

A Taste of Home





A Taste of Home

Understanding and sharing food heritage of
migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
in Newcastle

Project led by

University of Northumbria

in collaboration with

Discovery Museum (TWAM)

Seven Stories – The National Centre for Children Books





The interdisciplinary pilot project 'A Taste of Home' investigates the dynamic relationships between food heritages, cultural identity and diasporic experiences among migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Newcastle.

The project is led by the iSchool at University of Northumbria in collaboration with the Discovery Museum - Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums (TWAM) and Seven Stories – The National Centre for Children's Books.

Project objectives include:

1. To explore, better understand and share food traditions of selected migrants, refugees and asylum seekers communities in Newcastle.
2. To develop a pilot methodology based on Participatory Action Research (PAR).
3. To identify ways in which the Discovery Museum and Seven Stories may use the insights from this pilot to develop collections development directions, creative learning and engagement activities. Contribute to support wider well-being activities within TWAM and Seven Stories
4. Build upon partnership to expand project scope.

A small cohort of research participants with an adequate English knowledge was selected from migrants, refugees and asylum seekers groups in Newcastle.

Participants were recruited through the charities The Comfrey Project and

Investing in People and Culture.

Two participatory action research events including a convivial lunch conversation and a cooking demonstration have been organised in October and November 2017 at the Discovery Museum, Seven Stories and The Comfrey Project.

In each event project partners and research participants engaged with a museum visit, conversations and hands-on activities around food heritage.

Some notes, drawings and pictures from both events have been included in this booklet, respecting participants' request for anonymity.

Recommendations from this pilot projects will be used to:

- Inform the development of TWAM collections to provide greater representation of diverse communities, for example in relation to collecting new material, enhancing existing collections, providing new interpretations.
- Inform the development of Seven Stories online digital collections in relation to food-based resources for diverse audiences.
- Build upon partnership to expand project scope.

Funding scheme

- National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement,
- Arts Council England.



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Introduction: food traditions and migrant's heritage

Food is both a source of nutrients to support life and growth and a key component in shaping culture, identity and belonging. Food is part of our daily routines and plays a key role in socialisation. We eat food everyday to feed ourselves but also to share traditions, memories, and identities. Patterns of continuities, resistance and changes in food preferences offer insights into acculturation, assimilation, adaption, integration and quality of life, in particular in diaspora contexts.

The recent crisis of millions of refugees and migrants fleeing wars, torture, and famine has highlighted new complex geographies and temporalities of global migration systems. This challenges integration policies for asylum seekers and refugees, which are directly related to understanding their needs on employment, housing, food, social inclusion, education, health services, access to rights and information, active citizenship.

Food traditions are also a type of Intangible Cultural Heritage, characterized by a dynamic, ephemeral and heterogeneous nature, embodied practices, community-based participation. Food traditions pose challenging questions for traditional approaches to curation, authenticity and copyright.

Cooking, eating and sharing food is a great way to learn more about and

appreciate different cultures, recognizing differences but also similarities with our own culture within a global world characterised by migration and mobility. Project partners and research participants in 'A Taste of Home' are from nine countries, none of us a native Geordie from Newcastle. During this project we learned about cooking methods and tools, spice and herbs, food stories from diverse countries and personal stories of resilience, loss, bitter sweet memories, homesickness, and hope.

British dining culture would be quite different without all the flavours from around world. We hope readers will enjoy these stories and discover new recipes and perspectives.

Perla Innocenti



Breakfast





CANJEERO (Somalia)

I like it. Made with flour, it's traditionally made and eaten as a breakfast or lunch dish. Anjero written as canjeero in Somali is also known as lahseh laxoox. It is similar to the larger Ethiopian injera bread. Ingredients: flour, yeast, eggs, salt and mixed up and left overnight to rise. What I like is that it's good for kids,

when we were younger and growing up. It's a traditional food of Somalia and my mother always makes it every morning.

Tastes like a bread and can be eaten with sauces and liver. My mum makes this when I am home in my home country before I go to school but now I don't make it because I am alone I can't eat by myself and because I will miss my



Figure 1. Freshly made canjeero from the cooking demonstration at The Comfrey Project.

family. My mom cook it at 5 o'clock in one morning. The kitchen is outside of the house. She uses charcoal to light the fire. She uses a "thowa" a flat iron plate and she puts a lid at the top of the thowa, she cooks until 6 o'clock and she makes food for the whole family. We come to eat it when it is hot. I remember what my mom is wearing. My mum is wearing a "dra" a long traditional

Somalian dress and sitting and makes a circling movement with her hands and arms to pour on the thowa.

EGG HOPPERS (Sri Lanka)

Hoppers are basically the Sri Lankan version of thin pancake with crispy edges. Made from fermented rice flour, coconut milk, coconut water and a little sugar. This batter is made with a small wok. Hopper can be sweet or savoury. The egg is cracked into the bowl-shaped pancake, creating the Sri Lankan version of an egg-in-a-whole.

STRING HOPPERS (Sri Lanka)

I love to make traditional food - this is one of my favourite foods. String hoppers or Idiyappam is made with rice flour mixed with salt and hot water.

Idiyappam means “broken pancake” and it is one of the traditional food in Sri Lanka. It is popular at breakfast or a light meal; it is good with curry and coconut sambol. My mum used to make this for dinner time. I learned to cook it from my mum. My children like to eat with coconut milk with sugar. To make this you need a special mould for the shapes.



Figure 2. String hoppers from the cooking demonstration at The Comfrey Project.

Lunch and Dinner





ARTICHOKES ROMAN STYLE (Italy)

I love artichokes but it is so difficult to find them in UK shops. I saw them as ornamental plants here in Heaton Park and once in Glasgow I saw an artichoke in a flower bouquet! My beloved granny used to cook this recipe to perfection: big local artichokes called 'mammole', cleaned of the harder outer leaves, filled with bread crumbs, garlic, wild Roman mint and slowly stewed upside down, immersed in water and white wine. It is a simple dish but so tasty. Every time I cook it and eat it warm, tender memories of my late granny come back. If they are in season, my mum cooks artichokes for me whenever I am back in Rome.

BAKED POTATOES (United Kingdom)

Childhood for me is conjured up by potatoes baking for hours and served crunchy-skinned, fluffy inside, with cheese, and baked beans. Best served at our round dining table. Or occasionally in front of Neighbours on the telly for a treat – but NEVER with black pepper which I hated (until more recently when all that has changed).

COUSCOUS (Algeria)

When I was a child, I loved when my mother made couscous. I loved the taste of the soaked grains and the texture of the chickpeas. But above all, what I loved was the ritual. Spending the whole day in the kitchen surrounded by different smells. The gigantic bowl full of semolina that was like a desert in the house. The movement of my mother's hands caressing the grain, creating a storm of sand with her fingers. Oasis of

oil and water would sometimes appear, creating new worlds.

EGGS AND CHIPS (United Kingdom)

When I was a child we didn't see much of my Dad, he worked long shifts and got home when we were in bed. On Saturdays, he came home at lunchtime and we sat down at the kitchen table and had egg and chips for lunch. The chips were homemade, deep fried, and the fried egg yolk was runny so we could soak it up with our chips. It was the time of the week when everyone in the family was most relaxed and is a happy family memory for me.

ENJERA (Eritrea)

I like enjera with variety of lamb, chicken and vegetarian selection spread all over. I particularly liked shiro which is made by grounded Peas and many spices in it. This is served with enjera and salads and also hot chili pepper stuffed with onion, salt and olive oil.

GHETHERI, UGALI & NYAMA COOMA WITH SUKUMA WIKI (Kenya)

This food is the main diet in Kenya, it is the food every family can afford and is easy to cook. For Ugali you have to boil water and put the maize meal and mix it until it becomes hard and is ready within 20. Sukuma wiki is easy you cook it with onions and tomatoes. Nyama Choma is meat roasted on charcoal and is ready within 30 minutes. 'This food is important because almost every family can afford it, it is healthy and the vegetables are there all year round. It can be found in every home. We also

have gheteri (maize and beans). This is a bit different from ugali, it is cooked by boiling both maize and beans. This is staple food for the Kikuhu's people of Kenya. It is the food taken by people going to the work in the farm and by children going to school for their lunch. I do cook it here but because we don't have the same type of maize I use sweetcorn. It is ok but a little different, still a very healthy food.

KOTTU ROTI (Sri Lanka)

The meaning of kottu is chopped roti. Kottu is considered the Sri Lankan equivalent of the "hamburger", in terms of its popularity. The bread is described as similar to the type found in the South Indian "Kothu Paratta". Kottu is a common dinner dish in Sri Lanka. It's common to hear the rhythmic clank of the Kottu Maker on the streets. It is made with a type of roti known as "godamba roti" (a flat crispy bread). The Sri Lankan kottu is only a couple of decades old as it first appeared in the eating houses of Eastern coastal towns in the late '70s. However now it has spread throughout Sri Lanka. This is one of the meals I really enjoy the most from my country. Stir-fried shredded roti mixed together with finely chopped vegetables or pieces of meat, soya sauce, spices on a flat iron skillet using two metal cleavers with wooden handle. There are many variations of kottu. They are: vegetarian kottu, egg kottu, meat kottu, fish kottu and cheese kottu. Kottu is usually served with a bowl of curry sauce which takes you to the next level. I remember, I would always get excited when I heard we were having kottu roti, because it is not something that we have regularly. Normally we buy or order kottu rather than making at home: it is quite difficult

to make and it is also hard to find the tools needed to make it. I have tried many places in London and some other places in UK, but I could not taste or get the real flavour and texture that I have tasted before.



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



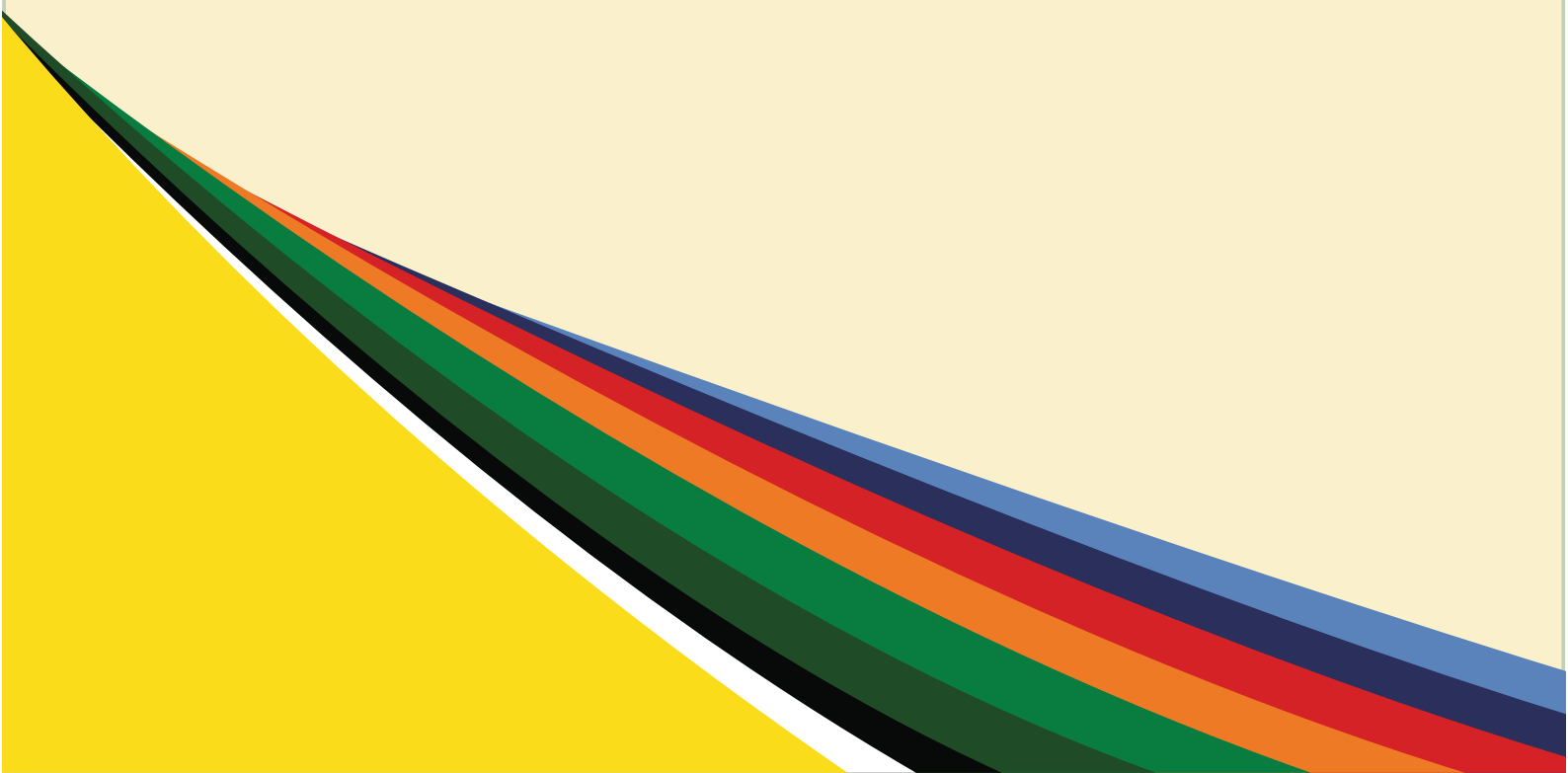
Fig. 8

Figure 3-8. Kottu Roti in the making from the cooking demonstration at The Comfrey Project.

TALKARI OF CURRIED CASCADURA (Trinidad)

Nanny, I remember you and your house of sustenance we frequented in those carefree years. Comforted by the billows of smoke which through the carat-leafed roof of your tapia house lingered the aroma of mouth-watering curried cascadura. I remember you squatting in your kitchen as you turned the talkari in the big pot on the chula. Your reverence, in every ingredient now nourishes my memory of a dish as the native legend says 'Once you eat the cascadura wheresoever you may

wander will end your days in Trinidad'. This story is about a distant, childhood food and family memory: the tapia house, a humble thatched-roof dwelling of my nanny's (Hindi for maternal grandmother), where I ate talkari (Hindi for a kind of dish) of curried cascadura (a kind of freshwater fish in Trinidad) cooked on a chula (Hindi for an earthen fireplace).



Desserts and sweets



Fruit Crumble



and custard

TRIFLE (United Kingdom)

When I was a child, my granny Kit and Grandad lived in a static caravan, in a caravan park in Armitage, near Rugeley. Every time we went to visit, my Granddad would (if we were good) give us a miniature Cadbury's Dairy Milk from a special Cadbury's Dispenser. He also gave us each £1 and told us not to spend it all at once. And then he would put on the same two episodes of Tom and Jerry that he had taped from the TV. My Granny Kit's speciality was her trifle, which came out at special occasions. Her day-to-day dessert though was a very glamorous black cherry yoghurt with squirty cream on top, which seemed very exotic.

PUDDING (United Kingdom)

For pudding it would be rhubarb crumble made by my Dad from the patch at the bottom of the garden (past the climbing frame) and covered in thick custard. Maybe I picked some blackcurrants to have with it too.

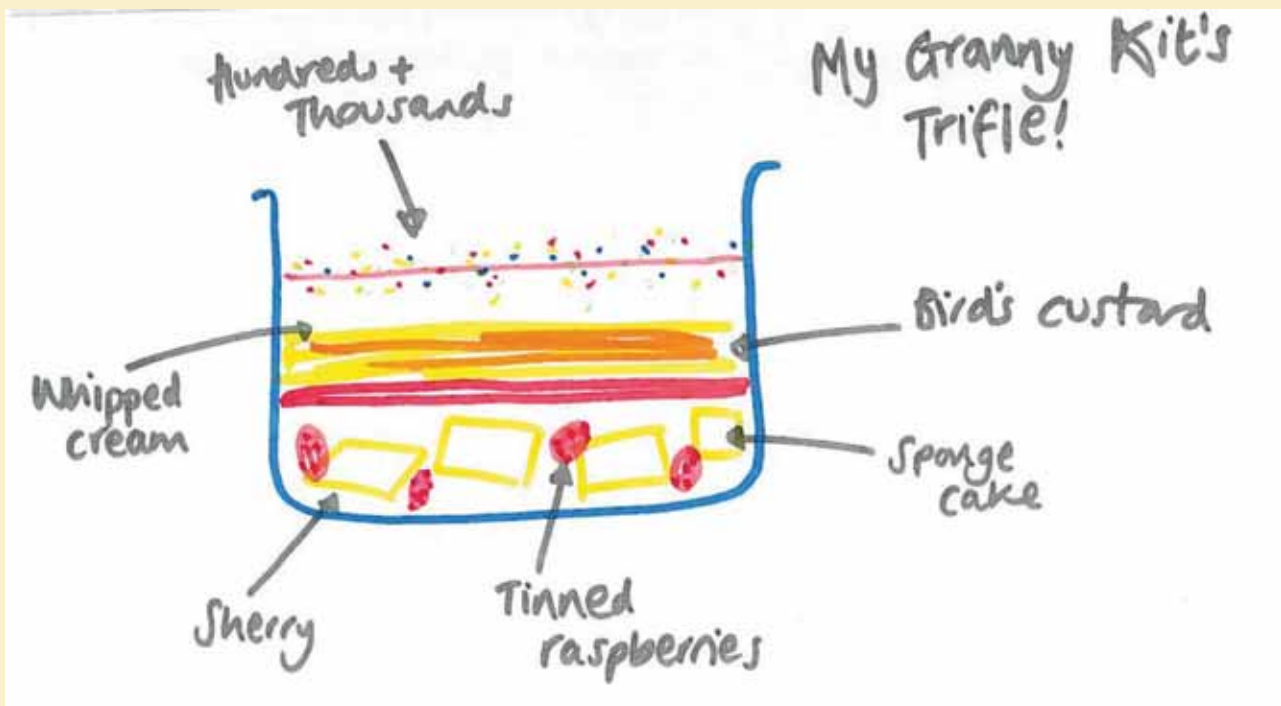


Figure 9. Granny Kit's trifle from the Hands-on session at Seven Stories.



Museum Activities





Seven Stories

Children's books are vital to our understanding of the world around us, and can open a window into the lives of people whose lives are similar to and different from our own. Here are some books recommended by Seven Stories for the Taste of Home Project –

they all feature food somewhere in the story, and were a great starting point for discussions about our own food traditions and memories.

The Tiger Who Came to Tea

by Judith Kerr

Baba's Gift

by Beverly & Maya Naidoo

Fruits

by Valerie Bloom

Azzi In Between

by Sarah Garland

The Hungry Caterpillar

by Eric Carle

I Will Not Never Eat a Tomato

by Lauren Child

Baby Goes to Market
Brooksbank

by Atinuke & Angela

Anna Hibiscus' Smile

by Atinuke

Vanilla Ice Cream

by Bob Graham

My Granny Went to Market

by Stella Blackstone

Seven Stories Bookshop is one of the largest independent children's bookshops in the UK. Contact our expert team on 0300 330 1095 or via our website www.sevenstories.org.uk

to check availability, get recommendations and order copies of these or any other books.



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13

Figures 10-13. The hands-on session at Seven Stories.



Discovery Museum – TWAM

The Multi-Sensory Food Table for 'Taste of Home' Project

This table is based on our notions of the variety of tastes influences in our food and a recognition of our 'sense of place', who we are and where we come from (identity). It involved the following approaches:

- Identity: the foods that are intrinsic to our cultures and traditions that travel as part of us i.e. 'we carry or bring with us'
- History (Western European) historical viewpoint, how past civilisations through trade and encounter, such as the Romans and the British Empire, have eventually contributed to our 'sense' of taste.
- Experience & aesthetics: flavours, touch and textures, smell, memory

The Multi-Sensory Table is a representation of 'tastes' we recognize as part of who we are, our identity and experiences and 'tastes' that have been 'blended' because of the changing world we live in.

Suggestions for museum activities related to 'A Taste of Home' and a Multi-Sensory Food Table

- 'How British is our Food' workshops & interactive sessions using the Multi- Sensory table in the Atrium of Discovery Museum. Accompanied by gallery tours of

Newcastle Story & Destination Tyneside (A TWAM staff member had developed this workshop as part of 'Try New Things' project at TWAM).

- Event 'Street Food Market', Challenger Plaza, in front of Discovery Museum but with a food heritage & awareness angle multi-cultural angle of audiences having a more total food experience of buying, tasting and talking about food. Involvement of food social enterprises especially from voluntary organisations and charities such as The Comfrey Project. Potential partners could include organisations such as Vamos! Kommunity.



Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17



Fig. 18

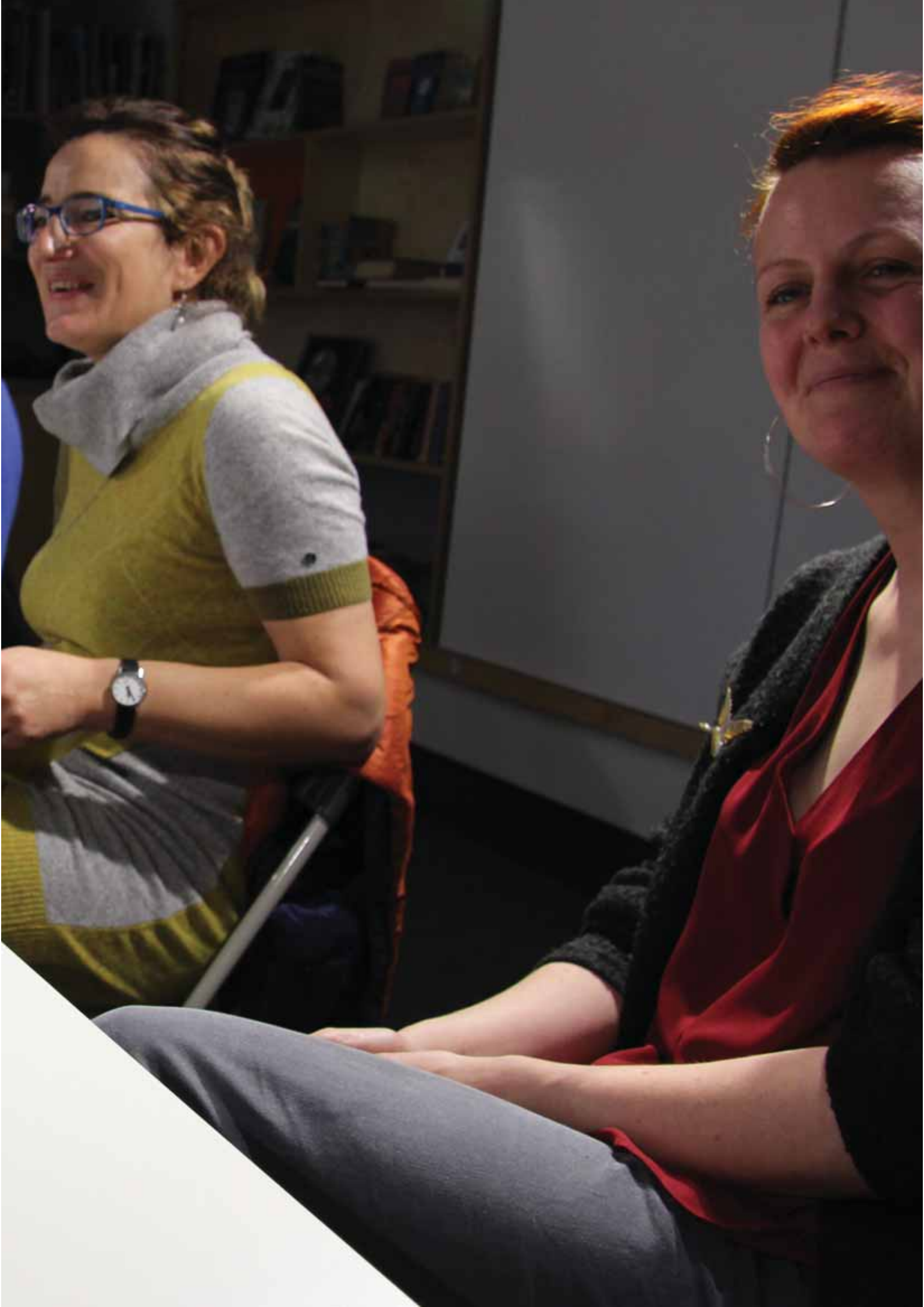
Figures 14-18

The hands-on session at the
Discovery Museum



Project partners





University of Northumbria



The University of Northumbria (<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/>) is the largest research and teaching university in the North East of England. The university has over 25,000 students from 100+ countries, 16 multidisciplinary departments, campus in Newcastle and in London, regional offices in China, India, Malaysia and Thailand and partnerships with Higher Educations institutions across the world. University of Northumbria is top ten in the UK for the number of graduates entering professional employment: more than 560 employers and 60 professional bodies sponsor or accredit the University's programmes. It also ranks fourth in the UK for graduate business start-ups (alumni include Sir Jonathan Ive, Senior Vice President for Design – Apple).

The iSchool at Northumbria University (<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/academic-departments/computer-and-information-sciences/research/>), Department of Computer and Information Sciences, is part of a consortium including 65 universities from around the world (<http://ischools.org/>) promoting information science education and research shaping information society. Our iSchool leads innovative research on information behaviour, digital heritage and cultural informatics, data and information management. We have our purpose-built iLabs, cutting-edge research and

teaching environments with dedicated facilities and tools specifically for Web and mobile usability studies, facilities for other specialist applications such as business intelligence, data analytics and internet of things.

Perla Innocenti

Dr Perla Innocenti is a heritage scholar, Senior Lecturer in Information Science at the University of Northumbria and Principal Investigator of the 'A Taste of Home' project. Perla has a passion for curating, making accessible and sustainably reusing tangible and intangible heritage in a digital world. Her research and several publications cross-interdisciplinary boundaries between cultural heritage, museum studies, cultural informatics, library and information science. She has long been fascinated by food traditions and food practices. More information at <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/our-staff/i/perla-innocenti/>

Kahina Le Louvier

Kahina Le Louvier is a PhD researcher at Northumbria University, under the supervision of Dr. Perla Innocenti. The aim of her research is to find ways to facilitate the social inclusion of people who resettled in the North East of England after seeking asylum, by investigating how they renegotiate their information and heritage practices in their new environment. She has a background in cultural identity studies and a special interest in intangible and multicultural heritages. She is also an enthusiastic volunteer at The Comfrey Project.

TYNE & WEAR archives & museums

Discovery Museum, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM)

Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM, <https://twmuseums.org.uk/>) is a major regional museum, art gallery and archives service managing a collection of nine museums and galleries across Tyneside and the Archives for Tyne and Wear. Our mission is to help people determine their place in the world and define their identities, so enhancing their self-respect and their respect for others. The Well-Being Programme is TWAM's culture and heritage programme using culture and heritage to support mental health, well-being and recovery across Tyneside.

The Discovery Museum Contemporary Collecting Programme aims to embed the Creative Case for Diversity through working with people from diverse communities in Tyneside and enhancing the TWAM collection to reflect and highlight contemporary social issues with the aim of supporting positive social change. Each year the TWAM Keeper of Contemporary Collecting work with communities in Tyneside which have

protected characteristics under the Equality Act. Examples include people experiencing homelessness and poverty to Newcastle West End Foodbank clients and volunteers; disadvantaged families working with Children North East; Men living in a secure unit at St Nick's hospital who are experiencing mental health disabilities; different generations of women and women from LGBT and BAMER communities.

Sarah Cotton

Sarah has been Keeper of Contemporary Collecting at Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums for nearly ten years. As part of the Collections & Research team my primary responsibility is collections development. She works with people from diverse communities in Tyneside to enhance the TWAM collection, highlighting contemporary social issues with the aim of supporting positive social change. A lot of Sarah's work is led by Arts Council's Creative Case agenda and the contemporary collecting programme is shaped by working on projects to represent protected characteristics under the UK Equality Act.

Kath Boodhai

Kath Boodhai is Assistant Outreach Officer for The Well-Being Programme, TWAM. She is Indo-Trinidadian and has a background in the use of participatory arts, culture and heritage to create

dialogue, creative expression and representation. Her work is part of the inclusion, diversity and equality practice in museums of communities (individuals, groups and organizations) socially excluded or 'minorities' whose heritage and experience is an intrinsic part of the wider world in the North East of England, enriching our culture and society.



Seven Stories - The National Centre for Children's Books



Seven Stories is the National Centre for Children's Books (<https://www.sevenstories.org.uk/>). Our mission is to champion children's books as an essential part of our childhood, our national heritage and our culture. We want to inspire a love of reading across generations, and we believe that books should be for everyone. We are leaders in inclusivity, championing diverse representation and the right of all readers to recognise themselves in stories and the wider cultural landscape. Our exhibitions are carefully designed to immerse children and families in books and story, encouraging exploration and inspiring our young visitors' creative imaginations. Our busy programme includes high quality participation projects, exciting events and inspiring theatre. We hold a unique archive of children's literature from 1930s to the present day, and everything we do inspires children and grownups to choose, share, read and enjoy the best children's literature. By engaging in Seven Stories' unique collections and innovative creative programmes the lives of children, young people and families are transformed - resulting in greater wellbeing and confidence, participation and citizenship, and lifelong enjoyment of the arts, book and story.

Beth Coverdale

Beth Coverdale is a Creative Learning and Engagement Coordinator and Access Champion for Seven Stories. Her

work is focussed around high quality arts engagement and inclusion, with a specialism in creative practice stemming from her background in theatre, writing and arts for change. Outside Seven Stories she leads young people's mental health projects as co-director of community arts company Little Big Mouth CIC.

Rachel Pattinson

Rachel Pattinson manages the Vital North Partnership between Seven Stories: The National Centre for Children's Books and Newcastle University, which is supported by Arts Council England. The partners share the goal of achieving excellence in the field of children's literature. Rachel provides project management, development, co-ordination and communication functions to facilitate the Partnership's work.

Charities involved







The Comfrey Project

The Comfrey Project (<http://thecomfreyproject.org.uk/>) is a registered charity that works with refugees and asylum seekers on allotment sites across Newcastle and Gateshead with the aim of improving their conditions of life and general wellbeing. It provides refugees and people seeking asylum across Tyneside with a safe, welcoming environment, which promotes personal well-being through a sense of place and belonging. This is achieved by various shared creative crafts including allotment gardening, cooking and crafts. We have

a down to earth approach to social integration and community health. We encourage integration, by introducing participants to other activities organised both by the Project and by other local voluntary and community projects. We provide emotional and practical support to participants, and where necessary signpost them on to relevant statutory or voluntary agencies for additional support and advice.



Investing in People and Culture (IPC)

Investing in People and Culture (IPC, <http://www.i-p-c.org/projects.html>) is a volunteer-led organisation based in the North East of England. Originally set up in 2010, the organisation strives to ensure that refugees settling in the North East are able to attain a good quality of life. The aim of the organisation is to promote social inclusion among people who are refugees, asylum seekers and BME communities. These groups are

often socially excluded on the grounds of their social and economic position. IPC currently works with 40 refugee led organisations from 32 nationalities.



Acknowledgements

We are grateful to MUPI and Arts Council England for giving us the opportunity to get together and explore research collaboration around food heritage and social inclusion. We are also indebted to The Comfrey Project for kindly offering their kitchen space for the cooking pilot. Last but not least, a warm thanks to our research participants for sharing their stories and food with us. This booklet was edited by Perla Innocenti and graphically paginated by Kaveen Perera.

Illustration credits:

Perla Innocenti: Figures 1-8; 14-18.


Images at page 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 14, 24, 28, 32, 40, 42

Rachel Pattinson: Figures 9-13. Image at page 34.

Kath Boodai: image at page 22

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Home***

