

Curate a Tray Museum

Ceri Thompson, Curator at Big Pit National Coal Museum arranges a tray of his family treasures.



As you can't come to our museums at the moment, we realise you may be missing some of our objects. But here's a chance to create a slice of museum life in your own home in 8 easy steps with curator Ceri Thompson.

Curate A Tray is really easy and anyone of any age can take part without leaving home.

Step 1: First – find a tray – any shape or size, but preferably one that you don't need to eat your tea off later!

Got the tray ready? Good. Now **Step 2:** you need to find a few things you want to display. This could be an object you really like, an old photograph, a coin, or everyday things like a cup. Think of what you've seen in our Museums.

Things don't have to be valuable like an old master painting to be in a museum. Everyday objects that people once threw away can show us how people used to live their lives.

Step 3: Could you include an everyday object or something that is special to you? Something that reminds you of a particular event or a family treasure during the current climate.



Here's an example of how a tray might look. How many things have you found? Depending on the size of your tray, around four or five should be enough. How are you going to arrange them on your tray so they look their best?

If someone is coming to see your Tray Museum, what are you going to tell them about your objects? That's where labels come in! **Step 4** - Can you find some blank paper or card to make your labels with?

Think about the information you can put on the label. What do you know about your object? What is it made of? Where did it come from? Do you know how old it is? Why is it special to you? **Step 5** - Gather as much information as you can.

Text for the labels can either be printed or handwritten. Remember that the text needs to be clear and big enough to read. Next, you have 2 options.

Option 1: Individual labels – each object on your tray will have its own label which will be placed next to the item.

Our Family Heirlooms

1. Brass colliery chewing tobacco tin used in Naval Colliery by great grandfather Jack Thompson. Made in 1897.

OR

Option 2: A main label – each object on your tray needs to have a number. The label will then list each object following the numbers of your items on your tray.

Our Family Heirlooms

Clockwise from top left

1. Brass colliery chewing tobacco tin used in Naval Colliery by great grandfather Jack Thompson. Made in 1897.
2. Earthenware bottle to hold hop bitters by Bamfield & Co. Ltd., Pontypridd, found by myself in river bank by Lewis Merthyr Colliery during building work. Made around 1900.
3. Brass 'Turnip' or watch protector used by great uncle Ifan Parry in Cymmer Colliery. Late nineteenth century.
4. Earthenware bottle made by Thomas Elliott, Cardiff, found by myself in river bank by Lewis Merthyr Colliery during building work in 1990. Late nineteenth century.
5. Small tobacco pipe and case used by great uncle Ernie Morgan when he was a gardner in Creigiau. 1920s.
6. Silver match holder to be worn on watch chain, unknown provenance, found in drawer of Welsh dresser. Early twentieth century.
7. Brass cigarette lighter, unknown provenance, found in drawer of Welsh dresser. Early twentieth century.
8. Military badge given by American soldier billeted on Green Meadow Estate, Tongwynlais to great Auntie Margaret Morgan when aged six years old. 1943.

Step 6 Now write information about each object on your paper or card – making it as clear as possible so that any visitors can read it! And then – **Step 7** - arrange the labels along with your objects on your tray.

Do you have a name for your Tray Museum? **Step 8** - Write this in BIG LETTERS so people know about it!

Finished? We'd love to know what you're displaying in your Curate A Tray Day Museum so don't forget to share a photo with us.

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