



Building an exhibition for all ages to inspire, connect and develop skills

Connecting groups with their intergenerational heritage and climate action concerns

The Our Heritage, Our Future team works with communities to develop a range of heritage skills such as creating exhibitions and displays, delivering guided tours, carrying out historical research and recording the historic environment. Through these activities, participants can work towards obtaining accreditation or get involved just for fun! We delivered an accredited qualification in Creating exhibitions and displays to a group in Irvine and caught up with one of the participants to see how she benefitted from the sessions and how she will use her new skills in the future.

How it started

At the beginning of 2025, the Our Heritage, Our Future team met with Jennifer Pless, Community Engagement and Development Officer at the Scottish Maritime Museum, with the goal to bring together community groups of different ages to connect over their intergenerational heritage and climate action concerns.

This new intergenerational group was inspired by ideas and themes from the Museum's maritime heritage and arts collections and added their own concerns about climate change to create 'Trashion', a project that turned waste into wearable art.

Exhibition

Working with the Irvine Youth Legacy Centre and the Irvine Seniors Forum, the project brought together generations and skills, as well as inspiring a lot of chat and fun, to create outfits that tell a story about human impacts on the environment and the group's hope to make a difference in everyone's daily actions.



Above: The Trashion exhibition in situ at the Maritime Museum.



Above: Linda modelling at the Trashion fashion show.

The exhibition, which centred on 'fashion art' pieces created using rubbish, explored the industrial marine pollution emergency, fast fashion and our own personal choices. It invited visitors to think about the small changes we can all make in response.

The Our Heritage, Our Future team, working alongside the Scottish Maritime Museum, supported skills development by delivering an accredited qualification in Creating exhibitions and displays.

Participant feedback

Linda Buchanan, a member of the Irvine Seniors Forum, gave us some fantastic feedback about what she enjoyed most about working on the project and what she learned from it.

Did you enjoy working on the exhibition?

I really enjoyed taking part in the Trashion workshops and to be honest I still actually miss it, as do my other friends from Seniors. I didn't actually know what to expect in the beginning, but Jen was fantastic and her enthusiasm definitely rubbed off on all of us.

How long did you work on the exhibition and what do you feel was achieved?

It did take up a good few months but these became really enjoyable. I would say from the beginning the inter-generational part really took off in a very positive way, and I would add that we all really got on and we felt at ease in each other's company. We did help and encourage each other throughout under Jen's expert guidance.



Above: Linda creating the seagull headpiece for one of the Trashion mannequins.

Did you learn any new skills while taking part in the exhibition?

My part was to make the seagull. It's been a long time since I ever made anything substantial, and wouldn't say I was that arty!



Above: Linda showing off the seagull in progress!

However with encouragement from everybody, I actually constructed my seagull, which was to be used as one of the animal heads on our models. I have to admit it was really fulfilling and extremely messy, but immense fun. I think that was a running theme throughout, fun with lots of chat and laughs all around.

What did you learn from your experience?

I feel I learned lots about myself, working with young people and also about making our environment a better place. I have always been aware of climate change and the negative effects of many behaviours from people regarding waste etc. This project definitely made me more aware.

Would you recommend others to get involved in similar exhibition building to develop heritage and climate skills?



I really did enjoy the full experience of the project and I am so glad I took part. I think I can speak for everyone involved when I say we were so, so proud of the finished exhibition and I think it actually surpassed our expectations.

Left: Linda and Anne with their Heritage Hero awards.

There have been so many people asking about it and genuinely interested in the exhibition which has been so positive.

I feel I am able to speak to my grandchildren now regarding climate change and the way we can all take positive steps to make our environment a better place to live.

If you would like to know more about the heritage skills training we provide, please visit the Our Heritage, Our Future webpages or email communities@keepscotlandbeautiful.org



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