

Gallipoli Centenary Education Project

Evaluation Report for North Devon March 2016

Executive Summary

The North Devon strand of the Gallipoli Centenary Education Project was project managed staff at The Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon (MBND). The project was intended to help young people from the North Devon region to engage with the Gallipoli story, specifically through the lenses of museum objects and archive documents, particularly the diaries of soldiers who took part in the Gallipoli campaign which are in the museum's collection.

The Gallipoli Centenary Education Project in North Devon was enhanced by running it in parallel with two other World War I focused projects. The first of these was a project to encourage children and young people to engage with the WWI story through arts. Funding managed by the Devon Arts in Schools Initiative (DAISI) made this possible. During the project period additional funding was also won by MBND to enhance the WWI galleries in the museum.

These additional sources of funding allowed the Gallipoli Centenary Education Project to involve larger numbers of young people and to showcase the work produced in the re-displayed WWI gallery at MBND.

Process

Creative practitioners with a known track record of excellence were invited to participate in this project.

Practitioners used their contacts to approach groups that we felt would benefit from and that were well placed to engage with this project. This was done well in advance of activity to allow for the curriculum limitations of secondary school pupils.

Practitioners spent significant periods of time at MBND, investigating the collection and in particular research by Brian Barrow into the story of service men in WWI. While in the museum creative practitioners were able to read and make copies of the diaries of soldiers who were present during the Gallipoli campaign. This research was augmented by research produced by two History/English students from PETROC College who collated the research by Brian Barrow into Word and PowerPoint format.

Creative practitioners were provided with access to online archives help by MBND. These links provided visual references for practitioners and participants.

Workshop sessions were timetabled with all groups. A film-maker was recruited to document the process and provide a final product.

Staff from The Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon attended workshop sessions with original WWI objects to inspire and inform participants.

The final artistic and dramatic products of each group were installed in the museum (in the case of visual art/recorded performance), and a series of plays were performed at both at the Museum and a public performance at a local school.

Participant Group	Working with practitioner	Number of participants	Producing	Number of sessions	Age range of participants.
West Buckland School	Jane Churchill	15	3D art	3	16+
The Park School Community College	Jane Churchill	18	3D art	3	14-16
The Ilfracombe Academy – after school Drama Club	The Multi Story Theatre Company	12	Drama	9	11-18
Pilton Community College (lunchtime drama group)	The Multi Story Theatre Company	25	Drama	7	11-14
Pilton Community College (GCSE)	The Multi Story Theatre Company	25	Drama	10	14-15
Braunton academy (GCSE)	The Multi Story Theatre Company	21	Drama	7	15-16
Home schooled children	Jo Bushell	6	Performance and film	3	11-15
PETROC College history/English students	Julian Vayne	2	Research for GCEP practitioners and participants	6	14-16
West Buckland School	Robin Clutterbuck	8	Research, Gallipoli visit and follow-up	5 day trip	14-17

With the exception of the Ilfracombe and Home Schooled group all other participants used the activity provided by this project as part of an examinable course of study. The artwork created by West Buckland Students was formally assessed at part of their A-level. The drama produced by Braunton students was formally assessed as part of their drama GCSE, this assessment took place during their performances at MBND.

All groups were given the brief that their creative responses should have the aim of helping visitors to MBND engage more deeply with the story of the conflict in Gallipoli during WWI. The hope was that the work produced by young people would allow visitors to develop an emotional connection with the soldiers involved in that campaign and to provide new engaging ways to share the facts of the story.

West Buckland students were involved in researching the names and stories of British soldiers who died during the Gallipoli campaign. Seven of these students visited Gallipoli and read out eulogies at the graves of the soldiers they had researched. History teacher Chris Allin researched former West Buckland students who fought in Gallipoli. Found objects retrieved from the Gallipoli coast were brought back to the MBND to inspire and inform the performance work of Jo Bushall.

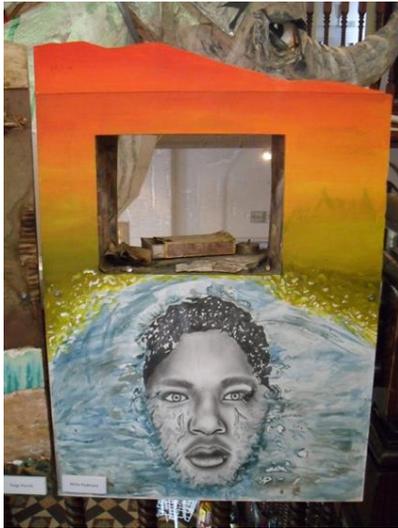
Additional key statistics

People engaging with the project	Number involved	What they did
Museum staff involved in this project	3	Involved in supporting visiting groups of young people, project management and installation of content into WWI gallery
Museum volunteers involved in this project	4	Installation of content into WWI gallery
Visitors to Pilton College drama performances (not staff or students)	62	Attended stage performances by drama groups
Visitors to GCEP private view	274	Attended private view of exhibition (this figure is approx. 170 greater than the average MBND private view event)

Outputs of the Project

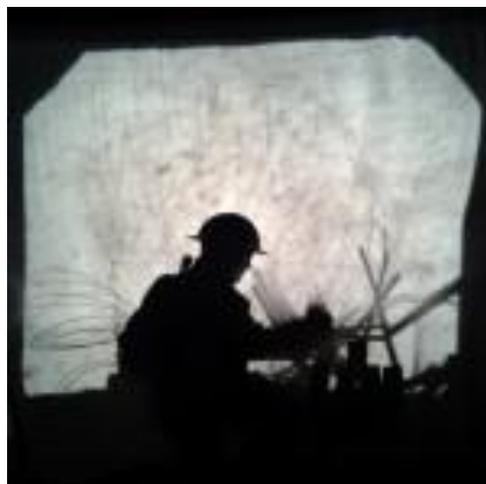
Visual Art

Each student created a miniature set/3D artwork. These were originally intended to be displayed high up in the redisplayed WWI gallery (to mimic the Gallipoli skyline as seen from the landing beaches). However the detail of the art was such that it was decided to display these on the approach to the gallery (up the main museum staircase) and in cases of the WWI gallery itself.



Performance (and film)

Based on an original poem by one member of the group a performance piece was developed that combined silhouette project, costume, set design and film. The completed film is available at the online and in MBND WWI gallery.



Drama (and film)

Drama was performed by young people in school, in The Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon and also at a public performance. Some pieces were written by The Multi Story Theatre Company and others were created by students. All the plays drew on original material from Gallipoli war diaries.



Evaluation research

Evidence for the impact of the project was gathered by Museum staff while engaging with young people, by creative practitioners, and by recording the journey of the drama and performance groups on film.

Questions were developed to benchmark students levels of knowledge. For the drama groups these were presented in a 'game show' format.

1. What do you know about the First World War?
2. Do you know when WW1 happened?
3. What do you know about a place called Gallipoli?
4. Please describe where you think where Gallipoli is.
5. What happened there during WW1?
6. Have you ever visited Greece or Turkey?
7. What was the weather like?

Questions were also used to establish level of knowledge of the broader historical context:

1. What do you imagine Barnstaple to have been like 100 years ago?
2. What do you think would be the main differences between life in Barnstaple 100 years for someone your age?
3. Is anyone in your family descended from someone who lived in North Devon 100 years ago?
4. Do you know if any of your ancestors fought in the Frist World War?
5. Imagine if your Dad, or big brother, or cousin went off to fight with the Devon regiments in WW1. What sort of news might you tell them in letters you might send...?

Questions were also asked over the following weeks:

1. Find out if anyone from your family/close friends /neighbours had relatives who fought in WW1.
2. Where did they fight? What did they do (army/navy etc)?
3. What was their job back at home? What was their family background? Were they married? Did they have children at the time they went off to fight? Did they have younger brothers and sisters?

Evaluation was also gathered using questionnaires and by recording key quotes from participants.

Evaluation data

Evidence provided here includes quotes and figures based on questionnaire results (averaged across all participating groups). Quotes from both creative practitioners and participants are included here.

Knowledge and understanding – learning about new things

Q: Do you feel that you have gained new knowledge through this project and that you understand the Gallipoli story better?

A: By the end of the project all of the participants who responded felt that have increased their knowledge.

“Students Read out aloud 5 short diary extracts from Algar and the group made ‘tableaux’: commented on what takes our eye and why. Adding to basic knowledge and / or what q’s it raised that we need to find out about (i.e. what IS dysentery?)” Creative Practitioner.

“I had spent several weeks researching at Barnstaple Museum prior to the workshops in order to underpin the young people’s research with accounts left behind in letters and diaries written by local soldiers. Drawing on this resource and their own research the group decided to work together to produce a series of striking images that portrayed the experiences of Lance-Corporal Alfred Trathen, who was from Ilfracombe, North Devon and served with the North Devon Hussars. Scenes depicting elements of Alfred’s experience of Gallipoli were re-enacted by the young people using a hands-on projection technique” Creative Practitioner.

“I’d never heard of it [Gallipoli] until the project but I now think I understand the story pretty well” Participant.

“I can find Gallipoli on a map now and can imagine just how hard it must have been [during the campaign]” Participant

“Before working on the Gallipoli Project I had never heard of Gallipoli. It seems strange that such a huge subject is overlooked in so many people’s lives. The reasons for the past cover-up of this war are the reasons it should be widely acknowledged. The mistake, the brutality, the mess up is a far greater lesson than any war where we have been triumphant. It is the warning that war is not always the right move and it is extremely important that we hold on to that lesson as a nation.” Participant

“I have always known that theatre can engage students far more than textbooks. Textbooks are important as a starting point and create a good foundation of information which leads on to experience. Once you allow the body to experience death, life, pain, hunger, grief you have not just created memories of a war you have created the emotional memory of war which develops their understanding of how they play a part in the world today. Therefore the work of theatre within the Gallipoli project is paramount to its success in teaching and allowing our next generation to experience the consequence of war. ” Creative Practitioner.

Skills – learning how to do something new

Q: Have you learnt new skills through this project?

A: 78% of responding participants felt that they had learnt new skills.

“Not so much new skills, but I’ve improved loads. My painting skills have got loads better.” Participant

As a Home Educator, it was really valuable to me in giving us a focus for some historical research and inspiration for a literary response which resulted in Grace’s poems (and her brother’s), as well as offering Grace

an opportunity to work with, and learn from, different people. It was a great opportunity for her and the other children and I hope that she can take part in future workshops - Jo was an inspirational teacher who clearly had a great rapport with, and understanding of the children as well as great talent to share. Many thanks Home schooling parent

We have been privileged to work with the group for a session per week since mid-September. They have grappled with unfamiliar material with tenacity and great application. Their performances at the Museum last Friday were proof indeed of the mature way they have assimilated the information, wrought it to make it their own and their skill in finding the appropriate way to dramatise it. Representatives of the local council, the DAISI project, the Museum service and even sundry members of the public all commented on the students' inventiveness, imagination and focussed delivery. Creative Practitioner.

"I'd never done work with silhouettes so what Jo showed us that something I'd never done before. Now I can see how the whole thing with the film comes together. It's really great" Participant

As one of the artists invited to work on this project, I found the experience thoroughly rewarding. For an artist with a particular interest in heritage projects, the prospect of being given access to the records and artefacts at Barnstaple Museum and the support of the staff including Brian Barrow (with comprehensive knowledge of WW1 history) was an exciting challenge and the experience of it proved to be truly immersive. Creative Practitioner.

Armed with knowledge, I was able to provide the young people with interesting 'inroads' based on real-life scenarios that were relevant and exciting mainly for their connection to their locality and, for some, to their actual families. As an artist who has great interest in heritage as a way of reconnecting communities and helping individuals to understand/belong to the larger narrative of which they are a part; the reference to real, local story is a very important part of the process. I felt the young people really engaged with this aspect of the project and also replicating the coastal landscape of Gallipoli with the coastal landscape of North Devon - connecting the two spaces was a powerful tool in their understanding. I was asked by DAISI to work with young people outside of the school system - the size and nature of the group (home educated young people) that I worked with and the flexibility of the funding allowed me to work in locations and at times of the day that may otherwise have been difficult. I really appreciated this freedom but I felt it also brought the project alive for the young people who were able to physically dig the sand into sandbags and measure out distances between the frontlines in the landscape and feel the cold wind of the beach as they worked. Creative Practitioner.

"Really coming together to work intensely on the small plays was something new. We all had to learn our lines and really work together. Especially when we performed in the museum." Participant

"In 4 groups of about 5/6 each had info given about an aspect of the campaign at Suvla taken from Algar, Baker, Crocker & Sutcliffe's diary/letters. They were asked to devise a short scene that explained to the others what they felt to be the most important aspects of the info given. The themes of the extracts were dysentery, flies, death and trenches." Creative Practitioner.

Attitudes and values – deepened perceptions, feelings and empathy

Q: Describe your feelings and if they have changed as you took part in this project.

A: Answers from participant feedback included:

Understanding [the story]

Appreciating what the soldiers had to go through.

Knowing that these were real people [just like me].

I learnt that war is messed up and I hope we can stop it happening again.

"An engrossing project from beginning to end. The very real first-hand accounts from local people, made available to us, gave us a sense of responsibility to ensure that the work with the young people reflected the research accurately." Creative Practitioner.

"It was a fascinating and absorbing project on so many levels and the utter commitment to the work displayed by the students has stayed with us. We're still reflecting on it and absorbing its tremendous impact." Teacher.

"We are both very proud to have been part of this project. And are looking forward to nipping back into the Museum to explore the displays further - and at leisure!" Teacher

"At first the students showed resistance to learning about century old History. However once the theatre practice was involved, along with real life photographs, films, diaries and memorabilia from the Gallipoli war, the students became engaged and open to learning. In fact they were able to relate to how they may have lived 100 years ago in such difficult times." Teacher.

"[The project] has definitely helped me to connect with the individual stories. Not just thinking about the war a whole but about individual people, real people from the past." Participant

"I learnt how it's good to use a real story to make a play and it really lets you get to know the people in the story." Participant

Inspiration and creative thinking – leading to enjoyment, and openness to new ideas

Q: Were you inspired by taking part in this project. For example of learn more about WWI?

A: Answers from participant feedback included:

Yes! I've now seen the film about Gallipoli and found out about my own family history [in WWI]

I've found out why the war ended and about the German revolution. Now I'm thinking about why war is such a rubbish way of sorting things out. Nobody wins.

I'd love to do more art like we did with Jane and find out about set-designing.

'I really, really enjoyed it! It was great fun! I especially enjoyed it on the beach filling the sandbags and feeling a bit like what it would have been like being at Gallipoli. It was really cool using the projector and learning how to make backgrounds. I loved the way the wind blowing on the beach made the images really atmospheric. Jo was really friendly and kind. I also learnt to read slowly when I was asked to read my poems. And recording my voice was really exciting! I would love to do something like this again!' Participant

I loved working on this project, I thought it was really inspirational to see how the children related to a 100 year old war and this relation was inspired and educated by the hard work from all involved. Thank you for your kind comments, it really means a lot! I would love to work with all of you again! Creative Practitioner.

"Thank you again for doing this project, Lila really loved it and the film was great." Parent

"Our students found Jane Churchill's enthusiastic teaching style captivating. Her knowledge of materials and techniques enabled all of our students to create a personalised response to the Battle of Gallipoli. Many of the students felt that her stories and personal artwork made this war from over 100 years ago feel like it was only yesterday! The art work they present is the response of these young artists to all they learnt about World War One, Gallipoli and how objects from one hundred years ago contain memories and stories just waiting to inspire us." Teacher

'It was such a pleasure to be asked to work with Jane Churchill, Daisi Arts, Barnstaple Museum and the Gallipoli Centenary Education Project to bring such an important event to life. It was a real thrill for the young artists to not only work with a practicing artist but also interact with artefacts from the time period and specifically the Gallipoli campaign. The body of work created by West Buckland students, of all nationalities, is their interpretation of their reaction, not only to the events in Gallipoli, but also to the idea of conflict as a whole. The students had 9 days to record, design and create these pieces. Working to such a time scale has been a challenge but the impact of the workshop with Julian Vayne and Jane Churchill ensured that not a moment was spent without trying new techniques and reflecting upon how their own pieces reflected the conditions and atmosphere of the time. The students have enjoyed this experience and hope that you enjoy their creations as well.' Teacher.

"Every aspect was moving and as you say loaded with the commitment of the young people. I do feel that the subject matter touched them all, they learnt a lot and engaged in a real and felt way. I heard many positive comments over the course of the final week and witnessed members of the public being quite moved by what they saw." Creative Practitioner

"History sometimes seems a bit boring but this was really interesting and was about real people, like in the diaries. I'm going to find out more about WWI and now I know it's not boring." Participant.

Legacy

Images of the art works that were created and film from the performance and drama strands has been added as part of the permanent display in the WWI gallery of MBND. These younger voices will make it easier for people, especially younger visitors, to engage with the Gallipoli story.

During the evening opening of the new WWI gallery (held to mark the anniversary of the great storm that hit Gallipoli on November 27th 1915) over 270 people visited the museum. Performances were given by members of the home school group and a large number of the children and young people who appear in films in the gallery visited to see their work in situ. Visitor comments from that evening included:

"Seeing the children in uniform [performing on film] is weird, reminds me of the military uniforms [in the gallery]. Brings then and now together. What a terrible time they had! [In Gallipoli]"

"A great exhibition! The young people have really done some good stuff!"

"It has been fantastic working alongside amazing practitioners engaging students in the Gallipoli war. Art, projection, theatre, mixed with hard evidence allowed for a heavy subject to be digested in bite sized chunks. Creativity is such an important tool for educational projects. It makes learning an experience rather than just 2 dimensional facts in a textbook. I know that most of the students will remember this project for years to come and isn't that what education should hope for?" Teacher.