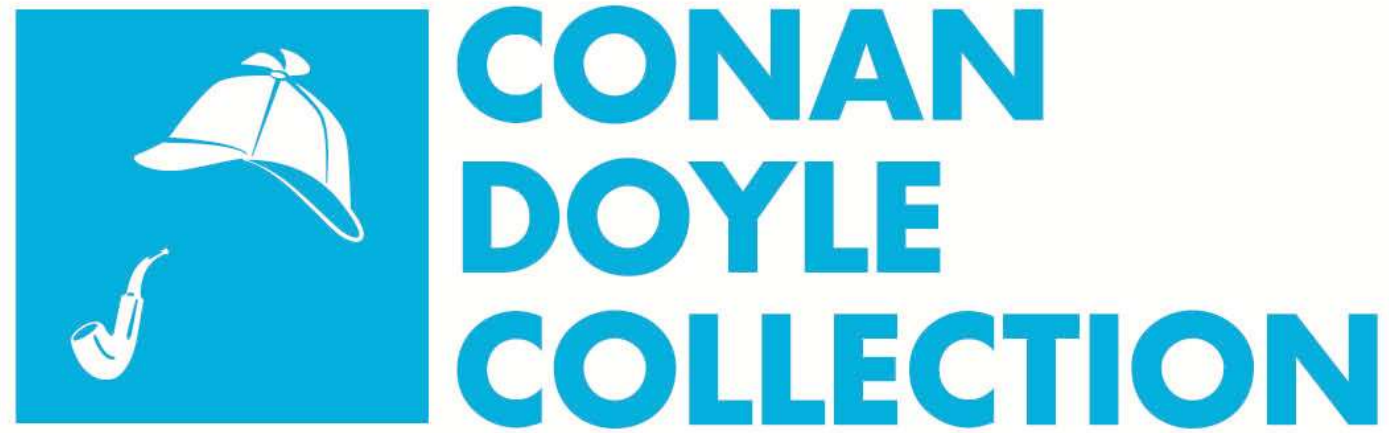




Creative solutions for working with visually impaired and blind audiences

Introductions....

- Julie Duffy

Visual Impairment Officer at Portsmouth City Council

- Laura Weston

Education and Learning coordinator for the Conan Doyle Collection, Portsmouth City Council

What is the Conan Doyle Collection?

- The Conan Doyle Collection is the biggest public collection in the world
- Richard Lancelyn Green bequeathed the Collection to Portsmouth City Council and it arrived in 2005.
- The Collection consists of 3,500 objects, 16,000 books and 40,000 archives.



“Making something
accessible to blind and
partially sighted people
makes it accessible
to everyone.”

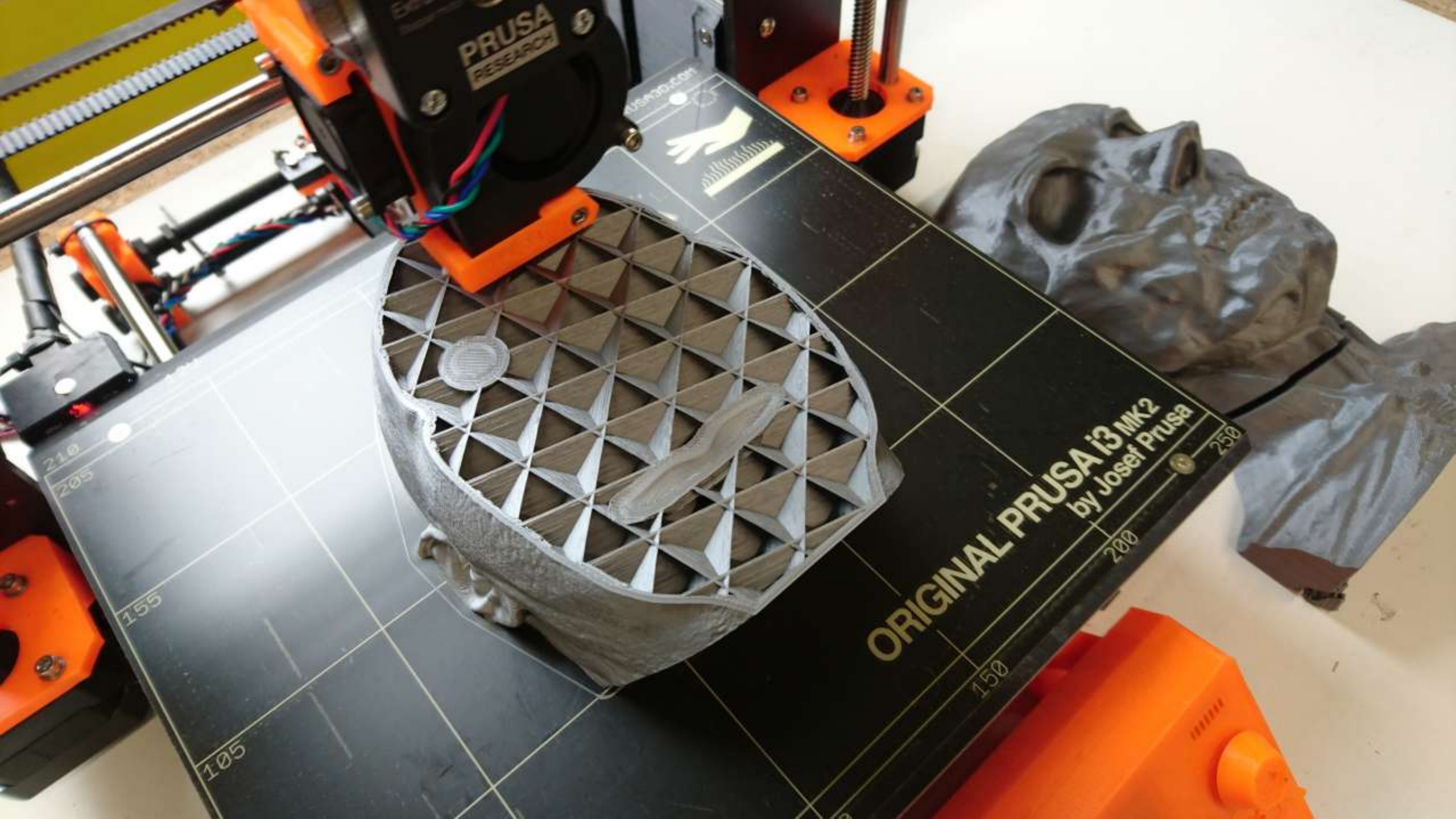


3D-Printed Sensory Exhibitions

- What items were chosen
- How they were reproduced
- Benefits for tactile interpretation

3D-Printed Sensory Exhibition













ficial -

A multi-sensory experience

- A silicone head and realistic hair
- Fabric suit, shirt and tie
- A soft leather background
- Several mobile phone vibrators in the top right area simulating an 'extra'
- Vibrations make a faint heartbeat sound
- Monotone colours used to represent the black and white original photograph





THE DEATH OF SHERLOCK HOLMES.

- Feel the wind against your face
- Feel the water droplets spraying your face and hands
- Would you taste the cool fresh mineral water?
- Touch?
- Sound of rushing water
- Smell of damp, mud or greenery
- Feel the texture of the rocks
- The sound of two men struggling on the edge of a cliff

Reichenbach Falls scene

- Silicone cliffs cold to touch
- 3D printed figurines of Sherlock and Moriarty warm to touch
- Moss effect
- 3D printed deerstalker
- Fan at base blowing cold air
- Monochrome



Audio- Described exhibition

- Training volunteers
- Script-writing and recording
- How audio description opens interpretation





Audio Description

Basics of audio description:

- Be objective – describe what you see
- Story telling, creative journey, an artistic, cultural experience
- Be concise - keep descriptions short
- Order the information –
most important information/subject first
- Read out loud any text



Tactile Textile Story Cubes

- Created by 10 local community groups
- Roll the dice to create a story...
- Tactile objects support imaginative engagement
- Further resource for creating short stories



The Process

3 session with 2 x Sight Impairment group -

Talk about touch and feel of fabric/design, feedback halfway through and product show and tell at end.

1 session with local Art group - create 6 backdrops to stories, designs for characters and items

1 session Young Carers Group – design fabric – paint, layers, create fabric, create printing stamps

1 session with Chaos (Learning Disability organisation) – heat press background material – printing on fabric

2 sessions with Girl Guides – layering fabric and stitching

1 session with Refugees and Asylum Seekers– sewing and embellishing

2 session with Live at Home charity velvet painting and stitching

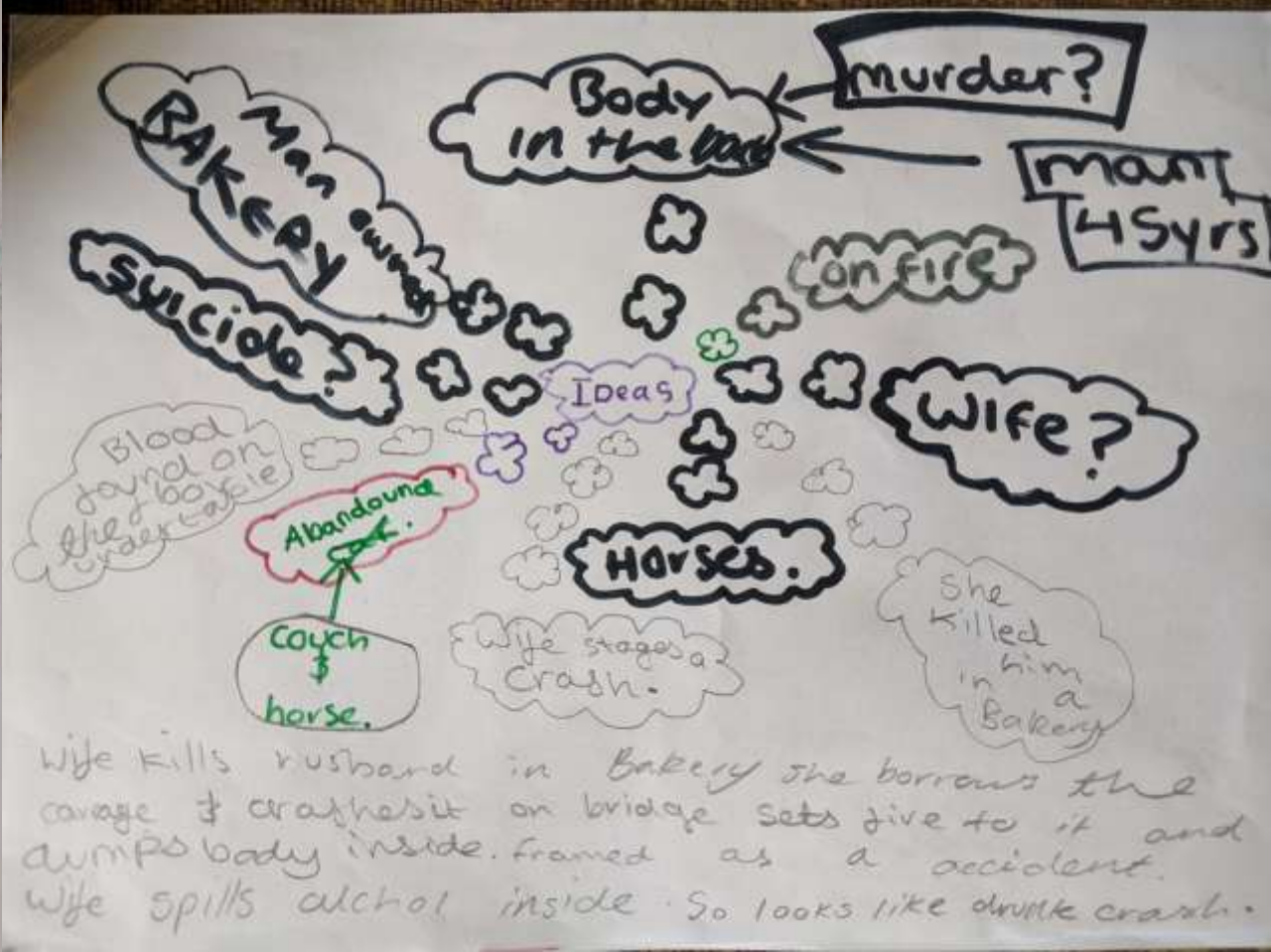
2 session with Hillside Youth Club – painting and stitching

Call out to all local knit and natter groups for crochet and knitted leaves and flowers









Groups who contributed to the making of the Story Cubes were then invited to play with them and make up their own stories!

Current Project

Sherlock: Made in Portsmouth

A series of mini exhibitions and events working with local community groups to investigate Sir Arthur Conan Doyle during his time in Portsmouth.

Outcomes include:

- Upcoming podcast series
- Audio described exhibitions
- Other creative outcomes



Collaboration & Co-Production with VI Communities

A partnership with Julie Duffy, Portsmouth's Visual Impairment Coordinator

- How VI groups guided decisions
- What you learned from their expertise
- Transformative moments or insights

Working with VI audiences doesn't just improve access — it improves the collection's creativity, relevance, and impact.

Practical Takeaways

- Start with lived experience
- Use multi-sensory design principles
- Collaborate widely
- Prototype and test interpretations
- Small accessible changes create big impact

Any questions?

Useful Links:

[RNIB | Homepage of the Royal National Institute of Blind People](#)

[HiVis 2026: 1-14 June 2026 - Reading Sight](#)

[VocalEyes – Opportunities for blind and partially sighted people to experience and enjoy art and heritage](#)

[Shop Extras - Mantra Lingua - MANTRA LINGUA](#)

[Home | Touchspot Audio UK](#)

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