

Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service: Case Study

Museum: Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse

Project: Skills for the Future: Trainee and apprenticeships programme

Why we did it: The Heritage Lottery Fund's Skills for the Future programme supports work-based training in a wide range of heritage skills. Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, in partnership with the Museum of East Anglian Life (MEAL), made a successful bid to the HLF in 2011, securing £1.1m to run a Skills for the Future programme aimed at developing skills in the sector, meeting skills shortages and encouraging workforce diversity.

What we delivered: With 88 placements over three years, Gressenhall and MEAL's Skills for the Future programme is the largest nationally, offering apprenticeships and traineeships lasting from three to eighteen months across many different areas of heritage management—from farriery to farming. So far, Gressenhall has hosted 14 traineeships and apprenticeships which typically include formal training courses, practical on-the-job experience and mentoring by museum staff. These are paid posts which broadens access and provides valuable jobs market experience. Trainees have come from a variety of stages in their working lives; one straight from sixth form, some immediately post graduate, some wanting career changes and others who never went to college.

Who benefited: The scheme is proving successful as a stepping stone into work. To date, four of the Gressenhall trainees have secured employment in a related field: **Joshua Giles**, Visitor Services trainee now working at Gressenhall in the front of house team; **Lucy Wallis**, Learning trainee now working as a learning freelancer and as part of the front of house team; **Oscar Smith**, Heritage Farming apprentice, now working on a farm with heavy horses and **Kay Davis** (see picture and quote), Heritage Gardening trainee, now self employed and also working for the National Trust at Peckover House garden. Visitors have also benefitted from trainees' work on site including the redevelopment of garden areas at the museum, development of a woodland management plan, development of museum social media work, re-organisation of the museum library and improved public accessibility.

What happened next: NMAS has submitted a bid for a new HLF programme, this time collaborating with nature conservation organisations in Norfolk to train people in the skills they themselves look for in new recruits. Gressenhall's growing role as a training provider is part of a service-wide ambition to create the country's first Teaching Museum, through paid traineeships focused on opening up access to the museum profession.

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“The best thing I have ever done! I needed to change career, and now I am delighted to have my first job with the National Trust.”

The Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service (NMAS) is a multi-award winning service comprising **ten museums and a study centre**. The Service aims to inform and inspire people's interest in the cultural and natural heritage of Norfolk, and address relevant contemporary issues by:

- **Collecting, preserving and interpreting material evidence of the past**
- **Stimulating creativity, inspiration and enjoyment**
Providing an enjoyable way to learn throughout life
- **Engaging with the widest possible audience**
- **Enriching people's lives and creating a sense of place and identity**
- **Enabling people to understand and value other cultures**

It is a high performing service. In 2010/11 **380,000** visits were made to the museums, and **43,000** schoolchildren participated in formal learning events.

The Norfolk Museums Service was established in 1974 when the County and District Councils in Norfolk agreed to delegate their museum powers to a Joint Committee to manage museums through a county-wide Museums

Service. The museums in each district are managed by local Area Museum Managers who liaise closely with each District and ensure that the museums support local strategies and initiatives.

NMAS is one of only 16 Major Partner Museums receiving substantial revenue funding from Arts Council England in order to achieve ACE's vision for museums:

"A museums sector that is delivering inspiring public programmes using high quality collections to reach more and more people, especially children and young people. The sector is innovative; it shares best practice and is embedded in communities and responsive to audience needs. It is made up of strong, sustainable organisations with a highly skilled and diverse workforce; it is excellently led."

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