

Devon Museums

AWARD WINNING



▲ Tiverton Museum



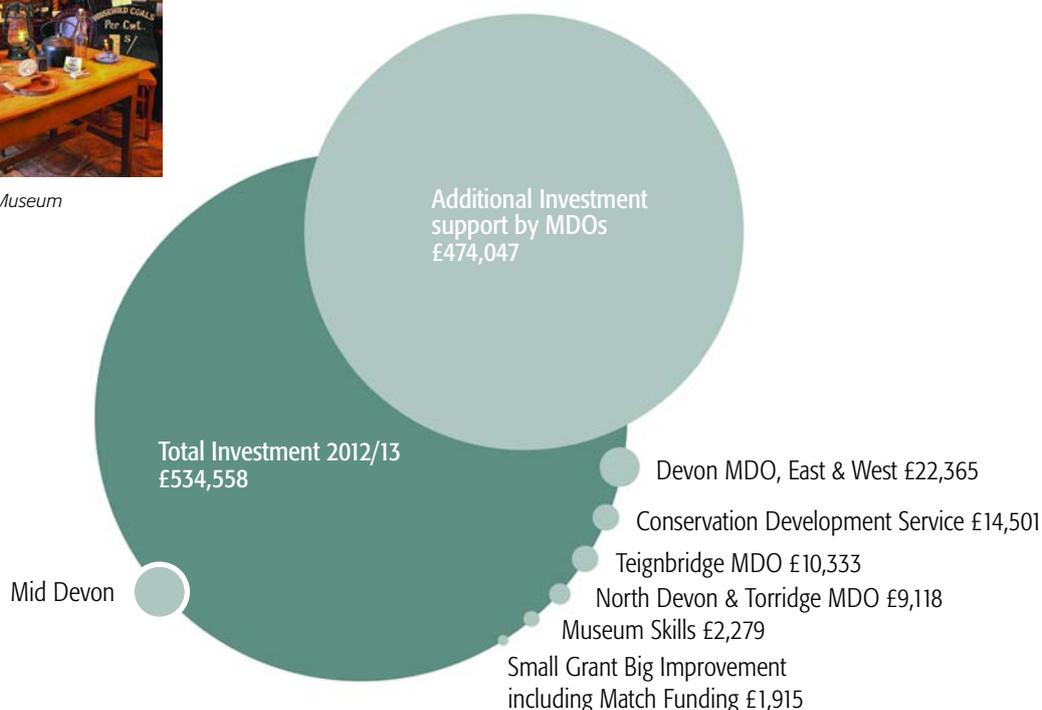
▲ Topsham Museum



▲ Lyn & Exmoor Museum

Museums in Devon come in all shapes and sizes, from the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) - Arts Fund Museum of the Year 2012 - to the small and entirely volunteer-run Topsham Museum, also listed for the prize in 2008. Museums in Devon attracted over 860,000 visits in 2012-13, based on Museum Annual Data Returns from 88% of Accredited museums, excluding RAMM.

Three Museum Development Officers (MDO), Susan Eddisford, Alison Mills and Pippa Griffith provide support to museums across Devon. A major success was securing £17,400 of ACE Strategic Funds for the Digital Devon project to develop Devonmuseums.net, a website on which all museums in Devon are represented. This shared platform has enabled each museum to develop a web presence with consistent key visitor information, and provides online shop facilities and sponsorship space. The project has supported museums to reach new and larger audiences, developing the sustainability of the sector through online retail and space to advertise new exhibitions, events, learning opportunities and resources for schools.



Devon Museums

EAST & WEST DEVON

East Devon

Museums in East Devon are almost entirely volunteer-run. This means that access to the professional support provided by the MDO is especially important. This year, the MDO has concentrated on supporting 4 volunteer-run museums, Allhallows, Exmouth, Fairlynch and Sidmouth to maintain their Accreditation. This has included providing advice on forward planning, governance, workforce management and collections care.

As well as providing funding support and advice to museums, which this year included working with Axminster Heritage Museum on the development of their HLF bid, the MDO organises the East Devon Museums Group. These meetings provide a vital network through which the museum workforce can share information, develop partnerships and access funding. The MDO continued to support museums to increase and develop their audiences and during the year worked with Whimble and Fairlynch Museums to develop story-telling sessions as part of their family friendly offer.

West Devon

Working with both the Museum of Dartmoor Life and Dartmoor Prison Museum the MDO has provided a range of advisory sessions including collections care, business planning, workforce management, audience development and sustainability. The MDO organises the West Devon Museums Group meetings and works with the West Devon Arts Officer to support the wider cultural offer for local communities. As Devon is such a large geographical area and the museum workforce is almost entirely voluntary, coordinating local networks to support heritage organisations exchange ideas and assist one another to improve and develop their services is vital to their sustainability.



CASE STUDY

SIDMOUTH MUSEUM - THE NEXT AMAZON.COM?

Using the platform of www.devonmuseums.net the local MDO, Susan Eddisford, has supported museums to develop their e-commerce. Following a training session in December 2012 nine museums have now set up on-line shops.

Sidmouth Museum used their online shop to offer a range of booklets and a calendar and sold almost £100 worth of goods at a time when sales were nil because the museum was closed.

A satisfied customer emailed:
"I would just like to say how brilliant the Sidmouth Museum website design is. Very easy to use; large clear print and payment was very quick. Thanks for all your hard work. I enjoyed purchasing some books from the site for the first time."



▲ Tiverton Museum



▲ Dingles Fairground Heritage Centre



▲ Museum of Dartmoor Life

Devon Museums

TEIGNBRIDGE

Teignbridge's museums provide a fascinating insight into the history and culture of South Devon and beyond. They are an important part of local communities, providing opportunities for fun and learning and can act as focus points for regeneration such as Teign Heritage Centre, which won an award for Best Commercial Public Building in 2012.

With the exceptions of Newton Abbot Museum and Teign Heritage Centre all the museums in Teignbridge are run entirely by volunteers, making access to training, information and professional museum advice of vital importance. These essential services are co-ordinated and delivered by the local MDO, Susan Eddisford, who manages the Teignbridge Museums group, which provides an opportunity to share successes, build partnerships and receive briefings on current museum policy and funding.

During 2012-13, Susan has provided 53 advisory sessions to 11 museums as well as acting as Museum Mentor for 3 of the 4 Accredited museums in Teignbridge. She provides these museums with qualified, professional support which they require to meet the national Museum Accreditation Standard. Her support has included advice on collections care, business planning, workforce management and audience development. The MDO has also ensured that the museum workforce are up to speed on recent changes in Heritage Lottery funding, updated on HMRC Gift Aid regulations as well as legal requirements such as Disclosure and Barring procedures.

The 4 Accredited museums attracted almost 12,000 visitors in 2012-13, but the real growth can be seen in their digital audiences. In building on the countywide Devonmuseums.net, Teignbridge's museums are reaching new and larger audiences with 10 new museum websites developed in 2012. This project, led by the MDO, secured an additional £17,400 ACE Strategic funding and provided museums with quality online marketing to meet the needs of the modern visitor as well as providing online access to collections. These websites attracted 50,000 unique hits in 2012-13 and the launch of a mobile app is planned for 2013. The income generation potential of digital access continues to be developed by museums with the launch of online shops at Dawlish and Newton Abbot, marketing initiatives include promoting online membership for Bovey Tracey Heritage Trust and special events such as cave walks with the William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust.



CASE STUDY NEWTON ABBOT MUSEUM ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVE PROJECT

In 2012, Newton Abbot Museum secured £250 from Small Grant: Big Improvement. The project collected over 20 oral history recordings of memories of people living and working in Newton Abbot along with photographs.

From this, 40 audio clips were made and an oral archive section developed on the Newton Abbot and GWR Museum website.

3 volunteers and a young graduate led the project which was delivered in partnership with the Rotary Club and the local community, including schools. They attended training sessions in the use of the recording equipment and working with young people.

Through the funding the museum has bought recording equipment and a camera. The project continues to grow as members of the local community share their stories with the museum.

Devon Museums

TORRIDGE & NORTH DEVON

Museums are an essential part of the tourism offer in North Devon and Torridge, attracting over 330,000 visits in 2012-13, based on Museum Annual Data Returns from all Accredited museums in the area. The collections of northern Devon tell stories ranging from the fishing heritage of little coastal villages, to Sixties surfers, to the internationally important North Devon pottery. Collectively, the museums of northern Devon celebrate the lives of people living on and visiting this unique coastline. The year saw some outstanding developments including the opening of The Museum of British Surfing in Braunton, shortly followed by the long awaited community transfer of North Devon Maritime Museum in Appledore to the trust that had successfully run the museum for over 35 years.

A vital component to the success of the museum provision in northern Devon has been the work of the Museum Development Officer (MDO), Alison Mills. She has delivered professional specialist support to 13 museums, including 9 Accredited museums, across a wide range of development needs. Two thirds of the support provided by the MDO this year has focused on collections and business management, enabling museums to develop realistic approaches to sustainability, business planning and improving the care of their collections. In total over 192 instances of support were provided to the museums during 2012-13, including Accreditation and funding advice.

The MDO service has been pivotal in securing additional investment in the heritage of northern Devon, supporting local museums and heritage organisations to secure just over £450,000 funding in 2012-13. This income represents a 49 times return on overall investment in local MDO provision.



CASE STUDY WORKING WITH OFFENDERS IN NORTH DEVON

Over the last year, two North Devon museums have engaged with different criminal rehabilitation programmes.

Combe Martin, a volunteer run museum, took on 2 young people as part of their Community Payback hours. This has proved to be an enjoyable and constructive experience for all concerned. The 2 young people gained experience with collections, front-of-house and working with people. Both continued volunteering after finishing the programme, receiving free annual museum membership as a thank you. For Combe Martin the best outcome has been the exchange between the different generations and realisation that all age groups have something to offer.

At the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon, young offenders decorated the inside of the museum, a job long overdue. The young people were polite and hardworking and under the team's excellent supervision were able to do the work well.



▲ North Devon Maritime Museum



▲ Museum of Barnstaple & N Devon



▲ Museum of British Surfing