



Dorset History Centre and Priest's House Museum

Brief for a Freelance Curator

Brief and specification for a consultancy contract with Priest's House Museum to curate a temporary exhibition on Edwardian childhood, utilising the collections of the Priest's House Museum and loans from the National Trust's Kingston Lacy estate.

1. Brief Overview

Introduction

Dorset History Centre (DHC – lead partner), working in partnership with the National Trust's Kingston Lacy estate and the Priest's House Museum (PHM), Wimborne wishes to appoint a freelance curator to curate a small-scale exhibition project which comprises part of a wider Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) project entitled 'Unlocking the Bankes Archive'. The exhibition will be located at PHM.

The Bankes Archive

Kingston Lacy near Wimborne in Dorset, ancestral home of the Bankes family was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1981. The estate, at 16,000 acres, replete with historic properties, significant archaeology and stunning landscapes is the largest single gift received to date by the Trust.

The archive of the Bankes family of Kingston Lacy is stored at DHC and is one of the largest collections of its type held by the service. The archive was deposited incrementally by the National Trust over the course of the last 20 years and consists of some 800 boxes of records dating from the early 1300s together with a substantial amount of 'outsize' (items too large to fit into boxes) material. It consists of parchment and paper documents and volumes, photographs and artwork. In terms of content, the collection covers subjects as diverse as estate and land management, garden design, warfare, politics, international affairs and foreign exploration

including early analysis of the lives of the ancient Egyptians. Material relating to William John Bankes' Egyptian exploration was returned to DHC from The British Museum in 2010.

The Bankes Archive has been described as "a world class archive showing Dorset's links with Europe and the Middle East" by Dr. Philip Mansel, an authority on Europe and the Levant in the 19th century. Professor Henry French of Exeter University has described the archive as "exceptionally complete...of international significance".

Project Aims

The overarching objective of the project is to turn a currently little-known, but highly significant part of the recorded history of Dorset (and that of the UK and the wider world) into an accessible, sustainable, high-profile and multi-faceted heritage resource. Project aims and objectives are linked to the HLF outcomes relating to heritage, people and communities.

The project represents a major piece of work for DHC. It will increase access to the collection through cataloguing and a programme of outreach activities over three years. As part of the project DHC will:

- Catalogue the archive
- Digitise content to make elements of the archive accessible online
- Better preserve and actively conserve elements of the collection
- Engage volunteers in a broad range of activities such as research, conservation and outreach
- Create a touring exhibition and new displays at Kingston Lacy and Priest's House Museum
- Capture the oral history of people associated with the estate
- Offer a varied events programme including talks, specialist workshops and drop-in activities
- Develop digital resources including an interactive map that utilises GIS technology
- Work with Walford Mill Crafts to generate creative responses to the archive's content
- Produce learning resources for schools
- Work with colleges and universities to encourage Higher Education involvement with the archive

For more information visit the project website
<https://dcc.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/bankes-archive/>

This brief is focused on delivering a small-scale exhibition focused on Kingston Lacy and its environs during the Edwardian era. The theme of childhood will be central to the exhibition and the successful applicant will be expected to spend time studying

the Bankes Archive at DHC and using the collection to fully research material for the proposed exhibition. The collections at PHM will also support research requirements. The aim of the exhibition is to strengthen local engagement with the Bankes Archive and the history of the local area.

2. Role and Tasks

- To work with staff from PHM and the Bankes project team to create an informative and engaging exhibition
- To develop the embryonic theme of the exhibition and create a clear and lively exhibition narrative linked to the objects available for display whilst placing the Bankes Archive at the heart of the exhibition
- To procure and coordinate 3D and graphic designers as required and oversee the design process
- To oversee and coordinate the development of storyboards, panels and other interpretive materials for inclusion in the exhibition
- To work closely with the teams at PHM and DHC for the promotion of the exhibition, both through print and digital media
- To support the development of any associated learning activities or events, including a preview
- To bring a collaborative approach to making the exhibition, that draws upon skills and expertise from across the Bankes project team
- Plan all aspects of the exhibition installation and co-ordinate all functions in preparation, installation and snagging
- Provide a legacy through purchasing equipment and researching stories that will provide opportunities for further exhibition work in the future

3. Experience, skills and knowledge

Experience

- To have delivered at least 3 lively and participatory exhibitions
- Proven experience of working with 3D and/or graphic designers
- Proven experience developing a range of forms of interpretation for diverse audiences

Knowledge/Skills

- Excellent communication skills and the ability to work with a wide range of internal and external contacts in partnership and collaboration at all levels

- Good understanding of different learning styles, including interpretive approaches
- Previous experience of undertaking research to inform work
- Excellent administration and project management skills, creative abilities, and an eye for detail, energy, flexibility and self-motivation
- A strong team player, with enthusiasm and energy to act proactively demonstrating initiative and tenacity in completing work

4. Timetable

Immediate start for delivery of an exhibition in June 2018 that will run until December 2018.

5. Reporting

The post holder will report to the Assistant Curator at PHM in Wimborne. Reporting to the Bankes project team will be required in addition to providing evaluation and feedback on the exhibition for HLF.

6. Fee and budget

This is a fixed fee appointment of £3000. The budget for delivering the exhibition is £7000. It is anticipated that the freelance curator will provide at least 15 days work in delivering the project. It is expected that there will be a legacy from the exhibition in the form of at least one museum quality showcase that can be repurposed.

7. How to apply

To express an interest, please send your CV, and covering letter to James Webb by 12 noon on Monday 9th April; jwebb@priest-house.co.uk

Hard copies can be posted to the Priest's House Museum for the same deadline. Our address is 23-27 High St, Wimborne BH21 1HR.

Informal enquiries can be directed to James on 01202 882533 prior to application.

PROJECT PARTNERS



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