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Scotland's Year of Stories 2022

**Case Studies from the Community Stories
Programme**

YEAR OF
STORIES
— 2022 —

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Introduction

Delivered as a partnership between VisitScotland and Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS), with support from National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and Scottish Government, the Community Stories Programme supported 180 organisations and community groups to celebrate Scotland's Year of Stories 2022.

This document provides a range of case studies from the Community Stories Programme.

It accompanies the evaluation report for the programme: Scotland's Year of Stories 2022: Telling the Story of the Community Stories Programme.

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Preserving and Celebrating Edinburgh's Deaf Heritage – How Deaf Action explored the history and stories of their building

Organisation & Location: Deaf Action, Edinburgh



1 event



700 audience attendances



18 artist opportunities



1 venue supported

Deaf Action sought to preserve, celebrate and raise awareness of their Edinburgh heritage through their event **Preserving and Celebrating Edinburgh's Deaf Heritage** - linked to their building and chapel, home to the organisation since 1889 and 1891 respectively. Through their event they captured stories from the Deaf community, connecting the audience with the legacy and history of their Albany Street building, and revealing narratives of the building through people's stories. The project was important in creating an archive of stories about the usage of the building and its people. For example, many personal events had taken place in the chapel, including weddings, christenings and funerals, while the building has also been used for social activities and overall connection for the Deaf community. There were a wide range of ages and experiences among the participants who shared their stories. Many stories drew parallels and led to mirroring of similar experiences across different generations, as well as reflections about the past, present, and future of both the building and wider Deaf community. On the meaning and significance of the stories chosen to tell, Deaf Action said:

“These stories are important to share because the building and charity has been around for over 130 years, and has been used as a Deaf Centre by the community and the building in that way is not really owned by us, but the community itself. It wouldn't feel fair if we only told our story and known history of the building, [so] it was important for us to get actual community stories.”

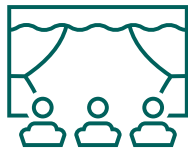
The stories were presented in an exhibition created by their in-house media agency and displayed during the Edinburgh Deaf Festival in August 2022. The exhibition took place in various locations around Deaf Action's building on Albany Street with exhibits presented in accessible formats suitable for both deaf and hearing audiences. This included video screenings, QR codes alongside photo portraits, and objects, such as old photos and artefacts, collected from participants. The stories were also presented in British Sign Language, with captions and voiceover added to ensure fully accessible content for all. The project resulted in

a large audience from Scotland and beyond engaging with the history of Edinburgh's Deaf community and its building, whilst also creating legacy through a rich digital archive of stories and history. Deaf Action reported that it had accomplished a great deal through the Community Stories Programme, and is looking at opportunities to explore the theme further in the future in order to share important stories from those in the Deaf community they have not previously engaged with.

“Our main lesson would probably be that, in the beginning we knew there were stories of those we reach out to, but as time went on we realised there were a lot more people that we hadn't heard of before. We've heard some amazing stories, for example, there was one man that came in who told a story about attending and winning the Deaflympics just after World War 2, and no one in our team had engaged with him before. He donated a beautiful artefact to the exhibition and we realised the potential of casting our nets wider to reach the stories of those we haven't met yet”.

Story Ceilidh – How the Community Stories Programme enabled a newly settled community to connect through stories

Organisation & Location: Magic Torch Comics, Inverclyde



10 events



80 audience attendances



11 artist opportunities



2 venues supported

Story Ceilidh was focused on sharing folk tales and traditional stories from Inverclyde, wider stories of Scotland, and stories from refugees newly settled in the region; the aim was to create a blended narrative of diverse folk tales and cultural traditions. The project was created through two stages, the first one aimed to gather the stories of people who live in Inverclyde, and the second involved a performance event where the stories were shared with an audience in English, Gaelic and Arabic. This started with multiple community workshops at which refugee families and native Scots families shared and retold stories, finding common ground in many experiences regardless of seeming cultural or geographical differences.

“We learned loads, there was so much learning when planning and delivering the event – we know all about delivering in schools, making books and comics, but we learned so much from doing just this one event”.

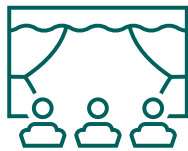
Magic Torch Comics was able to connect with their local community, support the participants in their storytelling, and help them to learn from one another’s experiences. The stories were also published in a book, alongside illustrations by professional artists, so that they can be read for years to come and find a wider audience. As well as the wider impacts of community integration, safeguarding local stories, and bringing people together, many participants reported that they felt supported and heard, and were able to improve their storytelling skills and gain confidence as a result of taking part in the project.

“People who wouldn’t have been part of the community usually, found connections through the event night. With storytelling, it’s always a confidence thing and people’s confidence improved, while also feeling the notion that what they were saying is valued and heard which makes a big

difference. For example, one man was very shy, but came up and told a story in Arabic. I think he was mainly telling the story to his children in the audience, but it was nice for him to be seen in that context in front of his children. These personal journeys are what I think is the nicest part of this project. [...] We would take part in a similar initiative again in a heartbeat, it was definitely my favourite process of last year”.

Whisper from the Woods and Wilds: Tales of the Badger from Across Scotland – Inclusivity, creativity and accessibility through the Community Stories Programme

Organisation & Location: Scottish Badgers SCIO, Lanark



23 events



1,131 audience attendances



2 artist opportunities



3 venues supported

Scottish Badgers' project **Whisper from the Woods and Wilds: Tales of the Badger from Across Scotland** explored and shared the importance of Scotland's environment, wildlife, and biodiversity by attempting to break negative perceptions and stereotypes surrounding the badger. This was done by sharing old Scottish stories relating to the animal with the local community and other groups, who were then invited to create their own stories and engage personally with the theme. While Scottish Badgers had previously worked to improve people's knowledge and perception of the badger, this was the first time they were able to take a such a creative approach, something they had been wanting to do for some time.

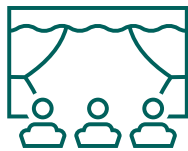
“The whole kind of creative angle is something we've not really worked on within our charity [...] Now we could focus on telling new stories, and positive stories, about badgers and wildlife which we already knew we wanted to do but hadn't had the confidence or funding to do before. What we learnt is that people really, really engaged with and enjoyed it”.

The project was highly successful in its attempt to break negative connotations of the badger, whilst also succeeding in connecting people with one another and with Scottish nature. This was achieved through nature workshops and storytelling events delivered in nature at a local wildlife reserve. Along with sessions for the wider public, the organisation also specifically chose to engage with under-represented people, delivering events for ethnic minority groups and refugees, people with disabilities, and primary school students with additional learning needs amongst others. The project team worked closely with partners to identify opportunities to reach these groups. For example, they utilised an existing partnership with a school, and were connected with the Central and West Integration Network in Glasgow through a storytelling consultant who had previously worked with minority groups in the environmental sector. These connections helped them to identify potential networks to reach out to.

“The minority ethnic group project helped with their sense of connection to nature as well as a wider sense of belonging in a new country and the sharing of stories and similarities really helped with integration with these groups and the other members of the public. The school group project was really amazing because some young people really stood out and were given a voice, and many of those with additional learning needs were able to stand up and get recognition, present their stories, and a big assembly of 500 young people got to hear the stories and we got some lovely positive feedback from those young people with learning disabilities”.

Striking Herstories – How the Community Stories Programme has shone a light on women's history

Organisation & Location: The Scottish Football Museum, Glasgow



2 events



1179 audience attendances



6 artist opportunities



1 venue supported

The Scottish Football Museum is in the top three per cent of visitor attractions in Scotland and its collections are recognised as Nationally Significant by Museums Galleries Scotland. The Museum's 14 galleries transport the visitor from the game's humble 19th century beginnings to the modern day. The Museum's Community Stories project **Striking Herstories** included a new trail and engagement events that follow the history of women's football in Scotland: a story of resilience and activism.

As the Museum's pre-existing collections held little material related to women's football pre-1970, four local artists were commissioned to produce new artworks, allowing the Museum to better tell the story of women's football in Scotland. The four artworks were featured in a trail along with four additional stops to object-based case panels. These covered specific periods of women's football; the increase in female football throughout the First World War, the first official match of Scotland's Women's National Football team in 1972, the formation of the Scottish Women's Premier League in 2002 and finished with 2019 and the Scottish Women's National Team's first FIFA Women's World Cup. Furthermore, five case panels which feature in the trail were updated with new or further information, in some cases they had not been updated since the Museum's opening in 2001. Updating these five panels was hugely valuable as previously the tactic had been to have standalone 'women's cases', whereas now the Museum is moving towards integrating this information. As such, having funding to enable text panels to be updated and weave women's history into existing cases was valuable.

The importance of telling these stories was centered on unveiling hidden histories and shining a light on forgotten figures who are embedded within Scotland's heritage. By telling these stories this heritage is being safeguarded, and this would not have been possible without sufficient funding. Moreover, with women's football finally gaining recognition, support and development, it's important to share the history of what led to this moment. The importance of telling these stories is also captured by inspiring a young generation of girls involved in football. The Museum partnered with Bo'ness United Community Football Club and Glasgow Schools FA Under 15s, two clubs the Museum has existing relationships with. Transport was provided through the project funding to enable the girls to visit the Museum,

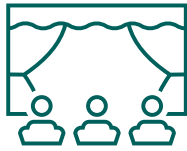
learn more about the history of women in sport and partake in various activities. The girls were given a guided tour of the trail and stadium, and encouraged to write the labels that were showcased underneath the artwork, helping to tell the stories of women in football.

Gender inequality undoubtedly features as a key theme in **Striking Herstories**. The project really emphasised the discrimination of women in football throughout history, highlighting to audiences the reasons why women's football is where it is in the modern day. It is also a story of overcoming significant adversity and therefore acted as inspiration to audiences, particularly young girls involved in football already. Further, hosting the football clubs was hugely valuable to the Museum as they are not often able to provide learning and engagement events.

In terms of legacy, the Museum established various partnerships through the delivery of the project. Design consultant Tea and Type, for instance, created the trail leaflet. This partnership is one the Museum hopes to continue moving forward, with the intention of creating more learning and engagement activities. The trail leaflet itself also provides a resource for future use – 500 copies were ordered with the intention of ordering more. Further, the trail and the stories it tells have greatly expanded the audience of the Museum. Previously, the audience demographic had been mainly older males, but it is hoped that **Striking Herstories** will have a lasting impact that will enable the Museum to engage more women and girls.

The Disappeared Village - How the Community Stories Programme has uncovered the disappeared village of Culbin

Organisation & Location: Robert Gordon University, Elgin



8 events



4,031 audience attendances



19 artist opportunities



1 venue supported

The Disappeared Village was built around the story of Culbin: a village on the shore of the Moray Firth which was subsumed by the Great Sand Drift of 1694. Academics Dr Rachael Ironside and Professor Peter Reid, from the School of Creative and Cultural Business at Robert Gordon University, worked in collaboration with Elgin Library to explore and uncover the story of the village and create an exhibition called **The Disappeared Village**.

The project sought to emphasise the scientific and natural explanations for the disappearance of the village, but also explored the stories of myth and legend that have shrouded the village in mystery. The exhibition sought to uncover these mysteries and retell the many stories of Culbin in new and creative ways, including exploring local history, national history, environmentalism, culture, heritage, legend and folklore. The exhibition launch was highly successful, with huge support from the local civic community, including the Lord Lieutenant, the Chief Executive of the local authority, the local MP, MSP, councillors and others. Twenty main stories were explored and these formed the basis of a real-life exhibition, with 23 interpretation panels, and a digital exhibition. These were researched by the team in conjunction with the local heritage staff at Elgin Library. The project also benefitted from help and support from the 'Forestry Memories' project and from others who have previously been involved in the interpretation of the Culbin Forest site for visitors, such as a local heritage organisation in Findhorn.

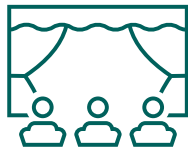
The story of Culbin was not particularly well known in Scotland, even within the local area. As such, a key driver for the project was to engage the local community as well as to reach new audiences. Therefore, as well as aiming to attract a demographic already interested in engaging with the environment, the exhibition also provided storytelling and crafting activities in an effort to attract families and young children, with the folklore element proving particularly popular among children. Moreover, the organisers were able to appeal to wider audiences by presenting the story of the disappeared village through an artistic lens. By doing this, the project was able to demonstrate that key themes such as environmentalism and creative storytelling can be explored beyond the written word, which was particularly engaging for children. Involvement in the Community Stories Programme provided a substantial platform to showcase this aspect of Scotland's heritage, which was reflected in

significant press coverage of the project and the abandoned village. For example, Professor Peter Reid was interviewed by BBC Scotland's Landward about the project.

Similar to various other Community Stories funded projects, "uncovering forgotten stories" has featured as another key theme to **The Disappeared Village**. As the project unfolded, researchers quickly realised that delving deeper into archive material, such as newspaper accounts or old books, would lead to deeper and more culturally rich stories. This led to the exhibition being designed in such a way that each panel acts as a standalone vignette but, when taken together, they collectively provide a bigger picture. This multidimensional element to the project was key to its success – it worked on various levels; historical, folkloric, cultural, geographical, and therefore ultimately had the ability to capture people's imaginations.

SUPERFAN: Stirling's Story of the Beatles – Music, People & Place – How a community connected over the Beatles

Organisation & Location: Creative Stirling, Stirling



5 events



8,586 audience attendances



23 artist opportunities



2 venues supported

Creative Stirling created their **SUPERFAN: Stirling's Story of the Beatles – Music, People & Place** project after being approached by a local record shop owner, who had just acquired a large collection of Beatles memorabilia. Thinking about the late fan who had collected this memorabilia, and later realising that the Beatles had their first Scottish concert in Stirling in 1962, it was clear to Creative Stirling that stories and objects concerning the Beatles could have a great impact on audiences and help to connect the local community. Creative Stirling's Director said this:

“I knew about the fact that the Beatles had played in the local community in January 1962 [...] I was later introduced to someone who had attended the gig at seventeen, and who is now approaching eighty. He had written a comprehensive book documenting bands who had played across the Forth Valley during the 60s, 70s, and 80s. Connecting this [to the collection of Beatles memorabilia], the connections for our Year of Stories project just started to happen”.

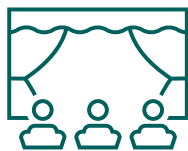
The project succeeded more than originally hoped in bringing people from the community together, and it also attracted a wider audience who travelled from all over Scotland and further afield to talk about their memories of the Beatles and their 1962 Stirling concert. An exhibition of the Beatles memorabilia displayed fan club ephemera, fanzines and rare records alongside a newly commissioned mural. Artist Fran Ryan worked with the family of the late fan whose collection inspired the project to create the mural as a tribute to his love for the Beatles. As well as the exhibition, a new theatre piece was developed, depicting the band's rise in fame from 1960 to 1965. The project also included two live music performances at which multiple artists played Beatles songs and tributes, and an exhibition talk by Europa Music. This activity created a lot of impromptu storytelling. People from the local community, visitors from further away, and past employees of the music industry came and shared their stories from the time and the concert.

The project brought people of all ages together – young people volunteered and engaged in the Beatles storytelling, whilst older people came and connected over shared memories of a time they felt deeply nostalgic about. This was something Creative Stirling previously had not seen to this extent. Succeeding in attracting big audience numbers, the exhibition attracted locals and visitors of approximately 165 people per day – totaling over 8,000 people over its fifty-day run. Meanwhile, the music and theatre performances and exhibition talk were successful in attracting local people from the community, with a total of over 330 people attending these.

“It was the most well received and attended project that we have had to date. Everyone who worked on it: our artists, performers, musicians, and the Superfan’s family are all very proud of what was achieved. This was the high point of the year so far and we would love to do something this ambitious again”.

Govanhill Food Stories – How the Community Stories Programme brought communities together through food

Organisation & Location: Glasgow Artists' Moving Image Studio, Govanhill



9 events



192 audience attendances



28 artist opportunities



2 venues supported

Govanhill Food Stories celebrated narrative through food as part of Govanhill International Festival and the Year of Stories 2022. Through three markets, stories of Govanhill communities and beyond were told through sharing food, and the stories, history and traditions behind the dishes. The initial idea was to connect and break down barriers between diverse communities in the local area. Govanhill is an area of high deprivation and substantial inequality, but it is also a hugely creative area with a lot of local artists and creative students. This part of Glasgow is considered to be one of the most multicultural neighbourhoods in Scotland, with over 88 languages spoken there. As such, the central idea for the event was to encourage a positive integration of all these communities and backgrounds, but not in an assimilation sense – the project aimed to connect them rather than merge them.

By partnering with local food shops and businesses, a long table was created for food cooked by community organisations and businesses from Govanhill and beyond, providing opportunities for attendees to try an exciting variety of cuisines. Some stall holders included MILK café, Soul Food Sisters, Transylvania Shop and Coffee, Pink Peacock, UNITY sisters, Swap Market (Feminist Exchange Network) and Outside the Box. The project also worked with Glasgow Zine Library (GZL) to deliver a zine-making activity during which participants were invited to submit a one-page contribution inspired by food. Market visitors shared stories, drawings, favourite dishes and beloved recipes. After the event, the stories were collated into a zine as a collaboration between GZL and editor Polly Rappapor to tell the story of Govanhill through food. Hard copies of the zine were distributed at future market events and a digital copy was uploaded onto Govanhill Open Museum website and [Govanhill Baths website](#), demonstrating a key legacy to the project.

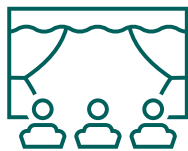
A key part of telling these stories was to explore links between migration, colonialism and food systems. An accessible session named *More than Just Food: Stories, Relationships and Memories* - led by Tunvii Khurana and Diana Jiménez from Nourish Scotland - allowed people to share stories about their own heritage, demonstrating Scotland's multidimensional cultural heritage as well as highlighting the various cultures that call Glasgow their home. Furthermore, by giving diverse groups a platform within their community such as this, members of other communities gained access to different cultures which would not have

typically happened otherwise. From these interactions, the project has been able to break down prejudices that may have previously existed within Govanhill and encouraged new audiences to use local food businesses they may not have previously visited. Sustainability also featured as a key theme throughout the project. Through a sponsorship from VegWear, all packaging was sustainable and environmentally friendly, with recycling also being encouraged. Promoting re-use was also important – a number of people contributed to the SWAP Market Feminist Exchange Network mobile library to promote a circular economy within Govanhill and expanded the collection of stories around the theme of feminism. Further, both cycle and walking routes to the market were displayed on the project's website and resulted in the majority of people cycling to the event with very little car use.

The project was a natural fit for Glasgow Artists' Moving Image Studio as it built on their work surrounding anti-racism, civil rights and female empowerment. The continuous nature of this work means that this project was not just a one-off and is something the organisation hopes to consistently keep doing. As they comment, under-represented groups tend to go under the radar, demonstrating the need in communities such as Govanhill for initiatives like the Community Stories Programme which gives organisations a visible presence within hard-to-reach communities.

OMOS Workshops and Storytelling Cabaret – Engaging in the Community Stories and history of Scotland’s Black LGBTQI+ community

Organisation & Location: Icky Arts (Pollyanna), Edinburgh



8 events



238 audience attendances



18 artist opportunities



5 venues supported

This project consisted of six workshops and one storytelling session engaging with audiences as participants in September 2022, concluding in a final cabaret event in October 2022. This project successfully told the stories of Black members of the LGBTQI+ community in Scotland, and the aim was to create an inclusive environment for the forgotten and hidden stories of the community to come to light, celebrating Black history in Scotland, Black performance, and Black storytelling techniques through movement, spoken words, and song. Through the workshops, participants were able to share their own stories through different themes, and hear the stories of other participants. While the project had a significant teaching and showcasing component, based on OMOS – a moving image exhibition exploring the history of Black LGBTQI+ culture in Scotland – there was also a substantial component allowing participants to engage personally. For example, a workshop in lip-syncing enabled participants to tell personal stories through music, and a storytelling workshop interlinked fairy tales with participants’ personal experiences, inviting them to create modern, personal tales. Icky Arts (Pollyanna) also said:

“By presenting workshops by Black and Queer artists, we created an environment where the artists could share diverse stories as well as audiences being able to share their own stories and find the connections, similarities, and differences between a wide range of experiences.”

The effects this project’s activities had on the participants were extensive and incredibly profound, and audiences included Black LGBTQI+ persons, other members of the LGBTQI+ community, people in the local community who wanted to learn more about the topic, and school classes and young people who also got a chance to partake in a workshop hosted at their school. Feedback from audiences and participants highlighted the need to uncover and underline other minority stories in LGBTQI+ and Scottish cultural spaces, with some people mentioning they felt personally inspired to be more creative and to engage in storytelling in

“their own way”. Others said they were going to consider the relationship between Scotland and Black history in a different way from before. Icky Arts (Pollyanna) also said:

“The uniqueness of this situation should not be understated, with the number of diverse artists platformed and sharing their story in a significant gallery in the heart of the capital as an engaged audience learned about new and untold stories.”

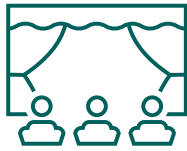
Icky Arts (Pollyanna) also collaborated with LGBT Youth Scotland, which they had not done before, and the events that were created were inclusive and adjusted to meet the needs of different groups. Events were either free or on a voluntary donation-basis, enabling everyone to access the events regardless of financial situation. Additionally, neurodiversity provision was also considered, and events were altered to meet the needs of participants, for example events would omit clapping for those sensitive to loud sounds, and workshops were adapted to accommodate non-verbal people. Addressing the diversity and inclusivity of the events, Icky Arts (Pollyanna) said the following:

“In particular, lip-syncing is a great activity for non-verbal communication, and it meant that they had the same experience of all other attendees. We held workshops in LGBT Youth Scotland’s venue and Newbattle High School, this brought diverse and unique opportunities directly to young people who may not be able to participate otherwise due to time, travel, money, or family.”

Overall, the OMOS workshops and storytelling cabaret had a great effect on showcasing and uncovering untold stories from the Black members of the LGBTQI+ community. These events enabled participants to share stories, and also increased awareness for Black and Queer accounts and perspectives in Scotland and its history amongst those not directly part of the communities represented and showcased through this project. Moreover, Icky Arts (Pollyanna) believes this has been fundamental in opening doors to future collaborations, and continuing to hold similar events and projects in different locations and uncovering the hidden stories of the communities there.

'Stories of Nairn' Community Flag Making Workshops and Parade – Reviving and reinforcing the storytelling tradition in Nairn through the Community Stories Programme

Organisation & Location: Nairn Book and Arts Festival, Nairn



8 events



1220 audience attendances



37 artist opportunities



3 venues supported

Nairn Book and Arts Festival looked to explore the Themed Year in an imaginative way by uncovering and reinforcing the vibrant heritage of storytelling in the area through the creation of story flags. The flags captured tales, legends, and other stories from the local community in a visual medium, safeguarding the stories for future generations. The festival was inspired to take this creative and different approach because storytelling was already quite a common custom within the local community:

“From our perspective, because we are a community that tells a lot of stories generally, we were looking to find a different approach to what we usually do. The fact that the year was focused on stories meant we had to think a bit differently. [Because of the Themed Year] so many people were already telling stories that it meant that we didn’t necessarily want to repeat what had already been done, so we wanted to do something else, something more creative”.

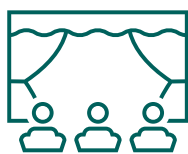
The flags were created through engaging with community groups of all ages to gather common tales, legends and stories that had been passed down through generations. The focus of the stories was relatively wide, as they could relate to anything from local myths, to famous people with connections to Nairn, to old knowledge, stories and superstitions from Nairn’s past. The community groups worked with artist storyteller Lizzie McDougall to create designs based on the stories which were then turned into 20 silk flags by international arts company Kinetika. The flags were premiered at a storytelling flag parade in Nairn High Street with large participation from the community; this enabled Lizzie McDougall to present the flags and the stories they represented to the community whose stories they were based on, and introduce these tales to the rest of the public. After the parade, the flags were displayed in the central bandstand with each representative story attached for everyone to read. Following the festival, the flags have continued to be used at further events and been added to an online gallery alongside the stories they represent, giving everyone an opportunity to fully learn these

stories. In this way, the flags have created a legacy for continuing Nairn's storytelling custom and have reinforced the stories for younger audiences so that the town's storytelling heritage can continue to flourish for coming generations.

"The **Stories of Nairn** Project sparked so many ideas, in addition to creating a really wonderful piece of intangible heritage for the town and a community resource which has already been used by community groups. Through the Year of Stories we could pass stories on verbally to children, which is something not necessarily done by their parents. The actual idea of oral traditions of storytelling was aided in its revival in younger people".

BE United Live @ the Fringe – How the Community Stories Programme helped improve Black visibility at the Edinburgh Fringe

Organisation & Location: BE United, Edinburgh



3 events



235 audience attendances



10 artist opportunities



2 venues supported

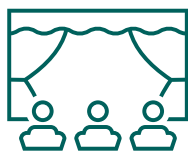
When BE United applied for the Community Stories Fund grant, they were aware of the lack of places for people of colour in Edinburgh to express themselves and showcase their art, cultural heritage and storytelling, and knew they wanted to do something to help this issue. Through the grant they were able to fund a three-night showcase of Afro-Caribbean music, dance and spoken word – highlighting both emerging and established talent – as part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. This was a new initiative for the Black community and the first time that BE United had been able to host such a wide range of activity, supporting 10 artists, as part of the Edinburgh Fringe. BE United believes the overwhelmingly positive feedback and requests for more similar events is long awaited in Edinburgh.

“When I first came to Edinburgh and BE United, I was told by some funders that they didn’t think there were enough Black people in Scotland to make the project we were planning, [...] but through Community Stories we have found a lot of hidden voices in Scotland that have not been expressed before because they needed a place to do this.”

At the events there was a good mix of audiences. A lot of Edinburgh’s BAME community attended alongside other local communities and tourists. Overall, BE United are very happy with the results of this project and mention the new relationships built with partner organisations and artists something that will help them in the future. Their hope is to produce an even greater, larger project in 2023, if they are able to source the necessary funding, so they can continue to support the Black Scottish community and its creatives.

Ceithir Ceàrnaidhean (Four Corners) – Preserving and sharing Gaelic culture through literature, poetry, song and storytelling

Organisation & Location: Comhairle nan Leabhraichean (The Gaelic Books Council), Various locations throughout Scotland



4 events



345 audience attendances



12 artist opportunities



2 venues supported

The Gaelic Books Council aimed to demonstrate the richness and range of literature and stories that exist in the Gaelic language with their project **Four Corners (Ceithir Ceàrnaidhean)**. Their Year of Stories participation consisted of four different events across different parts of Scotland, and each event was very different from the others.

The events themselves provided entertainment and learning for both adults and children alike, whilst also focusing on preserving Gaelic heritage and storytelling. The first event, *Friends and Monsters (Caraidean is Uilebheistean)* in Inverness included the characters and work of three Gaelic children's book authors. Big cuddly versions of their characters were present and the event engaged children in different practical arts and crafts projects related to the stories.

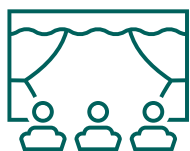
“We definitely want to do more children's stuff, we already do a regular children's event in Glasgow with our reading ambassador but we don't often involve other children's authors, and this was a good way to get them involved. As we go forward we would want to have more children's authors come and interact directly with their readers.”

The second event, *Poetry, Songs and Stories (Uibhist Mo Ghràidh)* was held in a new community venue in South Uist in the Outer Hebrides and featured various Gaelic singers and storytellers. Thirdly, *Poems for a Winter's Afternoon (Ann an Solas na Cagailt)* was hosted in the Scottish Poetry Library in Edinburgh. Two established poets and an emerging poet treated the audience to an afternoon of Gaelic poetry, thereby enabling them to widen their reach and represent their art. Finally, the fourth event, *St Columba's Legacy in Poetry and Prayer (An Deagh Sgeul)*, took place in Glasgow and celebrated the 500th anniversary of St Columba's birth through poetry and prayer. This event was also filmed and published online, creating a legacy for Gaelic storytelling and literature that can continue to be engaged with long after the Year of Stories has ended. Through the events, the Gaelic Books Council reported that they were able to share and preserve the use of Gaelic, demonstrating the richness of reading material that is available.

Cliabh an t-Seanachais -The Creel of Stories - Telling the story of the Isle of Mull and Iona's fishing heritage

Organisation & Location: South West Mull and Iona Development, Isle of Mull

Project Title: Cliabh an t-Seanachais – The Story Creel



3 events



225 audience attendances



11 artist opportunities



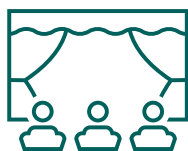
2 venues supported

The Creel of Stories - Cliabh an t-Seanachais project explored the past and present of fishing on the Ross of Mull and Iona, interviewing fishermen, their families and other individuals involved in the industry about their experiences. By filming and documenting these local stories, an important legacy has been created, sharing and preserving the fishing heritage of the Isle of Mull and surrounding areas for future generations. It was especially important to capture these stories because the fishing industry has played a crucial role in the island's history, with many people in the community – often entire families – dependent on it for a living. However, the local industry has been in decline for some time and thus the organisation sought to explore a wide range of fishing-related stories in their film – from the traditional practice of salmon bag netting to the creel fishing trade that continues to support families today – told by local people of all generations.

The film was premiered at a special event with live music and locally sourced food, attended by a variety of people, with a blended age-range and a mixture of locals and tourists. This provided one of the first opportunities for the community to come together following the Covid-19 lockdowns and the organisation received a lot of positive feedback following the event. Furthermore, an important legacy was established, with local stories not previously documented now safeguarded and available to share. This project was especially important as it not only included local tales and legends, but also told stories about life on the isles, the local industries and working people. The film and related images are available online, providing a platform for the stories for years to come.

Up the Middle Road – How the Community Stories Programme uncovered the history of mental health care in Scotland

Organisation & Location: The Crichton Trust, Dumfries



3 events



219 audience attendances



9 artist opportunities



1 venue supported

Up the Middle Road, led by Dr Valentina Bold, Heritage Project Officer at The Crichton Trust, creatively shared the stories of The Crichton Royal Institution in Dumfries as told by former patients, nurses, support staff, and those who grew up on the site. With the aim of de-stigmatising mental ill health, and commemorating past events, approaches, and treatments within the village of The Crichton, these stories explored a hidden aspect of Scotland's cultural heritage.

The project commissioned local artist Amanda Edmiston, who specialises in healing tales, and storyteller Kathleen Cronie who guided attendees around the site. Building on The Crichton's heritage of developing creativity through movement and the arts, musical interpretations were also provided in The Crichton's historic buildings by performers Emily Smith and Jamie McClennan that communicate the past of particular places, and the lived experiences of those who had received treatments, worked, and lived on the site. Artists were also joined by two locally recruited apprentices, contributing to a legacy of expertise among young people within Dumfries and Galloway. The Crichton Trust formed a strong connection with former staff and patients, who were consulted at every stage about which stories to tell and how they should be told. As such, the project centered on uncovering hidden stories as well as hidden voices. The Trust also worked with various mental health charities, such as Support in Mind Scotland, to ensure the project was developed in a responsible and ethical way, with mental health professionals on site to support anyone affected by the stories.

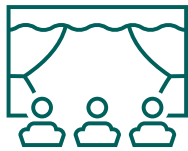
Exploring the history of mental health treatment and care was the consistent and broader element to the project. The project was able to evidence Scotland's history of providing mental health treatment based on models of compassionate care, demonstrating an empathy and understanding within mental health treatment being intrinsically linked to Scotland's cultural heritage. As such, bringing new light to these stories ultimately worked to further dispel stigmas around mental health, especially in the surrounding local community of Dumfries. The project was therefore hugely successful in demonstrating why these stories deserve to be told. Within this exploration of compassionate care models, themes of

recovery and resilience featured prominently in the project. This was particularly fitting given the events took place as the area was coming out of COVID-19 lockdowns, though it wasn't necessarily wholly centered on COVID-19 – the project instead primarily aimed to highlight the idea of The Crichton being a sanctuary and, within this, dismiss any negative connotations to receiving mental health treatment. By focusing on this theme, positive messages came through in stories, particularly those told by former patients where they highlighted how The Crichton was able to help them during a difficult point in their life, as well as showcasing the kindness and dedication of staff, and strengthened the element of Scotland's historically compassionate culture. Community engagement was also a central tenet of the project. The event was free for former patients and staff and to people under the age of 25. The Crichton also worked with the two local schools, attended by children of former staff of the Crichton Royal Institution, to provide a learning picnic day when they learned more about the site through storytelling.

In terms of impacts, giving hidden voices and stories a platform enabled more people to learn about Scotland's history of mental health care/treatment. The majority of former patients commented on how emotive the event was in making them feel like their experiences and stories were valued. The project also helped to connect the local community with an important part of their history and cultural heritage, as well as connecting them to further research in other arenas, including the Scottish Archives Records Association. Moreover, new opportunities for performance and collaboration have arisen, with Dr Bold developing a UNESCO Memory of the World bid focusing on The Crichton's oral history recordings and archives, which is linked to on-site initiatives to develop a new Centre for Memory and Wellbeing.

Silent Cinema: Telling Old Stories, Singing Songs - Celebrating two important women in Scottish history using the medium of silent film

Organisation & Location: Hippodrome Silent Film Festival (Falkirk Council), Bo'ness



3 events



224 audience attendances



5 artist opportunities



1 venue supported

As part of the Community Stories Programme, the Hippodrome Silent Film Festival (also known as HippFest), presented **Silent Cinema: Telling Old Stories, Singing Songs**, a festival strand comprised of three events focused on showcasing restored silent Scottish films. The first two events were connected, focusing on the iconic figure of Mary, Queen of Scots. Donald Smith, storyteller and then-Director of the Scottish International Storytelling Festival, delivered the illustrated talk *Queen of Hearts: Mary Queen of Scots in Popular Culture* which explored cultural representations of Mary Stuart in films, novels, art and other media. The talk included a rare screening of *The Execution of Mary Queen of Scots* – an 18 second silent film from 1895 which is believed to be the earliest surviving screen representation of Scottish heritage and is currently preserved in its original form in Museum of Modern Art, New York.

The talk was followed by the world premiere of the new restoration of silent film *The Loves of Mary Queen of Scots*, which originally debuted in 1923. This was accompanied by live piano music, performed by an experienced silent film accompanist. The event was also narrated by a live storyteller – or ‘film explainer’ – which allowed for deeper interpretation of the film and historic narrative. This event was also broadcast live online with captions. These events have helped to create greater appreciation for film archives and the role of archivists who make these important pieces of history available to the public and for preservation.

The third event explored the life and work of Scottish singer and song collector Marjory Kennedy-Fraser, who played a key role in Scotland’s Celtic revival, a movement to see a renewed interest in Celtic culture, through her production of Celtic music. The programme celebrated her through the screening of two short films, which were most likely shot by Kennedy-Fraser herself. This was complemented by a newly commissioned live storytelling and music piece about Kennedy-Fraser’s life, which made use of a variety of traditional Gaelic instruments. The event organiser hopes that this has helped to break the negative preconceptions that surround the song collector:

“Another impact is probably breaking prejudices on Marjory Kennedy-Fraser. Once people saw the context, and her personal biography was

added into the story, they had a more of a generous view on how she contributed [to the collection and preservation of Scottish folk songs].”

Overall, the Community Stories Programme allowed HippFest to celebrate two important women in Scottish history, and they have been able to raise the profile of their own organisation and appreciation of silent film.

Arctic Ventures – reviving the stories of Scottish whaling ventures

Organisation & Location: Scottish Fisheries Museum, Anstruther

Project Title: Arctic Ventures – Forgotten Stories of Scottish Whaling



6 events



1891 audience attendances



7 artists supported



2 venues supported

Scottish Fisheries Museum’s Community Stories funded project **Arctic Ventures – Forgotten Stories of Scottish Whaling** aimed to bring to life the human experiences of historic Scottish Arctic whalers through storytelling, art, and music. The project was instigated by the team’s desire to engage the public with the existing whaling collections in the museum by using stories and storytelling to generate interest in the topic. They saw the theme of stories as a perfect match for this, and worked with artist, Carolyn Hack, who visually interpreted the particular experiences of whalers sailing from Anstruther and other small Scottish ports in the 18th and 19th centuries to create textile panels which were displayed alongside the museum’s objects and artefacts to enrich the Arctic whaling story. Through this artistic endeavour, they were able to draw out the human experiences of an industry that can sometimes be considered inhumane or unpleasant, and allowed new audiences to reflect on the Scottish Arctic whalers and their lives as documented in logbooks, songs, and photographs:

“Working with an artist opened our subject matter up to a new art-appreciating audience, and similarly working with musicians who interpreted the stories of Scottish Whaling in another creative way, allowed us to explore the intangible cultural heritage of this topic. [...] Telling stories through art and song instantly transforms the accessibility of the information, tapping into our imaginations and the way we contemplate descriptions of places and experience”.

The project featured a range of activities, including an exhibition, Meet the Artist event, traditional whaling songs performance, and outreach programmes to engage with various community groups such as a local coffee morning and a babies and toddlers group. Through the different programme events the staff also engaged with a PhD student whose work was highly relevant, and who hosted a talk on the topic, offering an additional perspective on the frozen north. The exhibition, which included the commissioned art panels, was well attended with over 1,700 visitors.

Overall, **Arctic Ventures – Forgotten Stories of Scottish Whaling** successfully reached a wide range of audiences, including those interested in art, textiles and traditional music. The museum has developed and maintained relationships with local artists, musicians, and community groups – strengthening local history and cultural connections in the local area. The project also enabled them to explore the human element to the story of Scottish Arctic whaling, providing a more nuanced understanding of the industry and its impacts on people and culture. By incorporating stories and personal experiences into the exhibition and outreach activities, the project has been able to have a lasting impact beyond its duration, embedding the intangible cultural heritage of these stories within the community and the visitors to the museum.

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