



Tyne & Wear Heritage Forum

engaging communities in the conservation of their local heritage

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

Introduction: the period covered has seen the impact of Covid 19 with the need to curtail normal meetings and activities. It was therefore a question of finding new ways to encourage heritage support. As the accounts for 2020-21 shows the Forum received no income and spent just £75, leaving a balance at 1 April 2021 of £1,292.57.

It is to the considerable credit and hard work of Joanna Pullen our secretary and Amanda Cuskin, committee member and later secretary (succeeding Joanna) that we were able to develop the successful activities described below. It has meant that instead of shutting down, TWHF has been able to move into new areas, working with a new set of people, not -as previously - associated with a particular history or heritage group but rather working as individuals or groups of friends.

Make your own personal heritage trail, September 2019

The sketch below and text beside it, were the first resources used to promote 'making your own heritage trail'. This activity proved popular for people only allowed during the first wave of the pandemic to take a single hour of exercise each day. A special website was set up www.myheritagetrail and a number of personal trails recorded based in Northumberland, Newcastle or County Durham. To show the export potential of a scheme of this kind, one personal heritage trail came from the port of Le Havre in France.

Make Your Own Heritage Trail

'A person creates their own heritage trail, drawing on a place they know well, providing their own take on the heritage and historic features, explaining why they like them. Possible here too, to include places with a special family connection, places directly associated with their past – the house where they were born, the school they went to with old photographs to show this connection and give life to the experience.'

'My Heritage Trail' proved popular with some doing more than one trail. The list of trails currently available on the website is as follows:

- *Neville and Margaret's 3 Trails: Seaton Sluice (see above); Old North Shields and Tynemouth.*
 - *Joanna and Mark's Ovingham Trail*
 - *John's Lanchester Trail*
 - *Geoff's Old Colliery Railway Trail (Angel of the North area)*
 - *Monica's Penshaw Monument and Herrington Park Trail*
 - *Henry and Zelia's Le Havre, France Trail*

- John D.'s Doddington Trail, North Northumberland
- Dom and Margaret's Washington Trail
- Amelie and Alex's Jesmond Trail

This very positive response was partly due to covid restrictions during lockdown. It was clear, however that



there is a place for people, making up their own heritage trail, instead of following existing trails. Selecting for their personal trail not just a significant local heritage

feature which helps give identity to a place but also, introducing those places which have particular importance to a person as part of their own personal heritage. Instead of the rather dry explanations found on information boards or in guide books of trails- 'on your left you will find a statue of ...' This can become a personal trail- 'This is a statue I really like, as a child my Mum used to bring me here, to sit in the park to enjoy a sunny morning and feed the ducks.'

The question became, how to further develop the concept of personal heritage trails, perhaps linking the idea to existing heritage and history groups as a way for them to further develop their role. Going out and making up their own heritage trails would be a way to identify significant local heritage features which give a particular identity to a place with the need sometimes to ensure they survive. This might be a way to start up new history or heritage groups with individuals going out to identify important local features and those associated with their own personal histories.

TWHF work with Northumberland Libraries

January 2021 development of 'In My Footsteps' Project.



One of the problems for TWHF has always been how to promote and publicise the work to have communities identify and protect significant local heritage features. Libraries are an important history and heritage resource for local communities and the chance to work with Northumberland Libraries with Diane Wright, senior librarian and Kate Saint Claire Gibson, local studies director was very welcome.

A webinar was set up with Northumberland Libraries and I was able to give a wellreceived talk about personal heritage trails and the concept of extending this project to involve senior citizens particularly at a time when many grandparents had not had the chance to see grandchildren.

This developed into '*In my footsteps*' a project which received funding as one of a number of chosen schemes as part of the 'Northumberland Caring Community Project'. Initially this was about setting up a pilot scheme with Ashington and Haltwhistle chosen as communities to develop this project. While the idea was to focus on people with dementia or learning difficulties it became evident that it was better to be more inclusive and to extend the project to anyone wishing to participate. Heritage Trails were held in Ashington and Haltwhistle, followed by workshops in the libraries of these communities. We are now looking to extend the project into other areas and to develop the scheme across Northumberland, seeking further funding through the 'Northumberland Caring Community Project'.

Many older members of the community have had to isolate themselves during the pandemic, their lives limited to what they can see out of their window. But they have a story to tell..... by retracing their lives with them, we are able to follow in their footsteps.



Conclusion

During very difficult times it has proved possible to continue TWHF work. in the next year we will attempt to meet up again – probably virtually - to discuss ways forward, perhaps refocusing the charity to reflect recent changes and developments in our work.

Accounts 2020-21

Tyne and Wear Heritage Forum					Cash Account																						
Month	Date	Cheq No/ref	In	Out	Balance at Bank	Credits due	Description																				
					£ 1,367.57																						
Dec	18 th			£ 75.00	1292.57		BALH membership																				
Summaries			£ -	£ 75.00	1292.57																						
<table><tr><td>01/04/19</td><td>£</td><td>1,367.57</td><td>Opening Balance</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td>£</td><td>-</td><td>Income</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td>£</td><td>75.00</td><td>Expenditure</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>31/03/20</td><td>£</td><td>1,292.57</td><td>Closing Balance</td><td></td></tr></table>								01/04/19	£	1,367.57	Opening Balance			£	-	Income			£	75.00	Expenditure		31/03/20	£	1,292.57	Closing Balance	
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John Daniels

Chair

Tyne and Wear Heritage forum 23 December 2021