

Project name	People's War Gallery
Location	Scunthorpe, Humberside
Partner organisations	North Lincs Museum Service
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Funded by	YMLAC

## Introduction

North Lincolnshire Museum is the local museum of the North Lincolnshire region. The service has offered an innovative temporary exhibition programme for a number of years but the permanent galleries have remained relatively static. Inspired by BBC People's War funding to provide public Internet access in the museum education room the Widening Participation project offered the opportunity to encourage new users including KS2, KS4 and older users.

The museums education service developed a KS2 Second World War workshop based at Baysgarth House Museum. The workshop proved popular but with the reduced access to Baysgarth following transfer to trust status visitor numbers reduced. The workshop was developed following consultation with schools that identified the Second World War as an area in which they required extra support.

### **Aims:**

- To encourage new and more users while raising the museum's profile and becoming part of a larger, BBC promoted, national event.
- To continue delivery of existing Key Stage 2 programming linked to the Second World War but to widen participation of secondary schools and older learners who do not use the museum.

### **Objectives:**

- To create a gallery that will appeal to the North Lincolnshire community drawing on their own and their families experiences and history;
- To redisplay the Social History Gallery and produce a permanent gallery space that will encourage wider participation of all users including older learners, school groups and individuals with basic skills needs.
- To try new ways of display to offer variety to regular visitors and something new for non-users.
- To provide a space for public display to give local people ownership of the museum
- To benefit from publicity, marketing and programming generated by the BBC and the People's War gallery at a time of remembrance of 60<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of D-Day, with VE and VJ day in 2005 which means promotion and publicity will have a long shelf life
- To produce a new space that will gain positive professional press coverage for the museum
- To become an associate centre for BBC People's War
- To increase our web presence on a nationally recognised and used site

## Programme of Work

- The People's War Gallery was opened on Friday 12 August 2005 to coincide with the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VJ day. Evaluation of the gallery is still taking place. Initial responses have shown that visitors from the region enjoy the gallery. Oral histories from local people have been included in the gallery. It is hoped this will encourage other reminiscences from visitors in the future. Older learners have been encouraged to become involved in the new gallery through reminiscence sessions and oral history recordings. The new gallery and re launched workshop will be promoted to school groups in the new academic year from September 2005. The text in the gallery has been written following guidance from Basic Skills Awareness tutors. As well as text panels the new gallery utilises touch screen technology and an oral history listening post to aid interpretation. The listening post and interactive Anderson shelter have been incorporated to offer variety in display as have the touch screen interactives. The handling table will provide a further means of accessing the collection.
- Internet linked ICT access has been available since April 2005.
- The public display case has not yet been incorporated into the gallery but will be built into the handling table.
- The social history gallery redisplay is now complete and provides a more modern museum space in accordance with the objectives of North Lincolnshire Council.
- Support from the BBC in the form of print and promotional material and free listings on the BBC People's War web pages.
- Press coverage has been positive
- North Lincolnshire Museum is an associate centre for the People's War Project.
- The project has resulted in increased stories through our web pages on the People's War site. Volunteers have added these and Museum Education Staff and the archive will continue to grow.

### **Educational objectives**

- developing opportunities for older learners (see YMLAC discussion paper Fifty/Fifty)
- encourage older users to learn about the Internet
- widen participation in learning opportunities e.g. intergenerational and reminiscence work, family and local history
- encourage diversity and social inclusion in our attempts to engage with all our local communities
- widening outreach opportunities with older users e.g. residential homes

### **Outcomes**

- Developing opportunities for older learners is perhaps the least successful of the outcomes, at present, but a certain amount of educational opportunities have been created (see below) and the gallery itself is a long term investment in informal learning as many of the museum visitors are older learners.

- 16 members of the public who had experienced life on the Home Front during the Second World War contributed to the Peoples War Project and also had their memories recorded by an Education Assistant. Some of these memories can be accessed in the gallery on a listening post and have also become part of the North Lincolnshire Museum Services Sound Archive, which has been digitised recently.
- North Lincolnshire Museum, in association with North Lincolnshire LEA and the Royal British Legion, held a half-day school at Glanford Park, Scunthorpe, on Tuesday 10 May 2005. At this, groups of students from a number of local secondary schools had the opportunity to meet and interview older people who lived through World War Two. Students recorded their meetings in various ways and then produced a record of the day. This resulted in a contribution to the new gallery from students who attended the event in the form of a text panel.
- Increased staff awareness of Skills for Life agenda
- Age Exchange Introduction to reminiscence training proved very popular with professionals across the region. The event was well attended by Adult Social Care staff and relationships were established between this organisation and the museum service.

## Outcomes

### **Staff outcomes:**

- a. Number of Staff Involved: Up to 14 North Lincolnshire Museums Service staff were involved with the Peoples War gallery and web site at any one time. The Museums Education Officer prepared the brief and led on the project. The Assistant Museums Education Officer assisted her with re-working the “Take Cover” workshop for use in the new gallery. The Exhibitions and Outreach Officer and Assistant were involved in creating the gallery displays and the Principal Keeper (Museums) read through the text and chaired exhibitions meetings. An Education Assistant assisted people to put their memories on the web site and made recordings. The touch screen was produced in house by the Archaeology Assistant, photographs and artefacts were identified and provided by the Local History Assistant and Keeper of Social History. A Museum Attendant helped with the installation of the displays and two Support Services Officers helped with administrative backup and at the opening. Two Attendants also assisted at the gallery opening, as did the Principal Keeper. In addition, 29 people including some staff from other related service areas in the council attended the two training workshops.
- b. How their involvement was evaluated: Staff involvement in setting up the Peoples War gallery has not been formally evaluated. The workshops were evaluated using the attached evaluation forms.
- c. Outcomes and benefits (After the event):
  - Through the training provided staff have gained an understanding of the Skills for Life Agenda and where MLA fits in to this
  - Through working together as a multi-disciplinary team to prepare the Peoples War gallery and Take Cover workshop staff have gained skills in planning and delivering displays and activity sessions accessible to a wide audience

- These in turn have given staff an appreciation of the importance and size of the Skills for Life issues and a belief in their own ability to work with Skills for Life learners
  - New creative relationships and partnerships with learners, staff and organisations (for example see the Glanford Park Project above) have been forged as well as giving staff the experience of new and diverse ways to teach the same topics to deliver enjoyment and inspiration
  - The training has challenged the way staff communicate with the public (for example in writing display labels or delivering school workshops)
- d. Outcomes and benefits (From evaluation):
- **Basic Skills Awareness Training 16<sup>th</sup> May 2005:** 10 members of staff attended, 7 evaluation forms were returned.
  - What did you enjoy most: 4 said the activities. Of these, 2 specifically mentioned readability of newspaper & leaflets, and 1 particularly enjoyed being put into a similar situation to adults experiencing difficulties with basic skills. It made *her* “*appreciate their difficulties*”. Of the remainder, 1 enjoyed the informative and relaxed manner of presentation, another the variety of the activities and another found it useful as a refresher course.
  - What surprised you: 4 answered this. 3 were surprised to learn about the problems people have with literacy and numeracy: how different people interpret text, how much literacy and numeracy effect everyday life without consciously realising it and how low these skills are in the general population.
  - What did you learn and how have you put it into practice: 5 noted the importance of being clear and concise when writing text for public consumption. Practical applications included preparing worksheets, changing text on advertising posters to make it easier to understand, writing labels and being “*more aware in the choice of language I use when creating activity handouts and presentations*”. 1 found tips on manual handling useful when carrying boxes and another “*was able to use the reverse print exercise so that my dyslexic nephew and niece could at last demonstrate their problem to sceptical teachers*”.
  - **Age Exchange Training Workshop 20<sup>th</sup> May 2005:** 19 members of staff attended (not all from the museum) but only 5 evaluation forms were returned.
  - What did you enjoy most: 3 said the atmosphere/setting using words such as “*friendly, relaxed, good ideas, good pace, interesting, entertaining informative and informal*”. 1 was particularly interested in “*learning about memory and how to use simple items to stimulate memory*”. 1 noted that *her* “*own efforts were revealing*”.
  - What surprised you: 1 noted how simple the concepts were. Another said how important it is to make people relaxed in order to “*open up*”, whilst another noted that “*some of the sentences I considered to be simple still had too many words with too many syllables*”. Yet another noted the amount of time given up to practical exercises saying that these were a “*good way to get across the message of different ways to stimulate memory*”.

- What did you learn and how have you put it into practice: A member of the museum education staff noted that *“the design of worksheets needs careful thought and also that the literacy of adult helpers needs to be remembered”*. A member of staff who runs a day centre said that it had caused her to use the museum loans service to stimulate users of the centre as *“one piece can mean different things to different people”*. Another had passed on the skills and information gained on her visits to the homes of elderly people and in day centres. Another had now got *“a heightened awareness of the importance of visual stimulus, sound, smell etc”*.

## Evaluation – Public

### Secondary school event at Glanford Park

The Glanford Park session aimed to bring together Secondary School pupils and older people to increase understanding of the Second World War. This was an excellent event managed by the Local Education Authority. Children recorded their interviews with older people in a number of ways, by making notes or using digital recording equipment for example. The thoughts of one group were used to conclude the People’s War gallery with a sensitive perceptive panel (given in full below) about what the children learnt from the event.

#### THEIR PAST - YOUR FUTURE

In May 2005 young people from North Lincolnshire met with older people with memories of the Second World War.

*Interviewing men and women who have lived and fought in the Second World War affected our group greatly. We began to understand the horrors of war and how people tried to cope and survive. By talking to the people from that time we learnt more than we ever could from books or even teachers, because we got to see into people's minds. We also began to realise the debt we owe. Listening to these men and women talk about what they gave up and what they went through makes us grateful for what we have.*

*We also found out what the veterans thought of us. This was something we didn't expect - we found out how they lived their lives, but we also found out how they viewed our generation. Knowing how these brave people see us has affected us because we now understand how we should act towards an older generation, especially one that went through so much for us, our families and our country.*

*Now it is our turn to prevent future wars and conflicts, by reminding people in future generations the truth behind war - the suffering and the price to be paid. They told their story to our generation so that we can tell the next - that we can carry on their work. As one veteran said 'now it's up to you'.*

With thanks to the students of Huntcliff school:

Samuel Clements, Catherine Sunter, Andrew Green, Ruth Lawson, Ashley Cattell, Robert Clark, Ashley Patchett, Christopher Leak, Lottie Greenwood and their teacher John Kelly.

Evaluation forms were sent to the schools that took part, but so far none have been returned.

### **Peoples War Gallery, North Lincolnshire Museum:**

Between the opening of the gallery on the evening of the 12<sup>th</sup> August and the end of August 1,667 people have visited the display of whom 661 were children. 22 exhibition impact forms have been filled in. Feedback received includes:

#### What did you enjoy most:

- Films displayed on the touch-screen
- The house with table and exhibits
- Display was interesting and thought provoking
- All of it
- The recreation of the Anderson shelter, and the room with all the things in that we used to use
- Lots of information and exhibits that bring back many memories for the older people
- Displays and Air Raid Shelter
- Remembering our Anderson Shelter – the garden shed by the time I arrived – also the role of the ARP Warden – my father was one – and having an air raid warning
- Siren & bombs
- Memories
- All of it – especially the bunker and sound effects
- Computer choices of information
- Local story lines
- Air Raid Shelter (4 listed just the shelter – it was a clear favourite)
- Time M/C (the Timeline Time Machine Touch-Screen)
- Everything we saw
- Sounds and atmosphere plus information

#### What surprised you:

- Details about how much Scunthorpe was affected by the war
- Innovative and resourceful use of the space
- How much of the past is still with us
- Very small room to display it
- The noise of the bombs!! (2 people listed this sound effect)
- That so many items were shown
- Not really (surprised) but I don't think people now would cope as well with the rigours of war
- The number of bombs dropped in Scunthorpe (2 people noted this)
- Radio Phonetic alphabet displayed did not come into use until after the war
- A good few things – it was before my birth

- How primitive and cold looking were the Anderson Shelters

What can be done to improve it:

- Show how people improvised
- Display was excellent/very good (5 people)
- Nothing (3 people)
- A quiet area to listen to CDs etc
- Make the exhibition bigger (2 people)
- Some photographs would be nice
- Take to schools or encourage schools to visit
- Keep saving (items)
- 8 people did not fill in this box so presumably do not think that it could be improved

The comments show that informal learning is taking place and that certain generic learning objectives are being met, for example:

- Gaining factual information about the local area in the past
- Understanding of different sources of information
- Feeling that the museum is a place for ‘people like me’ and confidence to visit again
- Increased self esteem and a feeling of having a personal past that could be recorded and represented
- Awareness of the museum as a building and facility, openness to use in the future
- Surprise at enjoying museum activities
- Being inspired to find out more
- Planning to find out more about their local history

## Conclusion

### **Evidence of innovation**

The project has demonstrated innovation in a number of ways:

- It has raised the museum's profile by becoming part of a larger, BBC promoted, national event, 16 people to date having been known to have put their memories onto the People’s War web-site whilst others who have not required assistance may have done so
- It has created a gallery that appeals to the North Lincolnshire community drawing on their own and their families experiences and history with the involvement of schools, the LEA, the British Legion and numerous individuals in the production of parts of the gallery
- It has used new ways of displaying museum material to offer variety to regular visitors and something new for non-users and the comments on the exhibition impact forms show that these methods have been a success
- It has not only reworked the delivery of an existing Key Stage 2 workshop linked to the Second World War but through the Glanford Park project has widened participation of secondary schools, who do not normally use the museum, and older learners.

- It has given staff an appreciation of the importance and size of the Skills for Life issues and a belief in their own ability to work with Skills for Life learners
- It has developed new creative relationships and partnerships with learners, staff and organisations as well as giving staff the experience of new and diverse ways to teach the same topics to deliver enjoyment and inspiration
- The training sessions have challenged the way staff communicate with the public as shown in the comments on the evaluation forms

### **Key success features**

- Basic skills awareness led to text for the exhibition that addressed the basic skills agenda. The draft text for the exhibition was used during the basic skills training session. In this way it was exposed to more staff than normal. In the past text has been written by a curator/exhibitions officer then proof-read by the Principal Keeper. Through basic skills training the text was assessed by Museum Education assistants, Museum Attendants and basic skills tutor before finally being proof read by the Principal Keeper.
- Age Exchange Training helped staff to appreciate the ways in which text is written and has a major role to play in enabling people to maximise the potential of museum exhibitions and workshops for learning. It also created contacts with other council services, which led to loan artefacts being used in day centres.
- The Glanford Park Project brought together groups of students from a number of local secondary schools to interview older people who lived through World War 2 and contributed first hand evidence to the students understanding of the effect of the war on local people.