

Editor
Susie Batchelor
GEM
54 Balmoral Road
Gillingham, Kent
ME7 4PG
casestudies@
gem.org.uk

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Cover: Bags of fun!
at York Minister

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education project
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Gem
the voice for
heritage learning

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Case Studies

Vol.11 2013



What is GEM?

Editorial

GEM champions excellence in heritage learning to improve the education, health and well-being of the general public. GEM believes that involvement with our rich and diverse heritage is an enriching and transformational experience that provides distinctive opportunities for learning. We aim to make that learning accessible, relevant and enjoyable for all. GEM works with its members and collaboratively with other learning organisations across the UK and internationally to:

- champion excellence in heritage learning and participation enabling people to be inspired by, value and enjoy their and other's heritage;
- advocate the power of heritage learning in transforming people's lives to sector organisations, national agencies, funders and government;
- influence sector organisations to deliver excellent learning and participation for their visitors;
- promote and explain the benefits of learning through heritage which is inclusive, sustainable and respectful of communities;
- develop creative partnerships with other organisations to share effective practice in heritage learning and participation;
- research and pioneer innovation in heritage learning and participation;
- inspire and support the work of heritage learning practitioners;
- provide opportunities for practitioners to develop their practice through networking, mentoring and learning together.

Welcome to volume eleven of Case Studies, our autumn harvest of articles offering a snapshot of some of the inspiring projects and programmes our colleagues have been working on across the UK. We think you'll agree it's an excellent crop; the diverse projects outlined in these pages explore working with young people to engage with their local history and heritage organisations; efforts to widen access to collections and to better engage different audiences; and partnerships and co-production, a developing area of work that seems increasingly vital.

A number of projects featured in this issue demonstrate what an incredible asset young people can be to a heritage organisation. In Carlisle, an international group of young people contributed to the first foreign language interpretation at Tullie House, while in Swansea, young volunteers have enhanced the museum experience at the Egypt Centre, bringing with them each week new ideas and enthusiasm.

This issue also offers the reflections of three organisations that each worked to enrich their offer for visitors with disabilities and special educational needs. In London, Parliament's Education Service aimed to better understand working with young people with special educational needs, while in Duxford, new audio interpretation empowered blind and partially sighted visitors to engage with exhibitions on equal terms with their sighted peers. The People's History Museum in Manchester

worked in partnership with the Lancasterian Specialist School for Communication and Interaction to develop resources that allow children with disabilities to access the museum's workshops for schools and early years.

As you read, you will find frequent mention of partnership working and co-production. The increasing prevalence of organisations working with partners from both within and outside the heritage sector is in part a reaction to funding cuts, but also presents a wonderful opportunity. When heritage organisations work with each other, with organisations from other sectors, or with their communities, even the smallest organisations can overcome the limitations they may face on their own, and open the door to developing countless new approaches, impacts and outcomes.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of Case Studies. If you have been inspired, do think about writing up and sharing some of your work with others by sending it in to GEM. The next deadline for Case Studies is 12 March 2014.

The editorial team

Group for Education in Museums
54 Balmoral Road
Gillingham
Kent ME7 4PG
Tel/Fax: 01634 853424
office@gem.org.uk
www.gem.org.uk



My Place heritage education project

Using local history to engage young people with their surroundings

Summary

The My Place heritage education project is a two-year Heritage Lottery funded initiative, working with 1,200 young people in Bradford and Keighley, West Yorkshire, exploring the local history on their doorsteps and the ways in which they can contribute positively to their areas.

Background

My Place is being run by West Yorkshire Joint Services' education and community engagement team in partnership with Bradford Museums and Galleries.

Challenge

The areas of Bradford and Keighley are populated with diverse communities of different ethnicities and cultures. There is not often much interaction amongst the different peoples or awareness of any commonalities that would bring them together.

Approach

The My Place project uses local heritage as a medium to challenge the issues of lack of inter-cultural and inter-generational engagement. Through a series of in-school workshops, archaeological excavations and oral history sessions, young people will make the connection between themselves, their neighbours from the past and the impact they are having for future generations.

Intended outcomes

The My Place project intended initially to develop wider audiences for local heritage, increasing participation in heritage services. Through providing access to activities and events, skills, knowledge and experience will be increased, which will have an impact on safeguarding local heritage whilst also sustaining any relationships forged during the project.

Intended outputs

A schools pack including session plans and resources for all local heritage workshops will be distributed at the end of each year, along with a "dig manual", written by young people for use by any schools wishing to carry out their own excavations.

Obstacles and issues

The My Place project is facilitated by a number of agencies, including Archaeological Services West Yorkshire, Bradford Museums and Galleries and two theatre companies in order to deliver the excavations, archaeological workshops and additional drama performances. It has been testing to satisfy each agency's working practice whilst arranging contact with schools and, ultimately, booking in each group to ensure their participation. It has also been challenging to tailor the local heritage workshops to all schools and make it clear that, whilst the team is doing this where possible, there is not the capacity to provide a completely unique programme for 20 different educational institutions.

Actual outcomes

Despite the original target of 600 young people participating in the first year, this has been over-achieved with 803 students being put forward by schools, who saw the value of what My Place has to offer. There has been wide-spread increase in interest in both heritage sites of Bolling Hall, Bradford, and Cliffe Castle, Keighley, with cases of students visiting with their families in their leisure time. There were no cases of negative feedback from young

people during the excavations, with each and every one finding at least one activity that they engaged well with. There were no cases of vandalism at either excavation site, proving that the surrounding community appreciated the work being carried out to explore local heritage.

Actual outputs

The school resource packs are currently in production, following feedback from students and teaching staff. Students were asked to complete a "dig diary" during their excavation experience, which will go towards the "dig manual" at the end of the project. Two DVDs were created and edited for the two Bradford and Keighley hubs. The Bradford DVD was produced by media students at Tong High, Bradford.

Lessons learned

The in-school local heritage workshops will need to include more interactive content to engage a wider range of young people and increase their interest. There will need to be clearer working agreements produced for schools and partnership agencies, in order to ensure each party is aware of their responsibilities within the project.

Next steps

The My Place project is beginning its second and final year. Funding will come to an end in October 2014 and further funding streams will be sought to deliver this initiative in these and other West Yorkshire districts.

Rachel Tapp and Hayley McCarthy Project workers

Further information

Rachel Tapp (Bradford):
rtapp@wyjs.org.uk

Hayley McCarthy (Keighley):
hmccarthy@wyjs.org.uk

Twitter: @MyPlaceWY
Facebook: My Place West Yorkshire
Blog: www.myplace.wordpress.com

Bridport Town Hall

A partnership for local heritage learning and resources

Summary

As part of Bridport Town Council's Heritage Lottery funded project to restore the town hall, a partnership learning project between the town council, Bridport Museum and Dorset History Centre was developed to showcase the site as a learning resource for local schools and teachers. The project also offered the opportunity for Bridport Museum and Dorset History Centre to work in partnership to develop rich and inspiring local history resources, and to promote the value of their individual collections as a learning resource for schools. The project ran between February 2012 and March 2013.

Background

Bridport Town Hall is a Grade One listed Georgian building located in the centre of the town and managed by Bridport Town Council. The partnership learning project worked with eight local primary schools and was part of a larger programme of activities looking to develop schools engagement with the town hall and the town council.



Challenge

Through the restoration project, Bridport Town Council sought to encourage greater community use of the building, including schools, and to develop a greater understanding of the heritage of both the building and the town.

Approach

Project partners met with local headteachers to understand the nature of learning resources linked to the Town Hall that would be most useful to teachers. Teachers wanted learning resources that were not specifically reliant on visiting the town all or other partner sites, but could be used flexibly in schools for learning across the curriculum. Teachers also welcomed opportunities to explore how local heritage collections could be used to support learning and teaching.

Intended outcomes

- To raise awareness of Bridport Town Hall as a learning resource and develop sustainable ways of engaging with local schools.
- To network with local schools and promote local heritage services.
- To work in partnership with local heritage organisations.

Intended outputs

- Object and archive loan boxes based on Bridport Town Hall.
- Professional training for local teachers on the use of heritage collections.

Obstacles and issues

It was clear that teachers were not fully aware of the range of heritage resources that were available to them locally. Alongside this, potential changes to the curriculum, particularly in history, were making it difficult for both schools and heritage organisations to plan effectively and develop relevant resources.

Actual outcomes

Feedback from teachers who attended the continuing professional development (CPD) sessions was overwhelmingly positive, with participants expressing their excitement about using the heritage collections in their teaching. All of the participants left the CPD sessions feeling confident about using heritage collections through the *Take One...* model, even those teachers who had not heard of it before.

Actual outputs

Five thematically based loan boxes linked to Bridport Town Hall were created through the project. The boxes contain a mixture of objects linked to Bridport Museum's collections and reproduction documents from the archives at Dorset History Centre in both hard copy and on a CD.

To raise awareness and support teachers in the use of heritage collections and sites, two twilight CPD sessions were delivered by the partner heritage organisations. The sessions were held at Bridport Town Hall to give teachers the opportunity to visit the site first hand. The format for the session was the National

Gallery's *Take One...* model using *The Romance of Bridport*, a painting by Fra Newberry which hangs in the town hall, as the focal point for the session.

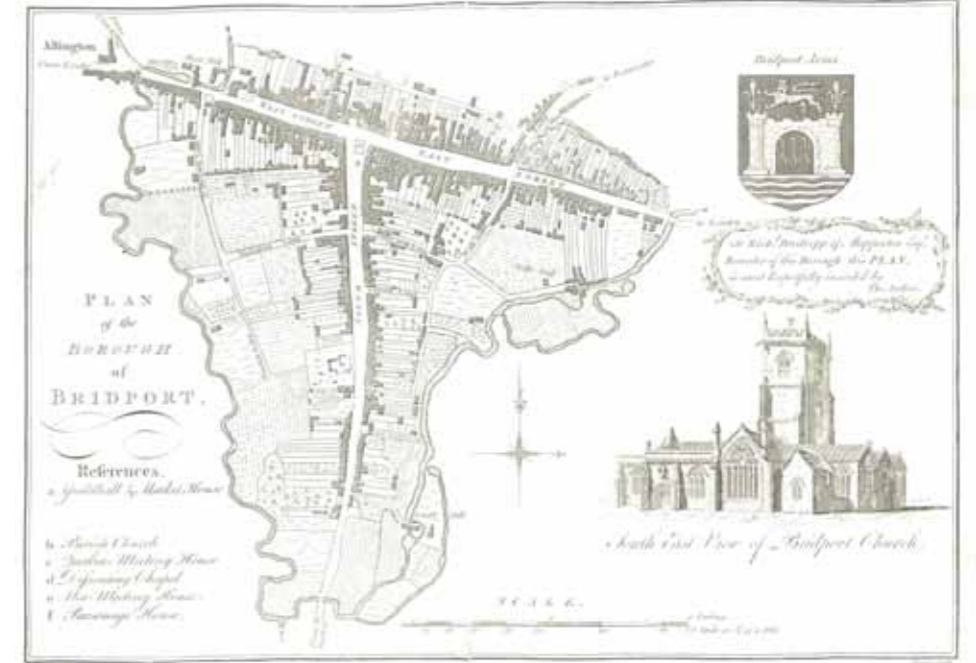
Lessons learned

The development of learning resources in partnership has both enhanced the quality, diversity and range of the resources, and helped to break down barriers for schools in using heritage collections. For Dorset History Centre in particular, where documents can not be used outside of the centre some 15 miles away from Bridport, the opportunity to have archive material included in the local museum's loan boxes has been a valuable way of promoting and increasing access to the collection.

Next steps

Bridport Town Hall is used for meetings by the Bridport headteachers group and a number of school groups have visited since it reopened.

Bridport Museum and Dorset History Centre have already begun to look at how they can further enhance each other's learning resources. Dorset History Centre will continue to contribute archive material to the museum's other loan boxes and both organisations are looking at developing a new learning product for schools focused on using resources from the archive and the museum's local history centre.



Bridport Museum continues to build its support to local schools. Staff have already worked closely with one school to highlight resources available for all primary school levels. The museum will seek to continually evaluate their resources to develop and improve them further.

Dorset History Centre has begun the process of reviewing all of its learning resources for schools, to make them more relevant to teachers and therefore

improve access to the archive collection. Based on the successful model from the Bridport Town Hall project, the history centre plans to develop new thematic document and photo packs as standalone learning resources with the potential to be easily integrated with other local heritage collections and sites.

Kristina Broughton
Learning officer, Dorset History Centre

Further information

Project Contacts:
Kristina Broughton, learning officer,
Dorset History Centre
01305 228 947
k.broughton@dorsetcc.gov.uk
www.dorsetforyou.com/
dorsethistorycentre

Emily Hicks, curator, Bridport Museum
01308 458 703
curator@bridportmuseum.co.uk
www.bridportmuseum.co.uk

Crystal Johnson, arts & heritage
consultant (project manager for
Bridport Town Hall restoration
project) crystal.johnson1@virgin.net



Creating communication boards

Summary

The People's History Museum (PHM), Manchester, worked in partnership with Lancasterian Specialist School for Communication and Interaction to develop communication boards which allow children with disabilities to access our *Living History* and early years workshops.

Background

PHM is the home of "ideas worth fighting for" and tells the dramatic story of the British working class's struggle for democracy and social justice.

We deliver cross-curricular learning workshops for all ages, including *Living History* and *Little PHM* storytelling sessions, which use performance, interactive drama activities and gallery exploration to bring learning to life.

In 2012 we received a £500 grant from the Tesco Charity Trust to help us make these workshops accessible to a wider range of users, specifically children with disabilities.

Challenge

To make our *Living History* workshops for schools and our *Little PHM* storytelling workshops for early years more accessible for children with communication difficulties.

Approach

We worked in partnership with Lancasterian School to develop communication boards for our workshops and storytelling sessions. The large amount of speaking and listening in the sessions is challenging for users with communication difficulties. Communication boards make language visible and accessible for individuals who have communication difficulties. These low-technology communication displays consist of photos, symbols, words and phrases or a combination of all three.

The learning team visited Lancasterian School at the start of the project to see how the boards were used in school to assess how to approach the project. We intended to develop the boards over a number of repeat visits to the PHM. Lancasterian School would use their specialist software to create the communication boards and PHM would offer free workshops to test and evaluate them. The boards would then remain at the museum to be used when required.

Intended outcomes

- To develop the museum's relationship with Lancasterian School.
- To increase accessibility of our *Living History* and *Little PHM* sessions for children and young people with communication difficulties.
- To increase awareness of the needs of children and young people with communication difficulties within PHM's learning team.
- To provide training for the use of communication boards to the staff in our learning department and our gallery assistants.
- To develop our skills in working with children with speech impairments and develop the skills of our visitor services staff when welcoming visitors with communication difficulties.
- To improve our accessibility for visitors with disabilities in the long term and allow us to integrate the new knowledge and skills when developing our future learning programme.

Intended outputs

- To develop a set of communication boards for our most popular *Living History* workshop, "No bed of roses", and one of our *Little PHM* storytelling sessions to be offered as part of our permanent learning programme for special educational needs (SEN) groups and mainstream schools with SEN pupils.



- To host a celebration event at the museum to disseminate findings from the project to other schools in the area and to promote our new offer for SEN groups.

Obstacles and issues

- The project was intended to be completed by July 2012, however due to a combination of other commitments and the difficulty of booking convenient dates for workshops the project wasn't completed until July 2013.
- Our actor was ill for one workshop so we had to have a last minute change

of plan and offer an alternative session.

- One group turned up without the communication boards so one of the sessions was done without them.

Actual outcomes

We fulfilled most of the original outcomes and have booked formal disability awareness training for staff at the museum which will further increase accessibility for visitors with disabilities.

Actual outputs

In addition to the intended outputs, we created communication boards for more sessions than originally planned

(four *Living History* sessions and three *Little PHM*) as we found that we didn't need to repeat sessions with the same boards to fine tune them, and the funding was better spent developing more boards.

Lessons learned

- Book dates of sessions in early to avoid clashes with other commitments.
- Work in partnership with enthusiastic teachers! – The project benefited from the drive of Helen Tildesley at Lancasterian who organised the visits and produced the communication boards.
- Work in partnership with schools who have the skills and equipment to fill any gaps in your knowledge – the software to produce the communication boards is very expensive, so the project benefited from Lancasterian being able to produce them in house for us. In addition, we visited the school to see how they were used, which helped us when delivering sessions at the museum.

Next steps

We will promote the communication boards as part of our core offer for SEN groups and evaluate how they are used. We will offer peer support for other museums interested in developing a similar offer. We will continue to develop our relationship with Lancasterian School and they will deliver formal disability awareness training for our learning team, front of house staff and volunteers.

Catherine O'Donnell
Play Your Part engagement
& events officer,
People's History Museum

Further information

For more information please contact learning@phm.org.uk or call the learning team on 0161 838 9190.

Co-production in digital learning



Summary

Larger museums often steal a march when it comes to technology, due to higher resourcing, a reputation that attracts investment and expertise, and access to specialist in-house technicians. This case study aims to show how effective partnership working can serve all partners equally and overcome many of the limitations faced by smaller museums when developing an online learning experience.

Background

Luton Culture is a charitable trust delivering cultural services on behalf of Luton Borough Council. The museum learning team operate out of Wardown Park Museum and Stockwood Discovery Centre,

offering education opportunities from children aged four to students aged fourteen and beyond.

Challenge

The team did not have the time, expertise nor resources to develop computer games in house. Nor was capital available to hire external providers to develop software to our specifications.

Approach

The business interaction manager and the computer sciences department at the University of Bedfordshire approached Luton Culture with the aim of providing their students with "real world development experience and clients" to form part of their degree courses. The learning team quickly produced a client briefing document, delivered a lecture at the university about the learning outcomes of our sessions, and explained our wants and needs for learning games.

Intended outcomes

The aspiration of the learning team was to provide online learning resources for schools and virtual visitors alike, to complement visits to our sites. The brief presented to the students was specific to schools teaching sessions for ages four to seven (*Grace's Go Kart*) and seven to eleven (*Plaits and Hats*).

By working with a real client and brief, the university can extend the learning of its students by offering a realistic experience of post university life, and offer them an insight into the growing digital education sector.

Intended outputs

- Simple flash games to extend the learning that takes place within taught sessions at Luton Culture's museum sites.
- A realistic scenario for students from the University of Bedfordshire to learn about client relationships and developing to an outside brief.

Obstacles and issues

- Time pressures meant that occasionally museum staff could not attend development events for the students. This negated some of the purpose of the project and so a substitute method was employed: for example, an open channel of communication between students and the client via email.
- The initial presentations by students to museum staff highlighted a need to provide additional guidance to students regarding the abilities of students aged four to eleven: for example, some games had complex keyboard controls beyond the motor skills of a six year old.
- Some groups needed advice about appropriate content: for example, a treasure hunt game about stealing from the collection.
- Students on advanced courses naturally have a higher level of English than younger pupils, so the museum provided guidance concerning UK reading bands.

Actual outcomes

Students gained experience of working within the constraints of a corporate identity for a real life client. They went through a commercial process which involved repeated client feedback and guidance on the direction of their product. They were also expected to engage with the museum and its collection, increasing their awareness of the cultural provision in Luton.

Actual outputs

We currently have nine games, at various stages of completion, ranging from near commercial quality to needing a lot of work. Work on these is on-going in collaboration with staff from Luton Culture.

Lessons learned

- Clear purposing needs to be in place from the initial meeting. Draw up a list of mutual expectations, delivery targets and a timeline.
- Compile a toolkit throughout the process; remember both parties are

learning from each other and the situation. If thoughts, findings and solutions are not collated at the time, there is the potential that important lessons could be lost.

- Assemble supporting documentation in advance of the project: for example, reading levels guidance, national curriculum links, lesson plans or schemes of work.
- If possible, allow students to observe teaching so that they can get a feel for the sessions and the intended audience of their games.
- Allow students to feed back; they are adults and yet closer to the experience of learning in school than most museum professionals.
- Provide a technical specification regarding how the end products will be used within a website. This should include the size of window in which the game should play; specific usability guidelines such as size of the text (16 point minimum); size of the buttons and how they should react when pressed (play a sound); the game should work equally well with sound disabled (for use in classrooms); and how logos and branding should appear in games.
- Define some acceptance criteria to determine when a game project is complete to a suitable standard and can be considered fit for publication to the organisation's website: for example, a list of objectives that is checked after play-testing by children.
- Brief students as early as possible so they have time to consider how they will tackle the brief. This allows students to spend more time analysing other web games intended for the target age group, enabling students to be better prepared. It is valuable to conduct the initial briefing on-site at the museum.

Next steps

Next year, the university would like to work with the museum on the same project again. This will probably involve developing games for different parts of

the museum curriculum.

Small groups from local schools will be invited to visit the university to feedback directly to the students.

Dave Graves
Learning officer,
Luton Culture

Further information

The current versions of the games produced are online at www.lutonculture.com/learning/online-resources/learning-games/schools@lutonculture.com

Bags of fun!

Little Explorer Backpacks at York Minster



Summary

The *Little Explorer Backpacks* are just one way in which York Minster is engaging with new and non-traditional audiences, through informal learning opportunities. They were initially produced as a response to the lack of resources for younger children (aged three to seven) visiting with families, but have since proved popular with early years groups too.

Background

York Minster is a working cathedral welcoming over 287,000 leisure visitors a year. Families with children make up less than 10% of this figure.

As part of the five-year project *York Minster Revealed* (a £20m project supported by a £10.5m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund) a new learning strategy for York Minster was produced, with family learning as a key priority area. The *Little Explorer Backpacks* form part of a growing informal learning offer for families, which also includes hands-on activities, trails, storytelling and tours.

Challenge

- A gap in provision was identified for younger children (aged approximately three to seven years) visiting with family.
- The value of offering resources such as this was not yet fully appreciated and there was some initial scepticism – the backpacks would need to prove their worth!

Approach

A four-stage approach was adopted:

Stage one – fact finding, research and identifying best practice.

Stage two – developing content and defining practicalities, developing step-by-step guides for volunteers (who would be distributing the backpacks), easy to use loan forms and methods of delivery.

Stage three – producing and delivering the packs and providing support for volunteers.

Stage four – evaluations with visitors and volunteers, report writing and distribution (including recommendations for improvements and future use).

Intended outcomes

- To promote York Minster as a family-friendly site and attract new audiences.
- To demonstrate the potential for family activities aimed at three to seven year olds.
- To provide a framework for engagement with York Minster.
- To provide opportunities for self-led discovery (with no set route or instructions).

Intended outputs

- To produce a children's backpack with age-appropriate resources, to be offered free of charge to visitors.
- To develop a straightforward way in which volunteers and staff can distribute and monitor the backpacks.
- To develop a "user friendly" system for volunteers and staff to record usage data and visitor feedback.

Obstacles and issues

- Initial scepticism about the needs and aims of backpacks, and the value of provision for this age group.
- Initial concern about resources being taken or broken.
- Some grown-ups needed more assistance than previously thought (for example, suggestions on how to use the resources).

Actual outcomes

We fulfilled all the intended outcomes. Feedback from visitors has proved that the project has been successful in promoting York Minster as a family-



friendly site and engaging young visitors.

Comments include:

"I had no idea York Minster offered this kind of thing – brilliant!"

"The children have had a great time and we have learned lots too!"

Feedback from volunteers distributing the backpacks demonstrated success in overcoming initial scepticism regarding the need for and value of the backpacks. Feedback includes:

"I wondered whether these would work, but they have been incredibly popular."

"I was dubious about the scheme but I am glad to say it appears to work well – well done!"

The backpacks proved very popular with early years groups and will be offered to early years groups to book as part of a visit, as well as to pupils aged five to seven, pupils with special educational needs, community groups and organised groups.

Other additional outcomes were the development of volunteer skills and enjoyment, as well as collaborative working between staff and volunteers.

Actual outputs

A set of five backpacks (rising to 20 after the initial pilot phase) were made available to families, each one containing the following resources:

- Plan of York Minster & "notes for grown-ups"
- "I spy" cards
- Torch
- Mirror
- Large magnifying glass
- Colour paddles
- Binoculars
- Compass
- Drawing pad
- Pencil case containing pencil, pencil crayons, sharpener and eraser

Step-by-step guides were produced for volunteers distributing the backpacks, as well as a simple loans form (to be completed by both visitor and volunteer), incorporating a declaration, data-gathering and feedback section with a "smiley face" and comments box evaluation.

Lessons learned

- To inform decisions about what should be included in the backpacks, it proved useful to speak to staff and families at sites already offering

- backpacks, and consult early years specialists and the revised Early Years Foundation Stage framework (2012).
- Speaking at a volunteers' meeting early on in the project really helped to address some initial concerns and outline the aims of the backpacks.
- Creating step-by-step guides and offering ongoing, face-to-face support for volunteers was essential.
- Offering volunteer and staff feedback opportunities, via evaluation forms also worked well at addressing issues and concerns and providing opportunities for some great suggestions!
- Reviewing feedback and acting on visitor suggestions has paid off (for example, suggestions for additional resources and adding more "information for grown-ups").
- Gathering email addresses via feedback forms has meant that we have been able to offer other informal learning opportunities to visitors.

Next steps

After the success of a pilot period during summer 2012, the backpacks now form a key part of the family learning offer at York Minster.

During the pilot phase we trialled some themed backpacks (containing additional resources and activities) for the Christmas period. This worked well and we did the same for Easter. We will be continuing to do this in the future.

Esther Lockwood
Learning officer

Further information

For further information on the project (and for a copy of the full project report) contact:

Esther Lockwood, learning officer
estherl@yorkminster.org,
tel: 0844 9390017 ext: 2241

www.yorkminster.org/learning/
families/explorer-backpacks
Twitter: @York_Minster
Facebook: York Minster

Fight for the right

Birmingham Suffragettes

Summary

Female students from two local Birmingham schools wanted to learn about the suffragettes. Working with the project team, they explored Birmingham Archives and Heritage's (BAH) collection relating to the suffrage campaign and interpreted those stories for a contemporary audience through a historical re-enactment film.



Background

BAH has a fantastic collection of material relating to events that took place in Birmingham during the suffrage campaign. Students from Kings Norton Girls' School and Waverley School volunteered to become part of the project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund's *Young Roots* strand.

Challenge

- Students who had never accessed the archive before needed to research and find stories that could inspire the creative output.
- How to encourage political engagement amongst young women who generally held passive attitudes.
- How to bring two groups of diverse students together to work collaboratively.

Approach

The project was co-ordinated by a freelance project manager and a local history filmmaker with support from BAH. They scheduled workshops, trips and filming days and acted as advocates for the young people, seeking their input throughout the project. Political engagement was encouraged by meeting a local female MP and by visiting Parliament. A number of sessions were held jointly with both groups of students, allowing them to get to know one another.

Intended outcomes

To provide new opportunities for young women to learn about their own heritage by researching archive collections specifically relating to women's history, and to interpret that research for a wider audience.

Intended outputs

The creation of an archive which documents the entire project to be deposited with BAH, and a short historical re-enactment film interpreting the Birmingham suffrage story.

Obstacles and issues

- With such a lengthy timeframe (the project lasted over 12 months) it was difficult to keep all the young people engaged, particularly those with other extra-curricular commitments, and a small number dropped out halfway through. There were also occasional problems in arranging for students to come out of school.
- The original plan was to finish the film by spring but problems in arranging enough rehearsals and bad weather hampered this so the film was not completed until three months after the initial deadline.
- The archive material and stories that we uncovered were so rich that they led the project to almost take on a life of its own and the film became more in-depth than we had initially envisioned, putting pressure on staff and the budget.

- The social media element of the project was taken over by the project manager as not all the students could access the sites and it required more frequent attention than originally envisioned.

Actual outcomes

- Archive workshops were a great opportunity for the participants to work together as a group and explore the events and incidents that took place during the suffrage campaign.
- The drama and script development workshops opened up those stories to the participants by stimulating discussion of the characters and the lengths they had to go to during the campaign.
- A blog and Twitter account were created and achieved publicity for the project.
- Members of the group were invited by the Birmingham Civic Society to unveil a blue plaque for Julia Varley, suffragette and trade unionist.
- Project participants also appeared on two local radio programmes and the project was featured on a local youth news website.

Actual outputs

The film, *Fight for the Right*, was celebrated in two school screenings in July. The entire process, including all activities and workshops, was documented and will be available as a heritage learning resource.

Lessons learned

- Full engagement by the participants at every stage of the process, researching in archives, devising a script and performing that script, was



what led to a credible and authentic piece of film which fully reflected their responses to women's suffrage in Birmingham.

- The topic was made interesting and relevant to the girls on the project by exploring the modern day parallels of female equality and the role of women in contemporary political life. This was crucial for ensuring continued engagement of the young people and in the impact that the project had on the girls beyond the life of the project.
- Being able to learn a range of new skills was important for engaging the girls throughout the project and ensuring that different interests and abilities were catered for. For example, some young people were more interested and confident in

acting and performing where others found their skills were in researching and writing. Having a broad range of opportunities for young people to choose from helps to widen participation in a project of this kind and helps to make it inclusive.

Next steps

A screening of the film is planned for Sunday 1 November in the Library of Birmingham. The film will also be submitted to a range of festivals, both national and international, as a way of further disseminating the work.

Nicola Gauld
Freelance project manager

Nikki Thorpe
Events & marketing team,
Library of Birmingham

Further information

Nicola Gauld, freelance project manager, nicola.gauld@hotmail.com

Nikki Thorpe, Birmingham Archives and Heritage, nikki.j.thorpe@birmingham.gov.uk
www.birmingham-suffragettes.wordpress.com

Engaging groups with special educational needs



Summary
 Starting in 2012, the aim of the project was to thoroughly research one of our under-represented audiences – young people with special educational needs (SEN) – and to review the opportunities and challenges involved in establishing a programme for these groups.

Background
 The project is a step towards achieving Parliament's Education Service's broader vision to reach every school aged child. Visiting students experience an engaging tour followed by an interactive workshop exploring themes that support citizenship, history, government and politics, public services, law and other curricula.

Challenge
 In the school year 2011-12 over 1,500 groups visited, 74 of which disclosed special educational needs. Through further research we realised that of the needs disclosed, the audiences most under-represented were students with learning difficulties and those with behavioural, emotional and social development needs.

Approach
 We consulted with teachers to discover what some of the supposed barriers of visiting Parliament were and what drove them to reveal the needs of their students, and asked them to evaluate our current programme. Case studies illustrating best practice were created through making contact with colleagues in other museums in London which had established successful SEN programmes.

Intended outcomes

- To establish a service-wide approach for better provision for SEN audiences, from the information available digitally and the booking process through to improving the students' experience of Parliament itself.
- To become better known by teachers for our SEN provision.
- To establish a support network with colleagues in other museums and galleries.

Intended outputs

- Pre-visits for teachers who work with young people with SEN.
- Improved information on our website.
- Support and training for all staff who book visits to improve awareness of specific terminology.



- Flexibility to tailor resources for these audiences.

Obstacles and issues

The project was undertaken alongside normal service delivery which resulted in delays in development when operational duties needed to be prioritised. Data collection was undertaken by sending teacher contacts an email linked to an online questionnaire; responses were low initially so further contacts needed to be made, making this stage time-intensive.

Being flexible enough to tailor experiences for visiting groups has been quite labour intensive due to the nature of a working building; access to the Chambers is not always available.

Actual outcomes

Teachers have commented:
 "The students loved the tour and your guides were great at making what happens in Parliament interesting and accessible to them."
 "Thank you for arranging for your staff to take our tour. I cannot commend them highly enough. They had such great approach in explaining tricky concepts to our hard to reach pupils (and adults)."

We also received some valuable feedback and ideas, as one teacher comments:

"As a special needs school there was too much language for our learners. For more able learners you could have written information and for less able learners you could have pictures and/or signs. It would also be really good if your employees could do basic signing."

Actual outputs

- We ran a training session on SEN terminology which has enabled more thorough information to be taken from teachers when booking a visit.
- A pre-visit day took place on Thursday 26 September.
- A dedicated webpage on the education service website on "Students with SEN".
- We have also arranged seven tailored visits for groups where some specific provision was required.

Lessons learned

- That while we deliver engaging and interactive sessions, some still need to be more hands-on.
- Our staff are highly valued by the teachers and there is an expectation to maintain this quality standard.
- Each group's needs vary hugely therefore a ready-made programme is not always the answer.

- Though young people with SEN are under-represented in our records they are not invisible or absent.
- Not to judge success with this audience by looking at numbers of visitors, instead to create a quality standard using feedback from the teachers and students themselves.

Next steps

- We are committed to continue reviewing and improving our programme for students with special educational needs.
- We will continue to review our practice and to develop our relationships with other museums and galleries who work with these audiences.
- With the progression of a new education centre (expected in September 2014) we have an ideal opportunity to look at what kind of new resources or experiences we can offer these audiences.

Emilia Ciesla
 Parliament's Education Service

Further information
 For further information please contact Emilia Ciesla at Parliament's Education Service:
 cieslae@parliament.uk



Carlisle Youth Exchange project

Young people's perspectives from Carlisle's twin cities

Summary

Tullie House worked with a youth exchange group to produce foreign language interpretation for its *Carlisle Life* gallery.

Background

Carlisle has been twinned with Flensburg, Germany and Slupsk, Poland for over 40 years. Throughout, young people from these cities have taken part in the Carlisle Youth Exchange project. During the exchange, young people explore each other's hometowns, celebrate each city's different cultures, and



highlight similarities between youth cultures across Europe.

This year, 30 English, Polish and German teenagers took part in activities across the county, exploring the theme of local industry.

As part of their visit, Tullie House invited them to the *Carlisle Life* gallery.

Challenge

As well as taking memories of their experiences away with them, the young people wanted to give something back to Carlisle and to leave a legacy. The challenge was to do this in four hours over two days, with young people for whom English is an additional language.

Approach

The Carlisle Youth Exchange project is co-ordinated by Carlisle City Council but delivered by two other organisations, so it was essential to discuss together the project proposal in detail. Due to limited time, it was imperative that the group was briefed prior to arrival at the museum and that the assisting adults from the visiting countries were aware of our plans and the input required of them. I enlisted the help of a Polish colleague to assist with the session, and I worked with the designer to develop a prototype, as we only had 24 hours following the sessions to get the booklet designed and printed.

Intended outcomes

To develop lasting relationships with organisations working with young people in the city.

To use this project as a pilot study for working with other non-English communities in Cumbria.

Intended outputs

We decided to produce a booklet that contained the group's personal responses to objects on display. We told some unusual stories behind the objects and asked the group to share similar stories from their home towns. We hoped they would write short sentences in their own language, with English translations provided by their group leaders. Before this project, the museum had no foreign interpretation.

Obstacles and issues

Language barriers proved to be more of an obstacle than expected. Due to limited time, there had to be a reliance on supervisors who, although enthusiastic, spoke less English than anticipated. I think the Cumbrian accent may have made understanding trickier too!

My Polish colleague Michał was incredibly helpful, but having a German-speaking assistant as well would have been useful. A lot of translation had to be done after the group had left, leaving me to rely heavily on Michał's help.

Individuals express themselves differently – our activity was particularly



challenging for those who had difficulty writing responses. To compensate for this, we ran a British Museum inspired *Talking Objects* session on the second day to encompass different learning styles.

Actual outcomes

We were able to compile the material and get it to the designers in time to have a finished product to present to the Mayor and City Councillors at a celebration only days later.

The booklet is well-received in the gallery and there are plans to do a similar booklet for other areas of the museum.

Actual outputs

Having maintained contact with the two partner organisations, I hope to work with them and others through the Carlisle Youth Network Forum to assist with activities for National Youth Work Week.

As part of our events programme to compliment an upcoming exhibition, Tullie House has proposed working with Carlisle's Polish community. I have discovered that although the Polish

community is growing in Carlisle, it may prove difficult to find a teenage contingent, as those I have contacted here to work and often have young children. This could be an opportunity to develop an alternative project with a family focus.

Lessons learned

When working with any group of young people, I believe the project will be more successful if you have time to develop relationships. Time limitations in these circumstances didn't allow for this. Ideally, I would have spent time with the group earlier in the week when they were doing team-building activities.

I found it useful to highlight key words and to have visual examples, props and written instructions with illustrative pictures available for the young people to follow as I spoke.

In the future, I would have translators for each language, and I would preferably work with smaller groups. With 30, it was difficult to determine individuals' understanding.

If working with local groups, it would be nice to encourage continued involvement with the museum, possibly through accreditation such as the Arts Award. I would also suggest that they might like to join the museum's youth group.

Next steps

The exchange works on a three year cycle, so young people from Carlisle will visit the other twin cities over the next two years. I hope that the museum will be involved in the next exchange, which will focus on work experience, and would suggest that the museum hosts one young person from each city to do a work placement.

Catherine Moss-Luffrum
Young people co-ordinator
Tullie House Museum and
Art Gallery

Further information

catherine.moss-luffrum@
tulliehouse.org
01228 618705

Historic Duxford

Discovering Duxford's own stories through audio description

Summary

Historic Duxford opened in Spring 2013 with an exhibition and external trail exploring Duxford as an RAF airfield from 1918-61. Visitors can discover the site's history through people's stories. Interactive trail points present explanatory text, contextual historic photographs with veterans' oral histories, soundscape and audio description.

Background

The primary audience is family groups. IWM Duxford's aspiration to integrate access was led by Kay Cooper as access champion, working with the inclusive access consultation panel. Blind and partially sighted members of the access panel identified audio

description as a way to make the trail inclusive for them.

Challenge

To empower blind and partially sighted visitors to engage with *Historic Duxford* on equal terms with their sighted family and friends.

Approach

VocalEyes was asked to develop audio description to integrate into the trail. Audio describer Kirstin Smith and editor Roz Chalmers worked with IWM Duxford's research and information manager Carl Warner and exhibitions officer Sarah Russell on scripts for external locations. Roz advised on IWM Duxford texts for exhibition audio pens.

The access panel tested scripts on-site prior to recording, facilitated by audience advocate Kirin Saeed.



Intended outcomes

- A historic trail for visitors, including blind and partially sighted people, to make direct emotional connections with Duxford's history and consider people's lives while standing where they lived and worked.
- Recorded description to bring to life visual elements with a sense of people, place and activity.

Intended outputs

- Choice of audio description and oral histories at eight interest points, on tactile wind-up devices.
- Descriptive overview of the Watch Office interior on audio pens.

Obstacles and issues

- Limited time for audio description process or effective involvement of the access panel in a hectic exhibition schedule.
- Descriptive challenge to weave history with visual experience of being there, with the range of vast hangars to huts!
- Physical challenge of a large scale, working outdoor environment with high noise levels during flying time.
- No permanent staff presence on the trail.

Actual outcomes

Visitors can learn about the history of people and place on the historic site through visual and audio information at any of the eight external trail points. An exhibition in the Watch Office provides an introduction to Duxford's history and immerses visitors in a multi-sensory

experience of the RAF base's fascinating history.

Feedback from blind and partially sighted people demonstrates impact of description:

"The trail stops were the highlight for me – a landscape of brick huts brought back to life through vivid description and veterans' voices – and all outside where the action took place... It transcends time, and there are quirky hooks – like hearing about the rings for tying up the horses – it all far exceeds expectations.

The voice is clear and direct with good expression and pace. The voice and script together realised a picture." Marion Mansfield

"The trail is an intriguing and informative journey brought to life through vivid descriptions and stories of day to day life of past times at Duxford." Stuart Hayes

Actual outputs

- Evocative architectural and photo image descriptions integrated with interpretive text to reveal hidden histories for any visitor who chooses to listen.
- Active involvement of local blind and partially sighted people able to influence the description and encourage visits.
- New methods of delivery with audio description on easy to operate wind-up devices and audio pens.

Lessons learned

- More time was required for planning and involvement of access panels to address comfort issues, establish a relationship, aims and working method or engage members of the group in detail.
- Ground rules and an understanding of their experience of audio description were important for the visitor access group at the start of VocalEyes work with them.
- Involving the client in choice of recording voice reflected the interpretive aims and appropriate tone of delivery.



- VocalEyes can use their experience in describing architecture effectively in museum interpretation projects.
- Early involvement of audio describers and project team understanding of process and principles are important for putting audio description effectively into practice.

Next steps

- Promotion of the trail to reach more blind and partially sighted visitors through VocalEyes audience advocacy with IWM Duxford and the access panel.
- Evaluation on the trails to include feedback from blind and partially sighted visitors.

Cassie Herschel-Shorland
Visual arts consultant, VocalEyes

Kay Cooper
Historic Duxford access champion,
IWM Duxford



Further information

Find out more about *Historic Duxford* at www.iwm.org.uk/exhibitions/iwm-duxford/historic-duxford

Research papers, reference and case studies are available on the VocalEyes website library pages at www.vocaleyeyes.co.uk

Contact VocalEyes on 020 7375 1043 or enquiries@vocaleyeyes.co.uk

Contact IWM Duxford on 01223 835000 or duxford@iwm.org.uk



Re-imagining the globe

A co-production project with community volunteers

Summary

The museum houses a historic collection of scientific instruments. In 2012 a special exhibition on cosmography in the sixteenth-century created the premise for the *Renaissance globe project*, a multi-faceted learning project involving community volunteers in the co-production of events and artefacts inspired by a modern “re-imagining” of the globe.



Background

Over the last ten years the museum has rapidly expanded its role in public, schools’ and community engagement. It offers a wide range of opportunities for volunteers, and placements for Heritage Lottery Fund *Skills for the Future* trainee education officers.

Challenge

The challenge was to create wider access to a specialised exhibition, and to provide for a growing constituency of volunteers seeking more fulfilling opportunities to engage with the museums.

Approach

Four museums including the Ashmolean, Oxford University Museum of Natural History and Museum of Oxford worked in partnership led by the Museum of the History of Science. Twenty community volunteers, divided into teams attached to each of the museums, worked alongside education officers in the co-production of a series of large globes and public events in which visitors took part in activities re-imagining the globe.

Intended outcomes

- To provide sustained opportunities for volunteers to participate in co-production.
- To facilitate interpretation of the special exhibition for schools, families, and community outreach audiences.
- To create new opportunities for staff to collaborate between the partnership museums.

Intended outputs

- To deliver a series of participatory events to schools, families and community groups.
- To co-create a series of artefacts (globes) which would be brought together to create an exhibition towards the end of the project.
- To create digital resources.

Obstacles and issues

- The extent to which the teams working at each of the museums took ownership of the project was variable; some worked well whilst others did not gel and sought to be directed.
- The initial concept and vision largely remained with the originating museum and the project director which inhibited independent initiative.
- The lack of lead time after the grant was awarded led to limited opportunities for participants – staff and volunteers – to work together on establishing the overall aims and objectives and create a genuine sense of shared ownership.



Actual outcomes

- A number of more experienced community volunteers were involved in the project from start to finish and expressed appreciation of the sustained and varied nature of the project, and the sense of building something over time.
- The project was well supported by staff across the partner museums and offered significant opportunities for developing leadership skills for three out of four *Skills for the Future* trainee education officers across the university museums.
- Effective scaffolding provided a good range of opportunities for varying levels of commitment amongst volunteers as well as opportunities to realise their own ideas.
- The project achieved its educational aims through interpretation of the special exhibition and learning engagement.

Actual outputs

- A varied programme of twenty participatory public events and six schools’ workshops was delivered across the partner museums engaging a number of different audiences; 2,400 visitors and 270 secondary pupils took part in activities.
- Five large globes expressing distinctive themes relating to the collections were co-created; in some cases these became semi-permanent exhibits in the museums providing a focal point for other visitors as they continued to be worked upon.
- The globes were eventually brought together for a collective exhibition and celebratory event for volunteers and staff.
- A website documenting the project has been created with resources yet to be completed.

Lessons learned

- Allow longer lead in time to establish aims and objectives and a shared

vision amongst all participants. This could have been facilitated by setting up informal opportunities to meet with other members of the museum staff involved in creating the special exhibition.

- Create a platform for sharing ideas and experiences between participants during the project such as a blog or Facebook page along with training for those without experience.
- Create more specific opportunities for skills training for volunteers during the project.

Next steps

- The education team will continue experimenting with a variety of approaches and participatory techniques and will implement the lessons learned in the delivery of future projects which involve a significant element of co-production.
- A web resource is being created which will include some of the materials generated for the workshops and activities which were delivered during the project and will be linked with the interpretation of the collection.
- The globe kits used during the project have been offered to other museums and local schools as a reusable resource for other globe-related projects. It is hoped that these will generate other ideas and educational resources to add to the website.

Christopher Parkin
Lead education officer,
Museum of the History of Science,
University of Oxford

Further information

Contact Chris Parkin on
christopher.parkin@mhs.ox.ac.uk
or 01865 277 297

Read more about the project at
www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/education/special-projects/globes/

Acceptance and removing barriers

Young volunteers in a university museum setting

Summary

To enable young volunteers of all abilities, social classes, ethnicities and socio-economic areas to experience working in a museum, thereby giving them valuable work experience and enabling them to learn about ancient Egyptian culture within a diverse team. In essence, to reach out to a neglected part of the population.

Background

The Egypt Centre is a small university museum situated on the campus of Swansea University. Founded in 1997 it is conversely the largest collection of Egyptian artefacts in Wales with over 5,000 items. It works extensively with schools, including those from Community First areas, as well as young people placed in special units with challenging behaviour and disabilities, in order to fulfil its remit of education and widening participation.

Challenge

The challenge our scheme addresses is the difficulty of managing a diverse group of youngsters as well as including those who would not usually have the opportunity to work within a museum other than through the

already established network of work experience placements arranged through their school.

Approach

From the very beginning of the Egypt Centre's existence the importance and value of volunteers in having ownership and running the museum was recognised. In order to be inclusive it was felt that few opportunities were presented to this particular age group and it was determined that positive measures of inclusiveness would be undertaken to remedy this.



Intended outcomes

To offer the opportunity to gain work based skills in a museum for those aged between ten and eighteen years of age with a particular emphasis upon those from ethnic minorities or with conditions such as ADHD, autism etc.

Intended outputs

- Ensuring a positive visitor experience through the provision of information and signposting.
- Delivery of public educational activities such as mummification and object handling sessions.
- Gallery maintenance.
- Raised self-esteem of the young people themselves as they gain confidence and skills.

Obstacles and issues

Several obstacles presented themselves over the course of the scheme. As our young volunteers attend mainly on Saturdays, training can only take place on that day during opening hours, resulting in training sessions being undertaken in the presence of the general public, though there is a positive aspect as visitors often enjoy watching and indeed taking part in these sessions. As technology has advanced, distractions such as iPods or mobile phones have filtered their way into the galleries, necessitating the introduction of rules regarding their use in the museum. Occasionally there can be clashes of personalities between volunteers and



also challenging behaviour to be addressed! Due to the popularity of the scheme it is also oversubscribed.

Actual outcomes

At the time of writing (September 2013) 42% of our young volunteers belong to an ethnic minority. 28% have autism, ADHD etc., while 21% have some form of physical disability. Thirty five volunteers are engaged on the young volunteer scheme, with a considerable number placed on a waiting list awaiting vacancies.

Actual outputs

Our young volunteers have proved to be an asset to the Egypt Centre. They tend to be less self-conscious about interacting with the general public. Another useful and interesting aspect is the interpretations they place on objects within the collection. They are popular with visitors and in our view enhance the museum experience. They have gained recognised awards such as the Diana Award, highly commended in the Welsh Council for Volunteer Action

volunteer awards and individually they have gained credits with Children and Youth University Swansea. Our child volunteers were the first in Swansea to gain a gold award at both levels, which shows amazing commitment by them.

Lessons learned

It has been a worthwhile scheme. The use of young volunteers has not only broadened the outreach programme at the museum, but has also brought new ideas and enthusiasm. However, a dedicated volunteer manager is needed to manage and support them and older youth volunteers to mentor, train and organise the day.

Next steps

Due to limitations on available physical space at the Egypt Centre combined with the fact they primarily attend the museum on one day a week, we unfortunately have to place a cap on the number of young volunteers on our books at any one time. In the short term this situation is unlikely to change. However, should the museum acquire



extra space we are keen to expand the scheme and enable more young people to experience working within a museum setting. The young volunteer scheme is an integral part of the Egypt Centre and as such is set to continue indefinitely.

Syd Howells
Volunteer manager, Egypt Centre,
Swansea University

Further information

For further details please contact:

Syd Howells on l.s.j.howells@swansea.ac.uk, 01792 606065

Wendy Goodridge on w.r.goodridge@swansea.ac.uk, 01792 295960

For other information on our young volunteer scheme, please visit; www.egypt.swansea.ac.uk/index.php/nubie-volunteering-10-18