

Project facilitating

One of the things we soon discovered was that getting the right personnel to deliver elements of the project was essential. This was particularly true when multi media and digital skills were needed. A small set of practitioners was found to be the best way forward. This creates it's own management tasks but the benefit far outweighs the extra work involved.

Links

Our main web site is
www.ourhistories.oysterproject.org.uk

the charity's web site is
www.oysterproject.org.uk

The film Time Slip can be viewed on
YouTube at
www.timeslip.oysterproject.org.uk

Our email contact is
admin@oysterproject.org.uk

Postal address is c/o Town Hall, High
Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN72QS



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Who we are

The Oyster Project Charity

We are a small self help, peer-to-peer charity founded and run by people with disabilities based in Lewes, East Sussex, UK

Our emphasis is on volunteering and self determination

Our aim with the Heritage Lottery Funded project, Our Histories, Our Heritage, was to explore the heritage of disability in distinct areas and then to create new heritage material based on that research which could inform and educate a wide audience.

Our film Time Slip won its class in the Oska Bright International Film Festival (Brighton), won a class award in the Sit Down and Watch Film Festival in New South Wales, Australia, has toured the UK with the Oska Bright Road Show. It is available to view on YouTube and our project web site.



Setting up and
running a heritage
research project
for people with
disabilities.

Preparation and planning - look to the detail



Preparation

Before you start on any project preparation will pay off. This is especially true if you are starting a heritage research project with people who have a range of disabilities.

Access

Obvious but often overlooked. Can your researchers actually get to the resources they will need? If not what are the alternatives? Don't compromise, be realistic.

Session times

Long sessions can create group and individual fatigue especially if members have health and stamina issues. Pace the sessions, 45 mins works, - half day workshops too.

Timetabling

We found it really important to have a regular time tabled session structure. We then added special workshops for all or part of the group as needed.



Planning

For many people using texts, paperwork, reading, writing, note taking and creating written records may not be part of their life experience. However this should not prevent them from taking a full part and making a full contribution. Our work found that using newspapers and photographs, images and films were a good way to get started. We then talked about ways to create documents other than text. We created large A2 mind maps in brain storming workshops, cartoons can be used if you have a group member who can draw a simple matchstick person. The Bayeux Tapestry is as much a heritage document as Magna Carta!



The Team

From the outset our aim was to create a team, a group of people who could collaborate, share ideas and create. This is rather like a company of players in the theatre or a close knit sports team, all for one, one for all! This really paid off when the group decided they wanted to express their research through drama and then to make a film. In some ways this team making element took precedence at first over the research for without it the research and final outcomes would not have been so successful. This was reinforced by feedback from the research group members who all felt included and able to have a say.