

# pyka\_lens: a digital heritage

March 2019





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# Using pyka\_lens digital heritage app at Cadw Site

## A How to Guide Book



## Foreword

### Welcome to the pyka\_lens digital heritage guidebook.

**Cadw** have been working in partnership with **pyka**, a creative tech company based in a Newport, who provide creative experiences for schools, galleries and museums, to develop a new exciting and accessible way for people to engage with our historic sites right across Wales.

Pyka worked alongside a wide variety of individuals, with different needs and background, to develop a tool, that helps uncover deeper layers of engagement within historic locations and their surrounding environments, in a way a typical visitor may not discover on their own terms.

Whether you have been to a Cadw site many times before, or have never thought of a historic site as somewhere you might go, the **pyka\_lens** app gives you a new reason to visit and a new way to discover the historic environment and these wonderful spaces, that our history was made in, our ancestors lived and worked in and visitors and artists have loved through the years.

“What can you hear? What can you feel? What can you imagine?”

The creative digital tool focuses on these multi-sensory layers, giving you a rich and meaningful engagement and maximising your use of your senses. There's more to our sites than what you may first notice. The app encourages you to explore our historic sites more deeply and to create unique pieces of digital art in the process.

Through the guidebook and our linked Custodian Tips, we hope you will discover the potential of this new digital tool, to help enable you to discover and explore our wonderful heritage sites and your other own favourite local, possibly “unloved heritage” sites, in a different, creative, inspiring and stimulating way.

Whether you use the **pyka\_lens** app at one of Cadw's 130 sites just for your own personal fun, or as a learning resource (ticking digital competency, literacy, art and other boxes) even perhaps using to gain an Arts Award - which the app and this guide is designed to support, it doesn't matter. All 'story-worlds' created in the app are unique and can be made accessible for others to view and enjoy.

We really hope you enjoy using the pyka\_lens app at our sites, and looking forward to viewing your digital creations over time.

## An introduction to \_lens

**pyka\_lens** is a free digital tool for iPad that provides people with the opportunity to creatively engage with their surroundings through multimedia creativity. Users are encouraged to consider and explore the visual, textual, and sonic aspects of their surroundings and capture content to sculpt their own interactive digital 'moments', serving as artistic interpretations of the historic locations they've physically explored.

The app features 2 core experience modes: **Create** and **Explore**.

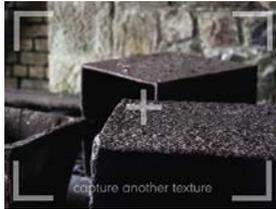
In **Create** users are able to capture their own mixed media content (images, sound, text) as they physically explore their surroundings, resulting in the creation of their own audiovisual 'moments'. **Explore** allows users to interact with finished 'moments' via a growing library of interactive content, created and submitted either by themselves, or other users of the app.

**pyka\_lens** features both **Welsh** and **English** language options in a conscious effort to support bilingual engagement across Cadw's historic sites.





## Capture & Transform



Capture images, sounds, and text while uncovering deeper layers of your surrounding environment.



## Create 'Moments'



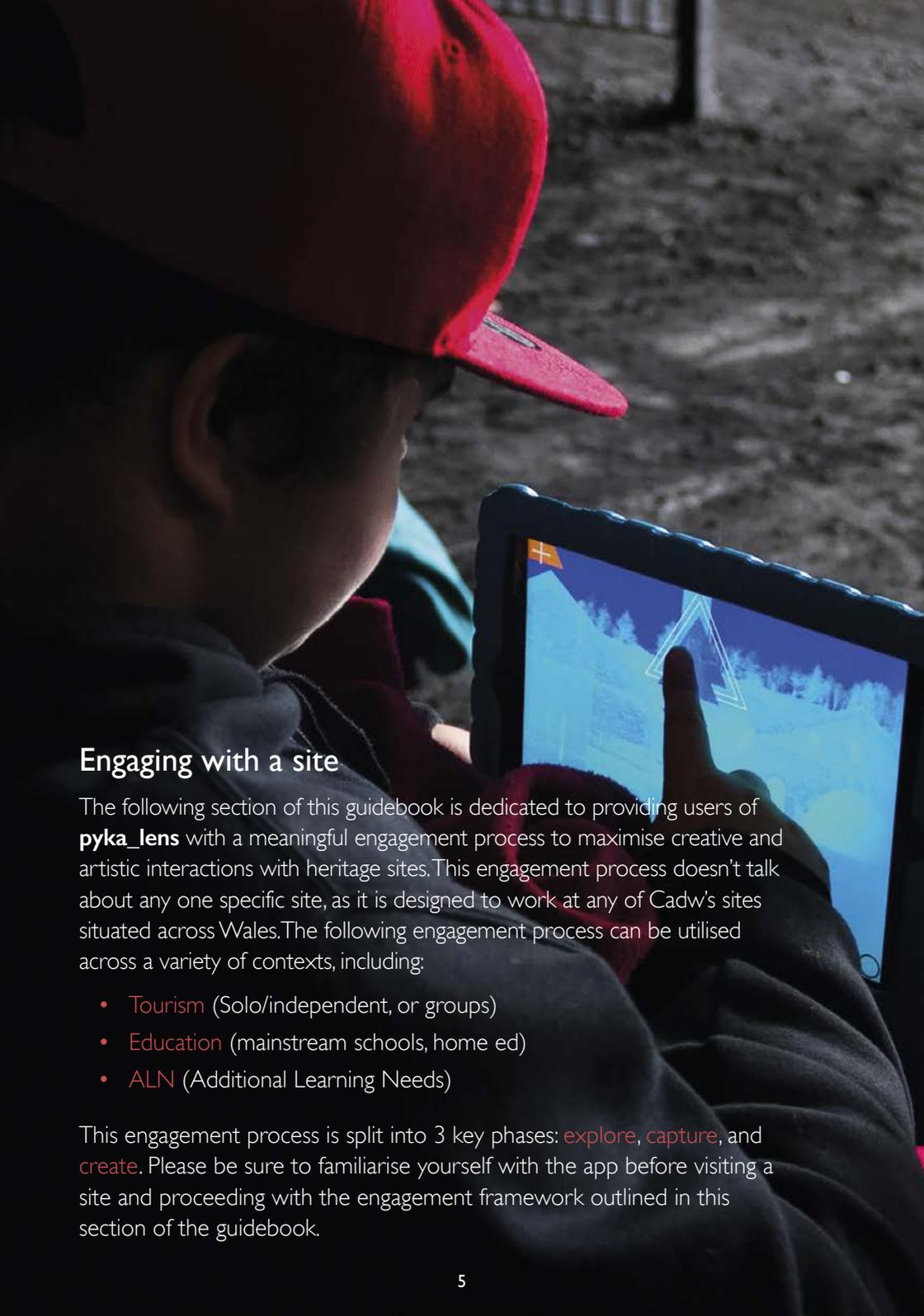
Arrange and sculpt your creative content into interactive digital 'moments'.



## Share & Browse



Share your 'moments' and access others from a growing public library of interactive digital experiences.



## Engaging with a site

The following section of this guidebook is dedicated to providing users of **pyka\_lens** with a meaningful engagement process to maximise creative and artistic interactions with heritage sites. This engagement process doesn't talk about any one specific site, as it is designed to work at any of Cadw's sites situated across Wales. The following engagement process can be utilised across a variety of contexts, including:

- **Tourism** (Solo/independent, or groups)
- **Education** (mainstream schools, home ed)
- **ALN** (Additional Learning Needs)

This engagement process is split into 3 key phases: **explore**, **capture**, and **create**. Please be sure to familiarise yourself with the app before visiting a site and proceeding with the engagement framework outlined in this section of the guidebook.

# Phase I: Explore

For this first phase of this engagement process, it is advised you explore the site without the use of **pyka\_lens**. Put away your device and take the opportunity to explore your surrounding environment away from the screen – you're about to take yourself on a tour around the site.

The purpose of the **explore** phase is to give yourself the chance to get acquainted with the site you're visiting, and think about various sensory aspects of the location. While exploring be sure to think about: what you can see, what you can hear, what you can touch, and how the environment makes you feel.

As you move around the site, try to look beyond the 'postcard landmarks'. By this we mean the landmarks and vistas that a site is well known for. By all means keep these in mind, but there is much more to each and every site than what people typically come to see. With this in mind, take a walk around the site and make sure you visit any areas that you're able to safely access. When you find yourself at an area that's of interest to you, you should consider the following types of observation to ensure you are engaging with the site at many levels:

- **The far** (e.g. the wide vistas, the surrounding environment, the wildlife)
- **The near** (e.g. site landmarks, structures, walls, objects, etc)
- **The close**. (e.g. materials, surfaces, textures, etc)

What can you see and hear at each of these levels? How does it make you feel? Make note of what you've discovered. When you feel you've acknowledged as many aspects as possible, you can move on.

Repeat this process a few times, visiting different areas within the site. Once you have done this you will have acknowledged many different aspects of the site at many different levels, spanning the senses.

Once you feel you have explored the site fully, you should return to where you began this phase of the engagement process, ready for phase 2.

## Phase 2: Capture

For this second phase, you are going to use **capture mode** within **pyka\_lens**. Take out your device and load up the app. To access **capture mode** from the main menu, first select **create** mode, and then in the following menu screen, select **capture mode**.

The first time you use **capture mode** you will be provided with a step by step guide of the capture process. Once you get started the app will encourage you to find one of the areas of interest you discovered in the previous phase of this engagement process. Return to one of the areas you identified earlier and proceed with the in-app capture process.

Firstly, the app will encourage you to capture images in the area that you're now currently located. Use the on-screen instructions to take photographs. Once you've captured a photo, you can continue to take photos in this area, or move onto the next capture process.

Next up you'll be prompted to capture sounds. Approach any sound sources you wish to record, and use the onscreen instructions to record your sound. These could be incidental sounds that are naturally occurring at the site, or sounds you can make yourself (footsteps, echoing voices, etc).

Lastly the app will encourage you to uncover and hunt for words within your surrounding environment. Look through the device's camera once more, and words will appear within the dark recesses of the site (in dark corners, in shadows, on dark textures, etc) Reflecting on the images and sounds you've recorded so far, as well as your own interpretation of the mood of the site, grab any words that you feel reflect your own interpretations of your surroundings. Be sure to move around and physically explore your surroundings in order to generate more words on the screen to choose from.

Once you have gone through these 3 capture stages, you can return to any of the 3 capture tools you wish to use again, or, if you're happy with what you've captured in this area, finish this capture session, move on to the next area of interest you wish to revisit, and start another capture session. Repeat this entire phase each time you visit a new distinct area of the site.

## Phase 3: Create

Now you're ready for the third and final phase of this engagement process. For the create phase, you are going to return to the content you have captured in the previous phase, and begin to work creatively with this media in order to create your own interactive digital 'moments'.

This final phase of this engagement process can be completed either at the site you've been exploring, or away from the site in your own time. However, for maximised creative inspiration, we recommend that this third phase is completed at the site.

Firstly, find a quiet/sheltered area of the site to reflect. Now you're going to explore the content you've captured. To do this you need to go into **curate mode**. Here you will see each of your capture sessions, presented to you as 'moments'. Each moment is a collection of images, sounds, and text you've captured at each of the areas you visited during phase 2. Simply select one of these moments to enter the **moment editor**. In the **moment editor** you can begin to edit and manipulate the content you've captured. To edit each piece of media, choose from one of 4 options in the menubar on the right hand side: **Image**, **Sound**, **Words**, and **Expressions**.

- **Image** – here you can colorise, contrast, and collage your photography to create striking new visual artworks.
- **Words** – here you can add and position your captured words within your visual composition, in order to weave narrative and deeper meaning.
- **Sounds** – here you can sequence and process your captured audio with effects to reflect the tone of your visual composition.
- **Expression** – here you can add interactive expressions to the visual elements of your moment in order to bring it to life.

As you work through the **moment editor**, you will slowly bring together all of your media, resulting in the creation of a digital 'moment' – an interactive audiovisual postcard that represents the space you explored and your unique response to that location. Once you've finished curating your moment, simply exit the **moment editor** to save your progress. You can return to continue editing this moment from the **curate mode** menu.

Repeat this phase for each 'moment' you created during the previous capture phase in order to artistically curate all of the moments you've generated during your exploration of the site.

## Cadw custodians' top tips for exploring



### **John Sherlock. Caernarfon Castle.**

“While engaging with Caernarfon Castle a visitor could also embrace the royal associations that make Caernarfon Castle unique in Wales, for example the **textures of the slate dais**, which through touch you are reaching back into the past.”



### **Sheena Williams. Plas Mawr.**

“Plas Mawr is abundant with different textures from ornamental plasterwork to magnificent wood carvings. Check out the **Elizabethan graffiti** in the kitchen; the **witch marks** and **red glass** in the Red Chamber; and the **unusual caryatids** in the hall.”



### **Annette Wells. Chepstow Castle.**

“While hunting for sounds, listen for the **wind** which can certainly howl around the castle. It can whip up the **leaves and branches** of the yew tree in the upper bailey. The castle is also home to **crows, pigeons, and seagulls**, all of whom like to make their presence heard!”



### **Stephen Mitchell-Cox. St David's Bishops Palace.**

“There is a spiral staircase which will take you to the top where you get a **stunning view** across the palace and cathedral. The reinstated floor gives you a great **wooden texture** to capture too, plus the **acoustics in the tower** are different to the vaults or the big open rooms.”



### **Jim Fanning. Raglan Castle.**

“On the horizon sit the Sugarloaf and the Blorenge, iconic mountains of this corner of Wales. At different times of year, the fields closer to the castle will have varying crops, including some to the northeast that occasionally become a **sea of blue** as the linseed plants flower.”

## Sharing creative outputs

**pyka\_lens** also features an **explore mode** where users are able to browse and interact with any digital moments that have been curated and submitted to the global library by other users of the app.

You can submit your own finished interactive moments to this public library from the **curate mode** menu. To submit one of your finished moments, simply tap to select a moment, and then press the submit button (see images right). If you haven't done so already, you will then be prompted to name and set the geographical location of your edited 'moment'. Once you have done this, your work will be distributed to the moments library in **explore mode**, where other users of the app will then be able to access and experience your work on their own device.

To interact with moments created by other users, simply access **explore mode** from the main menu in **pyka\_lens** and begin browsing and searching through a growing library of interactive moments. This online library serves as a digital exhibition space which provides everyone with the opportunity to present their own unique digital interpretation of the historical locations they've visited to a wider digital community.

## Arts award discover attainment

Both **pyka\_lens**, and the facilitation process outlined in this guidebook are a perfect approach for introducing young individuals to Arts Award, through the entry level Discover award. The following breakdown provides guidance on the 3 distinct steps young individuals must undergo to complete the Arts Award Discover process using **pyka\_lens**:

### Part 1 – Engage in Creative Activities

Participants are to explore a heritage site of their choice. By following the facilitation process outlined in this guidebook, users will capture multimedia, and sequence and curate their own interactive digital moments using the **pyka\_lens** platform.

### Part 2 – Researching Artists and Their Work

Following on from these creative processes, participants would then be encouraged to research an artist linked to one of the creative processes that they experienced while creating their interactive audiovisual moments in **\_lens**. This could be a photographer, a creative writer, or a sound artist. Participants will be encouraged to look at the work of one of these types of creative professionals and begin to develop their understanding of that specific creative discipline.

### Part 3 – Share Their Arts Discoveries

Participants would then share their finished interactive storyworlds with their peers, along with an arts log demonstrating the connections they've made between existing artists and the creative skills they've developed while using **\_lens**. Using **explore mode** in **pyka\_lens**, participants will be able to share their work not only with their peers, but also with a wider digital community.

On conclusion, certificates for Arts Award **Discover** can be awarded to any young people who have engaged with this process. Certificates can **only** be awarded by individuals who are Arts Award trained.

For more information on Arts Award Discover, and how you can become a certified Arts Award officer please visit **[www.artsaward.org.uk](http://www.artsaward.org.uk)**

