

## CASE STUDY

# WARDDYKES PRIMARY SCHOOL MUSEUM PROJECT

A joint project between Warddykes Primary School, ANGUSalive's Signal Tower Museum, Museums Galleries Scotland and Developing the Young Workforce that highlights the exciting and varied roles within museums and the skills required for these jobs.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

#### MUSEUM ORGANISATIONAL LEGACY:

- School workshops will be created based around what a museum is, different jobs in a museum, and historical themes.
- This focus on museums as a career opportunity will attract a new audience of early senior school pupils to the Signal Tower museum.
- The museum will continue the working relationship with Developing the Young Workforce.

### THE PROJECT:

This project was designed to give young people a flavour of the work they can do in the heritage sector and the activities that go on behind the scenes to bring our collections and exhibitions to life.

We worked with 44 pupils in P6/7 and P7 classes at Warddykes Primary School in Arbroath.

We created a series of eight workshops for each class, that introduced the pupils to the concept of what a museum is, the types of jobs there are in museums and give them a taster experience of what working in a museum is like and help them to gain skills relevant for the sector and other types of jobs. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic these were a mix of in person and virtual workshops. The pupils gained skills and experience through activities related to what we had identified as the core four areas of work in our museum – Collections, Exhibitions, Learning and Front of House. They virtually 'met' people who worked in these four areas at Signal Tower Museum (and ANGUSalive generally) and carried out different activities related to an aspect of these jobs.

As they were working with our archaeological collections, we reached out to Dr Kate Britton, an archaeologist at University of Aberdeen, to create a video explaining what her job involved and giving a tour of their lab. This meant that the pupils gained an insight into another career related to the museum sector.

The workshops culminated in a display at Signal Tower Museum curated by the pupils of items from our archaeology collection.



Pupils discuss the objects in the mystery handling box activity.

## CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES:

- Due to COVID-19 we couldn't bring in members of museum staff to speak to the pupils in person. So, the relevant people were asked to record a video giving details of their career path to date and what their jobs involved. This turned into a positive as we now have these videos for future projects and learning resources.
- Visiting the museum helped the pupils to see first-hand the different museum jobs and the visit pulled together their learning from the project. Seeing the importance of the museum visit to the pupils made us think of ways that we could include a tour of Signal Tower Museum on future projects, where physical visits may not be possible. This spurred us on to create a virtual tour of the museum.
- For the object selection activities, we had to balance allowing the pupils to engage and interact with different objects with keeping the items safe. We introduced the pupils to object handling through the mystery box activity with objects from our handling collection. This meant that they learnt the basics of handling objects with more robust items, and it gave everyone the confidence to then use archaeological objects from our collection. In addition to this we kept the collection items in clear boxes so that the pupils could study them and take notes, without risking the objects themselves.
- The pupils enjoyed the fact that they were able to hold objects that were, in some cases, thousands of years old and were given the responsibility to research and write their own labels. Having the display aspect of the project worked well as it gave the pupils something to work towards and meant that they had a reason to take their families back to the museum.

## THE IMPACT IT HAS MADE:

- We have now set aside a space that we can continue to use for other school and community

group projects. This enhances the variety of our display content at Signal Tower Museum and gives us the opportunity to work on other similar projects in the future. This will help to enhance our connections to the local community, where previously the majority of our visitors at Signal Tower have been tourists.

- 40 out of the 44 pupils showed that they learned a new skill that related to working in museums or about the different jobs that it is possible to have in the museum sector. They now have the knowledge to consider a career in the museum sector when they are older and have useful transferable skills for any future career.
- Approximately 50% of the pupils had visited the Signal Tower Museum before the project and since it 93% have said that they would return to visit Signal Tower again.
- 6 of the pupils have been back so far to take their families on a tour of the museum, including their own display. The pupils were proud that they had created something that was on display at the museum for all our visitors to see, and particularly that their names were on the labels.
- Visitor feedback about the display has been very positive with visitors commenting that it is nice to see young people getting involved in the museum.

## GUIDANCE:

- While COVID-19 at first felt like a barrier to this project, it just took a bit of creativity to work around the restrictions and find new ways of doing things. It's definitely useful to have alternative ways of doing different activities so that they can still go ahead while guidelines change.
- Whilst we live in a digital age it was the tangible aspects of the project that the pupils most enjoyed – working with the objects, coming to the museum, and seeing their display so having those elements in a project like this is useful.

## USEFUL RESOURCES:

If you would like more information about this project please contact Markus Offer, Skills Development Manager, Museums Galleries Scotland email: [MarkusO@museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk](mailto:MarkusO@museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk)

**T: 0131 550 4100 | W: [museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk](http://museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk) | Twitter: @MuseumsGalScot**

Museums Galleries Scotland is a company limited by guarantee registered in Scotland (No. 74264) and a charity registered in Scotland (No. SC015593).