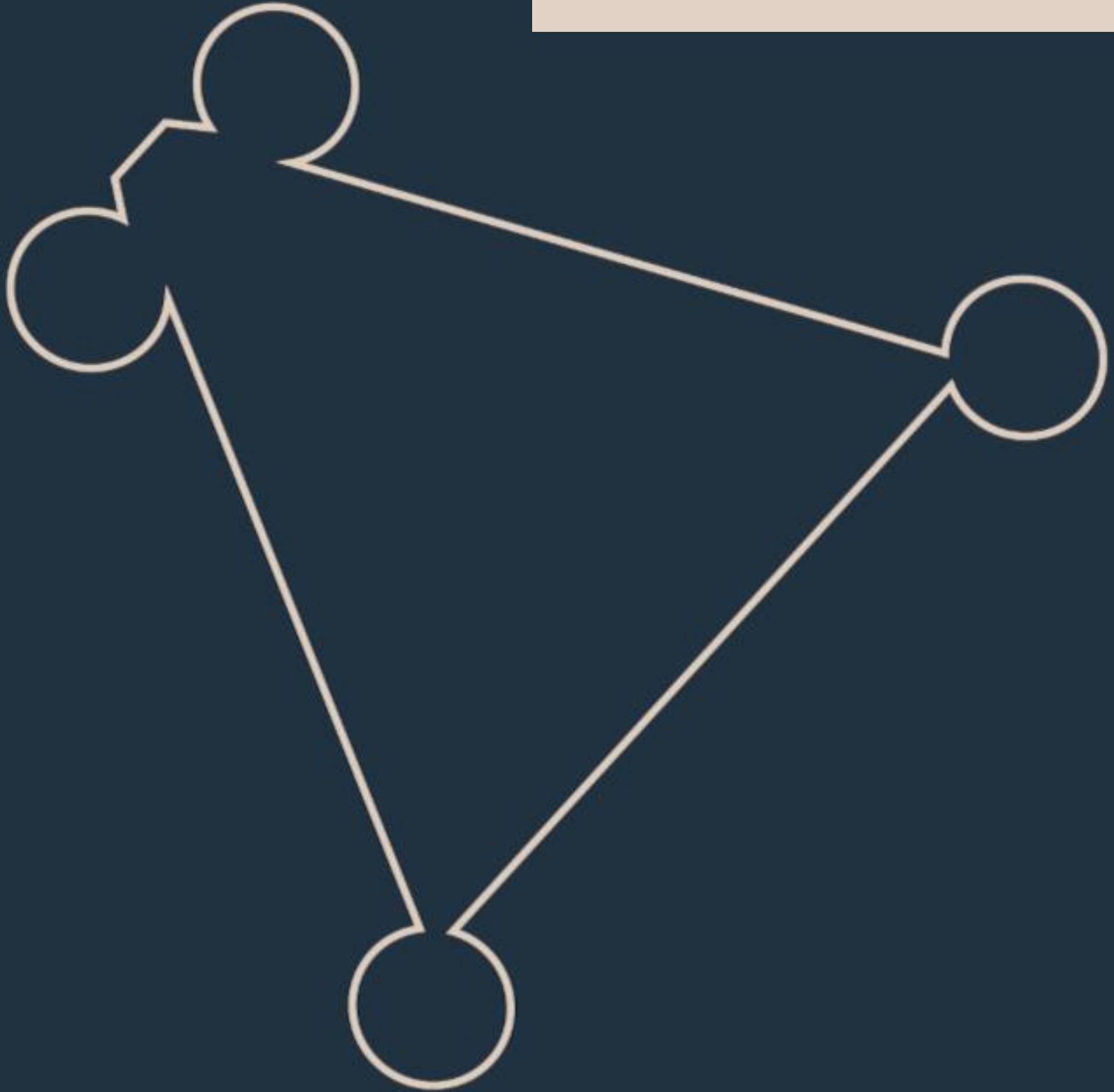


C R E A T I V E
C A E R L A V E R O C K



Phase 3 Report

May 2025

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Project context

The Stove has been working with Historic Environment Scotland's Learning and Inclusion Team since 2020, connecting local creatives and partner organisations to activate a new vision for Caerlaverock Castle as a place of creative learning and inspiration in Dumfries and Galloway (D&G). The goal was to foster deeper connections between local communities and Caerlaverock Castle and its wider environment's rich heritage.

In October 2021, The Stove and Northlight Heritage were awarded a tender to co-develop a Creative Learning Framework for Historic Environment Scotland (HES), which was published in August 2022. The Framework laid the groundwork for community engagement and creative learning inspired by Caerlaverock Castle's history, heritage, and local environments. A key focus was inclusivity and widening engagement for individuals who traditionally are marginalised and under-represented within heritage initiatives.

Creative Caerlaverock was established in August 2022 as an innovative way to build collaborative relationships and partnerships locally to engage under-represented populations in heritage and help reshape the Castle's role within its wider community. Designed and co-delivered by [The Stove](#) and [The Imaginarium](#), the three-year project began by actively listening to what local communities and priority audiences wanted to see and experience. This methodology was threaded throughout the project, with community gatherings, outreach activities, interactive themed focus groups (Ancestral Suppers), and taster/trial activities.



'Creative Caerlaverock is an innovative approach to creative learning, heritage and community arts working to realise and inspire new possibilities in working with the region's historic locations. Through gatherings, activities, groups and residencies, this co-created project is seeking new relationships, understandings and links to our past so as to understand our present and connect with our future.'

(DJ McDowall, Creative Caerlaverock Community Engagement Report Phase 1, 2023)

Creative Caerlaverock was divided into three phases of delivery:

Phase 1 (August 2022 - April 2023) focused on **building relationships** with key local stakeholders, **consulting targeted communities** on project themes and possible future activities, and initiating **pilot outreach events**.

Phase 2 (April 2023 - March 2024) saw the development and delivery of **project activities**, continuing to build relationships with priority groups and stakeholders.

Phase 3 (April 2024 - May 2025) sought to engage more deeply with the creation of **project outputs** and the development of future **creative learning** resources for / with target groups.



Courtesy of Historic Environment Scotland, design by Samuel Sparrow

Central to the aims and approaches of Creative Caerlaverock was the procurement of and investment in local skills and expertise, instead of bringing in external delivery partners. As a local ‘anchor’ organisation, The Stove sought to promote Community Wealth Building by partnering with and co-delivering with freelancers, notably The Imaginarium who were key collaborators in development, coordination and delivery, as well as local groups including: Caerlaverock Estate, Dumfries Museums, Dumfries & Galloway Heritage Service, Dumfries & Galloway Creative Wellbeing Network, Sonic Labs, Outpost Arts, Paragon Music, Mostly Ghostly Tours, Dark Skies Ranger, Summerhill Community Centre, Medieval Bruce Heritage Trust, LIFT D&G DnD Group, The Gallovidian Way, and Wordsmithcrafts.

The building of such partnerships with local creatives, groups, and organisations sought to establish the groundwork for the ongoing legacy and impact of the projects, as well as build emerging local and regional economic and creative systems. In turn, these collaborations would facilitate access and engagement of local people to their heritage; to uncover and co-create new narratives, connections, and stories linking the Castle's history to its surrounding environment and communities.



Photo Paragon Music

Key themes that emerged from the consultations, and that were used throughout the project, were:



The Siege – Caerlaverock is known for its sieges. This was used as a mechanism by which to look at what it means now in a wider sense - mental health & wellbeing / what creates sanctuary etc.



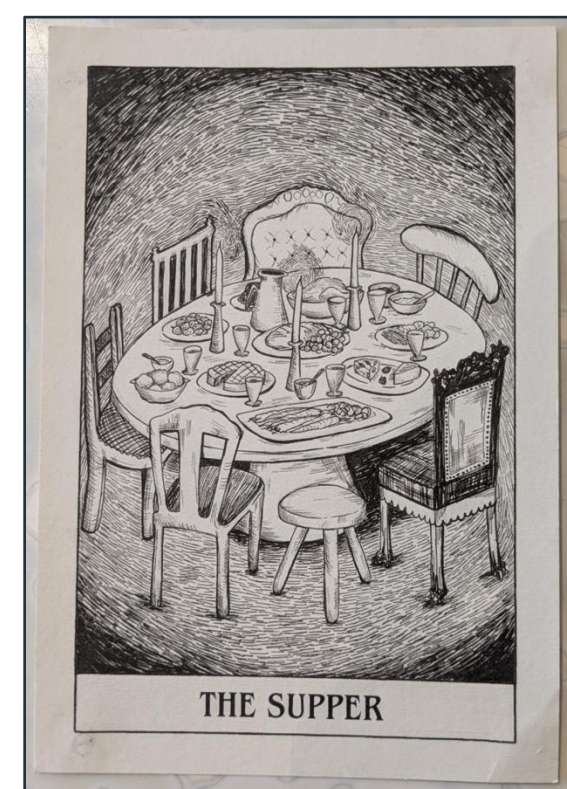
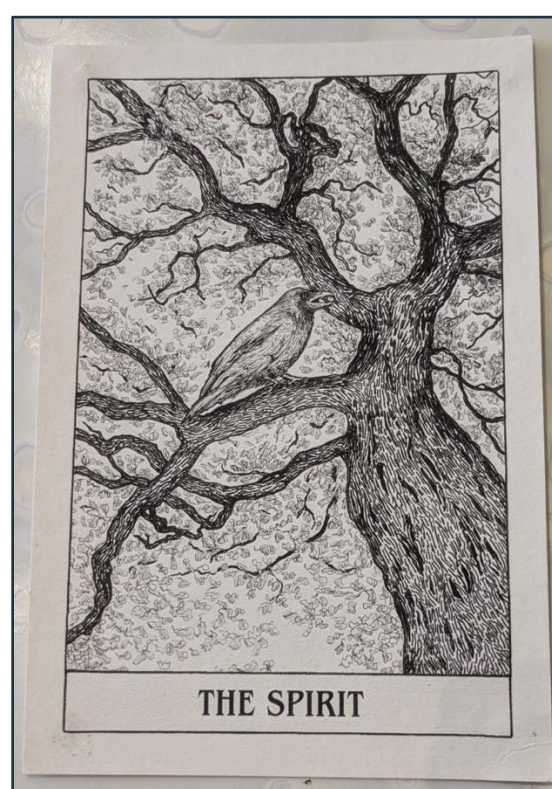
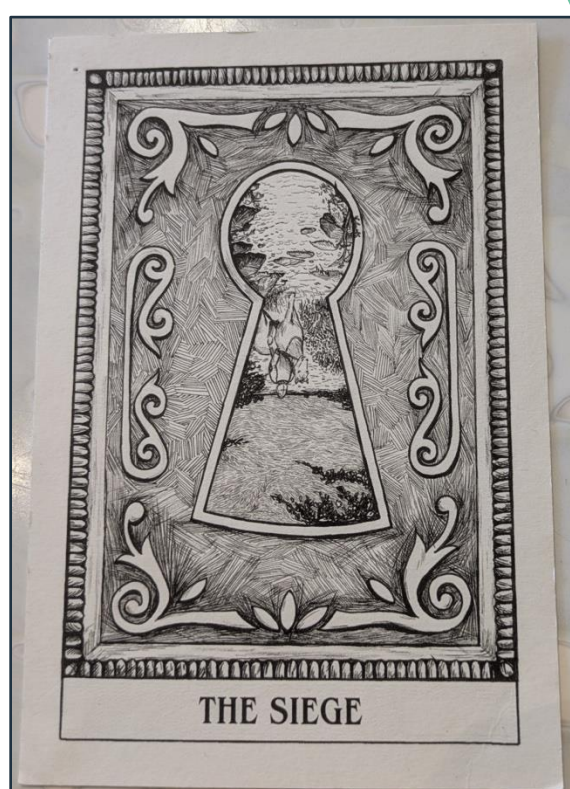
The Spirit – the intangible elements, folklore, and traditions of the Castle.



The Storm – referencing the changes and impacts of Climate Change in relation to Caerlaverock's coastal geography.



The Supper – exploring the natural resources from the land, the food, feasting traditions and ways of gathering which develop and maintain community making visible and sharing the collective history and experiences of the community of different people who have lived and worked in the area, now and then.



Introduction to this report

This report shares the activities, stories, and learnings from **Phase 3** of Creative Caerlaverock (April 2024-May 2025). It is based on the insights and perspectives of a variety of individuals from the partner organisations that worked together to conceive of and deliver this final Phase of the project (see Appendix). Their reflections were heard during project events, recorded interviews, and informal conversations, and are used within this report with their consent. For the sections providing overviews of Phases 1 and 2, the report draws heavily on the 'Creative Caerlaverock Community Engagement Report for Phase 1,' (2023) authored by DJ McDowall of The Imaginarium, and the Activity Reports compiled at the end of each Phase by The Stove.

The three projects in Phase 3 are presented here individually as 'project stories':



1. Site & Sound



2. Our Land, Our Stories



3. Queer Caerlaverock

It was felt that for the purposes of this report, the methodology of traditional case studies was misaligned with the iterative nature of non-positivist research and storytelling.* Instead, it seemed more pertinent to reflect the narratives within, and leading beyond, the projects.

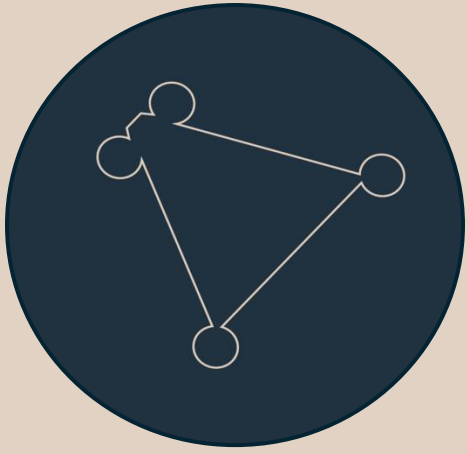
*See: Lesley Bartlett & Frances Vavrus. (2018). 'What's Wrong With Case Studies? Pitfalls and Promises.' *Teachers College Record*: n.p.

Each project story consists of a brief description of the project, priority groups, examples of project outputs, stakeholder stories and reflections, and potential legacy and development opportunities. It is hoped that learnings from these project stories will inform Historic Environment Scotland's ongoing vision for Caerlaverock Castle as a centre of creative learning in Dumfries and Galloway and beyond.

The report ends by outlining intentions for the final phase of the tender, which will involve the evaluation of the entire project and the legacy of creative learning resources to be recommended for use by HES.



Photo The Imaginarium



Phase 1

(April 2022 – March 2023)

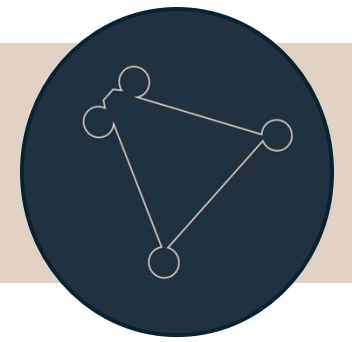
Phase 1 commenced by identifying and engaging priority audiences and under-represented demographics in heritage engagement (LGBTQ+, new Scots, young people, those with additional support needs, residents of areas of high deprivation, women's voices) and local stakeholders to gather insights into common themes and preferences for future activity.

Priority groups

- Local Ukrainian community (new Scots)
- Young people – particularly those with no prior experience of heritage or who would not otherwise have the opportunity to take part: those within formal education, youth work and employability support programmes.
- 4 local emerging young practitioners, from varied backgrounds and disciplines, were integrated into the core project team as 'Heritage ReMixers'. These young people become advisors and content creators for Creative Caerlaverock activity, co-designing engagement and consultation in collaboration with the project team within The Stove Network and The Imaginarium.
- Local creative practitioners
- Key local stakeholders
- Representatives from local areas of deprivation
- LGBTQ+ community
- Neurodivergent individuals
- Women's groups
- Disabled people
- Immediate local geographic communities



Foundational to the project were four paid participation/expert advisor opportunities for emerging young professional adults to steer the establishment of Creative Caerlaverock development and delivery. They formed the **Heritage ReMixers Group**.



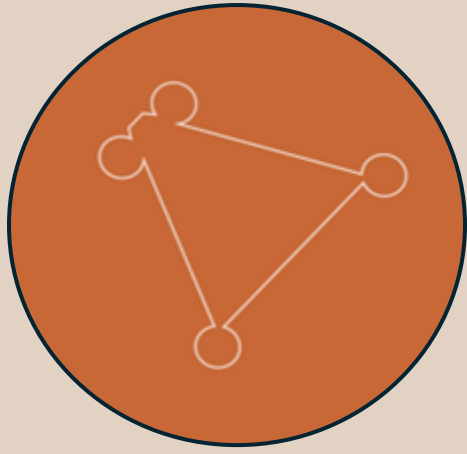
Priority groups were invited to three individual Ancestral Supper events to discuss and vote for what types of creative practices, events, and activities they would most like to see developed further for their own community, and that they felt would attract more diverse audiences. The third Ancestral Supper was dedicated to the local Ukrainian community. Living history and re-enactment received the largest proportion of votes across all three Ancestral Suppers.



Key activities

- A new 4-week **Time Travelling Forest School** programme co-created with local living-history expert Simon Lidwell (Wordsmithcrafts), local freelance Forest Ranger Elizabeth Tindel, Heritage ReMixers and Caerlaverock Primary School.
- A live action role play **Dungeons and Dragons (D&D)** event co-created with local D&D young gamers aged 14-25 from Northwest Dumfries, part of a collaboration with LIFT D&G (Lochside is Families Together) and local living-history experts Wordsmithcrafts, Medieval Bruce Trust, Wildlings o Galloway/The Gallovidian Way.
- A bespoke **Tarot Card game**, utilised as an engagement tool during focus group sessions.
- Delivery of **3 x Ancestral Suppers**: a unique interactive immersive community engagement model created by The Imaginarium as part of Hidden Histories of Dumfries & Galloway / The Gallovidian Way projects. Using the concept and process of a Medieval feast, stakeholders and priority group members were invited to a time-travelling focus group with themed interactive participatory appraisal exercises.
- The **soundtrack** to the Ancestral Suppers was created by one of the Heritage ReMixers team, a young local emerging sound artist Liam Russell.
- A **video**, 'Creative Caerlaverock: The Ancestral Suppers,' was produced in collaboration with a videographer Patrick Rooney, to help share the purpose and process of Creative Caerlaverock.

For further information see the [Creative Caerlaverock Community Engagement Report for Phase 1](#) written in 2023 by DJ McDowall of The Imaginarium.



Phase 2

(April 2023 – March 2024)

Phase 2 Phase 2 saw the development and delivery of the Activity Plan drafted during Phase 1, in collaboration with priority groups, partner organisations, and local stakeholders.

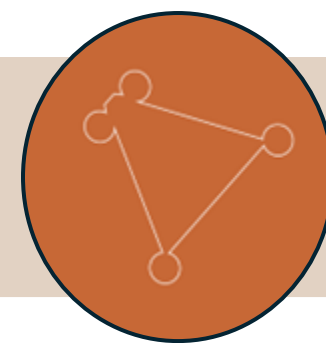
Priority groups

- New Scots
- Local geographic community
- Young people from disadvantaged communities

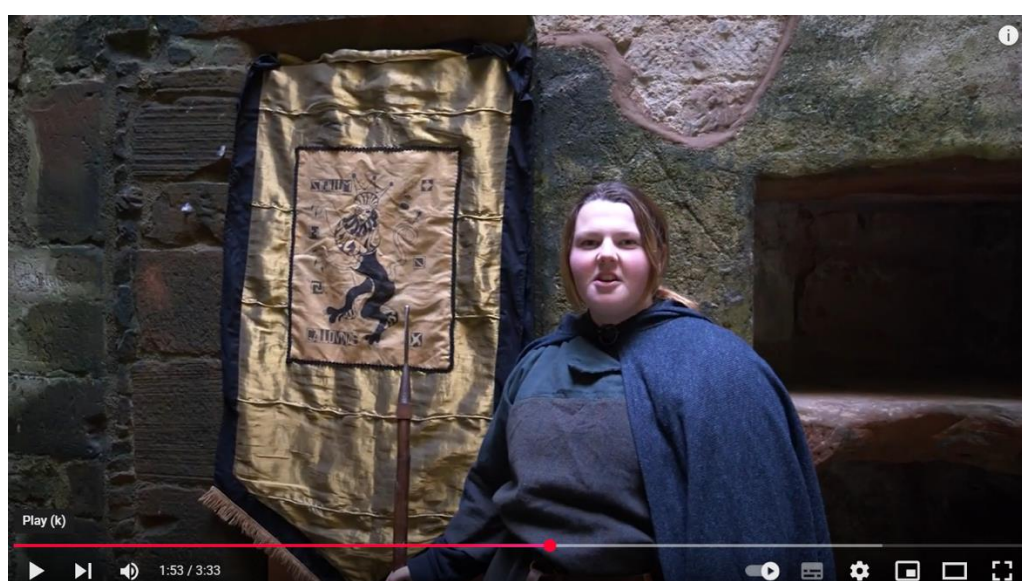
Key activities

- **Midsummer at the Castle:** Taster activities based upon activities highlighted during Phase 1 consultation, trebuchet building, sound foraging, textiles, living history, foraging, walking tours and storytelling.
- **Market Of Possibilities:** The Imaginarium's Missing Museum (interactive storytelling experience) in collaboration with Dumfries Museum, explored Dumfries and Galloway's hidden histories, artifacts, and stories (LGBTQ+ and BIPOC history focus).
- **Nithraid Festival:** Public Event and boat Race from Glencaple village, next to Caerlaverock Castle, to Dumfries and back again, while educating about historical boating.
- **Keep Looking Up Star Gazing,** part of Wild Goose Festival: A Star Gazing event at Caerlaverock Castle as requested during Phase 1 community consultations.
- **Mostly Ghostly at Caerlaverock Halloween:** As requested in Phase 1 community consultation, a new storytelling and story gathering opportunity. The event was exclusive to those in the local area and was well attended. There is now a permanent Mostly Ghostly Tour at Caerlaverock.





- **The Siege of Summerhill – Medieval Bootcamp:** Spanning fourteen weeks, the Medieval Bootcamp was based on The Imaginarium’s Hidden Histories bootcamp model. It worked with a core group of fifteen young people to familiarise them with their local history, explore themes of climate change, environment, creativity, and survival, while also focusing on the overarching idea of what ownership meant to the young people involved, and comparisons between the lives of medieval Scotland and people today. The program was a blend of events at Caerlaverock castle and at the Summerhill Community Centre.
- **Sonic Caerlaverock:** three-day immersive experience for participants from Sonic Labs (what was Free Improvisation), a community group initiated through The Stove’s **Open Hoose** programme. Activities ranged from on-site visits to studio production, fostering innovation and collaboration within the group.

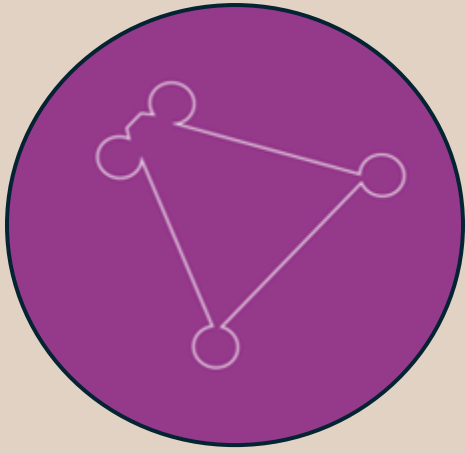


[The Summerhill Siege of Caerlaverock Castle](#)



[Youth Group Banquet at Summerhill Community Centre](#)

For detailed information about the events see the [Creative Caerlaverock Activity Report for Phase 2.](#)



Phase 3

(April 2024-May 2025)

Continuity between Phases 2 and 3 was made possible through ongoing relationships between more 'hard to reach' priority communities, long established community-wide collaborations and networks, and trusted wider partnerships with The Stove and The Imaginarium.

Priority groups

- Young people dealing with low self-esteem, low confidence, or poor mental health
- Long established farming families from the Caerlaverock Estate
- LGBTQ+ local community and allies

Key activities

Site & Sound

- sound foraging and sound production
- creative writing
- spoken word

Our Land, Our Stories

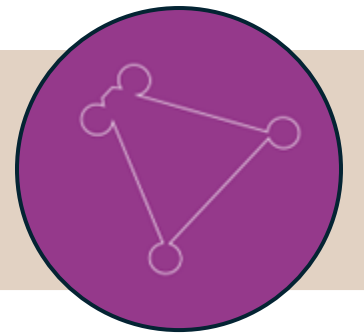
- gatherings of farmers and their wives
- recording oral histories
- collaboration with The Bookshop Band

Queer Caerlaverock

- gatherings to explore symbolic representations of queer and gendered experience
- group design workshops
- creation of The Quest for Queer Caerlaverock field guide



Photo The Imaginarium



The focus of Phase 3 was to explore a deeper approach to creating **outputs** and **creative learning resources**. Project leaders felt that the more process-oriented approach to much of socially-engaged art practices – and those that were utilised during many of the activities in Phases 1 and 2 – was too ambiguous for the aims of Phase 3. To consolidate learnings from the previous Phases, develop creative resources for the Creative Learning Framework, and to ensure physical legacies for the project during this final phase, there was a deep-dive into the process of producing project outputs. A focus on the creation of resource outputs enabled the project team to analysis methodologies, think about what could be share and reused and gave participants a sense of ownership from their experiences

Delivery partners (e.g. Sonic Labs, [Creative Toolbox](#), [Paragon Music](#), [The Imaginarium](#)) were encouraged to set out goals for intended outputs with the groups. By making participants aware from the outset the aim of the project's destination, they could choose whether or not to engage, amplifying participants' agency.

Engagement Overview

11 Events

101
Participants

13 Collaborative
Partnerships

5 Locations

13 Creative
Outputs



Photo Paragon Music

Close your eyes.

Breathe out slowly.

Tune into the sounds around you: above, below, behind; natural and human-created; harsh and hushed; the in-between.

Where is Heritage in those sounds?

Heritage can be found in the echoing whispers of the Castle's walls. It can be sensed in the silence now occupied by voices, bees, traffic, rustling leaves. Heritage can be experienced through more than our sense of sight. On site. We can allow the immaterial spirit of the place to wash over us, into us. We forage for audible clues to the past that allow our imaginations to ignite: to reach beyond the tangible and visible; and connect differently with what surrounds us. To radically imagine the past and future by being attentive to the present.



Description

Site & Sound was a youth-focused programme consisting of workshops and on-site experiences using an immersive creative process as a tool for growth and connection. Participants were guided through activities including sound foraging, free improvisation, circuitry, creative writing, and spoken word, inspired by the rich landscape and history of Caerlaverock. Sound Foraging Packs were created for the field work.

Partner Organisations

- Sonic Labs (previously known as Free Improvisation)
- Creative Toolbox (part of Outpost Arts and the Dumfries & Galloway Creative Wellbeing Network)
- Paragon Music (Inclusive music-making organisation)
- Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Participant groups

1. Participants and their carers/guardians involved in Paragon Music: Young people with complex additional support needs from visual impairment to neuro-divergence
2. Participants referred via D&G Health and Wellbeing Network with neurodivergence, low self-esteem, and complex emotional support requirements

Photo Paragon Music



Photo Georgia Blue Ireland

'Sound Foraging Packs':

- 1 x small notebook to capture reflections, observations, creative writing, or other expressions the users wish to note
- A 'Zoom' digital recorder and accompanying high gigabyte SD card
- 1 x set of headphones
- A 'Sound Foragers Field Guide' containing creative prompts to inspire alternative approaches to the capturing/recording of sounds



Outputs

- 6 audio tales and poems, written and performed by the young people themselves.
- Integration of written and musical outputs to the 'Echoes' Mobile App, a geo-location app providing free, downloadable tours and sonic experiences linked directly to sites across the country.
- A video made by Creative Toolbox can be viewed [HERE](#)

Click to listen



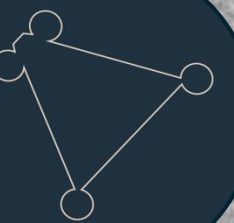
'Echoes'

Written By: Jenny Robinson
Performed By: Jenny
Musicians: Sonic Labs



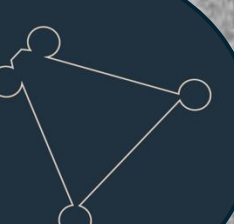
'The Storm'

Written By: Kaden Evans
Performed By: Kayla
Musicians: Sonic Labs



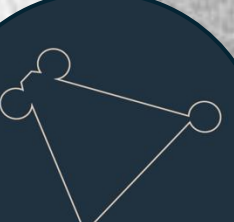
'Change'

Written By: Kayla Milligan
Performed By: Kayla
Musicians: Sonic Labs



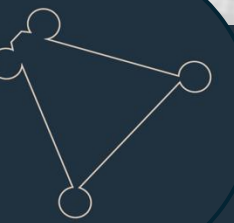
'I Desire...'

Written By: Kyle Phillips
Performed By: Kayla
Musicians: Sonic Labs



'Power: Fire & Lightning'

Written By: Logan Wallace
Performed By: Jenny
Musicians: Sonic Labs



'The Shape of a Castle'

Written By: Logan Wallace
Performed By: Jenny
Musicians: Sonic Labs



Reflection

Using **creative outputs** as a method of engagement was particularly pertinent for the Creative Toolbox and Paragon Music groups. Many of the participants were neurodivergent and for whom ambiguities can be unsettling. Having a clear structure, guided activities, and momentum towards creating a finished piece was an empowering process, as well as fostering a sense of unity and purpose.

Established relationships with the delivery partner organisations helped to facilitate deepening engagement, which otherwise would not have been possible if working solely with an unknown external facilitator.

Trust is essential when seeking to engage with participants from a marginalised group. This is only possible through the **slow nurturing** of relationships with these young people. These relationships provide continuity and understanding of each individual's access needs. It was shared that some of the participants would not have been able to engage with the project without the safety of those trusted relationships.

The **co-delivery method** was fundamental to the success of the project. The Stove's role was as conduit, facilitating the conceptual and logistical framework, while freelance practitioners worked alongside trusted expert partners with ongoing relationships with priority groups.



Photo Paragon Music



Photo Georgia Blue Ireland



A project story...

When a person is unable to leave the house due to social anxiety, sensory overwhelm, or low self-confidence, for example, participation in group activity in an unfamiliar environment can feel impossible.

One participant of Site & Sound initially felt unable to contribute in-person throughout the programme. They did manage to be present online – an example of an inclusive and adaptable approach to delivery. Through perseverance, courage, and commitment to the project they attended the final session at Circa 16 Sound Recording and managed to perform not only their own stories but also provided the voice for those too nervous to record their works. This significant step in raising the confidence of this participant is testament not only to the individual's growing resilience, but also to the engaging and safe context created by the co-deliverers and the ongoing relationships of trust with their affiliated group leaders.

This is one story. It is important to forge a robust creative learning framework going forward that will encourage the making of similar stories in the future.



Photo Georgia Blue Ireland



Learnings & legacy

The use of **high specification recording equipment** for the sound foraging was important to enable the production of quality audio source material for the participants to work with. However, there is a potential risk in using this high-end technology outdoors in the Scottish climate. It was suggested that a dedicated sheltered space would be beneficial where the group could come together to sample their recordings, add further instrumentation, and reflect. The offering of a dedicated quiet space would also be beneficial for neurodivergent groups moving forward.

The **sound foraging packs** hold great potential for future engagement. As such, training of local staff to use the packs is important. It would be recommended, however, that a project such as Site & Sound should be delivered in collaboration with expert practitioners.



Photo Paragon Music

OUR LAND, OUR STORY



This place.
Ever changing,
yet timeless.

Description

Working with the farming families with a long history of farming on the Caerlaverock Estate, Our Land, Our Stories captured their stories, memories, and reflections of their lived experience of living and working the local land, and the changes and history they've witnessed. Through two community gatherings – one with elder farmers, one with a group of farmers' wives – anecdotes, stories, and legends were shared, which were used as inspiration for The Bookshop Band, Wigtown's renowned musical duo, to create four original songs. These new compositions were recorded live within the Castle, along with a VR-filmed music video, offering visitors the chance to step into a fully immersive audiovisual experience prompted by the personal histories and broader narratives of the past. The project culminates in summer 2025 with a concert where The Bookshop Band, in collaboration with Glencaple community's traditional music group, will perform the new songs for the tellers of those tales.

Partner Organisations

- The Imaginarium
- Caerlaverock Estate
- Dumfries & Galloway Heritage Service
- The Bookshop Band

Participant groups

1. Farming families who have many generations of living and working on the Caerlaverock Estate
2. Glencaple community's traditional music group



Photo The Imaginarium

OUR LAND, OUR STORY



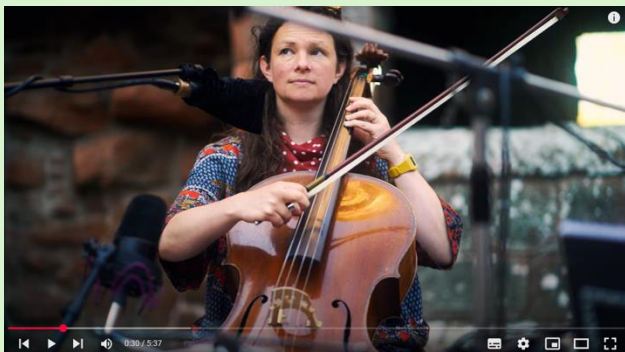
Outputs

- 4 original songs, written and performed by The Bookshop Band
- Live video recordings to accompany the new songs
- VR 'Music Video' Experience
- Long form mini documentary following The Bookshop Band's process (to come after the concert)
- Concert (to come)



'Hidden'

@TheBookshopBand | Caerlaverock Live Sessions



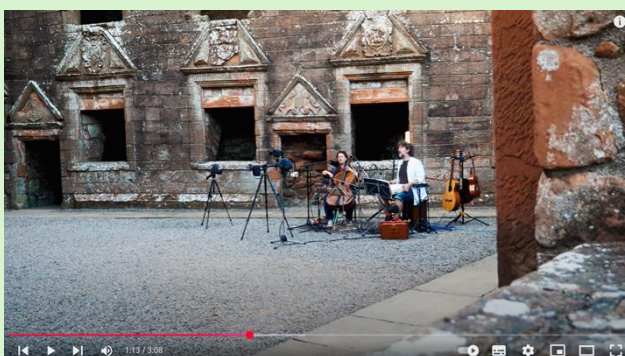
'Long Tall Trees'

@TheBookshopBand | Caerlaverock Live Sessions



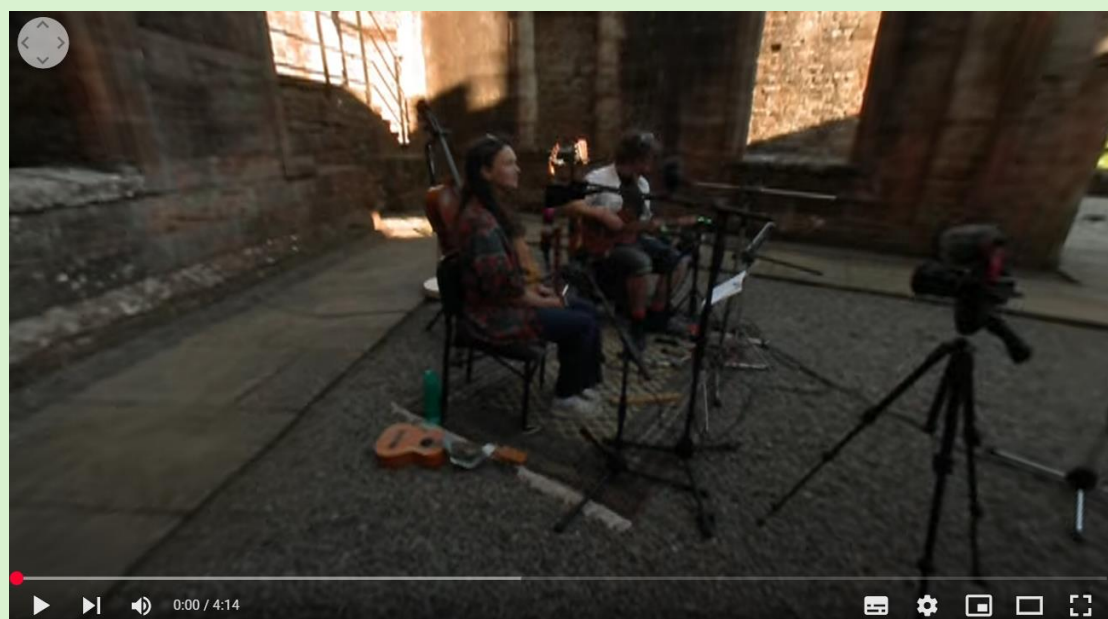
'An Ear To The Ground'

@TheBookshopBand | Caerlaverock Live Sessions

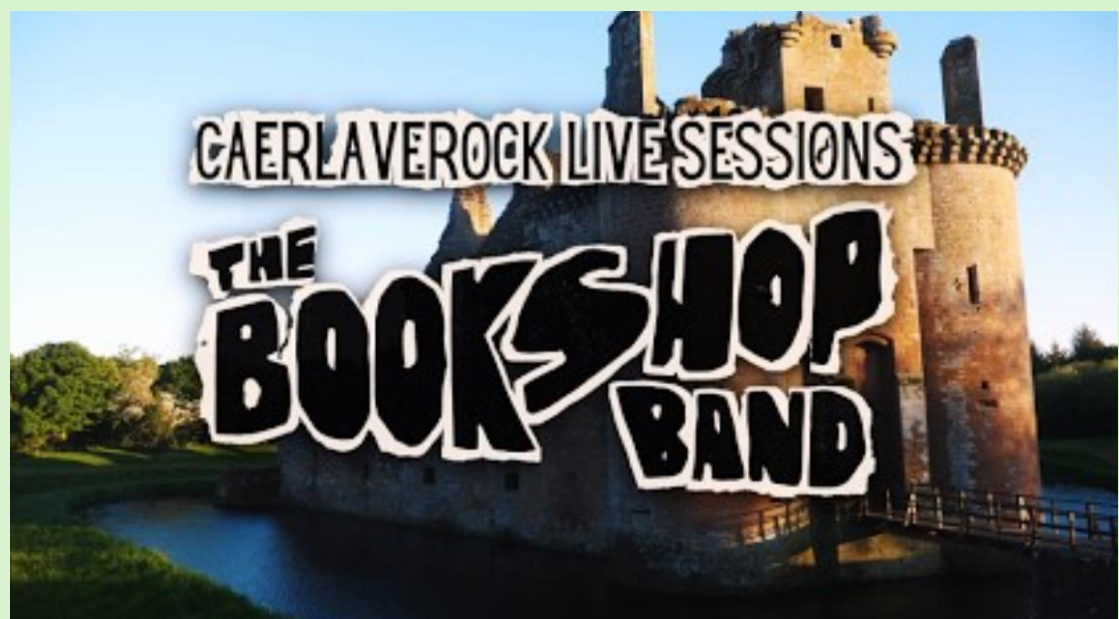


'Caerlaverock Castle'

@TheBookshopBand | Caerlaverock Live Sessions



The Bookshop Band LIVE in 3D 180 VR at Caerlaverock Castle



Caerlaverock Live Sessions Playlist: The Bookshop Band

OUR LAND, OUR STORY



A project story...

‘There were some great stories: old families from the area; what people had got up to; and even some scandals. It was interesting to hear how farming as a profession has changed. The way the community has changed. It was actually quite sad to listen to. It used to be a really sociable place, with the local pub heaving every weekend.

One farmer commented that the solitary life of farming now is not the lifestyle he had signed up to. There used to be other members of staff working with him, making it a sociable industry. But the affordability of his type of farm has made that impossible.’

(paraphrased from an interview with Anna Austin)

It shows the deep connection between **place** and **people**; and relationships with place when people leave or are absent.



Photo The Imaginarium

OUR LAND, OUR STORY



Reflection

Working with this target group would have been impossible without access through existing relationships. The Estate's working relationship with tenant farmers, going back generations, was one platform and dynamic that facilitated and encouraged engagement. Other significant individuals included Robbie, who worked on the Estate at the time, and who had strong family connections with key participants. His efforts extended to picking up and driving some of the farmers to their gathering. In this project, as with all the others, existing relationships and collaboration were fundamental to its development and execution.



Photo The Imaginarium

OUR LAND, OUR STORY



Learnings & legacy

Legacy of the gatherings

Caerlaverock Estate is keen to continue and encourage the gathering of smaller target groups of tenants, such as the farming community. This would be in addition to the annual Estate tenant events already part of the calendar. The benefit of facilitating smaller social gatherings for the sharing of memories and stories was recognised. The gatherings during Our Land, Our Stories demonstrated the significance of bringing together potentially isolated individuals into a space of connection – whether social connection or connection with the past – acknowledging a sense of value and shared heritage.

Oral history archive

The oral histories of the farming community are to be recorded by Alison Burgess and DJ McDowall in mid-June and will be stored by D&G Archive and the National Library of Scotland Archive.

The Bookshop Band EP

The Bookshop Band's EP of the four songs based on the stories shared during the gatherings is being released imminently. The Bookshop Band and Glencaple community's traditional music group are keen to work together to perform a concert of the new work which, it is hoped, will take place during the summer 2025.

Sharing outputs and stories

As the project has progressed, the co-deliverers have felt it increasingly important to share the context and interpretation of the storytelling and oral histories behind the songs written by The Bookshop Band. A blog has been proposed as one method by which to do this. A video has been made with The Bookshop Band to explain their contribution and inspiration.

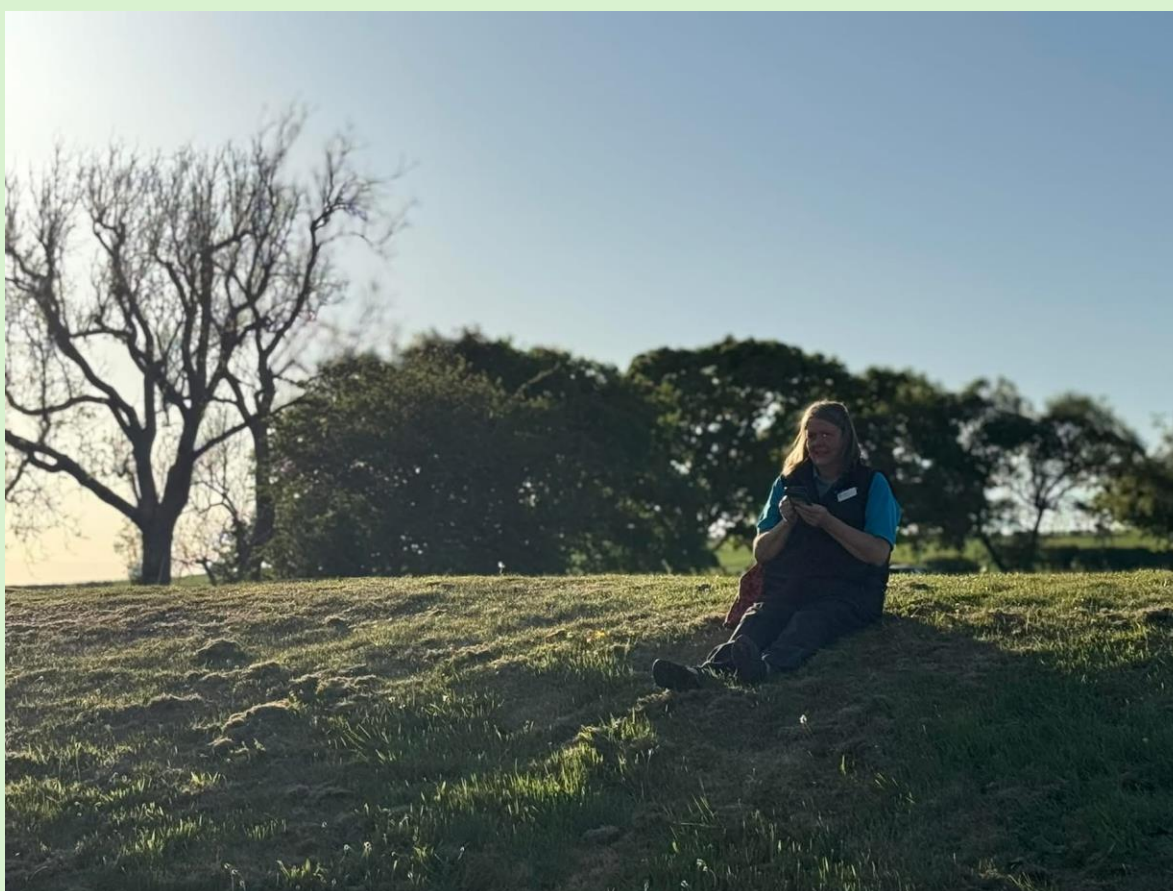


Photo The Imaginarium



Description

Queer Caerlaverock brought together members of the LGBTQ+ community and their allies to collaboratively shape the design and tactility of a stone carving destined for installation within the Visitor Centre at Caerlaverock Castle. A series of gatherings and design workshops provided a space for participants to explore LGBTQ+ / Queer heritage associated with the local area, and its symbolism, alongside the themes of identity, resilience, and belonging, delving into both real and imagined histories to reveal new insights into our present context.

Partner Organisations

- The Imaginarium
- Dawn Eva Berry (Mother Maiden Crone CIC)
- Mary W. Craig (Mother Maiden Crone CIC)
- HES stonemason

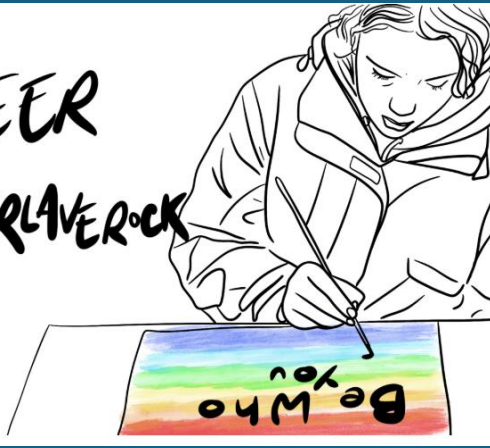
Participants

LGBTQ+ and allies



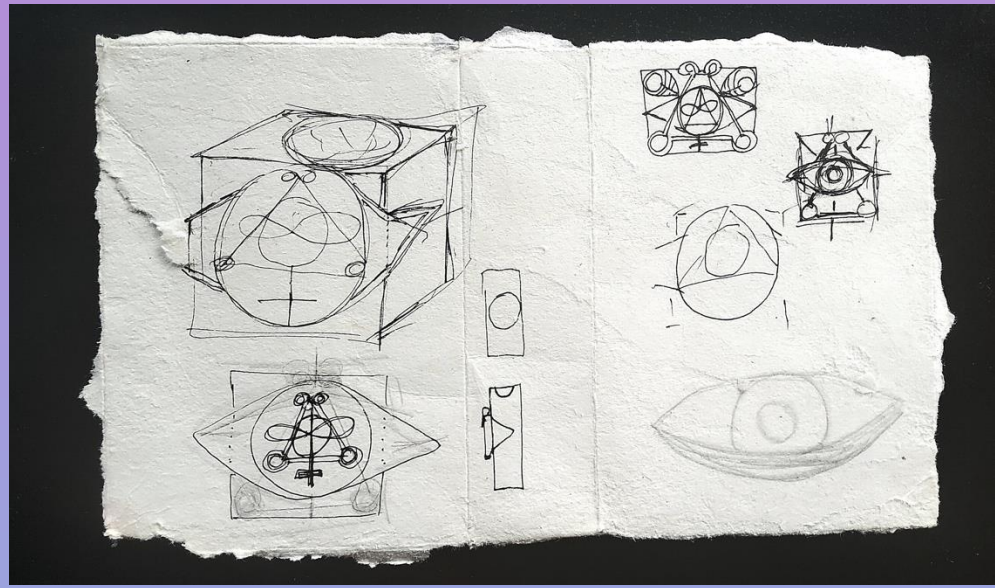
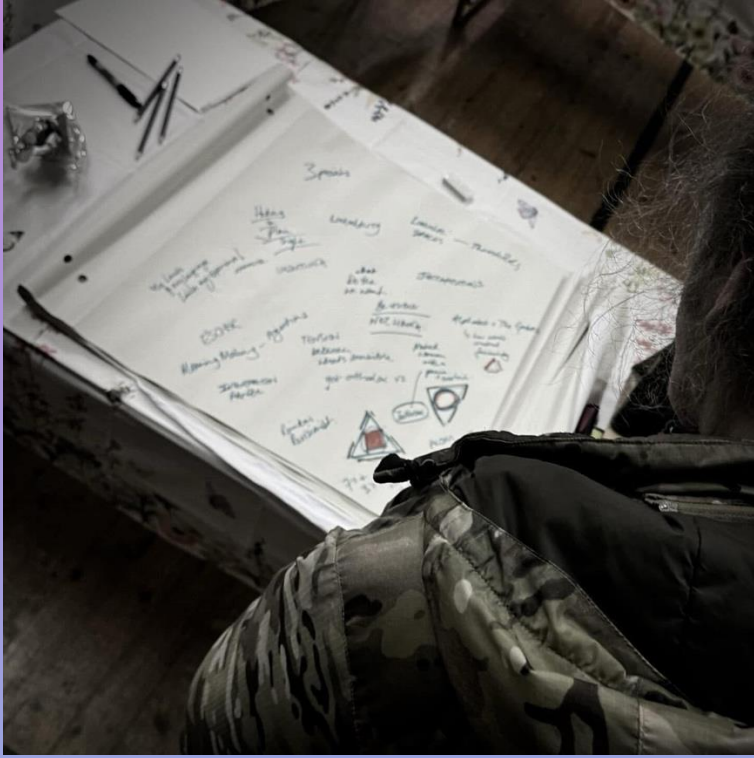
All photos: The Imaginarium

QUEER CAERLAVEROCK



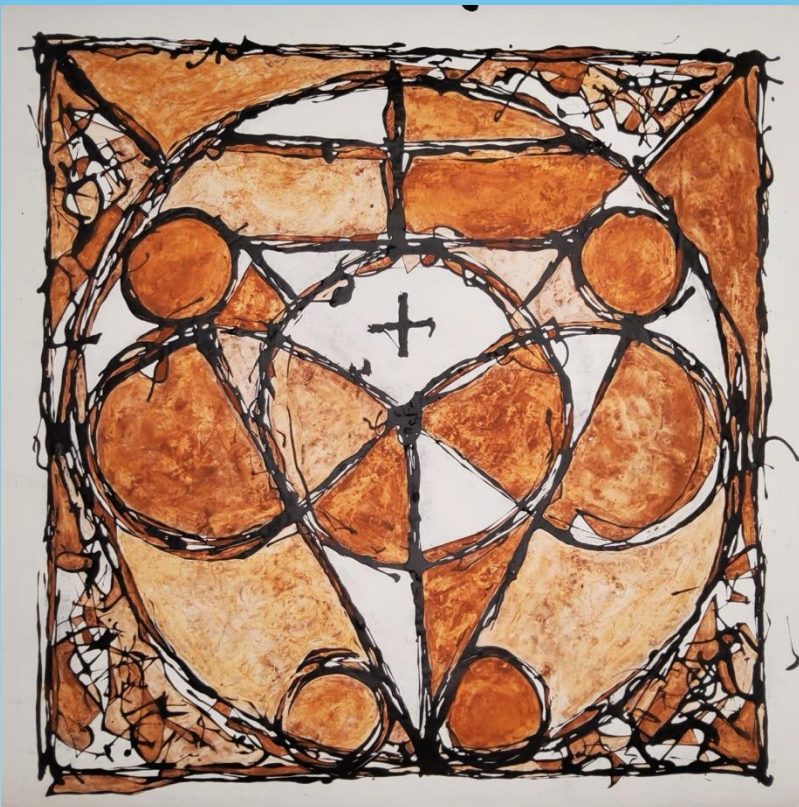
Outputs

- Stone artefact, designed by participants and carved by HES stonemason. To be installed in the Visitor Centre at Caerlaverock Castle.
- An interpretation board was produced to accompany the stone artefact. This was a collaboration of participants and HES's Graphics Department and Interpretation Department.
- The Quest for Queer Caerlaverock Deck / field guide



All photos: The Imaginarium

Proposed designs developed by the group





A project story...

‘In the lead-up to the event, visitors to Caerlaverock Castle who had seen the listing in the Pride programme expressed their pride and appreciation to members of Historic Environment Scotland and Imaginarium staff. They shared that, as an LGBTQ+ family, they felt acknowledged and excited to see something specifically for them at the castle. This highlighted the broader impact of creating visible and inclusive spaces for the community.’

‘The gathering served as a wider conversation about the significance of Caerlaverock as a place—not only as a site of refuge and reflection but also as one of inclusion and future-thinking, helping to shift perspectives. Participants considered how the site could hold space for past and present struggles and joys while inspiring new narratives of visibility, empowerment, appropriate representation and change.’

(DJ McDowall, The Imaginarium)



Photo: The Imaginarium



Reflection

The aim of this project was not simply to engage a new priority group at Caerlaverock. It sought to explore accepted narratives and reassemble fragments of the past to tangibly create a more inclusive and reflective story of our shared heritage. Queer symbolism and emotive interpretation was presented in the traditional vernacular of stonemasonry, reinserting lost histories and identities into the very fabric of the site.

Queer laverock Designs V1 + V2
Some ideas for interpretation board

- SYMBOLIC GEOMETRIES OF LINE + CURVE WITH AN INCORPORATED CAERLAVEROCK FORM
- CONTINUOUS LINKED FLUID FLOW
- BORDER NOT BOUNDARY
- MANY PATTERNS AND SHAPES
- SYMBOLIC OF OUR UNIFIED DIFFERENCES
- SANDSTONE IS GRAINS OF QUARTZ, COATED WITH IRON OXIDE AND JOINED TOGETHER ||



This artefact is more than an object—it is a mark, a memorial, and a reclamation of LGBTQ+ histories at Caerlaverock. Its design embodies fluidity, resilience, and defiance against the erasure of queer existence.

Breaking boundaries, its form moves beyond the binary, reflecting lives lived outside rigid structures. Weathered yet enduring materials symbolise queer survival, adaptation, and resistance to silence.

At its core, three sacred geometries—the triangle, circle, and square—intertwining symbols of LGBTQ+ and gender identities with Caerlaverock Castle’s iconic footprint. The reclaimed triangle, once a tool of LGBTQ+ oppression, now stands for strength and resistance. The circle, infinite and unbroken, represents fluidity and wholeness. The square speaks to the foundations of identity, and the safe spaces we carve out for ourselves.

Carved from Caerlaverock’s red sandstone, this piece mirrors queer histories—suppressed, reshaped, and reclaimed. Its surface bears the scars of change, yet it endures.

Through this piece, the Missing Museum and its Queer Co-Curators and allies, invite you to witness lives once unseen, ensuring they are no longer forgotten, and quite literally leaving their mark on our shared local history.



Learnings & legacy

- Queer Heritage work has been very well-received by HES staff at Caerlaverock and they are keen to evolve this work further.
- Bringing the wider project groups together would enable inter-group dialogue and the sharing of ideas and outputs. For example, the significance of the Castle's triangular shape was noted in a number of groups, not least Queer Caerlaverock.
- There is also overlap between the interests and inspirations of the Queer Caerlaverock participants, and other work DJ McDowall of The Imaginarium is delivering through their 'Pride of Place D&G' project. DJ created a zine for a recent visit to the Castle from an LGBT Youth group. The zine is based on her research of many queer characters through time that were connected with Caerlaverock. The materials have been well received and it has been suggested that a reproduction of the zine could be used as an engagement resource for the Visitor Centre.
- The zine became the basis for the development of a new resource: 'The Quest for Queer Caerlaverock', which looks like a pack of A5 playing cards with these local queer characters on them. Following the cards takes participants on a series of quests, with relevant challenges around the Castle to help them more deeply engage with and (re)view the castle, and it's surrounding area through a different, more inclusive lens. Incorporated into the design of the deck, by a local young designer, is the design created by the Queer Caerlaverock group.

Groundwork for the future

Phase 3 of Creative Caerlaverock dove deeper into the co-creation of outputs and creative learning resources, in turn setting fertile ground for engagement with more priority groups and the continuation of local stakeholder relationships.

Beyond the three main phases of Creative Caerlaverock will be a review of the entire project with those involved, looking at the legacy for learning resources, and what key recommendations could be taken forward by HES and partners.

- **Creative Caerlaverock Evaluation**

A full review with participants, local and regional partners, and HES teams (including site staff), to review the successes and challenges of Creative Caerlaverock and the opportunities this presents for future work between creative practitioners, communities, and the HES team in creative learning, effective community engagement, and site development across their sites. This will include a write-up of the full project of Creative Caerlaverock and the activities it has helped initiate regionally.

- **Creative Caerlaverock Resource Bank**

The compilation of outputs from across the Creative Caerlaverock programme (methodologies and documentation of sound foraging, zines, tarot cards, songs and stone artefact, programme frameworks, and accompanying educational toolkit) into a Resource Bank for future use. This will include interpretation, user guide, and community engagement training sessions with HES local team (district managers and site staff).

The Stove

Martin Joseph O'Neill, Artistic Director
Katharine Wheeler, Development Director
Sal Cuddihy, Production Manager

The Imaginarium

DJ McDowall, Creative Director of The Imaginarium
Co-Producer and Creative Collaborator on Creative Caerlaverock

Caerlaverock Estate

Anna Austin, Estate Manager

Historic Environment Scotland

Valerie Bennett, Caerlaverock Information Centre Manager
Rosie Thorp, District Visitor and Community Manager, Dumfries and Galloway

Creative Toolbox

Georgia Blue Ireland, Youth Creative Wellbeing Lead, Outpost Arts

Medieval Bruce Heritage Trust

Liz West, Chairperson

Paragon Music

Charlotte Riley, D&G Director

Sonic Labs

Calum Walker

Summerhill Community Centre

AnneMarie Coulter, Centre Manager,
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Wordsmithcrafts

Simon Lidwell