THE GRIT

NLHF EVALUATION REPORT

POETRY PEOPLE

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Photographs
Poetry People team: Becky Marshall-Potter, Dean Parkin, Naomi Jaffa
Mariners Score School, 1924; GritFest; Fisher girls in the 1930s
Pearls from The Grit; Unloading the herring, 1920s

INTRODUCTION

Poetry People is a community interest company, co-founded in April 2017 by Naomi Jaffa and Dean Parkin. Their mission: to bring poetry to people and people to poetry, often for the first time.

As Poetry People's first heritage-focused project, **THE GRIT** allowed Naomi and Dean – both published poets and former organisers of the international Aldeburgh Poetry Festival – to bring their passion and expertise to the heritage sector.

Since 2015, Poetry People has delivered the Suffolk Young Poets Competition and a series of workshops in schools to help inspire high-standard entries into the Competition. We are well-regarded in Suffolk where the local authority would like us to run GritFest again in 2020 and to work on a physical interpretation about The Grit for their newly-created park, The Ness.

In March 2019 **THE GRIT** project won a national Creative Learning Award in the Literature & Creative Writing category. It is a wonderful endorsement at this early stage in our own organisational development and will open doors to new collaborations.

THE GRIT project curated its heritage content with exceptional creativity. The script for 'Pearls from The Grit' seamlessly incorporated audio and verbatim written contributions from young and old – oral history interviews; voices of schoolchildren to bring to life an old photograph. **THE GRIT** was about working with people and valuing their contributions and as a result, Lowestoft people had real ownership and investment. The project exceeded everyone's passionate commitment to put The Grit back into Lowestoft.

Photographer: Heather Magner

A highly imaginative project, reaching right across the community and connecting the generations in a variety of different ways to bring the past to life in a part of the world where it had been all but forgotten

Melyvn Burgess
Carnegie Medal winning author
National Creative Learning Award judge

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 1900 Lowestoft was a top fishing port and tourist resort with a population of 23,000. The town's fishing village — known to locals as The Grit or the Beach Village — was the most easterly community in the country, right next to the North Sea.

The Grit was home to 2,500 people, 13 pubs, three schools, two churches, shops and cafés, and the often poor 'Gritsters' were known for their spirit of independence. By the early 1970s few houses remained on the east side of Whapload Road, with many new industrial buildings occupying the site.

THE GRIT project has been a community words, music and film project, devised by Poetry People and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Lowestoft Rising Cultural Education Partnership – which took place in 2018. The Lowestoft & East Suffolk Maritime Museum, located adjacent to the site of The Grit, were a project partner.

THE GRIT was inspired by poet and writer Dean Parkin and designed to put Lowestoft's forgotten fishing village back on the map. Dean's local bestseller *The Grit: The Story of Lowestoft's Beach Village* – co-written with Jack Rose and published in 1997 – has been at the heart of **THE GRIT** project.

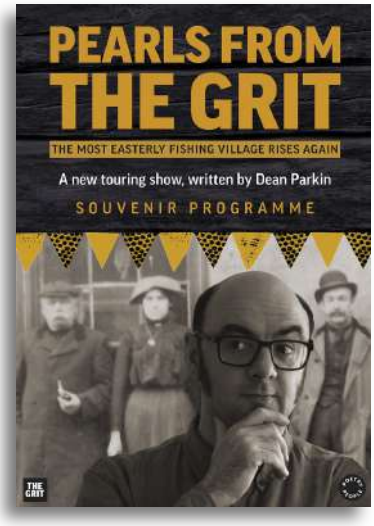
Throughout 2018, **THE GRIT** revived and celebrated the experiences of people who were part of this once thriving community, and introduced younger generations to the rich social history of their town.

THE GRIT project comprised:

- **WORKSHOPS** in eight primary schools and a Key Stage 2 resource to teach The Grit's history to future generations
- **GRIT GATHERING** launch at Christ Church Halls
- **GRITFEST** celebration day in Sparrows Nest Gardens
- **PEARLS FROM THE GRIT** new touring theatre show
- **VIDEO POEMS** and a **NEW DISPLAY** in the Lowestoft Maritime Museum

This is the best, most creative heritage project
I have ever worked on. In a town
that has high levels of deprivation
and low levels of aspiration
The Grit has made a real difference.

Jayne Austin
Museum Development & Partnership Manager



AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Raise awareness of
Lowestoft's forgotten fishing village
in creative and engaging ways

Help Lowestoft Maritime Museum
increase visitor numbers
and attract more volunteers

Honour the past by involving
older generations who lived on The Grit
or had family connections

Connect Lowestoft communities,
young and old, and foster
pride in the town's heritage

Make local history memorable
and relevant to school children

Celebrate Lowestoft people
and work with people
with real Lowestoft conections

Ensure high production standards,
value for money,
and a cultural legacy

PROJECT TIMELINE

NOVEMBER 2017
Creative workshops
224 pupils in eight primary schools &
in the Lowestoft Maritime Museum

JANUARY 2018
Grit Gathering public launch
slideshows & exhibitions
attended by over 300 people

FEBRUARY 2018
Research & reminiscence sessions
six local care & residential homes

MARCH 2018
Creative workshops
fourth & final session in schools

MAY 2018
GritFest celebration day
over 2,000 people
in Sparrows Nest Gardens

JUNE to AUGUST 2018
Pearls from The Grit theatre show
writing, casting & pre-production

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2018
Pearls from The Grit tour
rehearsals & nine performances
seven venues, 1,200 tickets sold

NOVEMBER 2018 to JANUARY 2019
Making the legacy
video poems, Key Stage 2 resource
Maritime Museum display

GRIT GATHERING

Grit Gathering was the public launch to tell people what the project was all about and how they could get involved. It was an all-day event on Saturday 27 January 2018 in Christ Church Halls, one of the last remaining original buildings on the site of the former fishing village. Dean Parkin presented a half-hour slideshow three times during the day; a Grit exhibition featured 40 rare enlarged photographs; and members of **THE GRIT** team recorded short Q & A sessions with former residents of the fishing village to begin to gather material for the reminiscence work, GritFest and the touring show. Christ Church provided six volunteers for the day who ensured plentiful supplies of hot drinks and homemade cakes.

Between 10am and 4pm, 312 people of all ages came to and spent time at Grit Gathering including children who were part of the schools workshops. Attenders brought their own photographic collections and memorabilia, including a 10-foot hand-stitched quilt map of The Grit. Coverage in the *Lowestoft Journal* and on BBC Radio Norfolk and BBC Radio Suffolk before and after the event helped spread the word about **THE GRIT** project.

As this was a one-off event at the beginning of the project, we had hoped that 100 people would turn up, but there was a queue waiting at the door well before 10am and the crowds never stopped. Grit Gathering demonstrated how passionately Lowestoft people feel about the history of their town and set the tone for the extraordinary popularity of the rest of the project.

Left to right: Quilt map of The Grit; Naomi Jaffa & Woods Loke Primary pupil; Vintage Grit quilt; Former Gritsters share photographs

I don't like to say how many times I've been round
this island. And if I dint do it, I'd miss it, I would.
I'd miss the men I sail with, good comrades they are.
Nothing happens the same twice. The weather, the waves,
the sky, that all change day to day, hour to hour.
Thas a beautiful life at sea.

Voiced by the character 'Billy' in *Pearls from The Grit*
based on Brian Springer's story recorded at Grit Gathering

RESIDENTIAL & CARE HOMES

In February 2018 **THE GRIT** project ran an oral history training day with an accredited trainer from the British Library / Oral History Society. This was attended by six members of **THE GRIT** delivery team plus the chairman and a volunteer from the Lowestoft Maritime Musuem. This prepared us for the subsequent work with Orwell Housing Association, to deliver six oral history reminiscence sessions later in the month. These sessions were held at five residential homes in and around Lowestoft – Pitches View, Marram Green, Morton Peto House, Nelson Court and two sessions in Levington Court – and engaged 64 residents across the five locations.

These sessions were a way of reaching some of the last generation of 'Gritsters', mostly born before the Second World War, who can remember the vitality and community spirit of the fishing village. Special connections were forged with four care home residents who provided invaluable testimonies about their lives on The Grit. At Pitches View in Kessingland, Dean met two former residents of the fishing village during the group session. Follow-up oral history interviews took place with Ros Clarke (born 1924) and Sheila Rogers (born 1947) and some of their recollections will appear in the revised edition of *The Grit* book.

At Marram Green, a follow-up interview with Jack Moore (born 1927) yielded information about the 13 pubs on the fishing village that became part of the script for *Pearls from The Grit*. Jack also attended GritFest in May where Dean conducted a public interview with him and, in October, he and his son Keith organised a special Gritster's tea party in Christ Church Halls before they enjoyed the final performance of the touring show.

During Dean's care home sessions, several residents recalled the childhood May Day song 'Climbing Up The Walls' which became a theme of the *Pearls from The Grit* touring show. At Nelson Court, Edie Sterry (born 1917) even agreed to be recorded singing it. Her iconic rendition helped teach the song to 224 school children for the soundtrack and also featured in one of the final scenes of *Pearls from The Grit.*

Edie had a lovely morning! The pictures of the fishermen and the fishing village really brought back memories for her.

Edie's carer

Sat at The Avenue Theatre, Ipswich, the last thing I expected to hear as this poignant play ended was my 102-year-old great aunt singing the traditional Lowestoft May Day song Climbing Up the Walls. Thinking back over the last hour, I recognised so much of her in the character of Ruby, played by Sally-Ann Burnett. Turns out the writer Dean Parkin had spoken to my great aunt at length about our hometown's almost forgotten fishing village known as The Grit.

Wayne Savage, East Anglian Daily Times (4/10/18)

SCHOOLS & LEARNING

I am hoping that The Grit will bring the fishing industry and fishing families to life for the children, enabling them to gain a better understanding of Lowestoft's past. This then, hopefully, this will encourage a sense of pride in our town.

Helen Phillips, Pakefield Primary School

THE GRIT project engaged with eight primary schools from across Lowestoft and delivered workshops to 224 children – one Year 4 and seven Year 5 classes – with 10 teachers and 13 support staff. Pupils also visited the Lowestoft & East Suffolk Maritime Museum to explore and better understand the physical reality of the lives of the fishing families who came from The Grit.

NOVEMBER 2017	24 workshops – three half-day sessions per school including a visit to the Lowestoft Maritime Museum
MARCH 2018	eight follow–up workshops in schools
JUNE / JULY 2018	recordings made of songs and words to be used in *Pearls from The Grit* touring show
NOV 2018 / JAN 2019	completion of Key Stage 2 resource about The Grit launched April 2019 with the Museum's own revised KS2 resource (Ben's Quest) available from the Museum, with copies distributed to all local primary schools

THE GRIT project delivered three CPD sessions for teachers via Lowestoft Rising Cultural Education Partnership. These enabled strategic updates on the project and ensured teachers' involvement in the development of the Key Stage 2 resource.

At the start of the project, Poetry People asked teachers from all eight participating schools why the project appealed and how they saw **THE GRIT** fitting in with curriculum requirements. This information fed subsequent evaluation questions.

Teachers and children were asked for two lots of feedback – at the end of the autumn sessions in 2017 and after the final spring sessions in 2018. Teachers from seven of the eight schools completed one or both sets of feedback.

Autumn evaluation questions: Impact on timetable & staff; development of literacy skills & knowledge of local history; museum visit impact on childrens' learning; impact on teachers' practice; improvements going forward.

Spring evaluation questions: Teachers were invited to score the sessions for their delivery, content and impact on children's learning. We also asked which areas of the curriculum a KS2 Grit resource would be most suited to and the answers were literacy, English and History.

THE GRIT WORKSHOP SESSIONS

The three workshop sessions included slideshows sharing old photos and archive films of The Grit and fishing industry. Exercises ranged from individual writing about a Mariners Score School photo from 1924 to a group poem about 'Gulliver', the landmark wind turbine that is now on the site of the former fishing village. Stories from The Grit and fishing superstitions were shared and included in the children's writing.

The second session took place at Lowestoft Maritime Museum where the classes were given tours of the the herring industry displays and installations. Some of the volunteers had first-hand knowledge of the fishing village which they shared with the children. At the end of each session a class poem was created involved the words and phrases they had gathered during a Museum scavenger hunt.

The sessions were adapted to each school. At Roman Hill Primary, we discovered that the caretaker had family links to the fishing village. He brought in photos of his father, who was a fishermen who lived and worked on The Grit, and shared them with the class during an impromptu Q & A session. Teachers reported that children were so engaged with the project that it was opening up discussions at home to find out more about their family history. A girl from St Mary's Primary discovered her great great grandfather was the Lowestoft lighthouse keeper. Another child, after telling her family about the 'Beetster's Hook' she'd seen in the Museum, discovered her great grandmother had mended nets.

THE GRIT VERSE

As part of the literacy development work of **THE GRIT** project, the workshops introduced primary school children to a new verse form which we told them was created by 'Ned', a fisherman who had lived on The Grit and whose poems were published in the Lowestoft Weekly News in the early 1900s. The children used the research they'd gathered from their visit to the Lowestoft Maritime Museum (boat names, fishing terms and maritime words) and from notes they'd taken about the fishing village during the classroom workshops. The rules of The Grit Verse are as follows:

Each Grit Verse has an odd number of lines for good luck
A Grit Verse often rhymes but it doesn't matter where
One line is always about a place on The Grit.
The last line is usually about the sea

The Sea Knows
A beetster's hook and the Prunier Trophy
The gasworks and the Eagle Brewery
The sun setting on the horizon
The water shining from the sun
The sea knows its way around the world

Year 5 pupil (boy), Blundeston Primary

The 1953 Floods
Wet dresses and messy hair
Flooded house and horrible weather
The sun goes down and more people leave forever
Barrels of herring fall to the ground
The sea says, 'I knew I was stronger than this wall'

Year 5 pupil (girl), St Mary's Primary

CHILDREN'S FEEDBACK

How has THE GRIT helped my literacy?

It's made me a lot better and braver

It's shown me that you can write about anything you want

It's made me feel like there is more to poems than just words

It made me feel like a writer and I liked it

It helped me be brave about new words

It has made me feel happy because I like writing poetry

One thing I have learnt about THE GRIT?

Being a fisherman is a hard job

Fisher girls could gut 60 herring a minute

Green is an unlucky colour for boats

They had floods and they rang a bell when the flood came

They had to share their toilet with neighbours

My great great grandfather was a lighthouse keeper

How does learning about THE GRIT make me feel about where I live?

It makes me sad because not many people get to know about Lowestoft's history

It has made me more curious about my family's history

It reminds me of how different Lowestoft is now compared to back then

There is a lot of history around me and I will try and keep it alive

It made me feel sorry for the people who lived then

It makes me feel where I live is a very special place

Three words that sum up THE GRIT project?

herring
fisher girls
floods

interesting
historical
unforgettable

barrels
bombs
boats

different
fascinating
fun

shocking
inspiring
epic

fishing
history
life

I've learnt that I can save old stories,
put them into my learning
and find out new things
and keep those stories alive

Spenser, Year 5
Woods Loke Primary School

TEACHERS' FEEDBACK

EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

Certain children, who are often hesitant writers, were very engaged and eager to share their ideas.

Lucy Robinson
Phoenix St Peter Primary

DELIVERY OF THE SESSIONS: 9/10

The children really enjoyed the sessions, particularly discussions around the old school photograph from The Grit and the tour round the museum.

Carol Roberts
St Mary's RC Primary

THE CONTENT: 7/10

The poem games / tasks were great. Some of them would have benefitted from a little more time for some of the written tasks.

Carol Roberts
St Mary's RC Primary

IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S LEARNING: 10/10

A really inspring project that's got the children involved. Every child in the class was engaged and was eager to take part and sing on the recording of the Climbing Up The Walls song.

Sarah Harris
Blundeston Primary

IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S LEARNING: 10/10

The children have a greater appreciation of how people lived at the time and a much better understanding of Lowestoft's heritage generally.

Charlotte Bowman
Carlton Colville Primary

EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

The children have increased their knowledge of the history of Lowestoft and increased their use of creative ideas. And they've gained confidence in performing aloud.

Claire Pagan
Oulton Broad Primary

DELIVERY OF THE SESSIONS: 10/10

Well honed and engaging. Lovely to have different voices and input to keep the children's attention.

Charlotte Bowman
Carlton Colville Primary

DELIVERY OF THE SESSIONS: 9/10

Nice to have outside speakers, a Museum trip, and to have listening, writing and singing involved. Ties in nicely with our history topic.

Kirsty Boggis
Pakefield Primary

IMPACT OF MUSEUM VISIT: 10/10

Because of the project I'll be keen to teach children about local history in creative ways and push for educational trips as I have seen first hand the positive impact that they make on children's learning.

Sarah Harris
Blundeston Primary

IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S LEARNING: 9/10

All children came out of this project learning facts about The Grit and are able to share the knowledge with family members and friends. The children are very much aware of the history of Lowestoft. It has impacted positively on their views about both poetry and local history.

Catherine Parnell
Woods Loke Primary

GRITFEST

On Sunday 27 May GritFest took place in Sparrows Nest Gardens, chosen because it houses the Lowestoft Maritime Museum and is adjacent to the site of the former fishing village. The aim of the celebration day was to reconnect the town with The Grit by bringing visitors to the park and the Museum, to re-kindle interest in and awareness of the most easterly community who had lived there.

The event was opened by the Lowestoft-born BBC broadcaster Zeb Soanes reading specially written 'news' headlines, telling stories and facts about The Grit. This was followed by a free programme of events which included live music, group activities, heritage talks, a DanceEast workshop and a special Grit exhibition in the main marquee. The lighthouse, which overlooks the gardens was opened by Trinity House for the first time and there were demonstrations of maritime heritage and skills from the International Boating Building Training College and the Excelsior Trust. GritFest involved 20 local businesses including the two on-site café/restaurants and traditional smoked and wet fish food stalls. Local arts and crafts groups were showcased and organised special activities for intergenerational participation (GritKnit, GritQuilt). The Lowestoft Movie Makers showed rare archive films to capacity audiences (55 seats) in their little known Studio Theatre in the park. This Theatre was also the venue for three talks – on floods, fisher girls and herring – by local authors.

The Maritime Museum recorded visits by 544 adults and 158 children (an unprecedented 702 in total) during GritFest. 25 people would usually be considered a busy day at the Museum. The Royal Naval Patrol Service Museum and The Lowestoft War Memorial Museum, also situated in the Gardens, both drew record visitors of around 400.

GritFest received enthusiastic coverage in the local press and much positive attention on The Grit's social media sites and on several Facebook pages devoted to Lowestoft's heritage. The original attendance target of 500 was quadrupled: more than 2,000 'True Grit' stickers were issued at the two main entrance gates to the site. Attenders feedback was recorded orally on the day and used to create a short celebration/evaluation GritFest film. This film, supported by Lowestoft Town Council, will help with fundraising for another GritFest in 2020.
www.bit.ly/gritfest2018

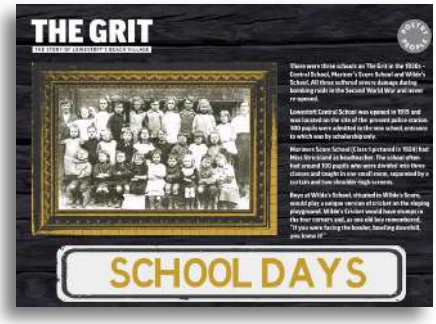
Photographer: Peter Everard Smith

(First row, left to right) Paper-works lino postcard printing, International Boat Building Training College demo, DanceEast fisher girls workshop, Zeb Soanes reads The Grit news headlines*
(Second row, left to right) The Strumming Seagulls, GritQuilt, GritFest crowd, Grit Exhibition map

I was reading about all the fishermen in the museum and it was really interesting. The younger fishermen used to go out and come back for 48 hours and buy ridiculous suits...they'd outdo each other wearing purple suits! That was something I didn't know. Cool!

FILM GritFest: A Day to Remember
www.bit.ly/gritfest2018

At GritFest the main marquees featured 14 newly created information boards concerning aspects of The Grit – characters, pubs, school days and streets – along with a specially drawn enlarged map of the village in 1930



Just cos we had thirteen pubs down there, dunt yew go gettin' the idea that means we're all drunkards – we're not! We go to the pub, one pint of beer and sit and play dominoes all night. We never drink a lot cos we never have the money.

Jack Moore's story re-told during an interview at GritFest, recorded at a Residential Home session, and voiced by the character 'Ned' in *Pearls from The Grit*

PEARLS FROM THE GRIT

THE GRIT project curated its heritage content with exceptional creativity, nowhere more so than in the new touring theatre show, *Pearls from The Grit.* The script written by Dean Parkin, seamlessly incorporated audio and verbatim contributions from young and old, gathered throughout the project. It mixed stories, poems, songs and films to bring the fishing village characters and memories to life.

Professionally produced, the one-hour show was directed by Alys Kihl of Wonderful Beast Theatre Company and starred three actors – Sally-Ann Burnett, Tim FitzHigham, David Redgrave – all from East Anglia and, vitally, able to speak with an authentic Suffolk accent. Narrated by Dean Parkin, playing himself as the writer, the set included a screen shaped like a fishing boat's sail on which rare archive photographs and films devised by Dean were projected throughout the show. The live music was inspired by traditional work songs, Victorian ballads, music-hall ditties and ragtime, and was composed and performed by pianist Maurice Horhut.

The recorded soundtrack featured children's voices from the school workshop sessions and archive audio of Jack Rose 'in dialogue' with the characters on stage. Jack (1926-2000) was born in Lowestoft into a 'Grit' family where he worked as a longshoreman, trawlerman, drifterman, lifeboatman, fish worker and school caretaker. He also published 11 local history books including *The Grit: The Story of Lowestoft's Beach Village* (1997) which he co-wrote with Dean Parkin.

With an audience target of 800, *Pearls from The Grit* exceeded expectations: 1,200 tickets were sold for the nine performances in seven venues across Suffolk. A free matinee at Lowestoft's Seagull Theatre was held for 90 children and teachers involved in the workshop sessions and transport for the schools was subidised. As well as conventional theatre spaces, the show was staged in the Museum of East Anglian Life (Stowmarket), the Leiston Long Shop Museum and Christ Church Halls (on the site of The Grit). Two performances were held at The Bethel Theatre in Lowestoft which had once been the fishermen's church. Former residents of The Grit, including some from the residential homes, attended performances. During the shows in Lowestoft the audience spontaneously sang along with the children's recording of the traditional May Day song, 'Climbing Up The Walls'.

Feedback was recorded after every performance – both orally and via written forms. This material, together with press reviews and online comments, was used to create the *Pearls from The Grit* evaluation film. **www.bit.ly/pearlscelebration**

I was always singing away, mending' the nets.
Started there when I was fourteen!
Our governor say, when my girls are singing,
I know they're busy. He dint like us talkin,
cos yew look at each other when you're talking.
That mean you're not working!
So we could sing as much as we wanted!

Ruby
from *Pearls from The Grit*

PEARLS FROM THE GRIT FEEDBACK

***Pearls from The Grit* cast** (left to right)
Maurice Horhut as *Tickler Sam*
Sally-Ann Burnett as *Ruby*
Dean Parkin as *The Narrator*
David Redgrave as *Ned / Happy Welham*
Tim FitzHigham as *Billy / The Host*

A wonderful blend of talents, research, ingenuity, nostalgia and fun!
Audience member (The Cut, Halesworth)

Fantastic show! Learnt so much – we need more things like this to bring history to life.
Audience member (Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket)

What a terrific way to tell history! Fabulous structure and great performances.
Nick Patrick, BBC Radio 4 producer

A really authentic slice of Suffolk social history... proper acting too, with faultless accents. And the music really enhanced the production.
Audience member (via letter)

Wonderful to see the personal stories brought to life and passed on to the next generation. A beautiful production and truly emotional.
Audience member (Avenue Theatre, Ipswich)

Powerful, thoughtful and elegantly assembled.
Libby Purves, writer, broadcaster & reviewer

Splendid mix of sadness and indomitable spirit of a place I never knew existed.
Audience member (Leiston Long Shop Museum)

What a treat to see this – and in Lowestoft. Excellent staging, precise and moving acting, haunting storytelling.
Diana Quick, actor

A wonderful evocation of a time, place and community.
Audience member (Seagull Theatre, Lowestoft)

THE GRIT PROJECT QUANTITATIVE SUMMARY

ACTIVITY	TARGET	ACTUAL NUMBERS ACHIEVED
Autumn Schools Workshops *3 x 0.5 sessions*	270 pupils and nine schools	224 pupils and eight schools
Lowestoft Maritime Museum Schools visit and Autumn workshops *1 x 0.5 sessions*	270 pupils and nine schools	209 pupils and eight schools
Grit Gathering Day (free, public project launch) at Christ Church Halls	Additional to original schedule	312 attenders
Oral History Training	Four from the Poetry People team	10 attenders including two Maritime Museum volunteers, Access Community Trust Arts Officer, two from The Cut Arts Centre and four from Poetry People
Residential & Care Homes Workshop & Reminiscence Sessions (Public Research Sessions)	One-to-one interviews with 20 residents	64 residents at six sessions held at five residential homes
Spring Schools Workshops *1 x 0.5 sessions*	Additional to original schedule 270 pupils and nine schools	224 pupils and eight schools
GritFest Celebration Day free event at Sparrows Nest Gardens	500 attenders	Over 2,000 attenders The Maritime Museum had a record 702 attenders (544 adults and 158 children)
Pearls from The Grit preview free event at Halesworth Gallery	Additional to original bid	35 attenders
Summer Schools Workshops (completing written & audio contributions for video poems and show) *2 x 0.5 sessions*	Additional to original schedule	60 pupils from two schools
Heritage Open Days Pearls from The Grit preview and exhibition	Additional to original bid	45 attenders including performances by two pupils from Oulton Broad & St Mary's Primary School
Pearls from The Grit touring theatre show	800 attenders across 10 performances in seven venues	1,200 attenders across nine performances in seven venues
The Grit Video Poems	To reach 2,500 viewers on Facebook, 1,300 Youtube views	Show trailer 14,645 views Climbing Up The Walls 622 views plus seven recently uploaded new Video Poems
Lowestoft & East Suffolk Maritime Museum	A minimum 10% increase in visitors and help to secure new volunteers	Visitor numbers rose by 44% – from 3,693 in 2017 to 5,319 in 2018 The Museum secured nine new volunteers in 2018

PROFILE

The Lowestoft Journal, 2 February 2018

The Lowestoft Journal, 27 April 2018

12 PRESS RELEASES

Grit Project Announcement

Grit Gathering

Grit Open Day

GritFest x 2

Pearls from The Grit x 5

Grit Project shortlisted for National Creative Learning Award

Grit Project wins National Creative Learning Award

12 APPEARANCES IN PUBLICATIONS (ONLINE & PRINTED)

Grapevine
Lowestoft Journal
Discover Lowestoft
East Anglian Daily Times
Eastern Daily Press
Lowestoft Bugle
Aldeburgh Gazette
The List
Beccles & Bungay Journey
East Life
Theatre Cat
In Touch Community Magazine

RADIO APPEARANCES

BBC Radio 4
Making History

BBC Radio Suffolk
Lesley Dolphin x 2

BBC Radio Suffolk
Stephen Foster x 2

BBC Radio Norfolk
Matthew Gudgeon

The Lowestoft Journal, 1 June 2018

The Lowestoft Journal, 28 September 2018

SOCIAL MEDIA

Local, regional and national press coverage helped to build the profile of THE GRIT project throughout the year. Social media accounts, **Facebook** (361 followers), **Instagram** (126 followers) and **Twitter** (218 followers) were set up at the beginning of the project and continue to grow and gather interest.

Facebook @lowestoftgrit / Instagram @lowestoftgrit / Twitter @lowestoftGrit

PRESS & PUBLICITY

Hundreds of people fascinated by a town's former glories came together to learn about an exciting new project...
Grit Gathering, Lowestoft Journal, 27 January 2018
www.bit.ly/gritgatheringjournal

Putting The Grit back into Lowestoft...
Grit Project, Grapevine, 9 January 2018
www.bit.ly/grapevinegrit

As a heritage project puts The Grit back into Lowestoft and memories continue to be recalled, a fun-filled, free family day out will be showcased...
GritFest, Lowestoft Journal, 27 April 2018
www.bit.ly/gritfestfunforall

It's a free fun-filled family day out celebrating THE GRIT, Lowestoft's forgotten fishing village...
The Suffolk Coast, May 2018
www.bit.ly/suffolkcoastgrit

Historic beach village to be honoured as GritFest is staged...
GritFest, Lowestoft Journal, 21 May 2018
www.bit.ly/gritfestcentrestage

Spirit of lost fishing 'village' rises again...
Pearls from The Grit preview
Eastern Daily Press, 15 September 2018
www.bit.ly/spiritoflostvillage

An entertaining new show, which is touring venues across Suffolk, has opened to sell out performances in Lowestoft...
Pearls from The Grit preview
East Anglian Daily Times, 27 September 2018
www.bit.ly/fishingvillageshowcased

Funny, sad and thought-provoking in equal measure, it was a poignant picture of a lost Lowestoft. Wonderful to see it revived, celebrated and kept alive...
Pearls from The Grit, Wayne Savage review,
East Anglian Daily Times, 4 October 2018
www.bit.ly/thispoignantplay

BBC Radio 4 Making History, 12 & 19 June 2018
Dean Parkin won 'Top Town' with his 60-second piece on Lowestoft's The Grit about 'Happy' Welham and the First World War unexploded shell, and returned the following week with a story about Joseph Conrad's relationship with Lowestoft.
www.bit.ly/makinghistorygrit

LESSONS LEARNED

THE GRIT project exceeded all its targets, established Poetry People's credentials and several new partnerships. The project captured the imagination of Lowestoft people and built on their passion for the town's history. The story of The Grit is unique to Lowestoft, but the story of a lost community and its once thriving industry is universal, as was proved by the extraordinary response to *Pearls from The Grit* by audiences from across Suffolk and beyond.

The major lessons learned for the future are to be ruthlessly realistic about the timescale and budget of a project, and that if you believe passionately in a subject and strive for excellence, people will want to come on board.

TOO MANY ACTIVITIES HAPPENING AT THE SAME TIME

In our original project plan several major events and activities centred around the middle of the project (GritFest, the touring show and book publication were all scheduled for May/June 2018). Delivery of these three all together proved impossible and undesirable. Time was needed to explore and process outcomes – interviews, stories, photographs – that emerged from each activity, including the earlier schools workshops, residential care home sessions and Grit Gathering. The decision was taken in the spring that the touring show should take place in the autumn, and with all the additional information and audio recordings collected, the writing of the script took place between June and August. Spreading events out through the year generated consistent media and public interest which translated into large engaged audiences for *Pearls from The Grit* in September/ October 2018. Revising the book of *The Grit* has proved a much bigger undertaking than expected and it will now be published in autumn 2019.

UNDER-BUDGETING GRITFEST

Dean Parkin and Naomi Jaffa organised the UK's leading annual Aldeburgh Poetry Festival for two decades and their experience informed many aspects of planning GritFest and its programme. Running an open-air event in a public park presented a series of new challenges and the appointment of Becky Marshall-Potter as Project Manager proved fortuitous. Originally selected for her teaching background and suitability for the work with schools, it was Becky's extensive experience as co-founder/director of FolkEast (annual three day outdoor festival, 6,000 attenders) which proved invaluable for GritFest. Much of the site decoration and marquees where supplied at low cost due to Becky's contacts, and she knew all about external staging and tech, health & safety, first aid, licensing, stewarding and insurance. Without her input GritFest would never have been achievable, never mind so successful. Becky is now part of the Poetry People team of freelancers and had she been on board at the application stage of the project, the GritFest blueprint and budget would have been comprehensive and realistic.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS & UNDERSTANDING VOLUNTEER-RUN ORGANISATIONS

Lowestoft & East Suffolk Maritime Museum benefited greatly from being a partner on **THE GRIT**. As promised, the project raised visitor numbers, increased profile and helped secure new volunteers. But it has been a difficult period for the Museum which suffered the loss and ill health of leading members of its management committee, and so almost all their energy in 2018 had to focus on building maintenance and keeping the Museum open. Projected outcomes involving the Museum – a new installation and the video poems – had to be scaled down and re-imagined. This is also another lesson concerning the project's timeframe. When dealing with volunteer-run organisations, extra time has to be allowed for information-sharing, committee meetings and decision-making. Although its physical legacy in the Museum has been reduced, **THE GRIT** project demonstrated positive sustainable ways to bring in more people, attract schools and use artefacts for more creative work with children.

THE TOURING SHOW

Poetry People had never produced a live touring theatre show before and this area of activity was significantly under-budgeted in the original application. We didn't know what we didn't know! As the script developed, it became clear that the show required not two but three actors (playing five characters). This added an additional actor fee of £1,500, plus £250 travel. More rehearsal days were needed – a minimum of seven instead of the three in the application. Once the Director was engaged, the necessity of a stage manager became apparent (another £1,500 fee). The technical requirements of the show proved much more complex and expensive than anticipated: we had budgeted £2,500 and the final cost was nearly £6,000 but with generous in-kind support from a long-standing Poetry People supplier, the final invoice was reduced to £3,700. These oversights were down to lack of knowledge and experience, and also because the ambition and artistic vision of the show grew during the year of the project. Interest in the show had grown too, and because of the evidence of the quality and reach of **THE GRIT** project, valuable new relationships with individual donors were forged in September, and sufficient donations were secured to cover the additional costs.

LEGACY

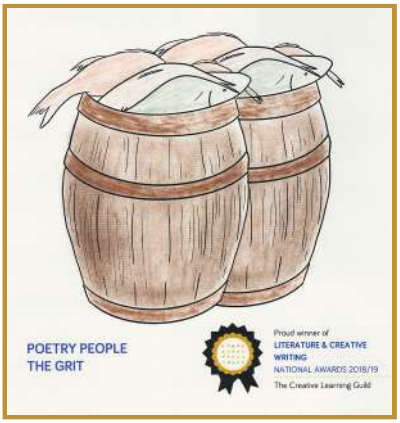
"We want to put The Grit back into Lowestoft" was stated in our first press release and the project has certainly put Lowestoft's almost forgotten fishing village back into Suffolk hearts and minds. The Grit is definitely back on the map and Phil Aves, manager of Lowestoft Rising's CEP, intends to name a new pathway leading to the site of the former village 'Grit Score'.

The legacy of the project keeps growing. Although initially planned as a one-off, the enthusiasm for another GritFest celebration day has been growing – online and from the 2018 participants and stall holders. As a result, the newly formed East Suffolk Council, together with Lowestoft Town Council, want Poetry People to organise a similar event in May 2020 as part of the development of a new park, The Ness (adjacent to the site of the former fishing village). The Key Stage 2 local history resource will also be used as part of this major Coastal Communities Fund development. Information about the fishing village will be included in a new permanent fisher girls display at the Maritime Museum, along with a special leaflet about The Grit.

The project's social media pages – on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram – will continue to be active to support the ongoing work of **THE GRIT**. Plans are underway for a second tour of *Pearls from The Grit* in autumn 2019, with expected National Lottery funding from Arts Council England. The five video poems, in addition to being embedded on the Maritime Museum's website and being shared online, will act as perfect trailers for the show. The *Pearls from The Grit* evaluation film will also be an invaluable fundraising tool.

With the revised book of *The Grit* to be published in autumn 2019, to coincide with the second theatre tour, the profile of the former fishing village and Lowestoft will continue to rise.

Winning a National Creative Learning Award for **THE GRIT** has established Poetry People's credentials as a significant provider of quality creative learning initiatives. A key legacy of **THE GRIT** is that it will enable us to deliver more ambitious community projects in the years ahead.



The clues in the title, Creative Learning Awards.
Creative because every single entry seeks
to innovate and find new ways to overcome
a myriad of challenges. Learning, because every initiative
is wrought from failure, resilience, evolution and triumph.
They have shown us the best that humanity can be.

Rob Young
Award-winning television, film & theatre writer
Judge, National Creative Learning Awards

GRIT GATHERING

What a great day yesterday, so many people and a good number of young people too. The interest in 'Lowestoft's Lost Village' seems to be growing stronger and stronger

Colin Dixon
President, Lowestoft Maritime Museum

SCHOOLS WORKSHOPS

I thought Lowestoft was boring and had no history but now I am amazed at how much history there is.

Year 5 pupil
Woods Loke Primary

MUSEUM WORKSHOP

The trip brought their learning to life and the children absolutely loved visiting the museum and being able to touch the artefacts

Lucy Robinson
Phoenix St Peter Primary School

GRITFEST

What a great day! So many people! Thank you so much for holding this fantastic free event. We had a great day and learnt a great deal about local history too

Christine Huckle
Facebook comment

GRITFEST

What a wonderful community event @LowestoftGrit is! A celebration of Lowestoft's lost fishing village and our town's rich character and heritage. So lovely to be a part of it.

Zeb Soanes, BBC broadcaster
Twitter post

PEARLS FROM THE GRIT

It was just wonderful! I laughed, I learned and I got goose bumps. The mix of real story, real voices, music, photos and the set. So clever.

Audience member
The Bethel Theatre, Lowestoft

VIDEO POEMS & EVALUATION FILMS

VIDEO POEM: Climbing Up The Walls
www.bit.ly/gritclimbingup

VIDEO POEM: Cobblestones & Fishbones
www.bit.ly/gritcobblestones

VIDEO POEM: Keep A'Gorn
www.bit.ly/gritrising

VIDEO POEM: The Grit Rising
www.bit.ly/gritrising

VIDEO POEM:The Unlucky Thirteen
www.bit.ly/gritunlucky13

EVALUATION FILM: Pearls from The Grit
A Celebration of the Touring Show
www.bit.ly/pearlscelebration

EVALUATION FILM: Workshops in Schools
www./bit.ly/gritschools

EVALUATION FILM: GritFest, A Day to Remember
www./bit.ly/gritfest2018

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A BIG THANK YOU TO...

All the volunteers who gave so much time and expertise

All the primary school teachers for their energy and commitment

All the private donors whose generosity greatly assisted the *Pearls from The Grit* tour

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INK Festival & Julia Sowerbutts Leiston Press & Glenn Barnes The Lowestoft Journal

Lowestoft Maritime Museum, Colin Dixon & Jim Aguss

Lowestoft Rising Cultural Education Partnership & Phil Aves

Lowestoft Town Council Orwell Housing Association & Fay Larkworthy

Silk Pearce Design Group, Rob Steer & Jack Pearce Pete Smith Photography

Suffolk Arts Service & Jayne Knight Suffolk Museums & Jayne Austin

PARTICIPATING CARE HOMES

Levington Court, Marram Green, Nelson Court, Morton Peto House, Pitches View

PARTICIPATING PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Blundeston, Carlton Colville, Oulton Broad, Pakefield

Phoenix St Peter, Roman Hill, St Mary's, Woods Loke

PEARLS FROM THE GRIT VENUES

Avenue Theatre, Bethel Theatre, Christ Church Halls, The Long Shop Museum

Museum of East Anglian Life, New Cut Arts Centre, Seagull Theatre

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HERITAGE FUND

LOWESTOFT MARITIME MUSEUM

Lowestoft Town Council

LOWESTOFT RISING

Suffolk County Council

POETRY PEOPLE / GRIT PROJECT TEAM

Nathan Berry, Naomi Jaffa, Jo Leverett, Becky Marshall-Potter

Dean Parkin, Chloe Pearson, Peter Spedding, Mischi Vernetti