

# Cornwall Museums

CELEBRATING A UNIQUE HISTORY



▲ Perranzabuloe Museum



▲ Liskeard Museum



▲ Falmouth Maritime Museum

The museums in Cornwall explore and celebrate the natural, cultural and industrial history of Cornwall through their unique collections. They are a major part of the tourist offer, attracting over 1.1 million visits in 2012-13, based on Museum Annual Data Returns from all Accredited museums in Cornwall. A dedicated Museum Development team of four part-time Museum Development Officers (MDO), Jan Horrell, Stephanie Meads, Joanna Mattingly, and Felicity Baber, jointly funded by Cornwall Council and South West Museum Development support museums across Cornwall.

Cornwall has over 50 museums, with 30 in the Accreditation Scheme. During 2012-13, the MDO team provided support to 20 Accredited museums and 19 non-Accredited museums, delivering 239 instances of professional support and advice. Almost half of these were dedicated to supporting museums to improve standards including collections care, business planning, workforce management, audience development and sustainability. With 10 of the Accredited museums in Cornwall being entirely volunteer-run, this access to professional support and advice is of vital importance.

Nearly a third of the MDO capacity was focused on providing funding support to 20 museums. In addition they have worked on Cornwall wide projects including the South East Cornwall Museums Forum HLF application and the ACE Strategic Fund South West Digital Development project. This focus on supporting inward investment realised a 13 times return on investment in MDO provision in 2012-13.



▲ Penlee Museum



▲ Geevor Tin Mine Museum



## CASE STUDY PORTHURNO TELEGRAPH MUSEUM

The South West Digital Engagement Project piloted a framework to support museums develop their digital engagement strategies.

Porthcurno Telegraph Museum was selected to participate as it is in the middle of a major redevelopment which includes renewing its digital offer.

Consultants audited Porthcurno's current online activity and led a whole-staff workshop to identify the museum's Vision and explore what makes for successful digital engagement.

It now has an embryonic strategy and recognises that digital engagement is a whole organisation activity, not the job of the marketing officer alone. 4 members of staff have committed to providing content, enriching the digital 'conversation' and adding identified personalities to the museum's online identity.

A key role of any MDO is to support museums to work more effectively, and this often involves supporting the development of partnerships beyond museums or other local cultural organisations. During 2012-13, the MDO team have supported a number of museums to develop learning opportunities for young people with the support of partners, including Truro and Penwith College and University College Falmouth. As part of Cornwall's Kernocopia Cultural Olympiad in 2012 the MDO team supported the creation of loan boxes used by local schools at 5 museums.

With the breadth of experience in the team, bespoke training was delivered complementing the Museum Skills programme, including website development, Modes Complete (collections management software), and display lighting. The team's skills work also included a focus on developing shared information and knowledge networks as a sustainable means of raising skills across volunteers in museums.

