

**Notes from the SHARE and Bridges Children & Young People Conference:   
Breakout Sessions***Coleridge Community College, 4th February 2015*

* **Heritage Lottery Fund Young Roots**
* **Reflective Learners**
* **Early Years**
* **Graphic novels, storytelling and plays; Creative learning and WW1**
* **STEM to STEAM**

**HLF Young Roots***Led by Kate Brown, HLF, and Lesley Morgan, Sawston Village College*

Kate Brown gave an overview of the various Heritage Lottery funding streams, in particular the Young Roots funding stream and in the context of Museum educators as fundraisers. There is £350million ear-marked for the East of England overall.

Young Roots gives grants of £10,000-£50,000 to help young people aged 11 to 25 to explore their heritage, from green spaces, museums, and historic sites to language, local memories and youth culture.

Examples could be Histories of individuals, communities, places, events and historical anniversaries. Projects – that make a lasting difference

The scheme can include full costs recovery and can be a different approach to what you already do.

Film examples are available on the young roots web-site.

Good partnerships – heritage & young people – Opportunities to learn about heritage and to share their learning.

There is a need to evidence a change in attitudes and team-working and confidence building.

Some actual examples included:

* Hatfield Aviation Heritage. Leading others in their filmmaking skills.
* Signals Media -Polish Connections - Essex Girls – stories of women in Essex over a period of time – working with the record office and the museum.
* Polish Heroes – The invisible Arts - Community college working with Polish Archive in London to explore the soldiers in the second world war based in Ely.

Other programmes:

* Sharing Heritage - £3-10K
* Our Heritage - £10-£100K
* First World War: Then and Now £3-£10K - Could interest schools, especially primary

Outcomes:

* Heritage – better interpreted or recorded
* Individuals – learn about heritage, develop skills

Success rate is 1 in 3. Contact Kate Brown: 01223224883, [kateb@hlf.org.uk](mailto:kateb@hlf.org.uk)

**Presentation** about Young Roots at Sawston college who have successfully run multiple Young Roots projects:

*Projecting the past – Sawston’s cinema history*

* Aim to research the history of cinema building
* Oral history training & interviewing members of the community who had worked there then making a film.
* Community also involved in the training along with the young people
* Re-telling people’s stories. Intergenerational aspects really positive.

*Linton in Layers*

* Transforming Place – tracing histories
* Connected to Archaeology & Anthropology museum
* Test Pit Excavation weekend – 29 pupils involved - Making art-work and making a film

*Henry Morris*

* visit Cambridge collection
* partner is Henry Morris memorial trust
* involving other schools in the project
* film

Arts award always involved

*Journeys intertwined – following 3 stories through WW1*

* Partner – Anglia Ruskin, Sawston Village History Society, Stories (projects in film)

**Reflective Learners***Led by Jo Roberts*

Introduction

Professional development needs to acknowledge the different pathways into heritage learning. It should also acknowledge the challenge of the wide range of people we work with and skills we need. Some of the words that describe what we do and are as museum educators are:

Adaptable/ flexible

Informal/ formal

Events

Digital

Marketing

Audience development

How do you feel about your own professional development?

Some key questions for discussion:

Is your professional development ad hoc or part of a progressive career path?

Do you have time for your own reflection and learning?

Is there time to process what you will learn today?

Do you keep a reflective journal? (no one did)

Do you keep a record of the training you do?

Do you have an action plan for your own learning? How pro-active are you?

Some comments from the group discussions:

There is a challenge in implementing what you learn

Never mind a career path – I am glad I have a job!

I often miss out because I can’t make time for training

Watching colleagues in action is a good way of learning – we don’t use our team expertise enough

We should make training more formal – I think in my own time, but I don’t record that

It’s a challenge because the priority of CPD is not high and funding it is a challenge

Self discipline

No ability to go to things that aren’t related to what you’re doing

Networking is valuable

**The challenge from Jo:**

Training is not only the CPD you can sign up for – it is also personal research, online, shadowing opportunities, cross department projects with colleagues

Think about your career – what would you like to know more about? Follow it up

Make your training formal – write it down. There’s a template for a CPD record of activity included in the GEM Foundation Course. Record the date, the number of hours, what you did, the reasons for doing it, what you learned, how you can apply it in your work

Think about what you can offer back to the sector i.e. write a GEM case study, there’s a template on the website, two opportunities a year and you don’t need to be invited to submit one

Think about writing up your projects if you don’t already

Share your projects and your learning at team meetings

Be a GEM member – GEM East is a good networking opportunity

What training or extra skills do you need right now?

Teaching skills, facilitating learning, using the right school language – even with an MA in museum studies – five of the group are qualified teachers – this can be counter productive

Advice on the right qualification – are they worth doing or are work based skills more worthwhile – there’s a work based PGCE, on day a week

Partnership working – an idea: share and swap skills in house, observe teachers in school, understanding of pressures for teachers, learning from colleagues in school can help you reflect on your own strengths

What do I need to do my job well, to remain adaptable, to develop my career? What are the core competencies of a museum/heritage educator?

GOOD COMMUNICATION – imaginative and inspiring - other organisations, adults, councillors, colleagues, marketing/ publicity, as an advocate for your organisation, share your success stories, story-telling, social media, speaking the language of schools, facilitating activities, presentations, writing skills – grant applications, reports

SELF STARTER - good organiser, planning and organisation skills, assertiveness, decision-making, managing expectations, fundraising, admin, prioritisation

RESEARCHER and LEARNER, QUESTIONING - Know your subject/ audience, knowledge of learning styles, keep up to date on learning agendas, reflection, evaluate and adapt, risk taking, not being afraid to ask questions and learn, mentoring, outward facing, seeing the bigger picture

PASSION – enthusiastic, inspiring, stay positive, don’t be cynical, good listener, fun, engaging

ADAPTABILITY and CREATIVITY- budget management/ finance, comms and marketing, IT graphics and design, event management

TEAMWORK AND CO-ORDINATION – curators, marketing team, managing people, open-ness and honesty – of our own practice and colleagues/ sector, building partnerships

EXPERENCE - working with children and young people

**Final challenge:**

Do something in 2015 for yourself.

**Break-out session: Early Years***Led by Colly Mudie (Norfolk Museums Service) & Charlotte Arculus (Magic Adventure)*

The session started with two short presentations from the leaders. Charlotte focused on the arts offer she and her colleagues in the Acorn Network (high quality arts for under 5s) delivered. Her own practice focused on playful interaction with children in micro environments involving light and sound installations. Colly’s presentation focused on the low-tech bureau of drawers with things for children to use as they went around the Castle galleries to help them explore the space and the displays. These things included things such as tape-measures and magnifying glasses– all small but safe things that could be conveniently carried around by the child in a colourful plastic bucket (also provided).

Both presenters highlighted the importance of open-ended child led learning and exploration. At its most successful this led to the child feeling comfortable and confident in the museum, with a sense of the space being ‘theirs’. This was evidenced by simple things like the children feeling confident about moving around the spaces, being engaged in their own play and leaving tokens (eg small plastic animals) within open displays. There was a brief discussion about how some adults (including some front of house staff keen on tidying) were not as comfortable with this approach as museum educators but most felt this could be counter-acted by giving regular assurances and, where appropriate, briefings. It was also noted that once a parent understood how free play in children was welcomed in the museum, they were the most effective means of promoting this to other parents.

Charlotte talked about the skills needed to engage very young children in the interventions she used. Being able to improvise and adapt, not requiring a specific response from children, and taking a multi-sensory approach was essential. She also led a session towards the end to simulate some of this but also to show how everyone’s responses were individual.

Colly talked about the importance of encouraging inter-action and positive conversations between parents or carers and the children - and that the tools provided at the Castle were designed to encourage this to some extent.

The session was well attended and it was clear the attendees already had a range of experience and commitment in this area of work, even when their museums were quite small.

**Graphic novels, storytelling and plays; Creative learning and WW1**  
*Led by Emma Steed and Sarah Turner*

**Background:**

Project started with a collection of police documents (from period 1840 -1919) that were going to be discarded coming into the ownership of BS Museum. The collection was a unique range of Police paperwork including Police daily logs that gave a narrative about life in the Police Force during World War 1.

HLF Funding was acquired for a project to restore and protect these documents that were in poor condition and to deliver a project that told the story of the documents and share this story with the public. (Partnership working was key to the project’s success).

A partnership project 'On the Beat' with partners Bishop Stortford Museum, Hertfordshire Archives, Hertfordshire Constabulary

**The Project:**

The project took two years from conception to producing the final novel and online resources.

The Police documents were unique and included information about life during WWI that couldn’t be found anywhere else. The project therefore focused on stories and life on the home front.

This was a storytelling project

30 volunteers were essential in project delivery and helped to carry out project research, oral history interviews with the Police

Community website was put together

Graphic Novel was chosen as the medium through which to tell the stories from the Police documents. This is because all the resource / documents were written and the Museum wanted to communicate these stories visually to the audience.

Middlesex Universities Arts Faculty was approached for Art students to produce graphic novel illustrations.

Students took the project on as a real life brief and the Head of Arts Faculty and students gave a real commitment to the project (key to success of project).

8 students were shortlisted to complete the graphics for each of the stories within the novel. Students were paid a fee, and received resource packs on the history of the stories so that their drawings were historically accurate. e.g. Students put phones, clothing and other items that wouldn’t have existed in this period into their drawings.

Students and Arts Faculty stated that this project was fantastic real life learning for them and the 8 commissioned students also learnt a lot about the history of the period.

When the novel was complete it made up an exhibition in the museum, the novel made the stories accessible to a wide range of people

The original documents are preserved and available online to view

**Schools Work:**

The project also included a partnership with The Grove Primary School in which Theatre Company Twisted Events and Education professional Emma Steed worked with the school to bring the project alive and to teach one class about WW1.

The school worked with the Theatre Company and Museum Education department for 6 weeks in immersive activities culminating in a performance.

Twisted Events worked with the school children intensively in the last week of activity to produce a play.

The children also made their own graphic novels and went on related visits and met the graphic design students that illustrated the novel.

The school embedded the learning from the project across curriculum subjects for this time

The project was really successful in truly embedding learning with this class

Museum had to be flexible and fit in with school timetable

**STEM to STEAM**  
*Led by Briony Jackson, NHRM and Claire Meade, Cambridge Museum of Technology*

STEM to STEAM was the title of one of the after-lunch breakouts – and it had hidden meaning. STEM as everyone knows is ‘Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics’ and - as Joff Whitten from the NNF Bridge explained in his intro - STEAM has the ‘A for Arts’ to see how the Arts can be worked imaginatively into STEM learning activities.

The breakout was led by Claire Meade from the Cambridge Museum of Technology (CMT) and Briony Jackson from The National Horseracing Museum (NHRM). Delegates were let loose on some of the simple and creative approaches to science learning that Claire and Briony have created in their museums. Both explained that although designed to meet the National Curriculum, the activities also engage families, and they also appealed to the delegates!

We started sorting a bag full of ‘rubbish’ of the kind that was taken during WW1 to the sewage pumping station that is now CMT. Claire explained how this links with learning activities at the Amey Cespa Recycling plant near Cambridge, who also help pay for the school activities. I had to decide whether to recycle the ‘rubbish’, or bury it, or burn it – the latter is how they generated the steam to pump the sewage! Claire had already shown how (with appropriate safety restrictions!) a mini-steamroller demonstrated lots of chemical and physical processes. Our technical skills were stretched by making a ‘kinetic’ WW1 tank out of cotton reels and rubber bands.

Our understanding of chromatography was expanded by testing different coloured inks and Briony explained that she used this to help understanding of the multi-coloured dying of jockey’s silks– this is the ‘Art’ bit of the STEM! Claire had also brought along a saddle to show all the different man-made and natural materials (leather, felt, metal etc) used to make saddles and riders’ safety clothing. She also did sessions based on weights, and has prepared Science Week activities looking at the anatomy of the horse.

In the group discussion it was agreed that it preferable for activities to be split between small groups to promote interaction. There was also a feeling that to combine arts and sciences really well it was probably essential to involve an artist.