ARCH
Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands

Creating a Display Module and Other End of Project Outputs

This module facilitates people towards providing outputs to showcase their work. There are several aims:

- Create a display, permanent if facilities exist or temporary if not, which covers the heritage of the subject area from earliest evidence to modern times
- To create an archive of information, including physical binders, electronic copies of sites and features compiled in the previous two modules (oral history and research), and any other formats thought appropriate
- To celebrate all the hard work over the past months, and leave people with a sense of achievement.
- To identify areas where further work could be undertaken. This will be fairly apparent, but by being explicit in a few cases, it might provide the catalyst for the group to continue in some form after the course finishes.

Format: 5x2.5 hr sessions, with some work needed out of class time

Display

It would be easier, faster and arguably better quality simply to do this for the group. However, they would not learn in this way, and would not have the skills to do one themselves in the future. As a result, facilitating this requires focus and a delicate hand. The proposed display here is deliberately low tech, able to be done by people with just basic computing skills.

The area available is dependent on your type of display. If this is to be a permanent display, find out where it is going and ensure display boards are purchased as soon as possible. If a temporary one (and this is more common), choose something that it as lightweight as possible. I tend to use the classic 3 or 4 panel triptych which can be placed on top of each other or separated into two for placing side by side. Orientation is important: if you use one tall one, it takes up less space (good for taking to libraries etc), but it means you cannot use the lower half of the lower panel other than for large pictures.

In the first session discuss **guidelines for good displays**. Ask people to think about signs / displays they have seen which they thought were really good or really bad (there may be some on hand in your venue). There are lots of websites and books devoted to creating display text. I use a handout from the Royal Society which is just one double-sided page (this does not currently seem to be on their website). I go over it with them, focussing especially on word limits and graphics. Rather than state that texts need to be a minimum of 16 point, I have around 100 words of text printed out in 12, 14, 16 and 18 point, with single or 1.5 spacing, and let them suggest what would be best. People quickly realise the compromises needed. You will then agree your style sheet:

- Font sizes (minimum 16, ideally 18 point if you can

- Choose a font – and don't mix, or at least no more than two. Show people a serif and sans serif example, and get them to agree. I like Palatino, but others find this too old fashioned. You can project different fonts so people can choose.
- Avoid white on colour – more expensive to print, and some people have real difficulties reading this.

Next I take a topic and show 50-100 words. I have prepared examples on carved stone balls, but depending on the group, you can also do this with them live on one of their topics. It's important to emphasise just how difficult it is to hone down all the research into 50-100 words. Stress that:

- the text is meant to be a taster so people will feel inclined to read the binder to find out more.
- it is not easy, and some people find this easier to do than others.
- focus on the main questions: who, what, when, where, why– the last being a conclusion on why it is important
- this can be difficult for many people too as their egos will get involved. We will pass attempts round to critique to get different perspectives, and to see ways to hone the words. Emphasise the need for constructive feedback.

Then:

- **Recap the list of topics** identified from the oral history and research modules. Not all will fit on the display, so it's important to flag these topics up for further reference in the binder. Some topics may be grouped together. If you are having a chronological focus (the area through the years), you want to span prehistory to modern times. Most of the work will probably have focussed on modern, so you may have to help guide prehistoric topics. Or you can choose to simply use themes.
- Have individuals or groups choose a topic, look over the pack of information and the transcript, and have them attempt 50-100 words summarising the topic as it relates to the subject area, using who/what/when/where/why. Set a time limit (no more than half an hour).
- Ask for volunteers to read to the full group and critique. If possible project it, so that people are reading it (with 50 -100 words, it should be possible to type this in while people are having their break). You may get only one offer, maybe even none.
- Everyone will remark how difficult it is to leave out information. Offer them the option to write a longer summary for the binder – which can also be scanned and linked by a QR code on the display if they wish. This longer summary can then form the basis for honing down to 50-100 words

Some people will find this exercise too difficult, or not of interest. For these people:

- Ask them to **think graphics**. Every topic needs at least one picture to illustrate. They will have to think laterally – and they will have to think about copyright. Copyright law must be explained (75 years after the person who took the image, drew the sketch, made the graphic, wrote the poem). If the identified image is still in copyright, permission must be sought as soon as possible. In some groups you will find people who will do this themselves, but in others you will have to write the letters. Whoever writes the letters, they should stress it is for a non-profit free community display. Some organisations will provide image

rights for free, others will charge (eg Canmore and National Collection of Aerial Photography) and you may have to rethink depending on the budget.

- Ask them to start **thinking about the binders**. What topics to include, what information in the packs should be kept and which can be discarded. They can work through the packs.
- If this is not of interest, ask them to be proof readers, or to do final touches on some outstanding research. Or let them just continue to share memories – and ask one of them to scribe.

In the subsequent weeks**, work on the texts**. By the end of week 2 you are aiming to have a number ready, and this will identify those who like doing this and are good at it. If necessary, you should write some yourself and bring them in for critiquing or rewriting. This often happens for many of the texts – so practice yourself so that you can churn them out if necessary.

By week 3 ideally you are starting to mock up the displays. I use the community timeline graphics, adding information on both sides, but you can devise your own. You can do text and image separately (useful if you have limited access to colour printer), but for ease it is often good to aim for image and text filling an A4 sheet, in equal parts. Having one topic with one A4 sheet means that should changes be necessary you only have to change the one sheet.

- Ensure all texts are proofread ideally by several people
- Ensure that all fonts and spacing are the same. Some people are better at this copy editing than others.
- Make sure you also write an introduction to the project, and also include a credits panel, with names of everyone who contributed information to the course and the funders. Copyediting definitely needed here.

Weeks 4 and 5 will be production, and there are lots of tasks for people: printing, laminating, cutting panels, cutting Velcro tabs, adding tabs to laminated sheets etc. If possible have a printer at the venue to allow you to print out in the class – ideally a colour one. If not possible, you will have to prepare the signed off sheets ahead of time, and bring them for processing.

If you are doing a temporary display, discuss with people where it might travel after the open day. You will want to find local help here to transport between venues.

Binder

The binder is where you can keep all the work that has been done on the course, and to expand on topics highlighted in the display. At the front of the binder, include printouts of all display panels. After this you need to organise in some way, and include a table of contents. Materials needed:

- a Lever Arch binder because this allows people to add information later. A 4 hole binder will keep the pages more firmly in place.
- Dividers so you can group topics
- Hole punch (2 hole or 4 hole depending on your binder)
- Lots of paper (I always use recycled), and toner cartridges for copying.
- Optional: plastic polypockets will preserve the pages better, but given the number of pages, this takes a long time to process – and environmentally is not ideal.

How many copies of the binder should you produce? You need to discuss this with your group, and come up with a reasonable plan. Things to consider:

- Where will people locally be able to read this?
- Will the location have a good chance of preserving the binder? Local community halls have good access, but are not secure and sometimes a later hall committee decides that it is just taking up space. A café may be good at present, but may not in the future. The Highland Archives on the other hand, will certainly preserve the binder, but access is real issue in terms of distance and opening hours.
- You (the organisation) should also have a copy so that pages can be replaced if necessary.
- Ideally not more than 3 copies, as it is very timeconsuming to make the binders, and if you are going to update, the more copies, the more you have to arrange updating in various locations.

I tend to suggest a local library, and then any other location which people think appropriate.

If you can bring a printer/scanner into the course, you can have some people copying information for the binders while others are writing texts. This only works however, if you agree beforehand how many copies are needed, and if people are very organised with filing.

Electronic outputs

- The signed off transcript from the first two modules should be made into a pdf, and placed on the website. An introductory paragraph will be necessary. You may want to include some maps – and copyright permissions will be needed if so.
- You can put your display as a series of pdfs or pages on a website. There are lots of good examples of electronic displays, and many people use wordpress for this. Again, if you have participants with the skills, they can convert signed off panels.
- QR codes. These need to link to a URL, so you will have to place texts in a suitable location. However, bear in mind that not everyone uses QR codes, so they should only be used for additional material.
- Add relevant information and pictures to heritage databases. This is important because the information on heritage databases is used in planning applications. In the Highland Council area, we use the HER, since this then links to Canmore.
    - Both the Highland HER and Canmore have an area where people can add information or photos for sites already on their database. You can either get people to add the information / pictures themselves, or you may have to do it. If you are having others do it, have a discussion about careful wording – the use of perhaps, probably, local tradition states … etc - and always list sources where relevant. All pictures should have copyright permissions and these should be stated.
    - For new sites, it will be necessary to compile a list for inclusion. For Highland HER, an Access database has been supplied by the HER officer to allow easy transfer, but this generally is outside most people's skill or software. Other ways may be possible if necessary – contact the HER or Canmore in these cases.
    - The transcript can also be submitted to the HER for inclusion.

Celebrating Results

Have an open day where the community and others are invited to look at the display and binders. Things to consider:

- Choose a date which is good for as many participants as possible. Discuss this with your group.
- Choose times that suit working people too.
- Create a number of activities: for example a slide show of all the pictures you have taken, other work in the area, colouring sheets etc. If possible have refreshments.
- Publicise with posters and press releases to the local paper, notes for the school newsletter, social media posts etc. Some participants may help with this, but you may have to write the press release.
- On the day ensure you have a number of helpers: people to help set up and take down, people to help with coffees and teas (and maybe some home baking). Do you want someone to do a launch speech?
- The event will be free, but you can have donation tins which can be used to collect for a local cause or for helping the group to continue. Be clear on the tins what the money will be used for.

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