

# OUTREACH

ENGAGING NEW AUDIENCES  
WITH THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT



ENGLISH HERITAGE



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▲ Cover: Hull, HODs 2010.  
 Above: Leicester Asian Youth Association,  
 Digital Heritage Project, 2007.

## INTRODUCTION

The Outreach team at English Heritage was set up in 2003 to actively engage new audiences in participating in, learning from, enjoying and valuing the historic environment. In each of the nine regions across the country, an Outreach Manager delivered a range of creative, grass roots community heritage projects, in response to local need. These projects provided a platform for people to explore and share their local, personal and cultural heritage on their own terms. The team created opportunities for English Heritage to engage with those audiences it had traditionally found harder to reach such as people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, people on low incomes, people with disabilities and young people. We tried to target those most at risk of exclusion, as a result of poverty, ethnic background, age or disability. This move towards widening participation was part of a bigger political agenda about broadening access to culture and opening up institutions funded by public money to as wide a cross-section of the public as possible.

When the team was set up, there was a choice about the way we could work. We could either work in a light touch, broad brush way which engaged many people superficially, for example: subsidising transport and entrance costs to enable many people to visit our sites. Alternatively, we could create small scale, high quality, experiential projects which meant working with fewer people but hopefully in a way that had a much greater impact on their lives. Though both have their merits, we chose the latter route. At the heart of this approach was a consultative, participant-led process, with the aim of widening the definition and understanding of heritage. We worked collaboratively with community partners such as youth clubs,

Sure Start, Age Concern and interfaith groups, to give people opportunities to tell their stories, learn new skills, try something different, think about the historic environment in a new way, build up confidence or to make links with other people and groups.

The Outreach team divided its time and resources between community projects in areas with levels of high deprivation where English Heritage had little or no profile, projects at the historic sites cared for by English Heritage, and working to make Heritage Open Days (HODs) more socially inclusive. This work had two main elements: *'project development and delivery'* and *'strategic capacity building work'*.

### Project Development & Delivery

The core part of the Outreach team's work focused on developing and running local community heritage projects in partnership with voluntary and community organisations as well as public bodies. This publication will take a closer look at the different themes we addressed through project work and the approaches used, along with the resulting outcomes and legacies.

### Strategic Capacity Building

Our capacity building work centred around providing support for the heritage sector, community organisations and English Heritage itself, to enhance provision for engaging new audiences with heritage both at a national and regional level.

In many projects, of course, practical delivery and strategic support went hand-in-hand so that outcomes were sustained beyond the life of the project.

Between August 2003 and March 2011, the Outreach team ran and supported over five hundred community heritage projects, offering high quality experiential opportunities to participate to three hundred thousand people from under represented groups.

This included those taking part as project participants and those who engaged with our work through attending a performance, visiting an exhibition, accessing a website, a publication or DVD – all produced as outputs from intensive outreach projects.

It is estimated that in total, over a million people including all those from hard-to-reach groups and the wider community were engaged through work facilitated by the Outreach team either as a direct participant, visitor or user of a project output.

In March 2011, after eight years, the Outreach team at English Heritage was disbanded as a result of the Coalition Government's Public Bodies Review and the Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010, which resulted in a 32% cut to English Heritage's grant-in-aid and the organisation's review of its strategic priorities.

As our last piece of work, we have produced this publication. It is intended to be a record and analysis of:

- the projects undertaken by the Outreach team
- the different themes and subject matters that can be addressed through community engagement work and the approaches used by Outreach
- outcomes of delivery and the impact on legacy and sustainability
- the fundamentals of delivering community engagement work

Our work demonstrates the value and impact community heritage work can have and the vital role heritage and culture has in empowering people to play an active role in their community, building a sense of belonging and making better places to live.

We hope this proves to be a useful document for people running similar projects, working to broaden access to heritage and culture.



Catherine Bloodworth & Miriam Levin  
(Joint Heads of Outreach)  
English Heritage, March 2011.

## FUNDAMENTALS OF OUTREACH

The Outreach team based its community engagement work on six fundamental principles, these were at the heart of our practice to provide inclusive, meaningful experiences of long-lasting benefit to individuals, groups and places.

### Sustainability

The intention for every project we worked on was that the benefits of participation lasted well beyond the life-span of that particular project and ways to sustain the work were built into the planning stage. Sustainability is vital because all projects must come to an end – funding may stop, priorities change, or they have run their natural course – but the time, energy and money invested should have an impact which outlasts the project delivery phase, whether this is at an individual, collective or community level. Through our work we aimed to provide enjoyable, inspirational learning experiences that left participants with increased confidence and new skills. Where possible we build in mechanisms and structures that allowed the work developed in the project to be continued after Outreach involvement had finished; such as enabling groups to set up a local history or civic society; or project participants or partners sharing learning amongst their peer group and increasing the capacity to deliver creative heritage engagement activities. Different examples of sustainability can be seen within the case studies throughout this document.

Whilst a clear exit strategy and plans for legacy were discussed with partners at the start of projects, the very nature

of delivering collaborative participant-centred work meant that often some of the strongest legacies were those that came about through the natural evolution of a project. We tried to ensure that both the more formalised plans for sustainability and the naturally occurring elements were regularly reviewed to ensure they continued to meet the needs of those involved in the project.

Ensuring the sustainability of project work is often challenging, being both time and financially resource heavy. We often found ourselves continuing to work with a group, or staying in the same location over a number of years to help enable positive changes to be embedded in the group or community.

It can also be very difficult to recognise and evaluate the long-term impact achieved, as true sustainability can often only be understood several years after the piece of work has finished, which is hard to track. The immediate impact on an individual participating in a project can be relatively easily measured, but after that it can be difficult to understand the long-term impact of participation, especially in the context of other external influences. This means that often sustainability is easier to quantify in terms of the effect a project has on a group or project partnership.

### Partnership Working

The Outreach team developed and delivered projects across the country by working in partnership with local and national organisations, working on average with over hundred partners each year. This included public and

third sector organisations, such as Local Authorities, community groups, civic societies, museums, universities, faith groups and youth services, many of which had not previously used heritage as a tool for engaging their target audiences. In partnership we created models of delivery which maximised our resources, embedded projects locally and created or built on a positive relationship with English Heritage.

Making links and building partnerships with other organisations is crucial for successful community engagement work, not only in ensuring that projects meet local need and support existing agendas and strategies, but also in understanding what has already happened to date to reduce the risk of duplication. It was particularly vital for us as we had only one Outreach Manager in each region of the country and it was impossible to have a detailed understanding of, and links into, all the different local communities in the areas we worked in. Community partnerships provided key gateways to reaching local participants, and enabled the development of relationships of mutual trust, which can only be achieved through a sensitive and sustained presence.

Whilst partnership working is a positive aspect of delivering community engagement, it can also be challenging if agendas and aspirations for the project are very different for partners. Therefore key to a successful partnership is developing an open relationship between stakeholders, where aims of the project are agreed in advance and different organisational priorities are acknowledged.

Alongside this is the need to establish and document who has responsibility for which elements of delivery and putting in place agreed methods of communication to keep the project on schedule and deal with any arising issues. One method of ensuring all aspects related to working with partners is covered, is to develop a project partnership agreement, which subsequently becomes a working document that is reviewed regularly.

### Maximising Impact

Limited human and financial resources and the desire to address a variety of different needs meant that maximising the impact of projects was also crucial. So whilst projects intensively engaged with small groups of participants, we always looked for ways to reach and have impact on a wider audience.

There were several ways that the Outreach team tried to do this, one of which was the dissemination of project practice (as detailed under knowledge sharing), another was to generate publicity for a project. Generally the most effective was the creation of project outputs which could provide another level of engagement. These project outputs took a variety of forms, including performances, exhibitions, websites, events, teaching resources, booklets and DVDs.

The production of these outputs, which were created with partners and participants through outreach delivery provided a second phase to projects beyond the intensive workshops. Often, in fact, interest in participating

in a project would be galvanised by the opportunity to be part of creating a lasting, professional and tangible output. So whilst the approach was not to produce outputs for their own sake, they could provide focus for participants as well as a means for a wider audience to engage with the subject matter.

Different types of outputs come with their own strengths and weaknesses in regards to production, on going, maintenance and reach. An exhibition, performance or event has a temporary nature, provides direct evidence of engagement (through audience numbers), and presents a clear offer that can be marketed appropriately. But these can be expensive and have a limited capacity to reach people unless there is a touring element which will also increase cost. Whilst websites, toolkits, booklets and DVDs provide a wider opportunity to reach people and may have lower costs attached, these outputs generally provide a more distant level of engagement that can be difficult to measure, although this can be reduced with targeted distribution and marketing.

### Knowledge Sharing

A key part of our work took the form of strategic capacity building which involved sharing and debating of our experiences and learning with project partners and sector colleagues, as a means to improve knowledge and develop best practice. Our national work to support the heritage sector and colleagues working in community engagement and access centred on two large pieces of work.

The first was the delivery of the 'Your Place of Mine? Engaging New Audiences with Heritage' conference run in partnership with the National Trust in November 2006. As a major, national event it brought together over 350 policy makers and practitioners from heritage, museums, cultural and community organisations to learn new skills, network, and debate the big questions that engaging new audiences with heritage challenged us to explore.

The second was *Our Place* ([www.ourplacenet.org.uk](http://www.ourplacenet.org.uk)), the heritage sector's first online professional networking website for people in the heritage and cultural sector who work with communities or in the area of broadening access. It was created by the Outreach team in direct response to feedback from the conference, where delegates reported the lack of opportunities to network and share good practice. Producing an online space for this was the most efficient and far-reaching way to support the sector. By the time of the Outreach team's closure, and the handover of running the site to the Diversity in Heritage Group, it had nearly 1,500 members, and its content of case studies, news, events, jobs and resources almost entirely generated by members for members.

Alongside sector support the team also undertook work to develop the skills and capacity of regional voluntary and community organisations, to run community heritage projects, by becoming members of advisory groups and steering groups, supporting bid applications and providing mentoring and guidance.



## Evaluation

Evaluation of work is obviously crucial in understanding whether a project has achieved its aims and been successful. It is an ongoing process that starts before a project gets going and ends after it has finished. Outreach project evaluation provided a means to understand the immediate impact on participants and partners, their perspectives on the process, whether the project delivered its core aims, the project's strengths and weaknesses and, if appropriate, further opportunities to sustain work developed.

However, what this project-led evaluation did not allow us to do was to provide robust comparative data or to demonstrate the impact of our work on the individuals and groups taking part over a longer time frame. So in spring 2010 the Outreach team commissioned BOP Consulting to develop an evaluation framework to measure and track the impact of our community engagement activities. The framework follows a logic model, so it can link the investment into a project, with the project activities and a range of outcomes that might arise in five major areas: social, economic, cultural, learning and communications impacts.

At the outset of the research, it was anticipated that once the framework had been developed, it would be piloted on a small number of English Heritage Outreach projects to ensure its 'fitness for purpose'. However, due to the closure of the Outreach team and its projects in March 2011, this testing phase could not be implemented. Nevertheless we hope that this will have value for other organisations, as the framework builds on a range of tested models and measures outcome and impact areas that will be relevant to others working in this field. This evaluation framework is available for download from the Our Place Network.

## Consultation

Finally, consultation and a participant-led process underpinned all the work that we undertook. Once we established who we were going to work with, we talked to the groups and the potential participants to start to build up trust and openness, and establish what it was that they were interested in, what stories they wanted to tell and how we could best work together to make this happen.

We found that when we did not start a project with a consultative

and collaborative process between the facilitator and the participants, the projects did not work. It is patronising to 'do unto' people and rarely does a project work when an idea is parachuted into a group, who then has no ownership over the direction or outcomes of the project.

Having said this, we did often go into a first discussion with a group with a few ideas in mind, just because a blank canvas can be an intimidating place to start, particularly when people may not have had any experience of what sort of things they could do in a heritage project. The Outreach team did, however, have a very broad definition of what heritage could be, so that groups' and individuals' sense of what is important and meaningful about the past could be explored.

As a team these six principles have underpinned our Outreach delivery. The case studies in the following pages show how these have been incorporated.



**Above left:** *Chiswick Community Arts Festival, 2005, Chiswick House & Gardens.*

**Right:** *Extraordinary Measures, creative workshop, 2010, Belsay Hall, Castle & Gardens.*

**Far right:** *Stonehenge Riverside Project, HODs 2006. © Calyx.*

**Below:** *Youth performance, Chiswick Community Arts Festival, 2005, Chiswick House & Gardens.*



# 0.1

## Audience Development

Audience development is work that is undertaken to develop new audiences and help organisations to develop on-going relationships with their existing and potential audiences. The term reflects the long-term nature of the work, as relationships build over time. As a process, audience development employs a range of tools such as research, publicity, community engagement, communication and customer relationship management.

For Outreach, audience development was defined as: work which built closer relationships between English Heritage sites and the communities who live around them, putting local people at the heart of the properties and building ongoing relationships to encourage participation and support, with the long-term aim to widen the visitor profile.



### CASE STUDY 1

## Community Arts Festival at Chiswick House & Gardens

As part of a major regeneration scheme for Chiswick House & Gardens in the London Borough of Hounslow, English Heritage's Outreach and Education Departments developed a programme of community arts projects over an 18 month period. These were designed to provide opportunities for local young people, adults and community groups who previously had not engaged with the site and its history. As previous consultation and research showed that visits from the wider Hounslow borough were limited. A range of intensive sub-projects took place which resulted in a variety of art, drama, performance and music being produced, with the climax being a two day *Community Arts Festival* on 24 and 25 September 2005, celebrating both the site and the community.

The house and gardens were open for free throughout the festival, with guided tours, theatre, performance, stalls, workshops, visual art and music, highlighting the work produced through projects or programmed from local groups to ensure the cultural make up of the local area was represented. Over 10,000 people visited the site during the weekend.

### Outcomes and outputs

#### Short term

- Festival visitors, particularly those who were previous non visitors, consulted on the future regeneration plans of the site and on what would encourage them to visit the site in the future. Consultation took place throughout the festival and after through focus groups
- Increased profile of site during weekend, particularly within the wider area
- Brokering of relationships and partnerships with previous non users
- Increased pride and ownership of the site felt by project participants

#### Medium/long term

- Second project run with Hounslow youth services, with local youth groups, in Summer 2006 in response to positive uptake of initial activities
- Members of mental health service group became long-term garden volunteers
- Successful HLF bid, including long-term commitment to Outreach & Education work at site

“It has been an amazing project and we have been very privileged to be involved. Now the staff and the parents are more interested in heritage and art.”

Teacher, Stobhillgate Primary School, *Extraordinary Measures*

▼  
Below: *Extraordinary Measures* summer fete, 2010, Belsay Hall, Castle & Gardens.



## CASE STUDY 2

# Extraordinary Measures at Belsay Hall, Castle & Gardens

*Extraordinary Measures* was the contemporary art programme held at Belsay Hall, Castle & Gardens in Northumberland, from 1 May to 26 September 2010. Nine artists and architects were commissioned to make work responding to the theme of scale and the history and visual presence of this extraordinary heritage site.

Running alongside the exhibition was a 10-month outreach project designed to build a relationship between the site and local families. English Heritage worked with staff at local schools and children's centres to deliver a programme of site visits and creative workshops for early years groups and reception classes and their families. These events enabled participants to explore the themes of the *Extraordinary Measures* exhibition and encouraged them to engage with the heritage and natural environment of the site.

## Outcomes and outputs

### Short term

- Staff and parents are now aware of Belsay as a fun and welcoming site to visit
- Project increased social opportunities for participants to meet new people
- Raised the profile of English Heritage and its role in the Historic Environment

### Medium/long term

- Increasing number of repeat visits to the site over time from local people
- Enthusiasm and interest of external organisations to make site part of regular programme of activities
- The project has encouraged staff at school and children's centres to use creative activities to teach areas of the curriculum. The sensory snow-dome workshop has already been booked by Morpeth Children's Centre for another event

## CASE STUDY 3

## Stonehenge

Outreach activities have taken place at Stonehenge since 2005, working with the Learning and Outreach Co-ordination group to support the Stonehenge Environmental Improvement Project. This work has included the delivery of the *Stonehenge Riverside Project* (2005-8) which aimed to increase local engagement with an archaeological dig through a programme of activities, tours, open days, school visits, volunteering opportunities and outreach sessions.

Another targeted project was *Stonehenge Rocks*, where Outreach worked with young people from the army camps local to Stonehenge to engage them with the local historic landscape and monuments, as traditionally people in the camps had not visited the local sites. As part of the out of school summer activities run by the Army Welfare Service, activity days included: workshops on music, costume making and weaponry, and trips to Stonehenge, Salisbury Museum and the archaeological excavation at Durrington Walls.

### Outcomes and outputs

#### Short term

- Repeat visits to the excavations of the *Riverside Project* by local residents
- Funding for a worker and a small temporary visitor centre facilitated volunteer support for the *Riverside Project* from local residents, which resulted in an additional 212 volunteer days of work for the project in 2008 alone
- Development of family backpacks for the Stonehenge landscape

#### Medium/long term

- Increasing number of visits to the excavation over time
- Development of strong and active relationships between local agencies and partners
- Ongoing programme of activities as part of HLF bid

### Approaches

Approaches that were used by Outreach to support audience development work echo the long-term nature and investment needed to produce real change. These included:

- Carrying out or commissioning community profiling around pilot sites
- Consulting with local 'missing' audiences about what they would like to see at the sites, how they would like to interact with it, what messages would encourage them to visit and what channels of communication would be best to reach them
- Delivering community outreach projects with under represented groups in the locality
- Looking for opportunities for site staff to get more involved in the local community
- Setting up a community ambassador scheme
- Embedding a site into a local Heritage Open Days programme
- Setting up deals, such as free entry, for local residents at certain times/events

“Excellent, very exciting.  
All these years didn't realise  
what was beneath my feet.”

Resident of Durrington in response to  
*Stonehenge Riverside Project* activities, 2008

### Lessons learnt

From our work on the case study projects and others at our sites, we have found that there are issues that affect the successful implementation of all work in this area. These include:

- Increasing and widening an audience cuts across the work of all the individuals that work at or contribute to a site, museum or gallery. Success can not be achieved unless there is cross departmental buy in from those working in the specialism's of: marketing, events, interpretation, visitor welcome and education. It is not the work of just one department and this needs to be echoed in the communication and welcome given to new audience groups
- Sustainability of engagement with groups that have been consulted or have taken part in a project can be challenging, so it is important to ensure that dialogue and updates on progress are shared with those who have given up their time to become involved
- Be realistic with groups and individuals on what might be possible long term, take on board both the large and small issues
- Reward and thank your local community for their engagement, through vouchers, marketing acknowledgment, local days and access to space
- Involving staff right across your organisation in any visitor consultation process will increase the potential for implementing changes later
- Don't second guess what your audience might value or risk being viewed as tokenistic



▲ Above: Edgbaston, HODs 2010.  
Left: Arts workshop, Bradford Industrial Museum, HODs 2009.  
© Joan Russel.  
Right: Bradford Synagogue, HODs 2009. © Joan Russel.

## 0.2

# Heritage Open Days

Heritage Open Days is England's largest and most popular grassroots heritage event, taking place annually on the second weekend in September across England (apart from London, which has Open House London), celebrating local heritage, culture and architecture. It was established by the Civic Trust in 1994 as England's contribution to the European Heritage Days, a council of Europe initiative, in which 49 countries now take part. Starting with a handful of pilots across the country, the scheme developed quickly into a major highlight of the national event diary. Over the last ten years, participation has doubled.



## CASE STUDY 1

### Hull

In 2004 Hull had very few properties taking part in HODs and the area was identified for development in 2005. Over the subsequent years the Outreach Manager developed links and partnerships with Hull Civic Society, Arc (The architecture and built environment centre for Hull), Holy Trinity Church, the Local History centre and many other key organisations in the city to help develop a local programme, with 2006 seeing significant growth in participation, with a range of different properties opened and events put on.

In 2008, increased focus was given to providing added activities and family-friendly events; which inspired organisers to put on art and family history workshops, quizzes, treasure hunts, food tasting, musical performances and craft demonstrations. A local leaflet of the programme of events was also co-ordinated and disseminated, along with a vintage bus service to tour the properties outside the city centre.

The city of Hull has had a great deal of success with its HODs events over the past five years. The Outreach Manager worked closely with the Civic Society volunteers and helped train a new volunteer HODs co-ordinator in 2010. The co-ordinator initiated new marketing initiatives such as email newsletters and is also charged with helping the Civic Society to attract external partnerships and funding to ensure the sustainability of the event.

### Outcomes and outputs

#### Short term

- The city council have taken an interest in the event and have become a key funder, raising the importance of heritage on their agenda
- Increased number of people volunteering for the civic society
- Forging links between organisers to create a network of like minded individuals that are passionate about the heritage of Hull

#### Medium/long term

- Development of a sustainable HODs programme that includes a wide range of family friendly events and activities
- Increased awareness of the cities rich heritage in particular with families and young people
- A major showcase event for the Civic Society to increase membership and awareness of the good work they do for the city
- A positive news story for Hull, a city which is often criticized by the press



Heritage Open Days' unique selling point is to open buildings to the public; free of charge, which are otherwise closed to the public or normally charge for admission. In addition, the four-day event in September offers tours and other interpretive events that bring to life local history and culture. The programme's strength is the commitment of local people who: take ownership of the scheme; interpret it to fit their purposes; provide an army of volunteers; and take the opportunity to share their passion and knowledge with others.

English Heritage provided core funding for the Civic Trust (CT) to run Heritage Open Days (HODs) between 2001 and 2009. In 2003, further support was provided when the EH Outreach team was formed, who subsequently spent 50% of their time and resources supporting the growth and the diversification of the scheme. Following the demise of the Civic Trust in April 2009, English Heritage took over the co-ordinating responsibility and two CT full-time members of staff who were integrated into the Outreach team.

Between 2003-2010 the Outreach team worked with and supported over a hundred local programmes across the country building partnerships to support the development of inclusive programmes at grassroots level, providing a substantial contribution to the massive expansion of the programme during this period. Underpinning the work of the team was the aim to take HODs into new communities in areas of the country where there had been little or no previous participation, and encouraging people to open up properties and run activities that represent England's diverse histories.

## Approaches

The range of regional support provided by the Outreach Managers and the method of working undertaken varied considerably, depending on the regional differences and priorities alongside the needs of those participating, but approaches included:

- Developing and delivering audience development projects with partners
- Running training workshops for organisers
- Setting up and participating in local steering groups
- Providing administration and co-ordination support for programmes
- Funding and co-ordinating production of local marketing material
- Identifying new sites and organisations and encouraging participation
- Running events and activities over the HODs weekend
- Offering guidance and support on aspects as diverse as staging family friendly activities, health & safety, evaluation and attracting new audiences

“Millom first took part in Heritage Open Days in 2004, and from small beginnings we now have a very successful annual festival with a packed programme which takes place not only in Millom but also in the surrounding villages and communities.”

Mandy Penellum, Millom and Area HODs co-ordinator, 2008

Left: Grange Farm, Gosport  
HODs 2010.

## CASE STUDY 2

### Millom & Cumbria

Analysis undertaken by Outreach in 2003 showed that Cumbria was relatively under-represented in HODs. This may have been due to several factors – the isolation of many of the region's villages (making it difficult to build up a density of events) or the fact that large swathes of the region and its economy are involved in the professional tourism industry, so key heritage assets may have been reluctant to engage with a 'free' programme. More broadly, many areas were still recovering from the Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001 and on the West coast in particular there were many areas that were still struggling to find a new identity following the loss of their major industries. Tourism was often cited as a possible avenue for these towns to explore, but the capability and the enthusiasm to do so was often low.

Cumbrian HODs development began by giving talks and making links with strategic networks (e.g. conservation officers and civic trusts) in 2003/4 before ultimately working with the 'Hidden Britain' network that had been established by Voluntary Action Cumbria. This led to successful HODs 04 projects in Brough, Appleby, Barrow and Millom. The success of the first year's participation in Millom in particular led to demand for a larger event in 2005. Working closely with the local Tourism Development Officer, Outreach helped to establish a sustainable steering group, delivered training sessions, advised on marketing strategies and liaised with potential event holders. Roles were gradually delegated to local volunteers and together we began to tie in neighbouring villages and source alternative funding. By 2008 the Millom & Area HODs programme had grown from five to sixty events that attracted approximately three thousand visitors and had helped to re-build both capacity and confidence in the town. Consequently a 'spin off' HLF-funded project was developed to capitalise on the renewed interest in the town's heritage, a South Copeland Tourism Group was set up and Millom's example inspired other towns across Cumbria to take part – Whitehaven being a prime example.

In 2008 Outreach started to focus on supporting Whitehaven for two reasons: local demographics indicated a potential to reach new or non traditional audience groups, whilst the perceived lack of experience and capacity amongst residents to take ownership of representing the area's rich heritage also presented an opportunity to make an impact at a grass

roots level. Working to support the local civic trust, the Outreach Manager's support in Whitehaven ranged from practical health and safety guidance to marketing strategies and organisational support, from one to one advice with event organisers to steering group attendance. Ultimately the work in Whitehaven saw attendance to their HODs programme rise to nearly 2,000 in 2009.

Outreach had simultaneously worked in several areas across the region and the work on Whitehaven HODs formed the final phase of the six-year development of Cumbrian Heritage Open Days. This had started in Millom but at various stages had taken in Appleby, Kirkby Stephen, Workington, Egremont, Brough, Barrow, Borrowdale, Gosforth, Penrith, Carlisle, Cockermouth and Keswick. Each involvement had its own flavour and its own level of required support but taken together they represented a boom in participating sites, improved county-wide promotion, increased networking and better peer-to-peer learning.

#### Outcomes and outputs

##### Short term

- Participation across the region grew from 22 sites and events in 2003 to 150+ by 2008
- The annual Cumbrian HODs directory was initiated by Outreach in 2007

##### Medium/long term

- Millom, Whitehaven, Appleby and Workington all have sustainable, confident steering groups that work together to plan HODs each year
- There is now critical mass of events across Cumbria and as a result HODs in this area has become self sustaining, generating new organisers spontaneously through word of mouth
- Despite cut backs to the local tourism industry and funding shortages which led to a recent decline in overall numbers of events, Cumbria's organiser groups have proved remarkably resilient. For instance, after Millom lost the professional tourism development post that had been largely responsible for driving forward Millom's HODs, local heritage enthusiasts sourced funding for and set up a new South Copeland Tourism Community Interest Company which continues the excellent co-ordination in the area

“It was exciting to see a room full of people from such different backgrounds celebrating their own buildings and open to learn about others.”

Participant, *Our Faith Buildings* film, created for Wolverhampton faith trail, HODs 2006

### CASE STUDY 3

## Milton Keynes

Probably because New Towns and ‘heritage’ seemed to be incompatible concepts, Milton Keynes did not feature in the national HODs programme until 2005. With support from Outreach, Milton Keynes Council and the Milton Keynes Heritage Association, who were all keen to introduce HODs as a regular feature of heritage activity in the area, a small programme of 15 openings and events was established.

To mark its 40th anniversary in 2007, Milton Keynes sought to celebrate its culture and heritage, demonstrating that Milton Keynes was a unique place where new city combined with historic towns and villages. Thanks to the drive of local partners and a continuing campaign to recruit new places and groups through running workshops, the creation of a steering group and direct approaches to potential participants, the town put itself on the event map with a programme of forty openings documented in a local leaflet.

Over the following years Milton Keynes and the surrounding area has continued to flourish and develop its participation, offering local people different and imaginative ways of exploring their environment, from tours of the shopping centre and villages, Bollywood dancing, events at local museums, factory tours, heritage art workshops, wheelchair rambles and trips on a vintage bus. In 2009 the hard work of

the steering group paid off as Milton Keynes saw a huge leap in visitor numbers, suggesting more effective marketing of the event, but also the fact that it usually takes three to four years to really anchor an event in the local consciousness.

### Outcomes and outputs

#### Short term

- Successful and well attended workshops held to encourage new participation
- Creation of heritage cycle trail leaflets
- ‘The Writing Memories project’, a partnership project with The Living Archive and Outreach. The project worked with people from BAME communities to explore their relationship and journeys to the area, through creative IT use. The project website was launched during HODs

#### Medium/long term

- The MK HODs programme has now established itself as one of the two major heritage events in the City and is a key part of a burgeoning heritage programme
- After several years of funding support from Outreach the Milton Keynes steering group has developed a sustainable and diverse programme of events, that covers the town centre and surrounding areas

### Lessons learnt

- Experience shows that developing a new local programme, building critical mass and ensuring that it is fully embedded and sustainable takes a minimum of three-four years
- Key is to ensure that those putting on events and opening up sites are aware of what/who else is taking part in their locality. This helps combat isolation, create better understanding of the overall event and the communities’ heritage assets and provide a more cohesive offer. One way of helping to develop this is running a familiarisation trip, as the Cumbrian programme did, with all participants visiting each others’ venues in August, to hear what they had planned and experiencing the offer first hand
- Building a body of events and site openings requires a committed and enthusiastic person or ideally a group to take on a co-ordinating role
- The paper work related to registration and health and safety can be intimidating to some groups and individuals and they may need support in completing these in the first few years
- Creating a successful HODs event/opening does not necessarily require a large amount of financial resource. Often a few hundred pounds can have a real impact as it is sufficient to cover costs of such basic things as: photo copying, refreshments, volunteer expenses etc
- Local sponsors can provide support in kind for HODs. The local newspaper could print the programme as an insert in the edition before the event
- Local programmes need regular refreshing of the buildings/properties and events, to ensure they remain engaging

## 0.3

## Regeneration and Local Distinctiveness

Much of Outreach's work has been about responding to a particular location and building sense of place and belonging in local areas, and increasing public engagement with issues affecting where people live. Often this has been in places undergoing major changes or regeneration where work is being undertaken to highlight the importance of the historic environment. Outreach's role has been in working with local targeted communities to ensure their view and voices were brought to the table as part of this process.

In other places Outreach has worked with residents to explore their local heritage, celebrate its local distinctiveness both in rural and urban environments, to understand the values they place on it. This type of work can also provide opportunities to take



expert information out into the community and invite dialogue back which can then inform decision making processes.

### CASE STUDY 1

## Tales and Trails of Manningham, Bradford

English Heritage undertook research into Manningham in Bradford, leading to a publication in the *Informed Series*. The book discusses the changes the suburb has gone through, showcases the architectural highlights still to be seen today and explores future conservation needs. To inform the research, Outreach developed a community engagement project with the local residents to open up a dialogue with them to discover what people think about Manningham as an historic area where they live and work, its buildings, culture, history and future.

The project worked with diverse local community groups and individuals, including first generation immigrants, long-term residents, young people, people from different ethnic groups, people who used to work in the mill, and schools. A community engagement officer and a film crew were appointed to work alongside local communities in Manningham to gather and document thoughts, memories and stories from the community about the way Manningham has changed, particularly over the last fifty years, and to celebrate the area for its diversity and contribution to preserving and evolving England's historic landscape. The DVD produced as a result of this work forms an integral part of the research publication,

published in June 2010. A school's resource pack has also been produced by Outreach to support the use of the book and the DVD.

### Outcomes and outputs

#### Short term

- The project-collected research has been made available to the Architectural Research Team and has added value to the book on Manningham and emphasised positive aspects of collaboration
- Positive experiences of participants taking part in project

#### Medium/long term

- Project has raised awareness amongst the residents about the historic importance of Manningham and its buildings. It is hoped this will lead to better maintenance, increased restoration, reduced vandalism, a perception of value, and an increased usage of these historic and significant buildings
- The film will be a permanent visual/audio record of the area and landscape, providing an historical account of the way Manningham looks today and how it has been shaped by the communities who live there



## CASE STUDY 2

# Springline, South Downs

*Springline* was a partnership project between Outreach, West Sussex and Hampshire Children and Young People's Services, the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum and The Sustainability Centre, which took place between 2006-09. The central focus of the project was to engage young people, living in rural villages, to raise awareness of the historic landscape and the distinctiveness of the South Downs, recently designated a National Park – in a creative and sustainable way. In addition, the project aimed to provide opportunities for young people to learn about rural crafts and traditional building skills relevant to their local area and consider them as future job options; as young people living in rural areas are at particular risk of social exclusion due to lack of access to public services including transport, recreational and extra-curricular opportunities.

In year one the project worked with young people from East Meon in Hampshire and South Harting in West Sussex, in the second year with young people from Thakeham and Leigh Park.

The young people participated in: after school workshops in their villages, working with a local artist; undertaking a summer residential at the Sustainability Centre to learn about woodland management and sustainable lifestyles and in the final stage each year took part in rural craft skills workshops at the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, which included thatching, lime burn and wattle and daub building techniques.

## Outcomes and outputs

### Short term

- Exhibition at the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum
- The 08/09 programme included a 'Skills Pathway Day' where participants presented their experience to a panel of professionals from the built and natural environment, family and friends, receiving expert advice about taking interests further
- Improved young peoples' understanding and appreciation of their local area and their increased knowledge of traditional heritage craft skills

### Medium/long term

- The Sustainability Centre has taken over administration of the project with the plan to continue to deliver the *Springline* project with new cohorts, in collaboration with other partners
- The empowerment of the young people to establish a new youth club in East Meon with support from Hampshire Youth Service, including completing a funding application to support running the club. The community led youth club at South Harting was also restarted as a result of the project
- One-day conference jointly undertaken by Outreach, Construction Skills and the Education South team, which took place at West Dean College in June 2009. The conference targeted Connexions advisors and others advising the 14-19 age range on careers, providing a programme of speakers, practical demonstrations and resources; making explicit and clear the link and pathways between careers in mainstream construction and heritage craft skills for the built environment. A leaflet was also created as lasting legacy

Left: Springline summer workshops, 2007.  
© James Simpson.

### CASE STUDY 3

## Living Legends Project, Tintagel

Tintagel is situated in the district of North Cornwall, a large, sparsely populated area renowned for its dramatic coastline and atmospheric moors. However, North Cornwall has the lowest GDP in the country and Tintagel is the second poorest area in the district. The ESF funded Tintagel Regeneration Scheme was formulated as a response to the decline of the character and economies of the village.

The final stage of the regeneration project was the creation of the new village square, nature area and trail, called the *Living Legends Project*, and managed by North Cornwall Arts (NCA). Working in partnership, Outreach and Arts Council England South West supported the participatory arts programme element of the project enabling the lead artist to engage the local community in the creative design of the new developments. A range of activities were put on which included banner design workshops and digital photography youth workshops, which started in August 2004 and concluded with a community walk around the trail in September 2006.

### Outcomes and outputs

#### Short term

- Community consultation sessions run by the artists in local factories, pubs and institutions
- Families worked together in design workshops to create banners for the new square, raising awareness of the project
- Digital photography workshops for young people, which provided opportunities to learn new skills and engage with their local environment in a different way

#### Medium/long term

- Series of six postcards produced using the images created by the young people
- Words contributed by participants were carved in to the wall of the new village square and into the 'touchstones' marking the new trail
- Opening celebrations with over 600 local participants and a walk around the nature trail led by the artists

### Approaches

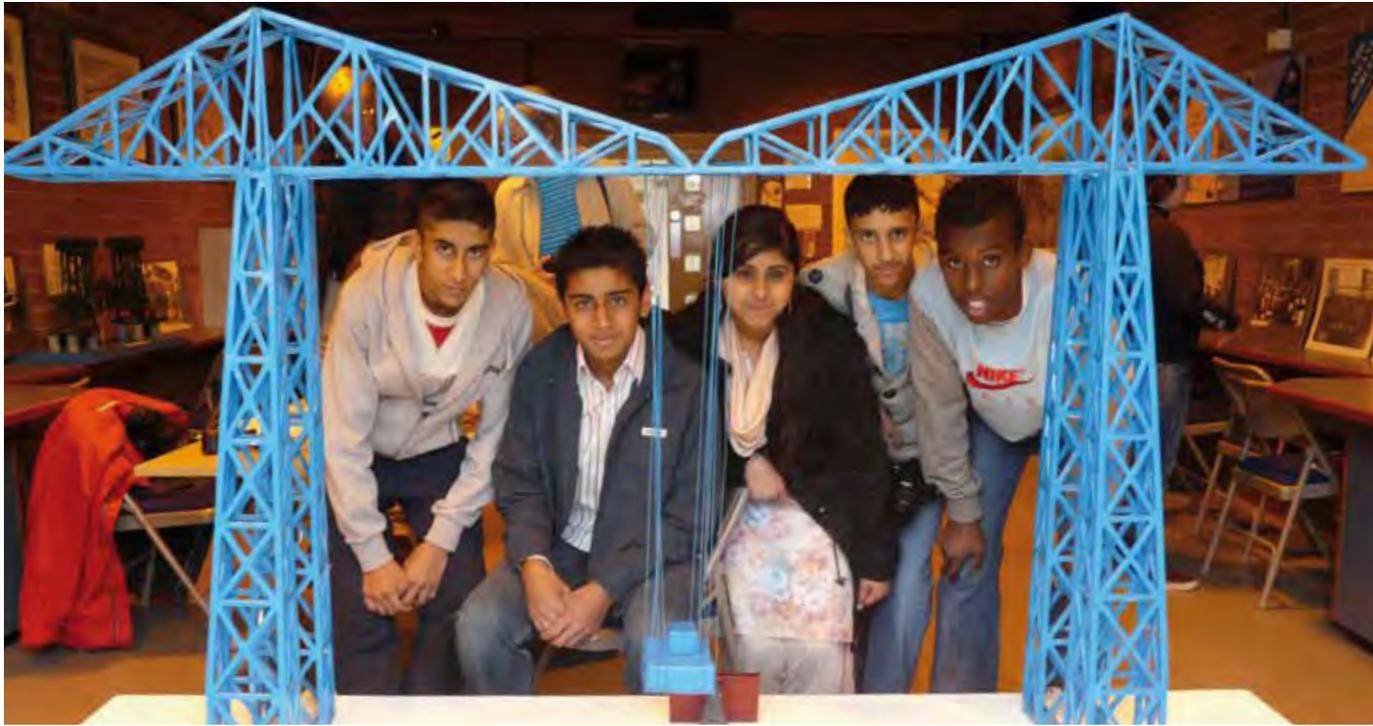
Approaches taken to deliver this area of work included:

- Undertaking audits and research of local community groups, projects, and third sector agencies to create community profiles
- Running events to raise awareness and engagement with particular heritage sites or undertaking consultation on particular issues related to it
- Setting up visits to different sites along with exchange visits between different projects to learn from experiences
- Using Heritage Open Days as a way to actively engage communities with the historic environment in their local area
- Inviting artists to 're-interpret' spaces or deliver creative opportunities for groups
- Working with the local community to research aspects of their local environment and help inform streetscape refurbishments or refits and design
- Using existing characterisation studies to enhance understanding or gain new layers of understanding and significance
- Working with local schools to explore their understanding of the local area and undertaking research with them
- Developing and supporting heritage champions from within communities who could advocate on behalf of their community

'We spoke to a lot of people from different cultures and asked them what they enjoy about Middlesbrough, what they think of Middlesbrough, and what their favourite landmarks are.'

Participant, *Middlesbrough Memories*, 2007

Below: *Middlesbrough Memories*, 2007.



#### CASE STUDY 4

## Middlesbrough Memories

*Middlesbrough Memories* was a partnership project between Outreach and the Middlesbrough BME Network, designed to explore the personal and local heritage of different generations within the diverse communities of Middlesbrough. In 2007, Channel 4's *Location, Location, Location* series named Middlesbrough as the worst place to live in the UK and the project responded to this claim by giving local people the chance to talk about their experiences of growing up and living in the town.

A group of young people from various communities were trained to use digital and video cameras as well as audio recorders in order to create a short film, radio programme and photographic display about Middlesbrough past and present. From July-September the group visited a series of important heritage sites and cultural events in and around Middlesbrough. During the visits they took photos, made film and audio recordings and interviewed the people they met to find out people's opinions on the town and how it had changed over the years. Places on the trips were offered to the wider community, so that the visits were inter-generational. Alongside this, as part of the project, the group interviewed older members of the community about their memories of the town, past and present.

The project resulted in the production of a 10-minute DVD, a radio programme about Middlesbrough heritage which was broadcast to the Muslim community during Ramadan, a website ([www.middlesbroughmemories.co.uk](http://www.middlesbroughmemories.co.uk)) and an exhibition of photographs.

### Outcomes and outputs

#### Short term

- 16 young people took part in the project which included media production training
- A total of 57 people participated in visits to heritage sites and cultural events and 2,100 people from Middlesbrough's BME communities indirectly engaged through the radio programme

#### Medium/long term

- The DVD and website – can be used by local schools as a resource for citizenship
- The radio programme was extremely successful in reaching new audiences and is being used as a model by the network for future work

## CASE STUDY 5

## DAWN Arts, Oldham

Between 2004 and 2008, Outreach worked in Oldham on the *DAWN Arts* project (Derker and Werneth Network), a multi-agency approach to working with communities in these two Housing Market Renewal (HMR) areas in Oldham. Several partners came together to facilitate community participation in neighbourhoods affected by HMR and to provide opportunities for people of all ages to participate in the life of their local area. By running projects with local community groups and schools, *DAWN Arts* engaged with all parts of the community, including the large Asian community in Werneth. A number of discrete projects were delivered in addition to regular street parades and park festivals. These included:

*Twilight Hours* – a youth consultation project that involved working with youth groups from Werneth and Derker, asking what mattered to them about their local environment, taking them to other regeneration areas and presenting their ideas in a DVD format. A launch was held in the Oldham Gallery in April 2005 which was attended by around 60 people. The response from the public to the exhibition was positive and images from the project were displayed at sites throughout the HMR areas. Additionally the films were taken by HMR Oldham to show to potential architects and the HMR core team to gain support and share good practice.

*Memory Lane* – a school's project that examined the social and cultural heritage of Oldham and gave pupils the chance to undertake oral history work, archive research and map

work. Pupils' findings were then expressed through film, photography, modelling and animation. The process engaged young people with local heritage, identified points of continuity with the past, and illustrated that change had always been a part of the area's history. The animated film is available on YouTube ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSyDdVAwn6Q](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSyDdVAwn6Q)).

### Outcomes and outputs

#### Short term

- Delivery of several park fun days and lantern festivals designed to nurture community spirit in an area undergoing radical change and gather opinion on the HMR process. All feedback received was delivered to the HMR teams
- Delivery of two major schools projects that produced large 3D models illustrating the history of Derker and an animated film that explored the history of Werneth and Freehold
- Outputs from creative writing and photography projects used on building site hoardings and shuttered windows and doors, helping to take the edge off the harsh impact of housing dereliction and subsequent regeneration work

#### Medium/long term

- Outputs from consultation projects given over to HMR teams for consideration in their initial planning
- Street Signs researched and designed by community members in Werneth now form a permanent part of the landscape

### Lessons learnt

- Build in plenty of time for the planning and consultation phase of the project, in order to maximise on the number of groups and participants who take part in the project
- Working with Children and Young People's Services should be a long-term initiative as partners need continued support to organise funded and sustainable programmes for young people
- Don't make assumptions about what participants may or may not know about their local environment or be interested in
- Ensure that the consultation process meets the needs of those who you are working with, large meetings can be intimidating, so it may be more appropriate to meet individually. Consider carefully the locations for consultation and how they might be perceived
- Employ experienced and local community engagement workers
- Taking young people out of their environment into neutral territory can help to break down barriers
- Ensure that communication with community groups is thorough, so they know what to expect on visits or workshops and come prepared

"I now walk around paying more attention to the buildings and questioning the history and how they might have been used."

Participant, *Tales and Trails of Manningham*, Bradford

▶ **Left:** Reinterpreting Witley site visit, 2005.

**Right:** Rock Art trip, Northumberland, 2006.

**Below:** Hidden Battles at Fort Brockhurst, Creative Landscapes workshop, 2008.



# 0.4

## Access

Outreach's work to engage with Deaf and disabled people has been approached in different ways this has included working at English Heritage sites and out in the community; with the aim of increasing physical, intellectual and cultural access opportunities to engage with heritage. Although improving access as a theme runs across all the work the team has undertaken, the following case studies concentrate on projects that were implemented particularly to address the needs of people with disabilities. These projects tackle access in a holistic way, understanding that barriers to engagement are so much broader than just physical requirements.



### CASE STUDY I

## Rock Art Project

In 2005-06 English Heritage worked with the Newcastle Society for Blind People (NSBP) on a project which supported members of their group in visiting prehistoric rock art *in-situ* and interpreting their impressions of the pieces through a series of art workshops.

Site visits took place in September 2005, February and September 2006, and involved the group travelling to well known rock art sites in Northumberland. The English Heritage rock art specialist Tertia Barnett accompanied the group on their visits to provide background information, as well as to discuss theories about interpreting the art. From March to May 2006 the group held discussions with a freelance artist to explore different art forms which the group could use to create a tactile piece of work using rock art as their inspiration. Over the summer the group took part in a number of workshops to produce their piece which was then assembled and installed in the offices of the NSBP by the artist. An official launch of the art work was held in December 2006.

### Outcomes and outputs

#### Short term

- Provided three trips to prehistoric rock art sites for members of the NSBP, who do not normally have the opportunities to visit isolated archaeological sites
- Six workshops for seven members of the NSBP
- One piece of artwork created from the work which the group had completed

#### Medium/long term

- Permanent installation of the finished art work within the NSBP office
- Decision by NSBP to apply for funding to enable them to provide further tactile art opportunities for their client group

“I thought it was just brilliant! I loved doing the clay and the painting as I had given up painting when my sight deteriorated. I also hadn't realised that I am still capable of going out into the countryside and appreciating it. I plan to carry on painting and spend more time in the country from now on.”

Participant



## CASE STUDY 2

# Creative Landscapes: Exploring creative approaches to making heritage accessible

*Creative Landscapes* is Outreach's contribution to the multi agency South East Legacy Trust project, Accentuate ([www.accentuate-se.org.uk](http://www.accentuate-se.org.uk)), which brings together the Arts Council, MLA, Screen South, Tourism SE, English Heritage and Sport England. The partnership aims to deliver projects from 2009 to 2012 that support the theme of providing innovative and exciting cultural and sporting opportunities for people with disabilities across the South East, inspired by the spirit of the Paralympics and with a significant post 2012 legacy.

*Creative Landscapes* is an on-going programme of work taking place in the coastal towns of Gosport and Hastings, working with Deaf and disabled people to explore and promote creative ways to broaden access to heritage. At the heart of the project is the aim to develop two thriving Heritage Open Days programmes (previously there was little or no participation) in these areas, which involve and are informed by Deaf and disabled people from the start; alongside the creation of residences for disabled artists. Both pieces of work are intended to find new ways of exploring and accessing the historic environment. In 2009 and 2010 artists were commissioned to run workshops enabling both disabled and non disabled participants to respond creatively to local sites and areas of significance.

The project has been successful in establishing new Heritage Open Days Steering Committees in each town, supported by a Development Worker and a Disability Adviser.

As part of the steering group, local disabled people have been recruited to be part of an access group, ensuring that access and inclusion remain central to the development of the HODs programme. The steering groups are now leading the way in taking forward future HODs development.

## Outcomes and outputs

### Short term

- A new HODs programme in Hastings and a revitalised programme in Gosport, each attracting over 4000 visitors in 2010
- Professional development for the three disabled artists recruited for HODs 2010. Subsequent to involvement in *Creative Landscapes*, all three have secured further professional commissions
- An innovative spoken word HODs event in Hastings, devised and led by Deaf and disabled artists, that provides a model for future HODs events

### Medium/long term

- Sustainable HODs delivery in Hastings and Gosport
- An established and sustainable approach to ensuring that the needs of disabled people are placed at the heart of planning HODs (supported by the development of a Toolkit) which can be disseminated to other local programme organisers
- Increased understanding of low-cost, simple approaches to improving access amongst heritage organisations in Gosport and Hastings

“Abstract Art was a mystery to some in the group... but once they realised that their pictures could contain a mystery, a home sickness... we found that lost things could be retrieved and portrayed in our art work.”

Artistic Moves member

### CASE STUDY 3

## Working with Arts on Prescription: ‘Nostalgia’ & ‘Positive Arts’

As part of a HODs development programme in Stockport, an opportunity arose to develop a project looking at the history of Vernon Mill. Throughout the summer of 2006 participants who had been through ‘Arts on Prescription’ (a service provided by Stockport PCT to promote mental well-being) learnt about the Mill’s heritage and expressed their responses through artistic activity. The group’s responses were displayed at the Mill, which was the launch venue for Stockport’s HODs programme, in an event attended by over 500 people. The success of this collaboration led to the development of a further, more involved, project.

The new project sought to organically promote greater cohesion amongst the Vernon Mill group whilst they worked with an artist towards delivering a more complex exhibition centred around *Nostalgia* – a term first coined to describe a perceived mental illness amongst soldiers that was represented by a melancholia for a lost place – before it evolved to its modern meaning of a slightly more saccharine ‘fondness’ for a lost place or time. Over a series of workshops the participants engaged with issues surrounding physical, cultural and personal heritage and delivered a series of large canvasses for exhibition purposes (the scale was deliberately chosen to challenge the group) and inclusion at a conference on Arts & Mental Health provision at the Lowry, Salford.

A final project was then conceived to try to address the problem of group sustainability in a more direct way. The project aimed to develop a mentoring relationship between a new group who had recently been through ‘Arts On Prescription’ and the previous group who had worked on *Nostalgia* and had constituted themselves as ‘Artistic Moves’.

The new group worked with the same artist to deliver a resource book – ‘15 Steps to building your own group’. The research process bound them together as a unit and gave them the practical tools they needed to secure funding, draft a constitution etc. Moreover, the resource is now there for the following individuals that will continue to come through the Arts on Prescription service.

### Outcomes and outputs

#### Short term

- The artwork for the HODs exhibition was subsequently transferred to Stockport Art Gallery for inclusion in an ‘arts and wellbeing’ exhibition/conference
- The canvasses from the *Nostalgia* project were displayed at Vernon Mill, Stockport for HODs 07 – with an estimated 500 visitors. In addition the project was showcased at the ‘Arts and Health Conference’ at the Lowry Centre in Salford
- Outputs from the Positive Arts programme were displayed at Vernon Park Museum

#### Medium/long term

- *Positive Arts* and *Artistic Moves* have both been successful in attracting funding for room hire, materials and tutoring and have gone from strength to strength. They regularly meet and are now self-sustained and independent from the PCT
- *Positive Arts* have secured funding from Stockport MBC and the HLF since the project closed and have maintained their own website
- Both groups operate as an outlet or inspiration for service users leaving Arts on Prescription. Delivery of the resource ‘15 Steps to building your own group’ will also help to support subsequent groups

## CASE STUDY 4

## Access at Witley Court

In 2004 work began at Witley Court and Gardens in Worcestershire to understand how the visitor experience could be improved for disabled people at the site. It started with consultation on physical, intellectual and sensory access, working with people with a range of disabilities as the experts. Rather than being a consultant-led exercise, four individual focus groups were invited to Witley Court. The volunteer advisors were wheelchair users, had learning disabilities, visual impairments or were Deaf or hearing impaired. The half day sessions, facilitated by West Midlands Disability Arts Forum, and involving members of different English Heritage departments, included a tour of the site, lunch and a relaxed discussion. Access issues encountered on route and any recommendations were filmed in order to capture the real experiences of visitors. Simple improvements such as cutting back the hedgerows so wheelchair users did not get scratched on paths, and using a more contrasting colour scheme in toilet facilities to aid visitors with visual impairments were just two of the recommendations noted.

Numerous changes have already been initiated based on the learning from these visits. In consultation with the voluntary advisors, it has also led to further projects at the site being developed.

### Outcomes and outputs

#### Short term

- Produced CD-ROM showing film footage of consultation and methodology for consultation projects with disabled people on historic sites, subsequently disseminated nationally across the heritage sector and disability networks

- Recommendations for improving access and visitor experience which included: an accessible orientation point and new signage scheme; a more accessible audio tour; relocating interpretation panels into more accessible spaces; an orientation leaflet/terrain guide with path surfaces, distances and gradients to help people plan their visit; and pilots of British Sign Language tours. Many of these were implemented within the first 12 months
- Links were made with eight regional disability-led groups and relationships maintained as improving access work was developed
- Landscape Institute award for CD-ROM – accompanying *Easy Access to Historic Landscapes* publication by EH, Sensory Trust and HLF

#### Medium/long term

- Production of a bespoke disability awareness training DVD used across sites, alongside Welcome Host customer service training for all new staff
- Successful HLF bid (2006-07) to continue work with young people with learning disabilities, some of whom had taken part in the consultation in 2004. The twice award-winning 12 month natural heritage project included the creation of a wildlife garden
- As a legacy of the Natural Heritage project, a monthly gardening club has been running since 2007, with 12 members, many of whom took part in the HLF funded project
- 2009 saw the first pilot work at an EH site to create a Visitor Operations traineeship tailored for someone with learning difficulties



▲  
Left: Monthly gardening project, Witley Court and Gardens.

Right: Reinterpreting Witley site visit, 2005.

Far right: Arts workshop, Gosport HODs 2010.  
© Laura Scottorn.



## Approaches

The types of approach we have used to increase engagement have included:

- Setting up access groups
- Working in partnership with disability groups and providers to deliver bespoke training for site staff
- Recruiting disabled project leaders and advocates
- Development of toolkits to share good practice
- Running of BSL sign language and touch tours for Heritage Open Days
- Setting up arts projects to explore access issues
- Putting on transport and access support to increase engagement in projects
- Contracting disability equality training
- Putting in place mentoring structures
- Supporting groups in developing new projects

“The Witley Court project has fed very well into interpretation... it seems appropriate to develop new interpretation that is tested and evaluated before being installed to ensure that it is effective for the intended new audiences and fulfils our access criteria.”

English Heritage member of staff

## Lessons learnt

- When working closely with disability groups, the use of terminology can become problematic. Accepted terminology related to disability and illness is constantly changing and often doesn't represent an individual's preferences. Consult with the people you are working with on their preferences around language and take this on board
- Work with disabled people in planning your project from the start
- Don't second guess what an individual's access requirements are and be prepared that they might not be clear on what these may be until undertaking the project
- Recognise the diversity of experience amongst Deaf and disabled people, don't pigeon hole people because of their disability or assume that access means the same thing for them
- Access is often about being creative, although it might not be possible to make a heritage site completely accessible physically there will be ways that intellectual access can be improved
- Don't define people by their disability
- Budget for access requirements at the start of a project; there may be costs associated with: providing transport to your workshops, covering the cost of a personal assistant, sign language interpreter or note taker, as well as pay travel expenses and offer refreshments for everyone involved
- Plan accessibility across all areas of the project including: communication, staffing and resources
- Focus on the achievable and try not raise expectations as to what can be achieved



▲ Above: *Kushti Atchin Tan Project*, young Romany travellers from Kent, 2006.

Right: *Apna Ghar* performance, Wednesbury, 2006.

Below: *Interwoven Freedom* workshop, 2007. © Vanley Burke.



## 0.5

## Cultural Heritage

Much of Outreach's work has explored the diverse cultural history of individuals and communities in relation to the places they live in and the part this has played in the social development of the area. In many cases this cultural heritage was often hidden in terms of receiving recognition or being shared with a wider audience.

Projects engaged with a wide range of audiences through a variety of different mediums, aiming to contribute to broadening the definition of heritage. These included: working with young people from the Romany Gypsy community in Kent to explore their culture and heritage, supporting the reduction of tensions between traveller and settled communities; training British Asian women in Sandwell in oral history to gather stories from women who had migrated to



the area since 1950; working in partnership with the Undivided Indian Ex-Serviceman's Association (UEAS) based in Slough to increase public understanding of the vital contribution that Indian Service men and women made to the world wars.

### CASE STUDY I

## Soho Melody

*Soho Melody* was a musical heritage project in partnership with Birmingham Music Heritage, Birmingham City Council and Oaklands Youth Centre which aimed to tell the musical narrative of the Soho Road and Handsworth over the last 50 years, through the eyes of the people who lived there. It documents the memories of residents and artists about the venues, musical styles and performers from Handsworth, which is Birmingham's, if not Britain's, foremost multi-cultural society.

The film documentaries feature interviews with local residents and some of Handsworth's stars, including Selwyn Brown and Basil Gabbidon of Grammy award winning reggae band Steel Pulse, Ruby Turner, Dennis Seaton of Musical Youth and Apache Indian, all of whom have achieved global success in the music industry and are still proud of their Handsworth heritage.

Young people from Oaklands were given the opportunity to learn some film making skills and help record interviews at three community reminiscence days. Inspired by a quote from a local resident about a typical Saturday night out on the Soho Road, they retraced the steps of their parent's generation between venues with local music legend Basil Gabbidon to learn about the vibrant musical scene of the 1980s in the area. They produced a leaflet called 'Following in their Footsteps' to reach a wider audience to share Handsworth's musical heritage.

Alongside the DVD a bespoke music track called Soho Blue was created, informed by the memories gathered as part of the film project. It was produced by UB40's producer Bob Lamb and features musical artists from Handsworth. Soho Blue was played at Birmingham's annual ArtsFest event on the main stage.

### Outcomes and outputs

#### Short term

- The film documentary and music track have been showcased publicly as part of Birmingham ArtsFest 2010, and at two community award ceremonies celebrating Handsworth's communities, reaching an audience of almost 3,000 people
- An exhibition about the project ran at Soho House Museum for six weeks
- Contribution to the Birmingham Music Heritage project, funded by the HLF

#### Medium/long term

- Film documentaries and music tracks available to download ([www.birminghammusicheritage.org.uk](http://www.birminghammusicheritage.org.uk))
- A series of radio documentaries, inspired by the project, have been produced by Radio to Go and broadcast across the West Midlands

## CASE STUDY 2

## The Corner Shop Project

In 2008 Outreach worked in partnership with Black Country Touring, Foursight Theatre, Sandwell Community History & Archive Service, Sandwell Museum Service and Birmingham Archives & Heritage on a social history project documenting Black Country shops from 1950–2010. Using a topic such as the local shop is an excellent way to engage diverse communities in exploring the history of their local area and the stories of people who live there.

During the project volunteers from all ages and backgrounds helped uncover the world of Black Country Shops: from nine year olds doing research, and young people performing next to professional actors, to retired shop keepers sharing their memories. The project engaged with four schools and a wide range of Black Country communities.

The information sourced through archival research and recording oral histories was presented in a variety of ways to engage with different audiences: live theatre, schools education projects, touring exhibition and archive presence.

In 2010 a website was launched to provide an overview of the project and share the models of good practice developed. It features videos, oral history extracts, image galleries and practical case studies to support other corner shop themed

projects. There are also over 30 resources to download aimed at education providers and informal learners.

### Outcomes and outputs

#### Short term

- 31 interviews with Black Country shopkeepers and their customers deposited in local oral history archive, along with gallery of new images from 2008
- The theatre production reached an audience of 1,835 over 41 performances
- 66 volunteers were involved in the theatre production, and a further 23 volunteers received training in oral history recording or archival research

#### Medium/long term

- Website ([www.thecornershopproject.co.uk](http://www.thecornershopproject.co.uk)) packed with resources aimed at education providers and informal learners
- Over 41,000 people have visited the exhibition which has toured over the Midlands
- Winner of two awards: Renaissance in the Regions and Jaguar Arts award

“Creating a show like The Corner Shop helps us to connect with audiences who may never come into a traditional theatre. The show is social history and showed how the arts can be used to connect with communities. The show unfolded and was cinematic in the split of narrative and timeline. And because of the nature of the production we could take audiences out of their comfort zone.”

Frances Land of Foursight Theatre, Co-Director of *The Corner Shop*



► **Right:** Performance of *The Corner Shop*, 2008.

**Far right:** *Global Gardens Project*, St Ann's Allotments, 2005. © Colin Haynes.



## CASE STUDY 3

## St Ann's Allotments, Nottingham

The St Ann's Allotments are Grade II\* listed detached Victorian gardens, now used as allotments in an inner-city district of Nottingham. Aiming to increase understanding of the social and horticultural history of St Ann's Allotments, Outreach commissioned a local community historian to conduct a series of oral history interviews with allotment gardeners in 2005.

Thirteen gardeners were interviewed, and photographic portraits were also taken for use in the resulting exhibition. Following further interest by other gardeners, it was decided to continue the project in 2006, conducting six further interviews with gardeners. Nineteen gardeners in total took part, and their stories were exhibited at two HODs events on the allotments site. The project enabled participants to reflect upon their own contributions to the built and cultural heritage of St. Ann's, and was an opportunity to celebrate the human value of the site and its history.

### Outcomes and outputs

#### Short term

- Oral History panels toured to local venues raising awareness of project and allotments
- Young people developed a global garden, with vegetables from around the world creating a starting point for discussions around food and heritage both within the group and with the older participants

#### Long term

- The project was the starting point for a partnership with the Afro-Caribbean Artistic Centre (ACNA) which led to the development of an intergenerational allotments project in which older gardeners' specialist horticultural skills, along with their knowledge of the allotments' social history, was passed on to local young people
- Ongoing participation in Heritage Open Days

## CASE STUDY 4

## Interwoven Freedom, Female Abolitionists in Birmingham

In 2007 Outreach worked in partnership with the Sparkbrook Caribbean and African Women's Development Initiative (SCAWDI), in Birmingham, on an arts and research project to commemorate the 2007 Bicentennial of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade Act.

*Interwoven Freedom* enabled a group of women to explore slavery and abolition in Birmingham. Over a twelve-week period they visited archives, exhibitions and historic sites with links to slavery and worked with a creative writer and textile artist.

Drawing on the tradition of abolitionist women who created and distributed workbags filled with anti-slavery manifestos, the participants wrote their own manifestos which mix historical facts with vivid fictional stories and powerful poems. They made workbags from fair trade cotton and African cloth. Woven into their bags are integrated references from their past and personal histories, images of slave ships, photographs, and Jamaican and Ghanaian flags.

The exhibition of their work is accompanied by interpretive panels, a book and audio commentaries.

### Outcomes and outputs

#### Short term

- The exhibition toured to 11 venues regionally and in London over 12 months reaching an audience of 33,500 people
- The audio documentary made during the project was broadcast on BBC Radio West Midlands
- In 2008 the project won a National Community and Heritage Award and was nominated as a national finalist. Awarded 'Runner up' in Renaissance in the Regions *Best of the West 2008*

#### Medium/long term

- The publication has been deposited in Birmingham City Archive as future reference material
- The SCAWDI group continued working with textiles and produced a further exhibition of their work
- SCAWDI successfully secured HLF funding to research the hidden histories of Black people across the West Midlands

### Approaches

- Intergenerational work involving both young and older generations of communities
- Oral history projects, giving lasting testimony to community voices
- Exploring the hidden cultural histories of collections in English Heritage's care
- Developing educational resource packs to raise the profile of diverse cultural heritage
- Working across communities to share experiences
- Enabling participants to share their stories through creative projects
- Using different artistic mediums to reach new interest groups
- Developing touring exhibitions and performances highlighting different cultural stories
- Developing faith trails for HODs
- Developing diverse cultural events and festivals for HODs

### Lessons learnt

- When developing community curating or opening up collections in an inclusive way, it is important to consider the sensitivities around a particular collection or museum and how you and members of staff will respond to opinions that may be critical or challenge 'expert' perceptions
- When undertaking oral history it is vital to ensure that you have a protocol in place that states how interviews will take place, and methods of saving recordings to ensure these can be used afterwards
- Touring exhibitions to neutral community venues such as libraries and leisure centres, can break down barriers for audiences who may feel uncomfortable visiting faith buildings or community venues
- Check religious festival dates before scheduling workshops of events to ensure maximum attendance from all communities

## PARTNERS

Outreach would like to warmly thank the hundreds of partner organisations that we have worked with over the years, who have been integral to the success of our work. Some of these are listed below:

Acta community theatre  
 Action Factory  
 Africa Forum  
 Afro-Caribbean National Artistic Centre  
 Aik Saath  
 Angley School Cranbrook  
 Appleby TIC & Kirkby Stephen Town Forum  
 ARC  
 Army Welfare Service  
 Artistic Moves  
 Arts Council  
 Audiences Yorkshire  
 Baltic  
 Barnardos  
 Birmingham City Council  
 Birmingham Lifestyles  
 Black Country Touring  
 Blackpool Council's Heritage Service & Blackpool Civic Trust  
 Bow Arts Trust  
 Bradford Museum Services  
 Bradford Trident  
 Bradford Youth Service  
 Bridlington Spa Theatre  
 Brierley Hill Community Forum and Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council  
 BTCV  
 Carrick District Council

Charlotte Brown  
 Christ Church Community Centre  
 Churches Together  
 Cirencester Civic Society  
 Cockermouth, Workington and Whitehaven Civic Trust  
 Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service  
 Connexions  
 Construction Skills  
 Copeland Borough Council's Arts Development Team  
 Corby Community Arts  
 DADA South  
 Deerbolt Young Offenders Institute  
 Derbyshire County Council Youth Service  
 Doncaster MBC  
 Dudley Arts Council  
 East Hampshire and West Sussex Youth Services  
 Equal Arts  
 Explosion!  
 Fairways Changeover Group  
 Forum of Faiths for Derby  
 Foursight Theatre  
 Friends of Tide Mills  
 Gosport Disability Activity Group  
 Gosport District Council  
 Greenwich Community College  
 Groundwork  
 HER Centre Woolwich  
 Herbert Museum and Art Gallery  
 HMR teams in Werneth & Derker  
 Hounslow Youth Service PAYP team  
 Hull College  
 Jephson Housing – Swindon Foyer

Kent Travellers Education Service  
 Kidderminster Deaf Group  
 Kingsholm Early Years Centre  
 Learning Links  
 Living Archive  
 Living Derby  
 Luton Borough Council alternative education unit  
 Luton Hoo Walled Garden Trust  
 Macclesfield HODs team  
 Middleham Youth Group  
 Middlesbrough BME Network  
 Millom TIC & the South Copeland Tourism Community Interest Company  
 Milton Keynes Council  
 Milton Keynes Heritage Association  
 Mind  
 National Trust  
 NEMLAC  
 Newcastle Blind Society  
 Newham Council  
 North East Derbyshire District Council  
 North of England Civic Trust  
 Northampton Black History Association  
 Northamptonshire Probation Service  
 Northumberland Strategic Partnership  
 Orford Museum Service  
 Peak District National Park  
 Positive Arts  
 Queen Mary University  
 Rugby Borough Council Tourism Department  
 Salisbury Museum  
 Sandwell Community History and Archives Service

SCAWDI (Sparkbrook Caribbean and African Women Development Initiative)

SCORE

SEEDA

Sheffield Age Concern

Sheffield City Council

Sheffield Civic Trust

Shrewsbury Civic Society

Slough Museum

Somerset Rural Youth Project

St Ann's Allotments

Staffordshire Blind

Stockport Borough Council HODs team

Stockport PCT's Arts on Prescription Service

Studio 1 & Wythenshawe Hall

Suffolk Artlink

Sure Start

Sussex Probation Service

Sustainability Centre

Teesside University

The Cheetham Festival team

The Ferrier Estate Kidbrook

The Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People

The Hull Civic Society

The John Roan School

The New Black Arts Alliance

The Weald and Downland Open Air Museum

The Well-Being Workshop

Thetford Heritage Partnership

Tilbury Riverside Arts Centre

Tilbury Riverside Project

Totnes Young People's Theatre

Tower Hamlet Archives

Tower Hamlets Council

Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

Undivided Indian Ex-Servicemen's Association of Slough

Victoria Baths

Visit Chester and Cheshire

Visit Hull and East Yorkshire

Weymouth and Portland District Council

Wiltshire Youth Arts Partnership

Worcestershire Adult Learning Disabilities Service (County Council)

Worcestershire LifeLinks

Worcestershire Lifestyles

Wyre Forest LAFS

Yorkshire Archives Oral History Project

Youth Building Academy

Zoom Animation

Zumamedia

#### Previous permanent and temporary members of Outreach

Refkah A'court, Lerato Dunn, Gail Graham, Rebecca Gee, Sarah James, Trina Nielsen, Norma Pearson, Hema Raull, Susie Scott, Ziggy Slingsby, Amy Solder, Sarah Watson-Jones, Cheryl Williams.

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▲  
Above: Remembering  
Forgotten Heroes, visit to  
Woking Burial Ground,  
2005.

“I learned a lot from visiting the cemetery... We all owe our gratitude to the former heroes... People came from all over the world and fought together for a common cause and all generations should show respect and gratitude.”

Mr KK Sharma – Remembering Forgotten Heroes project

“

It was the first time I have done anything like this and it was really interesting. I learnt a lot about the area I have grown up in and it's made me more aware of my surroundings. I now walk around paying more attention to the buildings and questioning the history and how they might have been used. It's given me a better insight into the area and I've enjoyed meeting other people that were involved in the project and hearing their stories.”

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Participant, *Tales and Trails of Manningham*, Bradford

#### Outreach Team – March 2011

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