

Accessible Heritage



During 2018 a number of special visits have been made by children and adults with learning disabilities to heritage and museum sites across the Isle of Wight. The project was managed by Lisa Kerley, Heritage Learning Practitioner and was made possible with a grant from ‘Down to the Coast’. The project has been enabling people to explore, enjoy and learn about our Island heritage. At each site visited the participants engaged in activities and recorded their visit through photographs and film. They helped to create a website as part of the project and their experiences and learning can now be shared with others through an accessible online guide.

3 groups were involved in the project - Way Forward, Phoenix Project and St George’s School. Over the course of 6 months they visited: Osborne House, Brading Roman Villa, Dinosaur Isle, IW Bus and Coach Museum, Wight Military and Heritage Museum, Carisbrooke Castle Museum, Brading Roman Villa, St Catherine’s Lighthouse, Fort Victoria Archaeology Discovery Centre, Arreton Shipwreck Museum, Newport Roman Villa and two of the groups had an outreach session with objects from the Mary Rose Museum. Each group also had 2 sessions of e-learning with ICT Talk where their learning was evaluated and content developed for the accessible web guide.

The main outcome for the participants has been the opportunity to visit important Island heritage sites and museums to experience and learn from them. Heritage has been made more accessible to these groups by providing learning opportunities through specially tailored visits, tours and workshops with museum staff and volunteers with carefully planned follow up sessions to consolidate learning.

Group leaders have provided positive feedback on individual learning, self-confidence and social interaction through the project. Some comments from the group leaders:

‘If it wasn’t for projects like this it’s very unlikely for many of our service users that the opportunity would arise that they could visit museums’

‘The project has made heritage really engaging for our service users in a way that is interesting and relevant to them: they loved the hands-on and practical workshops - making a fossil to take home for example’

‘The students have particularly enjoyed putting their learning into a Powerpoint which has then been made into a YouTube video, it’s something they can be proud of and show their friends and family easily. I’ve also seen some students engage much more than in an ordinary IT lesson’

The heritage sites and museums visited have reported back positively on the website; sharing the link on their own websites as well as their Twitter and Facebook sites. This guide will now be made available for others to use at the sites visited, in local libraries, schools and as an e-resource.

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Exploring bones and fossils at Dinosaur Isle.



Looking for artefacts buried in the sand - a workshop activity at Fort Victoria Archaeology Discovery Centre.

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Learning about ancient food and drink in the education room at Newport Roman Villa.



One of the groups visiting St Catherine's Lighthouse where they had a special guided tour.

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Learning how to operate a ticket machine at the IW Bus and Coach Museum.



Mosaic making workshop activity and exploring books at Brading Roman Villa.

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A group visit to Osborne House.

To find out more about this project please visit the Accessible Heritage website, where you will find an accessible guide written by the participants about each of the sites visited as part of the project:

<https://sites.google.com/view/accessible-heritage>

Case study written by Lisa Kerley
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