

# Ocean Road Mela: Shields of the Future

The town of South Shields holds an annual community festival (the Ocean Road Mela) in August, organised by a grass-roots collective including Bangladeshi community groups, local restaurants, CREST (Compact for Race Equality in South Tyneside), The Customs House, CAST (Citizens' Assembly South Tyneside), South Tyneside Council, Radio Shields and nearby schools and museum services. This year the Hadrian's Wall Classical Association was asked to set the theme for the school workshops, producing art and activities to create a street exhibition for the Mela.

The theme we chose was **Shields of the Future**, loosely based on the Shield of Aeneas from Virgil's Aeneid (and it seemed appropriate, since the town is popularly known as 'Shields'!). Aeneas' shield, made for him by the gods, shows him images of the world he will create, and the greatness of his future descendants. We asked the children what they would put on their own Shield, to inspire them to seek happiness and success in their future lives.



We ran workshops in two local state schools, Marine Park Primary School and Hadrian Primary School. Children from both schools went on a visit to Arbeia Roman Fort, to learn about Roman weaponry and military equipment from Roman soldier Roy Lawson.





**Roy Lawson**

@RAeliusVictor

Another bunch of recruits!

Aye, isn't [#Pannonia](#) full yet?

Well, if they keep sending them, we'll keep training them!

[#KeepingtheEmpireSafe](#)

[@ArbeiaRomanFort](#)

[@drcorabeth](#)



After their Roman soldier experience, children worked with artist, poet and musician [Jenni Mac](#) to create their own Shield of the Future. They learned about Aeneas and the challenges he faced in establishing a new home in a new land, and they used a worksheet to develop their ideas about what their own Shield might look like. Then they constructed their Shields of the Future, with help from Jenni.

# YOUR SHIELD OF THE FUTURE

- Imagine that you were given a magical shield with pictures of your own future on it.
- Those pictures would inspire you to do great deeds. They would help you to feel less afraid. They would make you believe in yourself. They would give you hope when things seem hopeless.
- Holding this shield, you would never give up.

**YOUR FUTURE CAN BE AS  
BEAUTIFUL, SCARY, BOLD OR  
PEACEFUL AS YOU WANT IT TO BE!**



**BUT ONLY YOU CAN DESIGN IT!**

**WHAT DO YOU SEE ON YOUR SHIELD OF THE FUTURE?**

The children thoroughly enjoyed the workshops.

*The feedback from the children and staff was really positive. The children showed high levels of engagement with the sessions, from beginning to end. The workshop with the Roman Soldier and the story about the shield gave the children a sense of purpose when designing and creating their own. The learning about this cultural significance within our local community was really brought to life.*

*Feedback from Marine Park Primary School*

The finished Shields were displayed in shop and restaurant windows along Ocean Road, for Mela visitors to look at. They were also hosted in South Shields Museum, in Ocean Road Community Centre, in Apna Ghar Women's Centre, and in the Sea Change Cafe (an autism support centre), as well as on the main stage.

Children took the Shields to the venues to be displayed, creating links between the schools and local businesses.



Get involved in this year's

# Ocean Road Mela

20 August 2023  
12 - 6pm

To learn more and get involved, contact  
[oceanroad.mela@gmail.com](mailto:oceanroad.mela@gmail.com)



The Mela festival was a great success. It was attended by thousands of people from South Shields and from further afield, including local MP Emma Lewell-Buck, who said, 'This is the beating heart of South Shields... and that's because this is a tight community'.







The school workshops were generously funded by a grant from The Classical Association, which paid for school materials and artist involvement. Thanks were extended to the CA from all the organisations involved.

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup>  
August | 12-6pm

# OCEAN ROAD

## Mela 2023

Ocean Road, South Shields

APU TRIXX HOPE SONKORI  
FESTIVAL PERCUSSION BAND TANIM &  
& MORE MUSIC HASSAN  
FOOD CHILDREN ACTIVITIES  
STALLS MMA PARADE  
DANCE WORKSHOPS CRAFTS  
ENTERTAINMENT COMMUNITY THEATRE

And street exhibition by Hadrian  
and Marine Park Primary Schools

### ORGANISERS

CREST  
 Citizens  
 South Tyneside Education  
 INTO THE SPOTLIGHT  
 The Classical Association  
 DIPNO GHOR  
 RAM  
 Sangini  
 TYNE & WEAR archives & museums  
 The Cultural Spring Charity  
 OCEAN ROAD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION  
 the customs house  
 arts and entertainment for all

### FUNDED BY

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND  
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 THE Barbour FOUNDATION  
 SIR JAMES KNOTT TRUST

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