on the River Fowey, it is a unique record of merchant shipping in the Fowey area from the 1950's. This collection complements the China Clay index which we hold – a record of shipping in the Fowey/Par area from the 1960's.

Image Tony Pawlyn with the late George Hogg in the Museum's Bartlett Library.



In memoriam

This year we lost Tony Pawlyn, founder of the Museum, volunteer, researcher, and dear friend.

Born and bred in Newlyn, the sea was in Tony's blood from the start, and he had a life-long fascination for the history of his home town and the maritime history of Cornwall.

Quite when he started his more formal maritime research, no one knows, but certainly by 1984, when he was still working for BT, he helped to found the South West Maritime History Society. He remained on their committee in various roles for over 20 years, producing a string of articles during that time.

When he took early retirement in 1992, he picked up his pen and embarked on his next full-time career as a researcher in maritime history.

The late Captain George Hogg, then the Hon Curator of the Cornwall Maritime Museum in Falmouth, persuaded Tony to become the Museum's 10th Trustee in 1996 and together they planned an ambitious expansion programme.

One thing led to another, and National Maritime Museum Cornwall was born, perhaps larger in scale than either had ever dreamed, but a real opportunity to tell the story of Cornwall's maritime history. Together they threw themselves into the detailed planning of the Museum and you can see their influence throughout the building today.

They were united in believing that any museum should have a proper library and between them persuaded retired engineer John Bartlett to help create the Bartlett Maritime Research Centre and Library. This became Tony's focus for over 20 years.

During this time, Tony won the prestigious Henwood Medal presented by the Royal Institution of Cornwall for his articles on the Pilchard Industry in 1998, in 2010 the South West Maritime History Society gave him a lifetime award for his 'contribution to maritime history', and in 2012 Tony received the Sir Richard Trant Award from the Cornwall Heritage Trust for his research into Cornish maritime history. He helped create and organise Cornwall's Maritime History Conference, sat on the editorial board for Troze, the Museum's refereed online journal, and prepared his masterwork on the Falmouth Packets which was published in 2003.

When he wasn't caring for The Bartlett Library or answering the many specialist queries that flowed in, Tony was off following his own research and helping other organisations. He worked with Penlee House in Penzance, establishing their Photographic Group with John McWilliams and helping develop their galleries. He was a regular at the Morrab Library, Kresen Kernow, The National Archives, the Post Office Museum or simply at his desk, deep in the British Newspaper Archives. In the dining room at Trellissick House is a picture of a ship with a caption. At the bottom is a little credit 'Research courtesy of Tony Pawlyn'. Cornwall is littered with such small credits.

Tony's support of the Museum knew no bounds and it was typical of him that he continued as a Trustee, and loyally supporting The Bartlett Library, until his health took priority.

For all this, and for his loyal friendship, support and guidance we will be eternally grateful.

Our online shop has now been open for a full year and the orders have been steadily growing, along with our understanding of this new audience and how to engage with them. We have devised a schedule of promotions so that each month we have something to talk about, from Falmouth week and national talk like a pirate day to Falmouth book festival and Museum Shop Sunday. We have also collaborated with Heligan Gardens to offer a free packet of Cornish wildflower seed to all purchases made on the run up to Mother's Day and Father's Day. We added a Meet the Maker section to the site and have been working with some of our Cornish suppliers to film interviews about their process and products, allowing us to showcase locally made products and the people behind them.

Having an online shop allows us to spread our reach to new audiences and opens us up to new markets and it helps to facilitate a purchase for customers who regret not buying the item they saw when they visited. We have found that our best sellers online are very much linked to the Cornwall experience, so along with bespoke items only available through our shop, general

Cornish and maritime products have done the best for us, with our nautical spotted scarf remaining a firm favourite. Realising that the scarf was selling well online, we thought it would be fun to push it out to a wider audience by photographing it as a dog accessory, resulting in a fun day in the studio working with Arthur, a cockerpoo who knows how to strike a pose!

Receipt cards at the till points, posters around the building and table talkers in our café link our physical shop and our online presence, presenting a joined-up retail offer. The team hand out a receipt card to every shop customer offering a 10% discount when they shop with us online. We are representing the Museum with each order, so we use bespoke tape and a lovely A5 welcome card for each delivery, we want the customer to have a high-quality shopping experience when they open their parcel.

Earlier this year, we were very pleased to be nominated for the best online shop in the ACE awards, it is nice to get peer recognition for all the work that went towards getting our online shop open for business.

A year of the online shop

Image A festive photo used as part of the online shop's Christmas campaign.



Commercial events & conferencing

Image The Boat Hall set-up for an evening dinner.



In 2024 the Museum hosted a range of commercial events, including an RNLI Ceilidh Fundraiser, BBC Radio Cornwall's Make a Difference Awards, Cornwall Council's Sustainability Awards, a 70th birthday with a 12 piece soul band, and Inclusion Cornwall's Annual Awards. Of course, the Museum also hosts events on Events Square, where the annual International Shanty Festival is an on-going highlight, and, for the third successive year Cornwall Pride hosted their annual launch event. In 2024 we also established a twice weekly Farmer's and Craft market, welcoming nearly 600 stalls over a four-month summer period.

How the Museum utilises the spaces it has, plays an important role in not only its financial sustainability, but also has a big impact on its brand awareness, reach, audience development, and stakeholder relationships.

It is critical that the decisions on what spaces are used when are well thought through, appropriately balancing the benefits with any potential risks to the collection, as well as the opportunity costs on both the Visitor Experience and Learning teams. However, there is the added benefit of increased additionality for the Museum, as many of the events we host are held during the evening, when traditionally the building would be dark, and generating no income at all.

We endeavour to offer a complete service. In addition to offering venue hire, we support events with both the provision of catering and refreshments, and a full bar service, when appropriate.

The use of the Museum's spaces for events and conferencing is an opportunity for us to grow as an organisation and strengthen our brand in a different way, whilst at the same time generating unrestricted funds for the Museum.

Below Deck

Image The Tall Ships at night docked opposite the Museum during the summer.



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 breathtaking 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.

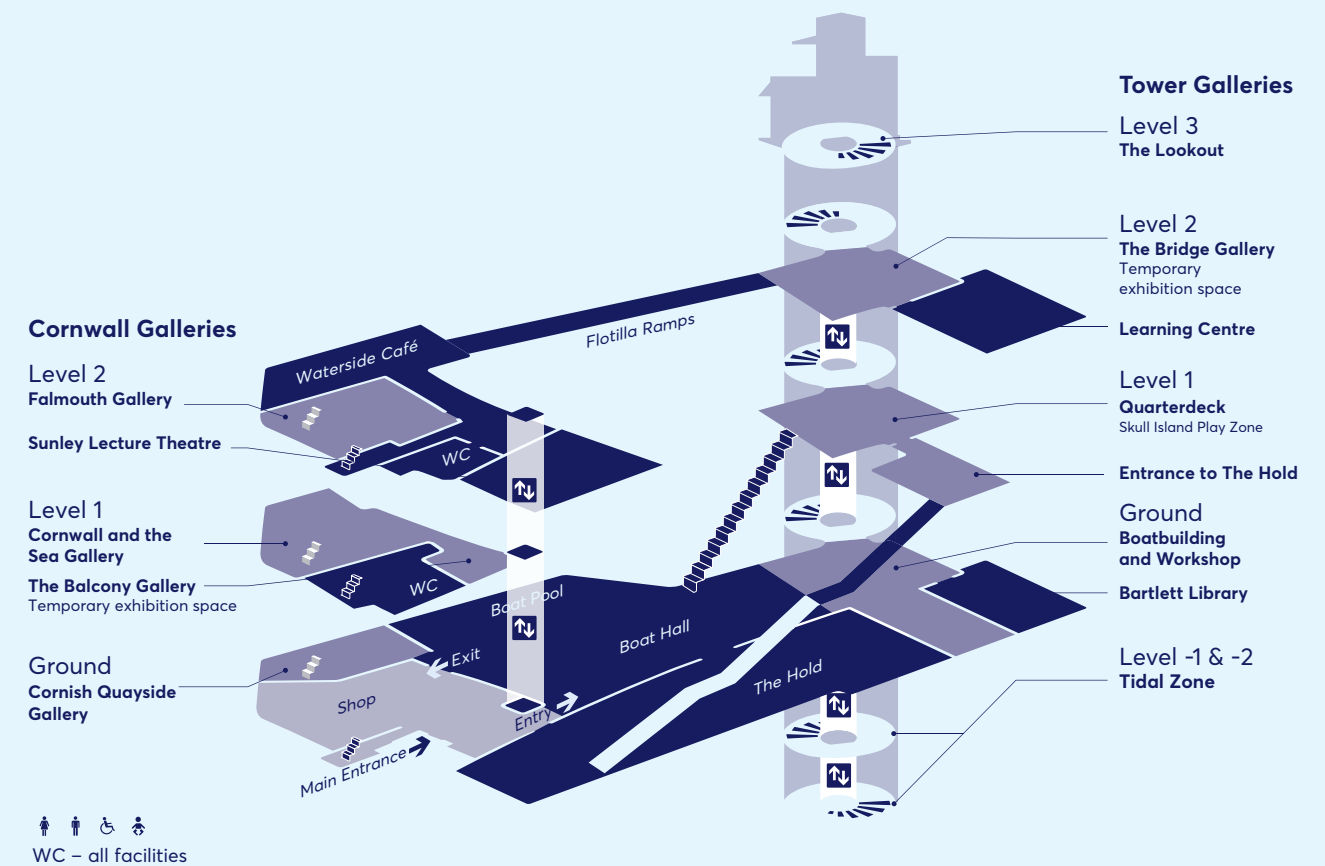
Formal education programme

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



2025 LISTINGS

Our 2025 programme is as ambitious as ever, providing a diverse range of events and exhibitions throughout the year.

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.

Science of the Sea
Saturday 15 – Sunday 23 February
Science experiments with a bang!

The Cornish Caretakers and the Treasures of Cornishness
Saturday 5 – Monday 21 April
A hilarious journey through Cornish history.

Rockpool Explorers
Saturday 24 May – Sunday 1 June
Discover the creatures found along Cornwall's coast.

Wipeout
Monday 21 July – Sunday 31 August
An aerial adventure with a splash.

Silhouettes & Shadows
Saturday 25 October – Sunday 2 November
Spooky shadow puppet stories.

A Cornish Christmas
Saturday 20 December – Sunday 4 January
A festive maritime Christmas.

EXHIBITIONS

Resilience
Running until January 2026
Stories of change in coastal Cornwall.

SURF!
Opens Friday 28 March and runs all year
100 Years of Waveriding on Cornwall.

SPRING LECTURE SERIES

Surf Pioneers

Curating 100 Years of Waveriding in Cornwall with Dr Sam Bleakley
Thursday 3 April, 7.30pm

Beyond the Break with Lucia Griggi Dr Charlotte MacKenzie
Thursday 1 May, 7.30pm

Intelligent Activism and Surfing as a Catalyst with Chris Hines
Thursday 15 May, 7.30pm

AUTUMN LECTURE SERIES

Cornish Folklore

Dark Tales of the Cornish Coast with Keith Wallis
Thursday 25 October, 7.30pm

Smuggling and the shaping of the Cornish cultural landscape with Dr Jo Esra
Thursday 16 October, 7.30pm

Rogues, Murderers and Cannibals: Falmouth's Hidden Histories with Will Hazell
Thursday 20 November, 7.30pm

VISIT US

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

Find us:
National Maritime Museum Cornwall
Discovery Quay
Falmouth
Cornwall

Sat nav: TR11 3QY

Admission fees:
See nmmc.co.uk for details or call us on 01326 313388

  
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
 DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund
 Weston Culture Fund (Garfield Weston Foundation)

The Headley Trust
 Coastal Community Fund
 Lois Cumbers Foundation
 The Tanner Trust



OUR VOLUNTEERS

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

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

OUR TRUSTEES

- Alexandra Bolitho (*President*)
- Simon Sherrard (*Chairman*)
- Rob Holmes (*Chair, Audit and Finance Committee*)
- Sue Bradbury
- Mike Carr
- Peter Davies
- Coralie Green
- Michael Griffiths
- Sam Hunt
- Dame Shan Morgan
- Ben Statham-Wilkins
- Simon Tregoning
- Dr Jo Esra

HONORARY COMMODORES

- Kurt Jackson
- Rodney Pattison
- Ellen Winsor



CORPORATE MEMBERS

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



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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.

