**“We need to talk about climate change” Workshop at the Manchester Museum, April 2017.**

**Research quotations**

Either we build the islands up, in order to stay out of the water, or we build floating islands, or we are not here. In other words- migrate. The question is: can we still retain our unique culture if Kiribati is no longer here?

**Kiribati Resident**

We need to be aware that when we are talking about heritage we are talking about various aspects of our life. We can talk about oral heritage, heritage to do with the land, and how we relate to people. So it's a whole broad area.

Land is very important, not only for the living, but also for the dead. The line is very fine in Kiribati, between the dead and the living, and we move easily between the two. Dead ancestors, for us, are as important as the living people and we pay first respect to them.

**Kiribati Resident**

With this land I can pass it on to my children, I live on it and I am not counted as a poor person. It gives me my dignity. Our heritage is connected to our land, our culture, our language. Everything that is i-kiribati. Our environment. Everything that is our heritage that we look after and pass on to our children and grandchildren. With the impact of climate change one of them is that we may be relocated. That is the biggest disaster for i-Kiribati person. I wouldn't know how tell my children where I come, especially my grandchildren, if Kiribati is not here.

It's burden to think about it, but how can you leave a land where all your families are buried, you know? Maybe we have dig everything, all our families up, and put them together, and we go with them. Maybe that's one way. But it's hard for us.

**Kiribati Resident**

Change is a constant, the only thing that is constant is change so um, I’m very aware that change is happening and my only worry is are people, are communities, are employees…visitors aware of that, so for example if they see us moving the coastal foot path…do they understand why we’re doing that?  You know, yeah, we’re making a walk… less enjoyable, by moving further inland you get less coastal views there and you’re breaking habit as well.  Why can’t we engineer it along the coast there, well, we need to think long term.  It’s that sort of attitude that I’m worried about.  And that’s why communication is going to be absolutely vital.

**Heritage Professional**

We do need to consult with them [community]…and we haven’t done that yet… I think, part of the reason why we haven’t done that so far is that we’ve been, and I guess the community as well, quite um, not necessarily stuck, but living in the moment.  A big challenge we face… [are] things like parking, sewage, so you know, when the village smells of sewage, that’s the thing that everyone is thinking about.  Forget not being able to get here in a year’s time or 10 years’ time or a 100 years’ time, it is things of the moment and I guess [we] need to think in 2 ways, 1…long term, and the other one is to take responsibility for things that are happening now, but also to think, ‘okay, what can we do about this that helps us long term?

**Heritage Professional**

The greatest challenge is- there's so much science behind the predictions for rising sea levels- is getting across to people that this is really happening. Then working together to make the houses more resilient.

There's a way of talking to a community, especially people who don't believe in climate change. Getting a scientist with graphs, that isn't the way. If you don't believe, that won't help But there is a lot to be said for using the arts to try to show the impacts...where will the sea be in 10 years, or 100 years? If we can show it like that it's much more obvious to people, rather than a computer projection.

**Heritage Professional**

They're [Heritage organisations] not the benevolent organisation that people think they are. They have to make business decisions...

**Local Resident**

It's difficult not to have a short term view on it, its human nature to worry about the mortgage payment next month, rather than how high the water will be in a hundred years’ time.

**Local Resident**

It depends how intrusive, invasive, or significant those measures are [sea-defense or other coastal adaptation strategy]. It's financial as well. Who's going to pay for it?

**Local Resident**

I don't think that [XXXX] is important enough, financially important enough, for anybody to spend vast sums of money protecting it. I suspect that if sea levels rise, that we will be sacrificed, and I think that's probably right.

**Local Resident**

I suppose [climate change] facts are out there is you seek them out, but it's not something that I've particularly done. I suppose that any information about sea-levels changing is probably through the media. I think because it hasn't had an effect on our lives as such, unless you have a particular interest, you're not going to seek it out. I imagine if the water was rising on a regular basis, you might take the time to find out more. Nothing comes through the letterbox, as far as I'm aware.

**Local Resident**

Is it going to happen in my lifetime? I'm 63. Am I going to see a steep increase in tidal events? I don’t know. The one thing I have noticed is that winds are stronger and more sustained than they used to be. That, I do think, is true, but I'm not sure about...there is so much conflicting information coming at you all the time….I think there are lots of vested interest, whether its industry, or I don't know, I do treat it all with a huge pinch of salt to be honest….The information that [XXX] gave us would have to be concise, no waffle, and accurate. It's easy to say: it might do this and it might to that. You want accuracy and honesty. It's all probabilities and possibilities, and I like to work with certainty.

**Local Resident**

People don't photograph everyday things...You've got to let go of it but that doesn't mean you can't remember it. If you think now about St Kilda, people are now fascinated by what life was like in St Kilda, and what was to them everyday life. Trapping the gulls, nicking the eggs, everyday life for them, but it's a way of life that has gone completely. We can preserve it to a certain extent, through written records, and pictorially. There is a film of St Kilda, and I think that's great. Nowadays, there's so much film, taken on phones, stills, video. In a way, there might be so much that it will all get thrown away.

**Local Resident**

And I think we're in denial about it at the moment, I mean when I raised it again yesterday….. my colleague is doing that bit of work, is, around looking at that sort of thing internally, what- how are our policies helping us to reach that sort of recognition around climate change…I would say, great [I’m] really pleased you’re doing that, are we gonna have some sort of moment internally then when we can start to think about it and XXX’s reaction was that she didn't think there would be enough traction within the organisation to have that moment…and I find that intensely frustrating, it's just, it's just sort of, you know organisations going along with the business as usual stuff, very aware in the backs of their minds actually that there is something coming down the tracks but actually it's too difficult.

**Heritage Professional**

…it was going to be [name of organisation] that was going to speak but actually in the end, and I totally understand his reasons, he provided a bit of information a kind of case study rather than a paper, and one of the reasons for that was that he didn’t feel comfortable about standing up and talking about it because of the implications that might have on the organisation….yeah, a lot of the time people aren’t willing to put their head above the parapet because of reputation issues, because we all want to be, you know a lot of these organisations want to be loved and respected charities because they want your money, you know? And they want more donations or whatever, they want to be seen as a safe pair of hands

**Heritage Professional on the organisation of a conference session.**

In general, it [Climate Change] has, but in the margins probably, it’s been acknowledged now, so we are having discussions now, these days we are having discussions about collections that perhaps were appropriately stored in Ok conditions, whatever those collections were, and that now, there’s issues with it, with the material and the environmental conditions in there and one of the facts in there is going to be the fact that we have warmer weather, winters and we have wet summers actually, it happened in the last couple of years, you know? That’s climate change and that’s having a direct impact on preservation stuff, even in boring ways…

**Heritage Professional**

If you want to talk in positive, in practical terms about what the sector can do….then yeah, it is, it’s about the fact … I think is about this idea again that cultural heritage can be made is being made, renewed, all the time, things are significant…It’s not a finite resource either, it’s limited by our own imaginations and ability to place significance on items and stuff or whatever it might be, yeah, I think that there is … but that’s not a sector issue necessarily…it’s what the public wants as well, we do all of this on behalf of the public, and the public don’t want necessarily the cultural heritage that’s been created today or yesterday, or whatever, they want something that carries this notions of authenticity.

It makes it feel like the last 200 years of museology have been misguided, wrong, it hasn’t, it was perfect, it was right for time, but now we’ve to do it differently, we’ve got to rectify those things.

It’s [climate change] bigger than us, yeah, and we focus on those things that are manageable, we try to pick our battles, don’t we?

**Heritage Professional**

…communicating is a central part of this whole process, all of these issues are about managing expectations and ensuring our reputation isn’t harmed and its being transparent in our decision making processes and run an efficient self-critical organisation that has a constructive approach to risk. That is what this is about and communication is essential, whether internal external from the sector to the public, whatever....

**Heritage Professional**

…there’s kind of two strands, for what we are trying to do with our displays, so one is that we are in the process of looking at a master plan to redo the whole museum and there are two key strands narratives, narrative strands that need to be put into that. One is evolution and the other is human effect on the environment, so climate change is a kind of a key, key narrative. So, it’s very much something that we will be putting in and the other thing we are doing is having a series of temporary exhibitions on contemporary science and society…and climate change will come in as part of those.

because we’ve got a responsibility, I suppose we’ve got a responsibility to tell people…partly in terms of our collections because it’s a real opportunity to use our collections for this in terms of research because our collections go back a long way and they’ve got very good data on them in terms of what they offer for us in mapping climate change and seeing from local to national to international project, there is a real opportunity and we would like to see our collections used…

**Museum/Heritage Professional**

…it felt like it went to a bit of a low and I think it was also because it’s hard to teach in an exciting way and giving an unpalatable message…encouraging [schools] to come out! and have a great enrichment day... you put all this work to come into here to actually hear to something that’s quite threatening. So that’s also something we face with our public engagement events, and exhibitions too. There aren’t that many people that want to come and see an exhibition that’s going to make them feel really depressed yeah, so how do you communicate? We haven’t cracked that yet, and it’s probably why we are doing things in a slightly sideways… the programme is about something else but this is referenced within it. Whether it’s people’s personal time that, teachers arguably might take for a trip, I still don’t think you…I think as a teacher to be motivated enough to organise an out-of-school learning experience, you’ve got to feel something really positive out of it so actually, if you are just giving a fairly negative ‘you should know this message’ it’s… I think there are other things that…. you are more likely to think I’ll just do that in the classroom with some resources, if you get them to come out and do something that you want it to be buzzy, you want it to be enriching, you want it to be …it’s about inspiration, so I think that’s the tricky thing about climate change…

**Museum/Heritage Professional**

We actively collect….do we collect around climate change? It tends to be, depending on which bits of the collection…so for example…we have somebody that is really into shrimps so he gets shrimps from around the world and I think our assumption is that there will be data that will relate to climate change because we are collecting recording to types, so crustaceans, we are doing active collecting on and we are doing a lot of collecting and some of that is about palms, plantations and effects and is much more about farming but I think, so we are not collecting with a view to looking at climate change we are collecting according to particular research interests because it all has got data with it, it’s potentially useful.

**Museum/Heritage Professional**