

Notes from the Local History Programming Group First meeting 11th March 2015, Heritage Quay

Attendees: Sarah Harding, Sandra Harling, Hilary Haigh, David Smith, Christine Verguson, Paul Ward

Aims of the Group

The meeting started with a discussion of the aims of the group. DS explained the reasons for setting up the group – to work with people with a passion for local history to programme activities in Heritage Quay, using the University collections and to provide a space for others. Heritage Quay is interested in harnessing the knowledge and enthusiasm of local people and wants to make the archive part of the local history community.

PW commented that he is interested in the sustainability of the programming group – something for the long term that might be worth applying for funding for.

Sandra and CV both talked about the importance of networking with other groups, avoiding clashes and sharing information (for example speakers)

DS will add a slot for a general catch-up into future agendas so on-going work can be shared

CV mentioned that connections between the HQ programming groups could be explored; both Rugby League and Music have connections to local history.

DS explained to the group that the targets are to programme a minimum of 18 events 2015-2017 with at least 600 people attending across all of them. All thought that this could be easily exceeded! There is budget to pay for materials, people to deliver events etc which averages at £750 per event. Discussions also included the next Heritage Quay exhibition which has a general theme of “local buildings”.

Heritage Quay collections

DS gave a general idea of the main local history-related collections;

- Albert Booth Photographic Archive
- Local Politics collections, esp Huddersfield, Denby Dale and Colne Valley
- Hopkinsons/Holsets
- Huddersfield Post Office Archive
- Huddersfield Literary and Scientific Society Archive
- University archive
- St Andrews Society

There are of course other collections/archives which have some connection to the local area such as music, arts and sport.

The rest of the meeting involved discussion of the types of programming, events and activities that HQ could put on to meet the targets. They have been grouped here by type to make it easier to access.

Events and activities

- University – there are really interesting links to Lindley and Mechanics Institutes everywhere. MIs could be a strong theme for work in the future connecting politics, industry and education with local areas.
- DS suggested that HQ would like to host an annual Histories festival starting in 2016. To be discussed in more detail at a future meeting.
- PW suggested a filmmaking event/workshop using photos – audience could be young people. To be explored – PW could you share example to the group of something similar done elsewhere?
- Sarah suggested something on the theme of New/Old images of Huddersfield which was agreed was a great idea and Sandra proposed a timeline approach. DS to explore options, any ideas welcome.
- Mapping – the group were all excited by the idea of maps of Huddersfield and it was felt that a combination of resources as a session at HQ would be interesting and attract an audience. Maps would cover many types and eras, perhaps with a practical element. This could be a weekend event. At the next meeting this will be planned more thoroughly and a date in the autumn identified to run it.
- There was also interest in hosting more theatre at HQ which could be a project or something bought in.
- There was discussion around Robert Blatchford and his Italian roots – Huddersfield and the World or Huddersfield and the 19th Century – as with the Mechanics Institutes – there is perhaps a broader theme to investigate here. This could be an adult workshop instead
- Welcome to Huddersfield – this is where you are for University students, produced by the Programming Group in partnership
- Regular feature in examiner – something from the archives
- Nursing was seen as a potentially interesting theme

Exhibitions

- Exhibition – to be on display July – September/October 2015 – theme loosely ‘local buildings’, action for all is to think about what to put in it from Heritage Quay collections and member’s contributions. Initial thoughts were; Edgar Wood, Archaeology, Local Studies collections and University (perhaps Storthes Hall). A more developed narrative to be discussed (see below). DS mentioned that he has a small pot of money to support a community history project around this which could contribute to the exhibition – perhaps Lindley could be the place to do this. HQ would also run family workshops (LEGO was an initial idea) and an adult learning course/walks/events/film screenings inspired by the exhibition too. The course may be run in partnership or just be developed by the Group.
- CV: Hopkinson’s – museums could lend stuff for an exhibition. DS reported that there is a plan in place for an “Industry” exhibition in the future, where this could be revisited. There may also be work to do for the Programming Group engaging with former Hopkinson’s staff.
- Booth – tie in with Art Gallery they have stuff to display too.

- Sandra mentioned that her choir Huddersfield Voices used to be a Methodist choir and SH said that Local Studies/archives have a big Methodist collection too. There is definitely potential to draw these together in a programme (and as part of the non-Conformist exhibition scheduled for 2017).

Adult learning workshops

- Palaeography
- Explore links with U3As. Sarah to provide contact point for Huddersfield U3A to DS
- Beginners historical researcher course
- History of Chemistry – Robert Brown – PW to investigate
- Oral history course – PW keen on the idea of a course that is about short interviews and that practical advice of what to do with them.
- ‘Putting on an exhibition workshop’ – which could involve doing live exhibition curation. This would be as a course for those interested in putting on their own exhibitions
- Creating a website

Other

- Use groups’ mailing list to advertise events/activities – a big potential audience for activities can be reached.
- Regular column in the Examiner for HQ
- DS asked the members of the group to feel free to invite others to contribute; individuals or representatives from other groups will be more than welcome at future meetings. They should contact DS directly d.smith@hud.ac.uk

In summation, there are some clear priorities to take forward in the short term:

- Exhibition. This will be the focus of the next meeting. Ideally, by the end of that session the group will have created an outline narrative and a set of actions for object selection and text writing and have a series of ideas for supporting events/activities for DS to take forward. This includes an adult learning short course on the theme of the exhibition.
- Films from photographs – PW to provide information on other example(s) to DS to look into for programming in Autumn
- Mapping day – all to think about what they could contribute or what the focus of the day should be about.

The next meeting will be 5-7pm on a Wednesday, date tbc – ideally May. Choices are: 6th, 13th or 20th May. Let DS know which is best by end of March