

ramm



**Annual Review
2022–23**



**Cllr Laura Wright,
Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder
for Arts, Culture and Corporate Services**

From *Brick by Brick: a LEGO® brick history of Exeter* to the contemporary art exhibition *Earth Spells: Witches of the Anthropocene*, this year has been one of great contrasts. A common thread, however, has been the gradually increasing visitor numbers as we build back almost to pre-Covid levels.

It was thrilling to see the history of the city come alive in an engaging and accessible way in colourful LEGO bricks. The museum was full of excited children (who ever thought we would see LEGO® Robot Wars in the museum?) whilst the relaxed early sessions were a big hit with families with additional needs. Such an exhibition is quite an undertaking, and we could not have done it without the support of several generous sponsors and a small army of volunteers. A massive thanks to you all!

In May 2022, the museum handed over the sacred regalia of an important 19th-century Blackfoot leader, Chief Crowfoot, to representatives of the Siksika Nation in Canada. I was honoured to attend the moving ceremony and it was a real surprise to be gifted regalia from a Siksika elder which is now a treasured part of the museum's collection. There was a real sense of history being made in Exeter that day.

The year culminated with *Earth Spells: Witches of the Anthropocene*, the museum's latest contemporary art show which garnered national praise. It's clear there is a real audience for contemporary art in Exeter and this show, linking so closely to Dartmoor and the local area, was a fantastic chance to welcome some internationally renowned women artists to the city and showcase their exciting work.

There's so much excellent work highlighted in this annual review but it provides just a small glimpse into the life of this fascinating museum. I would like to thank all the staff, volunteers, funders and partners for all the wonderful work they do to make this such an inspiring place for the people of Exeter, Devon and beyond.



Introduction



**Camilla Hampshire,
Museum Manager & Cultural Lead**

2023 saw the museum receive confirmation of continued Arts Council England funding as a National Portfolio Organisation. This, together with the support the museum receives from its main funder, Exeter City Council, gives us the confidence to invest in upcoming projects and feel confident we can continue to deliver an ambitious public programme.

We are incredibly grateful to everyone who has supported the museum over the last year. Standstill funding and increasing costs make these difficult times for every organisation in receipt of public funding. At RAMM we are always keen to stretch ourselves and our resources and I am often amazed by the museum's achievements considering the size of the team. Nonetheless we need to be realistic about the ever-tightening constraints which makes the support of all those who know and love RAMM all the more important. Thank you for any help you are able to offer, from staying in touch by joining our mailing list or making a donation via the independent charity, RAMM Development Trust. Every gesture of support is appreciated.

Several wellbeing projects have come to fruition this year: the *A Picture of Health* exhibition charted the history of healthcare in the city and we took the Gold award at the Devon Tourism Awards for accessible and inclusive tourism. We were delighted to launch two audio guides: the quirky Sound Journey, and our mindfulness audio guide, both the results of collaborative partnerships. We continue to build relationships with Wellbeing Exeter, recently welcoming two new community connectors into our team who are working with older people looking for more connection in their lives.

Bringing people together to share experiences, whether it is through collections-inspired projects and partnerships, exhibitions or events like Lates or A Song for Ukraine, ensures RAMM's continuing place at the heart of our community.

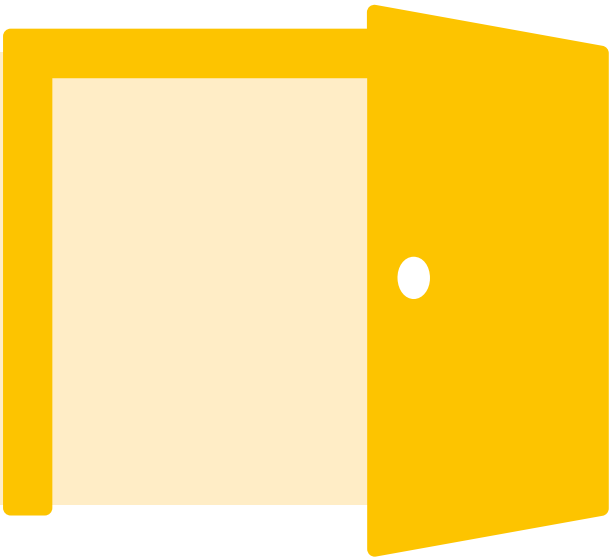
Year in numbers

Visitors 204,500



People


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|--|-----|
| Members of staff | 56 |
| Interns and work placements | 49 |
| Volunteers | 268 |
| Volunteers with disability | 15% |
| Volunteers from diverse ethnic communities | 12% |
| Volunteers from LGBTQ+ community | 25% |





Events

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|---------------------------|--------|
| Exhibitions and displays | 22 |
| Events | 140 |
| Tickets for events issued | 3,743 |
| Tickets for exhibitions | 13,992 |



Learning

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|---|-------|
| Participants in museum-led school visits | 2,440 |
| Participants in self-led education visits | 8,218 |
| Engagement sessions/workshops | 75 |



Shop

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|--------------|----------|
| Transactions | 19,000 |
| Items sold | 48,000 |
| Gross income | £207,000 |

Online views

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|---------------------------------|---------|
| RAMM website users | 137,700 |
| RAMM website page views | 585,213 |
| Collections Explorer users | 21,378 |
| Collections Explorer page views | 96,242 |

Social

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|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| Video views | 34,223 |
| Facebook | 7,651 followers 168,186 reach |
| Twitter | 16,808 followers 320,300 impressions |
| Instagram | 7,240 followers 40,907 reach |

Objects

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Acquisitions | 100 |
| Incoming object loans | 122 |
| Outgoing object loans | 3 |
| Artist commissions | 6 |



Exhibitions

Brick by brick: A LEGO® brick history of Exeter

This exhibition invited visitors to embark on a time travelling adventure, journeying from the deepest recesses of Devon's prehistoric past to Exeter's dreams of a greener future... all lovingly recreated in LEGO® bricks. Each miniaturised LEGO® brick model explored a different point in the city's vibrant history, from the Jurassic seas, to the Roman Empire, to the height of the famous woollen trade, and from the tragedy of the Second World War to Exeter's future transformation into a 'garden city'.

Filled with fun and humour, and accompanied by objects from RAMM's collection, children's playzones, trails and more, this LEGO® brick story of our city delighted children of all ages.

This exhibition was made possible thanks to the following sponsors and supporters: Liveable Exeter, Exeter Canal and Quay Trust, RAMM Development Trust, Kier, TClarke, Arup, UK Remediation, Massey Cladding Solutions, Drive Creative Studio, VINCI Construction UK, Princesshay, Stagecoach South West and Building Greater Exeter.

150 years of Exeter Rugby Club: from local heroes to European champions

Curated in partnership with Exeter Rugby Club to celebrate their 150th anniversary, the month-long showcase featured an array of memorabilia spanning the long history of the Exeter Chiefs. Shirts, photographs, trophies, and caps took visitors on a journey from the early days of rugby in the region, through to the recent successes at the top of European rugby.

Some of the objects donated to the exhibition came from fans, who sifted through years of memorabilia to find gems to exhibit. Visitors were treated to a display of impressive trophies from the club's recent successes, including the Heineken European Champions 2020 Cup, and the women's team's first trophy, the Allianz Cup.





Exhibitions

A Picture of Health: Exeter's medical history

In 2019 RAMM acquired a series of portraits of influential early physicians, surgeons and benefactors of the Devon & Exeter Hospital, which opened in 1743 and later became the RD&E. These new acquisitions formed part of an exhibition examining health and wellbeing in Exeter from the 18th century to present day. Focusing on the stories and experiences of real people associated with the city's medical past and present, the exhibition included, for the first time, the display of some recently identified medical objects from RAMM's collections.

From body snatching surgeons, to pioneering use of inoculation and medical statistics and a revolutionary hip replacement, this exhibition engaged audiences of all ages with a lesser known aspect of Exeter's rich history, and highlighted parallels which had particular contemporary relevance in light of the Covid pandemic.



Exeter's Fine Art Collection: Funded with thanks

Since the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery was founded in the 1860s, it has benefitted from the support of donors, benefactors and funding bodies. Shining a light on the often overlooked topic of museum funding, this exhibition showcased the quality and diversity of Exeter's fine art collection, which is in large part thanks to the generosity and foresight of these supporters, past and present.

The changing tastes and priorities of collectors and benefactors could be tracked through this display – scenes of historical and classical subjects were especially popular among the museum's Victorian supporters, while some more recent acquisitions have focused on modern and contemporary art inspired by the Devon landscape.

Funders recognised in this exhibition include: Arts Council England, V&A Purchase Grant Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund, Art Fund, Friends of RAMM, RAMM Development Trust, the Sir Harry Veitch Bequest Trust Fund, the Reynolds Chard Bequest, Kent Kingdon Bequest and private donors.



The Fair Toxophilites, William Powell Frith, 1872
Purchased with support from the V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Sir Harry Veitch Bequest Trust Fund.

Earth Spells: Witches of the Anthropocene

Artists: Caroline Achaintre, Emma Hart, Kris Lemsalu, Mercedes Mülheisen, Grace Ndiritu, Florence Peake, Kiki Smith, and Lucy Stein

This specially curated RAMM exhibition responded directly to the museum's collections through the work of eight internationally renowned artists in a variety of media. RAMM's Dartmoor Cauldron, once owned by the self-identified 'White Witch of Dartmoor' Elizabeth Webb, was the focus for ideas about the environment explored through paintings, video, textile and ceramics.





Contemporary art

Grace Ndiritu, *Labour Birth of a New Museum*, 2023, film still (*Earth Spells*, RAMM, Exeter, 2023)

This year we worked with critically acclaimed, internationally renowned, exciting contemporary artists in an eclectic range of styles and media that explored living through the dual ecological and climate emergencies. RAMM's inspiring collections provided the impetus for artists to create new artwork which included dance, sculpture, video and tapestry.

Our major contemporary art exhibition, co-curated by RAMM's contemporary art curator Lara Goodband with the independent curator Gemma Lloyd, *Earth Spells: Witches of the Anthropocene* explored emotional, spiritual and otherworldly connections to nature and our entanglement with it.

The Dartmoor Cauldron in RAMM's collection, was the central focus for this exhibition. It helped visitors reflect on supporting a symbiotic relationship with plants and was the site for five new commissions.

South West-based painter Lucy Stein worked with RAMM's collections team to select objects reflecting her interest in ancient female Celtic myths and mothering rituals. She said she wanted to 'satisfy my own inquisitive nature and to put together artefacts and animals, that cross epochs and millennia, that have some kind of pulsating resonance to me'. Having access to the stores, the expertise of the collections team as well as the objects inspired a productive time which she says transformed her practice in new and exciting ways.

Internationally renowned Grace Ndiritu created *Labour Birth of a New Museum* and a *Protest Carpet* at RAMM with local, pregnant women as an opportunity 'to think about lineage and the legacy of keeping indigenous ideas current as well as thinking about ecology'. London-based award-winning artists Florence Peake and Emma Hart also created new work especially for *Earth Spells*. Peake's installation of video, poetry, ceramics and textile hangings inspired by her visit to a Dartmoor Shaman, created an experiential installation



in the exhibition that was especially appealing to children and young people, while Hart's ceramic discs' lively, bright colours intrigued visitors. RAMM's early commissioning of these artists meant that their profile was high by the time the work was displayed so RAMM was able to benefit from great national press coverage for the exhibition.

South West Dance Hub Company, based at Exeter Phoenix, were commissioned to create a new performance inspired by the artwork in *Earth Spells* for a special RAMM Lates performance in April.

Exeter-based illustrator Molly Saunders worked with students from Exeter School of Art at Exeter College to create contemporary art activity cards which proved popular with young visitors to *Earth Spells* during the Easter holidays.

[My daughter] sat through the whole film, trying to get to grips with this strange and spiritual thing. Trying to understand what was meant in the words of the women as they described their experiences and vision. [She] made me pay attention... Then she did some gymnastics. I don't know how appropriate this was. I'm not going to justify it, but neither am I sure it was wrong.

RAMM visitor



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Collections



1

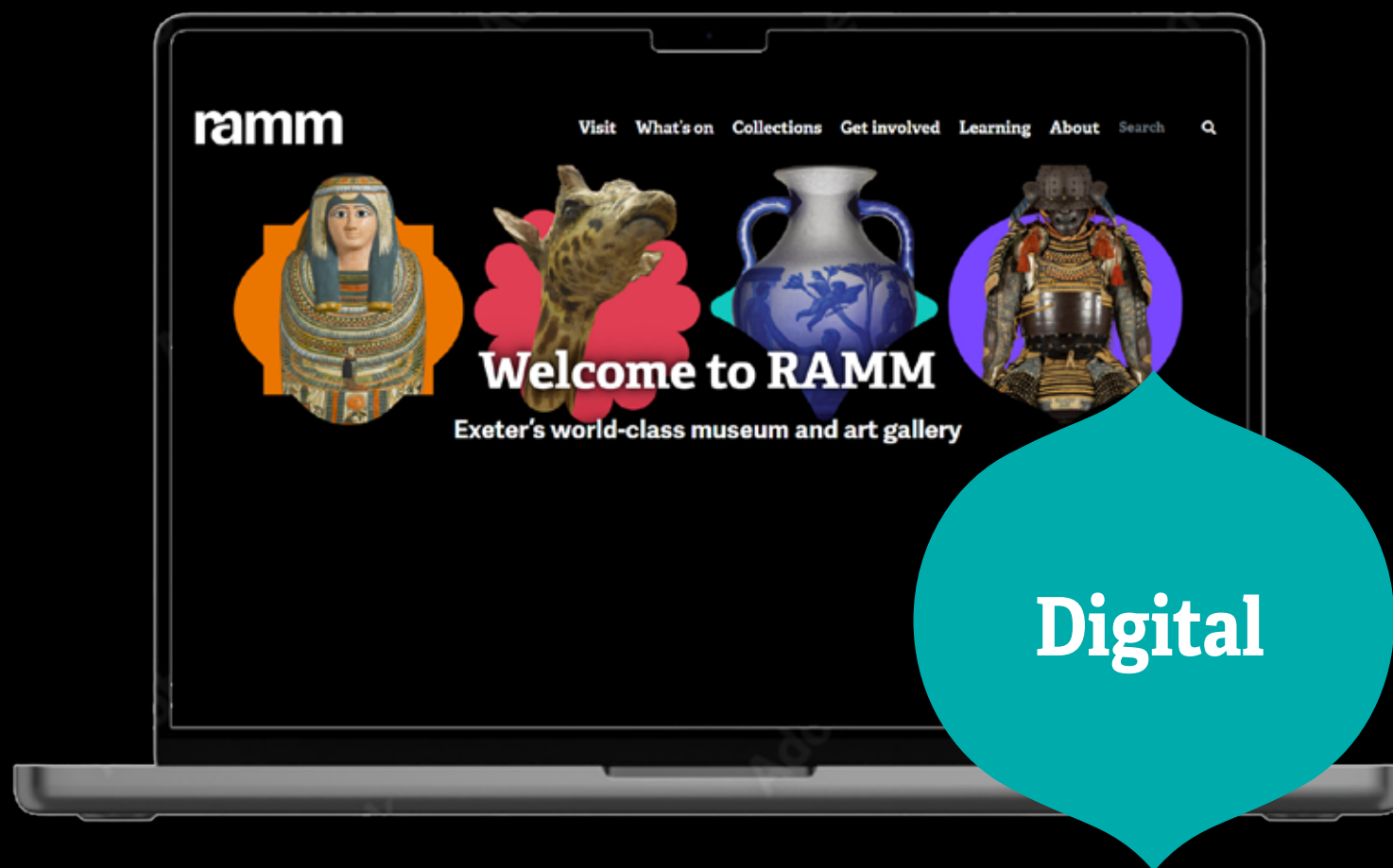
This year RAMM's acquisitions included items of both historic interest and outstanding artistic quality. But it was a group of objects leaving the collection that grabbed the media's attention.

In spring 2022, as Britain emerged from the worst effects of the pandemic, artefacts related to health and medicine formed a focus for RAMM's collecting. Along with the Covid-associated artefacts were several examples of the Exeter hip. This artificial hip stem was pioneered in the city in the 1970s through a collaboration between an NHS surgeon and a University of Exeter engineer. The hip and surgical equipment needed to implant it took pride of place in *A Picture of Health* – an exhibition devoted to Exeter's medical history. Another piece of local innovation was welcomed into the collection too: samples produced by Heathcoats of Tiverton of a parachute fabric used in NASA's 2020 mission to Mars.

In the autumn, RAMM was delighted to receive two engravings of moths by the artist Sarah Gillespie, who worked from specimens in RAMM's collections to help make these works which reflect the ecological crisis and the dramatic decline in numbers of species, as well as a significant group of drawings and paintings from the estate of the Devon-born artist Wilfred Avery, showing Avery's love of coastal landscapes.

As for the departing artefacts, these are the 19th-century regalia of Chief Crowfoot of the Blackfoot, including a buckskin shirt, leggings, bow, bow case, knife and feather bundle. They arrived at RAMM in 1878 in the wake of the signing of Treaty 7 in Alberta, Canada. The decision to return the regalia to the Siksika Nation was made by Exeter City Council in April 2020, but Covid meant it had been impossible for a delegation to travel to collect the sacred items. It was not until 19 May 2022 that Chief Ouray Crowfoot, a direct descendant of the 19th-century chief, could lead a group of Siksika elders and family members to accept the objects on behalf of their nation. An emotional and memorable day of ceremony at the museum, watched by press from both sides of the Atlantic, was concluded by a mayoral banquet at the Guildhall. At the end of proceedings, the Siksika presented RAMM with the regalia of Herman Yellow Old Woman to be kept in Exeter in perpetuity. It is now displayed in the Americas Gallery.

- 1 *King and Queen*. Brain Rice, oil and mixed media on board, 1961
- 2 *V40 Exeter Hip Stem*. Designed by Professors Robin Ling and Clive Lee, manufactured by Stryker, 2022
- 3 *Love the NHS*. Carol McFadzean, quilt, 2020
- 4 *Peppered Moth*. Sarah Gillespie, mezzotint engraving on paper, 2019
- 5 *W. Woods Toothpaste Pot*. Ceramic, about 1900
- 6 *Coastline*. Wilfred Avery, oil on calico and board, 1998
Presented by the executor of the Estate of Wilfred Avery with Art Fund support, 2022
- 7 *Ceremonial regalia made and worn by Herman Yellow Old Woman*, about 1990



This year was bookended by launches of the new versions of RAMM's two main websites: the main museum website and Collections Explorer, RAMM's home for all things collections-related. Both sites had a complete rebuild and redesign to deliver a much-improved visitor experience.

RAMM's main website

The main website was completely redesigned following user surveys and an audit of the old site. RAMM's new visual identity has given the site a distinctive and memorable look and feel, and the site navigation was streamlined and simplified so visitors can more easily find the content they are looking for. Additional accessibility features were added so visitors can easily adjust the colour contrast, increase text size, and switch to a more readable font if they need to.

We worked with our web developers Surface Impression to integrate Spektrix, RAMM's ticketing and customer relationship management system, across the website. This means that for the first time visitors can use RAMM's website to:

- ▶ Purchase exhibition and events tickets
- ▶ Join the Friends of RAMM
- ▶ Make one-off or recurring donations to the RAMM Development Trust

Collections Explorer

Collections Explorer moved to a new WordPress site provided by The Museum Platform. The process included a thorough review of the collections data that was exported. Some new and improved pieces of information were added to what RAMM publishes online, including:

- ▶ Topic and project tags so users can search for areas they are interested in or look up RAMM objects from a favourite past exhibition
- ▶ Latitude and longitude, meaning we can show where RAMM's objects were produced and collected on a map
- ▶ 3D scans and RTI files for selected objects, created by the University of Exeter's Digital Humanities Lab as part of the GLAM-E Lab project

There are over 17,000 object records on Collections Explorer, with more being added each month. The new site also supports deep image zooms, embedded audio and video content, 360° photos, and timelines. Staff have used these features to create engaging narrative content about RAMM's collections. There are currently 10 of these 'collections stories' on the site, including the online legacy of the *In Plain Sight* exhibition.

Conservation & technical

Our year in conservation was driven by preparations for RAMM's busy exhibition programme. 370 objects were installed and de-installed during five temporary exhibitions and two smaller display changes. The objects passing through the conservation labs for these displays were diverse and often unusual, including an Exeter hip stem, an early 20th century maternity mourning dress and trophies from Exeter Chiefs Rugby Club.

The team was also heavily involved in the next phase of display improvements for our Designated world cultures collection. Having successfully updated the large World Cultures Gallery in recent years, 2022-23 saw the team move into the Americas Gallery. Here the first two cases have been given a colourful makeover and a completely new theme for the Ancestral Voices project funded by the Arts Council England Designated Collections Development Fund. A real highlight during this project was the display of the ceremonial regalia donated to RAMM by Herman Yellow Old Woman from the Siksika Nation.

We conserved 100 objects for these and future exhibitions, while also continuing with less urgent object treatments, such as dealing with new acquisitions or stored objects in need of attention. In total we spent 2,132 hours on practical conservation work. Alongside this busy schedule preparing for exhibitions, preventive conservation projects were still high on the conservation agenda. For example, our student conservator this year has been looking into the appropriate storage of objects which include plastic materials. We condition checked and prepared nine loans, coming in and going out from RAMM. A special treat was the preparation of six Chinese objects for the big blockbuster exhibition *China's Hidden Century* at the British Museum.

We are building our conservation outreach work by giving talks and taking part in the now fixed annual Twitter feature #AskAConservator day. We also continue to offer skills development opportunities, this year hosting four conservation student placements.

We were delighted during 2022-23 to secure a substantial Costume Society Elizabeth Hammond Grant for the conservation and mounting of a fragile 18th-century man's silk coat and breeches. It will be ready for its display in RAMM's Making History Gallery in late 2023.





Events

This was another exciting year with RAMM welcoming existing and new visitors to the museum for a variety of engaging experiences.

The family events programme was again very popular. The first part of the year saw workshops focusing on mosaics, beading, weaving and crown making. Later in the year the school holidays took on the theme of medicine, to tie in with the *A Picture of Health* exhibition, and folklore, inspired by *Earth Spells*. Events included making your own stethoscopes and microscopes, magical den creating and Operation Earth, an exciting family show exploring the fascinating stories and science of the environment, told by a giant globe, Earthy.

We held two larger family events this year, the first being our Skeleton Crew night which saw the museum turning the lights off, and children exploring with torches, alongside creative workshops and musical lessons playing the bones. November saw the return of Exeter's Carnival and we held a 'Carnival of the Animals' day in the museum with live orchestral music, dance workshops, storytelling and games to be played. This fantastic day attracted over 850 people.

With LEGO® building being the theme of the summer, our workshops sold out quickly. Children learnt to make different mechanical models, such as trains and catapults, and took part in a series of Robot Wars battles. We also introduced a LEGO® trail throughout the city for families to follow and held an adult-only LEGO® building evening. Outside activities took place in our garden and included storytelling, rugby skills sessions and a chance to meet some of the Exeter Chiefs players.



Some highlights of our adult-focused events included engaging talks around the subjects covered in our *In Plain Sight* exhibition, including an 'in conversation' event with the contemporary artist, Joy Gregory, and a poetry event together with the Museum of Colour. We also held a number of expert workshops on couture and fine art.

Attendee numbers for our ever-popular RAMM Lates built back up to pre-pandemic levels. The first event in April was curated by our Youth Panel and focused on the human face, expression and portrait, including experiences such as a performance from drag queen Arina Fox, portrait drawing workshops with an urban sketcher, talks around early representations of human faces in the archaeological record plus much more. Our second Lates in October took on the theme of medicine, the body and wellbeing. Experiences included a hip hop dance workshop, gong and sound bath and a talk by a global cadaver expert.

Our new evening event, Ancient Riddles, Virtual Adventure: Games Night, saw visitors embarking on nail-biting adventures that took them from the mysteries of the ancient past to the virtual-reality world of the future.





Engagement

RAMM focused on listening to different voices, nurturing the city's wellbeing, and giving older and younger residents opportunities to be creative and curious.

Museum objects – from swarming insects to details in textiles – inspired mindful photography for young people and creative arts for children, showcased in an online exhibition and a buzzing café display. Through Project Buzz, 315 children and young people met local artists, connected with the natural world and chatted with experts from Devon Wildlife Trust.

A new series of activity game cards – co-curated by A-Level Fine Art students from Exeter College – prompts interaction with contemporary art using pencil or smartphone. RAMM revamped a colourful Discover Arts Award activity booklet for young people with funky illustrations by local up-and-coming artist Molly Saunders.

The summer LEGO® exhibition welcomed neurodivergent visitors with ear defenders, relaxed sessions and a quiet space. A visual photographic story was also produced. Staff were so enthusiastic at its success they decided to create a visual story for each new temporary exhibition and further relaxed openings are being introduced.

For those who like to listen through headphones, RAMM launched the Sound Journey audio guide, co-produced with disabled sound artist Gemma Nash and local disability groups, designed to take visitors on a playful journey around the museum. This project was made possible with support from the Clare Milne Trust, the Elmgrant Trust and a private donation. RAMM bingo cards co-created with young people with disabilities went into circulation for the general public, enabling a no-right-answers approach to exploring and sparking conversations.

The audio guide was generously supported by the Art Fund and RAMM Development Trust.

I felt incredibly empowered by the experience, it has completely boosted their confidence. DLRC choir participant.

The museum listened and learnt about wellbeing with a variety of partners, creating a mindfulness audio guide alongside Devon Recovery Learning Community (part of Devon Partnership NHS Trust), running dance workshops inspired by contemporary art, and welcoming a choir who now use the museum every few months as a safe public space to build members' self-esteem.

The engagement team initiated a listening exercise with local community-focused organisations to feed into programming and reflect Exeter's neighbourhoods. RAMM provided around 200 free café vouchers to encourage museum visits as a mental health action. These were distributed through GP surgeries, the local council and the citywide Wellbeing Exeter social prescribing network. Hospital workers were also offered free coffee and cake, in thanks for their part in a film to celebrate workforce humour and diversity.

RAMM revived a relationship with local authority social housing for older people, taking age-friendly, multi-sensory activities to communal spaces to tackle loneliness. The team refreshed and restarted its longstanding dementia-friendly programme, with 22 visits around Exeter and Devon, reaching 294 older people in care homes, hospital mental health wards, older people's support and social groups, and a secure hospital. RAMM contributed to local warm spaces in response to rising cost of living challenges, and started hosting two community connectors at the museum, in partnership with Age UK Exeter.

Great to see some of the patients' creative side come out. Very innovative and straightforward, which ruled out confusion. Great fun for our patients. Staff at hospital.

RAMM's engagement team has impacted the lives of many in 2022-23: from an anxious teenager following his special interest in LEGO® on a rare day out, to a brave visitor playing an African board game in the museum courtyard after months of isolation due to caring responsibilities and Covid lockdowns, to an older gentleman laughing at a magic lantern slide in a social housing communal room near the River Exe.



Working with the University of Exeter



For the second pilot project, local artists Tidelines curated a *Salmon Run*. This community relay run from sea to moor through the heart of Exeter was designed to highlight the plight of the river Exe salmon in their perilous journey downstream. A band of human runners set off on Sunday 25 September, making their way along the Exe and through public information stalls at Miller's Crossing before heading inland. The run was supported by social media coverage that emphasised the role of salmon as barometers of the river's health.

2022 also saw the start of a major collaboration between the museum and university called the GLAM-E Lab. Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Lab works with UK and US cultural institutions and community organisations to help build open access capacity and expertise. In the first year a GLAM-E Lab Research Assistant, Dr Francesca Farmer, was integrated into RAMM's collections team. Francesca is working on a pilot project to release about 60 of RAMM's digital images on Wikimedia Commons and Wikipedia; already these images have been viewed over a million times around the world.

The concluding project, SoundTracks, teamed up sound artist Emma Welton with RAMM's archaeology expert Tom Cadbury. They created a series of free, family friendly guided walks using sound to lead people along the Mincinglake and Exwick sections of Exeter's Green Circle. Two of the walks were for adults with pre-schoolers along paths suitable for pushchairs. The walks were intended to connect people with their local environments and improve wellbeing.



In 2022–23 RAMM continued to build on its close working relationship with the University of Exeter. Staff from both organisations have collaborated and innovated to deliver ground-breaking public outputs.

Three pilot projects, created as part of an Exeter City Council-RAMM-University of Exeter initiative called Creative Arc, occurred throughout the year. RAMM about Town took place in an empty shop on Exeter High Street in May and June. Shoppers and passers-by dropped in to find out about the history of the High Street, try their hand at building a high street of the future in LEGO® with Art Work Exeter, listen to talks and chat to staff and volunteers. The results will help academics and town planners create a high street that meets the needs of our future.





Skills development

RAMM's Youth Panel successfully curated two cafe exhibitions this year. For their first exhibition, *Picked and pressed: the appeal of edible plants*, they worked alongside Amy Shelton, artistic director of Honeyscribe and invited RAMM's audiences to reconsider their relationship with the plant world.

During the process, members of the Youth Panel identified themselves as writers, researchers and artists, in a bid to expressively call to attention our damaging habits of food consumption in a society of increased global food insecurity. This Youth Panel cohort was kindly funded by Art Fund.

In their second exhibition, *Making Sense*, the Youth Panel were supported by photographer Joe Blatherwick and Youth Arts for Health Trust to create a series of

photos which promoted everyday mindfulness in the museum. In a world that is increasingly fast-paced, *Making Sense* invited the audience to slow down and use the five senses to ground themselves within the museum's collection.

In January 2023, RAMM launched its new Future Skills programme, recruiting 13 members. The Future Skills programme has been designed to allow individuals of any age to explore the various roles within the museum sector. The scheme provides participants with meaningful experiences working on research, exhibitions, community engagement, marketing and events.

RAMM has hosted numerous student work placements this year from the University of Exeter, University of Plymouth, Arts University Plymouth, Bath Spa University, Exeter College, Bicton College and Ellen Tinkham School. These students have helped in all areas of RAMM's work, from helping with exhibitions to marketing events.



Working with the University of Exeter, RAMM hosted one paid (12 month fixed-term) Graduate Business Partnership placement this year who worked in RAMM's marketing team. We also provide students who meet the university's Widening Participation criteria with secure paid internships of 140 hours. This year, RAMM hosted four such students.

In partnership with Exeter College, RAMM hosted two T-Level Digital Production and Design students who have been working on the transfer of the new Collections Explorer website. The long-term placement (one day a week over a thirty week period), aims to give college students the opportunity to develop real-life work experience, alongside their taught college courses.

RAMM has continued to offer supported internships for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to allow them the opportunity to explore meaningful work experience in the cultural sector. This year, RAMM has worked with a student from Bicton College and another from Ellen Tinkham School.

Another highlight was the Youth Panel's Lates event which saw the group plan and deliver a programme of live music, performances, workshops and talks exploring the human face, expression and portraits.



Volunteering

Volunteers are an important part of life at RAMM. They add value to many aspects of museum life, contributing to a range of activities and projects that would not otherwise be possible due to time and financial constraints.

Volunteering enables people's deeper engagement with culture, providing health and wellbeing benefits, connection, and social interaction for people. It also offers valuable skills development opportunities. As such, the programme is mutually beneficial.

In 2022–23, 268 people volunteered, or engaged in non-paid placements/work experience, across the organisation, contributing 10,690 hours. This is a 40% increase on last year as we continue to rebuild the team and volunteer activity from the 2020 closure during the nationwide Covid lockdowns.

Our aim is for our volunteer workforce to reflect the diversity of our local community. This year, we have continued to engage a high level of people from ethnically diverse communities, compared to the local population: 12%. 15% of team members have declared a disability, 3% more than the previous year.

56% of the 268 people who engaged with the museum in 2022–23 are under 25 years of age. 29 of them were under 18 years of age, representing a successful introduction of younger volunteers at RAMM through our summer 2022 LEGO® exhibition and programme of events. Our engagement with individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ has increased significantly to 25% at year end. We believe this reflects the inclusivity and diversity of the younger generation.

We continue to work with a number of partners to offer volunteer opportunities to their clients and students including the University of Exeter, Exeter College, Bicton College and the Down's Syndrome Association.

Schools programme

This year, 2,440 Key Stage 2 pupils in 64 primary school/home education groups undertook formal learning at RAMM. A further 8,218 pupils from all age-ranges, in 383 groups, visited RAMM on self-led visits accompanied by their learning organisations' educational professionals.

RAMM's formal learning programme includes Ancient Egypt, Roman Devon, and Second World War and the Exeter Blitz. This year, eight students joined us from the University of Exeter Aspiring Educators programme, contributing 197 volunteer hours. This is a great symbiotic relationship, enabling skills transfer for the students in preparation for their PGCE course by teaching the Key Stage 2 children who visit RAMM.

The schools programme at RAMM is self-funded and is only possible through the generous support of the 30-strong schools volunteer team who give their time, many of whom are retired educational professionals.



Visitor services

The year got off to an energetic start for front of house as we welcomed visitors to the extremely popular LEGO® brick history of Exeter exhibition. Our team grew as we welcomed new exhibition visitor guides, and we had a mighty stream of visitors booking tickets and enjoying the multifaceted exhibition.

We saw numbers starting to reach pre-Covid levels during the summer holidays which was encouraging. The team did a fantastic job as we cruised through summer supporting a full complement of activities and bustling galleries. In addition to LEGO®, we were also excited to welcome many new visitors to RAMM as they came to see the Exeter Chiefs exhibition and get a good look at the new logo and kit.

We welcomed a new member to the visitor services team who has been with RAMM for several years, first for school work experience, then as a volunteer,

moving to a casual assistant and now a visitor service assistant – a great example of career progression!

Through the winter into early 2023 we were on hand to help other areas of the museum. We made trips around Devon and to London and Cornwall, picking up artwork for exhibitions and delivering objects for loan. We assisted the conservation and tech team in preparing display sundries for the new Ancestral Voices displays. One member of the team signed up for several sessions over a few months with conservation to help restore some of the extensive snail shell collection.

Finally, we have completed lots of training in health and safety, disability awareness and exhibition guidelines and we currently have more staff first aid trained than ever before. The variety of exhibitions and growing visitor numbers have kept us busy in 2022–23 but as always, the team have thrived and supported others where possible.



The Shop at RAMM

In 2022–23, the Shop at RAMM was pleased to have almost reached pre-pandemic income levels and to have re-established itself with ranges reflecting the year's exhibitions and new local artist-maker connections. This year's exhibition hits included LEGO® earrings and ice-cube trays (it was a hot summer!), Covid microbe toys and human skeleton posters, and mini witch's cauldrons. The top five best-selling books had a representative from each major exhibition alongside the works of two local authors.

The shop strives to offer something for everyone, from pocket money toys to unique artist-maker craft. This year we welcomed new work from local artists including Claire Armitage textiles, Philippa de Burlet ceramics, Helyne Jennings jewellery and Danielle Barlow illustration.

I write to let you know how impressed I am by the way RAMM has re-established the shop post-Covid shutdown. It is always a delight to visit – so attractively designed with a great range of merchandise, including RAMM exclusives.

Visitor, Sept 22

Top sellers by quantity:

Mayan beaded bracelets
Exeter fridge magnets
Roman gladiator figurines

Top sellers by income:

Ray Balkwill prints
Erin Cox silver jewellery
LEGO® earrings

Top 5 book sales:

Brick History
Geology of Dartmoor
Unwell Women
Mary the Pigeon who never gave up
Witchcraft in Exeter

Have you been inspired by this Annual Review? So much of RAMM's work relies on support from partners, grant funders and individuals.



As an individual you can make a big difference. For example, a gift popped into a donation box, or a Friends membership all help to raise crucial funds that support the museum's work. Where possible we try to use these funds as match funding against larger fundraising campaigns. This means the vital support we receive from people like you shows the local support RAMM has. This in turn helps the museum to unlock larger sources of income, helping make that local support go even further.

How will you Support RAMM today?

Connect ramm.uk/connect

Keep in touch by signing up online. It's free and only takes a couple of minutes. Hear about the things you love and never miss out.

Volunteer ramm.uk/volunteer

RAMM depends on a family of dedicated volunteers. We'd love to welcome you to the team.

Make a donation today ramm.uk/donate

Online you can make a one-off donation or set up a regular monthly or annual gift. At the museum you can use our cash or contactless donation boxes. If you can, do remember to Gift Aid your donation and increase its value by 25% at no extra cost to you.

Play the Exeter Community Lottery ramm.uk/ExeterLottery

Choose the RAMM Development Trust as your local good cause. Do good whilst being in the running to win big. Good luck!

Join the Friends of RAMM ramm.uk/friends

Meet like-minded people with a passion for heritage and culture and enjoy a programme of special events and benefits. Did you know you can buy a Friends membership as a gift for a loved one?

Become a Patron ramm.uk/patrons

In 2023 we will be launching a refreshed Patron offer.

Gifts in wills ramm.uk/wills

Leave a gift in your will and support RAMM's future. Request a free RAMM gifts in wills pack for more information, including a useful question and answer section.

Sponsorship ramm.uk/sponsorship

Do you work for an organisation who might be interested in sponsoring RAMM? Do get in touch.

Your kind support helps to keep Exeter's heritage and history alive. Be a part of next year's inspirational Annual Review stories.

Thank you for making incredible things happen

Donors

Thank you to everyone who donated this year, from those who dropped a few coins into a donation box, to our major donors. All gifts have a big impact on what RAMM can achieve.

Gifts in wills

Thank you to those who gave the gift of a lifetime and chose to support RAMM with a gift in their will. Thank you also to those who have pledged a gift in their will for when the time comes. We are always so moved when people choose to support RAMM's work in this very personal way.

Grant givers

Art Fund
Arts Council England
Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund
Arts and Humanities Research Council
Aurelius Charitable Trust
C James Cadbury Charitable Trust
The Clare Milne Trust
Contemporary Art Society
The Costume Society
Exeter Canal and Quay Trust
Exeter Literary Society
Elmgrant Trust
Exe Decorative and Fine Arts Society
Exeter City Council
The Finnis Scott Foundation
Friends of RAMM
Garfield Weston Foundation
Kent Kingdon Bequest
The Leche Trust
National Lottery Heritage Fund
Norman Family Trust
Northbrook Foundation
The Pilgrim Trust
RAMM Development Trust
Viridor Credits Environmental Company
Waitrose & Partners
Weston Loan Programme with Art Fund

Patrons

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Andrew Gould
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Edmund Burke
General Sir John Waters GCB CBE (Hon.)
Heleen Lindsay-Fynn DL (Hon.)
John Lloyd Maunder (Hon.)
Julia Tremlett (Hon.)
Julian Steer-Fowler
Lord Devon Charles Courtenay (Hon.)
Maddy Jevon
Nick Baker (Hon.)
Steve Knightley (Hon.)

Thank you to all our Patrons who wish to remain anonymous.

Sponsors

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UK Remediation
Vinci Construction

Special thanks

We would also like to give special thanks to all of our Friends of RAMM members and the Trustees of RAMM's independent supporting charities.

RAMM and its parent body, Exeter City Council, would like to thank all of the museum's partners. They enable the public collection of over one million objects, to be used in innovative and creative ways with the communities we serve. RAMM would like to give special thanks to the University of Exeter and Arts Council England, for the ongoing supportive partnerships we hold with them.

Partners

Age UK Exeter
Art Work Exeter
Arts University Plymouth
Balloons
Bath Spa University
Beacon Centre
Bicton College
The Bodleian Libraries
Bookbag bookshop, Exeter
Brick Ideas
Bristol Museums
The British Museum
Canada Council of the Arts
CEDA
Culture Health & Wellbeing Alliance (CHWA)
Cygnet Theatre
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
The Devon and Exeter Institution
Devon Carers
Devon Development Education
Devon Recovery Learning Community
Devon Wildlife Trust
Diversity Trust
Double Elephant Print Workshop
Ellen Tinkham College
Exeter Chiefs Foundation
Exeter City Council older persons housing
Exeter City of Literature
Exeter College
Exeter Community Trust
Exeter Culture
Exeter Live Better
Exeter Living
Exeter Phoenix
Exeter Pride
Exeter Respect
Exeter Rugby Club
Exeter School of Art
The Foyer
Franklyn NHS Hospital
Gemma Lloyd
Girlguiding (Brownies)
Gray's Devon Cider
Guildhall Shopping Centre
Honeyscribe
HM Government
Intercom Trust
Joe Blatherwick Photography
Jurassic Coast Trust
Kaleider
Learn to Live: 19-25

Libraries Unlimited
Literature Works
Magic Carpet
Mary Schwarz
Meridian Raw
The Museum Platform
Northcott Theatre
Participate Arts
Pelican Project
Pete's Dragons
Quay Words
Quirk Theatre
Refugee Support Devon
Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia
Surface Impression
University of Derby
University of Exeter
University of Plymouth
Warren Elsmore
WayMakers
Wellbeing Exeter
The Westcountry Study Centre
X-Plore Youth
YAY! Cornwall
YMCA
Youth Arts & Health Trust

Artists

Alistair Lambert
Amanda McCormack
Amy Shelton
Caroline Achaintre
Edgardo Ayala
Emma Hart
Emma Welton
Florence Peake
Gemma Nash
Grace Ndiritu
Kay Walsh
Kiki Smith
Kris Lemsalu
Lucy Stein
Mercedes Mülheisen
Michelle Williams Gamaker
Molly Saunders
Naomi Vincent
Rosie Stiling
Ruth Bell
Sarah Gillespie
Simon Pope
South West Dance Hub Company
Tidelines

Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery
Queen Street, Exeter EX4 3RX

Open Tues 10.30am to 5pm
Wed to Sun 10am to 5pm
Closed Mon and most bank holidays

ramm@exeter.gov.uk
rammuseum.org.uk



Exeter
City Council



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