



digital:works

annual report 2017-18

About digital:works



Participation Through Creative Skills

digital:works is a group of artists and trainers who work with local communities, providing training and creative assistance, to produce arts and media projects.

We are committed to a participatory approach. Creative arts are an exciting way for people of all ages and backgrounds to engage with and learn more about others from their local community – especially if they are the ones shaping and leading the creative process.

Thanks to our breadth of experience and expertise, we can provide training and creative support in a wide range of media, from web development, video and digital animation, to textile and oral history projects.

Accessible Projects for All

Our commitment to participation means we place great emphasis on inclusivity.

Our projects actively involve people from all corners of the community – be they young or old, visually or hearing impaired, or someone for whom English is not the first language.

The skills required in taking part in our projects do not depend on advanced media literacy or prior experience with digital equipment.

Community Ownership

Our goal with all projects is to encourage and maintain participants' sense of ownership of both the process and the final product. This, we believe, is the guiding principle of true participation work.

Chair's Report

The reporting year of 2017- 2018 has been a busy one during which we have continued to initiate our own projects as well as working in collaboration with outside organisations. We resumed our partnership with Totally Thames to complete 'Boatyards on the Thames', a film focusing on eight yards between Tower Bridge and Teddington Lock as well as others which have closed in recent memory. A launch event was held at Watermans Arts Centre at which it was very well received and it has also been shown at a number of events including the Thames Festival. It also joins the list of our projects that have been broadcast on the Community Channel.

A Westminster council funded film on Samuel Godfrey, a hero of Waterloo was the first of three Military history themed projects undertaken this year. With the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1 looming we were asked by Westminster archives to create a film, 'They Called it Passchendaele' looking at the battles in and around Ypres and Passchendaele with a particular focus on the role of nurses. It also looks at Westminster's contribution to the 'Coming World Remember Me' commemorations. Also on the subject of WW1, 'Wilfred Salmon: Hero of the First Blitz' saw us working further afield in Kent and Essex as well as central London, in a search for evidence of the first blitz and Salmon's role in it.

Back in the capital, 'Sherbet Dab - An Oral History of the London Cabbie' featured stories from the 1950s up to the present day. Often funny, sometimes poignant, these stories paint a picture of the changes to city life from a time when roads were relatively empty to the choked streets of the present day with cycle lanes and increased competition from independent operators and the likes of Uber. South of the river, in 'Battersea Junction', we presented an oral history of the Winstanley and York Road housing estates. Funded in part by the Battersea Power Station Foundation, the film featured interviews with current and past residents. The project proved very popular at its launch in the newly refurbished Battersea Arts Centre.

We continue to seek new partnerships as well as working with familiar groups and we would like to thank all of the participants as well as those who provided funding including trades union Unite and The Heritage Lottery Fund.

Peter McKenna, Chair

Review of the Year

digital:works ran six projects this year with four of them being commissions. One of our major projects this year saw us working once more with London Transport Museum record the lives of London's Black Cab drivers. We also built on our relationship with Totally Thames to look at boatyards on the Thames. We conducted two projects for Westminster Archives covering Waterloo and Passchendaele, undertook a project with CRAY about the birth of the RAF during WW1 and ran a project in Battersea to study the building of the Winstanley estate and the communities on it.



Working River: An Oral History of Boatyards on the Tidal Thames

Commissioned by Totally Thames we worked with volunteers to record an oral history of people in boatyards on the tidal Thames. London's boatyards have an significant place in the history of the River Thames, once known as the 'greatest shipbuilding area in the world'. One hundred and fifty years ago, nearly fifteen thousand men were working in shipbuilding in the Isle of Dogs alone, with hundreds of boat and barge yards operating along the shores of the Thames. Today only around fifteen boatyards remain between the Thames Barrier and Teddington Lock, due to the decline in the commercial river and rising land prices on the riverfront.

The living history of London's boatyards from Tough's boatyard in Teddington to Cory Riverside Energy in Charlton have been captured and documented through oral history interviews for a documentary film.

More info: <https://thamesfestivaltrust.org/our-work/heritage-programme/working-river>



Sherbet Dab - An Oral History of London Cabbies

We worked with two London primary schools, the London Transport Museum, Unite and cabbies themselves to uncover the history and stories from the lives of cabbies. We have explored the history of the taxi from the perspective of the people who have been driving them for hundreds of years but with particular emphasis on those driving today as well as retired cabbies.

Year 6 children from St George the Martyr and Westminster Cathedral Primary Schools worked with historians at the London Transport Museum Depot in Acton to explore the history of the industry. A historian presented this history along with veteran taxi driver Alf Townsend and Unite Education Officer and former cabby Danny Freeman. Members of the London Vintage Taxi Association came along to show the children cabs dating from the 1930s to the present day, also giving them free rides!

The children also met with other cabbies to find out more about their lives and history.

After these workshops and activities the children worked with digital:works to understand oral history techniques and recording. They then

developed interview questions which they used to conduct and record oral history interviews with cabbies.

These interviews have been edited and combined with archive and personal photos as well as archive footage to make a unique and fascinating educational documentary film starring the cabbies.

The children also produced creative and historical written work inspired by the people they meet and their research on the project.

The film was premiered at the London Transport Museum hosted by the children and with an audience of cabbies, historians and the public.

We are grateful to Unite the Union and the Heritage Lottery Fund for financially supporting this project.



Wilfred Salmon and the First Blitz

We worked with Crayford Reminiscence and Youth on this wide-ranging project using Wilfred Salmon as a way of exploring the first blitz, the development of aircraft in WW1, defences against bombing raids and the eventual establishment of the RAF.

<http://wilfredsalmon.crayfordhistory.co.uk/>

They Called it Passchendaele

digital:works worked with Westminster Council and All Souls C of E Primary School to explore and create a film about the various battles around Ypres and Passchendaele during World War One, with particular reference to issues around nursing in those battles. It also includes a piece about Westminster's role in the Coming World Remember Me commemorations.

<http://digital-works.co.uk/history.html>



Saving Samuel Godley

digital:works led workshops with 16 Barrow Hill School students on documentary film-making to look at the life of Samuel Godley who fought at Waterloo and whose gravestone was to be restored.

We ran a 2-day crash course in practical film-making and conducting interviews. Following a systematic step-by-step run-down of the film-making process, 16 children from the Y5 classes were taught about types of equipment, how to use every tool and feature, how to

adapt one's technique to a specific space. The second day the children prepared to interview adults supporting the project. They practiced writing open (rather than closed) questions, and commented on the importance of posture, demeanour and tone of voice. Questions like "How can I show that I'm listening?" were met by insightful answers. We favoured a relaxed approach, making theoretical lessons like principles for composing a shot and the rule of thirds easy to digest. The day ended at the St John's Wood Burial Ground to film interviews around the fallen gravestone. In groups of 4, the children shared responsibility of directing, filming, sound capture and interviewing and producing a successful interview in a supportive way. Their questions were inquisitive and creative, but the resounding enquiry was the same:

"Why should we save Samuel Godley?"

www.stjohnswoodmemories.org.uk/content/category/samuel-godley



Battersea Junction -

Stories from Winstanley and York Road Estates

We have been exploring this history from the perspective of the people who have been living on the estate, whether they are from families who have lived in Battersea for generations, or have moved in more recently.

Year 6 children from Falconbrook Primary School worked with Emma Anthony, archivist from Wandsworth Heritage Service, and a local historian to explore the history of the area, what was there before and why it was built.

After these workshops and activities the children worked with digital:works to understand oral history techniques and recording. They then developed interview questions which allowed them

to conduct and record oral history interviews with current and former residents.

These interviews have been edited and combined with archive and personal photos as well as archive footage to make a unique and fascinating educational documentary film starring local people.

The film was launched at Battersea Arts Centre and featured on Together TV.

The project was funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and Battersea Power Station Foundation.

More info: www.winstanleystories.org.uk



Future Projects

Confirmed projects for 2017/18 include working once more with Westminster Archives on a project about the birth of the NHS; looking at Panjabi Pioneers in Southall with The Asian Health Agency; working with CRAY on the Legend of Hengest, and three of our own projects looking at post-war migration to London, Panjabi Wrestling and dock workers on the Thames.

Financial Report

The independent examination covered the year 6th April 2017 to 5th April 2018.

Our total income for the period was £123,970 [£79,141] made up mainly from Restricted Funds (successful funding applications) consisting of £83,885 [£47,637] accounted for mainly by the London Cabbies project as well as final and first grant instalments for other funded project just beginning and ending their life. Designated Income (commissions) amounted to £38,085 [£28,145]. The balance is made up from voluntary and investment income.

Our total expenditure to date is £92,843 [£102,961] which has mostly been spent directly on costs relating to the HLF funded projects £51,496 [£67,093], the commissions £38,085 [£32,470] and governance costs of £3,262 [£3,398] made up mainly of insurance costs and accountancy fees.

The difference between income and expenditure over the year can be accounted for by projects being funded in one financial year while expenditure takes place in another.

We have no fixed assets as yet so are not affected by depreciation. We have no current liabilities.

Please contact us by email if you would like a copy of the full accounts.

[Last year's figures in brackets]

Trustees

Peter McKenna (Chair)

David Rogers (Treasurer)

Sally Booth

Jenny Donaldson

Workers

Sav Kyriacou

Matthew Rosenberg

Thanks to Peter Daniel and
Pauline Delpratt



Launch of Battersea Junction film at Battersea Arts Centre

digital:works 
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