

The School Looks Around Toolkit

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Daisi's School Looks Around project



Daisi's School Looks Around project is part of a wider youth programme of the same name run by Publica. The programme investigates new interpretations of an inspirational book written by Elizabeth Layton and Justin Blanco White and published in 1948 by the Association for Education in Citizenship, whose board included Anthony Eden and then Prime Minister Clement Attlee. The new projects build on the premise of the local survey as an open-ended process and tool or understanding and analysing neighbourhoods.

A report and series of 'Contemporary Urban Character Assessment' workshops was originally initiated in 2005 by General Public Agency, a cultural and spatial planning consultancy. The schools project was set up in 2009 and a programme similar to Daisi's was run in partnership with the Whitechapel Gallery in 2009/10. The School Looks Around research and youth programme is now run by members of the same team but at Publica, a new consultancy and community interest company specialising in research and practice in the public realm.

To find out more and get involved visit www.publica.co.uk

Publica

The School Looks Around

The School Looks Around Toolkit

The School Looks Around project aims to use creativity to make the local area and issues of society and citizenship come alive for young people, and to establish new and lasting connections between pupils, schools and their communities.

This toolkit outlines the process of The School Looks Around project, and provides a starting point for similar work. It gathers together the learning from the project in order to assist other schools and organisations who wish to carry out similar work with young people in the future.

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Introduction

The School Looks Around project

The heritage starting point

The idea for The School Looks Around originated from the rediscovery of a publication of the same name written in 1948, which promoted the idea of the local survey as an adventurous and open-ended process, a “voyage of discovery into the life, history and organisation of the locality”. The project aimed to encourage young people to uncover clues about the history and development of their area, to question local people about their lives and experiences, and interpret and document their findings in imaginative and personal ways. The outcomes were to form a usable archive for wider external use and consideration, housed at the Devon Record Office.

Active citizenship

The School Looks Around as a whole aims to help young people process and understand the public realm and the built environment, and become active citizens within their communities. As stated in the 1948 publication: “The local survey can help to bring the individual into sympathy with his/her

surroundings, not passively, but as an active unit”. Creative survey methods were intended to give young people the tools to negotiate their environments, to understand and engage positively in the social, economic and cultural relations within their neighbourhoods.

The project idea reflected current priorities of policy-makers in addressing the complex issues of sustainable neighbourhoods and community cohesion through notions of ‘the local’, the requirements of social infrastructure and the symbolic and functional importance of the public realm.

A cross-disciplinary approach

This project aimed to encourage opportunities for linking practitioners across disciplines – an ambition which mirrors not only aspects of contemporary art practice, but also current developments in the National Curriculum, particularly at Key Stage 3, encouraging teachers to find links between subjects and teaching thematically across departments. The School Looks Around builds on these investigations, and while it could be ‘timetabled’

through the Art department, it has the potential to support learning across the curriculum – for example in English, Maths and Science, as well as Geography, History and Citizenship.

The project aimed to engage with volunteers from local heritage societies, with different generations within the local community through an oral history element and to incorporate consultation methods through which the young people can influence and shape the project design and processes.

Creative practitioners lead the learning

At the heart of The School Looks Around lies its advocacy of exploratory learning. It differs from conventional approaches to studies of the local area in the central role it gives to practitioners and experts, in the belief that creative collaborations can inspire children to develop ideas in unexpected directions, encourage critical thinking, and raise the quality and professionalism of the results.

Project partners

The School Looks Around was conceived and designed by Lucy Musgrave and Clare Cumberlidge of General Public Agency, now Publica (www.publica.co.uk), and Clare Cumberlidge & Co (www.clarecumberlidgeandco.com). The project was developed during delivery by Daisy, in partnership with Devon County Council Libraries, Devon Record Office, The King’s School, Ottery St Mary and South Dartmoor Community College, Ashburton.

The School Looks Around is funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and Devon County Council.

National partners

Two projects also took place in London secondary schools, in a parallel project run by Whitechapel Gallery in partnership



with General Public Agency. These schools were The Urswick School (formerly Hackney Free & Parochial Secondary School), and Bishop Challoner Catholic Collegiate Girls’ School in Tower Hamlets. The two East London school projects formed the basis of an exhibition entitled The School Looks Around which was shown at Whitechapel Gallery between June and August 2010.

Project Design

Our project design can be summarised in the following steps:



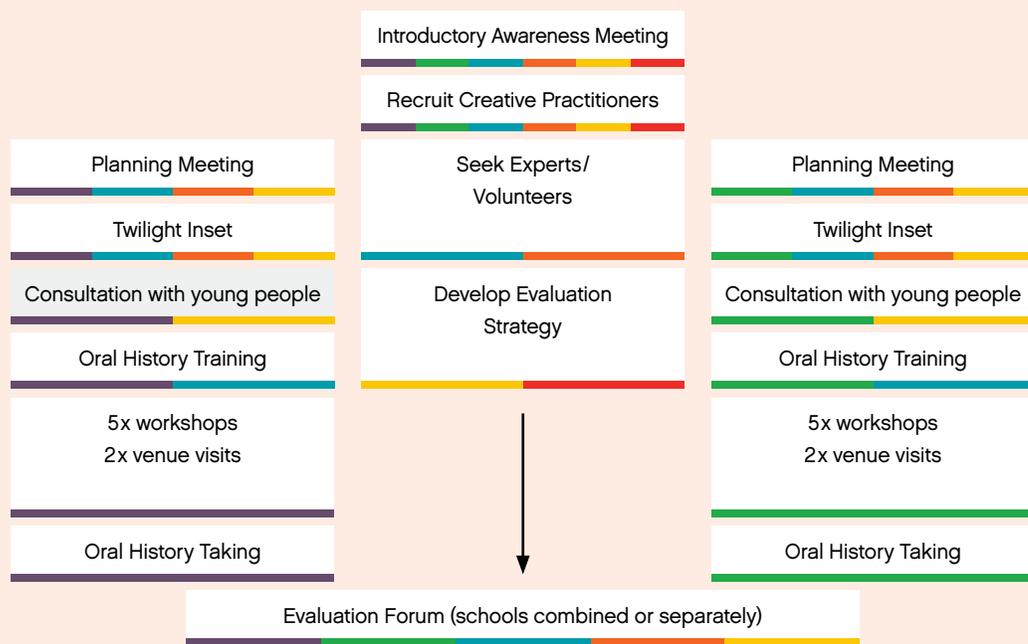
- 1** Call for expression of interest from creative practitioners
- 2** Hold project awareness session to introduce project to potential creative practitioners, cultural and heritage organisations, and school representatives
- 3** Recruit lead practitioners
- 4** Consult with young people and identify heritage they are interested in exploring, and survey methodologies of interest, as well as young people's current levels of engagement with heritage
- 5** Create links with local community and heritage groups, and local volunteers
- 6** Draw up an evaluation strategy for the project
- 7** Commission oral history training for young people and schools
- 8** Hold project planning meetings with teachers, creative practitioners and young people to plan the creative activity
- 9** Lead practitioners work with young people and lead workshops, surveys and visits
- 10** Hold regular evaluation forums to discuss the progress of the work with young people, project artists and teachers
- 11** Commission an archive of the project for each location from the creative practitioners
- 12** Hold celebrations in schools
- 13** Accession of archive to Devon Record Office, public celebration and dissemination event
- 14** Create toolkit for future work

The School Looks Around project aims stated for the Heritage Lottery Fund were:

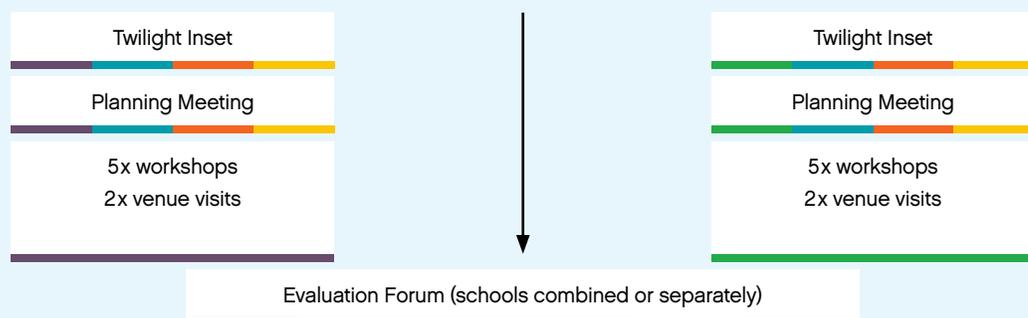
- To broker and stimulate schools' access to heritage resources and incorporation of heritage learning in programmes of study both within the curriculum and beyond, in support of whole school initiatives.
- To create a legacy for the project beyond the direct participants by establishing and promoting appropriate documentation (e.g. an archive and a tool kit) enabling future generations to learn more about heritage or to develop a similar project for themselves.
- To use a heritage resource (the 1948 The School Looks Around publication) as the starting point for a project.
- To create an exemplar project for demonstrating the contemporary relevance of local heritage in fostering a new civic awareness.
- To engage young people in Ottery St Mary and Ashburton in learning about their local heritage and it's relationship to the contemporary life of their local community.
- To forge new and intergenerational relationships between young people, their schools, the local communities and the local heritage resources in Ottery St Mary and Ashburton which will support and enrich their current and future understanding of and interest in heritage.
- For young people and their teachers in Ottery St Mary and Ashburton to explore, learn about and interpret their local heritage through a range of creative disciplines which encourage engagement through a variety of preferred learning styles and lines of enquiry.

Project Plan

Spring Term 2010



Summer Term 2010



Autumn Term 2010



Introduction to the Artists

Daisi asked for expressions of interest from creative practitioners. We were particularly looking for visual artists who are increasingly interested in working in the field of the built, natural and social environment and social relations and who could lead creative documentary, mapping and archiving processes.

We were looking for artists who showed:

- Strong artistic practice showing experience and / or awareness of projects engaging with the public realm, for example exploring social and community issues related to geography, history and heritage
- An interest in wider debate around community engagement in the public realm
- Experience of working with young people between the ages of 11 and 19
- Excellent communication skills and ability to engage positively with a wide range of people
- An interest in how the context of the school or encounter with young people might inform your own practice
- Experience of and openness to collaborating.

The archive development and build was to be a separate commission which was introduced once the project was underway.

Daisi had a strong response, and after interview and consultation with our partners in the secondary schools, Joe Stevens was engaged to work with South Dartmoor Community College and Moose Allain to work with The King's School.

Their artist statements are overleaf:

Joe Stevens

Print | Web | Video | Photography

e: joe@51degreesnorth.net
w: www.51degreesnorth.net/joe



10 February 2010

RE: The School Looks Around Expression of Interest

I am extremely interested in this project and the possibility of being lead artist. I'm an artist who enjoys creative collaborations and working with the public. I have over twenty years experience working with community groups, using a variety of creative media including video, animation, music, oral history, print and web design. I work with schools, charities and local government departments to design and deliver projects that address issues important to particular communities and organisations.

One example I have was making an award winning film with a special needs school. This was a project I helped devise, working very closely with the school and the teachers. I believe this close group effort led to it being a hugely successful project that was enjoyed by all. Together we formed a production company and made a documentary on Weymouth Pavilion (www.pavilionpast.org.uk). The children learnt how to use a video camera, interview techniques, public speaking, exhibition display, blogging, researching local history, along with a wide range of communication skills.

Last summer I was the lead artist on a Cultural Olympiad project working with disadvantaged young people. Maps were compared to contemporary artists interpretation of the landscape. We worked cooperatively, sharing experience, while investigating paths around town, recording our experiences using drawing, photography, sound recording, writing and GPS (Global Positioning System). This led to an exhibition at Sherborne House, along with work being posted to Google Earth (www.51degreesnorth.net/joe/archives/317).

Previous to this I completed an AV work for a planning dept, where I consulted with young people on their views of their towns. This was very interesting but frustrating work, as I felt we did not have enough time to really work with the young people. Still, it was a good experience to walk around their spaces and discuss what was there and what could be changed.

I'm currently working with a group of senior citizens on an oral history project 'Our Working Lives'. Together we've been investigating local history archives and recording peoples memories of employment. This year should prove interesting when we start interviewing young people and finding out about their experiences of finding work. See the website I created at www.ourworkinglives.org for more about this project. I'm collaborating with Poole museum on this project, who will host an exhibition of this in 2011.

As an artist I have a keen interest in the traces we leave behind, in how our environment comes into existence and the marks we leave behind. I feel that we create the world around us and that we are, in turn, created by the world around us. In other words, the human condition is characterised by a feedback loop between human activity and our material surroundings. In this view, space is not a container for human activities to take place within, but is actively "produced" through human activity. The spaces we produce, in turn, set powerful constraints upon subsequent activity.

I'm interested in creating projects that can endure. So while technology facilitates my work, public interaction is at its heart. To that end, and despite the migration of many of our experiences to an online space, I'm interested in how media plays a role in a real physical space. In physical environments of all sizes, I seek to facilitate connections between strangers.

Most like to collaborate

I would be particularly interested in working with cartographers, or the councils Geographic Information System (GIS) officer. As I have been developing the Sherborne project into a larger scale one and I've been having some interesting discussions with the councils GIS officer.

I hope you find this interesting and I look forward to hearing from you. I can provide a range of references from schools, local councils, voluntary organisations and charities if required.

Regards,
Joe Stevens

Moose Allain

moose@worldofmoose.com
www.worldofmoose.com

Devon Arts in Schools Initiative

Great Moor House
Bittern Road
Sewton
Exeter EX2 7NL

February 9, 2010

The School Looks Around Expression of Interest

I would love to be the The King's School's lead artist for this project. I have enjoyed working full time as an artist since 2007. I mostly make ink drawings in a variety of styles. My work is informed by my fascination with maps, diagrams, and the narrative possibilities of graphic novels - I incorporate text, narrative and playfulness. I love work that extends its influence beyond the object. For example, the website for Anthony Gormley's "One And Other" focused the community of "Plathers" who, without the artist's intervention, have vowed to meet annually in Trafalgar Square.

I worked for many years as an architect specialising in public consultation and participatory design, particularly in connection with urban design and the public realm. In this context I have lead, devised and documented many consultation exercises designed to engage the public. I have previously taught architecture at post-graduate level. As an architect I have run design workshops with all ages including school children.

In my practice as an artist I am continuing to explore this ground. In a project for Otterton Mill Gallery last year I invited visitors to write down their "Pet Names" and "Favourite Words". This material became the basis for a drawing depicting the words of more than 300 participants. These sometimes highly personal and emotive responses were interesting individually, but even more powerful as a group, representing this community of participants linked by their engagement with the project. This work was seen by Debbie James, the art teacher at The King's School, who subsequently invited me to hold workshops with 6th form and year 10 students.

The chance to work with a school would provide me with a fantastic opportunity to further explore collaborative work and set up long-term projects. Schools have the institutional weight to develop new traditions carried on by successive cohorts of students; for example, another favourite artwork is Tom Phillips' "20 Sites in Years", photographing the same places every year.

I feel that the artist's role in this project should be to encourage participants to "take a fresh look", and to devise their own tools that elucidate, organise and represent the poetry and drama of the everyday. For example, "Treasure Mapping" could explore what we value individually and as a community. What we choose to record for posterity is a self portrait. Mapping other qualities - sounds, smells, signs and paths - will tell us much about natural shifts and man-made changes. Examining the narratives of past and present can lead us to tell stories about what we want for the future.

Technology offers this project amazing opportunities. For the "We Generation" sharing information is second nature. On-line networking can cross over with real time/real space networks; we can weave new narrative trails across the local area, making connections between the local and the global.

This project has the potential to create a lasting legacy and a continuing "community of interest" beyond the school gates.

Moose Allain

The Project within Schools

Daisi asked schools for an expression of interest before the bid was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund, as their support as partners was crucial to the project development.

South Dartmoor Community College and The King's School wrote expressions of interest which showed they were committed to undertaking the project and able to foresee how the project would fit into their school's current thinking and how the school would be able to accommodate the project activity across the relevant timescale.

Both schools gave considerable time to planning and working out the details of individual sessions and programmes of study with the lead practitioners.

The schools approached the project in very different ways. A small number of students from The King's School worked individually on the project with the artist Moose Allain, whereas whole year groups of year 7 and 8 students from South Dartmoor Community College participated in the project.

For South Dartmoor Community College, therefore, as the project replaced sections of the art, history and geography curriculum programmes, it was necessary for the work to fulfill curriculum requirements as well as leave room for the students to follow their own enquiries.

The next few pages show a small selection from the artists' and schools' planning documents.



The King's School Looks Around

Students at The King's School were able to develop their own independent work within the Moose's 'My Story' guidelines.

Moose Allain
July 2010

My Story – Living History

Where do you live?

Earliest memory, Favourite memory
What are you most proud of about yourself?
What would you like to be able to do better?
What do you always carry with you?
Cars, vehicles.

Your family words (special words your family uses, etc.)
Nicknames, pet names, etc.
Is there a time you would like to go back to?
What would improve life today?

Your family

Family Tree (Briefly!) & where they live
Parents, Grandparents, Aunts, Uncles & Cousins
Pets, Socialising, Hobbies, Pastimes, Fun

Choose a friend to describe.

Where do you socialise?
What do you do for fun?
Who is your hero?

Favourites

Place, Smell, Colour, Sound, TV programme
Song / musician / band / composer, Artist
Any other artist/performer/inspiration?

Places

Favourite building
Place you have visited,
Place you'd like to visit
Favourite places to visit locally
What do you like about them...

Posterity

What object do you think says most about life today?
What has changed most in your lifetime?
What are the good things about life today?

Treasured Possession

Students should document (photos, drawings, text, etc.) the personal possessions they told us about at the beginning of the project.

Tell us about one object that has some significance for you – it can be serious or trivial but should tell us something about your lives.

The School Looks Around Surveys

The 'My Story' book is an important part of the individual surveys the students are carrying out, describing their lives today. In addition the students have identified particular studies they are going to carry out into a subject that interests them outside the school, relating to Ottery St Mary or the surrounding areas. The students can draw on the experience and knowledge of family and friends to make their investigations – the School Looks around team of Moose Allain, Mrs James and Daisi will be setting up a 'Big Survey Day' for next term and arranging appropriate interviewees.

Personal Project

Students should clearly document the pieces they create in response to the project using photographs, drawings, maps, film, sound and explanatory texts.

Stories

Telling and gathering stories about themselves and their lives, or about their research is at the heart of this project. Here are some stories we would like everybody involved in the story to make:

Tell a story about yourself.

How far can you step back in time – i.e. who is the oldest person you know? Can you get a story from them, their earliest memory...

Tell a story about a member of your family.

Collect a story from a member of your family.

Collect a story from a friend.

Tell us a story about your friend.

Collect a story about OSM or the surrounding areas from somebody who lives there

From Moose's workshop notes



Outline project proposal, Joe Stevens, December 2010

See the familiar with new eyes

This project is interested in understanding the nature and extent of human interaction with Dartmoor. We tend to think of landscapes as natural phenomenon, with some inherent quality that exists outside our understanding and ownership of them, even though humans have altered almost all of the British landscape in some way.

Students will be undertaking fieldwork, recording their findings on site and then compiling these impressions back at school. Together we would prepare the ground for an investigative art practice involving extensive fieldwork, cooperation with local organisations, assembly of library and archive-based information.

The whole year group will research Dartmoor to come up with questions around the future; present and past of Dartmoor from the point of view of Dartmoor users, i.e. a farmer, a walker, a tourist, a local (who are the groups that use Dartmoor?). We will put together a series of questions for the year group to research during the deep learning days (an i-spy).

This project aims to:

- Stimulate discussion, thought, and general interest in the everyday landscape that surrounds us.
- Understand how we communicate with one another in order to understand the world around us.
- Pursue questions around the changing quality of locations.

What does this mean during lessons?

- 1 We will undertake an archival approach.
- 2 It will be about collecting people's stories and impressions.
- 3 Students will be encouraged to look at our own time through the eyes of the future.

Geography class

In the geography classes the whole year group has to research the area they are visiting and come up with a series of questions. The questions should be related to the place.

In each session the students, working in small groups, research and answer the following (one question per group);

- Is Dartmoor a natural, or man-made environment;
- Who set the boundary line for this national park? (Who decided, what, when?)
- Describe the landscape 200 yrs ago;
- What future improvements would you put in place on Dartmoor? (Answer this question from different viewpoints, i.e. a farmer; a tourist; a teenager; and a local who lives on Dartmoor but travels to work elsewhere.
- What will Dartmoor look like in 10, 20 years time?



Each group comes up with 5 questions, with their answers and research material.

Art class

In the art classes, the students construct their biodegradable letterboxes.

Visit to Dartmoor

During their visit each small group will be tasked with keeping a diary of the route and impressions of the place. They will record thoughts and experiences of Dartmoor. This fieldwork of recording and documenting will be important to them on their return to school and the following exercises.

On return to school after Dartmoor visit

On return to school students individually undertake a number of tasks to summarise their experience of the place visited;

- 1 Each student to write a short, approx twelve words, descriptive text on the place visited.
- 2 Draw a map of the walk. For example they could highlight points of interest, parts that are difficult to travel across, is it suitable for pushchairs, or for mountain bikes?

And then collectively in their groups

- 3 Students download their photos and select twelve, which they feel sum up their experience of the place. They then proceed to title these twelve photos and give them captions. Lastly using the internet these photos will be placed in their geographic location (probably not enough time to undertake this geographic placement of the photos).

Following sessions

Afterwards we use art as a medium to communicate what we now know of the places visited – not in the sense of discovering the unknown but rather with a view to organising a wealth of existing knowledge into a complex aesthetic product from which new meaning could emerge.

We condense the complexity of our source material into conceptual art works involving photography, sound, text and wall graphics. This material would be re-imagined for different spaces; a radio program; an online Google Earth download document; and the biodegradable letterboxes, which will be installed in-situ on Dartmoor.

Notes

Recording devices

Trying to tap into young peoples use of mobile phones (while staying within safeguarding children guidelines) – Make use of the cameras and sound recorders they have in their pocket. Have their phones a memo function so they can talk into and record their impressions, or the sound of the place?

Or could we ask students to bring with them any cameras or sound recording devices they might have?

If we DO use their mobile phones then it is imperative that this audio & photographic material is downloaded and archived on the schools intranet.



Joe Stevens, February 2011

Dartmoor deep learning day activities

You have already done some research in your geography classes and have some understanding of the landscape that makes up Dartmoor. Today on this outing you will be undertaking some field research, which you will be taking back to school to compile and place in your specially-created letterbox. The crucial question to bear in mind is: are we looking at a man-made or a natural landscape; ie. Would you classify Dartmoor as a theme part, or is it a wilderness?

On your walk around the tor you will have to undertake some tasks. You will find people situated at various waypoints who can offer you help and guidance to undertake these tasks. Use their expert knowledge to help you comprehend this place we are visiting, as they might point out things not obvious to the naked eye.

Throughout the walk can you;

- Take a series of photos of scenes or objects that catch your eye. In particular can you photograph five different textures; Photograph five manmade objects and five natural objects.
- List the number of different animals you see.

The top 6 tasks were:

1 Describe the landscape in front of you as if to a blind person.
This activity to be recorded by the artists at a marker.

- a What do you see?
- b What can you hear?
- c What can you smell?

2 Look around you,

- a what will this place look like in fifty years time?
- b what did this place look like one thousand years ago?

3 What can you see from the top of the tor?

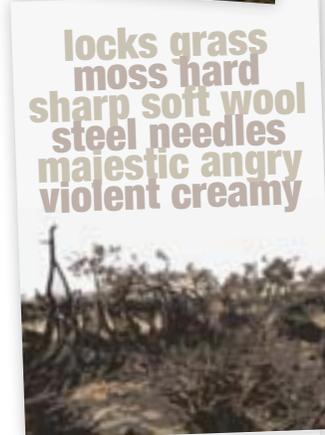
4 Record what you can hear by sketching with your eyes closed.

5 Look around and using your sense of smell, vision and hearing record 'What colour does the place remind you of?'

6 With the square, throw it in the air and then draw whatever it lands on.

Backup tasks if we need some extras.

7 Have some objects in a black bag. Everyone has to then put their hands in the bag and draw what they feel without seeing the object.



Cultural and Heritage Organisations

Daisi sought cultural and heritage organisation partners through contacts with Devon Libraries, Devon Record Office and knowledge of existing networks in the project locations.

Cultural and heritage organisations were invited to the initial project awareness session, so that they could be involved from the start and form good links with project practitioners and schools. Strengthening the links between schools and such organisations was a project aim.

Participating heritage and cultural organisations:

Devon Record Office
www.devon.gov.uk

West County Studies Library
www.devon.gov.uk/localstudies

Devon Libraries
www.devon.gov.uk/libraries

Ottery St Mary Heritage Society
www.otteryheritage.org.uk

Guild of St Lawrence, Heritage Centre and Old Grammar School
www.stlawrencechapel.org.uk

Ashburton Museum
museum@ashburton.org

Dartmoor National Park Authority's Education Service
www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/learningabout



Volunteers

Daisi also made contact with project volunteers, through contacts with local organisations and the schools.

A number of volunteers played a pivotal role in the project. Local historian, Sue Dymond, delivered oral history training to both schools. Retired teacher, Heather Stimson, volunteered to let Ashburton students interview her about her working life at the school and her knowledge of the area, for them to practise taking an oral history.

The Ashburton Mayor, Councillor Peter Brewer, and several other town councillors agreed to be interviewed by project participants.

Sue Dymond helped to organise a 'Big Survey Coffee Morning' in Ottery St Mary to which older members of the community came to be interviewed by the students about their lives and memories of the Ottery. Carol Pentecost, Ottery St Mary Library and Robert Neal of Ottery St Mary Heritage Society contributed to the coffee morning by providing local history material to help the students in their research into the history of the locality. Twelve community members attended the event.



The community invitation to the Big Coffee Morning

Evaluation

The evaluation strategy has been developed and carried out by Daisi and Publica.

Publica planned to collect evaluation materials by the following methods:

Questions for all participants:

- What do you think an artist does?
 - How do you feel about your local area?
- Publica will collate, analyse and edit these to evaluate perceptual shifts.

Artists forms – these form the basis of the survey case studies, and hopefully help the artists think about their projects as surveys. These will be used to identify issues arising in conducting surveys. They will connect to the visual documentation.

Evaluation forums – These will be an opportunity to share learning outcomes to date, monitor whether the project is achieving its aims, address any challenges, share unforeseen impact, set the scene for next term's planning meetings. Publica will document these sessions.

Interviews of focus groups – Publica will visit the schools and interview small groups of pupils and the teachers.

Documentation – both material that has been generated during the workshops (drawings, photographs, audio and video material etc) and documentation of the artists and young people doing the surveys. This will illustrate the toolkit, funding report, evaluation and dissemination material.

Daisi also carried out the following documentation and evaluation:

Documentary film

A filmmaker, Stuart Dawson, was commissioned to produce a documentary film for the archive on the Ottery location. He interviewed all the participating young people about their work on the project.

Student survey

South Dartmoor Community College asked all 280 year 8 students who participated in the second part of the project to complete an online (moodle) survey about their experience.



Final interviews with lead teachers and artists

Daisi wished to obtain feedback on the project process as a whole from the schools and lead artists. The following questions were asked:

- What outcomes was your school hoping to achieve through participation in The School Looks Around project?
- How far do you feel these outcomes have been achieved?
- Do you feel that the project has engaged young people in learning about their local heritage and its relationship to the contemporary life of the local community? If so, how?
- Do you feel the project has helped young people to explore, learn about and interpret their local heritage through a range of creative disciplines? If so, how?
- Did teachers find any new partners, or new ways of working with the heritage sector or creative practitioners through the project?
- What do you feel that your school and/or pupils have gained from this project?
- Does your school have plans for any further, similar work?
- Any other comments you wish to make, anything you would like to be noted about the project.



Evaluation Findings

Daisi collected evaluation responses from the creative practitioners, participating teachers and young people. The findings have been summarised and grouped below:

What outcomes was your school hoping to achieve through participation in the School Looks Around Project? How far were these outcomes achieved?

The two schools involved hoped to achieve different things through the project. The King's School was particularly attracted by the chance for young people to explore the richness of their area, and to produce their own creative response to it. They were keen also to make contacts with cultural organisations and experts.

"I would like to create an archive that records the community not just from an adult perspective but also from the perspective of students at the school. Such an archive would be a very powerful tool towards community cohesion."

Debbie James, The King's School



For South Dartmoor Community College the opportunity to undertake 'new initiatives to work collaboratively across subject areas' (John Whitehead, South Dartmoor Community College) was a driving factor. As a result of the project the school stated:

"We are more confident about initiating cross curricular projects of this complexity. In the heart of our curriculum aims in all subjects there is a drive for creative practice which is not just focused on Art & Design and can be felt right across the college making connections between subjects far deeper than before."

John Bradford, South Dartmoor Community College

Do you feel that the project has engaged young people in learning about their local heritage and its relationship to the contemporary life of the local community?

The project successfully initiated young peoples' engagement with their local heritage. Students from both schools visited Devon Record Office and looked at maps of their local area. In Ottery St Mary students looked at local history material from the library and the Ottery St Mary Heritage Society and used their research in their creative work.

It was more difficult to arrange for Asburton students to engage with their local heritage. It was not possible for all participating students to work with the local library and museum in the first phase of the project, due to the school's tight timetabling requirements and cultural organisations' tight staff time. However in the second phase of the project, all 280 participating students engaged directly with the landscape and heritage of Dartmoor through visiting and questioning Dartmoor Education Rangers. The students enjoyed their visit to Dartmoor, but felt they would have liked to spend more time exploring independently.

The oral history element of the project was strong, particularly at The King's School, where students interviewed older residents about their lives and memories of the area at the 'Big Survey Coffee Morning'.

The students enjoyed obtaining these living histories and used them in their creative work.

"The students gained so much from talking to older people in the community, visiting the Record Office, and talking to each other about their town... It has made them consider everyday things they take for granted in a different way, almost through another's eyes. This I feel has led them to be far more interested in the older members of the town, and value their experiences and opinions."

Debbie James, The King's School

Do you feel the project has helped young people to explore, learn about and interpret their local heritage through a range of creative disciplines?

This aspect of the project was very successful, with the students, teachers and artists really flourishing in the opportunity to respond creatively to their local heritage.

"Students were encouraged to respond in a personal way and were given autonomy to develop their own artefact boxes. This allowed for lots of individual interpretations and lots of different ways of working. We felt that this was a very successful part of the project."

John Bradford
South Dartmoor Community College

"The art department really got behind the project and with their input the young people really produced some remarkable creative interpretation work."

Joe Stevens, Lead artist

Did teachers find any new partners, or new ways of working with the heritage sector or creative practitioners through the project?

South Dartmoor Community College used this project as a test bed for cross-curricular collaboration, and also for greater student involvement in the design of work. They found both aspects very successful and are planning to continue this work in the future.

"We felt valued by the teachers... the Gifted and Talented group took the lead in designing a project for our friends."

South Dartmoor Community College Student.

"The Art and Geography scheme of work will be repeated this year as we see it as having embedded into our school curriculum."

John Bradford
South Dartmoor Community College

"They were surprised that their special places had been special to previous generations, and each learned new things from each other. They have tried to show in their artwork what they have discovered."

Debbie James
The King's School

Recommendations for Future Work

Daisi has gathered feedback from project partners, and would recommend that for similar work in the future, the following issues are considered carefully at the start of the project:

'Local' communities

The project concept was based upon the idea of young people exploring their 'local' community and their 'local' heritage, but anticipated that the concept and scale of the local would vary. The students in the Devon secondary schools travel to school from across a very wide area, which means that as a group they have a range of intersecting and overlapping 'local communities'. For future work it would be valuable to explore this concept further, and consider how a school community connects through its students to a wide area,

and how a broader definition of 'local' heritage and community can be established.

Individual surveys, taking students out of school and safeguarding

In an ideal version of The School Looks Around Project, the young participants would individually and directly survey their own local area and its heritage. This would allow each student to follow their own individual interests and methods throughout the project.

It is clearly not possible for schools at this time to sanction young people working independently off the premises with unknown individuals, while remaining within their safeguarding requirements. Both schools were really keen to embrace the idea of students taking individual responsibility and leading their own enquiries, so found ways of working that gave students as much individual leeway as possible without contravening safeguarding requirements.

At The King's School, a small group of students were selected to take part in the project, and encouraged to choose their own topics to investigate. Their research, much of which took place in their own time, outside school, was supported through mentoring by Debbie James, Head of Art,

"The young people would not see each other outside school. That the only sharing they did was within the school grounds."

Joe Stevens

and the lead artist Moose Allain. Daisi also worked with the school and local volunteer Sue Dymond, to set up a coffee morning in a village hall, to which the public were invited. So the students had the opportunity to take oral histories from members of the local community, and ask their own questions, while in a supervised environment.

At South Dartmoor Community College the lead artist Joe Stevens was asked to work with a group of gifted and talented students to devise the survey methods and activities that the whole year group would do during their research trip to Dartmoor – so although the students did not all individually choose what to survey, their researches were led by their peers rather than the artist or teachers. This was also a way to enable a whole year group – 280 students – to participate in the project.

"During each Deep Learning Day over 200 students were bussed up onto Dartmoor and back. A massive undertaking in itself."

Teacher

South Dartmoor Community College

Working with oral history and community volunteers

We would recommend that an oral history component is included prominently in future work. Asking residents to contribute oral history, and come and talk to students and tell their stories, was a concrete and useful way of forming a link to the local community, and both students and residents found the process enjoyable and stimulating. Nearly all the students from The King's School used some part of the stories or information they got from the oral history in their creative work, showing its power and relevance as a source of inspiration.

Cross curricular project involvement

The project in South Dartmoor Community College was really strengthened by being undertaken by both the art and geography departments as a cross-curricular project. Staff were stimulated and inspired by the greater possibilities this afforded, and the joint planning and organisation benefited the students' experience. This cross-curricular and multi-department way of running the project in the school is in line with the vision for The School Looks Around and brings the opportunities that the project needs to fulfil its ambition.

"We are more confident about initiating cross curricular projects of this complexity. In the heart of our curriculum aims in all subjects there is a drive for creative practice which is not just focused on Art & Design and can be felt right across the college making connections between subjects far deeper than before."

John Bradford

South Dartmoor Community College

Daisi's Role



Daisi is the arts education partnership organisation for Devon and Torbay and brings professional artists and creative practitioners to work alongside young people.

Daisi's vision is for artistic and cultural experience to be at the heart of young people's lives and learning.

We develop and participate in partnerships to create innovative arts education opportunities for young people, and design and manage creative projects. Daisi carried out the following roles during The School Looks Around project:

Raising funds

Devon Libraries was approached by Publica, London, to be the rurally based partner for The School Looks Around. Devon Libraries then sought local partners with whom to develop the project and raise the necessary funds. Daisi was invited to join the Libraries and Devon Record Office to form the project team. Daisi then led on a collaborative bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund which was successful, allowing the project to begin in February 2010.

Recruiting creative practitioners

Daisi advertised for creative practitioners, using our networks across the south-west region. Practitioners were interviewed and selected against the project requirements.

Project design and management

Daisi worked closely with both the creative practitioners and the teachers to translate the project from concept to workable plan, taking into account the practitioners' interests, ways of working and the different needs of the schools. This project was innovative and required an intense and long-term interaction between the practitioners and the schools. It was helpful to have an external organisation such as Daisi to maintain the direction of the project, and to carefully negotiate issues that arose through the course of the project activity.

Daisi brokered relationships between schools and their local heritage and cultural organisations, with the aim of enabling closer working relationships in the future.

Evaluation

Daisi worked with Publica to draw up an evaluation strategy and carry out project evaluation and documentation.

Archive commission

Daisi developed the brief for the archive commission in consultation with Devon Record Office, and partner schools.

The Project Archive

The project archive is held in Devon Record Office, and is available for public access.

Please see www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/record_office for information on opening times and access arrangements.

The School Looks Around project archive consists of:

- Printed publication by Moose Allain
- Documentary film on DVD by Stuart Dawson
- Printed publication by Joe Stevens, including a radio programme on CD
- Toolkit (this document).

The project has involved working with many organisations and individuals, and an exhaustive list is not possible, but Daisi would like to thank the following people in particular who contributed so much to the project:

Artists

Joe Stevens
Moose Allain

Teachers

Debbie James
The King's School, Ottery St Mary

John Bradford, John Whitehead,
Caroline Morgan and Bea Tyndale
South Dartmoor Community
College, Ashburton

Oral history training

Sue Dymond

Cultural and heritage staff

John Draisey
Devon Record Office

Anne Howard
West Country Studies Library

Ciara Eastell
Devon Libraries

Robert Neal and Chris Saunders
Ottery St Mary Heritage Society

Project Concept

Lucy Musgrave
Publica
Clare Cumberlidge
Clare Cumberlidge & Co

And of course, the students of The King's School and South Dartmoor Community College who took part and who produced such interesting and inspired work.





Daisi™

Great Moor House,
Bittern Road, Sowton,
Exeter EX2 7NL

T: 01392 385214

E: admin@daisi.org.uk

www.daisi.org.uk

