

Museum Development Yorkshire

Annual Review
2018 - 19



Industrious Lives

Thousands of men, women and children worked in Barnsley's collieries, furnaces, factories, mills and foundries. Over the centuries, we produced coal, iron, steel and glass for Britain and the world.

But what was it like to work the face, blow the glass and pick the shovels?

1. Working the Face at Liddington Colliery, late 19th century
2. Industrial Glass Mill, 1910
3. Working the newly made machine which cut the iron into sheets at Woodhouse, 1870
4. Steel workers in 1940's 'hot' job positions at Woodhouse, 1950
5. The powerful blast of a furnace glass blow, Woodhouse, 1950
6. Blast of sand-making mills at Woodhouse, 1950
7. Sheffield Glass Museum Collection, late 19th century
8. Yorkshire Coal & Steel Company, Frotherley, 1900

Working for a stronger, more resilient museums sector

Museum Development Yorkshire provides advice and development support to museums in Yorkshire and the Humber. In this review we share a sample of our recent activity, helping a wide range of museums to achieve their ambitions to become more sustainable, to care for their collections, and to share those collections ever more widely.

We work directly with museums, providing one-to-one support that builds on existing skills and progress, giving information and advice, offering grant funding, and giving access to expert, bespoke consultancy. We also offer confidential advice and support for museums, where needed.

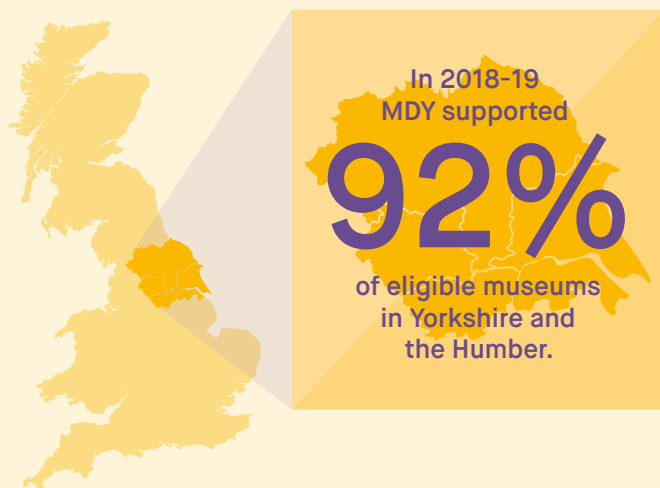
A new museum landscape

2018-19 was the first year that museums became National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs), receiving revenue funding from Arts Council England. Our region enjoyed great success, with six museums becoming new NPOs, joining The Hepworth Wakefield and museum services in Humberside, Leeds, Sheffield and York.

Success was the result of sustained hard work by people with whom we have worked for many years, and by organisations which are meeting the challenge of becoming more sustainable. Museums have been able to reflect on their own work, have

focused on a clear purpose, and connected with their audiences, to ensure that collections are being cared for and used well.

For Museum Development Yorkshire, the museum landscape has been reshaped as museum NPOs are not eligible for our direct support. Yet, the concentration of museum NPOs in Yorkshire offers a powerful opportunity for us all to learn from others' success and excellent practice, and to strengthen museums across the region. Museum NPOs are welcome to participate in our wider support and professional development activities, including regional forum meetings, cohort learning, and information sharing.



Wakefield
Museums

Barnsley
Museums

Brontë
Parsonage

Doncaster
Heritage
Services

Ripon
Museum
Trust

Thackray
Medical
Museum

Our region's new museum NPOs.

"Working with Museum Development Yorkshire has been vital to the sustainable growth of Barnsley Museums over a period of several years. From peer support opportunities, to governance reviews, to business planning, the support from MDY has put us on a firm footing, stretched and challenged us as an organisation – and, ultimately, led to us having the confidence to apply successfully to become a National Portfolio Organisation in 2018. I would strongly encourage all museums and their teams to make use of the fantastic array of support on offer."

**Lynn Dunning, Group Leader,
Arts & Heritage, Barnsley Museums**

"Working with MDY, for many years, has helped Ripon Museum Trust to become an ambitious operation with a clear sense of purpose. We have enjoyed excellent support in the form of advice, training and small grants to develop our museums, and in turn have shared our experiences with others. This relationship led to our being given encouragement to apply to Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation and, undoubtedly, contributed to our success. We are very grateful for this practical support."

Richard Taylor, Chair, Ripon Museum Trust



The Workhouse Museum, Ripon.

Sustainability

Achieving sustainability is now a key goal for museums.

Whitby Museum

Through development support over several years, Whitby Museum has gained a real sense of purpose, and a new team-working approach. This has led to innovative exhibition and activity programming, delivering a higher profile and a 24% increase in visitor numbers in just four years.

A workshop for trustees and volunteers was the first step towards determining a forward plan and strategy, enabling managers to focus on short-term priorities for Accreditation renewal. Further training was delivered through MDY's front of house cohort, interpretation support from an external consultant, and workshops for curators.

Innovative exhibitions and exciting new partnerships have been a major public outcome in 2019.

"Museum Development Yorkshire has been instrumental in our development of a management strategy for Whitby Museum. As an independent museum, and run mainly by volunteers, we needed to re-focus our goals to retain accredited status. The workshops and training were very valuable for planning how to achieve our aims. We now work as a team across marketing, operations, and collections, which is helping us plan our bi-centenary celebrations for 2023."

**Sarah Booth, Chair,
Whitby Literary & Philosophical Society**

Whitby and the Cosmos: The Search for Dark Matter, funded by The Royal Society Places of Science scheme and in partnership with Boulby Underground Laboratory, explored the area's importance to our understanding of the universe, from Captain Cook's scientific investigations to state of the art research into Dark Matter today. This ZEPLIN III Dark Matter detector, shown in the exhibition, has been donated to the museum.



The Unblinking Eye: 55 Years of Space Operations on Fylingdales Moor, explores the cultural legacy of the iconic "golf balls", benefiting from an academic collaboration between Newcastle University and Fylingdales' first artist in residence.



© Whitby Literary & Philosophical Society

In 2019-20 MDY are
working with the



University
of York

to trial innovation
development workshops
with six museum services.



Visitors at Whitby Museum and Pannett Art Gallery.

Kirklees Museums and Galleries

Kirklees Museums and Galleries have received a range of support from MDY, following a two-thirds reduction in their local authority budget in recent years. Having closed two museums and lost significant staff capacity, short-term personal support and planning for future investment was vital in order to put Kirklees Museums on the road to a sustainable future.

Initial coaching and mentoring for senior staff helped to identify priorities, build confidence, and develop essential advocacy skills. Heritage has now been given status within Huddersfield's Cultural Heart development, and Kirklees Museums have demonstrated their contribution to local authority outcomes on health, cohesion, aspiration and economic sustainability.

MDY encouraged staff to reconnect with the wider museums sector, and supported preparation for successful grant applications which led to a National Heritage Lottery Fund Resilient Heritage grant of over £200,000 in 2019.

Through Lottery funding, Kirklees Museums are now engaging with stakeholders, developing their vision, and preparing strategic masterplans. Inclusion and collaboration are being embedded, following a Creative Case for Diversity workshop delivered by MDY and Arts Council England.

More widely, participation in cohort learning has enabled action to tackle the collections backlog, rationalise collections, and review the collections policy. Through the front of house cohort, staff have developed skills and confidence, new awareness of audiences, and understanding of visitor engagement. A review of learning provision has led to a redesign, focusing on the strengths of the learning offer.



© Kirklees Museums and Galleries

Huddersfield by L.S. Lowry,
promoted to develop a
place-making approach
by Kirklees Museums and
Galleries.

Accreditation

We support museums to maintain their Accreditation with Arts Council England, or to become newly accredited.

Calderdale Industrial Museum

MDY has worked with Calderdale Industrial Museum, in Halifax, throughout their progress towards achieving Accreditation in 2019. The museum has particularly valued MDY's role in providing encouragement and advice, supporting communications with Arts Council England, and suggestions for museum mentors.

Being largely volunteer-run, the museum decided to seek accredited status to support its long-term survival as an organisation:

"Accreditation confers immediate credibility in our dealings with other museums, and many funders require it. Many of our projects can only be achieved with this external funding."

Tim Kirker, Chairman,
Calderdale Industrial Museum Association

Achieving Accreditation will enable the museum to negotiate a longer-term licence agreement with Calderdale MBC and to initiate two major development projects: a £100,000 project to redevelop their Power gallery, and reinstatement of displays on worsted cloth production in Calderdale. Accreditation is also an essential prerequisite for starting conversations about borrowing objects from other museums.



In 2019-20,
MDY are supporting
museums applying for
Accreditation under the
revised Accreditation
Standard 2018,



with dedicated
workshops, and
briefings at our regional
forum meetings.

Peter Robinson, who led the museum's Accreditation team, is presented with the Accreditation certificate by the Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, Ed Anderson, watched by museum chairman Tim Kirker, and director Stuart Crowther.

Ready To Borrow

In 2018-19, seven museums completed projects funded by Arts Council England's Ready To Borrow capital grants via Museum Development Yorkshire. They received up to £50,000 each to upgrade buildings and display spaces to meet Government Indemnity Scheme (GIS) requirements, enabling them to borrow significant material from regional and national collections.

Dales Countryside Museum

Ready To Borrow enabled the Dales Countryside Museum, in Hawes, to make progress in repositioning the museum as a visitor destination. With a gallery fully fitted to GIS standard, the museum is now building a reputation as a vibrant, high quality, temporary exhibition venue, working with regional or national museums to illustrate links between the Dales and wider collections, and increasing access to culture for people living in the Yorkshire Dales.

Having developed a recognised exhibitions programme, the quality and scope of exhibitions was limited by the standard of the gallery space. The museum matched a Ready to Borrow grant with support from the Friends of the Dales Countryside Museum and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. This funded the installation of secure doors and a shutter, reinforcement of an internal wall, and upgrading of the security and fire alarm systems. MDY grant funding purchased a new display panel system for the gallery.



Significant pieces from The Quilters' Guild, displayed at Dales Countryside Museum in the GIS-compliant gallery.

© Dales Countryside Museum

In total, MDY helped 11 museums to access over

£ 380,000

of Ready to Borrow funding

Captain Cook Memorial Museum

Captain Cook Memorial Museum, in Whitby, seized the opportunity to increase the size and quality of their exhibition spaces. As a Grade 1 listed, 17th century house, the museum has atmospheric but small rooms, so the grant transformed some challenging spaces. The outdated CCTV system was replaced and extended, increasing security and bringing new areas into play for temporary exhibitions. New display cases were bought, meeting safety, environmental and security standards, and also being easy to access for the museum's team.

And the benefits? The museum has already secured a long-term loan from the National Maritime Museum of the replica wax painting of a dingo, created as part of NMM's project, *Stubbs' Kangaroo from New Holland*. In 2019, the new exhibition space will house contemporary artwork from artist Helen Snell's *Neogeographies* exhibition, a reframing of the Captain Cook story. The museum has also made loan requests for 2020 to two national museums - watch this space!



Transforming challenging exhibition spaces at Captain Cook Memorial Museum.

© Captain Cook Memorial Museum

Learning together

MDY's learning cohorts support museums to develop a wide range of specialist skills.

Assembling a group with a shared need, we focus on sustained development over several months, supporting museums to fully embed new practices. Cohort members benefit from the knowledge and skills of an expert consultant, and learn from each other's challenges and solutions. A series of full-day, group workshops are supported with individual mentoring or coaching, and the opportunity to implement new learning with a grant.

In 2018-19, we delivered cohorts for front of house skills, developing health & wellbeing provision, and tackling collections backlogs. Participants find that cohort learning helps them to maintain momentum with new developments, and connect with colleagues across the region.

Visitor services

The Hepworth Wakefield

Visitor experience supervisors from The Hepworth Wakefield especially valued their participation in MDY's front of house cohort, which offered a professional development opportunity, impact for the gallery, and a chance to network with colleagues from a range of museums, including smaller volunteer-run museums, medium-sized independents, and a larger museum service.

"All of the sessions were very insightful, very well run and really helpful. We brainstormed with other museums about what we were doing, and how to develop our approach."

By benchmarking their work against other museums, they confirmed their ideas and then developed their ability to train their front of house team. As a result, they have developed the team's confidence in processes such as upselling.

The biggest impact was felt in developing their group tour offer. With support from the cohort, they reviewed their existing offer and developed the content and quality of free, daily tours. This work is now coming to fruition as the museum continues to promote paid group tours, with the aim of increasing both visitor numbers and income.

In 2018-19
24 museums
participated in MDY
learning cohorts.

MDY delivered
34
learning events providing
521 professional development
sessions for individuals.



A highlight tour delivered by a visitor experience assistant at The Hepworth Wakefield.

Caring for collections

Collections Trust have been delivering regional training events with MDY for several years. In 2018-19 we introduced the *Banish the Backlog* cohort, working with seven museums in three full-day sessions, plus visits providing one-to-one support throughout the year. Participating museums have improved their documentation procedures to prevent issues arising, and developed realistic documentation plans. Museum workers gain a new focus on their collections goals, and benefit from peer support.

"Working together ensures that MDY and Collections Trust provide a consistent message, and connects participants with both organisations. Our delivery benefits from MDY's strong, existing relationships with the cohort museums, and their regional knowledge contributes to the Collections Trust outreach programme as a whole."

**Sarah Brown, Outreach Officer,
Collections Trust**

Collections
Trust

A conservation assistant at work at Nunnington.



Nunnington Hall.

© National Trust images/Paul Harris

Nunnington Hall National Trust

Nunnington Hall needed to change the stories they told, to be more honest in the presentation of the house, and to bring out the people that lived there. To achieve this, they needed to understand their collection, including what they have, where it is from, and what is known about it. Asking these questions led the team to recognise a significant documentation backlog, and the need for collections rationalisation.

Banish the Backlog provided the ideal opportunity, enabling them to learn what other museums do, and understand Collections Trust recommendations.

"It gave us the headspace to think about tackling the problems, and allowed us to liaise with colleagues from other museums, gaining ideas, and seeing their procedures and plans. Most importantly, knowing that you are not the only person dealing with these issues makes them feel less daunting. Support from Collections Trust and MDY enabled us to go back to the basics, to have a refresher on the primary procedures, and plan how to tackle backlogs and care for the collection in future."

**Iain Kelly, House and Collections Manager,
Nunnington Hall National Trust**

Nunnington Hall have gained greater confidence in collections management, and have developed a strong plan to banish their backlog and fully align with the SPECTRUM primary procedures. The plan includes a training programme to ensure primary procedures are correctly followed, including object entry, and location and movement control. The next steps will be to identify gaps in the procedures and undertake a full collections inventory. *Banish the Backlog* continues with a new cohort of six museums in 2019-20.

Audience Development

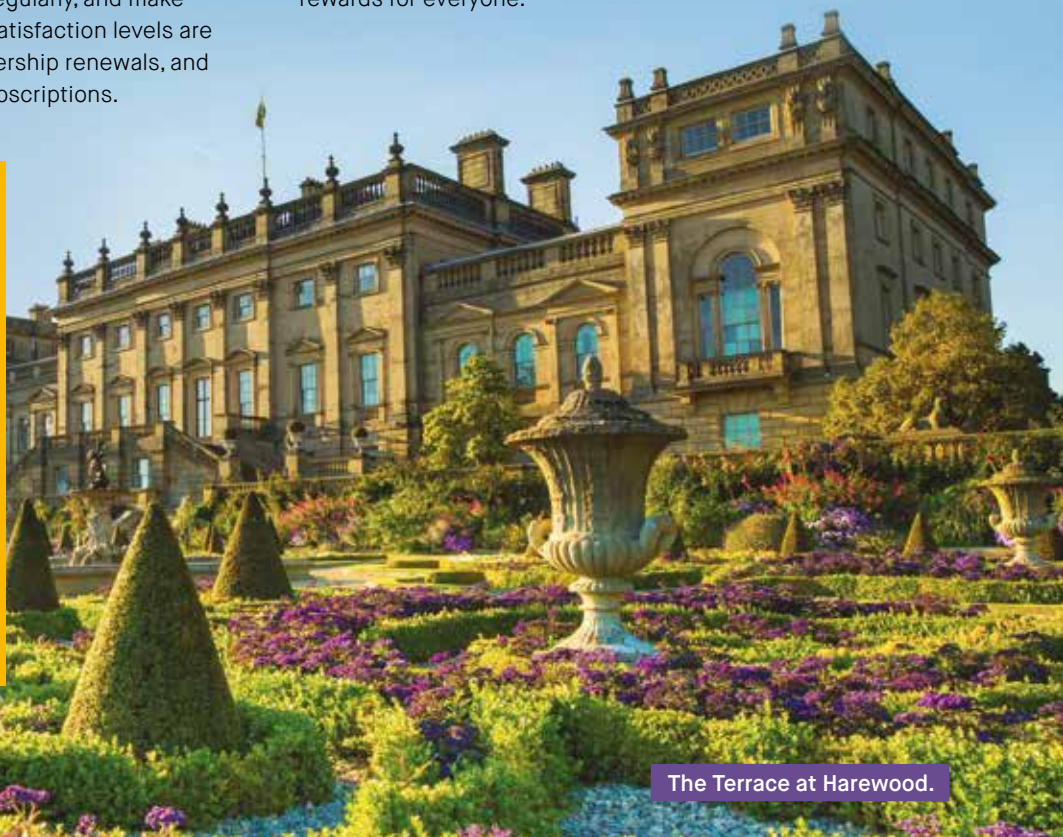
Understanding and developing audiences is key to museums achieving sustainability.

Harewood House

Supported by MDY grant funding for audience research, Harewood House Trust has gained deep and powerful insights into its visitors' motivations and interests. As a result, all programming now refers back to evidence-based audience knowledge, Harewood membership has grown, and a greater number of members are visiting more regularly, and make up over half of all visitors daily. Higher satisfaction levels are also demonstrated by increased membership renewals, and increased income from membership subscriptions.

Working with audience development consultants, a programme of audience research explored the different motivations of Harewood's members and non-members to identify how the membership scheme could best satisfy visitor demand. This was followed with deeper research into the motivations of members, leading to unique offers directed at people's main interests in the house, garden, or bird garden and animal experience, including special behind-the-scenes experiences such as the opportunity to meet curators at preview events.

By exploring how visitors consume their cultural offer, Harewood House Trust has ensured that visitor needs are being met, whether they are seeking detailed interpretation, prefer to guide themselves, or simply enjoy the experience and atmosphere of the site. In 2019, research is reaping rewards for everyone.



The Terrace at Harewood.

© Visit England and Thomas Heaton



"Really relaxing, could sit here for hours."
Female visitor, aged 14.

"We took our three, who are 7, 5 and 3 years old, they absolutely loved the gallery - we spent ages there and had a really fab afternoon."
Local visitor.

Gallery 5: a family-friendly space at Cartwright Hall Art Gallery.

Cartwright Hall Art Gallery

Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, in Bradford, secured MDY funding of £2,100 to develop Gallery 5, a fun, creative and engaging space which is especially welcoming for children and families. Their curator of fine art worked closely with colleagues in the learning team to test ideas for the gallery with members of the community, so that it would meet the needs of family visitors and schools.

The gallery's ever-changing content provides a fresh and vibrant space which is more visible and accessible for families and community audiences than the permanent, first-floor galleries. The space has already been used as a stimulating learning environment for early years groups and has attracted repeat visits from a more local audience, who appreciate that the gallery is refreshed regularly. Gallery 5 incorporates on-going informal dialogue with its visitors through thought-provoking question walls and reflection areas.



Museum Development Yorkshire is funded as an Arts Council England Sector Support Organisation to provide advice and development support to museums in Yorkshire and the Humber, and is part of York Museums Trust.

Museum Development Yorkshire is one of the nine regional museum development providers in England. Together, we form a national Museum Development Network to share our knowledge and learning, and to access opportunities for museums.

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Your MDY team, 2019. Left to right (back): Joanne Bartholomew, Liz Denton, Dieter Hopkin, Michael Turnpenny, Rebecca Griffiths, and (seated) Lily Wilks and Alan Bentley.

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Museum Development Yorkshire



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