



How folk music, dance and drama inspired learning with museums

Case studies, outcomes
and resources from
The Full English Extra
learning programme

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Introduction

This booklet shares case studies and resources from The Full English Extra learning programme that was delivered by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) in partnership with three national museums in 2015 – 2016.

Background information on the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS)

The English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), based at Cecil Sharp House in Camden, North London, is the national development organisation for English traditional folk music, dance and related arts. It runs the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (VWML), England's national folk music and dance library and archive.

EFDSS creates and delivers creative learning projects for young people and adults, locally and nationally, often in partnership with other organisations, and runs the Folk Educators Group, a national peer support network.

Overview of The Full English

The Full English was a national programme of work carried out by EFDSS between 2012 and 2014, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, delivered in partnership with a number of archives and cultural organisations from across England and beyond. It comprised a national learning programme that reached over 15,500 people, and the creation of the world's largest digital archive folk songs, dances, tunes and customs with over 80,000 items of manuscript accessible via the VWML website.

The overall aims were:

- To greatly increase access to important folk archives
- To reach new audiences and participants for folk arts
- To demonstrate the value of folk arts within education

“ The songs encouraged children to explore their own dialect and accents. They were encouraged to ‘sing Yorkshire’ and it sounded great but they are so used to putting on their school singing voices!

Bryony Griffith, EFDSS artist

The Full English Extra

The concept for the learning programme came during 2014 when EFDSS worked with the National Coal Mining Museum for England (NCMME) near Wakefield in West Yorkshire. This proved to be a very fruitful relationship, so for The Full English Extra it was decided to work in partnership again with NCMME, plus two other national museums – the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, London (with whom EFDSS collaborated on the Music of the Sea season in 2013) and the Museum of English Rural Life at the University of Reading in Berkshire.

The overall aim was:

- To explore the way museum education and folk arts can combine to create powerful new learning experiences and together shed light on intangible cultural heritage.

The Full English Extra learning programme reached around 1400 people over the academic year 2015 – 2016. Work took place in Yorkshire, Berkshire and London, with the three museums, eight schools and two music education hubs, to co-create the learning projects and resources shared in this booklet.

Material for the projects came from various archival sources; including the museums' own collections and EFDSS' digital archive, which has seen three further collections added – from Daisy Daking and Mary Neal, two pioneering female folk activists of the early 20th century, and a collection of Broadside ballads.

On 16 March 2016, The Full English Extra learning programme was shared via a professional development day at Cecil Sharp House. *Museums and Folk Arts: Creating Education Projects Together* was co-presented by EFDSS' Folk Educators Group and attended by 60 folk and museum educators from around England. (see page 10)

More information and short films: www.efdss.org/thefullenglish

Learning resources and a PDF of this booklet are freely accessible online via the EFDSS Resource Bank www.efdss.org/resourcebank (see page 11)

www.efdss.org
www.cecilsharpouse.org
www.vwml.org

“ What a four weeks we have had, simply the best. I am so indebted to you for your time and energy in delivering the folk project to Reading String Orchestra. We all have learnt so much and the project will continue. Sean Law our Bass teacher now has the bit between his teeth to get a folk group off the ground on a regular basis. This is mainly due to the performance and opportunity that has been given to us from yourselves...This project has been a shining example of what is possible when a hub and cross cultural bodies are brought together.

Jonathan Burnett, Head of Strings, Berkshire Maestros

“ As a museum we try and tackle these big themes, about political struggle and workers' rights, but they're quite big concepts for children to get their heads around, especially in a day's visit where you're busy doing things. So I think this project really gave the children who looked at this aspect of their local history the time and the space to do this. That's been another valuable thing about folk music... it allows children to contextualise political and social issues and make them personal. Once they are personal they have much more resonance and impact. You can see how those things affect me, or how I can apply those things to the rest of my life. So that's another magical thing that happens, I think, when folk music meets heritage.

Jayne Ambrose, Education Officer NCMME

Aligning museum collections with the folk arts in innovative ways

“This was a really lovely partnership model - everyone was so flexible. Working with EFDSS has made me realise how well aligned our collections are. Folk arts are a key manifestation of how people have related to English rural life. The innovative ideas around the use of music are taking both the music and the presentation of the collections in different and exciting directions.

Phillippa Heath, Public Programmes Manager (MERL)

Background to partners

The Museum of English Rural Life (MERL), part of the University of Reading, is 'dedicated to the spirit of the English countryside and its people. The Museum houses the most comprehensive national collection of objects, books and archives relating to the history of food, farming and the countryside' (www.reading.ac.uk/merl). The Museum was closed for refurbishment at the time these projects took place and is due to reopen in autumn 2016.

Arbour Vale School is an all-through day and weekly boarding school in Slough, Berkshire, for young people with moderate or severe learning difficulties. Music and the Arts are highly valued and evident throughout and beyond the curriculum.

Berkshire Maestros is the lead organisation of Berkshire Music Hub. Reading Music Centre String Orchestra is an advanced ensemble (for pupils Grade 6 or above) meeting weekly at one of five regional music centres.

Specific project aims

Two projects were undertaken, with the following collective aims:

- To link folk material to specific themes within the collection of the Museum in innovative ways in order to bring new interpretations and perspectives.
- To broaden and deepen young people's engagement with, and understanding of, rural history and heritage, English folk material and traditions.
- To experiment creatively with different ways of working in order to explore ways in which the folk arts and MERL can attract new and different audiences.

Synopsis of the projects

This was the first time that EFDSS and MERL have worked together. A known challenge was that the Museum would be closed during the project.

Museum educator: Phillippa Heath

Lead teachers: Jonathan Burnett, (Berkshire Maestros); Josephine Langenhoven, (Arbour Vale School)

Artists: Rob Harbron, Miranda Rutter (Berkshire Maestros); Cat Kelly (Arbour Vale)

Trainees: Chloe Metcalfe, Anna Mullens, (Arbour Vale)

Arbour Vale School - EFDSS artists worked collaboratively with the Head of Music and class teachers to deliver sessions over four Friday mornings. Using two songs about rural life as a starting point (Daddy Fox and A Country Boy), pupils in two Key Stage 3 classes and the school choir explored and developed the musical material using voices, instruments, movement and Makaton signing. The songs, and photographs from the Museum, were used as stimuli for cross-arts work, including creating soundscapes and making props, forming part of the final sharing performance.

Reading Music Centre String Orchestra

Working with the Director of the orchestra, EFDSS artists sourced musical material from the digital archive which was accessible to string players and had plenty of potential for musical development. The players were introduced to the music over five Friday evening sessions through learning by ear. This encouraged them to work as an 'organic body' (Frances Watt), acknowledging and listening to each other and working together as a more effective ensemble. A final piece, using ideas from the string players, was worked into a 'soundtrack' to accompany a film of a threshing machine, similar to one which forms part of MERL's collection. There are plans for this soundtrack to be used, performed and archived in the Museum once it reopens.

Key outcomes - partnership working

- These projects have developed the relationship between EFDSS and MERL and helped make new connections between these organisations, the Berkshire Maestros and Arbour Vale School.
- The EFDSS artists had previously worked with EFDSS and were experienced and well respected. They supported trainee artists, which is essential for developing the pool of high quality folk educators and a constant feature of EFDSS education work.

Other discussion points

- It was noted that learning by ear gave some string players the opportunity to shine who struggle at points in notation-led sessions. Some were keen to continue to play by ear and have been signposted to other possibilities, including the new National Youth Folk Ensemble.

“The fact that the museum was there is great inspiration; that there is this fascinating resource of great artefacts right down the road in Reading really helped make the link between the lives these kids live here in suburban Berkshire and the lives that people may have lived here just 50 or 60 years ago.

Rob Harbron, EFDSS Artist

- The process of working was described as 'organic and refreshing' (Phillippa Heath, MERL) in that it was very open with no definitive outputs. This flexibility allowed the team to be creative in their processes and approaches; new possibilities for combining and interpreting the collections emerged from this.



Wakefield Music Education Hub

Schools from Featherstone: Purston Primary School, Girnhill Infant School, Street House Junior and Infant School, North Featherstone Junior and Infant School, All Saints Junior and Infant School, St Thomas Junior and Infant School

Local history: where folk arts meet heritage

“If there’s one song that symbolises the synergy between folk arts and heritage, this is it, because it’s about making the ordinary extraordinary. Our job at the museum is to make an ordinary working life an extraordinary thing, and folk music does that too. Our job is to connect people with their past in a really personal and emotional way and folk music does that too. So, Blue Scars* is one of the songs that will always remain with me from this project.

Jayne Ambrose,
Education Officer
NCMME

(*written by Bryony Griffith with children from St. Thomas Junior and Infant School)

Background to partners

The National Coal Mining Museum for England (NCMME) is situated near Wakefield on the site of Caphouse Colliery, which has one of the oldest working shafts in Britain. NCMME has an extensive education programme built around their exhibitions, artefacts, underground tours of the mine, online resources and an outreach learning programme. NCMME worked with EFDSS as part of The Full English Learning Programme in 2014. The Full English Extra has consolidated and further developed the work and relationships.

Wakefield Music Education Hub (WMEH) is a partnership of 25 organisations, ‘promoting and providing inclusive, quality, enjoyable and diverse progressive music education and opportunities...’ (www.wakefieldmusicservices.org). WMEH has collaborated previously with NCMME, recently producing a concert of new works with an iPad orchestra based upon sound samples collected within the mine.

Specific project aims

- To draw on materials and inspiration from The Full English digital archive, complemented by sources from the Museum’s own collections and other relevant collections, creating an education project and inspiring cross-curricular resources particularly supporting exploration of local history.
- To enable pupils to develop understanding of coal mining history, heritage and context, drawing out the importance of folk music and dance as part of coal mining’s rich cultural heritage.
- To develop and strengthen relationships between formal education and informal learning, including working with local schools in partnership with WMEH.
- To promote NCMME as a place for creativity and arts participation and learning, and the development of innovative practices in the use of folk arts to enrich learning in a heritage setting.

Museum educator: Jayne Ambrose

Music education hub lead: Phil Needham

Artist: Bryony Griffith

Trainee: Lucy Huzzard

Synopsis of the project

This project provided the springboard for children in six schools in Featherstone, a former mining community, to deepen their engagement with their local and personal heritage through becoming ‘history detectives’. It supported themes in the Museum’s exhibition *In Our Own Words: The Language of Coal Mining* (February – May 2016). Sound recordings of children singing mining-related folk songs developed through the project were included in the exhibition and participatory singing was included in the exhibition opening.

Local and personal stories, customs, language and dialect were explored through different lenses, utilising using folk music, dance, stories, artefacts and social histories to stimulate rich cross-curricular projects: each school took the work in its own creative direction.

Key outcomes – partnership working

- Bringing families’ and personal social histories into the project has been extremely powerful in linking cultures, times, places, people and events through the stimuli provided by a wide range of folk songs, dances and materials and the physical surroundings of the Museum.
- Utilising the skills of an artist who knows, and has worked with EFDSS, NCMME and WMEH has been extremely beneficial as the different organisations’ ethos, and aims are understood and consistently promoted.

- The original The Full English project built the relationships between EFDSS and NCMME allowing them to try out ways of working with one school. Through this project, they have successfully extended the number of organisations with mutual interests engaged in the work and worked across a cluster of schools.
- The funding for this project has been cleverly used to attract further funding from CAPE UK to bring in the Arts Award across the schools
- The EFDSS artist leading the project has written folk arrangements for a brass band and choirs working with the Music Education Hub that will link the organisations again in the future.
- There have been multiple ways for children and staff to creatively explore their mining heritage through a range of different mediums including music, songs, rapper sword dance, visual arts, creative writing, discussion and drama. Schools commented on how children have found this project a very engaging way of accessing learning and developing many other transferable skills.

Other discussion points

- This model of partnership working, building upon a ‘triangle’ of existing relationships encouraged individual and collective agendas and values to have synergy. How can this be further developed, and this model be shared more widely?



Nelson, Navy, Nation – bringing artefacts to life through songs, dances and stories

“Working with EFDSS has brought human experiences to this collection of objects through the exploration of oral histories and folk arts. This more interactive approach is definitely what we are moving towards; it builds a much richer picture.

Ruth Boley,
Formal Learning Manager,
National Maritime Museum

Background to museum and school
The National Maritime Museum (NMM) is the world’s largest maritime museum. Collectively, the mission of the Royal Museums Greenwich is *‘to illustrate for everyone the importance of the sea, ships, time and the stars and their relationship with people’* (www.rmg.co.uk/national-maritime-museum). This is the first time the Museum’s Formal Learning Team and EFDSS have collaborated, although EFDSS has previously worked with the Informal Learning Team.

Invicta Primary School continually strives to develop strong community partnerships and prides itself on providing a creative and stimulating curriculum. Invicta has collaborated with the NMM previously.

Specific project aims

- To share and develop the expertise of the NMM Formal Learning Team and EFDSS, to bring together tangible heritage, contained within the Museum’s collection, with intangible cultural heritage; combining archives, objects and artworks within the Museum with oral histories, testimonies, folk songs and dances.
- To create a high quality online educational resource based on artefacts in the Nelson, Navy, Nation gallery at the NMM, for use by schools locally and nationally, to explore the nine themes of: national pride; the press gang; life on board; life below deck; long distance love; women at sea; dangers of the sea; Nelson, the naval hero; and a sailor’s life.

Museum educators: Ruth Boley, Martha Burns Findlay

Lead teacher: Jodie Cawte

Artists: Hazel Askew, Ed Hicks

Trainee: Maz O’Connor

Synopsis of the project

EFDSS collaborated with the NMM to develop new ways of accessing artefacts through bringing together tangible and intangible cultural heritage. This was built around initial identification of suitable artefacts within the new Nelson, Navy, Nation gallery relating to the themes identified and then sourcing a range of suitable folk songs, stories and materials to stimulate starting points for learning. EFDSS artists and the Formal Learning Team then worked together to create and trial an interactive, cross-curricular resource for primary-aged pupils. The resource and approach aims to promote historical enquiry, literacy, oracy and artistic development.

Two year-groups from Invicta Primary School visited the Museum over two days, learning about different aspects of life at sea through storytelling workshops, role-play, visiting the gallery, exploring artefacts close up, and being introduced to related folk songs and dance. This was followed up at school with folk song and dance sessions run by EFDSS artists over three weekly sessions.

The project culminated in the whole school launching a pop-up museum at the Old Royal Naval College for two days in November 2015, of which this work was one strand. Participating classes produced a display of their work and gave a performance of the folk songs and dances outside the museum to a public and invited audience.

Key outcomes – partnership working

- The resource created is considered important to the local community as well as being relevant and accessible to pupils nationally. It is the first time the Formal Learning Team at the NMM has brought together intangible and tangible cultural heritage in this way. They highlight the importance of folk arts in helping to develop their future work.
- The NMM Formal Learning Team recognise that folk arts have tremendous potential for developing literacy and oracy; aspects they highlight as key in their education work.

- This work continues to develop its ‘partnership’ reach; all organisations involved are now more aware of signposting each other’s work.
- Pupils thrived on the authenticity of the experience; they (and their teachers) were very motivated by the idea of the pop-up museum and the performance being open to the public. Parents appreciated the opportunity to see their children and their work outside of the school environment and mentioned that they came home from school ‘bursting with enthusiasm’ about the visits and workshops.

Other discussion points

- Finding material with age-appropriate content linked to a specific theme and context, and of a suitable musical difficulty, can be challenging, and something the artists noted that they had to continually balance throughout the project. This is something that the Museum and EFDSS will continue to consider and review through all future work.



“We really enjoyed taking part in this project. Teachers and children gained knowledge and understanding of curriculum content and how better to include artefacts and information contained in the museum to teach it. The end result was phenomenal!

Lindsay Scott, Year 1 leader



Review: Museums and Folk Arts - Creating Education Projects Together

Professional development day, Cecil Sharp House, 16 March 2016



Co-presented by EFDSS' Folk Educators Group this conference aimed to share learning from The Full English Extra project and other partnerships between folk artists and museum educators. It was attended by 60 delegates from around England.

This conference provided a brilliant opportunity to find out how other organisations are using folk music to enhance heritage learning. It was a stimulating day of listening and reflecting, chatting to familiar faces and new ones, singing and celebrating.

Bryony Griffith and I were first up to introduce the project we had both worked on at the National Coal Mining Museum for England with six primary schools in Featherstone, West Yorkshire. Talking about what the children had achieved and the impact that music-making had on their learning was a real privilege.

I am excited about the many parallels between the folk and heritage sectors. What museums try to perfect is what folk music fundamentally embodies: the art

of storytelling. So it was really interesting hearing how the Farmland Museum and Denny Abbey have used folk music installations to tell the story behind their farm machinery and bring them to life.

Similarly, we were all enthralled watching a film of young musicians from Berkshire Maestros playing to a video of a threshing machine, as presented by Miranda Rutter and the Museum of English Rural Life. Experiencing the rhythms of the machine interpreted by music was a visceral sensory experience.

'Bill the Grinder', from Sheffield Industrial Museums Trust, used traditional music to tell us about the dangers of working as a scythe grinder. He illustrated how industrial heritage settings can use folk music to help audiences empathise with ordinary people from the past.

The most memorable and enjoyable parts of the day were when we were singing, which only serves to emphasise why museums and folk artists should continue to embrace each other. We are natural partners after all: we both

seek to create authentic, life enhancing experiences; we both try to connect with people through stories; we both make the ordinary, extraordinary.

We certainly had a lot of fun learning the sea songs and shanties (with actions!), which were part of the impressive project delivered with the National Maritime Museum. Sticking with the maritime theme, folk educator Steve Gardham shared his work with Hull Maritime Museum.

The final session gave us the time and space to be imaginative and create new folk heritage projects. Combining forces empowered people in the room to create operas, walking musical trails, films and much more. Fuelled by cake and inspired by what we had heard earlier in the day, our ambitions knew no bounds! I left London feeling so energised and even more convinced that there will be more folk arts projects to come at the National Coal Mining Museum for England.

Jayne Ambrose, Education Officer,
National Coal Mining Museum for England

Learning Resources & Archive Materials

Learning materials on the EFDSS' Resource Bank

All the below packs, and accompanying audio files, are available to download freely at www.efdss.org/resourcebank

Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading

The Threshing Machine: A musical interpretation of a heritage resource

- Written by Rob Harbron
- A description of the inspiring process used to develop a musical interpretation of a working threshing machine, with scored exercises.

Introduction to playing folk music: Working with intermediate and advanced players new to folk music

- Written by Rob Harbron
- This resource pack will be helpful to folk musicians who have the opportunity to work with intermediate and advanced players with no previous experience of folk music. It describes the processes and exercises developed by Rob Harbron and Miranda Rutter when working with the Reading Music Centre String Orchestra.

Songs of Rural Life: Accessibility and adaptability in SEN settings

- Written by Cat Kelly, in partnership with The Makaton Charity
- Exploring approaches to using folk song in SEN settings, and including Makaton signs to aid communication and accessibility. This pack represents a project delivered by Cat at Arbour Vale School, Slough.

National Coal Mining Museum of England

In Our Own Words: Folk Song and Coal Mining

- Written by Bryony Griffith and Jayne Ambrose
- Aimed at Key Stage 2, this resource explores Yorkshire songs with links to coal mining, with activities and song-writing exercises. There is also information from, and an introduction to the National Coal Mining Museum of England.

A Collier Lad: Arrangement for choir

- Arranged by Bryony Griffith

Swords and Stars: Rapper Dance for Primary Schools

- Written by Bryony Griffith, Lucy Huzzard and Will Hampson
- An introduction to the traditional North East English dance form which uses 'rapper' swords and makes patterns and sequences with a chain of dancers, culminating in a 'lock' of swords.

Rapper Dance Tune Set

- Arranged by Bryony Griffith for Key Stage 2.
- Two tunes that can be used to accompany Rapper Dancing.

National Maritime Museum

A Sailor's Life: Nelson Navy Nation, Key Stage 1

A Sailor's Life: Nelson Navy Nation, Key Stage 2

- Written by Hazel Askew and Martha Burns Findlay
- Supporting primary schools to explore the life of sailors aboard Nelson's Navy through song, history and literacy, creating an engaging cross-curricular study topic for the relevant Key Stage.

Examples of archive materials used from the online EFDSS digital archive

Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading

Captain Grant: www.vwml.org/record/CC/1/300

Daddy Fox: www.vwml.org/record/CJS2/10/2824

National Coal Mining Museum for England

A Dance For 1811: www.vwml.org/record/AGG/2/139/1a

National Maritime Museum

Young Susan: www.vwml.org/record/CC/1/290

Overarching themes for discussion

The Full English Extra learning programme has been refreshing in its approaches to utilising and combining museum resources and folk arts in innovative ways, in order to successfully bring together and develop relationships between tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

There are a number of recurring themes that provide some further points for discussion across arts, museum and cultural learning settings, particularly when working with formal education structures such as schools and music education hubs.

Partnership – knowledge exchange

- A key positive focus of the work has been around knowledge exchange, which comes in many guises; from engaging all children in mixed ability settings, to knowing how to introduce folk tunes aurally and creatively to an ensemble used to working from music notation, to having an understanding of how the folk arts can infuse meaningfully through the curriculum. Each organisation 'holds knowledge which may be useful to others in the future' (Phil Needham, WMEH). How are the partnerships and relationships maintained and developed once a particular funding 'pot' has been used up, and how is knowledge shared and accessed, particularly once a key person from an organisation moves role?

Getting a longitudinal view

- These projects have only recently finished and been evaluated. However, the museum stakeholders are also interested in the longer-term impact and outcomes; identifying the factors that have enabled the work to proliferate and those that have become potential barriers to sustainability and future development. Necessarily, a longitudinal view, over a period of time well beyond the end of a project, is required. This is something for funding bodies to consider in the funding of education-related future work.

Professional learning across the workforce

- There has been overwhelming positivity about the professional skills that have been shared through all of the projects. However, there are also questions about the best ways in which structures can be initiated and supported in the future so that teachers in schools and music hubs can, in the first instance, be introduced to the folk arts and museum heritage. Stakeholders have noted that many teachers need significant help and encouragement to develop the skills, confidence and interest for embedding the folk arts (and culture generally) into the curriculum to permeate learning in the longer term.
- The songs at Arbour Vale School used Makaton signing which helped include the whole community and seemed to help pupils engage with the songs' stories and retain material between sessions. How can future emerging and established educators and organisations gain crucial understanding of working with children with a wide range of special educational needs and disabilities in order to make their offers as inclusive as possible?

Aligning values, interests and priorities

- In partnership working models, organisations ask 'what are we getting out of it'? These projects have successfully brought together people and organisations with shared interests and the gestalt principle has been evident – the outcomes have exceeded what any one organisation could achieve individually and the combined outcomes are greater than the sum of the individual contributions. What can be shared with other organisations to help them to promote such alliances?



Project initiator and leader



Supporter



Museum partners



Additional partner



Case study booklet written by: Dr Alison Daubney, External Evaluator for The Full English Extra learning programme, with Rachel Elliott, EFDSS Education Director and Frances Watt, Programme Manager for The Full English Extra learning programme.

Additional material by: Jayne Ambrose, Education Officer, National Coal Mining Museum for England.

Photographs by: Roswitha Chesher, Rachel Elliott and Frances Watt.

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#TheFullEnglish

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