



Historic England

Project Rejuvenate

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Final Report of Kent Implementation Stage 2024

Annie Partridge and Andrew Richardson



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Summary

This report details the 2024 Kent-based version of Project Rejuvenate, Historic England's exploration of how heritage and archaeology can be used for building self-determination and resilience in vulnerable young people. In Kent, Rejuvenate is founded on a partnership between local archaeological and heritage organisations and the Kent Youth Justice Team, working together to help young people reach their full potential.

Project Rejuvenate began with feasibility and planning (2019-20) followed by a development year (2021-22) which tested out logistics and practicalities, enabled feedback from participants and maintained and development local partnerships. These stages fed directly into the design for the 2023 pilot schemes in Kent and Wiltshire. The evaluation report from 2023 detailed lessons learned and impact in a way that enabled a more refined project to be developed and delivered in 2024.

The Project Rejuvenate development phase was funded by Historic England and Wessex Archaeology. The first pilot was generously funded by The Historic England Foundation, The Swire Trust, Edward Vinson 1957 Charity and Rockthorn. The 2024 pilot extension in Kent was generously funded by Ecclesiastical through their Movement for Good award.

Contributors

This report was co-authored by Annie Partridge and Andrew Richardson of Isle Heritage CIC. It includes written and photographic contributions from staff members of the Kent Youth Justice Team and the National Trust.

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Front cover image: Young people with the Kent Youth Justice Team, White Cliffs of Dover, June 2024 (Image: Isle Heritage CIC)

Archive location

Historic England Archives; Isle Heritage CIC Archive

Date of survey/research/investigation

The main series of Project Rejuvenate (Kent) 2024 activity sessions were undertaken on Thursdays between 6th June and 25th July 2024. Additional sessions were undertaken between 3rd October and 21st November 2024. This report was written in November-December 2024.

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Contents

| | |
|--|------|
| Glossary and Abbreviations | viii |
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Background | 1 |
| Previous Work | 1 |
| Moving to the Expansion Phase | 2 |
| Project Delivery | 3 |
| Project Managers and Resourcing | 3 |
| Delivery Partners | 3 |
| Programme Delivery | 4 |
| Sessions at the White Cliffs of Dover | 7 |
| Battle of Britain Museum and Hawkinge cemetery | 13 |
| Fort Burgoyne..... | 14 |
| Methodology | 17 |
| What does the evaluation process seek to find out? | 17 |
| How was the evaluation undertaken?..... | 17 |
| Evaluation of young people | 18 |
| Evaluation of project partners and adults | 19 |
| Limitations and adaptations | 20 |
| Key Findings..... | 21 |
| Delivering intended outcomes | 21 |
| Case Studies | 28 |
| Key Stakeholder Observations | 32 |
| Kent Youth Justice Team..... | 32 |
| National Trust | 35 |
| Lessons Learned and Recommendations..... | 37 |
| Successes | 37 |
| AQA Modules | 37 |
| Blockers and Challenges | 38 |
| Recommendations for future work..... | 39 |

Conclusions 41

Bibliography 42

Illustrations

Figure 1: Staged delivery plan for Rejuvenate (after Monckton *et al* 2024) 1

Figure 2: Drone shot of D2 HAA battery (IHCIC, 16th June 2022)..... 8

Figure 3: The elephant hut before the first session (IHCIC, 6th June 2024) 8

Figure 4: Walking along the cliffs (IHCIC, 13th June 2024) 10

Figure: 5: Progress on the Elephant Hut in session 5 (IHCIC, 4th July 2024)..... 10

Figures 6 & 7: Progress on the final session of the front and back walls of the hut (IHCIC, 18th July 2024) 11

Figure 8: German war graves at Hawkinge cemetery (IHCIC, 2023) 14

Figures 9 & 10: Views of Fort Burgoyne (IHCIC, 2023) 16

Tables

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1: Activity Sessions in June and July 2024 | 5 |
| Table 2: Additional sessions October to November 2024 | 5 |
| Table 3: Attendance per session | 6 |
| Table 4: Sessions and time spent per young person | 6 |
| Table 5: Proposed evaluation method | 18 |
| Table 6: Outcome 1 | 21 |
| Table 7: Outcome 2 | 23 |
| Table 8 : Outcome 3 | 24 |
| Table 9: Outcome 4 | 26 |
| Table 10: Outcome 5 | 27 |

Glossary and Abbreviations

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| HE | Historic England |
| IHCIC | Isle Heritage CIC |
| KYJT | Youth Justice Team in Kent |
| NT | National Trust |
| WCCP | White Cliffs Countryside Partnership |
| YP | Young person in the cohort of the project |
| YP 'A' 'B' 'C' etc | Anonymous identifiers for participating young people in Kent |

Introduction

Background

The work that is the subject of this report formed the Kent-based part of Stage 5 ‘repeat and expansion’ of Historic England’s ‘Project Rejuvenate’. This stage of the project was preceded by a feasibility study and a project development stage funded by Historic England (HE project no. 8493), completed in autumn 2022 (Partridge 2022), and the main pilot which was completed in autumn 2023 (Monckton *et al* 2024). The project design of this stage built on the pilot to enhance the data on the most effective ways to improve the lives of vulnerable young people, with a particular view to enhancing life opportunities for those at risk of falling out of the mainstream school system and those at risk of, or already involved with, the criminal justice system through the implementation of a heritage-themed participatory intervention.

Previous Work

The development of Rejuvenate began with feasibility and planning in 2019/20, followed by a development year in 2021, and a detailed feasibility study which was carried out in 2022. The Kent study was funded by Historic England, whilst a similar project in Wiltshire was funded by Wessex Archaeology. Further details of the Wessex project can be found in the main Project Rejuvenate report and will not be repeated here (*ibid*). The Kent study was undertaken by Isle Heritage CIC (IHCIC) and was completed on 29th September 2022 (Partridge 2022). The different stages of Rejuvenate are summarised in Fig. 1 below.

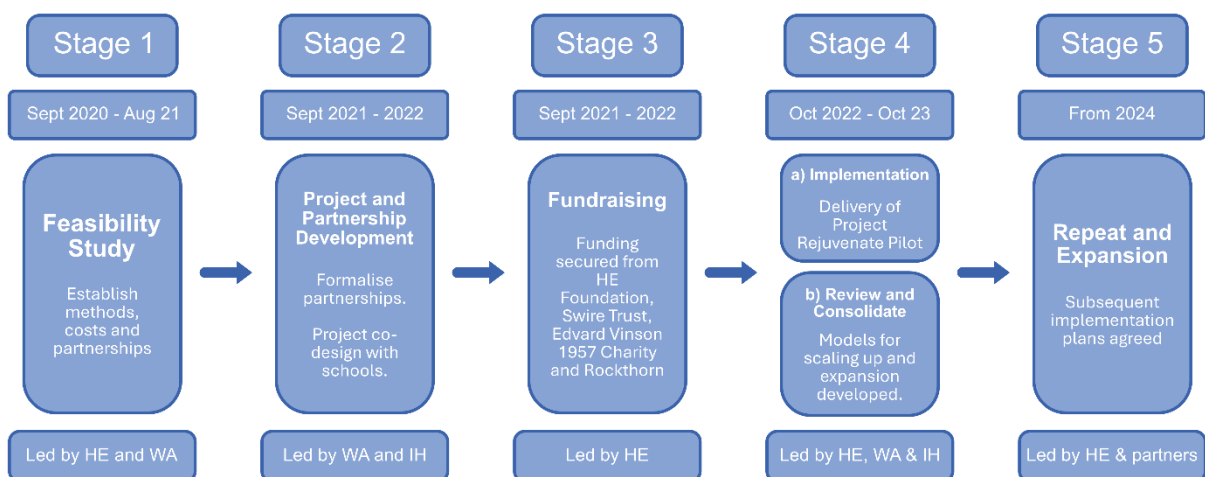


Figure 1: Staged delivery plan for Rejuvenate (after Monckton *et al* 2024)

The feasibility study was undertaken to further develop and test approaches to creating and running heritage-based interventions with young people who are at risk of coming, or have come, into contact with the criminal justice system. This development stage saw the establishment of a partnership with the Kent Youth Justice Team (KYJT) to undertake two feasibility sessions in 2022, in which several young people participated. These young people had been directed by a court to undertake a programme of restorative justice with the KYJT, who then referred them to the program. From the lessons learnt from the feasibility study it was possible to reevaluate and adjust the design of the forthcoming pilot program to ensure it was tailored to provide the best opportunities for the young people involved.

In this early stage, the establishment and creation of working partnerships was critical to the future of the project. The success of this project was linked to the enthusiasm for the realisation of the project aims by all the partners. The lessons learned by all those involved in the feasibility study directly contributed to the successful delivery of the Rejuvenate pilot in 2023. The Rejuvenate Pilot was based around a model of eight half-day activity sessions, held at five different locations in east Kent.

The pilot project of 2023 was considered a success, albeit with low participation numbers, and IHCIC were commissioned by Historic England to undertake a repeat during the Expansion Phase in 2024, to see if the same results could be replicated. This followed the same general design as the pilot in 2023, with adaptations to the program from lessons learnt during the pilot phase.

Moving to the Expansion Phase

Moving to the expanded implementation phase was straightforward. The established network of partners created during the feasibility and pilot phases were keen to see the project repeated and further developed. The Kent Youth Justice Team were very enthusiastic about working with the heritage organisations and IHCIC again but were clear from the outset that there would be little chance of getting participants to come to the full eight sessions, based on the number of hours left on the 2024 cohort's reparations. This meant that the program designed in 2023, which was designed on the basis of each young person aiming to attend all sessions, would need adapting (detailed further in Project Delivery below). In addition, responding to the feedback from the National Trust and KYJT, the sessions were designed to have more of an activity focus, and not be so preoccupied with tours or establishing a historical background immediately. The overall program was designed to be flexible, activity focused, and to allow the young people freedom of agency.

Project Delivery

Project Managers and Resourcing

The overall Project Rejuvenate pilot was project managed by Linda Monckton, Head of Wellbeing and Inclusion Strategy at Historic England. Within Isle Heritage CIC the project managed by Annie Partridge, with Andrew Richardson. The budget allocated for the delivery of the Kent pilot project was £33,655.00 (excluding VAT).

Delivery Partners

Isle Heritage CIC (project development, liaison, delivery and reporting)

Isle Heritage consists of three full-time staff, Andrew Richardson, Annie Partridge and Paul-Samual Armour, all of whom are experienced professional archaeologists with a solid track record in community archaeology and public engagement. Andrew and Annie were the primary staff assigned to this project and have been involved with the design and development of the Kent pilot since the early stages of Rejuvenate. Paul-Samual provided additional support and capacity as required, particularly in delivery of the activity sessions.

Kent Youth Justice Team (recruitment, supervision and welfare of young people)

Recruitment of young people to participate in the project was fundamental to its success. The partner in the Kent pilot project was the Kent Youth Justice Team, based within the Children, Young People and Education Service of Kent County Council. This team works across the county of Kent with young people who have become involved with the youth justice system. The team includes case and session workers who accompany and supervise young people undertaking a range of out-of-court disposals and reparations activities. The Kent Youth Justice Team support the young people they work with in undertaking simple formal qualifications as part of their activities.

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/young-people/youth-justice/support-for-young-offenders>

Land Trust- Fort Burgoyne, Dover (site owner)

The Land Trust owns and manages public open spaces, such as country parks, nature reserves and woodlands for community benefit. They own and manage a major late nineteenth century fortification, Fort Burgoyne, located to the northeast of Dover Castle. This fort was in the hands of the Ministry of Defence until purchased by the Land Trust within the last decade. The fort continued to be modified during its use by the army and includes First and Second World War and Cold War structures and features.

<https://thelandtrust.org.uk/>

White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (site management and assistance with activity, Fort Burgoyne)

The White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (WCCP) was established in 1989 to help landowners to care for the special coast and countryside of Dover and Folkestone & Hythe Districts. Funded by 23 organisations, the main partners are Dover District Council, Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Kent Country Council, Eurotunnel and Natural England. The Partnership runs an education shelter at Samphire Hoe, and WCCP staff are very experienced at working with volunteers and young people from across the local community. Within Rejuvenate, the main role of the WCCP was to assist with the activity session at Fort Burgoyne.

<https://www.whitecliffscountryside.org.uk/>

National Trust- White Cliffs & Winchelsea Portfolio (site owner and assistance with activities, White Cliffs of Dover)

One of the most iconic landscapes in England, the White Cliffs of Dover occupy both a symbolic and actual role in the history of the British Isles. The National Trust recently acquired a larger landholding behind the cliffs, including very significant historic defence sites associated with the First and Second World Wars in particular. An active cohort of National Trust volunteers assist with the conservation of the natural and historic environment at the site. National Trust staff and volunteers are well-used to running community engagement activities, including with young people. Within the Kent pilot of Rejuvenate, six of the eight activity sessions were held on the National Trust property at the White Cliffs, and the additional sessions were also held here.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/the-white-cliffs-of-dover>

Programme Delivery

The main programme was delivered over an eight-week period between 6th June and 25th July 2024, with activities taking place every Thursday between 10:00 to 14:00. All sessions were delivered as planned with no cancellations, although the session on 18th July was ended at 12:30 due to extremely hot weather. Sessions were designed to be effective both for participants who were attending only a few sessions, and those that were able to attend over a longer period. This was achieved by having flexible, adaptable, sessions and a close working relationship with the NT, who were able to quickly facilitate sudden changes in the schedule. For example, YP who had missed tours of the site were offered the opportunity to have those tours when they next attended.

In addition, a further seven sessions were planned from 3rd October to 21st November 2024. These were shorter sessions, starting around 10:00 and finishing around 12:30. Some of

these sessions did not go ahead due to KYJT staffing shortages and the session on 10th October was shortened due to the wet weather.

Tables 1 and 2 list the dates, locations and local partners for each of the activity sessions, as delivered. As learnt from the pilot study, the young people liked having something to return to each week and a goal to work towards, so the majority of the project was based at the White Cliffs of Dover. Two sessions were planned outside the White Cliffs, at the Battle of Britain Museum and Commonwealth Graves in Hawkinge, and at Fort Burgoyne also in Dover. These were kept on the program due to the positive reception on the 2023 pilot program. All of the additional sessions were facilitated by the National Trust at the White Cliffs of Dover.

Table 1: Activity Sessions in June and July 2024

| Session | Session dates | Location | Local Partners |
|---------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Thursday 6 th June | White Cliffs | National Trust |
| 2 | Thursday 13 th June | White Cliffs | National Trust |
| 3 | Thursday 20 th June | Battle of Britain Museum and cemetery, Hawkinge | n/a |
| 4 | Thursday 27 th June | White Cliffs | National Trust |
| 5 | Thursday 4 th July | White Cliffs | National Trust |
| 6 | Thursday 11 th July | White Cliffs | National Trust |
| 7 | Thursday 18 th July | White Cliffs | National Trust |
| 8 | Thursday 25 th July | Fort Burgoyne | Land Trust/ White Cliffs Countryside Partnership |

Table 2: Additional sessions October to November 2024

| Session | Session dates | Location | Local Partners |
|---------|------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 9 | Thursday 3 rd October | White Cliffs | National Trust |
| 10 | Thursday 10 th October | White Cliffs | National Trust |
| 11 | Thursday 17 th October | White Cliffs | National Trust |
| 12 | Thursday 24 th October | White Cliffs | National Trust |
| 13 | Thursday 7 th November | White Cliffs | National Trust |
| 14 | Thursday 14 th November | White Cliffs | National Trust |
| 15 | Thursday 21 st November | White Cliffs | National Trust |

A total of six young people, anonymised as individuals 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E' and 'F', participated over the initial eight weeks. An additional six (individuals 'G', 'H', 'I', 'J', 'K', and 'L') participated in the second batch of sessions in October to November. The latter included a young person (YP) from the 2023 program, YP 'J'. YP 'E' from the 2024 July program also participated in the second batch of sessions. Most of the young people were between 15 to

18 years of age, although YP 'B' was aged 14. All were male and resident in urban locations in east Kent. None of the individuals spoke English as an additional language, but at least three were known to have non-English family members.

Table 3: Attendance per session

| Session | Young Person Nominal | Total YP in Attendance | Absences | KYJT staff | IHCIC Staff | Other staff |
|---------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | A, B, C | 3 | 1 (refusal) | 2 | 2 | 1 (NT) |
| 2 | B, D, E | 3 | 2 (refusals) | 2 | 2 | 1 (NT) |
| 3 | B, C, F, G | 4 | 1 (refusal) | 3 | 2 | - |
| 4 | B, C, E | 3 | 2 (refusals) | 3 | 2 | 1 (NT) |
| 5 | A, B, C, D, F | 5 | - | 4 | 2 | 1 (NT) |
| 6 | B | 1 | 2 (refusals) | 1 | 2 | - |
| 7 | B, D, E, F | 4 | 1 (refusal) | 4 | 2 | 1 (NT) |
| 8 | B, D, E, F | 4 | 1 on site refusal (rain) | 3 | 2 | 2 (WCCP) |
| 9 | H, I | 2 | - | 2 | 1 | 1 (NT) |
| 10 | H, L | 2 | - | 2 | 1 | - |
| 11 | E, H, I, L | 4 | - | 2 | 1 | - |
| 12 | E, H, I | 3 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 (NT) |
| 13 | H, I | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 (NT) |
| 14 | H, J, K | 3 | - | 2 | 1 | 2 (NT) |
| 15 | H | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 (NT) |

Table 4: Sessions and time spent per young person

| Young Person Nominal | Month joined | Number of sessions attended | Approx. hours |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| A | June | 2 | 8 |
| B | June | 8 | 28 |
| C | June | 4 | 16 |
| D | June | 4 | 16 |
| E | June | 6 (inc. 2 additional sessions) | 21 |
| F | June | 4 (refused in session) | 12 |
| G | June | 1 (removed part way session) | 2.5 |
| H | October | 7 | 17 |
| I | October | 4 | 10 |
| J | November | 1 | 2.5 |
| K | November | 1 | 2.5 |
| L | October | 2 | 5 |

Overall, attendance and participation by young people was significantly greater than for the 2023 pilot, 12 individuals taking part across 15 sessions, compared to 3 individuals over 8 sessions in 2023. One young person attended all of the sessions held in June and July 2024, and one was involved in both the main and additional sessions. All of the main session participants came to more than one session.

The reasons for not participating ranged from citing illness or injury, not being at the designated collection point and uncontactable, or they expressed a disinterest in the session. There was no direct adverse consequence for not participating in a session, but the length of the sessions did mean those who did attend could finish their reparations programs quicker. The reasons cited by the young people for not attending were accepted by the team but were often masking other reasons for non-attendance. These reasons could range from an overindulgence in substances (typically alcohol, but others too), feeling uncomfortable about being in unfamiliar situations or with groups of people, erratic sleep patterns (broadly caused by substance abuse, or computer gaming, or living in an unstable family situation), or the weather.

Sessions at the White Cliffs of Dover

Six of the main sessions (75%) were held on the National Trust property at the White Cliffs of Dover. All the additional sessions in October-November were held there. The White Cliffs themselves are amongst the most famous landscapes in the world, with stunning views across the Straits of Dover to the French coast. The National Trust estate here includes the South Foreland Lighthouse, as well as an extensive range of military remains, of which the most notable are the Second World War coastal gun batteries at Wanstone (with positions for two 15" guns) and Fan Bay (positions for three 6" guns), as well as the D2 Heavy Anti-Aircraft (HAA) battery.

The White Cliffs were chosen as the focal point for the project because the range of sites and facilities available are well-suited to Rejuvenate. From the pilot project it was noted that having a project, or goal, to work towards was beneficial to the enthusiasm of the team, and therefore encouraged reattendance in the young people. The National Trust were able to offer a site similar to the one that had been worked on during the 2023 pilot, exclusively for the project, on the D2 Heavy Anti-Aircraft (HAA) battery. The structure chosen was an air raid shelter (one of several referred to by the National Trust as 'elephant huts') associated with the D2 HAA battery. The shelter had collapsed and been covered over at some point after the war, and this offered the team a project to clear and partially excavate. The structure would have taken the form of a concrete and brick structure, with an arched corrugated iron roof, which would originally have been covered with soil and turfed. This was an ideal site for the young people as there was a concrete base and brick walls to aim for under the soil, and the overburden was of limited archaeological interest so could be removed with heavy tools. Furthermore, the wider White Cliffs site has many opportunities for diversionary activities should the session require a different direction. The National Trust were able to provide a member of staff (Beatrice Hayley) to support in some of the sessions.

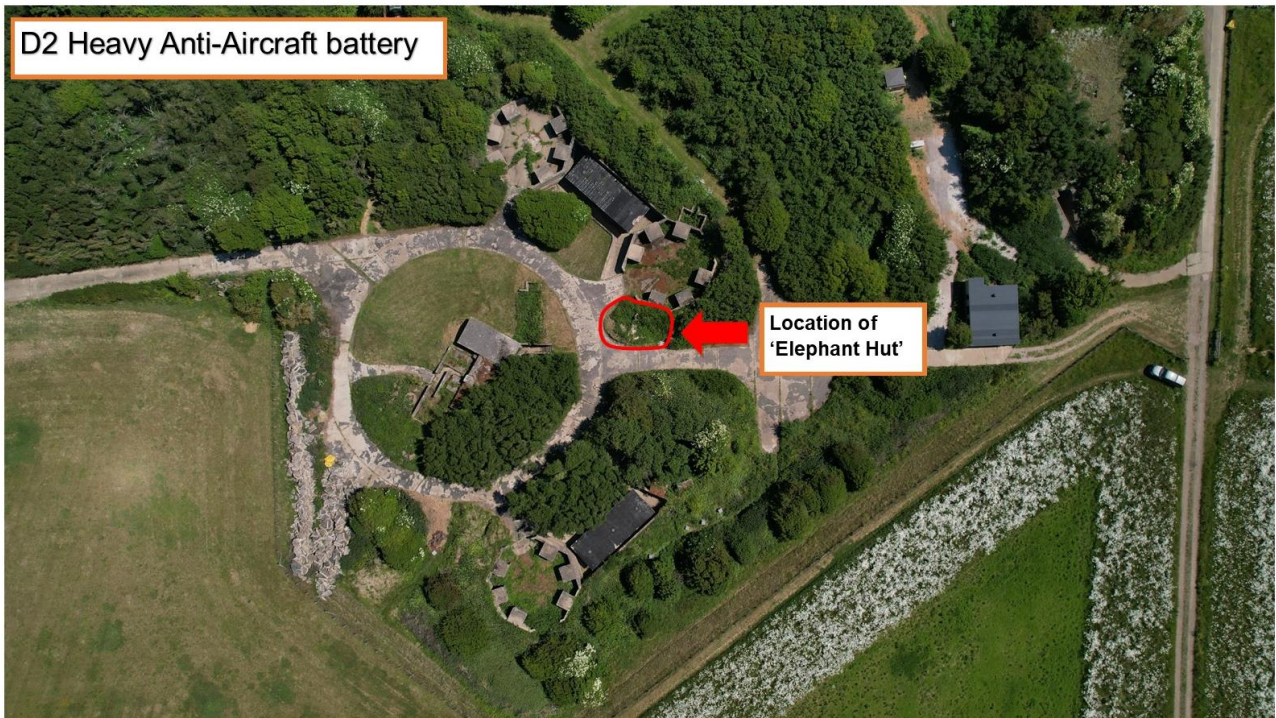


Figure 2: Drone shot of D2 HAA battery (IHCIC, 16th June 2022)



Figure 3: The elephant hut before the first session (IHCIC, 6th June 2024)

The first session at the White Cliffs took place on 6th June. The session started with a tour of the D2 HAA battery and the position of 'Jane', one of the 15" guns of the neighbouring Wanstone battery. The young people were not very engaged at the start but warmed up to the tour as it progressed, and they began to ask questions. The excavation part of the activity was well-received, with all of the young people getting involved with the work. The aim of the session was to work away at the entrance of the hut, to clear the concrete steps leading into the shelter, and to remove the vegetation off the front. Gardening is an activity that the YP do not seem to like, possibly because other reparation programs are garden-focussed and they are tired of the repetition.

The second session at the White Cliffs took place on 13th June. This session started with a tour of the Fan Bay Deep Shelter, which is very popular with the young people. One of the young people, 'E', refused to wear a hard hat so could not participate in the tour. A member of the KYJT and IHCIC took him back to the excavation, but he did not want to participate in that either so was taken off site. This particular young person had a difficult home life and getting them involved in the activities they did not want to participate in was initially challenging. This was his first attendance with the KYJT, and he was clearly very nervous of the new people he was meeting, both adults and other young people. However, on future sessions his attitude improved very considerably, with more contact time and with getting to know the team better (see below). The other young people in the session were enthusiastic about the Fan Bay tour and enjoyed participating in the continued clearance of the elephant shelter.



Figure 4: Walking along the cliffs (IHCIC, 13th June 2024)

Session 4, on 27th June, started with a tour of the cross-channel 15” gun positions ‘Jane’ and ‘Clem’, which together formed Wanstone Battery. The group were generally excited about the tour and engaged well. YP ‘B’ was especially excited about the intact WW2 glass in the windows of the crew shelter at ‘Clem’ and couldn’t believe that it had survived for so long. YP ‘E’ came with a one-on-one worker this week and did not seem to enjoy the tour very much. He later said to Andrew that he did not enjoy the history aspect of the sessions. However, his enthusiasm was almost immediately transformed once he was given tools and began to dig on the excavation of the air-raid shelter; this, it turned out, he enjoyed and he, and the other

participants, really got stuck into the excavation task this session.



Figure: 5: Progress on the Elephant Hut in session 5 (IHCIC, 4th July 2024)

Session 5 was held on 4th July. It was the last session for YP 'C' and he had requested a BBQ, along with his friend YP 'A'. YP 'F' came with his one-on-one worker, but as they arrived early Andrew took them on a tour of gun position 'Jane' and over to Fan Bay. The rest of the group arrived and started on the excavation. The weather was hot so it was decided to stop the excavation and go for a walk to South Foreland Lighthouse before having the BBQ. The BBQ was generally held to be a success but there was a bit of sitting around waiting for it to cook. Everyone seemed to be in a good mood, relaxed, engaged, and with good natured conversation.

Session 7 was poorly attended on 11th July. Only YP 'B' came, and as he had already finished his reparation hours, he did not complete the whole session. YP 'B' was full of energy during the session, possibly because he was the only participant and had a lot of focussed adult attention.

The final session of the main program was on 18th July, and the weather was extremely hot, therefore the session was cut short. There was a lot of grumbling from the group about the heat, but they achieved a lot despite the weather.



Figures 6 & 7: Progress on the front and back walls of the hut (IHCIC, 18th July 2024)

Additional sessions at the White Cliffs of Dover

The additional sessions started in October and continued until 21st November 2024 (with at least one further session scheduled in December at the time of writing). These sessions were shorter and focused on the excavation of the elephant hut, although tours were added where it felt it was appropriate. These sessions were shortened because there was a logistical issue with the distances some of the YP would need to travel to get to site (some were in the car for over an hour each way), and from previous experience the team were aware that many of the participants would not make collection for an earlier start. However, the shorter sessions worked in the project's favour in some respects, as there was less time to do the activity the focus of the group was much more engaged on the tasks. These length sessions are in line with the other reparation programs so there was an element of familiarity from the participants with expectations within that time.

The archaeological result of the project is that the air raid shelter ('elephant hut') worked on has been cleared of vegetation and overburden, and much more of the structure is now visible. In the interior, parts of the collapsed roof have been exposed, and it seems probable that most of the roof survives in a collapsed state within the building. The plan at present is to continue excavation of this in future, to expose the collapsed roof but leave it *in situ*, to illustrate how these structures decayed in the decades following the abandonment of the site by the army. Very considerable progress towards this end has been achieved by the young people participating in Rejuvenate 2024.

Battle of Britain Museum and Hawkinge cemetery

This session, which took place on 20th June, comprised a visit to the Battle of Britain Museum at Hawkinge, followed by a visit to the neighbouring cemetery to view war graves dating to the Second World War. This session was well received in 2023 during the pilot program so was repeated.

The Battle of Britain Museum at Hawkinge occupies part of the former RAF Hawkinge station, the nearest fighter station to enemy-occupied France during the Second World War. The museum, operated by the Kent Battle of Britain Museum Trust, has been based at this site since 1980, and includes the world's largest collection of Battle of Britain memorabilia, with parts of over 700 crashed aircraft on display (www.kbobm.org). For security reasons no photography by visitors is permitted at museum, therefore no phones are permitted in the venue.

All of the young people engaged extremely well with the museum, and clearly enjoyed the visit, spending a lot of time looking at the many exhibits and engaging with questions. For two participants this was their first session. YP 'F' had one-on-one supervision as he had autism which sometimes impacted his ability to engage with reparations, and the KYJT did not know how he was going to react during the session. He was very engaged and took time considering the exhibitions and reading the texts, albeit away from the noisy and boisterous nature of rest of the group. He stated that he wanted to bring his family to the museum in the future, and his father would especially enjoy the exhibits. The second new starter, YP 'G', was also engaged and displayed extensive knowledge on the period but was very high energy. By the end of the visit he was deliberately running and hiding from the KYJT staff, and after lunch he was removed from the session by a member of the KJYT because it was felt that his unwillingness to follow instructions was not safe for an activity which was an open space. This unfortunately meant he was not considered an appropriate candidate for the activities at the White Cliffs of Dover.

Lunch was eaten at the museum cafe. During this lunch the group had a discussion about vaping, and whether the YP considered themselves addicted. Only YP 'C' (age 17) smoked traditional cigarettes, the others smoked vapes. YP 'B' (age 14) said he did not consider it an addictive habit, although he did recognise that it was expensive to maintain as he smoked so much. Despite it being illegal to sell vapes to under-18s in the UK, the group from 2023 had a similar demographic of the older participants smoking traditional cigarettes and the younger ones smoking vapes. In 2023 a participant made a comment about his 10-year old brother being addicted to vaping.

After lunch, the group visited the war graves in neighbouring Hawkinge cemetery, many of which dated to the Battle of Britain; some being those of pilots mentioned in the museum. The visit to the cemetery helped to bring home the reality of war and provided opportunity for reflection and conversation about the cost of human conflict, as well as more general themes around life, death and family. The young people were particularly struck by the ages of the individuals and the range of nationalities on the grave stones. All of the participants were respectful of the cemetery and seemed to appreciate the experience.



Figure 8: German war graves at Hawkinge cemetery (IHCIC, 2023)

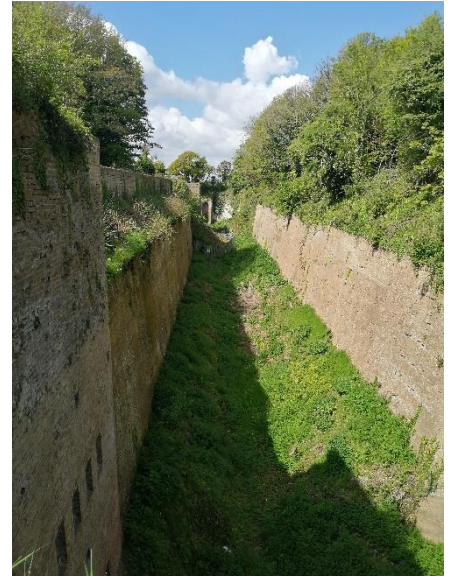
Fort Burgoyne

The last session was held at Fort Burgoyne, Dover, on 25th July. Fort Burgoyne is a late nineteenth-century fort, which overlooks the town of Dover and Dover Castle, which lies a short distance to the south-west. The complex includes structures and modifications dating to the twentieth century, especially the Second World War, but also including First World

War, inter-war, and post-war/Cold War phases. This location had featured on the 2023 program and had been well received by the participants on that program. Isle Heritage CIC and Kent Youth Justice Team staff were accompanied by a member of the White Cliffs Countryside Project (WCCP), who guided the party around the exterior and interior of the main fort.

The session was based on a practical activity hosted by the WCCP who needed a hand with cutting back vegetation ahead of a summer open day at the Fort. The area that needed attention was a brick structure, set back from the main fort, which used to be where the ammunition was made. The weather was unfortunately not favourable, being drizzly and turning into rain before lunch. YP 'F' had come to the session but had refused to come out of the car after seeing the conditions. An attempt was made to coax him into the session but he was adamant he was not going to participate, so was taken home. The rest of the participants were not too keen on the thought of 'gardening' but with the help of the IHClC and KYJT adults, they got into the activity after a while. YP 'B' was removed from the session before lunch because he became bored and disruptive with YP 'E'. Once YP 'B' had left, YP 'E' became sullen and had some one-on-one time with a KYJT member. He had disclosed that he had been involved in an argument with a friend's mother, who had beaten him up, and he was finding it difficult to get into the headspace for the session. He decided to stay in the session but was not keen on the gardening, so it was decided to start the tour of the interior of the fort.

The fort interior tour was kindly hosted by the WCCP and well received by all. The tour certainly benefited from the shorter time in comparison to the 2023 program where it was the whole session. The YP were interested but this particular audience would not have managed a longer tour without losing interest. The inclement weather halted any thoughts of returning back to the activity, so after an extended lunch the session was ended.



Figures 9 & 10: Views of Fort Burgoyne (IHCIC, 2023)

Methodology

What does the evaluation process seek to find out?

Evaluation of the project and its impact took place during and after the delivery of the activity programme. The evaluation process sought out the opinions of the young people on the programme, their wellbeing, as well as those of the adults participating. It was based on the model used in the 2023 program as this was found to be the most effective way to evaluate the project, and to provide a comparison across the years.

As part of the project development, self-determination theory has been used by the partners to create a project specific framework for evaluation. Whilst the evaluation in Salisbury and Kent differed, the end goal of evaluating self-determination was the same. Self-determination theory is based on the idea that people are naturally curious and self-motivated, and this plays an important role in well-being. However, this natural state can be reduced by the social environment people live in. It is argued that people have greater self-determination when they have three basic psychological needs met. These are autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

- Autonomy – people being able to take direct action that will result in change and being in control of their own behaviour
- Competence – people learning different skills and feeling they have the skills needed to achieve their goals
- Relatedness – people experiencing a sense of belonging and attachment to other people

Observations and informal questions asked during the evaluation were framed to gather this information.

How was the evaluation undertaken?

The proposed evaluation method is summarised in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Proposed evaluation method

| Evaluation method | | When/How often |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Quantitative measures | Statistics from Kent Youth Justice Team – to include feedback from KYJT caseworkers | Statistics for participants and control group will be gathered Pre, during and post project in conjunction with the KYJT |
| | Recording of number of sessions and numbers taking part including young people, staff and facilitators | Each session |
| | Recognised, ethically approved wellbeing evaluation toolkit to be used to enable project to be compared with other national/regional projects eg UCL Museum Wellbeing Measures Toolkit | Pre and post 8 sessions |
| Qualitative measures | Photos and film footage if possible, but this must be agreed in advance with KYJT and must maintain the young peoples' anonymity | Each session |
| | Evaluation from staff accompanying YP on sessions | Each session |
| | Evaluation questions from KYJT lead | After 8 th session |
| | Evaluation questions from National Trust | After 8 th session |
| | General notes on each session including any quotes from the young people | End of each session |
| | Informal interviews with some staff or facilitators | Throughout |

Evaluation of young people

A casual, informal, approach was adopted to data collection from the young people. An attempt was made to follow the Wessex model of using a more formal, paper-based evaluation, but this was not successful. The reasons behind this are discussed below in limitations.

When designing the data collection process, it became clear that the young people who would be coming to the sessions might not be able to understand certain terms, such as the concepts of 'heritage', or 'wellbeing'. There was also the possibility that English would be a second language for some of the participants, based on experience of the project in 2023.

Another consideration was that deep questions about emotional state might not be welcome, especially by those individuals who may be going through other forms of support through the Kent Youth Justice Team or social services. There was a concern about question fatigue or that the answers may be unrealistic because those asking them were strangers. Therefore, it was designed to record the thoughts and feelings of the participants through observation and non-intrusive questioning, kept in note form at the end of each session.

It is to be noted that most of this cohort were extremely communicative and very happy to express their opinions.

Dealing with negativity

Given the larger number of participants there was naturally a larger variety in the types of responses received; most positive but some negative. Negative comments are not ignored or disregarded in this project, but it is a worthwhile exercise to try and understand where some of the negativity was coming from.

The vast majority of the participants understood what the reparations program was, how it worked, and why they were there. For the most part the YP wanted to complete their hours, preferably in as short a time as possible, and this project offered longer hours so attendance would reduce their hours quicker. However, a very small majority made repeated comments about how the work was like 'slave labour' because they were working for free, they didn't see the point of the program, and they should be paid to do this sort of work. These comments were prevalent between two individuals, YP 'A' and YP 'D', when they were on site together, but occasionally from others, especially once they heard the remarks being made. Although there was an element of bravado among their peers to these remarks, neither YP 'A' or YP 'D' felt that the program was for them and they weren't interested in it. YP 'D' had not changed his opinion of the project by the end of his last session, but he did recognise the effort that had gone into arranging it for his benefit.

Evaluation of project partners and adults

The adults participating were also informally questioned during and at the end of each session. Helen Dingham, the lead from Kent Youth Justice Team, and Beatrice Hayley, the National Trust staff member assigned to the project, answered follow up questions.

Limitations and adaptations

The limitations in the evaluation methodology were recognised in 2023 but limited changes could be made to the existing format. These limitations included:

- Access to the young people before the sessions was not possible. The Kent Youth Justice Team had invited the young people to come to the sessions but did not know for certain who would engage until the day. Therefore, pre-session evaluation was not possible.
- The attempt in 2023 at a more formal, paper-based, evaluation for the YP was not reattempted in this project. This is partially because there was no access to the YP before or after the 8-week program to collect adequate data, but the issues recognised in the 2023 program were still relevant.
- Access to the young people after they leave the Kent Youth Justice Team reparations program is limited to non-existent. Once the reparations program is completed the young people leave the program and are no longer part of the Kent Youth Justice Team system. Therefore, follow up contact is impossible with the participants. Thus far, it has not therefore been possible to gather any data on such things as re-offending rates. This would require strategic decision making regarding KYJT data and long-term engagement with young people post-reparations. Addressing this issue is not within the power of IHCIC staff; it would require higher level intervention from stakeholder bodies.
- The case workers accompanying the young people were the same for each session, so evaluation was done informally as the sessions went along rather than through formalised evaluation sheets. The case workers are employed on zero-hours contracts on a casual basis, so keeping the evaluation in-session put less pressure on them to work outside of hours and increased the chances of gaining feedback. Out of the six individual case workers who came to the project, three had been involved in the previous year.

Key Findings

Delivering intended outcomes

As with the 2023 pilot project, there were five intended outcomes for young people participating in the project. These draw upon self-determination theory. They were:

- Outcome 1: Young people will feel that local heritage is something for them
- Outcome 2: Young people will feel their views and ideas are a valued part of the project and its development (autonomy)
- Outcome 3: Young people will have tried new skills (competence)
- Outcome 4: Young People will have enjoyed spending time with other people (relatedness)
- Outcome 5: Young People will have improved wellbeing

The overall intended impact of participation in the project was to increase the wellbeing of vulnerable young people in Kent. Progress against these outcomes is summarised and discussed below in Tables 6-10.

Table 6: Outcome 1

| |
|--|
| <p>Outcome 1 - Young people will feel that local heritage is something for them</p> |
| <p>Outputs</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful and high-quality heritage engagement • Connecting young people to tangible local heritage • Immersive heritage experiences |
| <p>Evidence</p> |
| <p>Before the sessions none of the young people had been to any of the sites visited. Fort Burgoyne is not routinely open to the public, and the White Cliffs of Dover and Battle of Britain Museum charge an entrance fee. Within this cohort at least half of the participants had an idea of what history is, some had studied the Second World War, and at least two had in-depth knowledge of the period. By using the overarching theme of twentieth-century military archaeology, the sites were linked by a common thread, and therefore allowed the build-up of knowledge and a bigger picture of the landscape in the past. Through conversation, IHCI staff were able to demonstrate to the group that heritage and historic sites are all around us.</p> <p>The enthusiasm for local history and landscape shown by the KYJT helped in bringing the sessions to life. Their engagement in the activities set a positive tone for the sessions and their questions encouraged the young people to ask their own. Having the White Cliff sessions at</p> |

the same time as the regular NT volunteers showed the cohort that engaging with heritage can be a lifelong interest, and that there are many ways to get involved locally.

Observations in sessions:

Young Person Reflection: The visit to the Battle of Britain Museum in Hawkinge was especially enjoyed by YP 'F' who wanted to return with his family. His case worker suggested he may like to return with his father, who was also interested in the Second World War, and use the time to spend together. He also said "I thought war would be boring, but it's really interesting" during a tour of the site in his second session. YP 'B' was very excited about the intact glass remaining in the window at the crew shelter at Clem. He couldn't believe that it was still in the window after all that time, so much so that he went to fetch Annie, who had stayed outside with another YP, to come and see.

KYJT Staff Reflection: The staff at the KYJT were very excited about being involved the project again because the project provides different, new, and interesting experiences. It also provides a form of learning/education for those out of education. The project is an excellent way to provide the participants with experiences they wouldn't usually have the opportunity to experience. They can visit sites that they wouldn't usually be able to perhaps due to being out of education, or because their parents/carers aren't in a position to be able to offer them these experiences. All of the participants said they enjoyed visiting the different locations, even if not all of the activities were personally for enjoyable them. The KYJT were impressed by the questions that the YP were asking at the different locations, and how they were engaging with the information.

IHCIC Staff Reflection: All the young people exhibited an interest in the heritage sites visited, and in the histories connected with them. Being able to ask heritage specialists questions and engage in an informal manner was something that was picked up on in the pilot project. Entrance fees as a barrier to engagement was noted in these sessions as those who attended the Battle of Britain Museum were surprised by the entrance fee (£10 an adult and £4.50 for under-15s) and stated that they would not be able to afford a trip as a family. Another famous local attraction, Dover Castle, charges a Family ticket of £59.90 (2 adults, up to 3 children), which is unaffordable for a many local families. Access to heritage is simply not always attainable for this audience.

Table 7: Outcome 2

| |
|--|
| <p>Outcome 2 - Young people will feel their views and ideas are a valued part of the project and its development (autonomy)</p> <p>Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young person agency – project outputs will be co-designed with participants • Provision of ‘safe space’ – an environment for young people to engage in the activity free from threat • Young people offered freedom of choice in activities they engage with, alternative activities always available to suit individual needs |
| <p>Evidence</p> <p>From the 2023 pilot project it was clear that part of the success of the program was its adaptability. Whilst the young people had not had a chance to design the project from the outset, they had a say in the session timetabling and activities run during each session. After the end of each session the next session would be clearly discussed with the team so any alterations could be planned for in advance. This had the added benefit of generating excitement for the next session, resulting in better attendance.</p> <p>Being open and clear with this audience was absolutely necessary. It was clearly explained to them at the start of each session what would happen and broadly when, and at the end of each session an outline of the next session would be explained. Any new people were introduced fully as soon as possible, and their role in the session was made clear to all. This was intended to alleviate anxieties around unfamiliar circumstances, locations, or people.</p> <p>Within the sessions breaks and lunch were a team decision with flexibility in the schedule to allow for changes in the weather, energy and engagement levels, and to reflect on the activity being undertaken. End times were flexible but were not earlier than 13.30 on a normal session. It was noted in the 2023 project that given the opportunity the young people would choose to go home earlier, so early leave times were only used in times of adverse weather.</p> <p>In other instances when the YP needed to be removed from sessions for whatever reason there was always an ‘escape’. No one was forced to come or stay, and that agency allowed for sensible decision making from the YP. If their mental wellbeing was negatively affected, for whatever reason, and they felt like they couldn’t do the session then there was always an option to leave and try another day.</p> <p>Observations in sessions</p> <p>KYJT observation: There have been occasions when a task could be carried out in more than one way which leads to them having to negotiate between themselves as they have different ideas of how to do something. The project has also required them to problem solve when, for example, the digging isn't going to plan because of roots or rubble, and some have taken the lead to make sure they get things done.</p> |

IHCIC Staff Reflection: Throughout the activity sessions, the young people were kept informed, consulted, and their views and ideas listened to and often acted upon. This helped underpin the positive relationship that developed between the project team and the young people, which undoubtedly made the entire project easier to run. It is very important to develop trust and mutual respect when working with young people, even more so when working with those from challenging backgrounds. Everyone acted as a team with no one person 'in charge' so all thoughts and opinions were equally valid when setting goals or tackling a problem.

Table 8 : Outcome 3

Outcome 3 - Young people will have tried new skills (competence)

Outputs

- Archaeological excavation and recording/observational skills (reading the landscape/buildings) and outdoor working

Evidence

The project successfully introduced the participants to a variety of new skills and experiences. The main focus was on archaeological excavation and using tools, including heavy tools such as mattocks and spades, as well as smaller tools like trowels and brushes. There was also an attempt to establish a working routine of collecting tools, cleaning them after use, and putting them back in the appropriate place. The walks in the landscape afforded the opportunity to think about what lies beneath our feet and how landscapes change over time.

For this cohort there was an emphasis from the team on improving soft skills. Communication, adaptability, problem-solving, leadership, teamwork, time management, and organisation, were all skills that could be improved, albeit with varying levels of success. At least one YP communicated how he found new situations and meeting new groups of people challenging, but he persevered and by the mid-point of his time on the project he was feeling confident enough to hold conversations. Time management and punctuality was something that needed further work with most of the participants.

The older YP liked being given areas of responsibility in a task. Having ownership of a task and being allowed to manage themselves to achieve an agreed target for the session worked well in building soft skills. At least one individual, YP 'D' was a talented leader, possibly because he was responsible for his younger siblings at home.

AQA modules: A total of 35 certificates were awarded to seven participants through AQAs 'Unit Award Scheme'

- Two participants were awarded seven certificates each
- One was awarded six certificates
- Two were awarded five certificates each

- One was awarded four certificates
- One was awarded one certificate

The AQA modules covered included the following:

- Exploring an historic ruin
- History: A Site Study
- Visiting an historic monument
- Discovering Local History
- Introduction to WWII Defences
- Basic Teamwork Skills
- Clearing and tidying an area of Land

Observations in sessions

KYJT observation: The project provides different, and new and interesting experiences. It also provides a form of learning/education for those out of education. It gives them a variety of activities to do out in the fresh air. It also helps the participants to gain and improve interpersonal skills such as active listening, effective communication, and teamwork. There have been occasions when a task could be carried out in more than one way which leads to them having to negotiate between themselves as they have different ideas of how to do something. The project has also required them to problem solve when, for example, the digging isn't going to plan because of roots or rubble, and some have taken the lead to make sure they get things done. These are all skills that will help boost their confidence and in turn could help them to return to education or enter into training or help to increase their employability. These can also be helped through them gaining knowledge and other skills, such as gardening, digging, learning what tool is what and how to safely and effectively use each tool, or just general health and safety.

IHCIC Staff Reflection: Learning new hard skills allowed the participants to contribute to the excavation of the elephant hut and gave them a sense of purpose as the team worked towards a common goal. The development of soft life skills is as critical as any training in hard skills, and the project was set up to allow the participants an opportunity to develop those skills.

Table 9: Outcome 4

| |
|---|
| <p>Outcome 4 - Young People will have enjoyed spending time with other people (relatedness)</p> <p>Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialisation opportunities • Celebration and recognition of achievements |
| <p>Evidence</p> |
| <p>One of the noted strengths of the 2023 project was having a consistent adult presence to build relationships. As such the core team consisted of Annie and Andrew from IHCIC, Helen from KYJT, and Beatrice Hayley from the NT (NT site only). Other members of staff from KYJT and volunteers from the NT were involved, but every week there would be at least the three core members of staff. Having the same people each time had a reassuring effect in the YP's minds, so even when the sessions went to other sites they knew the same people would be there.</p> <p>Socialisation opportunities were available throughout the sessions. Fostering a sense of community through team building was essential in allowing conversations to start and flow. It also permitted individuals to take a step back if needed and listen to others talk. There was no pressure to join in and people could enter and leave conversations with ease. The relaxed, positive, nature of the adult conversations were designed to make the participants feel at ease in the group even if they did not want to join in with the conversation.</p> <p>Achievements were celebrated on an individual basis. The KYJT had advised that this audience do not necessarily enjoy a lot of public focus, so it was decided to keep celebrations of achievements to a quieter, individual level. This had the added bonus of giving meaningful feedback on an individual level.</p> <p>There were, however, instances where not all of the participants got on. The noisy exuberant energy levels of the younger participants was not always appreciated by the older participants, especially when the younger participants behaviour was become a nuisance to others. Some of the older participants had personality clashes too, especially with YP 'E' who was initially a lot more introverted than the others (but see below). However, there were no negative consequences and the sessions were not adversely affected.</p> <p>Observations in sessions</p> <p>KYJT reflection: The YP get the chance to socialise with members of society that they perhaps wouldn't usually socialise with due to being out of education/training/employment, or because they generally mix in different social circles. Being able to meet and socialise with people of different ages and backgrounds also means that they can have conversations that they wouldn't usually think to have or receive advice from people who they wouldn't usually get the chance</p> |

to speak with, which can help open their eyes and help them see things from different perspectives.

IHCIC Staff Reflection: The fact that everyone involved in the project worked together on the archaeological tasks (including excavation) contributed to a sense of togetherness and the development of a team spirit. The young people seemed to respond very well to this and to enjoy being part of the whole group, rather than feeling that they were a separate group supervised by adults.

Table 10: Outcome 5

Outcome 5 - Young People will have improved wellbeing

Outputs

5 ways to wellbeing:

Connect: socialisation opportunities

Be active: outdoor activity and active tasks (building/walking etc.)

Take notice: time for reflection

Learn: Opportunities to learn new skills, creative and practical - activity that is engaging, enjoyable and mood enhancing

Give: Team building activities, opportunities to support each other with tricky tasks

Evidence

The wellbeing of the participants who attended more than one session was noted to have generally improved in the sessions. All participants were able to demonstrate a willingness to participate, or a positive improvement, in all of the 5 ways to wellbeing categories. This was observed in a marked change in their behaviour from the first time they came to the time that they left, being more relaxed, open, and enjoying themselves through the activity – this is especially true of YP 'B' and YP 'E' (see case studies below). Conversations with the KYJT on the way home were positive and they conveyed to the team that they had enjoyed the experience.

Observations in sessions

KYJT observation: As with the pilot project in 2023, this project took young people out of their comfort zones but showed them they could make a difference which has helped build confidence and boost self-esteem.

IHCIC Staff Reflection: The young people certainly showed increased confidence and willingness to engage in conversation through the course of the project. This is evidence of activity sessions contributing to developing more positive mindsets, and taking the young

peoples' minds off sources of stress and anxiety, by providing them with focussed activities that they enjoyed. Case Study for YP 'B' and YP 'E' expands on this below.

Case Studies

Young Person 'B'

YP 'B' was 14 years old and a energetic person, possibly with an undiagnosed neurodiversity disorder. His energy levels were definitely influenced by the other participants, with a couple of instances where he allowed himself to be led into mischievous behaviour by others. The KYJT said that getting diagnosed takes around seven years and can be an arduous process, even with family support. At the time of the main project in June/July 2024 he was living in a Placement (Children's Home) as he had been removed away from his family. He had improved a lot since being in the Placement, gaining some stability in his life. He disclosed that his reparation hours were a result of possession of a knife.

He is supposed to attend school but does not like to go, perhaps going in maybe once a week, often not for the full day. He has been expelled from schools for aggression towards other students and teachers and says he doesn't like them and wants them to be scared of him. At no point during the sessions with the project had he exhibited these behaviours with any of the team or other cohort.

In the start he was wary of being with strange adults and the older participants, although he soon warmed up to the team and ended up attending all of the sessions, despite finishing his reparation hours around Session 3. He was moderately interested in the historical side of things, enjoying the tours and visit to Hawkinge, and he liked the physical aspect of the excavation work.

YP 'B' benefitted from the program's flexible and relaxed atmosphere. His reluctance to engage with schools was something that this project could help him with but was never going to resolve. What the project did do was introduce him to adults outside of the education sector, social services, and penal system, therefore introducing him to people who he did not feel 'threatened' by. Over the weeks, as he relaxed in the team's company, he was able to show a side of his personality that would be usually hidden behind his defences.

Young Person 'C'

Young person 'C' was 17 years old and a charismatic, extroverted, young man. He came to four sessions, often with his friend YP 'A' who was of a similar age and both share Czech

heritage. YP 'C' said that they had both got into trouble and were trying to keep each other's behaviour in check, although it became clear through the sessions that YP 'C' was more committed to changing his life in a positive way than YP 'A'. He was quite critical of his friend YP 'A' who was not making any effort to change his attitude to life. Through boredom, YP 'C' had got into alcohol and drugs, although he did not specify what his reparations hours were for.

YP 'C' was training in Ju Jitsu with support from his father. From his conversation it appeared that after he had got into trouble his father stepped in and gave him an increased focus of his time. As a result, YP 'C' reduced his consumption of alcohol and smoking and stopped using illegal drugs. His father is continuing to support him in looking for a job in construction. YP 'C' had looked at working on the railways, but there is a prevalent drug culture in that industry, and he was concerned he might lapse into bad habits.

He feels that the YJTK don't provide a lot of support to the young people who are trying to turn their lives around, although he does recognize that their time is taken up with trying to get non-engaged young people engaged in reparations. Whilst he enjoyed the project and agreed that the reparations hours with this project were better than in other places, he did feel that there was no added value to his personal circumstances. He had already changed his mindset before coming on the project, stating that the person who was sentenced for a crime was not the same person he is now.

Young Person 'E'

Young Person 'E' was around 16 or 17 years old. He was introverted, being extremely closed off when he first came, but came into his own after a few sessions. He explained that he does not like change and that being around groups of people he doesn't know was uncomfortable for him. YP 'E' was the only participant who came to some of the main sessions and the additional sessions.

When he first came to the White Cliffs he did not speak a word to anyone, engage, or take his hood down. The activity that day (Session 2) included a tour of Fan Bay Deep Shelter, which required wearing a hard hat, and his refusal to wear the hard hat meant he could not participate in the activity. Despite being offered an alternative activity he decided not to participate and was taken home.

The second session YP 'E' attended was Session 4, this time he had come with a one-on-one case worker in case he needed to be taken home again. The session started with a tour of the gun emplacements 'Jane' and 'Clem'. As anticipated, he did not engage at all with the tour, although he did not complain or ask to go home, and he did confess to Andrew that he did not like the history aspect of the program, much preferring the physical activity. He

became very engaged with the excavation in this session, even promising to come back to continue with the work.

By the final session in July there was a marked difference in YP 'E's attitude to everyone, so much so that YP 'D' hadn't realised he was the same person from Session 2. However, the session was challenging for YP 'E' as he had an argument with his friend's mother the day before, and she had assaulted him. He had started the session off well but allowed himself to get into mischievous behaviour with YP 'B', who subsequently left the session, and became sullen after he was reprimanded. After taking a break with a KYJT worker he was willing to rejoin the and finish the session.

When YP 'E' returned to the October sessions he was a completely different person. He was chatty and, as ever, keen to get to the excavation. He was able to work with another YP to reduce a lump of spoil at the back of the hut and was given the task as a project to complete over the sessions he attended. He seemed pleased with the responsibility and came up with a strategy to effectively manage his time to do the work. His personality was shining through in these sessions, and although he is a serious type of person, he has a dry sense of humour, and we even managed to have a bit of a joke and a laugh – something we would have not been able to achieve in session 1.

Young Person 'F'

Young Person 'F' was around the age of 16. He was diagnosed with autism, and there was doubt from the KYJT that a reparation order was the best form of sentence considering his needs. The KYJT had put him down for this project due to their difficulties in getting him to engage with other reparation programs. He did not engage with reparations if there had been an upset during his week, which happened quite frequently.

His first session with the project was Session 3 at the Battle of Britain Museum and Commonwealth Graves in Hawkinge. Although he did not engage with the other cohort he explored the museum with his care worker and a member of the IHCIC staff. He was very interested in all the displays, taking his time to carefully look at the text and ask questions. He expressed an interest in coming back to the museum with his father. He mentioned the entry price to the museum would be too far out of their budget to come with his whole family (£10 an adult and £4.50 for under-15s).

He joined the team for two sessions on the White Cliffs, but again did not really engage with the other YP in the cohort. He was quite happy to work on a physical task, although he was not keen on using the heavy tools. During Session 5 he was taken on a tour of Fan Bay and remarked that "I thought war would be boring, but its really interesting" and he also said how great the view from Fan Bay was, and said "I don't know why, but it makes me feel happy".

During the October sessions it was disclosed that YP 'F' was resentenced in the summer in respect of his lack of engagement with other reparations programs.

Key Stakeholder Observations

Kent Youth Justice Team

The Kent Youth Justice Team were the main partner in this project. Helen Dignam, Restorative Justice Practitioner for South & East Kent, was the main point of contact through this phase of the project and attended every session with the young people. Helen was able to feedback on how the project worked for the Kent team, and how they observed an impact on the young people who participated.

Evaluation of the project

The evaluation of the project as a whole was undertaken through informal questioning at the sessions and follow up questions via digital means.

The results of the evaluation were overwhelmingly positive. From the end of the 2023 pilot there was an expression of interest in any future Rejuvenate work from the KYJT. They felt the project was of enormous benefit to the young people. Helen from the KYJT sent this email after Session 1:

‘Just wanted to thank you and Andrew for a great start to the project. They all enjoyed it and I spoke about it with [YP ‘B’] in the car afterwards. He only actually needs to attend again next week as his final mandatory appointment with me but he has asked if he can keep coming each week!’
(6th June 2024)

Helen commented in 2023 that getting young people to attend sessions is always an issue for the Kent Youth Justice Team. The reasons vary but include anxiety about trying new things, leaving familiar spaces, meeting new adults, and generally being out of their safe spaces. Having a YP want to attend all of the sessions even though he had finished all of his reparations hours was a great result.

During the first session an experienced case worker said this was the best reparations program they had attended, and another, who had been on the 2023 program reiterated his sentiments from the last year. It is worth noting that one of these commenters had been involved in social services and the penal system for over 40 years. Their enjoyment of the sessions stemmed from interest in the topic and locations visited, the welcoming nature of

the sessions, and the comradery of the team. They all fed back on how much the participants enjoyed the sessions from conversations on the way home. They felt the experience was of a high quality for all involved, and they were pleased they were able to give the young people experiences they don't usually have access too.

From a practical perspective the sessions were planned based on the 2023 pilot project between Isle Heritage CIC, the National Trust, WCCP, and the Kent Youth Justice Team. The flexibility to change the activities and timings of the day was seen as a positive as it allowed for adaptable responses to the participants' circumstances on the day. External factors play a huge part in how the young people behave and engage, so having multiple options and a casual feel to the sessions made the project less intimidating for all involved. In response to feedback from the 2023 pilot project, trialling the single location for the majority of the sessions, with additional visits to other locations to widen the experience, was deemed a success for the 2024 project. This was successful for two reasons, firstly, the number of hours any one YP was completing was shorter so there was a greater chance of them attending a session on the White Cliffs. Not only did this mean they could have a go at the main excavation activity, but it did not make them feel like they had missed out on any prior learning or experience, and 'behind the group'. Secondly, the process of working toward a goal over the weeks was part of the team building and wellbeing development. Seeing progress being made, working as a team, and becoming proud of an accomplishment was something that could be worked on over the weeks in one location. The participants knew what to expect and in some instances were excited to be able to come on site and carry on with their task.

It was noted that tasks that were deemed to be similar to gardening (such as clearing vegetation) were less popular with the participants than archaeological excavation. This was possibly due to other reparation programs being garden-orientated and there is weariness from the group about engaging with such tasks. However, the addition of heavy tools and freedom to dig seemed to turn initially negative attitudes into positive experiences.

Finally, the low numbers in the group allowed for a better individual experience for the young people taking part. Large groups do not work well for this audience and the Kent Youth Justice Team has had experience of negative responses to large group activities in the past. The young people had more individual attention from the adults, something that they were clearly in need of, and they were not too distracted by the behaviour or attitudes of their peers.

What difference did you see the project make to the participants?

The project is an excellent way to provide the participants with experiences they wouldn't usually have the opportunity to experience. Firstly, they can visit sites that they wouldn't usually be able to perhaps due to being out of education, or because their parents/carers aren't in a position to be able to offer them these experiences. Secondly, they get the chance to socialise with members of society that they perhaps wouldn't usually socialise with due to being out of education/training/employment, or because they generally mix in different social circles. Being able to meet and socialise with people of different ages and backgrounds also means that they can have conversations that they wouldn't usually think to have or receive advice from people who they wouldn't usually get the chance to speak with, which can help open their eyes and help them see things from different perspectives.

The program visited three locations (Battle of Britain Museum & Commonwealth Graves; White Cliffs of Dover; and Fort Burgoyne). Was there any favourite location amongst the participants? Did they have an activity they particularly enjoyed? What didn't work so well?

The most popular location was the White Cliffs because it was the site where they had something to keep them busy and really get stuck into. Every participant enjoyed the digging and being able to see what they had done and that they had made a difference at the end of the session. They also enjoyed seeing the same faces (Annie, Andrew, and Bee) regularly to talk to and have become comfortable around everyone.

Positive feedback was received about the museum visit because they all liked to see what they had been spoken to about on previous sessions. It was also nice for them to visit as, again, some wouldn't usually have the opportunity to visit the museum. One participant really enjoyed himself, more than he was expecting, and expressed that he wishes to return with his father one day as he knows that he would also find it interesting. Youth Justice staff were impressed with the conversations the participants were able to have at the museum, particularly with Andrew, as they showed they were really taking an interest and retaining information they were being given.

The gardening activities at Fort Burgoyne were probably the least popular however through all of our projects, I find that there is a mix of people who like or dislike gardening so I wouldn't rule out those activities completely as it depends on the participants at the time. It also wasn't the best weather so that does also affect the session. The tour of Fort Burgoyne went well though and again, YJ staff were pleased to see the participants engaging with community partners and asking questions as we went round.

What changes would you make to the program to improve it for the future?

Overall, I think the project went well and we were lucky to have understanding community partners that are willing to work flexibly with us and go with the flow on each session as the participants vary weekly, as well as the number of participants, and also because the moods and attitudes of some participants may also change across sessions due to them all having other things going on in their lives.

I think for some, the four-hour sessions were good as it got them out and doing something with their day but for others, it can be a long time to maintain focus, so shorter sessions (two to three hours) may be more suitable. I would also be asking for shorter sessions if it meant we could run the project for longer/more sessions as some participants would benefit with having a scheduled activity/routine for a longer period of time to give them something to do, to give them something to look forward to, to give more sessions where they feel welcome and feel they are achieving something which helps build their confidence.

What is it about this project that the Kent Youth Justice Team likes, and makes you want to continue with it in the future?

The project provides different, and new and interesting experiences. It also provides a form of learning/education for those out of education. It gives them a variety of activities to do out in the fresh air. It also helps the participants to gain and improve interpersonal skills such as active listening, effective communication, and teamwork. There have been occasions when a task could be carried out in more than one way which leads to them having to negotiate between themselves as they have different ideas of how to do something. The project has also required them to problem solve when, for example, the digging isn't going to plan because of roots or rubble, and some have taken the lead to make sure they get things done. These are all skills that will help boost their confidence and in turn could help them to return to education or enter into training or help to increase their employability. These can also be helped through them gaining knowledge and other skills, such as gardening, digging, learning what tool is what and how to safely and effectively use each tool, or just general health and safety.

National Trust

The National Trust was a key partner in this project allowing open access to their property at the White Cliffs of Dover over the six main sessions and the additional sessions. An early career member of staff, Beatrice ('Bee') Hayley, was allocated to support the team during the activity sessions at the White Cliffs, and she was the predominant voice in the evaluation of the project. The National Trust also provided feedback on the project in general in 2023 and are committed to the statements they made then.

How does this project fit in with the Trust's wider work?

The Trust has a set of values in place including 'everyone welcome' where we welcome visitors to our site no matter where they come from or what their religious beliefs are, gender identity is etc. I think this project holds up to that value where we've invited these young people to experience volunteering at Wanstone and provided them the opportunity to engage in volunteering work to conserve the Wanstone site for everyone, forever. We encourage work experience across the Trust in much the same way and this project has allowed young people to engage with and find out more about careers in conservation work.

What has worked well?

By having a small cohort (the most we had on site were four young people at a time), we were able to encourage and inspire on an almost one-to-one basis. We ran a shorter tour of site this year which were flexible and covered more of the site. Quite a few members of the cohort enjoyed the free tour around Fan Bay.

What was challenging?

The elephant hut we excavated this year was quite tough going it was perhaps more difficult to see much progress in the excavation this year and keep the group motivated. It was also a lot hotter whilst we were digging which made the group quite tired.

Where did you see it make a difference?

One of the group [YP 'E'] started by not engaging with the tour around Fan Bay to the point where they asked not to go down and walked away. Through finding out more about them we established that they wanted to do the digging more than anything and they thoroughly engaged with it after that. It was lovely to see the change.

It was a reminder for the National Trust to be flexible in our approach. Because we offered more than last year we had different young people engage in different parts and this flexibility was nice to see.

If you ran it again what changes would you make?

Might try to provide more of a contingency after the sessions end to encourage further help if they wanted to continue.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Successes

- The continuation of partnership networks between the Kent Youth Justice Team and local heritage organisations has been a tremendous success. The Kent Youth Justice Team have taken steps with the National Trust to continue with the reparations at the site after the project is completed.
- Returning to the same site, with the same team, and working towards a common goal has proven benefits to the teams' cohesion and the participants' wellbeing.
- Having a common theme throughout the sessions, even if the location changes, provides familiarity for the participants and builds a deeper understanding of that theme.
- One participant showed substantial demonstrable positive changes in his confidence and social skills whilst on the project.
- The program successfully engaged a neurodiverse individual who did not otherwise engage with other reparation programs, and another who does not engage with the formal education system.
- Giving the young people new experiences outside of their comfort zones widened their horizons giving them a different perspective on life. Widening those experiences has had a positive impact on their wellbeing.
- The majority of YP who attended more than one session made progress against the outcomes.
- A total of 35 AQA certificates were awarded to seven participants.

AQA Modules

- A total of 35 certificates were awarded to seven participants through AQAs 'Unit Award Scheme'
 - Two participants were awarded seven certificates each
 - One was awarded six certificates
 - Two were awarded five certificates each
 - One was awarded four certificates
 - One was awarded one certificate
- The AQA modules awarded were:

- Exploring an historic ruin
- History: A Site Study
- Visiting an historic monument
- Discovering Local History
- Introduction to WWII Defences
- Basic Teamwork Skills
- Clearing and tidying an area of Land

Blockers and Challenges

- The young people were better equipped for the outdoors this year, but there were instances of inappropriate clothing, particularly in their choice of footwear. Wellington boots were available, and their availability for use was communicated clearly by Isle Heritage CIC and Kent Youth Justice Team staff. Whilst on this occasion Isle Heritage CIC and Kent Youth Justice Team did not feel participation should be hindered by choice of footwear, it is a factor that needs considering in future.
- The young people were often not at their points of collection, or not ready. One participant was uncontactable on a couple of occasions, and others were either still in bed or in the process of getting ready (i.e. in the shower). This is a common occurrence when dealing with this audience but can have an impact on the length of the sessions if the pick-up is significantly delayed.
- The young people were not used to having to be physically or mentally engaged for long periods of time. The sessions were set to last four hours but often finished slightly sooner due to fatigue. Extending the sessions on future projects beyond four hours with this type of audience would be ill-advised; indeed in some cases shorter 2-3 hour sessions may be more appropriate.
- The additional sessions provided an opportunity to evaluate the impact a shorter session would have on the group. Whilst these shorter sessions were more in line with what the other reparations programs offered, it came at the loss of the lunch break. However, the general mindset of the group was more focused on the task as they knew they only had a limited time on the site.
- The fluid nature of the Kent Youth Justice Team system had to be taken into consideration when planning the project and expectations on data gathering beyond the immediate session should be factored into evaluation plans. Young people enter and leave the system regularly, with the length of time dictated by the number of reparation hours they need to complete, so securing an individual for a set period of time is purely

down to chance. There are opportunities for the young people to continue participating in the project once their reparation hours are completed, but this is down to the individual.

- The limiting beliefs of the participants in their own abilities and their anxieties about trying new experiences is a barrier to participation. When the participants did attend the sessions, they enjoyed themselves and all returned for one or more additional sessions.
- Once the young people have finished their reparation hours, they are no longer part of the Youth Justice system, and therefore not contactable by the Kent Youth Justice Team. This means that longitudinal data on their experiences will not be obtainable.
- Planned changes to the way in which reparations work within Kent means the project may not be able to run in the same way in the future. This is due to plans to streamline the service and cut costs. The plans have not been settled on, but may include little to no contact time from the KYJT staff, who would essentially just drop off and pick up the participants. This would make the running of the project unfeasible for heritage bodies who rely on external under-18 groups to be accompanied by an appropriate number of adults for safeguarding issues, and at least one from the organisation responsible for the YP. In addition, the inclusion of the support workers made the project a success, as it allowed the YP familiar faces in the sessions, and for the case workers to engage with the YP in a positive manner. It is hoped that these changes do not come to pass; this will be kept under review through ongoing contact in 2025 with the KYJT.

Recommendations for future work

- The project template should be applied to a different geographic area to see if the results can be replicated with different partners.
- Adjusting the timings of the sessions so they are shorter (two or three hours) would keep engagement and momentum in the session. This could mean they start later so as to finish with lunch, or keep to snacks throughout breaks.
- Having a main site and a goal for the team to work towards was valuable because it managed expectations of the sessions, gave the participants something to achieve and be proud of, and accommodated the fluid nature of the reparation system.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the Kent-based Stage 5 'repeat and expand' for Project Rejuvenate in 2024 was a success. The project demonstrated once again that engaging young people at risk of falling into, or already involved with, the criminal justice system within the historic environment has clear and definite benefits for them and, by extension, for society as a whole. Specifically, the project repeated the successes of the pilot by demonstrating:

- The potential of heritage to change the mindsets of young people for the better.
- That there is a desire for this type of project amongst Youth Justice Teams.
- That there are a wide range of partners willing and able to support and work with this audience of young people.
- The wellbeing benefits extend to the adults supporting and participating in the project and are not limited to the younger participants.

In short, the project has developed a local network of partner organisations that have demonstrated their ability to work together to successfully deliver Rejuvenate. The project demonstrated that the Rejuvenate approach works for some young people who have had very challenging starts to life with positive benefits through engagement with their local historic environment. It showed that an approach which respected and actively involved the young people as part of a wider team, and gave them a sense of autonomy, was the right one. Finally, the Kent Rejuvenate pilot showed that many young peoples' lives are lived within surprisingly narrow boundaries of space and time, but by giving them the opportunity to experience new places, and to learn about the past that is evidenced all around them, their lives can be enriched, their minds can be broadened, and their chances of living a better life, away from crime improved. The Rejuvenate model works, and merits expanding.

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