



# digital:works

---

annual report 2019-20

# 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 2019-2020 has been a busy one which was curtailed rather suddenly with the lockdown. Throughout the year we have continued to initiate our own projects as well as working in collaboration with outside organisations. We resumed our partnerships with The London Transport Museum to work on a film to be shown as part of their Hidden London exhibition and with The Eel Pie Island Museum to create an audio-visual permanent exhibition exploring the history of boatyards on the island.

We have also been working with Camden Council as part of their Camden Alive Arts Project, where we have trained volunteer residents in filming and interviewing techniques and supported them in creating 20 short films depicting something of importance to 20 residents.

We worked on three projects that were initiated and developed by digital:works, one in partnership with Brentford Football Club. This involved working with 16 volunteers to explore the history of the football club from a living memory perspective. This took place during a particularly pertinent time as the club were counting down their final games at their home of 116 years. The result is a fascinating look at how a community club has fought challenges and threats of takeovers, unwanted moves out of the area and financial distress by a multitude of campaigns and supporters organising themselves. A second project was a partnership with the Imperial War Museum to explore the experiences of children being evacuated from London during WWII. This came about because many of the people we had interviewed on other projects had talked about their time as evacuees, we also realised that people with these experiences were getting fewer as the first evacuations were taking place 80 years ago. Another project we initiated was Brewing Stories which explores the working lives of Brewery workers in the three medium and large breweries along the Thames in West London, two of which had already closed down.

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 National Lottery Heritage Fund. We are particularly grateful to the latter for being flexible with the grants and allowing us to continue creating historical material and making it accessible even during lockdown.

**Peter McKenna, Chair**

# Review of the Year

digital:works have run three large National Lottery Heritage Funded projects this year, one with Year 6 children looking at evacuees from London during WWII and another two with adult volunteers exploring the working lives of brewery workers in West London and an oral history of Brentford Football Club. We also had two substantial commissions, one with Camden Council, training residents to make short films about the lives of other residents as part of the Camden Alive arts project and working with London Transport Museum and a primary school to explore the history of Clapham South Deep Shelters which became part of their Hidden London exhibition. We also created films for Eel Pie Island Museum exploring the history of boatyards as part of their permanent display and conducted some oral history and interview training with the African Women Group.

## **Push Up Brentford! - An Oral History of Brentford Football Club**

This project was created to coincide with Brentford Football Club leaving their home of 116 years to move into a new, purpose-built stadium less than a mile away. A very emotional time for fans of the club.

A group of 16 volunteers aged between 16 and 73 (mostly but not entirely fans of the club) were trained in oral history, sound recording and interviewing techniques, conducted historical research at the local archives and were treated to a tour of the club's ground and a history

workshop before developing questions for fans, former players and managers.

They conducted 21 interviews before lockdown and two more when restrictions were lifted. We used lockdown to create a series of seven very well-received podcasts from the interviews collected [an idea that came from one of the volunteers].

Lockdown meant that the project required a time extension to complete the film documentary which was launched at the Water and Steam Museum in Kew in October 2020 to a socially distanced audience. Our partners Brentford FC Community Sports Trust are preparing to take the film into local primary schools and run workshops around the themes it brings up. Bees United - the Supporters Trust - plan to use the film as an integral part of their new permanent exhibition of the history of the club.

[www.pushupbrentford.org.uk](http://www.pushupbrentford.org.uk)





## **Escaping the Blitz - An Oral History of London's WWII Evacuees**

This project was set up to mark the 80th anniversary of the start of Operation Pied Piper, and focused on the experiences of the children who were evacuated from London during WW2. As an oral history, this project captured the memories of those school-aged children who left the capital.

Working with two local archives, the Imperial War Museum, two schools, older people's organisations, a refugees group and historians, this project trained 90 primary school children in heritage research skills, oral history interviewing and recording skills and engaged wide and diverse communities in exploring history.

The project recorded 24 in-depth oral history interviews with Londoners who were evacuated from the capital during World War Two.

These full interviews have been given to the two local archives we are working with at Kensington



& Chelsea and Wandsworth as well as Bishopsgate Institute.

The interviews were edited to make a documentary film that was shown at a launch screening event at the BFI and on Together TV.

We are grateful to RBK&C's City Living, Local Life Fund and the National Lottery Heritage Fund for financially supporting this project.

[www.londonevacuees.org.uk](http://www.londonevacuees.org.uk)



## London Transport Museum - Hidden London film project

We worked with children from Clapham Manor Primary School to make a short film that would be part of the London Transport Museum's Hidden London

exhibition. We trained a group of young people in filming and sound recording while a drama practitioner worked with another group. We then filmed the children playing games and singing songs as if they were living in the Clapham South Deep-level Shelters during the war. They also interviewed each other talking about how they would feel if they were housed there at that time.

We interspersed these recordings with an interview from someone who was housed in the shelters as a little girl.



## African Women Group - Oral History Project

We ran a three day workshop for the African Women Group looking at Oral History, interviewing skills and sound recording. We worked with them to develop questions that would be suitable to gather life-stories from their communities. The plan was to support them during their first few interviews and then work together on creating a radio-style documentary from the recordings to make the material easily accessible but the project was put on hold because of COVID.

## Camden Alive

digital:works worked with a team of volunteers to make 20 short documentary films as part of the Camden Alive festival. We trained 12 local residents in film making and interview techniques and then supported them to conduct interviews with 20 Camden residents. digital:works edited these 20 interviews and ran an editorial session with the volunteers to view the films.

The films were completed but the festival launch was put on hold due to COVID.



## Eel Pie Island Museum

The Eel Pie Island Museum asked us to produce an audio-visual exhibition for their galleries that explores the history of boatyards on Eel Pie Island. We recorded an actor reading from a script and edited this along with music, sound effects, archive photographs and other materials alongside our own footage taken from recent films No Cash, No Splash and Clinging to a Mudflat. We also added to this with newly taken footage to make three short films which are on display at the museum.

## Brewing Stories - An Oral History of West London Brewery Workers

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

The project recorded 33 in-depth oral history interviews with older workers who worked at the Ram (Young's in Wandsworth), Stag (Watney's in Mortlake) and Griffin (Fuller's in Chiswick) breweries.

People told us about the different jobs they did at the breweries - the draymen (delivery men who used horse and carts), and master brewers, working the mashers, the women in the accounts, the coopers, stable hands and packers. Many of those we met spoke of their fathers and grandfathers working for the breweries. They spoke about the wonderful atmosphere of the breweries, the relationships between workers, and also with the owners. These were historically family business. There is also the whole process of making the beer, the milling, the mashing and boiling and lautering, all crucial parts of the process overseen by the master brewer who, increasingly, had input from modern developments in chemistry. Connected



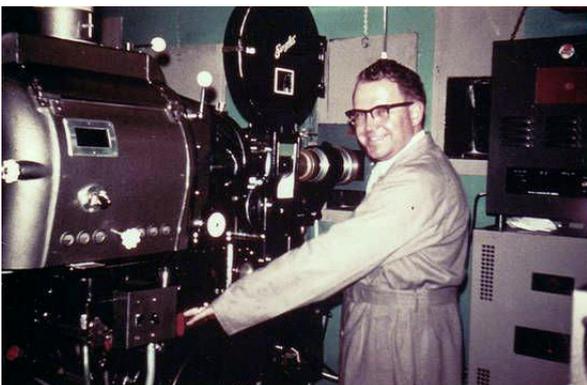
to this there was the bottling process, the coopers making barrels, the kegs, and all the paraphernalia that make up the production process and the range of skilled people involved.

These full interviews have been given to the three local archives we worked with at Wandsworth, Chiswick and Richmond as well as Bishopsgate Institute and the TUC archive.

The interviews have been edited to make a documentary film that was launched at the Fuller's Brewery and shown at various local screenings and broadcast on television.

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

[www.brewingstories.org.uk](http://www.brewingstories.org.uk)



## Future Projects

Confirmed projects for 2020/21 include completing our oral history of Brentford Football Club, a film project with schools looking at an oral history of Postal Workers [now put on hold] and a project with Westminster Archives exploring the Cato Street Conspiracy [postponed for one year]. We are also developing a project about London's Cinema Projectionists.

# Financial Report

The independent examination covered the year 6th April 2019 to 5th April 2020.

Our total income for the period was £130,412 [£117,743] made up mainly from Restricted Funds (successful funding applications) consisting of £98,912 [£91,173] accounted for mainly by the Brewery Workers and Evacuees projects as well as final and first grant installments for other funded project just beginning and ending their life. Designated Income (commissions) amounted to £28,250 [£21,200]. The balance is made up from voluntary and investment income.

Our total expenditure to date is £116,330 [£124,927] which has mostly been spent directly on costs relating to the HLF funded projects £88,659 [£99,510], the commissions £25,750 [£21,200] and governance costs of £1,921 [£4,217] 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

## Workers

Sav Kyriacou  
Matthew Rosenberg  
Mona Carr  
Thanks to Peter Daniel



*The launch of Escaping the Blitz at the BFI*

**digital:works**   
participation through creative media

5 Lyncroft Gardens, London W13 9PU Tel: 020 8354 7349  
info@digital-works.co.uk | www.digital-works.co.uk

Registered Charity No. 1124659