



SHARE Museums East
a network of know how

‘Something Borrowed’

In partnership with the British Museum

Evaluation Report

Amanda Burke
Renaissance Evaluation Officer
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Summary

The Something Borrowed project was first conceived of during the Renaissance East of England 'Museums Partnership Day' event in September 2009. The central theme of the project was to bring the British Museum together with three smaller museums in the East of England and develop temporary exhibitions based around loans. Underpinning the basic premise of the project were a number of different aims. Firstly, the project was very much a pilot aimed at understanding and documenting the lending process. The partner museums were all of different types (small local authority service, small independent, volunteer run independent) and at the outset none of us knew quite what to expect. The excitement of the project, particularly given its pilot nature, was heightened by the optimistic timetable we were working to; two out of three of the exhibitions were delivered from start to finish within six months – no mean feat given the level of work involved. All members of the team worked extremely hard and in addition to successful exhibitions, a set of '*recommendations*' or '*things to consider*' when looking to borrow from another museum has been developed. These recommendations, based on the experience of the partners, are aimed at providing a useful starting point for museums exploring taking a loan for the first time.

In addition to documenting the lending process itself, this project had Museum Development firmly at its centre. Key to the success of the project was the focus on skills sharing. Drawing on support via the East of England's SHARE scheme, pathways were created that facilitated the bringing together of a large organisation, such as the British Museum with an entirely volunteer run organisation such as Dunwich Museum in Suffolk. For example, the British Museum required that the objects they loaned to Dunwich were housed in a secure and appropriate museum case; a member of the Colchester and Ipswich display team were able to support Dunwich staff to draw up a specification for a new case. Through bringing staff from other museums in through the SHARE scheme, all local teams were able to fulfil their role in developing the exhibitions.

In addition to skills sharing, each of the museums involved has a legacy, not only in terms of new knowledge, but also in terms of capacity that will enable them to take loans from large organisations again. Of particular importance to the partner museums were the new additions to their own security arrangements; each of the museum partners involved is now able to take loans in the future as a direct result of this project.

Finally, at the time of writing the evaluation report, two of the exhibitions that resulted from the project had run their course, demonstrating the final aim of this project was met, namely, to enable the museums involved reach new audiences and to increase access to national collections. Both the exhibitions at Mill Green Museum in Hertfordshire and Ely Museum in Cambridgeshire show an increase in visitor figures. Evaluation of the exhibitions also demonstrates that these elements of the National Collection were made more accessible as a number of visitors had never been to the British Museum.

Overall 'Something Borrowed' was an ambitious, but very successful project. Its success came through the hard work of all involved and it is hoped that its success will continue through the capacity built within the partner museums and through the recommendations that resulted from the detailed evaluation of the project.

Dr Natasha Hutcheson
Regional Museums Development Manager
Renaissance East of England
Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service
December 2011

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

'Something Borrowed' was a pilot project exploring ways of partnership working between the British Museum, Renaissance East of England¹ and smaller regional museums. The regional museums in this project comprise Ely Museum in Cambridgeshire, Mill Green Museum in Hertfordshire and Dunwich Museum in Suffolk. These museums were chosen to be part of the pilot project because they represent three distinct types of organisation: Mill Green Museum is part of a small local authority service, Ely Museum is independent with a small number of paid staff as well as a volunteer staff, and Dunwich Museum is a largely volunteer run organisation (for further information about the museums, see Appendix A).

The project aims to enable the three museums to mount exhibitions using objects borrowed from the British Museum. Whilst it is not unknown for smaller museums to borrow objects from National Museums, it is unusual because accommodating a loan of this type requires resources and facilities that a small museum may not have, such as the necessary security conditions. As a result, the role of the third partner in this project, Renaissance East of England, was to facilitate and support the loan process and provide assistance through its workforce development scheme - SHARE. This scheme enables smaller museums to access advice from specialist staff in Renaissance funded museums across the region. The project was also supported by a grant from both the British Museum and Renaissance East of England.

The project was launched at a meeting at the British Museum in December 2009 at which all partners were present. Exhibitions took place at Mill Green Museum between 26 July to 31 October 2010 (original Beatrix Potter drawings), and at Ely Museum between 4th August and 31st October 2010 (mummified Egyptian cat). A further exhibition at Dunwich Museum opened in March 2011. At the time of writing, this exhibition had not been completed, as such, although it is discussed in this report, it has not been fully evaluated. Further details of the exhibitions can be found in appendix A.

1.2 Why evaluate?

Whilst the British Museum routinely lends objects to other museums and is engaged in a raft of partnership initiatives, this project has some fairly unique aspects:

- Support is being delivered in part through the sharing of expertise via the East of England's SHARE scheme.

¹ Renaissance is a government funding programme to raise standards in England's regional museums. In the East of England, Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, the lead hub museum, manages the regional Renaissance Museum Development funding stream. It is this stream of funding that has supported the 'Something Borrowed' project.

- Workforce development is a central tenet of the project – the aim being that those participating will develop skills and knowledge with a view to borrowing other objects in the future.
- Capacity building has also been a central theme, particularly with the view to improving the partner museums ability to receive loans in the future.
- The project involves loans to three small museums, each with very different characteristics.
- The budget for the three loans was relatively small

This provided the ideal opportunity to evaluate the delivery of loans in a number of different circumstances, with the specific aim of providing valuable information for future practice.

1.3 This report

This report brings together the findings of the evaluation of the project. It is primarily intended as an internal report for the partners as it concentrates on how to improve practice and act as a tool for learning and assessment, rather than for advocacy. In addition to this report a set of recommendations can be found on the SHARE Museums East website at

<http://www.sharemuseumseast.org.uk/training-resources-result.aspx?cat=&key=Something%20Borrowed>

1.4 Project Aims

The evaluation of the project is closely linked to the overarching aims of the pilot:

1. To enable small museums to reach new audiences and to increase access to national collections.
2. To develop the capacity and capability of small museums to receive and display significant loans.
3. To enable skills sharing and to facilitate new ways of working for the national, regional and local museums involved in the project.
4. To develop and assess models of working in partnership to enable significant loans to be made to small museums.

1.5 Roles and responsibilities

The British Museum team facilitated the loans and the relevant necessary information to enable the exhibitions to take place, they also assisted with a range of other things, for example, arranging transport, insurance and installation and providing equipment.

The project was managed by the Renaissance East of England Regional Museum Development Manager, whose remit it is to work with museums in the Eastern region. The latter was responsible for co-ordination and providing ancillary support to facilitate the loans.

In order to enable exhibitions to be created around the loan objects, an external consultant was contracted by the latter to deliver a comprehensive package of support around marketing, which included supporting the development and publicising of the exhibitions and associated events and activities.

The Renaissance East of England Workforce Development Officer was responsible for organising specialist support through the SHARE scheme as described above.

The Renaissance East of England evaluation officer was responsible to developing and undertaking an evaluation of the pilot project.

The three museums in the project were responsible for delivering an exhibition around the loan object(s) in their museum along with associated activities and events.

1.6 Inputs

It is important to consider the costs involved when assessing the project, these comprise not only direct costs in terms of funding, but staff time and the donation of equipment.

Staff inputs

Support from British Museum and Renaissance East of England

The estimated hours² of support from November 2009 to September 2010 are seen in the following paragraph. They include general support for the project as the whole and also in developing the exhibitions at Ely and Mill Green Museums, but not at Dunwich as this is ongoing at the time of writing.

- Renaissance East of England Museum Development Officer: 93.5 hrs
- British Museum (Project Coordinator: National Programmes): 100hrs
- British Museum (Head of London and National Programmes): 40hrs

Peripheral support was provided from the Renaissance East of England Evaluation Officer, Communications Officer and Workforce Development Officer.

Support from the SHARE scheme

Mill Green Museum

- The Head of Display at Museums Luton contributed one day's assistance by visiting Mill Green to discuss exhibition space.

Ely Museum

- An Exhibitions Officer from the Fitzwilliam Museum with a specialism in Egyptology provided academic advice via phone and email including comments on interpretation panels.
- A Learning Officer from Norfolk Museum and Archaeology Service discussed the development of learning events and subsequently spent one day at the museum.
- A Designer from Museums Luton provided brief advice on panel design, but due to the assistance already being provided by the freelance marketing consultant, was not required for more than this
- Colchester and Ipswich Museum Services (CIMS) provided support with handling collections for learning events including the loan of handling objects One of their archaeologists brought the objects to the museum with a member of the conservation department

Dunwich Museum

² These time were estimated in retrospect and are approximations

- One of the exhibitions officers at CIMS supported with commissioning a display case and designing the exhibition. This involved two and a half days support.
- The acting Collections Manager at CIMS, drew up an environmental specification for the display case, supported case specification and organised for the Dunwich Seal to be borrowed from Ipswich museums. This included photographing the object and carrying out a condition survey for the loan. This equated to a full day of support.
- The Regional Conservator at CIMS offered two days support to carry out a conservation audit of environmental conditions and prepare a report.
- The Learning Officer at Dunwich Museum attended two-day SHARE Learning Spaces training course with a volunteer.

Other support

- In addition to this the Victoria and Albert Museum were able to loan items to support the Beatrix Potter exhibition at Mill Green Museum.
- Wisbech Museum loaned learning resources and dressing up clothes to Ely Museum (through the Fenland Partnership).
- Curatorial Staff at the British Museum provided information regarding the loan objects

Funding and funding in kind

Funding

The total budget for the project was £30,748 of which £10,000 was donated from the British Museum. This was disbursed amongst the museums as follows:

- Central Costs £14,000 (marketing materials and specialist marketing support through a consultant)
- Ely £3621.19
- Mill Green £3904.34
- Dunwich £7,747 (including a new case)

Funding in kind

- Ely Museum received a display case and backing panels from the British Museum.
- British museum paid for transport, installation costs and insurance for all exhibitions.

2. Methodology

2.1 Approach

An evaluation plan was devised at the start of the project in consultation with those involved in the partnership. The evaluation plan was developed with the following objectives in mind:

- To assess how the project has met its stated aims.
- To produce a robust yet flexible approach to data collection and analysis.
- To minimise workload for those involved.

Resources were a major consideration because:

- Data collection and analysis were to be done in-house by partners.
- The smaller museums involved have few paid staff.
- The loan project itself was creating extra workload for the smaller museums and partners.
- For all those involved, this project was additional to existing workloads and there was limited additional capacity.

The evaluation involved a two-fold approach. The first of these was to gain an understanding of the loan process itself and of any resulting outcomes for those involved (aims 2, 3 and 4). Developing an insight into how individuals perceived the process, its strengths and weaknesses, and benefits and disadvantages, lent itself to a discursive, qualitative approach. This is especially true given the relatively small numbers involved and because such an approach enables the development of a deeper understanding of a complex and ongoing process. Additionally, because this was a pilot project, any factors governing success or failure would be difficult to predict and pre-quantify.

The approach to qualitative data collection was to use a number of data collection techniques as is common in case-study research design (Bryman 2004). This included open-ended interviews (on the telephone or face-to-face) or in some cases, where circumstances dictated, group discussion. Two rounds of interviews were conducted, with the results of the first guiding the schedule for the second, as is common in qualitative research (Bryman 2004). The evaluator was also present at a number of meetings and one exhibition launch which facilitated an understanding of process as a whole.

The second approach was to test the idea that the loan exhibitions would bring in new audiences for the participating museums (aim 1). This predicated a quantitative approach involving the use of visitor figures. Attributing causality to changes in visitor figures is problematic as visitor figures can fluctuate for a number of reasons, for example, the weather. Therefore a survey was used in order to establish visitors' reasons for attending the museum on that day.

Whilst this evaluation had two distinct elements, the findings from both strands are interlinked because the intended outcomes from this initiative include the development of skills and capacity of the small museums to receive loans and mount successful exhibitions in the future, in addition to increasing audiences in the present. The approach to this research is, therefore, a mixed-method one (Bryman 2004)

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of an evaluation project of this nature. Qualitative research is inevitably subjective. Findings will be influenced by a host of other

factors not least the preconceptions of the researcher, however neutral they aim to be, but also those of the participants (Silverman 2006). A small-scale evaluation of a complex project cannot hope to arrive at cast-iron, definitive conclusions or firmly attribute causation – however, through undertaking the qualitative element of the evaluation in a systematic manner, it will provide insights that might otherwise be unobtainable.

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The following table, based on the evaluation plan, summarises the principal methods of data capture.

Aim	Evaluation method
To enable small museums reach new audiences and to increase access to national collections through facilitating significant loan arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in visitor numbers • Change in % new visitors • Why did visitors come, did loan exhibition influence decision? • What did / didn't they like, what worked / what didn't, is loan object mentioned, are new ways of working mentioned?
To develop the capacity and capability of small museums to receive and display significant loans	Facilitated discussion / review at project meetings or by interview where no meetings planned.
To enable skill sharing and facilitate news ways of working for the national, regional and local museums involved in this partnership project.	Record of SHARE days and number of hub staff providing help/advice. Facilitated discussion / review at project meetings or by interview where no meetings planned.
To develop and assess models of working in partnership to enable significant loans to be made to small museums.	Facilitated discussion / review at project meetings or by interview where no meetings planned.

Data was collected and analysed by the following means:

Visitor counts:

All three museums keep visitor figures enabling numbers during the exhibition period to be compared to the same period in the previous year.

Evaluation cards:

Evaluation cards were systematically distributed by a member of staff in each museum in order to minimise the sampling bias that can occur with self-completion questionnaires left out in galleries. Instructions were provided. Only Mill Green Museum and Ely Museum took part in this element of the evaluation. The Dunwich exhibition was not complete at the time of writing this evaluation.

The evaluation cards were distributed both before and during the exhibitions in order to compare the number of new users. The following numbers of evaluation cards were collected at the two museums that held exhibitions during the evaluation period.

Museum	Before opening	During opening	Not known	Total
Mill Green	37	72	8	117
Ely	139	171	8	318

As can be seen, the sample size at Mill Green is small, making it difficult to arrive at statistically significant conclusions.

Data from evaluation cards was inputted by the relevant museum onto a web-based database. There were three open-ended questions, the responses to which were coded into themes during the data entry process by museum staff.

Interviews and group discussions of project participants

Face-to-face interviews and discussions at meetings were recorded and transcribed. Notes were made from telephone interviews. The data were printed off and thematically coded using the aims of the project to guide this process. Key themes were therefore identified in the data under each of the three project aims 2, 3 and 4. The draft evaluation report was fed back to the respondents for validation.

The following people fed into this part of the research:

1. Ely Museum Curator
2. Mill Green Museum Curator
3. Museum Services Manager, Welwyn Hatfield Museum Service
4. Dunwich Museum Chair of Trustee
5. Dunwich Museum Curatorial Advisor
6. Renaissance Workforce Development Officer
7. Renaissance Regional Museum Development Manager
8. British Museum (Project Coordinator: National Programmes)
9. British Museum (Head of London and National Programmes)
10. Freelance marketing consultant

Data was collected at the following stages, this included a round of interviews in July 2010 in the weeks before the exhibitions at Ely and Mill Green opened, and some follow up interviews in October 2010:

Period	Participants	Type of data collection
1. Planning stage: Meeting in March 2009	All except 4.	Group discussion at British Museum
2. Interviews leading up to first two exhibitions: July 2010	6,7	Face to face interview
	1,2,8,9,10	Telephone interviews
	4,5,7	Group Discussion
3. Follow up interviews: October 2010	2,8	Telephone interview
	1	Face to face interview
4. Early planning meeting at Dunwich: Dec & Jan 2010	4,5,10	Group discussion at Dunwich
	4,5	Email questions about process
5. Comments on report and findings: March 2011	7	Input into first draft
	All	Comment on first draft
6. Other	1,2	Ad hoc emails ref. launch event, marketing etc.

3. Results and discussion

This section examines each of the projects stated aims in turn.

3.1 Aim 1

To enable small museums to reach new audiences and to increase access to national collections through facilitating significant loan arrangements.

Visitor Figures:

Ely and Mill Green museums saw rises in visitor figures during the exhibition period (August, September and October 2010) when compared to the previous year. The percentage increase during the exhibition period for each museum is as follows:

Year on year comparison August-October 2009 and 2010

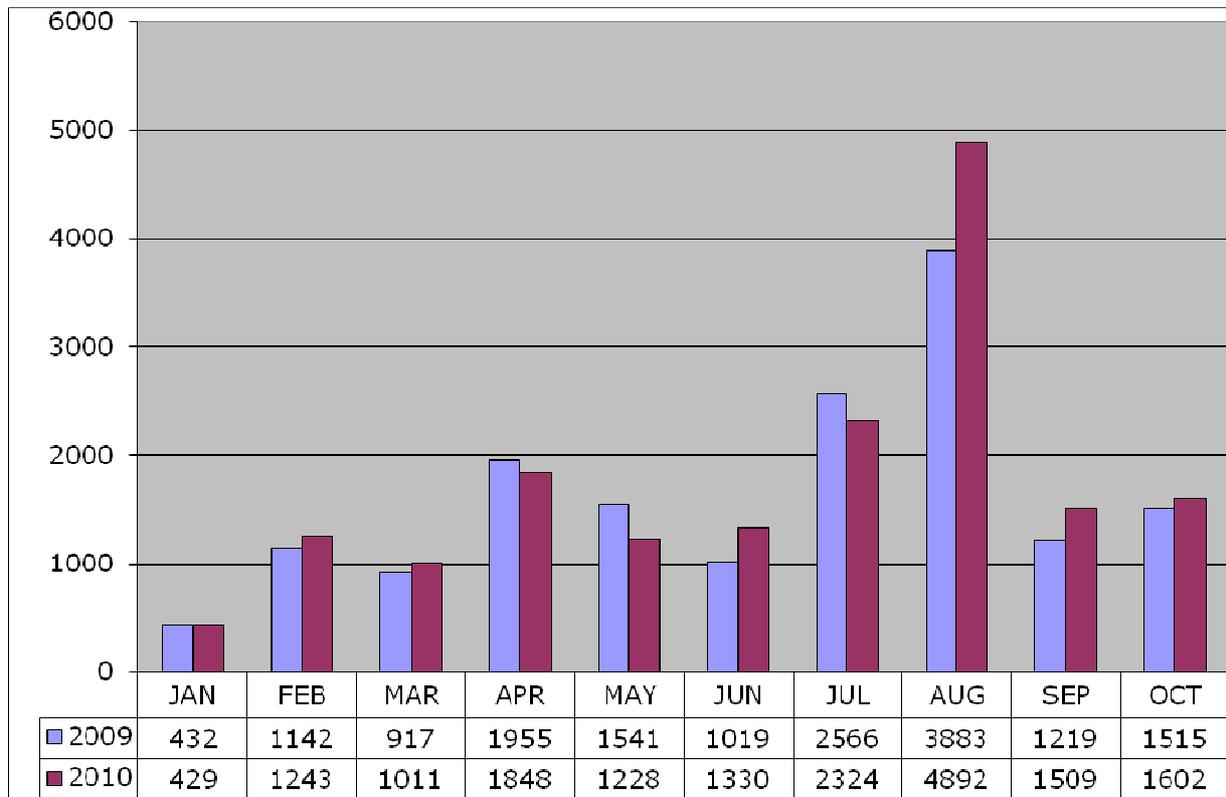
(Not including school groups)

	Aug 09	Aug 10	Change	Sep 09	Sep 10	Change	Oct 09	Oct 10	Change
Ely	1296	1725	+33%	780	852	+9%	974	1027	+5%
Mill Green	3883	4892	+26%	1219	1509	+23%	1515	1602	+ 6%

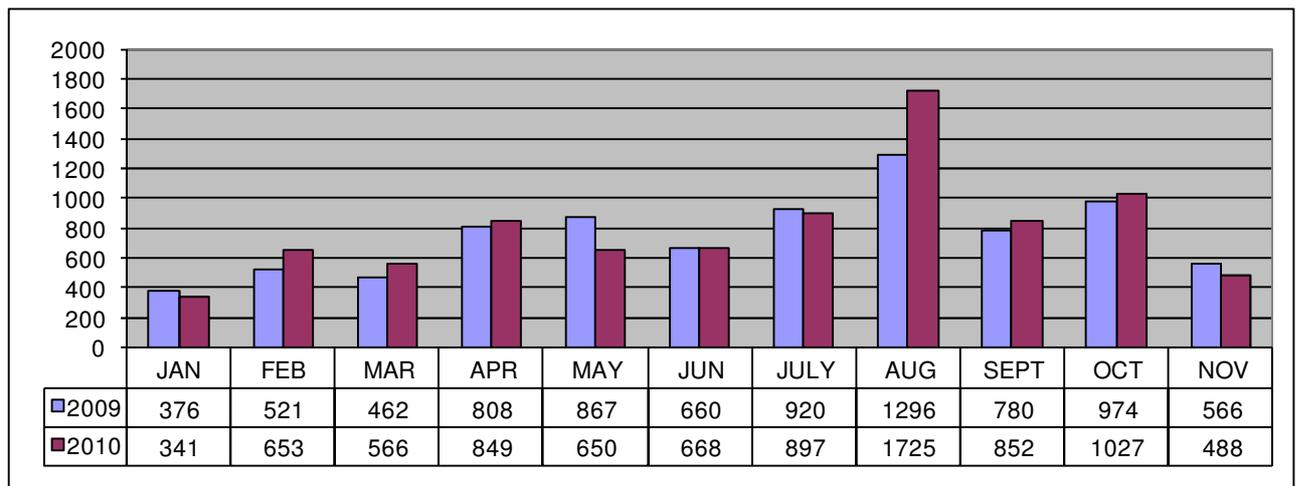
In total, 11,607 visitors had access to the loan objects (8,003 visitors at Mill Green and 3,604 at Ely), a further 678 school children in groups had access to the objects (308 at Mill Green, 370 at Ely).

Regional statistics are not available at this point in order to discount a general upward trend in visitor figures in the region during this period, however, investigations with a number of museums local to Ely and Mill Green revealed mixed results during the months of August and September, some seeing increases and others a seeing a reduction in visitor figures. Visitor figures are subject to variations for a wide range of reasons and the charts below show that both museums had other periods during the year in which there was a rise in numbers, but it can be seen that the increases in August are pronounced.

Mill Green Visitor figures for 2009 and 2010 (not including school groups)



Ely Visitor figures for 2009 and 2010 (not including school groups)



Visitor motivation

In order to identify a link between an increase in numbers and the loan exhibitions, visitors were asked what had made them come to the museum on that day. This was done using an open-ended question that did not lead the visitor into any particular response. Of those that visited when the exhibition was on, at Ely 4% ($\pm 3\%$ ^{3]}) gave the loan exhibition as a reason for visiting, at Mill Green this figure was 40% ($\pm 11\%$). It would appear therefore that whilst the exhibition did bring in visitors at Mill Green, the exhibition itself was a less important factor at Ely. There may, however, be factors connected to the project that resulted in increased numbers at Ely, particularly the publicity for the exhibition which may have attracted visitors to the museum itself.

This difference may also be explained by other data, including the other responses to this question (which are shown in the table below). Around 65% ($\pm 8\%$) of respondents in Ely said they had visited the museum because they were on holiday in the area (this contrasts to 24% ($\pm 11\%$) of visitors to Mill Green). Furthermore 86%⁴ ($\pm 4\%$) of Ely's visitors had never visited the museum before and a much larger proportion came from further afield with 46% ($\pm 6\%$) living more than 50 miles away and only 20% ($\pm 5\%$) within 10 miles). In contrast, at Mill Green only 37% ($\pm 9\%$) were new visitors and most were local (only 9% ($\pm 6\%$) lived over 50 miles away and 75% ($\pm 9\%$) lived within a 10 miles distance.⁵

This analysis points to reasons that may explain why fewer people came to Ely Museum expressly to see the temporary loan exhibition. Ely museum is situated within a tourist destination and this would explain both the visitor profile and why visitors are likely to be driven by a desire to see the 'sights' rather than a changing programme of events. Mill Green on the other hand, is not within a major tourist destination and is non-charging. It also has gardens, a working mill and cream tea at the weekend. These factors may explain the higher proportion of local, repeat visits, particularly visitors drawn for social/leisure reasons; 57% stated friends and family as a reason for visiting. A new temporary exhibition, it could be argued, along with the relevant publicity, may be an incentive for such an audience to visit in order to see something different at a regular haunt.

Reason for visiting the museum during the exhibition period:

(some people gave more than one reason for visiting).

Reason for visiting	Percentage of people giving each reason	
	Ely	Mill Green
Weather / rain	2.8%	1.6%

³ As this information was gathered from a sample, a range is given as to what this figure might be if everyone coming into the exhibition was surveyed – the 95% confidence interval.

⁴ All visitor in the collection period i.e. those in the two months preceding and during the exhibition

⁵ All visitor in the collection period i.e. those in the two months preceding and during the exhibition. All distances as the crow flies.

Visiting on holiday in area	64.6%	24.2%
Loan Exhibition	4.3%	40.3%
Interest in Mill	n.a	35.5%
Interest in local history	6.4%	9.7%
Interest in history	9.9%	6.5%
Interest in Ely	7.8%	n.a.
Children requested	0.0%	14.5%
Came with friends / family	14.9%	56.5%
Other	6.0%	20%
Number that answered question	141	62

It is worth, at this point, looking at what people enjoyed most at each of the museums; another open-ended, non-directive question on the evaluation card (see the tables below). At Mill Green, the museum and mill were selected most frequently, however, the Beatrix Potter exhibition and trail still comprised a high proportion of responses, especially if taken together. At Ely, visitors most enjoyed finding out about the history of Ely and the Fens, a much lower proportion mentioned the loan exhibition. This may be indicative of the visitor profile as discussed above, i.e. a high proportion of people new to the area possibly interested in finding out more about it. This is, however, one interpretation; compared to Mill Green the exhibition at Ely was small in relation to the rest of the museum and a little more diverse from the rest of the collections. It may be, therefore, that it did not make sufficient impact for reasons of its size, content or relevance in order for the visitor to remember it when completing an evaluation card at the end of a visit.

What people most enjoyed during the period the loan exhibitions ran

Main themes for Mill Green	Percent	Count
Museum	71.4%	45
Mill	73.0%	46
Garden / outside	36.5%	23
Beatrice Potter Exhibition	60.3%	38
Beatrice Potter Trail	34.9%	22
Other (please specify in one or two words)	28.6%	18
Answered question	87.5%	63

Main themes for Ely	Percent	Count
Gaol	23.2%	22
Hands on	9.5%	9

Video	12.6%	12
History of Ely/Fens	61.1%	58
Romans	20.0%	19
British Museum Loan Exhibition	10.5%	10
Other (please specify in one or two words)	53.7%	51
Answered question	55.6%	95

New users

The percentage of new users before and during the exhibition can be seen in the table below

Whether visited before	Mill Green %		Ely %	
	Before exhibition	During exhibition	Before exhibition	During exhibition
Never visited	43.0	35.1	79.2	90.5
Visited in last 12 months	51.5	46.4	12.7	2.9
Visited over 12 months ago	5.0	18.5	8.1	6.6

Analysis revealed a significant change in the proportion of visitors at Ely before and during the exhibition falling in each of the groups: never visited, visited in last 12 months, visited over 12 months ago. As can be seen, there was a higher percentage of new visitors during this period, however, care needs to be taken interpreting these figures as the exhibition took place in the summer holidays when visitor profiles are likely to change. There was no significant difference at Mill Green; this is likely to have been due to sample size⁶.

Previous visits to the British Museum

A comment book was put out for a short period at Ely Museum, the very limited number of responses indicate that not all visitors had been to the British Museum (9 out of 15 had not visited). This is too small a sample to make generalisations from, and in retrospect this question could have been included on the evaluation card. However, for those that did respond, it can be seen that they had an opportunity to view an object from a National Collection that they might not otherwise have accessed.

A sample page can be seen below.

⁶ The ability of statistical tests to identify differences is less where sample sizes are small.

Date	How did you find out about the museum?	What did you think of the Egyptian cat exhibition? What did or didn't you like, did anything surprise you?	Where do you live? (Nearest town or country if from abroad).	Have you ever visited the British Museum in London?
2/10/10	walked past	Creepy and brilliant	Nr Newcastle	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
8/10/10	checked out followed signs	very good	Toronto Canada	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Oct 14th 2010	Have visited it previously.	Very interesting & informative.	Peterborough.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Oct 14 2010	Local Planet!	Nice, well displayed.	Taranaki, New Zealand	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

The role of marketing in raising awareness and increasing publicity

A marketing consultant was employed to support the museums. This was a decision made by the Renaissance Museum Development Manager following feedback from the project manager for a similar BM loan project to Brent Museum who stressed the importance of marketing to the success of the project.

This resulted in the creation of attractive marketing materials which were distributed using the revised contacts lists, Mill Green, for example

'...mailed out thousands of postcards and A5 flyers to local museums, heritage sites, libraries, community centres, primary schools etc and to our standard mailing list'.

Both events were launched in the afternoon rather than the evening, which was a new approach. It was thought that a Friday afternoon would allow people returning from work to drop into the event at the end of the working week.

Ely largely had the normal attendances with the exception of the British Museum representation, Renaissance staff and the head of Community Services at the council whose department is responsible for funding the museum.

Mill Green would not routinely 'launch' a temporary exhibition, the high profile nature of this loan made it appropriate and the museum did see increased attendance:

'In the case of Beatrix Potter - it was opened by the mayor, we invited all our volunteers and friends of the museum so there was far more support, we had senior council officers and all the partnership people involved - so it was much more high profile and far more people attended. Probably in the region of 80 people in the end. '
[Email from Museum]

Both museums had improved press coverage.

'We have had good press coverage. Usually we just get one piece when the exhibition opens but this time we have been featured when the exhibition was installed and then several times during the exhibition. The BBC local Radio station were also more interested than usual.'
[Email from Museum]

Mill Green had articles in a number of publications and good coverage on local radio. For example on 'Jack fm', a local station, the museum had a week's worth of five minute slots, two about the exhibition, two about the museum and one about an artefact in the collection.

'In terms of press coverage - we got much greater coverage as the Beatrix Potter topic is very popular and more wide ranging in the interest it gains. We were interviewed by all three of the main local radio stations (usually we get some coverage from these but not as much).'
[Email from Museum]

To sum up, whilst it is not possible to come to a set of definitive conclusions about the effect of the exhibitions on new visitors, the evidence points to the Beatrix Potter exhibition increasing the number of visitors to the museum.

Numbers at Ely increased during the exhibition period, whilst it is hard to attribute this directly to the loan object, it is possible that the increased publicity due to both the object and increased marketing capacity increased the number of visitors

Comparing the evidence from the two very different museums raises the following questions:

- (i) Do temporary exhibitions provide greater 'leverage' to audiences of local, repeat visitors who might be interested in a changing programme of events?
- (ii) Is it important that the loan relates to the needs of the audience and audience profile? For example, in Ely, the largely tourist audience seemed to be more interested in discovering more about the local area.

Whilst this evaluation cannot answer the questions it raises, they are useful considerations that can be borne in mind for future loans and evaluations.

What is clear is that during the exhibition period, 11,607 general visitors and 678 children in school groups had local access to national collections - a proportion of these people had not previously visited the British Museum.

3.2: Aim 2

To develop the capacity and capability of small museums to receive and display significant loans

The following areas were identified as having increased the small museums' capacity and capability to receive and display significant loan objects.

Security: All three museums were required to undergo security checks by the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) security advisor⁷. As a result, all have made changes in order to receive objects. The funding for this project has facilitated some of the required security improvements, for example, security radios and picture alarms at Mill Green and a new alarm system at Ely. The security check, report and resulting improvements in security, should make it easier for the museums to receive loans in future.

'The MLA security advisor visited and was very useful'

[Interview with museum]

Conservation visit at Dunwich

In addition to the security checks, a conservation officer from CIMS visited Dunwich Museum in order to provide advice for both the loan display and the museum as a whole

Equipment:

Ely and Dunwich museums received high specification display cases. The former was donated by the British Museum as they had a suitable case available that they no longer required; the latter was paid for from project funding. Mill Green did not require a case as it was borrowing pictures. This will assist with the future potential borrowing of 'significant' loans since the high specification cases enable objects to be securely displayed, within conditions necessary to maintain the required environmental control for conservation purposes. The case for Dunwich Museum, being bespoke, has been commissioned to be of a sufficient size to display a range of different objects in future and to fit within revised display arrangements within the gallery.

'...a high security case opens up not only further loan exhibitions from the British Museum (perhaps in a couple of years), but also from other major museums.'

⁷ This is linked to requirements of the Government Indemnity Scheme, an insurance scheme that offers cover at a notional rate for National Museum objects to be loaned to non-national museums, archives and libraries.

[Email from Museum]

Display

All three museums have redecorated the galleries in which the loan is being displayed. At Ely museum, tired-looking display boards were removed revealing an old fireplace in the process. These were replaced by a number of high-quality exhibition backing panels from the British Museum, which were specially made for Ely Museum and resulted in an improved exhibition space

'It will make our temporary exhibition better looking...It raises the bar a bit. We have got nice solid panels and two cases.'

[Interview with Museum]

Mill Green bought digital photo-frames that will be used for future exhibitions

Knowledge and understanding of the British Museums loan process

Although Dunwich Museum has recently had a loan from the National Armoury, the other museums have not recently had loans from National Museums and none of the staff in this project have been involved in a loan from the British Museum.

'It opened my eyes to how complicated borrowing from a National Museum actually is'

[Interview with Museum]

'In most ways this is not much different from the usual exhibitions we do ... this is different in that it is a high profile loan and there are issues of security, and copyright.'

[Interview with Museum]

'...having gone through the process once, we are more aware of the time and planning needs'

[Email from Museum]

Working in partnership

Ely is an independent museum, Mill Green is a local authority museum but within a small museum service of only two museums in total. Staff were therefore more accustomed to working within smaller structures and more-or-less autonomously. Thus, whilst there is less specialist support, decision-making and planning is more straightforward. Whilst both museums have previously worked in partnership to receive loan exhibitions, this project involved a more complex partnership comprising the British Museum, Renaissance staff,

SHARE advisors and a freelance consultant. This brought about an understanding of the benefits and difficulties of working in a complex partnership.

'I am used to doing it alone more or less, we turn things around very quickly, make decisions and do it – we don't have the time to do it differently. This takes so long because there are so many people involved.'

[Interview with Museum]

'Because we are such a small museum, I am used to working on my own, at my own pace and not waiting for anyone. It is a learning curve for me to have to put in for things a long time in advance.'

[Interview with Museum]

Improved marketing contacts list

The marketing consultant provided the museums with a revised marketing spreadsheet which segmented audiences into different target groups. Alongside this she composed a number of marketing letters for each of these groups; the museums will have this as a template for the future, along with the revised marketing database.

'We now have extra contacts as [the Marketing Consultant] put together a contact database which is better, more varied. She suggested people we might not have thought about, we might use this for future launches.'

[Interview with Museum]

'I think it has made me think about doing things a little more professionally, like the invites to the opening, the postcard; it is worth doing, even if it costs a little bit more, it doesn't have to cost an absolute fortune.'

[Interview with Museum]

Desire to receive loans in future

The museums involved said they would be interested in taking loans in the future. However, the funding available for the project was important and a lack of it might be a barrier in future should museums need to pay for transport, insurance etc.

This project involved extra workload for the small museums as it involved creating an exhibition around the loan objects, rather than a receiving an object to go in an existing display or a touring exhibition which comes with interpretation panels etc. The experience of this did give food for thought in terms of future loans

'...we would think about doing it in a different way. Maybe an object to be a starring role in an exhibition that we were putting on anyway. Or something that wouldn't

involve so much interpretation because we couldn't afford to have all those panels done'.

[Interview with Museum]

The experience has thus given the museums new ideas and aspirations as to how to make use of loan objects in future.

'It makes you more ambitious about what you can achieve, starts you thinking about what can loan in future and what would stop us borrowing something.'

[Interview with Museum]

'We are now able to have loans, we have the seal of approval from the BM even if we don't borrow from them. It will be hard for other museums to turn us down because. if we are good enough for the British Museum, we should be good enough for them.'

[Interview with Museum]

3.2: Aim 3

To enable skills sharing and facilitate new ways of working for the national, regional and local museums involved in this partnership project.

In addition an awareness of the processes and planning involved in borrowing an object from the British Museum, partners gained the following:

Knowledge and skills

The museum staff gained a mixture of knowledge and skills:

- Knowledge about the exhibition subject areas, as these have been researched by the museums in order to write interpretation materials. For example, the Chair of Trustees at Dunwich Museums has used his archaeology training to research the exhibition.
Understanding of issues around security, insurance and copyright (the latter was an issue as the Beatrix Potter images are still in copyright).
- Skills in writing interpretation panels
'Text writing, I've gained more confidence because there weren't as many changes as I thought there would be. I thought they would come back covered in red pen and they weren't' [Interview with Museum].
- Experience of working in partnership and with a large organisation
- In the case of the Mill Green Curator, experience speaking to a large audience at the Museums Association Conference (2010).

It is not only the smaller museums who have gained in this way, other partners have too:

'I've gained an understanding of the issues and structures of different types of museums, from small museums where staff work quite independently, to the structures of a large organisation such as the British Museums, where projects such as this involve the co-operation of various departments.' [Interview with Renaissance Team Member]

Thinking differently

In some cases the loan exhibition enabled new ways of working. At Ely the exhibition space was opened up and drop-in learning activities were trialled, the launch was also run slightly differently at both museums. At Ely, due to the fact that the exhibition was held in a space downstairs, the normal temporary exhibition space was used to house a drawing activity around the theme of the exhibition – this proved successful and the curator would consider this approach again. At Mill Green a Beatrix Potter trail took visitors around the museum and out into the garden. Many visitors enjoyed this with 35% choosing this as a favourite aspect of their visit.

'It has opened up my outlook a bit, in a small organisation you can get a bit insular. For example, opening up the space, there used to be horrible yellow panels in the room the exhibition is going in. These were easy to remove, but I just didn't think of this before. It has also got us thinking about events, for example, the opening event is going to be in September after the exhibition has been running for a while and co-ordinating with the Egyptian new year. It will be between three and five pm, with tea and cake, rather than in the evening which is when we normally hold events.'

[Interview with Museum]

Sharing ideas and experiences

Sharing ideas and experiences was also useful, museums found the two meetings with all the partners helpful. Mill Green for example, met with British Museum's National Programmes Project Co-ordinator and came up with a number of new ideas; the Dunwich Team met with the freelance marketing consultant which resulted in a number of exciting ideas for learning activities.

'Meeting as a group at the beginning.... meeting with Rob and him coming up with ideas. Sharing experiences and working as a team.'

[Interview with Museum]

'People come with ideas and are very positive. There is no whinging where there are problems. It is great having Helen⁸ on board because she is easy to contact and doesn't have fifteen other things going on, and is an excellent person to bounce ideas off.'

⁸ Helen Mitchell, freelance marketing consultant

[Interview with Museum]

Volunteers

Both the Mill Green and Ely exhibitions have involved the use of volunteers. The Beatrix Potter exhibition required invigilation, and required the input of the volunteers for this as did the drop-in learning activities at Ely Museum.

'We are going to do rota for invigilation with the volunteers, for security and so they can talk to people in the galleries, this is a development opportunity for them too.'

[Interview with Museum]

3.4: Aim 4

To develop and assess models of working in partnership to enable significant loans to be made to small museums.

The process of lending to the three museums was evaluated in order to inform future practice and take the opportunity of comparing how the process worked with different types of museums.

There are many positive aspects to the process:

Pride and Reputation

Working with the British Museum was seen as motivational, a source of pride and of profile-raising to the small museums involved. This in turn was seen as helpful with press coverage, marketing and advocacy.

'Staff and volunteers have been re-enthused and excited; the museum has got self-esteem out of the project.'

[Interview with Museum]

'It's nice to be 'invited' to work with BM rather than 'can we borrow?', it feels like we are less of an individual museum and more 'part of something'. It's nice to have the recognition.'

[Interview with Museum]

'For the museum, it's good from a kudos point of view, it's high profile, people are coming up saying 'ooh!, you've got BM and V & A things on display'.'

[Interview with Museum]

It is not only the small museums who benefited in this way, for both the SHARE scheme and the British Museum in particular, there was publicity and advocacy, this included a presentation at the Museum Association Conference in 2010,

'...the advocacy value of all of this – the Ely cat was seen in more than one session at the MA conference as well as appearing in a full page picture in the MJ and in an article in Museum Practice.'

[Interview with British Museum team member]

Funding

Funding was considered a vital factor in making this project happen for the museums taking the loans. Because of their size, they do not usually have the flexibility in budgets to pay for even very, small additional costs

'Funding is a massive thing. It is the funding that has made it happen. The cost of paying for copyright, paying for equipment, the fixture and fittings. Because we are loaning from a National we would not have been able to cover the costs of insurance and transport.'

[Interview with Museum]

'The key thing was if the money had not been there to do the security. Without the changes we would not have been able to have a loan.'

[Interview with Museum]

Marketing

The marketing support, which was funded from the budget for the project was felt to be an important factor. Much effort has been invested in the exhibitions and it makes sense to make full use of them to increase audiences.

'...[the consultant was] really helpful, we know how to do marketing, but she was able to put more time and skills in and the extra flyers. It was desirable rather than essential ... but having her come and have a look around and be involved in the project from the beginning was beneficial'.

[Interview with Museum]

'...[the consultant was] key as well as she was able to focus on projects as a whole, make sure things ran smoothly. Because for the rest of us, it is not our main job, but a small part of our day job and we have other things to do.'

[Interview with Museum]

Practical help and support

The British Museum handled the transport and the installation and received praise from Ely about this part of the project

BM were excellent, sent two people to put in the panels, set in the case and the next day sent someone to install the object, plenty of support from them and by the time they had finished it looked brilliant.

[Interview with Museum]

The British Museum were able to offer other practical assistance in a flexible way, such as the provision of a display case and backing panels where they had these available and surplus to requirements. Support offered by Renaissance and through the SHARE scheme was also appreciated.

'...very good support from Renaissance East of England and the British Museum staff'

[Email from Museum]

It was appreciated that the project staff attended the launch events.

'..both the Mayor and the Councillor talked to John from the British Museum and he is very eloquent so he was able to tell them all about the project, and Natasha was here as well and was able to tell them all about the SHARE point of view.

[Interview with Museum]

Visiting

It was felt important that partner staff were able to visit and see the space in question and the facilities available. The display at Ely for example, had to be accommodated in an extremely small space only a few feet wide.

'It was useful to visit the museums, for example, from this I could see that Ely needed a display case, it is also useful to see where the objects will fit, seeing the space is important.

[Interview with British Museum team member]

'...they need to picture the place, meet staff and know the context - every museum is different.'

[Interview with Museum]

Willingness and enthusiasm

Finally, there was a palpable sense of the enthusiasm, willingness and good will from all those involved in the project.

Whilst there was generally positive feedback about the project, there were areas that could be improved. These issues mostly arose from the following circumstances:

- Fitting two of the loans into unusually short timescales; normally a loan from the British Museum would take around a year to organise, in this case the loans for the first two exhibitions had a lead-in time of six-months.
- The number of partners involved could at times complicate communication
- This was a pilot project, involving a new approach (for example the involvement of SHARE and Renaissance) and therefore involved teething problems; not everyone involved in this project has experience working with this type of loan, so it was a learning process.

The specific areas for improvement are listed below, it should be remembered at this point that this pilot project successfully resulted in the realisation of two temporary exhibitions within an unusually short-deadline, on time and on budget⁹. Those involved were generally very enthusiastic and positive. The aim of the evaluation however, is to understand how the project can inform future lending programmes between a national or large museum to a small museum, and it is for this reasons that areas of potential improvement are outlined below.

Project planning and timescales

Whilst there was an initial timetable, it was possibly a little optimistic, and when it slipped it was not revised, and therefore not used. The project was very ambitious, particularly as it involved delivering the first two loans, with all the additional support required to create exhibitions around them, within six months. The normal timescales for such loans are a year and it is a credit to the British Museum that they were willing to take on this project with such enthusiasm. It had been planned initially to create three exhibitions in the first year, however the Renaissance Museum Development Manager identified, at an early stage, potential workload issues and suggested that Dunwich exhibition should take place at a later point.

Some elements in the project's 'critical path' came a little late in the day, it was difficult for the small museums to speed up or influence this situation as it relied on the actions of other people, particularly around the security visits, information necessary for the design of the panels and for insurance purposes. One of the British Museum team did state the need to be 'brutally realistic about timescales' in future and the need to set clear objectives, schedule and timescales. It is also essential to regularly review schedules in order that they remain relevant.

Communication

The project involved a number of different partners and, in some respects, partners needed time to get a feel for how the others worked. As explained above, the smaller museums are used to working independently rather than within large structures, but even Renaissance Staff who do work within these large structures, appreciated that they had a lack of understanding

⁹ Subsequent to the writing of this report, the final exhibition at Dunwich successfully opened to time and to budget.

as to how the British Museum worked. It was not realised, for example that they had to negotiate and advocate with other departments within the organisation, almost as if they were separate organisations.

There was a period in which the other partners heard little from the British Museum, unaware that that there was work going on behind the scenes in the early stages of the project. Once this became apparent the British Museum were careful to keep in contact, although there were still instances where it was difficult for partners to get the relevant information. One suggestion that has been made is that it would be useful, from the perspective of the smaller museum, to deal directly with the relevant curator at the British Museum once the object had been chised.

'...it got easier once we were put in touch with the actual person that does things'
[Interview with Museum]

'It would be worth having more direct contact with more than one person at the BM, it is great having a key contact, but if I was able to talk directly to the curator, I might have got my answers a bit quicker. I don't know whether they are protected from outside interference'
[Interview with Museum]

It would also be useful, at the start of the project, to have documentation explaining how the British Museum works, the different departments and the role of loans team. This might enable museums to become more proactive in realising that the loans are not a 'favour' but part of the department work. For example one museum had come, through the project, to a better understanding of...

'... the relative position of the partners, that we are equal partners. It is not us desperately coming in and tugging at coat tails and begging for an object. The British Museum have an agenda as well and we can help them fit their agenda'
[Interview with Museum]

From the British Museum point of view, it will be useful to have evaluation and advocacy materials that enable them to promote these loans (which are small-scale initiatives by British Museum standards) and the benefits they bring, internally.

'...something tangible to give colleagues so that they can see how this type of project affects museums.'
[Interview with British Museum team member]

'...something that might change is how we advocate and sell within the organisation itself once the loans have happened.'

[Interview with British Museum team member]

The number of people involved in the partnership also led to some confusion as to who to keep 'in the loop' in different circumstances, one example of this would be which people needed to 'sign off' interpretation panel text. This was sometimes frustrating to museums that are use to 'going it alone':

'We turn things around quickly, we make a decision and do it. There were so many people involved'

[Interview with museum]

Roles, responsibilities and workload

Whilst it was conceived that each of the museums involved managed their own project, they were also offered support from the rest of the partnership to enable the loan to take place. The museums had varying needs for support in different areas, and the staff or volunteers involved have different amounts of time to spend on the project and drive it forward. There were some instances where 'ownership' of different elements of this complex project were not clear. A clearer understanding at the start of who was doing what and by when would be useful - it would also indicate whether a project is realistic at the planning stage.

'I think we should agree at the start who will be responsible for what. At the start I didn't know I would be writing the text. I thought they would be doing this because I don't know anything about the subject matter. I was asked 'How are you getting on with the panels, and I was 'Oh , am I doing the panels?'

[Interview with museum]

It should be said at this point, that it was helpful that the Regional Museum Development Manager had the foresight to bring in the freelance consultant who could take responsibility for a number of elements of the project, including interpretation, marketing and events. Being independent and focussed on the project she was able to give these it undivided attention and respond quickly to the museums

Another issue regarding 'ownership' and the need to drive forward various elements of the project might be a possible reluctance to 'pester' the British Museum which is, after all, a high status organisation within the museum world. As before, explaining that the loan project is not a 'favour', but part of its business, might be useful in this respect. The project did result in museums gaining the confidence needed to be more proactive:

'If I did it again, I would have my timetable, we would need to agree it obviously, but if people weren't fitting into it I would feel more free to nag'

[Interview with museum]

Whilst it makes sense to fully capitalise on the loan objects by producing a quality exhibition and series of related activities, this does take resources and capacity and the pros and cons of this approach need to be weighed up on each occasion.

Selecting objects

The British Museum facilitated the loan of not just its own objects, but in the case of Mill Green, objects from the Victoria and Albert Museum. In future it would be useful to have further information to assist with the selection process, for example, an overview of the different departments at the British Museum and the type of objects they might hold for loan. It would also be worth flagging up factors that need to be considered when selecting objects, for example, the need for conservation that might lead to delays, security considerations that might involve additional cost or staff time or, as in the case of Beatrix Potter, copyright costs.

SHARE

In the early stage of the project, there was mixed success with the SHARE scheme. Mill Green, in particular did not require a great deal of support having a larger and more experienced staff. However, Ely and Mill Green were offered a range of support. The tight timescales at Ely and Mill Green meant that the normal SHARE systems did not have, perhaps, the sense of urgency required; the project manager (Regional Museum Development Manager) was proactive in chasing this up for Ely. Dunwich has been able to access a wider range of SHARE support through attending a scheduled training course. The support offered by SHARE was complimented by the more intensive, longer-term support from the freelance marketing consultant.

'Marketing was important, the subject specialist, was the key. I have a bit of knowledge from university but there is nothing Egyptian here at all. Learning would also be important because if your Learning Officer does not do that subject, they do not have those resources, it is important to have handling things and objects to look at.'

[Interview with museum]

4. Conclusions

Whilst it is not possible to come to definitive conclusions about the effect of the exhibitions on visitor numbers, the evidence points to the exhibitions increasing the number of visitors to the museum. A total of 11,607 visitors and 678 school children in groups had access to the British Museum loan objects at the two, small, local venues; a proportion of these people had not visited the British Museum before.

Comparing the evidence from the two very different museums raises interesting considerations around the choice loan objects and how they relate to the motivations and needs of their audiences.

The project appears to have increased the capacity of the small museums in question to receive high profile loans in future both due to material changes to their premises, facilitated through the funding available, and through increased awareness of loan processes. Future loans, however, will remain dependant on the museums being able to afford any additional costs, such as transport and insurance. In addition to increasing capacity, the project appears to have given the museums increased appetite for future loans and improved confidence about the process. It has also given them food for thought about the nature of future loans, for example, consideration about methods for displaying such loans in ways that are less resource intensive than creating an exhibition from scratch.

Regional museum staff were able to input into the project through the SHARE scheme, as were British Museum staff and the marketing consultant; this resulted in some learning and skills-sharing taking place and the smaller museums introducing some new practice. The sharing of ideas was valued by the museums. The principal learning, however, was increased understanding for all parties about the issues of making high profile loans to small museums. Key to this was the insight into the differences that exist in a larger organisations and small museums.

The project was, however, a positive one that resulted in exhibitions being delivered on time and on budget. The principal benefit of having the loans, from the small museums point of view, appears to be the resulting profile-raising which resulted in marketing and advocacy opportunities and a sense of pride within the organisations themselves. A key factor to the success of the project was the funding, as even seemingly insignificant costs can be prohibitive to small museums. The practical support from partners, support from the freelance consultant in marketing, events, and developing the exhibition and specialist support through the SHARE scheme were also key to the project success. There is room for improvement in the planning stage in order to ensure that there is a realistic timetable and that key responsibilities and duties are identified at the start. This should be followed by regular reviews of project progress in order to ensure that the planning documents remain relevant.

Information is needed in the early stages in order that partners understand British Museum structures; more direct routes of communication to loan object curators might also be useful.

Whilst the funding for this project was relatively small, it was been supplemented by a significant amount of support in kind; this has been balanced by the outcomes for the smaller museums (described above) and for the British Museum who were able to take their collections to new venues out of London. The aim of this evaluation was not to perform a rigorous cost-benefit analysis, however it is hoped a description of the inputs found in section 1.6 provides contextual information to enable the costs to be considered in light of the evaluation; it should also provide data to enable different models for delivering this type of activity to be compared in future, should this be required.

One of the recommendations from this pilot project is to bring together the learning from the evaluation in the form of a brief guide on the key stages in a loan process, from the lender's and borrower's perspectives in order to inform future project.

5: Appendix

Smaller museums and their exhibitions

Exhibition at Mill Green Museum

26 July to 31 October 2010

Mill Green Museum in Hertfordshire is located within the Old Mill House dating back to the 17th century. Mill Green is a local authority funded museum and part of Welwyn and Hatfield Museum Service (the other museum in the service being Welwyn Roman Baths). The service has a high ratio of volunteers to staff, with the equivalent of eight full-time, paid members of staff and seventy volunteers.

Mill Green do not usually borrow from National Museums because of the costs and logistics involved, however they regularly borrow from smaller local museums. They usually do about three to five exhibitions a year and all of the galleries house temporary or changing displays. One of the galleries is also hired out for art exhibitions.

The house is immediately adjacent to a refurbished working flour mill that dates from the 17th century. With a small, but carefully planted formal garden and the mill stream running through, the museum is a beautiful corner of Hertfordshire that could be described as 'quintessentially English'. It is against this backdrop that the decision was made by the museum team to borrow original paintings from the 'Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies' by Beatrix Potter.

These paintings were not only fitting in terms of the look and feel of the museum, there is also an historical link; Beatrix Potter was born in Kensington in London, however, she spent many holidays in Hertfordshire where the landscape influenced a number of her books. In addition to the Flopsy Bunny paintings, a number of drawings have been loaned by the Victoria and Albert museum, including a sketch of the mill made by Potter in 1910.

Exhibition at Ely Museum

4th August and 31st October 2010

Ely Museum is situated in the heart of the historical city and housed in the old Bishop's Gaol. It has a range of local history displays exploring life in the gaol and fenland life from prehistoric times to the present day. Ely Museum is an independent museum with the equivalent of four, full-time, paid members of staff and forty-six volunteers. Ely often have temporary exhibitions and occasionally loans, but not from National Museums.

The Ely team decided to go for something that differed from their current collections and chose to develop an exhibition on ancient Egypt centring on a mummified cat.

The mummified cat, with its painted bandages is an extraordinary object that provides an interesting insight into ancient Egyptian culture. Of particular interest, although rather macabre, was evidence from a CT scan that showed that the cats bones had been broken as part of the mummification process.

Planned exhibition at Dunwich Museum (at time of writing this report)

March - October 2011

The final museum involved in this project was Dunwich Museum which is dedicated to telling the local story of medieval Dunwich, a city that fell foul of the sea. It is an independent museum with the equivalent of one, full-time member of staff and ten volunteers. The museum recently borrowed an item from the Royal Armouries but has not been involved in other loans processes in its recent history.

The loan exhibition at Dunwich is due to open in late March 2011 and at the time of writing this report, it was in the planning stage. It will tell the history of seals throughout the ages, focussing on the Dunwich seal in particular; the latter is being loaned from Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service with a range of other seals being loaned by the British Museum.