



CASE STUDY			
Name	Susan Yule Clackmannanshire Council	Date	24/04/19
Clackmannanshire Archives – Educational Activities for School Groups			
Summary/Background <i>Outline of your project/exhibition/story and context in which the activity/ies took place.</i>			
<p>The aim of this project was to plan and deliver a creative educational workshop for school groups, initially aimed at Primary 6-7. This event would involve a visit to the Speirs Centre in Alloa where the archives are kept, a tour of the building and the archive store, and participation in learning activities about archives and items from specific collections. The event would enable the children to explore their local history and would cover several learning outcomes in the Curriculum for Excellence, for example through working with historical sources and nurturing children's creative and aesthetic talents. The project was intended to coincide with Book Week Scotland and Explore Your Archive week in November 2018.</p>			
The Challenge <i>Outline what is challenging about this? Did any issues appear? Why was it problematic?</i>			
<p>As I work in a lone archivist role in a small local authority with a low budget, my capacity in terms of time and resources is always a challenge. I have had no previous experience of creating educational activities or working with school groups, so this project was an entirely new experience for me but something that I wanted to embrace in order to widen the outreach of the archive service. The main challenges at the outset of the project were my lone-working status and achieving buy-in from local primary schools to participate in the project. I had to close the archive enquiry service during the 3 days of education coaching so that I could focus on the project. Working with Douglas Roberts to discuss and devise the educational activities was an invaluable and enjoyable experience. It was excellent to benefit from his experience and expertise, and to hear about previous projects he had worked on. It was extremely useful to be able to work with someone who understands archives and the outcomes I was trying to achieve</p>			
Intended Outcomes <i>What were you trying to achieve? Who was the target audience?</i>			
<p>I wanted to gain a clearer idea of where to start with educational activities, how to tailor them to certain age groups, and how to fit them in with the Curriculum for Excellence in order to make them attractive to schools. This learning experience for me would then be translated into learning activities for school groups, initially aimed at Primary 6-7. I would create activities to introduce children to the concept of archives and items from specific collections that would enable the children to explore their local history. These activities could take place in the library and archive building, or I could visit the schools and work with groups there. The project was intended to coincide with Book Week Scotland and Explore Your Archive week in November 2018. The intended outcome for the archive service was to promote the service and the learning activities, provide evidence that the archive collections were being used in education and outreach projects, and build a relationship between the archive service and the local schools.</p>			
Action/Approach Taken <i>Detail the actions taken in order to address the challenge. What was done, how and why? What staff and partners were involved, what tools were used? Were there costs and timescales?</i>			

As this was my first experience of creating educational activities, Douglas and I adopted a free-form approach rather than concentrating on one particular collection or record. I am still relatively new in this archive post and am still learning about the history of the area and the collections. The modular nature of the activities we devised would allow me to add more content and activities when I identify collections or records that would provide good learning opportunities.

We did initially explore an activity relating to our records of Clackmannanshire Infectious Diseases Hospital, involving the death of a child from cross-contamination, and the ensuing investigation and potential cover-up. However, we put this activity on hold when we realised through our reading of the records that the case was quite dense and possibly too advanced for the intended age group or length of event I was aiming for.

We then concentrated on modular activities that could be done separately or joined together depending on the length of an event. These activities included an introduction to archives, an exercise in value and appraisal (what you would keep/throw away and why), explaining archive terminology like types of records, and information that we can learn from the archive like types of job that no longer exist. We also discussed object lessons with particular items that would illustrate the aesthetics of archives and provide learning opportunities about local groups and industries.

Another reason why it was excellent for Douglas to come to the Speirs Centre for the education coaching was that we could also discuss how I would take a group for a tour of the building and explain its history as a public baths and gymnasium. It was very beneficial to be able to tailor this activity to the specific nature of our building and its history, and to explore the links to health and wellbeing in the Curriculum for Excellence. We also devised a tour of the archive store and discussed how I would explain the order of the records to children by explaining about forms of local government.

In terms of the challenge of achieving buy-in from local primary schools to participate in the project, I liaised with my librarian colleague to obtain contacts both at a higher level in the education department, and contacts of individual teachers. I provided a list of potential archive resources that could be used and how the educational activities would fit in with the learning outcomes from the Curriculum for Excellence.

Obstacles and Issues

What obstacles or difficulties, if any, did you have to overcome?

Unfortunately despite contacting the education department and local primary schools in advance of the education coaching I received no reply from the primary schools and no expression of interest in participating in the learning activities. Building a relationship with the schools will take longer than I anticipated. There may be an opportunity to work with the library service to participate in their planned school activities and tours of the Speirs Centre, in order to incorporate an archive section or activity. I have also considered opening up these activities to public groups or drama clubs rather than just school groups, in order to increase interest and uptake.

The largest obstacle to the completion of the project has been the Section 21 notice served by the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry at the end of September 2018. I did not find out about this until the start of October and was then involved in research for the Inquiry until the end of February 2019. There were in excess of 200 files and volumes to check in the course of this research. Unfortunately due to this research, the running of the normal public enquiry service and other promotional display work I was involved in, I have not yet managed to organise an educational event with school groups. The project was put on hold due to the Section 21 research and the lack of communication from the schools.

A further complication is that the Council is currently undergoing a restructure where the archive service may end up under a different section of the Council, with different goals and objectives. I am awaiting further information on the restructure before I restart this project.

Results and Impact

Outline the results of the actions taken. What was the outcome of the approach, what was the uptake (attendances/participants/sessions), what impact and positive changes occurred (include observed results, customer/stakeholder feedback, and positive changes in performance), were there any

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unforeseen benefits, what is the legacy?

Although the original project has been paused and there was no uptake from schools, I have since had cause to use some of the education coaching work with an older group. I have previously worked in partnership with a local volunteer group called Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface (CTSi) by putting on displays in conjunction with their projects and advertising through them for archive volunteers. In March 2019 I had a visit from a group of young volunteers (around 16 years old) who are applying for volunteering positions through CTSi. One of the volunteers is interested in a placement with the archive service but the whole group (6 volunteers) visited for a tour of the archive store. I gained valuable experience of showing the archive store to a group of young adults, explaining archives in a way that would engage them and was relevant to local history. I explained about the difference between the Council's records and Private Deposit collections. I also talked about conservation and demonstrated cleaning and repackaging archives. There was another adult with the group who had memories of the Patons & Baldwins textile factories in the area (our largest Private Deposit collection) and who was able to offer insights into how Patons was a big part of local life. The feedback from CTSi was that the group really enjoyed their visit to the archive and were discussing it during their walk back to the CTSi office. The potential archive volunteer was very excited about the role.

As well as providing further experience of conducting an archive tour and explaining our collections, this visit allowed me to reach an age group that is normally difficult to engage. It was a great opportunity to promote the archive service, the role of the archivist and the potential for archive volunteering. This group are now aware of the archive and will hopefully pass on positive word of mouth to their peers. It was a different experience for them and highlighted the importance of local history. I hope to be involved in similar visits through our partnership with CTSi.

The SCA Education Coaching experience has been extremely helpful in giving me more knowledge and confidence in creating educational activities. It was of great benefit to hear about the previous projects that Douglas has been involved with and to work with him to create various learning activities that can be used separately or together. The flexible nature of these activities means that they have long-lasting potential as they can be adapted for different age groups, projects and collections. The fact that Douglas came to the Speirs Centre for the coaching was also hugely beneficial as it allowed us to explore more archive material and make use of the character of the building when planning tours and activities.

Lessons Learned

What are the key learning points? What worked particularly well? What would you do differently next time? What advice and recommendations would you give to other people dealing with a similar situation?

A key learning point for me from working with Douglas was that creating educational activities does not need to be a complicated process if you break it down into elements and keep in sight what you want the children to take away from the experience. It is also important to let the children explore and learn about the records in a creative and involved way rather than a dry question and answer format that does not engage their interest.

In terms of the challenges and obstacles faced, a key learning point for me was to approach the education department and the local schools far in advance of any events you are planning. It would also be useful to visit schools and speak to the teachers about what the archives can offer and what their expectations are.

It would also be advisable to factor in unexpected delays in a project when planning for future events. The Child Abuse Inquiry notice was unforeseen and delayed the project for several months, so it would

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have been better to have a contingency plan.

I would encourage any archive service to apply for the SCA Education Coaching programme because it is so flexible to whatever stage you may be at in your planning and implementation of educational activities. It has definitely given me more knowledge in creating learning activities and given me confidence to start such a project by breaking it down into manageable elements rather than seeing it as an insurmountable task that a lone archivist could not manage.

Next Steps

Briefly describe the future of the project or related initiatives. For example, how you intend to maintain the momentum of the action you have taken so far, how you will monitor the success of your actions, or how you intend to build on/create new initiatives.

Next steps in this project cannot be taken until I receive further information about the Council restructure and potential changes in the objectives of the archive service. I still intend to organise educational workshops if this fits in with my objectives, although these may need to be opened up to public groups rather than just school groups. I will also be taking part in the Doors Open Days this year and I intend to have activities for children as well as an archive tour for adults.

Any Other Information

Detail here any further information you would like to include in your case study. This can include, but is not limited to; images, references, suggestions for further reading, contact details for those involved in the project with links to staff recognition.

I have attached a couple of images in case you would like to use these along with the case study on the website. One is a photo of our archive store, to illustrate the tour I hosted with the group from CTSi (unfortunately I did not get any photos at the time of their visit). The other image is of a John Paton Son & Co. Worsted Wool Fingering Chart, which is part of our Patons & Baldwins collection. It contains samples of real wool and a line drawing of mill buildings in Alloa in 1871. Douglas and I used this item as the basis of an archive object lesson to introduce children to the local textile industry.

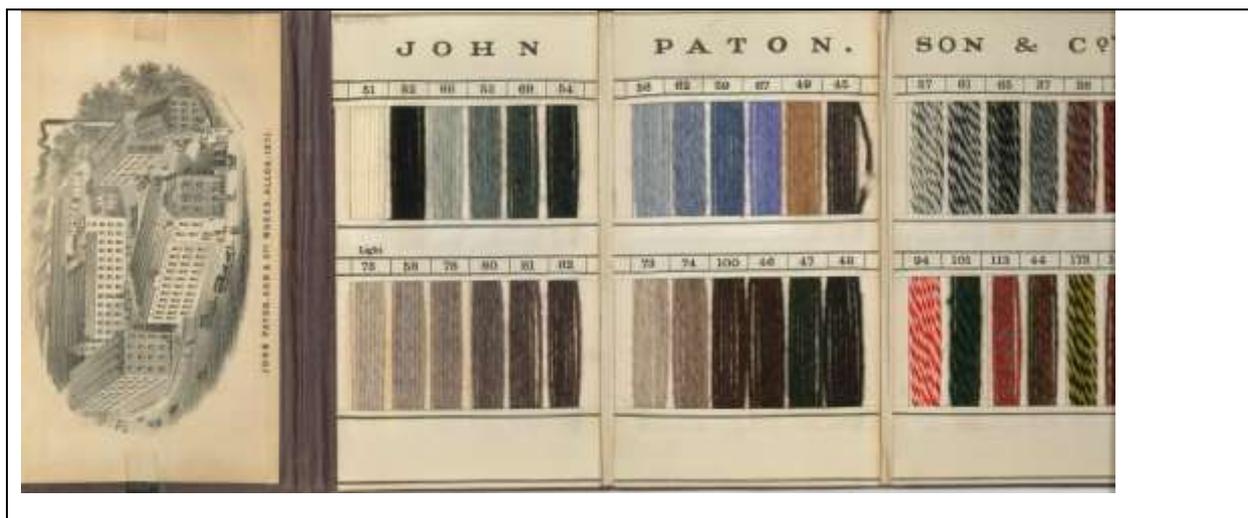


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