



digital:works

annual report 2021-22

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

Although 2021-22 was another year affected by COVID-19 we were able undertake projects that were postponed from the previous year, and added to new projects, we were able to complete a full year's worth of work. This year we have continued our production of podcasts. These were initially made largely in response to the restrictions of Covid, but have now developed as part of our practice and archive to give more personal and in-depth insights. As a result, we have been able to reach a wider audience with all our projects. We have also continued to develop our work with volunteers, as outlined in our projects below.

The two main projects that we had pushed back and completed this year were *On The Post – An Oral History of Postal Workers in London* in conjunction with The Postal Museum, and *Reel Stories – An Oral History of London's Cinema Projectionists* with the British Film Institute. The former was a post-SATs project with Year 6 children from St George the Martyr Primary School and the latter with a group of 12 adult volunteers. Both of these projects were funded through successful bids by digital-works to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

We also had two commissions this year, one from the Pothohar Association to train a group of volunteers to film and record oral history interviews with members of their community and for us to edit a film from the results, and another from Westminster Archives to work with young people to interview and film academics, historians and actors in role on the subject of the Cato Street Conspiracy.

During the year we also made another application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to build on our *Push Up Brentford!* project by recording the history of fans from Wimbledon Football Club, whose history within living memory is quite extraordinary and often cited as the Greatest Story in Football. This was successful and we started working with volunteers, Wimbledon in Sporting History and AFC Wimbledon Foundation in January 2022.

So, all in all a very busy year with plenty of positives to look forward to.

I would like to welcome Eshan Puri to our group of Trustees. He has been a volunteer on two digital-works projects and provided support in media promotion to us before joining as a trustee.

Sally Booth, Chair

Review of the Year

digital:works have completed two National Lottery Heritage Funded projects this year, begun another and completed two commissions.



On The Post - An Oral History of London's Postal Workers

With funding for the Lottery Heritage Fund, digital-works worked with Year 6 at St George the Martyr Primary School, The Postal Museum, The Communication Workers Union and older and retired workers themselves to uncover the history and stories from the lives of London's postal workers.

The children worked with historians and archivists at the Postal Museum in Clerkenwell to research this history.

After these workshops and activities the children worked with digital-works to understand oral history techniques and recording. They developed interview questions which they used to conduct and record oral history interviews with postal workers.

These interviews were edited and combined with wonderful archive film footage supplied by the Postal Museum to make a unique and fascinating documentary film starring the workers themselves. The children also produced creative and historical written work inspired by the people they met and their research on the project.

The film, titled "The Postman's Knock" was premiered at the Postal Museum hosted by the children and with an audience of workers, historians and the public and has been broadcast on national TV.

The film, podcasts, full interviews and children's writing can be found on the project website and have also be given to the TUC archives.

www.onthepost.org.uk

Reel Stories

From the date of the first projected film by the Lumiere Brothers in France in 1895 projectionists have been the behind the scenes technical experts locked up in sound proof rooms, the silhouettes occasionally seen as we look back and up from our cinema seats at the little windows from which are projected cinema projectionist the films that have entertained, terrified and beguiled us. The projectors themselves, often Heath Robinson like machines, with film snaking through them, have required great skill and dedication to run. With the recent move to digital projection most cinemas now do not require those skills and we want to record the working lives of projectionists in the heyday of this dying art. We set out to find what type of person becomes a projectionist?

Working with the British Film Institute on the South Bank, this project which is part of our "Working London" series, explored and recorded the history of some of London's cinema projectionists. Working with historians, local archives and digital-works staff, a team of volunteers were trained in research skills, oral history interviewing and recording skills.

The project has recorded 20 wonderful oral history interviews which have been edited to make a documentary film and a series of podcasts. The film was launched at the BFI and broadcast on Talking Pictures TV with screenings taking place at the Rose Theatre in Kingston and the Musical Museum in Brentford.

This project website houses all of the full interviews, the podcasts, the film and covers the progress of the project.

www.reelstories.org.uk





Wombles From The Lane

An Oral History of Wimbledon Football Club

This National Lottery Heritage Funded project focused on an oral history of Wimbledon Football Club at a time when it returned to its home in the London Borough of Merton for the first time in 30 years. Often cited as the greatest story in football, they are the only club to have won both the FA Amateur Cup and the FA Cup. As a non-league club they beat top-flight Burnley in 1975 and took then-current Champions Leeds to a replay in the next round. In 1977 they joined the football league and took just 9 seasons to reach the top flight and beat Liverpool to win the FA Cup just two seasons later in 1988. In 2002 the FA agreed to allow their owners to move the club to Milton Keynes - an unheard of move in British football. The fans joined together and created AFC Wimbledon - A Fan's Club - and started back in non-league in the Combined Counties League Premier Division. Just 9 years

later they made it back to the football league and eventually back to Wimbledon in their new ground in Plough Lane.

Working with historians, local archives and digital-works staff, this project trained volunteers in research skills, oral history interviewing and recording skills.

The project recorded 26 in-depth oral history interviews with fans, volunteers and staff of the club.

These full interviews have been given to Merton Archives, Wandsworth Heritage Service, Wimbledon in Sporting History and Bishopsgate Institute.

The interviews have been edited to make a documentary film and a series of podcasts.

This project page houses all of the full interviews, the podcasts and the film.

www.digital-works.co.uk/wombles/

Commissions

Children of Partition: An Oral History of Pothoharis

Digital-works were commissioned to work with a group of adults to train them in oral history, interviewing, sound and video capture to undertake a series of interviews with Pothoharis in the UK. The main themes were a look back at the events of 1947 with a deep focus on how a community was affected by Partition and their subsequent migration to the UK. Digital-works edited the material into an illuminating documentary Children of Partition: An Oral History of Pothoharis. The film focuses on the Pothohar region of West Punjab and how this community's heritage and culture has been nurtured and cultivated by the generation who came to Britain. This project was commissioned by The Pothohar Association UK and supported by the Heritage Fund.

The Cato Street Conspiracy

The early 19th century was a time of political unrest. Fearing uprisings, Lord Liverpool's government had introduced repressive measures (The Six Acts) to curtail the rights of individuals to gather together and to silence the radical press. It was against this backdrop that the conspirators pieced together a plan to assassinate the cabinet.



The leader of the band was Arthur Thistlewood, a fanatical advocate of progressive policies. He plotted with fellow activists at rented premises in Cato Street, then a rural area in Marylebone. The plan was to storm a dinner party hosted by Lord Harrowby, at which the members of the cabinet would all be present, and slaughter the entire gathering. The vision was to spark off a revolution, creating a fairer society in which all could prosper. But there was a police spy in the group who tipped off the

authorities and the Cato Street meeting place was raided, resulting in the death of a policeman. The conspirators were charged with treason, five were executed and five were transported to Australia.

Digital-works worked with a group of young people to uncover this history by interviewing and filming academics, historians and actors in role. This project was commissioned by Westminster Archives.



Future Projects

Confirmed projects for 2022/23 include a look at the history of Cinema in the London Borough of Kingston; a follow up to our Every Kinda People project with Notting Hill Genesis Housing Association but this time training and supporting adult volunteers to carry out the interviews; a commission from Crayford Reminiscence and Youth to study the English Civil War's impact on their local area and an oral history project exploring working lives at Kings Cross Station.

Financial Report

The independent examination covered the year 6th April 2021 to 5th April 2022.

Our total income for the period was £116,924 [£47,760] made up mainly from Restricted Funds (successful funding applications) consisting of £95,624 [£19,970] accounted for mainly by the Postal Worker, Projectionists and AFC Wimbledon projects. Designated Income (commissions) amounted to £15,900 [£25,590]. The balance is made up from voluntary and management fees.

Our total expenditure to date is £109,151 [£55,033] which has mostly been spent directly on costs relating to the HLF funded projects £79,404 [£49,257], the commissions £27,090 [£3,900] and governance costs of £2,657 [£1,876] which includes 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 (Vice-Chair)

Jenny Donaldson

Eshan Puri [From Dec 2021]

Workers

Sav Kyriacou

Matthew Rosenberg

Mona Carr

Thanks to Peter Daniel



The launch of Postman's Knock at the Postal Museum

digital-works



documenting life-stories through creative participation

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