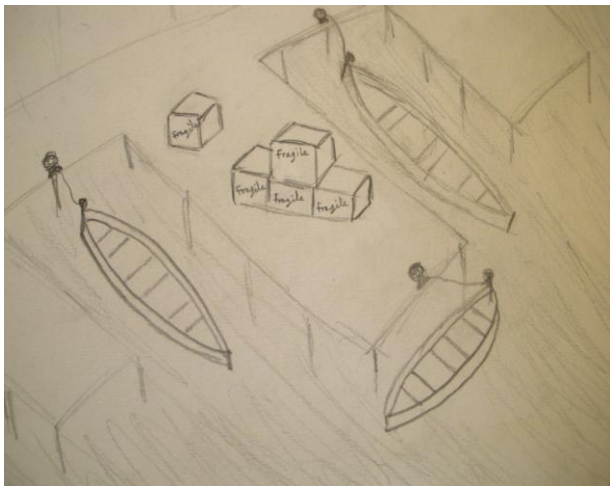


Your Heritage and Young Roots Final Evaluation Report



River Rhymes and Voices

(Project number: YH-08-18758)

September 2010

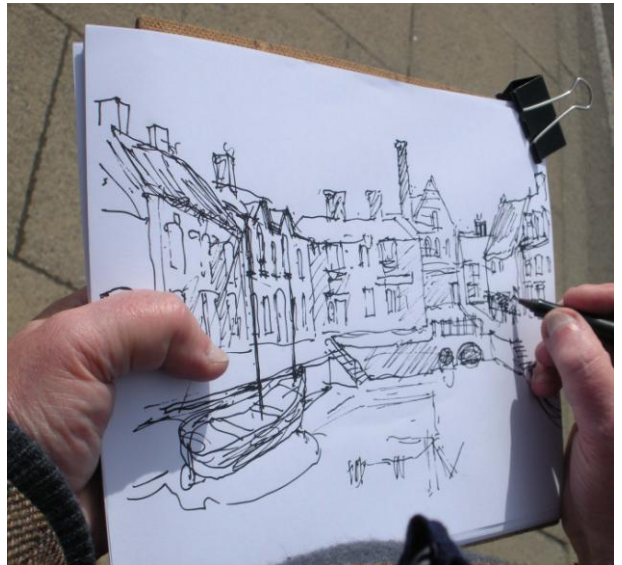
1. Executive Summary

“I have learnt so much about the the (river) Cam, I can't believe that there are so many interesting things about the Cam and we are grateful to experience them”

“I have learned how to interview elderly people to get them to tell us their stories of Ramsey”

“We heard so many interesting stories of the old people's lives”

“The project has been amazing and it has been great fun! I would recommend anyone to take part”



This is a summary of the River Rhymes and Voices project carried out by Shape East (The Architecture and Built Environment Centre for the Eastern Region) between September 2009 and October 2010. (To see a summary of project photographs see Appendix 1 at the end of the project.

1.1 Project Conception

The idea for the 'River Rhymes and Voices' project evolved through discussion with young people, teachers, local museum services, historians and our local archaeological services contacts. In these discussions young people talk about how they access the river for leisure, transport, hobbies etc. but repeatedly conclude that they know little about how the history of their local rivers (and particularly the Bury Brook, the Great Whyte and river Cam). A detailed creative project was planned that would enable students to use a range of creative methods and media to explore the history of their local rivers and where students would have the opportunity to talk to local elderly people to learn first-hand stories of the river, which would be recorded to create an audio heritage record for distribution in the region.

1.2 Through the creative project we planned to:

- Carry out a creative project in two contrasting areas in the region; a city school in the centre of Cambridge (Parkside School) near the river Cam and a rural school in the small market town of Ramsey (Ramsey Abbey College) to enable students to explore the history of their local rivers through dedicated 'heritage clubs' out of school time (after school and during holiday) which students would attend (at least 40 students aged 12-15)
- Use the exploration of local heritage to enable students to learn new skills in a range of media, including interview techniques, research, sketching, record taking, audio editing, team work, written and performance poetry
- Bring students and local elderly residents together to create an audio record of the project
- Take students on relevant trips (at least 2 per school) to explore their local heritage first hand
- Create an audio record of the project for wide distribution in the two areas to share the elderly peoples stories and the students performance poetry inspired by the rivers

1.3 Who we worked on the River Rhymes and Voices project with

A dedicated Project Manager was recruited to manage the project throughout its deliver, who began by working closely with schools and project partners to create a comprehensive programme and timetable for the project. Although we were successful in signing up the school for the Ramsey element of the project (Ramsey Abbey College) the process of recruiting students for the Cambridge part of the project (from Parkside School) was a slow and frustrating process which meant that it was difficult to set a start date for the heritage events in Cambridge. After many meetings with the school it was decided that we would also try and recruit students from Coleridge School in Cambridge, in an attempt to increase the number of students we worked with. Although this would provide challenges with splitting the project between the two sites, it enabled us to begin the delivery of the project in Cambridge.

We delivered a range of creative and bespoke workshops with a range of activities with the 3 schools taking part in the project, these included:

- Historical quizzes
- Using a range of historical records to learn about the past
- Working with a local artist and historian to make observational drawings of the rivers today to compare with historical documents to identify how they have changed over time and to learn new art skills
- Working with an archaeologist to create visual time lines and handle historical artefacts
- Training with lead Journalist from the Guardian newspaper to learn the skills necessary for interviewing elderly residents and recording the information (and to gain confidence in communicating)
- Taking a boat trip on the Cam with 26 local elderly residents to learn more about the history of the river and to interview the elderly for the heritage record
- Planning content for a heritage recorded (and CD)
- Working with the UK Slam Poetry Champion to turn the historical knowledge learnt into modern poetry and learning how to best perform this poetry to an audience and for the record
- Learning from an MC Rap artist (and Music editor) how to edit their poems and create performance rap from their heritage knowledge
- Visit the Denver Sluice in Norfolk to explore how the fenland water ways have been managed over time
- Interview local elderly residents in their homes in Ramsey

1.4 The number of people heritage has reached as part of the project

The River Rhymes and Voices project was about the quality of the experience and the heritage engaged in by the individuals taking part in the project, rather than the number of participants, but we were delighted that we managed to significantly increase the number of people we originally planned to work on the project with, therefore increasing the number of people actively engaged in their local heritage.

Project participants	Proposed number	Actual number
Young people (aged between 12 -15)	40	54
Elderly people	20	48
Role models: Archaeologists/historians/museum staff:	8	9
Local authority Planners:	2	2
Artist (Poet/ Cartographer):	2	2
Recording artist:	2	1
Shape East Staff:	4	4
Performance event:	94	66
Local school representatives	10	8
Family:	60	48
Project staff:	4	4

Decision makers/youth workers/LA Officers	20	6
Audience for CD (Circulation):		
Young people and their family	80	140
Elderly and their family	60	60
Sheltered schemes in the area	20	48
Decision makers	30	28
Local youth and community workers	20	20
Secondary schools in Cambridge	114	120
Community venues	20	20
Libraries	52	Unknown to date
Museums	2	2
Local population	200	200

1.5 What worked well on the project (A summary)

- Planning the project in detail and the constant review carried out ensured that we were able to ensure high quality delivery and activities for participants
- Evaluation carried out backed up our understanding that a particular success of the project was the broad range of experts we used. We were fortunate to enlist the services of, amongst others, the UK Slam Poetry Champion, a lead Journalist from the Guardian Newspaper, a lead UK Rap artist, local authors and journalists, archaeologists and respected experts. This communicated different methods using a range of different styles and practical workshops which kept the students interest and allowed them to explore the heritage through a range of different media.
- Using new media (recording, slam poetry, editing, rap and performance) to engage the students to new and interesting styles of collecting information and communicating heritage
- By providing a range of trips and outings throughout the project's course we were able to introduce students to areas they had not visited before and of whose' heritage had not been previously considered. These trips also help to keep student's interest
- By ensuring that students had a through groundwork in heritage before they began to interview the elderly residents it meant that the dialogue between the two generations was more meaningful and appreciated as the students better understood, could better relate to the stories they were listening to and could ask relevant questions of the elderly residents

1.6 What didn't work well and why

- Liaising with busy school to get dates agreed so that guest speakers could be signed up, venues booked and risk assessments carried out
- Working with students from 2 schools in Cambridge at the same time and co-ordinating creative workshops so that all students could attend

1.7 Summary of lessons learnt

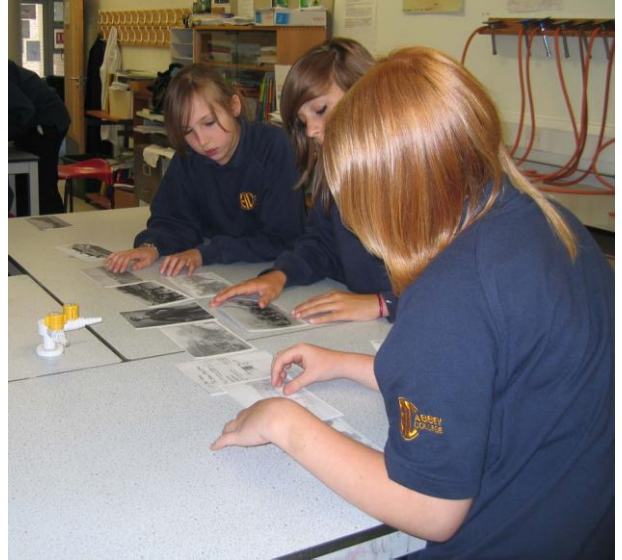
The evaluation taken place for the River Rhymes and Voices project has shown that the project was a great success, benefiting a large number of people and bringing heritage to communities who would not normally engaged with the subject.

The following summarises the lessons we have learnt and what we might do differently next time

- The biggest lesson learnt for Shape East (and the schools) by taking part in the project is that how much more engaged young people are in heritage issues if they can relate or engage with the media the heritage is presented in. By using journalist skills, audio recording, rap, computer editing, poetry and performance the students were fully engaged in heritage, whilst gaining new skills and trying new things for themselves

Shape has always used a range of creative methods to engage young people but this has primarily been design, art and model making. This project has given us the evidence (and confidence) necessary to try out alternative and new media in the future with young people

- For a future heritage project we will be more involved with the schools in the initial recruiting of students for the project, to ensure we get the numbers hoped for and that the students are fully informed of what they will be doing during the projects course
- We would be more persistent with local press in getting newspaper coverage for the project. We tried on many occasions to get interest from local newspapers, who expressed initial interest but then did not cover the stories we had provided information for
- We would perhaps restructure the timetable of workshops (if possible) so that some of the more 'exciting' elements of the project happen towards the beginning of the project to help maintain the interest of the students for the longer term. This was something we learnt as the project evolved and would be considered in future project planning



1. The project: its aims, why we wanted to do it and the difference we hoped it would make

1.1 Why we wanted to do the River Rhymes and Voices project

Background

Education workshops we carry out in the region with young people often highlight the limited knowledge and engagement young people have in the history of their local area. (They can often talk about The Great Pyramids or Ancient Greece but not the history of the local area in which they live). This limited knowledge is not through lack of interest or enthusiasm to find out more about local heritage, but rather a lack of opportunity to be engaged in the subject (particularly outside of formal education setting)

Project's conception

The idea for the 'River Rhymes and Voices' project evolved over six months through discussion with young people, teachers, local museum services, historians and our local archaeological services contacts. In these discussions young people talk about how they access the river for leisure, transport, hobbies etc. but repeatedly conclude that they know little about how the history of the rivers and the historical influence they have had on the area they live. Within these discussions, teachers and youth providers highlight the lack of good teaching resources on local heritage with reference to rivers.

In discussion with local historians, schools and young people (via their teachers) the rivers Bury Brook, the Great Whyte and Cam were identified as rivers with great potential for delving into their heritage.

Similar heritage projects we have run with young people (including a Young Roots project supported by HLF in 2007) and public consultation in the region have repeatedly shown the benefits (to both parties) of bringing elderly residents and young people together to create an oral record of stories passed on through generations. It was decided therefore, as part of the project to devise an element of the programme where young people interview local elderly residents to understand their valuable history.

Our research into the popularity amongst young people of 'Performance poetry' (and in discussions with the 'UK Slam Poetry Champion) showed the great potential of using performance poetry to express the heritage findings of the young people to share with others in the community and create a lasting audio heritage record.

1.2 The aims of the project

The aims of the River Rhymes and Voices project were to:

- Undertake a creative and thought-provoking heritage project engaging students on holiday schemes to expand their local heritage knowledge and thus respect for their area its people
- Engage students in the physical, commercial and cultural heritage of the Bury Brook and the River Cam, in their historical changes and influence on their surroundings
- Provide students with research tools and skills to explore this and further heritage
- Promote inter-generational understanding and respect through heritage information sharing and story-telling sessions with elderly residents
- Creatively engage students to express their heritage findings to the wider community through both live poetry performance and poetry recordings
- Produce an audio CD/booklet combining students' poetic summaries and elderly people's stories to orally record tales of the rivers' cultural and historic heritage before such information is irretrievable
- Create a downloadable online education pack supporting and encouraging educators to utilise and explore their local heritage with students
- Forge new partnerships between Shape East and regional heritage and youth organisations
- Establish a project with the flexibility for future re-use
- Raise the profile and enjoyment of local heritage issues for a younger audience

1.3 What we planned to do

We planned to:

- Carry out a project at in two contrasting areas in the region; a city school in the centre of Cambridge (Parkside School) near the river Cam and a rural school in the small market town of Ramsey (Ramsey Abbey College). The schools were chosen for the geographical location to very contrasting rivers and for a show of enthusiasm from both the students and teachers (and senior school staff) for the opportunity to explore local heritage and to pass their findings on to others

- Create dedicated 'heritage clubs' out of school time (after school and during holiday) which students would attend (at least 40 students aged 12-15)
- Use the exploration of local heritage to enable students to learn new skills in a range of media, including interview techniques, research, sketching, record taking, audio editing, team work, written and performance poetry
- Bring students and local elderly residents together to create an audio record of the project
- Take students on relevant trips (at least 2 per school) to explore their local heritage first hand
- Recruit a dedicated member of staff to oversee the River Rhymes project
- Allow students the opportunity to meet and benefit from a wide range of experts, research and opinion and to be able to question this information
- Create an audio record of the project for wide distribution in the two areas to share the elderly peoples stories and the students performance poetry inspired by the rivers
- Create teaching resources based on the project for teachers throughout the whole country to access via the Shape East web site
- Establish a project which could be carried out with other schools and groups of students in the future
- Forge new partnerships between Shape East and heritage and educational organisations and providers in the region with the aim of sustaining these relationships over longer term
- Gain any press coverage for the project to help promote the work of Shape East, the schools and the Heritage Lottery Fund

1.4 What difference we expected the project to make

We expected that River Rhymes and Voices would make a difference to the people involved in the project in different ways as described below:

Students (In Cambridge and Ramsey)

- Heritage
Through the project we hoped the students involved to gain a better understanding and appreciation for their local heritage and in particular the importance roles that 2 very different regional rivers have played in the history of the areas in which they live. Talking to some of the students before the project start it was startling to learn that not only had they very limited knowledge of the history of their local rivers but in many cases they had never visited the rivers, even though they are both very geographically close to their schools.

- New skills

The exploration of local history, we expected would also provide a vehicle for gaining skills in a broad range of new subjects and media which the students had not been involved in before. We thought that it would be very different to explore local history through Slam Poetry, art, journalism and rap, which would allow for a very different and interesting expression of our heritage.

"I never thought that I would write and perform a poem about a river- I've never done that before, it was really cool" Young person (aged 14) from Parkside School

"There were Woolly Mammoths living by the Cam?! I can't believe it" Young person (aged 14) from Parkside School

"I'm not very good at art but it is interesting to draw the buildings (in the High Street) as they are today and hear at the same time about how they were in the past – the river used to run right under our feet, look that pub is called the 'Jolly Sailor, I didn't think why that was before" Young person (aged 13) from Ramsey Abbey College

- Inter-generational understanding

We hoped that by participating in the project students would have a better understanding and appreciation of the role of the elderly people in their communities and their outlook of the elderly. Many students we talked to before the project start indicated a nervousness and reluctance to want to meet elderly people as they perceived them as so very different to themselves.

"I am really nervous about talking to the old people, what if they don't understand what I am saying or don't want to talk to me, they may think I hang around on the streets and want to mug them" Young person (aged 13) from Ramsey Abbey College

- Difference to the way we see and interpret our surroundings

We expected the project to inspire students to look at and interpret their surroundings differently as a result of the project. With the help of local historians, authors and archaeologists taking part in the project we hoped that students would be able to look for clues in their local areas to help them interpret and understand the past.

Local elderly residents

We expected the River Rhymes and Voices project to make a difference to local elderly residents in the way that they perceive students and to inspire them to tell their stories. By bringing together the two generations we hoped that we would inspire a better understanding between the two generations and better appreciation for their roles in society.

"I don't mind talking to them (the students) but I'm not sure that I really have anything of interest to tell them that they would want to hear" Ramsey Resident (aged 80)

“We don’t mind a group coming to the home as long as they are very respectful and well behaved, they will be won’t they?”

Ramsey Resident (aged 79)

The schools

We expected/hoped that the project would make a difference to the schools taking part in the project that they would feel confident to arrange after/outer school activities with external education providers in the future and would see the benefit of their students interacting with their local heritage in different ways.

Through the partnerships involved between Shape East and the schools we hoped that by carrying out the project in a professional and well constructed way that it would give the schools the confidence to work with Shape again in the future.

Shape East

Through carrying out the River Rhymes project Shape hoped that it would provide us with a range of new project partners and contacts and would allow us to carry out a project which would make a difference to a broad of individuals taking part and the general public in the form of a lasting audio record.

Local heritage/ the public/CD

Although the project will not make a physical impact on the history/heritage of Ramsey or Cambridge we hoped that the CD produced at the end of River Rhymes and Voices would provide local people and visitors to the area with a better understanding of the history of their local area and encourage them to visit the rivers and to explore their surroundings for themselves.

2.5 The story of change behind our project

The River Rhymes and Voices project explores the history of change in two areas which are geographically close but very different in their history.

The Bury Brook and Great Whyte River, Ramsey

The Bury Brook is an extremely unique river, as it runs underneath this small, fenland town. The 1883 constructed town clock remains visible, originally powered by water from the river when Ramsey was an island reliant on the surrounding waters for sustenance. In the 1850’s Ramsey boasted the largest inland lake in the UK until the London-Edinburgh railway was built and part of the lake and river subsequently drained and culverts introduced. Local pub names, ‘The Jolly Sailor’, ‘The Ship’ and ‘The Boat Inn’ reflect the vital role of the river in the town’s formation.

The River Cam, Cambridge

This river has always been a vital and vibrant waterway and was key to the growth and success of Cambridge city. In the 1950’s its use shifted from primarily one of trading and transport to recreation and residential use. This project focuses on the 2km ‘Middle River’ stretch of the Cam, from Jesus Lock to Granta Pool, an area inclusive of ‘The Backs’, where several University Colleges back onto the river. Yet in addition to this historic interest, this river area holds many more fascinating secrets, such as a submerged towpath and many remnants of Cambridge’s more industrial heritage.



2. What actually happened

2.1 Project Management

A. Planning

Extensive and detailed initial planning took place before the start of the project in consultation with all of the project partners, the schools and the Shape East team. We spent some time talking to some of the students who would take part in the project in the planning stages of the project in order to determine their prior knowledge and areas of particular interest in their local heritage. This was useful in ensuring that the project plan was comprehensive, of interest to all taking part and allowed for the most in-depth exploration of local heritage as possible.

Through Shape's extensive experience in carrying out similar education and heritage projects we understood the importance of planning our project as detailed and comprehensively as possible. The time spent on initial planning allowed for a fluid and thorough project to take place.

B. Staffing

A new position was advertised for a Project Manager to carry out the River Rhymes and Voices project (being overseen by the Head of Projects at Shape). The position was advertised in local newspapers, on arts job web sites and the Guardian newspaper. A number of applicants responded to the advertised position and 5 candidates were interviewed. After a second interview a Project Manager, with a great deal of relevant experience in this field was appointed to lead the River Rhymes and Voices project alongside the current Shape East team.

C. Timetable

The Timetable for the River Rhymes project was created at the beginning of the project in consultation with all of the project partners and after many meetings with the 3 schools involved. The organisation of the timetable was very time consuming with unexpected changes to the timetable by the schools, often at late notice. This was difficult in terms of booking speakers, carrying out risk assessments, booking venues and organising student's time. The timetable was kept fluid and flexible and kept up to date on a regular basis.

2.2 Recruitment of students and planning with the schools

The initial planning and development stage of the project took much longer than initially anticipated. As we had gained a commitment from the two schools we had aimed to work on the project with during the application to the Heritage Lottery with we hoped that the initial planning and recruiting of students would be a relatively quick and easy process.

Cambridge schools

In our initial planning meetings (once we had the project go-ahead from the HLF) with Parkside School in Cambridge it was agreed that the school would set up a 'heritage club' especially for the project which would run every Tuesday after school. Although Shape provided written advertisements/promotional material for distribution at the school initial interest and sign up by students was very low. This was very frustrating as the school did not appear to be working very hard to recruit or encourage the students. (This is not a failing of enthusiasm by the school Teachers but simply a lack of available time and resources).

This process of recruiting students for the Cambridge element of the project was a slow and frustrating process which meant that it was difficult to set a start date for the heritage events in Cambridge. After many meetings with the school it was decided that we would also try and recruit students from Coleridge School in Cambridge, a partner school to Parkside.

Although this would provide challenges with splitting the project between two different school campuses it enabled us to recruit more students so that a start date could be set for the project and the project could be planned as a whole which enabled us to begin to plan content for individual sessions, approach experts, plan trips (and risk assessments) and do an overall project plan for the year.

Ramsey school

Following discussions with Ramsey Abbey College it was agreed that we would work with a whole class of students (aged 13) for the length of the project both in school time and as part of a holiday club. Although the school were extremely enthusiastic and dedicated to River Rhymes and Voices it was difficult to get dates agreed for project events at the school as the students were tied into the curriculum. After many meetings and discussion a timetable was agreed upon with a start of 2 days in the school's holiday.

Timetable

As the initial stages of the project evolved it was obvious that for the Ramsey element of the project we would need to be flexible in our timetabling. This was frustrating as it created problems in setting up events but was unavoidable as the school are extremely busy.

Staffing

Two members of Shape East staff were present at each of the planned workshop days with a third member of staff attending where a higher staff/young person ration was needed. We were fortunate with Parkside and Coleridge school to work with the same teachers for the entire length of the project, this allowed continuity and an efficient means of communicating which was necessary for the projects progress.

With the Ramsey side of the project the school staffing changed frequently which was difficult and did not allow for fluid continuity as it was necessary to brief each new Teacher we worked with.

3.3 The project: What we did

The following describes the workshops activities we carried out as part of the River Rhymes and Voices project. (It does not describe the extensive background project planning that went into planning each activity and stage of the project)

<p>September '09 – March 2010 8</p>	<p>Created an advertisement, job description and information pack in order to advertise for a Project Manager for River Rhymes and Voices</p> <p>Advertised position in local newspapers, on arts jobs web sites and in the Guardian newspaper</p> <p>Regularly met with Ramsey Abbey College and Parkside in order to recruit students and to establish plans and timetables for the project. During this time it became apparent that we would have to work with a second school in Cambridge in order to gather the numbers of students we wanted to work with. Meetings with Coleridge school followed which resulted in the school signing up to the project and students recruited. For all students recruited letters were written to parents to gain permission for their children to take part in the project.</p> <p>Met with local history experts and organizations to plan content for workshops events</p> <p>Carried out project research for focus, locations and content for project</p> <p>Activity workshop 1 and 2 (Ramsey) Introduced the project to the students, used a range of activities and creative design activities to explore the history of world rivers and there function. Two external speakers from the Olympic Park development visited to engage young people in the way that the use of the river has changed dramatically over time. Students explored the past of the river in Ramsey and the two local railway stations.</p>
<p>April '10</p>	<p>Activity workshop1 (Parkside and Coleridge) Introduction activities for the whole project and discussion with students as to the content for the project and they kind of historical information they would like to find out as part of the project.</p> <p>Students worked in teams to take part in a heritage quiz which asked them to match answers to questions all relating to the history of the Cam and its surrounding area. This allowed us to find out the level of the student's prior knowledge and to identify specific aspects of the river's history which was of particular interest to them.</p> <p>This activity showed that although the students had quite a good knowledge about the geography of the River Cam, their historical</p>

	<p>knowledge was very limited. Discussions also indicated that 30% of the students at the workshop had not visited the river before, even though it is only a fifteen minute walk from Parkside school.</p> <p>Activity workshop 2 (Parkside and Coleridge) This workshop aimed to give students an introduction to the river Cam and its history by walking along the river with artist and historian Jon Hariss. Students made observational drawings of the river today and listened to Jon talk about its history.</p> <p>Workshop 3 (Ramsey) This workshop focused on the history of the Bury Brook and its surrounding area. Students spent the activity day with a local historical expert who is responsible for the tunnels which now run under the high street which were created when the river's course was changed and which formed a major change in the water ways of the area. The project participants were able to look at a range of historical documents, images and photographs to see how parts of the river have changed in the past.</p> <p>Workshop 4 (Ramsey) During this activity workshop the students in Ramsey spent the day with historian, author and artist Jon Hariss. A leisurely walk around the area allowed participants to see what the area is like today, what it was like in the past, how it has evolved and changed and what has caused these changes. (The evolution of the river has changed many things about the area including its economy, its look, its function and its surrounding buildings).</p> <p>Students learnt how to sketch buildings and make observational drawings whilst looking at maps and historical documents to notice changes in the area. Following a picnic by the river, students returned to the school to use their drawings to create collage of the river and its surrounding buildings.</p>
May '10	<p>Activity workshop 3 (Parkside and Coleridge) During this workshop students worked with historical records from the Cambridge Collection and local Archaeologist Michelle Bullivant (from the Cherry Hinton Local History Society) to create an historical time line of the River Cam. The students were able to use genuine artifacts excavated from the river to create a physical time line.</p> <p>Activity workshop 4 (Parkside and Coleridge) Students were fortunate during this workshop to train in journalist skills with the Energy Correspondent from the Guardian newspaper, Terry Macalister. The aim of this workshop was for students to learn how to carry out our interview people in order to create an audio record and practiced their interview techniques on each other.</p> <p>Activity workshop 5 (Parkside and Coleridge) During this activity workshop students discussed the kind of information they wanted to learn from the elderly residents they would meet during the next activity workshop. Students worked in groups to write questions to</p>

	<p>ask elderly residents.</p> <p>Activity workshop 6 (Parkside and Coleridge) This workshop day (Which took a great deal of planning, meetings and organisation) saw 26 local elderly residents and the students from Coleridge and Parkside schools taking part in a leisurely cruise along the river Cam in Cambridge.</p>
June '10	<p>Activity workshop 7 (Parkside and Coleridge) This workshop involved students beginning to plan the CD audio record.</p> <p>Activity workshop 8 (Parkside and Coleridge) The UK Slam Poetry Champion worked with students to use their findings from the project so far to create their own poetry.</p> <p>Activity workshop 9 (Parkside and Coleridge) Students worked with the Slam Poetry champion to practice and perform their poems</p> <p>Activity workshop 10 (Parkside and Coleridge) Students worked with a Music editor to learn how to edit their poems and elderly people's stories on the computer.</p> <p>Workshop 5 (Ramsey) Students were fortunate during this workshop to train in journalist skills with the Energy Correspondent from the Guardian newspaper, Terry Macalister. The aim of this workshop was for students to learn how to carry out our interview people in order to create an audio record and practiced their interview techniques on each other.</p> <p>Workshop 6 (Ramsey) A visit to the Denver Sluice in Norfolk to learn about the management of the water ways in the fens.</p> <p>Workshop 7 (Ramsey) Students were fortunate during this workshop to train in journalist skills with the Energy Correspondent from the Guardian newspaper, Terry Macalister. The aim of this workshop was for students to learn how to carry out our interview people in order to create an audio record and practiced their interview techniques on each other.</p>
July - August '10	<p>Activity workshop 11 (Parkside and Coleridge) Continued with CD editing and production</p> <p>Activity workshop 12 (Parkside and Coleridge) Performance workshop with students performing their poems and a celebration of the end of the project.</p> <p>Workshop 8 (Ramsey) During this workshop students visited a local elderly people's home to interview the residents.</p>

	<p>Workshop 9 and 10 (Ramsey) During this workshop (divided over 2 days) students visited a local elderly people’s home to interview the residents and practised their performance poetry.</p> <p>Workshop 11 and 12 (Ramsey) In this workshop, the culmination of the Ramsey element of the River Rhymes and Voices project, students worked with Rap Artist and Music technician ‘Gee’ and the Slam Poet, to turn what they had learnt about the heritage of the Ramsey rivers into performance rap. Students learnt how to edit the elderly people’s stories and the poems they had created and recorded using computer software.</p> <p>At the end of this creative and fun day, students performed their rap and performance poetry for an audience at the school, which was very well received and a great way to finish such a wonderful project.</p>
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3.4 The difference made by the project (For people)

A. Number of people the River Rhymes and Voices project reached:

The River Rhymes and Voices project was about the quality of the experience and the heritage engaged in by the individuals taking part in the project, rather than the number of participants, but we were delighted that we managed to significantly increase the number of people we originally planned to work on the project with, therefore increasing the number of people actively engaged in their local heritage.

Project participants	Proposed number	Actual number
Young people (aged between 12 -15)	40	54
Elderly people	20	48
Role models:		
Archaeologists/historians/museum staff:	8	9
Local authority Planners:	2	2
Artist (Poet/ Cartographer):	2	2
Recording artist:	2	1
Shape East Staff:	4	4
Performance event:	94	163
Local school / youth representatives	10	117
Family:	60	24
Project staff:	4	6
Decision makers/youth workers/LA Officers	20	16
Audience for CD (Circulation):		

Young people and their family	80	140
Elderly and their family	60	60
Sheltered schemes in the area	20	48
Decision makers	30	28
Local youth and community workers	20	20
Secondary schools in Cambridge	114	120
Community venues	20	20
Libraries	52	Unknown to date
Museums	2	2
Local population	200	200

B. Difference made to students

The quotes included in this section have been taken from evaluation carried out with participants as part of the project. This evaluation took the form of a formal survey questionnaire and in formal group discussions held with the students and participants.

Local heritage knowledge

Throughout the course of the River Rhymes and Voices project, participants used a range of skills to explore the history of the River Cam and the Great Whyte in Ramsey. By participating in a broad range of activities in section 3.3 they were able to question the river's history, use a range of resource materials such as artefacts, documents, images, maps and drawings to find out a great deal about the heritage of the local area and how it has changed over time.

Quotes from project participants (all from students unless indicated)

"Lots of new, fun ways of learning about history"

"I liked learning about new things and it (the project) was about something that is not in my country (of origin), so I liked to learn about it"

"I think this project has been an eye-opening experience to local history and you got to do creative things to portray what you have learnt"

"I have learnt a lot about the people who use/used the river and how the city may rely on it"

"I have learnt so much about the Cam, I can't believe that there are so many interesting things about the Cam and we are grateful to experience them"

"I learnt that the Cam was much different and had many uses and that people have

different memories and opinions of the Cam”

“I have learnt so much about the Cam”

“The boat trip was one of the highlights of the projects, it was exciting and fun”

“I learnt a lot about the history about the river”

“I think I have learnt more history about the river”

“I gained a lot of information and history”

“The river, in my opinion is very interesting”

“I learnt more about the fairs, e.g. the Stourbridge far and also how the landscape has changed”

“I signed up to the project because I wanted to learn more about the Cam and its history – and I did”

“I have learnt a lot about the history and who was there and so on”

“I learnt about the big fairs that have occurred next to the Cam and how old the Cam is”

Skills training:

Research and analysis

A wide range of skills in researching and analysis were gained by the students. We worked closely with staff from the Cambridge Collection to gain access to the library of heritage related resource documents, as well as staff and from the Cambridge Community Archive (A record of over 15,000 historical records) and the Cherry Hinton Society and their extensive archive records. In Ramsey we worked with the Director of historic-ramsey.net and the local information centre to gain access to archives with a wide range of resources for the students to study. By using a variety of different resources and approaches (such as record comparison, time line construction, and record analysis) students were able to carry out their own research into their local heritage. This research was then used as the basis for slam poetry, interviewing elderly residents, designing and planning CD content and making comparisons with the local areas.

Interview techniques and interview skills

We were fortunate to get the Energy Correspondent from the Guardian newspaper to agree to work with students from all three schools to train them in how to interview people. This element of the project was set up so that we could be sure that when students met with the local elderly residents they would feel confident in having the skills necessary to get the elderly people to open up and feel happy and relaxed to share their stories of the past. The students learnt how to introduce themselves and the project, plan and ask questions appropriate to what they wanted to find out, record information using written responses and audio media. They also learnt appropriate techniques of making interviewees feel comfortable and happy to share their stories.

Quotes from project participants (all from students unless indicated)

“I know more about interviewing people now”

“I have learnt how to interview elderly people to get them to tell us their stories of Ramsey”

Working with the elderly

As part of the project we worked in a range of settings to interview local elderly residents to create the heritage audio record for the project. We worked with local elderly from:

- The Red House residential home (Ramsey)
- Mill House sheltered home (Ramsey)
- Cambridge Older People’s Enterprise Forum (Cambridgeshire)
- Victoria Homes (Cambridgeshire)

Elderly from Ramsey

In our planning of the Ramsey element of the River Rhymes and Voices project it was clear that the best way to bring the students together with local elderly residents was to visit the elderly people in the residential homes in which they lived. Many of the elderly residents had mobility difficulties which meant that they could not easily leave their homes, and in some cases where mobility was not an issue, they felt happier in having the students visit them rather than visiting the school. (We tried to organise a meal at the school where we would invite local elderly residents in, but this did not prove popular and so another approach was taken).

Many of the students were nervous of going to interview the elderly residents as they felt that the residents would have a bad impression of them or that the elderly would not understand what they were being asked. In all cases the students approached the interview tasks with enthusiasm and were instantly made to feel at ease with the situation by the residents.

One student in Ramsey who had been difficult to engage with during the course of the project and was particularly reluctant to visit the elderly in their home, engaged with the elderly with the most enthusiasm of any other student. He was able straight away to put the elderly at their ease and asked enlightened and inspired questions, quickly responding to points in their stories by asking other questions to entice more information. He said afterwards *“I didn’t know I could do that, I was really nervous, I’ve only talked to my Nan before, but I just sought of knew what to ask them, it was so cool”*.

Elderly from Cambridge

In Cambridge we worked closely with the Consultation Officer (Penelope Hird) from Cambridge City Council and a Director from the ‘Cambridge Older People’s Enterprise Forum’ (COPE).

Having followed up a number of leads for interviewing elderly residents in Cambridge we struggled to find a way of getting the students from Coleridge and Parkside in one place with elderly people in order to interview them. Having talked to a number of relevant people

we decided to organise a boat trip on the Cam in which we could invite local elderly residents through COPE and through our contacts from the Council and the students.

Although this trip took a lot of organising it was a great opportunity for the students and local elderly to explore the history of the river first-hand with local experts and to interview the elderly in the relaxed surroundings of the river boat Georgina. (Chosen for its affordability and accessibility). On the way up the river on the boat trip the elderly, staff and students were given an hour commentary on the history of the river by 4 expert historians on board. On the return trip down-stream the students interviewed the elderly using their pre-prepared questions and enjoyed listening to the stories of the river.

Cambridge City Council were able to provide us with a long list of useful people that we could contact to interview, these included the Chair of the local 'Midsummer Common Society', an ex Mayor of Cambridge, the Chair of the 'Old Chesterton Resident's Association', three local historical authors, Director of the 'Cambridge University Boat Club' and the Director of a local well know punting company. All of these people were contacted and many of them took part in the boat trip we organised.

We were also put in contact with a resident of Victoria Homes in Cambridge, a complex of homes for the elderly. Ben, one of the residents due to celebrate his 100th birthday imminently expressed an interest in sharing his stories of his 100 years living next to and using the Cam, but did not want to be interviewed by the students. We therefore arranged for Shape East to go along and visit Ben in the surroundings of his own home and to interview him for the heritage audio record. This record was later shared with the students.

Quotes from project participants (all from students unless indicated)

"The quality and experience was great, I was nervous of talking to the elderly people but once I started it was good, I asked lots of questions"

"By interviewing the elderly residents I learnt lots of things about the rivers past and how people use it differently now than before"

"The boat trip was really fun and I learnt lots about the river"

"By interviewing the elderly residents we got some different views from another generation"

"Thanks Amber for organising that lovely Cam trip, a great treat for me, for me it was a learning experience and I congratulate you, Shape and the schools for making it happen"

(Cambridge elderly resident)

The boat was an interesting experience that enhances your knowledge of the River Cam"

"The highlight was the boat trip because it was a new experience and it was nice to hear the stories"

“Thank you for Tuesday (the boat trip), what a lovely way to spend an afternoon, it all seemed to get really well and I learned a lot so I am sure the youngsters did too” (*Elderly Cambridge resident*)

“I heard lots of great stories and things that I could do on/in/near the river”

“We heard so many interesting stories of the old people’s lives”

Sketching/drawing and collage

As part of the project, students from all 3 schools were fortunate to work with a famous local Artist and Historian ‘Jon Hariss’. We signed Jon up to the project as he was able to pass on valuable information to the students about the river Cam and the Great Whyte whilst teaching them skills in drawings, sketching and record making. The students learnt all about really looking at the evidence of history around them and in using historical drawings and pictures to make comparisons between the past and present.

Quotes from project participants (all from students unless indicated)

“The highlight of the project was drawing the river”

“I learnt new drawing techniques”

Visits

As part of the heritage project we organised for students to go on a number of trips. We thought this important as it allowed for first hand observation and fact finding.

As part of our *students took part in the following visits:*

- the River Cam to make observational drawings and sketches
- on the Riverboat Georgina (Cambridge)
- to the high street in Ramsey and the river
- the Red House residential home (Ramsey)
- Mill House sheltered home (Ramsey)
- to the Denver Sluice, Norfolk (The Denver Sluice is on the River Great Ouse and helps maintain the water levels in the fenlands – this was an important visit for students in Ramsey as it allowed them to see how the waters of the Fens have been managed over time and to find out more about why part of their own local rivers had their courses changed over time)

Slam poetry

In the range of education projects we use a mixture of different media to get young people to explore a subject through in a new way. In the planning stages of River Rhymes and Voices we talked to Hollie McNish who is the UK Slam poetry Champion about the possibility of working with the students on the project to use their heritage research findings as the basis for poetry and performance.

At the first of the 3 slam poetry workshops we carried out with three project students, there was a definite reluctance by the students to engage in poetry. (*"I haven't done it since junior school – it's boring and I don't want to do it"*). However once Hollie began incredible creative methods to get the students to think about the heritage they had discovered and to turn it into poetry, the students created fantastic poems. The poems were so creative and explained the history of the Ramsey and Cambridge rivers so well that it was decided that they would form part of the audio CD's that would be produced at the end of the project.

Example of a poem produced as part of the project:

*A land without rivers, like a body without blood
As veins flow through towns grow through history's mud
Waves, transport and trade aging decades ago
Now we're sitting with picnics watching punters fall low*

*But do we know what this river would bring?
And when we think back do we roll flat in watery dreams
Seeing steam powered engines that took out the need
For boats bringing goods, locks and river run feeds
It was trade, now we're laid back with books looking sunny
Immersed in old stories of commerce and money*

*From Roman time trade lines to Middle Age deals
Bringing stones building buildings, bringing fuel, feuds and meals
Until two honks and a whistle sound slice the air
Train tracks more flat, fast take over the fair,
Yet while pump mills and barges float away
So the town folk would drown without riverside plays*

*Now its days playing ball games and Pimms sipped beside her
Canal barge through pub queues for riverside cider
So don't sigh like goodbye run the rivers to slaughter
Cost new worlds can be born with each ripple of water.*

Quotes from project participants (all from students unless indicated)

"My skills in writing poems has improved"

"I learnt how to slam in poetry, I totally recommend it!"

"I have learnt how to use words and make them into slam poetry"

"The highlight of the project was meeting Hollie (The UK Slam Poetry Champion)

"I learnt backwards poetry!"

Audio editing, rap and performance

Students worked with one of the UK's leading 'MC Rap' artists to learn how to edit their audio record and to turn their findings into performance rap. This, along with the slam

poetry was an obvious highlight of the project for students and it was fantastic to witness the students turning historical information into modern day rap.

Quotes from project participants (all from students unless indicated)

“I learnt how to use software to make a CD!”

Other comments of interest

“Wow, it was amazing, so many challenges and experiences”

“Thank you for the great experience”

“The project was much better than I expected, because the trips and stuff were really good”

“The project was much better than I expected- I met lots of nice people and had lots of fun”

“The project was really fun, thanks to everyone who arranged it”

“I never thought I would have my stories on a CD, for other people to hear” (Ramsey elderly resident)

“It (the project) was really great lots of fun and very interesting”

“I enjoyed it all!”

“I thought the project might be more full on, but the laid back attitude made it more fun and you were able to have 1:1 time with the visitors, not just in a group”

“A great collaboration of different skills, giving unique opportunities to meet talented, interesting people in an enjoyable format”

“The people were really friendly and at ease, I’m glad I did it. It kind of gives you confidence to do new things that are good, thanks for the cake, lemonade and CD voucher”

“The cakes were lovely and the CD voucher was very generous, thank you

“The project was better than I expected because I didn’t realise that we would go out on trips and have people (professionals) visit us. It was really fun and creative”

“A fun team building exercise/workshop of skills with great people and great opportunities”

“The project has been AMAZING and it has been GREAT fun! I would recommend anyone to join and take part”

C. Difference made to local elderly residents

The feedback from the elderly residents who have taken part in all aspects of the project is of one of appreciation at their involvement, not only creating the heritage record but also of the interaction they had with the students. It can be a little intimidating for the elderly to talk

to young people but as part of River Rhymes and Voices a positive and respectful relationship was enjoyed by all.

D. Difference made to teachers and educators

All of the Teachers and teaching staff who took part in the project have been enthusiastic and encouraging of what we have been trying to achieve. One Teacher who is responsible for Geography at Ramsey Abbey College commented:

“By taking part in the project I will carry on and explore these topics again next year with different students, they have learned so much not only about their local history but also the geography of their local area”.

Comments by Teachers taking part in the project

“Thank you again for all your hard work on the River Rhymes project, we needed a bit of support at times with what seems to have been the busiest time I can remember, so your patience and perseverance has been very much appreciated”

“I’m wondering what next in terms of Ramsey’s history?”

“I signed up the school for the project because it looked like a really interesting project and it was run by an external organisation”

“I’ve learned so much I didn’t know about the local area”

“Some of the highlights of the project were the boat trip, the outside agencies, particularly the journalist and poet and that the students learnt about the history of the river whilst gaining a lot of new skills as well”

E. Difference to Shape East

The project for Shape East has been one of learning and of rewarding experiences. We have created a whole new range of project partners and skills which we hope to continue to use in the future for other projects.

F. Difference to the local community

It is difficult to determine the impact the Audio heritage CD will have on the community as it is just in its distribution stage at present, but we hope this will make a great difference to the historical knowledge of many people.

3.5 The difference made to heritage

We feel that we have brought heritage to life through the interpretation of local history by young people – interpreting and re-telling the history in a young voice. This combination and contrast to the elderly people’s stories will be a long lasting record that will be available for many people to access in the future.

We hope that by having access to the heritage audio CD that it will inspire and interest many more people in the history of their local area and in heritage issues in general. The CD will tell stories of the heritage of the local area that have never been told before and which tell an alternative side to the 2 river's history that can-not be found in books or on the Internet.

3.6 Organisation: Has the organisation changed as a result of this project

Although Shape East has not noticeably changed as an organisation as a result of the River Rhymes and Voices project it has:

- given us new contacts and partnerships with individuals and organisations that we hope to sustain in the future
- provided us with the confidence to carry out more heritage projects
- given us new skills in a range of new areas and media
- given us the confidence to work with elderly residents
- trained us further in planning and implementing large scale community projects



1.7 Review

1.8 What worked well and why?

- Planning the project in detail and review
Planning the project in detail and the constant review carried out ensured that we were able to ensure high quality delivery and activities for participants whilst constantly reviewing our actions and liaising with our project partners
- Using a range of Experts
Evaluation carried out backed up our understanding that a particular success of the project was the broad range of experts we used. We were fortunate to enlist the services of, amongst others, the UK Slam Poetry Champion, a lead Journalist from the Guardian Newspaper, a lead UK Rap artist, local authors and journalists, archaeologists and respected experts. This worked well as it communicated different methods using a range of different styles and practical workshops which kept the students interest and allowed them to explore the heritage through a range of different media. It also helped display the

significance of the project as the students were very impressed/grateful of the Experts involvement in the project

“I can’t believe that the journalist from a big newspaper who has interviewed the Prime Minister and Simon Cowell has come to work with us – for a whole day” (*Ramsey student*)

“She (The Slam Poet) was performing at Glastonbury and on the radio just, and now she is here teaching me how to slam- how cool is that” (*Ramsey student*)

- Using new media (recording, slam poetry, editing, rap and performance)

When we first began to talk to the students from the 3 schools about the project there was an obvious empathy towards learning about the history of their local rivers and their surrounding areas, even though we wrote advertisements to appeal to the relevant age group for distribution at the schools

Once the project began, however and the students were exposed to new and interesting styles of collecting information and communicating the heritage, it felt as though we had gained their trust that the project would be ‘different’ and inspirational and that they would get to try out a range of media new to them which would provide new challenges. By ensuring the project had enough links with the student’s lives we kept the interest of all of the participants throughout the project

- Use of trips and outings

By providing a range of trips and outings throughout the project’s course we were able to introduce students to areas they had not visited before and of whose’ heritage had not been previously considered. These trips also help to keep student’s interest

- Heritage ground work

By ensuring that students had a through groundwork in heritage before they began to interview the elderly residents it meant that the dialogue between the two generations was more meaningful and appreciated as the students better understood, could better relate to the stories they were listening to and could ask relevant questions of the elderly residents

1.9 What didn’t work well and why?

- Organisation with Ramsey

The biggest challenge we had to the project as a whole was co-ordinating the project with Ramsey Abbey College. This was not because they were not completely dedicated to the project, but are a very busy school with many challenges on their time as they run many out of school projects for their students. Working with the students during holiday times was difficult as on some occasions the school had failed to properly advertise the events and so the number of students who attended was not as high as we would have liked. This was frustrating as Shape had worked hard to prepare the holiday club workshops and had pushed the school to advertise the events well in advance

A second difficulty with the Ramsey school (and again as a result of the pressures on the staff and students time) was continuity of students. On occasion we would arrive at the school to do a whole day workshop to find that the class of students that we had previously

worked with on the project had been unable to get off curriculum and so we had been given a new class of students to work with. This was very frustrating with the continuity of the project and the knowledge the students had already acquired. Discussions with the school found solutions to the problem and meant that we worked most of the time with the same students, but it was an added difficult and time consuming element to the project.

- Working with students from 2 schools in Cambridge

As described previously, the number of students recruited for the Cambridge part of River Rhymes and Voices was at first low and it was necessary to recruit students from both Parkside and Coleridge schools. Although this was a positive in terms of increasing the number of students we worked with and meant that more students benefited from the project, it created logistical problems of working with the students out of school time but both at the same time

The only solution to the challenges of working with the two schools was to arrange (and pay) for taxi's to bring students to the school hosting the after-school workshop each week. This was time consuming as often we did not know which school would be hosting the workshop on a particular week until last minute which was problematic in terms of letting students and quest speakers etc.

After the first workshop we did with the two Cambridge schools there was a significant drop-out of students who attended the second workshop. After a discussion with teachers at the two schools it was agreed that we would try a new recruitment drive and offer students who committed to attending every workshop with a CD voucher to be issued at the end of the project as an incentive. This worked well and all students who came to the second workshop stayed for the whole project. (Many of the students had forgotten about the CD offer by the end of the project as they were enjoying it so much)

1.10 How much of the 'difference' would have happened anyway even if no project had been undertaken at all?

If Shape East, with the generous support of the Heritage Lottery had not undertaken the River Rhymes and Voices project the students (from 2 very different areas), Teachers, Shape East Staff and elderly residents from both Ramsey and Cambridge would not have had the opportunity to engage with their local heritage and in the wide variety of people, resources and media that they did as part of this unique project.

We feel the project gave particularly students from Ramsey Abbey College, which is a small rural community in the fen lands the opportunity to meet and work with a broad range of people and media that they would not usually have the opportunity to engage with. The CD produced as part of the project will make a difference that would not have been present without the River Rhymes and Voices project. If the project had not taken place there is a real possibility that the stories from the local elderly residents would have been lost and not recorded for the heritage record.

The teaching resources produced as part of the project it is hoped will be used by teachers throughout the country to help them engage their students in heritage local to their areas.



5. Summary of lessons learnt

The evaluation taken place for the River Rhymes and Voices project has shown that the project was a great success, benefiting a large number of people and bringing heritage to communities who would not normally engaged with the subject.

The following summarises the lessons we have learnt and what we might do differently next time

- The biggest lesson learnt for Shape East (and the schools) by taking part in the project is that how much more engaged young people are in heritage issues if they can relate or engage with the media the heritage is presented in. By using journalist skills, audio recording, rap, computer editing, poetry and performance the students were fully engaged in heritage, whilst gaining new skills and trying new things for themselves

Shape has always used a range of creative methods to engage young people but this has primarily been design, art and model making. This project has given us the evidence (and confidence) necessary to try out alternative and new media in the future with young people

- For a future heritage project we will be more involved with the schools in the initial recruiting of students for the project, to ensure we get the numbers hoped for and that the students are fully informed of what they will be doing during the projects course
- We would be more persistent with local press in getting newspaper coverage for the project. We tried on many occasions to get interest from local newspapers, who expressed initial interest but then did not cover the stories we had provided information for
- We would perhaps restructure the timetable of workshops (if possible) so that some of the more 'exciting' elements of the project happen towards the beginning of the project to help maintain the interest of the students for the longer term. This was something we learnt as the project evolved and would be considered in future project planning