

Appendix A: Grant Funded Projects

In this appendix we catalogue the Grant Funded Projects supported as part of the Medway Heritage Place programme.

There were 23 projects and for each there is a brief description, the heritage category it falls into and relevant web links.

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1. Remembering Gillingham Skatepark

Celebrating the lost history of Black Lion Park and Gillingham's importance in the history of skate culture.

Between 1978 and 1987, Black Lion Park on Mill Road, Gillingham was home to one of the UK's greatest skateparks. This project celebrates this piece of modern heritage — gathering up the stories and images that people have and bringing them together for the first time.

The overall aim was to showcase this lost part of Medway's heritage and its importance in the sub-culture — both locally and nationally - and inspire a new generation of skateboarders and BMX riders.

This project is run by Rikard Osterlund (<https://www.rikard.co.uk/>), a photographer, designer and workshop facilitator based in Rochester.

Outputs includes materials and oral histories donated to the Medway Archives Centre, a presentation and community event at GlassBox Theatre, a photographic exhibition and a booklet, plus images and stories shared via Instagram.

The partner for the project was Medway Archives.

Area of heritage: Cultural Traditions

2. Young People and Traditional Heritage Crafts

Engaging young people in Medway with traditional heritage craft skills to expand educational and employment opportunities.

The project was managed by The Herbert Baker Society (<https://www.herbertbakersociety.org/>), an organisation celebrating the legacy of Sir Herbert Baker, a leading twentieth century architect and proud man of Kent.

The aim was to inspire young people to learn heritage craft skills and get them to consider careers in the heritage sector. More broadly, it sought to encourage a wider conversation about traditional crafts and their teaching by hosting a round table event of heritage experts, educators and makers.

The work included training days and workshops, introducing college aged students to heritage sites they had never visited. For some, it was the first 'school trip' they had been allowed to attend.

The Society worked with Rochester and Canterbury Cathedrals, as well as the Wealden and Downland Museum. Students came from Mid Kent and North Kent Colleges.

The Society are currently fundraising to run an annual week of events from April 2026.

Area of heritage: Cultural Traditions

3. In Our Own Words

Uncovering of Medway's unknown post-WWII histories, through a community film project that told the personal stories of local working class communities and families.

The project was a collaboration between Open Film CIC and Goldsmith's, University of London. Open Film CIC's mission is to remove the barriers to participation for local people who want to have their stories heard.

Through a process of co-design and co-production, the project supported local working class participants in making a film telling the stories of post-WWII working class lives in Medway. These stories promoted a sense of recognition and belonging amongst communities and participants across Medway — both those involved in making the film and those who watch them.

Outputs included community events, workshops, screenings of the final film and an exhibition.

Area of heritage: Commemorations and Celebrations

4. Short Brothers – Aviation Pioneers

A celebration of Medway's rich aviation heritage by showcasing the pioneering exploits of Short Brothers (and its employees) in Medway.

This project is run by Short Brothers Aviation Heritage to honour the work of Short Brothers, the innovative aircraft manufacturers based in North Kent (1909-1948), who during WWII employed over 15,000 people in Medway (Rochester Esplanade, Rochester Airport and Strood Extension Factories).

To better tell the Short Brothers' story and engage more deeply with Medway residents — and wider UK and global audiences — improvements have been made to the organisation's website and social media platforms, and permanent public information boards will be installed at Rochester Airport and Rochester Esplanade. Pilot education material has been prepared for a local school, which is planned to be rolled out more widely, and enhanced networks have been formed with local aviation and transport groups.

The organisation will investigate how it can expand its activities by becoming a Community Interest Group, and plans to seek additional funding for future initiatives including the potential conservation of the Rochester Esplanade flying boat launch ramp and the creation of a flying boat statue along Rochester Esplanade.

Area of heritage: Industrial, Maritime and Transport

5. Maintaining Motor Tug Kent

Work on the historic Motor Tug Kent to ensure she remains a heritage asset for the people of Medway, accessible to the public and able to offer educational experiences.

The South Eastern Tug Society (<https://mtkent.org.uk/>), who lead the project, own and exhibit the historic registered tugs Kent and Fearnought.

The Motor Tug Kent's history is uniquely local to Medway and connects different eras of its maritime past. By ensuring the Kent remains a functioning vessel, the Society continue to tell Medway's rich maritime heritage stories to new generations, as well as offering hands-on experience of an historic tug.

With the drydocking now completed, the Society is using the funding next to set up 'experience days' for adults so that people can engage with the vessel in new ways, as well as using the funds to support marketing activities.

Area of heritage: Industrial, Maritime and Transport

6. Browsing History's Medway Special

A series of online videos using the hosts pride in Medway history as a way of exploring different aspects of local sites, and delivered in an irreverent and appealing style.

Browsing History¹ — the locally produced, internet researched, history and comedy podcast — led this project.

The project engaged a younger audience and promoted Medway as a tourist destination. It allowed Browsing History to amplify what they already do and provided a new offer to their existing audience. Additionally, the Browsing History team developed their historical research skills through working with local history experts and reenactors.

As well as the video content, there was targeted promotion over social media channels which more broadly boosted Medway's heritage and tourist industries.

The project explored a number of collaborative possibilities.

Area of heritage: Historic Buildings, Monuments and the Historic Environment

¹ <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/browsing-history/id1672829116>

7. Chatham Stories — New Chronicles of Mudfog

This project reimagined Chatham’s rich heritage through the eyes of young people, drawing connections between the town’s industrial past and contemporary experiences of identity, migration and belonging.

Led by House of Stars, a creative hub based at Sun Pier House, the project empowered young participants — many from second-generation migrant backgrounds — to explore historical narratives and reinterpret them through illustration and digital storytelling.

The outcomes included co-designed Augmented Reality (AR) installations on Chatham High Street, developed through creative workshops, family ‘Snack and Chat’ sessions and collaboration with local archives. These AR experiences brought history to life for passers-by, inviting the public to engage with overlooked or untold local stories in an interactive way.

To learn more, visit: www.house-of-stars.co.uk/new-chronicles-of-mudfog

Key partners included: Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, Medway Archives, Electric Medway, Sun Pier House, and Medway Libraries

Area of heritage: Cultural Traditions

8. Unearthing Rainham Pottery

Engaging people with the intricate story of pottery production in Rainham, underscoring the importance of the potter Edward Baker and the Upchurch Pottery company.

Kate Devine, a researcher and curator working in the area of crafts and ceramics, led this project.

Local makers researched clay excavation and ceramic production in the Rainham area. Then they were commissioned to make works inspired by Edward Baker — with these exhibited alongside examples of the original Rainham pottery.

It engaged with local people, visitors and students — and benefitted the local businesses who displayed the work produced. A website now provides more information on Rainham pottery and an educational resource was produced for the KS2 history curriculum.

Support came from Rainham Town Centre forum, Nucleus Arts and Medway Creative Schools Network.

Area of heritage: Cultural Traditions

9. Restoring Dickens' Chalet

Building a sustainable future for the Charles Dickens' Chalet — a Grade I listed building in Rochester — where the author wrote a selection of his most famous works.

The project was managed by the Charles Dickens' Chalet Stakeholder Group, made up of representatives from local community groups who take an interest in the building.

The funding supported strategic work to help the Group progress towards the ultimate aim of making the chalet a landmark in Medway as it has been in the past, and one which will benefit local people and visitors alike, enhancing the story of Dicken's life in the town.

Outputs were:

- A strategy considering greater community ownership
- Mentoring for Stakeholder Group members to support funding bids
- A business plan exploring new audiences and a sustainable future
- Researching the social and economic impacts of the chalet

Area of heritage: Historic Buildings, Monuments and the Historic Environment

10. Preserving St Margaret's

Ensuring St Margaret's Church in Rainham is preserved for the future, and can continue to house nationally significant historical artefacts and serve the community.

The project was led by Friends of St Margaret's Church, a charity dedicated to the maintenance of the church, a Grade I listed building.

The aim is to preserve the structural integrity of the building and work towards carbon neutrality. This will ensure it continues to serve not only as a place of worship but also as a community, heritage, cultural and arts centre.

The project allowed engineers to survey the church to understand the structural needs and prevent possible collapse. This then allowed architectural designs to be developed on solid conservation principles.

A consultant is producing a business plan and an overarching development plan for heritage in St. Margaret's and Rainham.

Area of heritage: Historic Buildings, Monuments and the Historic Environment

11. Sikhism — Past, Present and Future

Focussing on Punjabi culture and Sikh heritage, the project reinvigorates cultural practices and connects the local Sikh community to its past, present and future.

The project was run by the Medway Towns Gurdwara Sabha (<https://medwaygurdwara.com>), the place of worship for the Sikh community in Medway.

Aimed at the local Sikh community and those interested in its culture, there were four streams of activity:

- Sikhi Classes for young people to learn about traditions and histories
- Music Classes where participants will sing Kirtans (hymns) and learn to play traditional instruments
- Gatka Classes exploring the origins and basic technique of the Sikh martial art
- Classes to practice the traditional communal meal (Langar), shared by all who come to the Gurdwara

The project engaged with local and national groups such as the Medway Diversity Forum, Basics of Sikhi, Baba Fateh Singh Gatka Akarah and others to exchange knowledge and encourage participation.

Area of heritage: Cultural Traditions

12. The Queens Of The Medway

This project was to create new displays to tell the stories of the Queen of Thanet and Queen of Kent, two excursion ships active on the River Medway between the wars and into the late 1940s.

The project has been bringing Medway's maritime history to a wider audience through the untold story of the Queens Of The Medway. Its mix of wartime, marine and social history has appealed to multiple audiences, encouraging visits to the River Medway and sparking interest in the preservation of maritime history.

New marketing has been and continues to be created to increase audiences for the display including targeting schools and colleges.

This project is produced by Richard Halton, a voluntary Trustee of the Medway Queen Preservation Society and author of 'Two Queens', a book about the two vessels.

Key relationships included Medway Archives Centre and the libraries in Chatham and Gillingham.

Displays were shown at:

- The Medway Archives Centre from late April to July.
- Gillingham Library in May.

Further displays are in place on Medway Queen and at Riverside Country Park.

Area of heritage: Industrial, Maritime and Transport

13. Gillingham Football Club Oral History Project

Capturing the stories and lived experiences of Gillingham Football Club supporters who have been watching the club for many decades, providing an opportunity to capture those memories for posterity.

This project was led by Oral History Medway CIC (oralhistorymedway.co.uk) with assistance from the Gillingham Football Club Supporters' Club (gfcsc.co.uk). Oral history is a vital part of historical research that captures personal stories often overlooked by official records.

A call out to the supporters' club led to interviews at Priestfield with a number of long-standing fans. The interviews were audio recorded and videoed and a high quality 30-minute film produced. This film can be accessed on the Oral History Medway website and socials, and the Gillingham Football Club Supporters' Club website. A screening of the film at The Factory at Gillingham Football Club is also planned.

Area of heritage: Cultural Traditions

14. The Story of the Irish Community in Medway

Uncovering the story of the Irish community in Medway to better understand their cultural, social and economic contributions to the area.

This project was led by Laura Burke Training and Consultancy, a mental health training organisation.

The project empowered those of Irish heritage to share their stories with a wider audience. Medway residents then had the opportunity to engage with these stories through walking tours and a resulting film. The stories captured provided invaluable resources for research and learning.

The walking tours, at local landmarks, were used to immerse participants in the rich history of the Irish community. The project culminated in the production of a film which highlighted the diversity of Medway's heritage and the role of the Irish diaspora, and which is now available in the Medway Archives.

Area of heritage: Cultural Traditions

15. Threads 2025

An intergenerational community project capturing the migration and heritage stories of culturally-diverse residents of Medway in textile and prose.

The project was delivered by Medway-raised educator and coach Jay Patel in partnership with Medway Council.

Heritage should be for everyone. But not everyone's stories are told or their histories remembered.

This community-led, people-focused project developed collective understandings of the past, honouring heritage that celebrates first- and second-generation migrant residents' connections to Medway.

Jay invited Medway Diversity Forum and Medway Hindu Parivar to share their culturally-diverse stories and the contributions they made. During innovative workshops held at Gillingham, Chatham and Rochester libraries, heritage fabrics were used to explore identity and belonging, and to evoke memories.

Jay curated an exhibition of her photographic portraits of participants to accompany excerpts of their migration stories, and the collection will be held at Medway Archives.

Area of heritage: Cultural Traditions

16. Towards an Isaac Newell Statue

Laying the foundations for a fundraising campaign for a new tourist attraction, a bronze statue of Isaac Newell on Strood Waterfront.

The project was run by the Isaac Newell Heritage Group. It was formed to honour Isaac, who was born in Strood in 1853 and who went on to combine sport, education and the arts to enrich the lives of children and young people, and who was also a pioneer of football in Argentina.

This project prepared the Group to establish a fundraising campaign to make the statue a reality and included:

- Working with a consultant to develop a fundraising strategy — upgrading the Group's skills and identifying prospective supporters.
- Commissioning a designer and social media expert to co-create content that enhances any fundraising and makes Strood's heritage more enticing.
- Implementing appropriate governance structure to ensure organisational stability.

Area of heritage: Commemorations and Celebrations

17. HERitage, HIStoric and Beyond Escape Room

An exciting escape room experience based on a real life, historical Medway crime.

The project was run by Grain Youth, a group from the Isle of Grain who meet once a week with their youth workers to do a range of activities.

Those designing the escape room experienced leading a project from start to finish. Through the process, they developed confidence and a range of project-based skills, and they engaged with Medway's (criminal) past. Young people who played the escape rooms develop their problem solving and communication skills, as well as learning about history.

The outcome was an escape room experience that can be set up in venues like village halls across Medway and the Hoo Peninsula.

To make the project a success, the group worked with a graphic designer, a local artist and their current youth workers.

Area of heritage: Cultural Traditions

18. Shaped by Place

A record of people's lives in Twydall, an estate in Gillingham, told through their houses and buildings, past and present.

Led by Claire Butters, Hazel Browne and Peter Willer, the project was run by the Residents of Twydall.

Twydall Estate was built by Gillingham Council in the 1950s, providing homes for generations of people. The project captured the stories of those who lived in those original homes and the newer houses built in the last couple of years. It sought to understand how place shaped — and continues to shape — people's lives and those of the young people born on the Estate.

Outputs included local events where people could share memories, a celebration of local life and the production of content for the Local Archives. The photos provided by residents are available to see at Twydall Library in advance of being deposited with Medway Archives.

Area of heritage: Historic Buildings, Monuments and the Historic Environment

19. Advancing the War and Police Reenactment Group

Improving accessibility and engagement for a reenactment group, allowing them to better tell the story of the Kent Constabulary during WWII.

The project was managed by the War and Police Reenactment Group (<https://warandpolice1940s.wixsite.com/team>) who are interested in sharing the history of the Kent Constabulary, the armed forces and their war animals.

The funding allowed the Group to better communicate their enthusiasm for their particular area of historic interest. They professionalised their presentation and their skills to reach more diverse audiences and better engage younger audiences. In addition, they addressed issues around access, inclusivity and best practice so existing resources could be shared with more people.

This included improving access to the mobile police station, producing braille signage and commissioning training for members in order to work more effectively with young people and those with learning disabilities. The Group have developed a lesson package for KS1, 2 and 3 in accordance with the National Curriculum available for schools.

In addition, partnering with the Kent Police Museum, they worked with visually impaired artists and a home for older people.

Area of heritage: Cultural Traditions

20. Uncovering Histories, Medway Memories

Young people innovating new ways to tell the positive stories of Black Culture in Medway to other young people.

The project was organised by Young People United (YPU), a group of young people aged 17-23 who are part of Medway African and Caribbean Association (MACA).

YPU worked with academics to pilot new approaches to teaching Black British History in schools. This was achieved through creating an educational resource that recognised the contribution of Black people and Black culture in Medway both in the present day and throughout the area's history.

Through the project, members of YPU developed their leadership and creativity skills — and the resource produced aims to allow other young people to better understand Black British History and its part in the story of Medway.

Area of heritage: Cultural Traditions

21. Conserving Horrid Hill

Protecting a coastal heritage site from the impacts of erosion and sharing the story worldwide.

The project was led by Medway Swale Estuary Partnership, which seeks to conserve and promote the Medway Estuary's natural and cultural heritage.

The project focused on Horrid Hill, the site of a nineteenth century cement works and wharf. The aim was to slow down the impacts of erosion, so the Hill can continue to be safely enjoyed by the public.

Restoration work was undertaken to the existing coastal defences. Alongside this, posts were installed with CoastSnap² cradles for mobile phone cameras, allowing users to take fixed point photography to monitor the continued impacts of erosion.

Associated information boards provide details on sending the photos to the partnership and how to download the CoastSnap App, which allows users to upload photos from locations across the world to an international database.

Riverside Country Park's management team at NORSE and Medway Council's Greenspace Team were partners on this project.

Area of heritage: Nature

² CoastSnap is a global citizen science project documenting changing coastlines – see <https://www.coastsnap.com/> for more details

22. Growing Medway History Showcase

Evolving an existing series of history and heritage talks so they better appeal to the people of Medway (and beyond).

Started in 2021, Medway History Showcase presented talks in history and heritage in the Medway area, and they will lead the project.

The project expanded Medway History Showcase's current work, creating talks that are open to everyone – accessible, educational and entertaining – attracting the best speakers and delivering engrossing content for diverse local audiences.

The funding allowed the organisation to operate on a more sustainable and professional level – for example, extending the range of speakers they could invite and developing its network – along with producing more sophisticated branding and marketing activity.

Area of heritage: Oral Histories and Museum, Library and Archive Collections

Area of heritage: Cultural Traditions

Note: after initial engagement, this project withdrew from the programme.

23. Historic Homeowners Project

Tackling the concerns of owners of heritage properties.

The Historic Homeowners Club project came out of a 'Historic Homeowners workshop' in January 2024, part of the HSHAZ programme. The most popular part of that workshop, and a growing concern for owners of historic properties, was climate change and retrofit (improving energy efficiency etc).

A follow-up survey in 2025 confirmed these as important – and that an event with a guest speaker would be popular. Therefore, the project will now focus on retrofit to respond to the needs of the community, rather than its original broader remit.

A partnership between Medway Council's Climate Change Team and Conservation Team – alongside key partners of Intra Community Trust and the University of Greenwich's Faculty of Engineering and Science – will deliver a workshop session in Rochester by expert Dr Wim J.C. Melis. (Unfortunately, Dr Melis is currently on long term sick and so this cannot be scheduled until his return.)

In addition, the project will explore ways to further engage historic homeowners on this topic by collaborating with other local groups (such as Rochester Eco Hub, Rainham Eco Hub) and attending events (such the Eco Hub Fair in the autumn).

Area of heritage: Historic Buildings, Monuments and the Historic Environment