

BURSARY WINNERS' REPORTS 2 - BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Wednesday 3 September

Communities *Susan Potter, Rose Swindells and Chloe Bird*

(Report by Sarah Hamilton)

The breakout session on communities examined two community based projects: the *London Voices* project created by the National Trust, and the *Vital Communities* project created jointly by the Councils of Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. The first was created to increase community engagement with four National Trust properties in East London, while the second was created to study and to quantify the impact of arts and heritage programmes on the local community

I found the first project to be the most interesting. The *London Voices* project was an innovative way to use four historic properties in some very diverse communities in East London. The properties were enjoyed in a variety of ways, beyond the aesthetic appreciation of a carefully maintained historic house. Not only did the project forge a stronger connection in the community, it allowed staff and volunteers to be really creative in their interpretation and usages of the properties.

The second project really provided the hard data to back up the contention that arts and heritage programmes really do have an impact on the community.

I felt the most important concept to take away from this breakout session is that museums have a responsibility to figure out creative and innovative ways to connect to their communities: the museum must go to the community. Once that happens, arts and heritage programming will enrich the lives of the people in those communities.

Continuity and Regeneration *Joanne Creighton and Liz Ritchie*

(Report by Alexandra Gordon Jones)

The first speaker in this breakout session, Joanne Creighton from Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, opened with an outline history of the dockyard and the changing fortunes of the surrounding area as employment opportunities in the docks have decreased. As an example of regeneration at the dockyards, the focus was on the recent practice of utilising the skills of those previously employed at the dockyards in the education department. She did not shy away from detailing some of the challenges this entailed - from sustainability issues as the older workers retire, to a lack of confidence in their own skills to manage a class.

Liz Ritchie described some of the initiatives in Kent and then specifically those in Folkestone to promote regeneration. Of special mention was the project to encourage children to engage with the built environment and recognise its employment opportunities through the building works and builders they see every day. Most evident in this discussion was the optimism displayed by the speaker in the difference that museums and creative foundations can have in helping to empower people to lift themselves out of dependence.

Thursday 4 September 2008

Innovation in delivery – *Lynne Minett and Dr Carl Gavin*

(Report by Alexandra Gordon Jones)

The case study analysed in this session was taken from a project run by English Heritage at Belsay Hall, near Newcastle. English Heritage worked in conjunction with Lateral Visions, a computer software company interested in extending aspects of stealth learning, and with a group of eight 14-15 year olds.

The young people were provided with a brief to form a games company and to design a computer game based at Belsay Hall. They were given a relatively free rein to develop the game as they chose,

albeit without violence or killings. The young people also featured in the game, as the voice-overs and costumed characters.

We were provided with examples of positive social outcomes for the young people and lessons that English Heritage learnt from working with such a group. Additionally, to the advantage of the audience, were details of how to run a similar computer based project; from how to find a software company to marketing and evaluation.

Learning Outside the Museum *Celine West and Mike Lefroy*
(Report by Jo Rooks)

The breakout session was led by Celine West, UCL Museums and Mike Lefroy, freelance museum consultant, Fremantle, Western Australia. Both sections of the breakout session were aimed at explaining how UCL and two museums in Fremantle have tried to expand their educational resources to reach those who may not attend the museums.

Celine West's description of UCL's outreach work was informative and very honest – achievements and problems were equally covered. The scale on which they have been able to work, reaching 400 parents a year, is amazing and it proved that a pro-active museum can reach out to many more people than just the 'typical' visitor.

Mike Lefroy's talk was equally interesting especially the use of publically accessible sculpture and the Bluetooth enabled trails that link the Fremantle museums.

Both sections of the session exhibited the diverse ways in which the heritage sector can reach out into wider society.

Friday 5 September 2008

Teenage Learning *Dr Sharon Goddard and Jane Clark*
(Report by Jo Rooks)

The speakers in the *Teenage Learning* session were Dr Sharon Goddard, 14-19 adviser, DCSF and GEM Trustee and Jane Clark, project coordinator, *Inside Out* project.

Dr Goddard gave succinct and concise explanation of the new secondary curriculum and the introduction of the new diplomas which was extremely helpful and informative. The links that could be made between museums and educators were very clear and it certainly inspired me to expand our offer in secondary education.

Jane Clarke's presentation continued the theme beautifully as she explained how a number of museums across Kent held activities and projects for teenagers that were diverse and innovative. The 'how to' booklet and DVD that were produced by the project have proved to be very useful and over all the breakout session opened my eyes to how much museums can achieve in teenage learning.

Learning Outside the Classroom, *Peter Carne and Dr John Stevenson*,
(Report by Mike Lefroy)

This session was an excellent introduction to the proposed LOfC (Learning Outside the Classroom) Quality Badge scheme due to be launched in early October 2008 for implementation in January 2009.

Peter Carne began with an overview of the *Out and About* package and stressed the importance of learning outside the classroom commenting that even when 'not done very well' it has a huge impact on children's learning. He outlined the Manifesto's aim as a belief that '...every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances.'

The second part of the session chaired by Dr John Stevenson was a valuable discussion amongst the group about the practicalities of the proposal. The scheme is seen as a way of streamlining school visits to museums, heritage sites and other out of school learning programmes. For teachers the value is seen as the way the scheme can break down the barriers by reducing the crippling amount of paperwork and authorizations required to leave the school grounds during a school day. From the providers point of view the Quality Badge, although not mandatory, is seen as a potential marketing tool and a valuable checklist of pre and post visit indicators and risk management assessment.

One issue raised within the group was the cost to register. The hundred pound price tag is seen by some, particularly small museums, as potentially excessive on a limited budget. For larger providers like English Heritage, the question was posed – ‘would the scheme require all of the 400 properties to obtain a separate badge?’ When the answer was given that perhaps there would be one badge for the whole organisation, the observation was made that some of the small local museums would not be able to ‘tick all the boxes’ and therefore not be able to conform with the Quality Badge requirements. This seems to be an issue still to be resolved.

A couple of other key points were made about the importance of marketing the Quality Badge effectively to all users, providers and parents and that the project must continue to be a ‘top down’ initiative by government so that government schools officially embrace the scheme and bureaucracy is reduced for all parties.

Skills-Focused Learning *Sandra Stancliffe and Nic Garrick*
(Report by Sarah Hamilton)

This breakout session examined an education partnership between Sandra Stancliffe of the Bristol Museums and Nick Garrick of Fair Furlong Primary School. Sandra wanted to make the museums’ education offerings more flexible, in order to meet the needs of the new, flexible curriculum. When she asked teachers to evaluate her museums’ programmes, she listened to the teachers who didn’t use the museum at all. One of these teachers was Nic Garrick.

Over a year and a half Sandra and Nic developed quality standards for museum education programmes, and then asked staff to explain how their programmes met those standards. Nic has also developed a resource guide, called *Bristol as a resource* that helps teachers use the museums and built heritage of the Bristol area as one more resource in their arsenal.

The ideas presented in this session were really useful. The presenters encouraged educators to take a long, hard look at their offerings. They emphasised that we really need to look at skills development and understanding, rather than ticking off boxes on a curriculum checklist. They offered some great strategies for doing this, including a lot of consultation with colleagues in the field. One big message that I took away from this session is that museum educators and teachers are in it together, so we must communicate with each other about the educational needs of the students.