



Ruthless Research

Final report:
Evaluation of the
Stirling Heritage Arts Award project

August 2018

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About Ruthless Research

Ruthless Research is an Edinburgh-based independent research consultancy, through which Ruth Stevenson provides a range of qualitative and quantitative research solutions to organisations who work for the benefit of the community.

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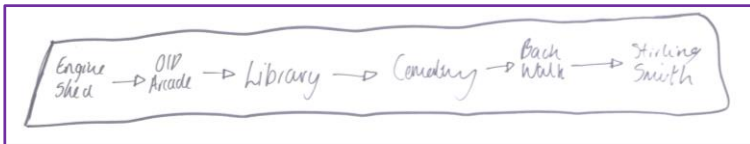
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and methodology

Stirling Heritage Arts Award was a year-long project delivered by See Think Make, in partnership with Scran (Historic Environment Scotland), and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Structured around the Silver Arts Award, young people aged 15+ used Stirling's heritage and a programme of Partner-led workshops an inspiration for their own arts practice and ultimately to co-design a heritage trail through Stirling.



Project partners included Scotland's Urban Past, The Engine Shed, The Smith Art Gallery and Museum, Stirling Castle, Historic Environment Scotland and Stirling Council, Forth Valley College, Dunblane High School and St Modan's High School, Media Education, Magic Torch Comics and Rachel O'Neill.



Ruth Stevenson of Ruthless Research evaluated the project, through creative sessions with project participants, email

feedback, feedback cards at the end of project event, and semi-structured telephone depth interviews with 12 project partners.

Key findings

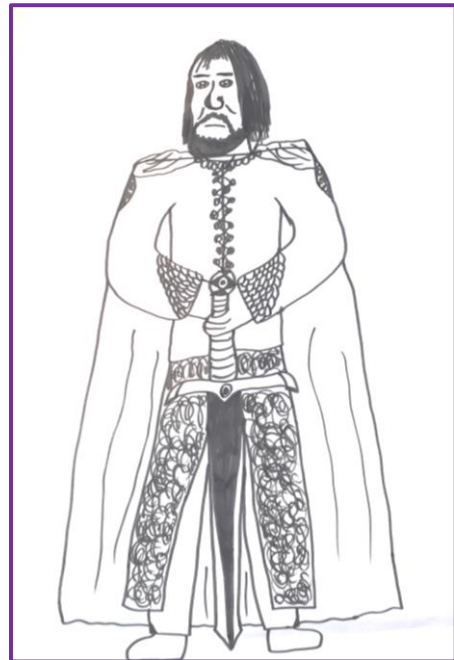
At the close of the evaluation, those involved with the Stirling Heritage Arts Award were very satisfied with the progress and outcomes of the project.

Positive impacts on participants included:

- Enthusiasm and enjoyment;
- Developing creative skills;
- Engagement with Stirling's heritage;
- Developing teamwork and connection with others;
- Enhanced confidence;
- A sense of pride and achievement;
- Gaining a recognised qualification;
- Access to an alternative route to learning.

Positive impacts on partners included:

- Personal interest and enjoyment;
- Learning about the Arts Award;
- Building professional networks.



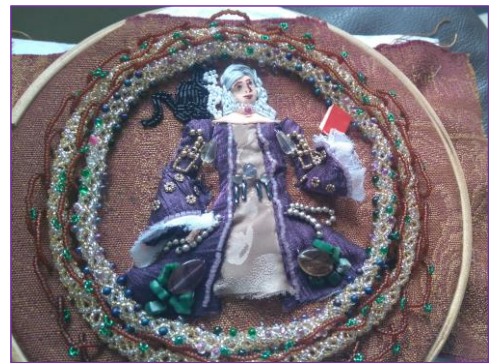
As such, there is no doubt that the project attained and exceeded the Heritage Lottery Fund outcome: *Outcomes for People – With our investment people will have: developed skills; learnt about heritage; changed their attitudes and/or behaviour; had an enjoyable experience.*



This was a complex project to manage, and it was challenging to participate in due to its open nature which demanded a 'leap of faith' for partners and participants alike. The group was small and hugely varied, including young people with complex needs. It was not straightforward to pitch the project at an appropriate level or generate the cohesiveness necessary to enable the intensive stage to develop organically.

However, it worked. The project lead must be commended for her vision, and the time and energy that she put into building relationships with the partners and young people.

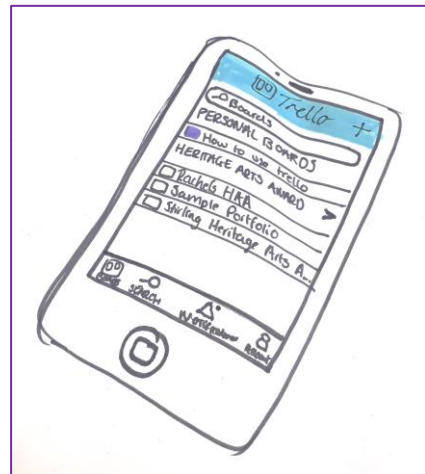
Retrospectively the partners were supportive of the model, and the approach taken including the Arts Award and the subject matter. Ultimately the project succeeded in delivering against the needs of multiple partners and providing positive impacts for the participating young people which will surely have a lasting legacy.



Learning from the project

Good practice which may be useful in the planning of future projects:

- Engage with potential partners at the earliest opportunity;
- Work with a wide variety of partners to inspire participants;
- Expect a drop-off in attendance;
- Expect attendance to be unreliable, and plan to spend time getting to know individuals and encouraging them to participate on a case-by-case basis;
- Plan to provide bespoke individual attention throughout every stage of the project;
- Look for ways to manage the group dynamic and build teamwork opportunities in the early stages;
- Use Trello (or similar) to prepare portfolios.



For future projects, earlier consideration could be put into:

- Project timings, to optimise conditions for working outdoors;
- The balance of arts and heritage across the course of the project;
- Ways to engage partners and participants with an open process;
- Ways to support the young people to continue with their creative work after the project has ended.

The success of the Stirling Heritage Arts Award and the useful learning points identified through careful reflection should provide a useful model upon which others could base their work.

Background and context

Stirling Heritage Arts Award was a year-long project delivered by See Think Make, in partnership with Scran (Historic Environment Scotland), and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It worked with young people, aged 15+ to explore Stirling's heritage and use it as an inspiration in their own arts practice.

The project worked across art forms, creating a bespoke programme of visits, workshops and talks to inspire and progress the young artist's leadership skills, creativity, artistic knowledge and understanding.

This was structured around the framework of the Silver Arts Award, and delivered in partnership with Scran, Scotland's Urban Past, The Engine Shed, The Smith Art Gallery and Museum, Stirling Castle, Historic Environment Scotland and Stirling Council, Forth Valley College, Dunblane High School and St Modan's High School, Media Education, Magic Torch Comics and Rachel O'Neill.

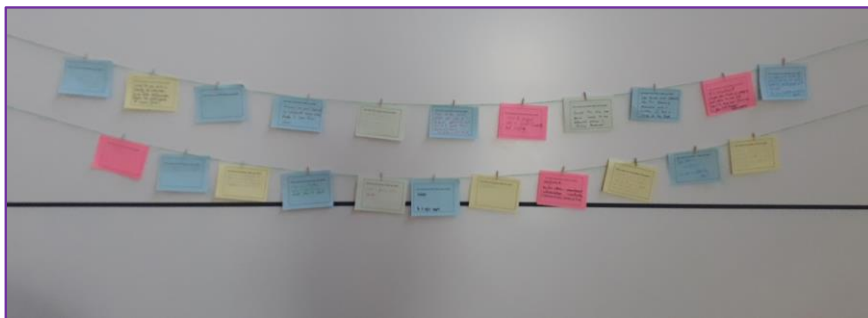
Towards the end of the project the young people made a creative heritage trail through Stirling, which is framed around a Discover Arts Award so that anyone aged up to 25 can gain an award from taking part in the trail.

Ultimately, the aim of the project was to deliver against the following Heritage Lottery Fund outcome: *Outcomes for People – With our investment people will have: developed skills; learnt about heritage; changed their attitudes and/or behaviour; had an enjoyable experience.*

Methodology

Ruth Stevenson of Ruthless Research was commissioned to evaluate the process and impact of the Stirling Heritage Arts Award project. The methodology for the evaluation comprised:

- Reading project documents stored on Trello;
- 2 creative sessions with project participants (drawing 'scenes' from the project, examples throughout the report);
- Email feedback from 2 participants;
- 12 semi-structured telephone depth interviews with project partners;
- Feedback cards at the end of project event (photo below);
- Written reflections from the project lead.



All of the data from the various components of the evaluation was collated and analysed, and the findings are provided in the following report.

KEY FINDINGS

This section of the report describes the key findings emerging from the evaluation.

Project process and progress

The following section describes the Stirling Heritage Arts Award project process, and response to this.

Initial meetings with potential partners

Very early on in the project process, Sarah the project lead had many meetings to explore potential partnership opportunities.

Sarah came in and met with us looking for support for the project, about what she was looking to do and the Arts Award and how we could get involved. (Partner 1)

They said would we be interested in getting involved in the project so I went to an initial meeting and heard about the project. (Partner 3)

We met with them before they kicked off the project, to see how we could work in practice. (Partner 4)

We met several times and talked about possibilities. That's where the foundations of the project started. (Partner 5)

My colleague suggested we had a meeting to see if we'd like to be involved and support it. We were very happy to do that. (Partner 7)

A wide variety of partners were supportive and these meetings helped to shape the emerging project.

Placing the project in Stirling

I'd never been to Stirling before, now it feels like home. (Participant session 2)

One of the first challenges for the project was to decide where to locate it, and Stirling was selected as being geographically appropriate and historically interesting.

We pinned down that Stirling would be a good place to base the award around. (Partner 3)

Choosing a location was fairly early on. Not being Edinburgh or Glasgow focused, so we thought Stirling had a lot to offer with its rich heritage and history. (Partner 5)

The Engine Shed (a building conservation centre) had just opened in Stirling, and this was also a key asset that drew the project to Stirling.

The new Engine Shed facility was opening so we thought that would be great to utilise the facilities and expertise. (Partner 5)

The Engine Shed had just opened and we thought it would be good to base it from the Engine Shed. (Partner 3)

Recruiting young people

A variety of young people were recruited to the project via leafleting, and talks at local schools and colleges.

She came in and spoke to groups on non-advanced learners. Level 4, 5 and 6. We thought they would benefit most from the arts award structure. They are working at a reasonably low level, they are still learning! Some struggle to achieve the awards they are completing at college. The demands on the HN students are significant so we didn't think they would be able to commit the time. Someone from an advanced programme did sign up although we didn't target it at them. (Partner 1)

The young people that participated were drawn to the project for a variety of reasons.

Some were interested in history:

That's what got me into it, I was interested in history. I look up things on Youtube channels based on history. (Participant session 1)

I was interested in history at school. (Participant session 1)

Some wanted to focus on their art skills:

To prove to myself I had more art skills. (Participant session 2)

I saw it as an opportunity to learn new things creatively - which sounded cool. (Participant email feedback 1)

I wanted to develop my art practice. (Participant email feedback 2)

Others were looking to take a positive step in their lives:

See Think Make, Scran and Partners present:
Stirling Heritage Arts Award Project
For young people aged 15-25

- Develop your artistic practice (any art form)
- Gain inspiration from Stirling's past
- Achieve a Silver Arts Award
- Create a youth-led heritage trail for other young people

When?
Introduction day: Saturday 25th November
Workshops on various Saturdays and some evenings from December to March & Easter Holidays

Interested?
Go to www.seethinkmake.co.uk/heritage to find out more
Any questions or to sign up, email sarah@seethinkmake.co.uk or message us on facebook
We're also happy to come and speak to a group or individual before signing up

See Think Make | SCRAN | Scotland's Urban Past | Stirling Castle | Heritage Lottery Fund | LOTTERY FUNDED

To use a bit less drink in my day, instead of being in a depressed mood learn a bit about history and art. (Participant session 2)

I wanted to prove to myself that I could achieve [an accreditation of the same standard as] a National 5. (Participant session 2)

I just moved to Stirling when I heard about the project so I decided to join to have something to do with my time and meet new people. (Participant email feedback 1)

A variety of workshops

They came in and showed us their craft and we had a wee try. (Participant session 1)

The first block of project sessions involved a series of one-off workshops run by professional practitioners, designed to introduce the young people to a variety of techniques and ideas.

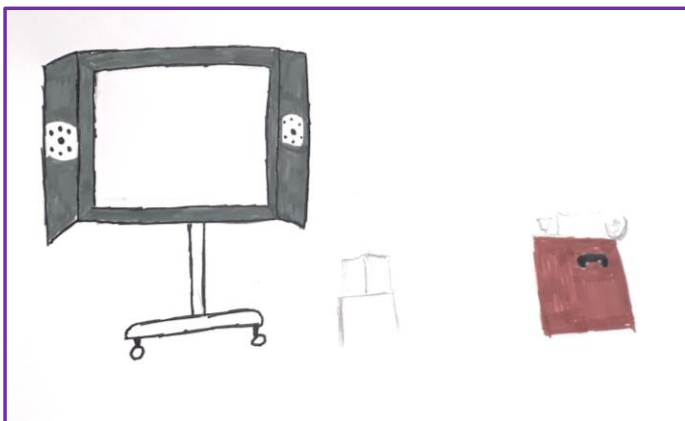
She was keen to invite practitioners to do a one off session to inspire practice. It should be interesting for their arts practice but also connected to the idea of heritage. (Partner 11)

Partners and experts to introduce different approaches. (Partner 5)

Artists came in. Some were specific towards a heritage context and some were more broad and open. Maybe it was good that the first few weeks had an openness. (Partner 10)

A series of different activities to get their creative juices going. (Partner 3)

The sessions were very varied in content.



The guy from the Engine Shed telling us about the materials. Telling us what it originally was. (Participant session 1)

We did a session on mapping and the history of mapping, then story maps and how they could use that as a tool. (Partner 3)

They looked at the SCRAN records using ipads to do their research. (Partner 4)

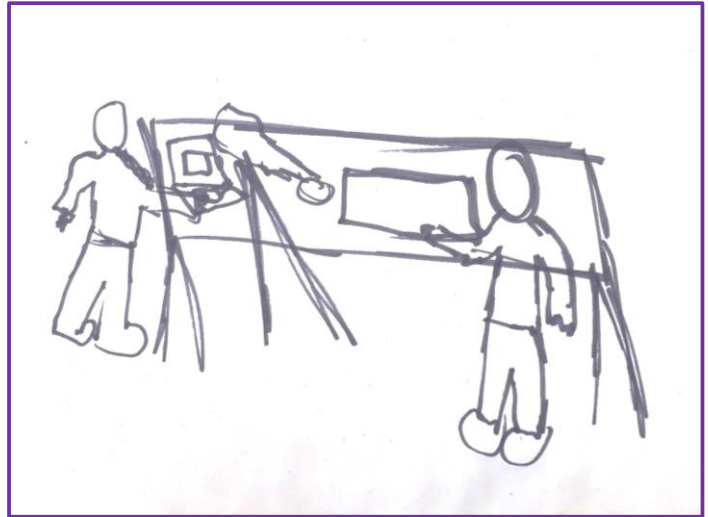
There was a 3D scanner and printer in the Engine Shed, we got an idea of how objects could be reproduced. Fascinating. (Partner 6)

They had some comic book artists come in, I was very intrigued to see that. (Partner 7)

The animation session went quite well. (Partner 8)

I provided a drawing activity. (Partner 9)

I presented my arts practice, introducing the work I make, and then we did a workshop in the Engine Shed with drawing and observation exercises. (Partner 11)



The workshops also involved an element of discussion and critique.

The young people were really able to talk about each other's work even though it was sometimes quite different to their own. One way to assess the learning, their confidence in language and articulation. (Partner 11)

We discussed our artistic differences. (Participant session 2)

The young people enjoyed the workshops and appreciated the opportunity to try new things.

My favourite part of the project was learning about different artists and their art forms through the workshops. It was very interesting to see how the professionals work and get to acquire some basic skills in other art forms. (Participant email feedback 2)

They came in and showed us their craft and we had a wee try. (Participant session 1)

Using Stirling's people and spaces for inspiration

We met a lot of people, like living history. (Participant session 2)

In the early stages of the project, many of Stirling's spaces were visited and explored to provide inspiration for the young people.

We got around a lot of Stirling and learned about the heritage of the buildings. (Partner 2)

Starting to pick out the heritage sites. (Partner 6)

The Castle and graveyard were key sites for visiting.



They took inspiration from the Castle. (Partner 4)

We looked round the Castle which was amazing. (Partner 6)

We went to Stirling Castle to learn from it. (Participant session 2)

It was the Castle, the Graveyard below the castle. Doing walk arounds. (Partner 2)

We looked at the graveyard, looking at architecture that summed up the passage of time. (Partner 3)

The Engine Shed was used as a base and a learning opportunity.

They used the Engine Shed as a base. There was plenty of room and they could leave their stuff. (Partner 4)

We went to the Engine Shed multiple times. (Participant session 2)

The young people looked at a variety of artefacts and resources.



They used some of the artefacts and costumes as part of the project. (Partner 2)

We went to that room with all the weapons and armour. (Participant session 1)

The actual statue was pretty cool it had a cape. (Participant session 1)

I brought in a whole load of books about Stirling. (Partner 3)

They also enjoyed learning from the people of Stirling.

We met a lot of people, like living history. We hear a lot about battles, not always social history which gives a place its identity. People were so lovely to deal with and helpful with our trail. (Participant session 2)



Preparing the trail

It is my baby. (Participant session 2)

For the Silver Unit 2 leadership project, the group spent an intensive block of sessions preparing a creative heritage trail through Stirling. This component of the project was led by the young people, who took forward ideas based on their interests and learning.

The trail was all about testing out the skills that we had learned. (Participant session 2)

It would depend on the young people and what would pique their interest. It is community led, it depends what the community is interested in and what they latch on to. (Partner 3)

It was nice to see the trail bringing different threads together. It allowed the different interests and abilities of the individuals to shine through. It was quite a fluid process, that was good. (Partner 9)

They were able to use skills they had picked up earlier, especially the animation. (Partner 10)

Again, the city of Stirling was used as inspiration.

We took them through the town on possible routes for the trail. We looked at the Castle as a series of spaces that you move through, and not just an architectural pile. To help them think about their trail and moving through the town. (Partner 3)

I led the young people round the Castle to think about views and on a small scale what a trail might look like. (Partner 9)

The young people found it challenging to get started and find their roles within the team.

Making the trail was a challenge because I have never done this before. It pushed me to take initiative and build my leadership skills. (Participant email feedback 2)

We were lost at first. It is finding a starting point. (Participant session 2)

I think all of us were new to this. (Participant session 2)

This was also noted by the partners.

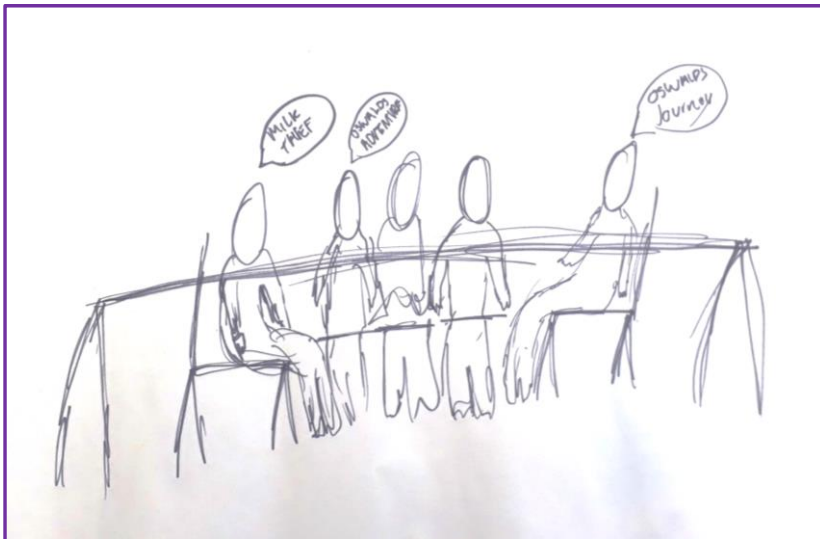


They needed to find their roles but they could lead on what they felt their strengths are. It was a slow start but they were faced with the challenge of a deadline and they seemed to really respond to that natural pressure. (Partner 10)

There was quite a lot still to do, I got the impression there was a slight lack of leadership with the young people deciding exactly what they were doing. (Partner 9)

Once they assigned themselves their own roles and what they were expected to deliver, and the momentum began. (Partner 5)

The young people decided to make an animation introducing a storyline to the trail.



Animation became a solid part of the trail project. Two of the young people took a lead with the animation. Not everyone wanted to do it, they did other things. (Partner 8)

I really enjoyed the animation and how it linked in with the central character. (Partner 3)

I thought it was great, really funny, the story was good. (Partner 8)

They were able to weave some good narrative through it. That demonstrates learning and a connection to the themes being explored. (Partner 10)

The animation was great! It was very Monty Python looking. People were making connections to South Park. (Participant session 1)

The trail was framed around a Discover Arts Award, so that anyone aged up to 25 could gain an award from taking part in the trail.

The young people put a lot of thought into making the trail appropriate for the audience.

For families going about Stirling, I think they managed to pitch it really rather well. (Partner 5)

It was for children so we thought it needed a story – Oswald the cat. (Participant session 2)

You can do the trail just with WIFI hotspots so people don't have to rely on their contracts. (Partner 3)

Some meant you'd need to pay to get into the Castle, and they wanted to keep it free to make it accessible. (Partner 6)

Looking at things that have stayed the same and things that have changed – a really good way of getting little children to think about time passing. The wording of the trail is very open to drawing the thing. They've really thought about it from a non-school perspective. We want it to be not too much like school! (Partner 6)



The young people also tested the trail with a primary school class, which went well.

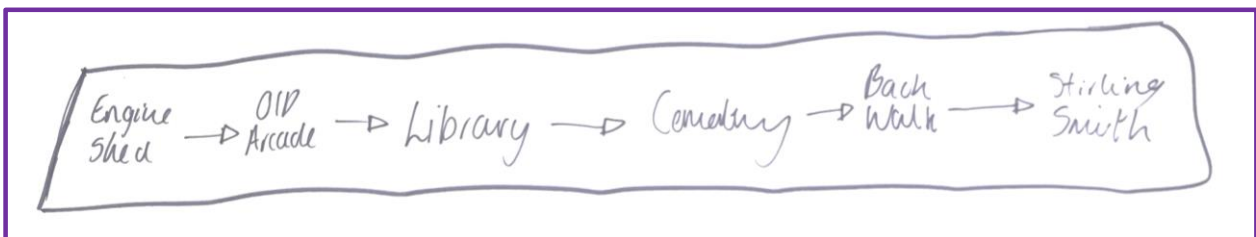
I saw the trail being tested with a primary school class. (Partner 6)

They did well to evaluate it with the people involved. Putting it into action automatically provided feedback, raising questions about how people on the trail will engage with it. So that adds depth. (Partner 10)

The children really enjoyed it. (Partner 6)

We were really happy, the children liked it. (Participant session 2)

Ultimately, the trail was well received.



They have created a trail that works really well, engages children and that they enjoy doing. It was wonderful, a really good trail. (Partner 6)

The trail itself was really impressive. (Partner 8)

In total 24 Discover Arts Award were achieved when testing the Trail. A further 100+ awards are planned as part of Stirling's TopFest and the Engine Shed's DigiFest in the Autumn.

Exhibition and launch

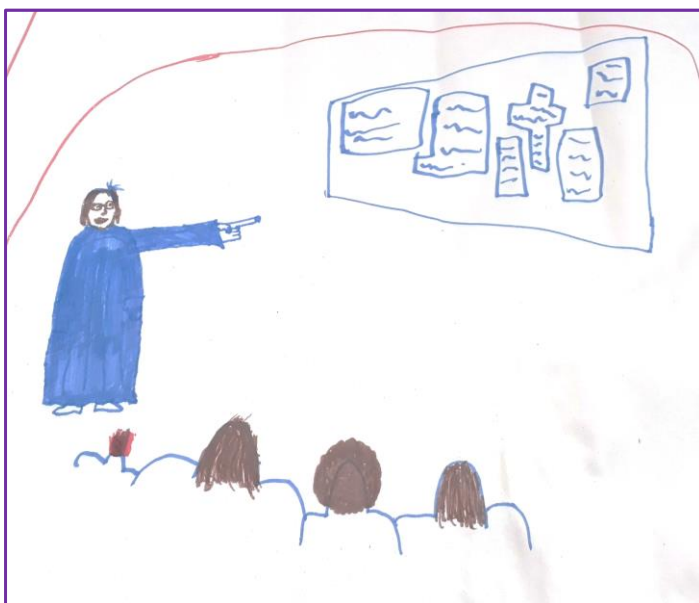
At the end of the project, a closing event was held at the Engine Shed. It involved a mini exhibition sharing the young people's artwork and some presentations about the project journey. A variety of partners were invited to attend.



The partners felt that this was an important occasion, to celebrate the project and its outcomes.

I went to the launch and saw the work produced. A really nice outcome to show their work off. Very important. (Partner 2)

It is nice to see the work they had done here now being displayed. (Partner 4)



I think the event was really good, great to celebrate the young people. (Partner 5)

It is always a good idea to have an event and celebrate what the young people have done and share in the success. (Partner 8)

It brings the project to a close and celebrates the project, so I think it is really important. (Partner 12)

We saw what the students had created which was really positive. (Partner 1)

That said, two partners stated that they would have liked to see a larger exhibition.

I'd have liked to see a bit more in the exhibition. More of their artwork, different directions it had gone in. (Partner 3)

I think there's not enough really to call it an exhibition. A mini-exhibition, a glimpse. (Partner 5)

Final Award

In total six young people were assessed for the Silver Arts Award – an RQF Level 2 qualification.

Their individual portfolios were assessed for learning against:

Arts practice and pathways:

- identifying and planning an arts challenge
- implementing and reviewing the arts challenge
- reviewing arts events and sharing their views
- undertaking arts research

Arts leadership:

- identifying a leadership role and planning the project's aims
- planning the practical issues
- being an effective arts leader
- working effectively with others
- reviewing their project and leadership role

All six young people passed.



The impact of participation

The following section describes the impact that participating in the project had on the young people.

Enthusiasm and enjoyment

Many noted that the young people engaged very well with the project and their enthusiasm was apparent.

Such enthusiasm from the participants. (Final event feedback card)

It seemed to work really well, they all engaged very positively and were keen to come back. They were all quite determined and quite focused. (Partner 4)

They worked really well, you could see the thought and creativity coming out of the young people. The concentration, the interest, the passion. (Partner 7)

Inspired... by the ideas, commitment, collaboration, creativity, relationships, sense of fun. (Final event feedback card)

I think the ones really enjoyed it that followed it through to the end. (Partner 10)

Participants enjoyment and satisfaction was clearly evident. (Final event feedback card)

Developing creative skills

The young people had the opportunity to learn a range of creative skills from professional practitioners.

Learning new skills from working artists. The skillset they had got by the end of it all. (Partner 2)

I had the chance to learn from true professionals and I developed new skills. (Participant email feedback 2)

As a consequence, a variety of high quality creative outputs were produced.

The individual arts challenges produced some amazing work. (Partner 6)

I was very impressed with the work that they created. (Partner 12)

The things that the young people made were all completely different. (Partner 11)

The animations and films received a lot of positive attention.



They came up with some nice animations, one of them used it for her final piece in her portfolio for the Arts Award. (Partner 8)

Great outcomes with the animations and films produced. The animation created was fantastic. (Partner 2)

One girl made a wonderful animation. (Partner 6)

I thought the film was great. (Final event feedback card)

I really liked the film that they made. (Partner 12)

One individual's embroidery piece was also singled out for praise.

The Stirling Head in beadwork was fantastic, really good. (Partner 3)

She produced a Stirling Head style piece of embroidery. It was a really lovely example of taking inspiration from what she'd been doing and taking it into her artwork. (Partner 6)



Engagement with Stirling's heritage

Linked to the above, several partners felt that the young people had engaged very closely with Stirling and its heritage.

They really engaged with the city which was a positive thing. (Partner 1)

It has made the history of the town come alive. (Final event feedback card)

The history of the area inspired what they produced. The artwork and animations. (Partner 2)

It related on quite a personal level with the place. (Partner 10)

Teamwork and connection

I learned that even though people may seem strange/different, I can still get on well with them and form friendships. (Participant email feedback 1)

Although it took some time to develop, the group of young people eventually connected and learned to work together as a team.

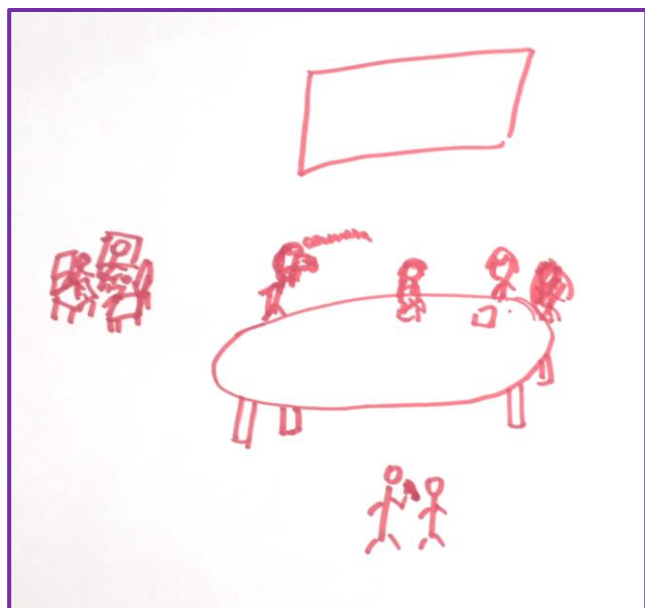
My favourite part of the project is the people. I met a very diverse group of people which sort of challenged me - I like a lot of the people that were involved in the project so that is my favourite part because it was enjoyable working with fun people. (Participant email feedback 1)

We got to know each other.
(Participant session 2)

We worked together well.
(Participant session 2)

You could see them sparking off each other. (Partner 5)

Working as a team was obviously beneficial to them all. They all had a role and learned to work with other people and compromise and listen. (Partner 6)



For the animation that they had to work with one another. Because of the teamwork element the young people became a bit more talkative. You saw them talking together without being forced. By the end they had had the common experience of these common tasks and they were able to connect. (Partner 8)

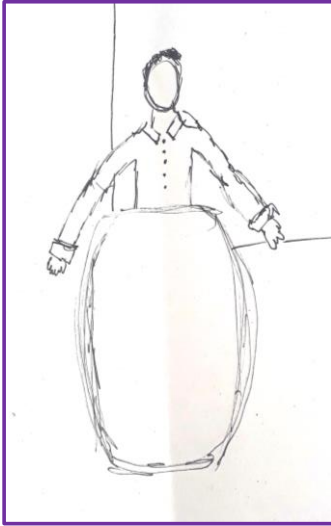
Confidence

Over the course of the project, the young people gained confidence.

Only six of the young people completed their Silvers. But all six of them are ones that it has probably been most beneficial to. I've seen the difference. And it is captured in films. You can see the difference in body language. (Partner 6)

I think taking part in the project has helped me gain confidence in my own ideas/abilities to complete tasks. (Participant email feedback 1)

It was significant that two of the young people presented at the final event, showing a substantial increase in confidence.



I got up and talked! (Participant session 1)

Some of them actually spoke, they were quite shy at the beginning and you could see the confidence they had gained. (Partner 2)

I think it was good that the young people got a chance to get up and speak to the crowd. Those two young guys – one had been awkward and one incredibly shy. So to see them do that was really nice. (Partner 3)

Lovely to hear them stand up and speak in front of the group. (Partner 5)

A sense of pride and achievement

**You think artists are at the top of their game, so to have your work in an exhibition...!
This made me feel like an artist. (Participant session 2)**

The young people demonstrated a strong sense of pride and achievement in their work.

The young people were proud of what they produced and talking about the artwork on the walls. (Partner 2)

They were invested in what they had made which was the most important thing. (Partner 10)

It was good to see them recognised, to feel what they've done is an achievement. (Partner 3)

Talking to them you really felt their genuine sense of achievement. (Final event feedback card)

Putting the work in a public place, there's a certain validation that comes through that. It is nice for them. It showed them we appreciated what they had done. (Partner 10)



Challenges and learning points

The following section describes the project challenges and learning points emerging from the evaluation.

Limited numbers

In total, only six individuals completed the project and received the Arts Award. Some felt that this was a low number of participants.

There wasn't many young people there. (Partner 9)

There were less people there than expected. (Partner 11)

Several young people had dropped out along the way.

The numbers dropped dramatically. Maybe it wasn't for them. (Participant session 1)

It would have been good if more people had finished it. (Partner 6)

More signed up and there was some fall away as always. (Partner 1)

Some people dropped out. (Partner 10)

It was a shame that the attendance dropped off. (Partner 3)

It was also difficult to maintain a consistent group of participants, and a lot of effort was put into encouraging attendance.

Sarah had been struggling with attendance. (Partner 11)

Attendance was a bit erratic. I think it would have been more successful with the numbers, if a core group was there to keep the energy up. (Partner 9)

Sometimes sporadic attendance, we didn't get a consistent group. A lot of work had to go into jollying people along and encouraging people to come along on different days. At certain points it was a bit like herding cats. (Partner 5)

Managing the group dynamic

The partners noted what a varied group of young people participated in the project.

In this project the young people were vastly different. (Partner 8)

We came down to a group of six, all very different. (Partner 5)

The young people varied in age:

We had some 15 year olds, right up to the limit. It was quite a range. (Partner 5)

The age range taking part is quite wide. (Partner 6)

The young people varied in education:

Young people with a degree, young people just started college. (Partner 8)

Not just people in school but a couple of graduates. (Partner 9)

Additionally, one of the group had Asperger's.

One has Asperger's. (Partner 6)

What linked the group was that many of them were very shy and lacked confidence.

They were a quiet group. (Partner 11)

Quite reticent types. Chronic shyness. (Partner 6)

Young people with really low confidence. (Partner 8)

We were all shy, with all the people it was intimidating. (Participant session 2)

The challenging part of the project for me was being out of my comfort zone. There were a lot of firsts for me during the project - this made me a little nervous. (Participant email feedback 1)

This variety, linked with a lack of confidence, meant that it was challenging for the partners to manage the group dynamic.

The varied abilities of the people taking part could be quite challenging at times. (Partner 9)

I think it was quite difficult because a group dynamic had not been established yet. So we needed to find ways for that group to be built. (Partner 10)

We had to get a disparate group to come together. (Partner 5)

However, with some careful attention everyone was enabled to participate.

I'd been warned that the young people were mixed ability, that they wouldn't talk too much. But we're used to that. So I gave them the confidence first to try things. They all got involved and made something. (Partner 8)

Lots of teamwork, it took all of that groundwork, but it was good fun and they were more relaxed and clearer on what they need to do. (Partner 5)

One Partner highlighted that these challenges were likely to persist, and that the young people would likely need more support to continue with their creative work.

All of them face quite a lot of difficulties and will need more careful support to keep on the creative ladder. They've all got so much potential. (Partner 6)

Belief in the process

The Stirling Heritage Arts Award was designed to be led by the young people, and thus the process was open-ended.

I don't think I knew what it would look like, there was a genuine openness. (Partner 10)

It was very youth led so we didn't know where they would take it. (Partner 8)

The project can go in directions you didn't expect it to. (Partner 3)

Some of the partners struggled at first to have confidence in the process and belief that it would all come together.

At the beginning we weren't sure of quite what form it would take. There always is a bit of anxiety around knowing what it might turn out as. (Partner 3)

Before it happened I was a bit concerned about what on earth would happen and we would create. (Partner 5)

I don't think it was clear about how the elements could merge together. I think that could have been given a bit more thought. (Partner 10)

Some were also initially concerned that the time frame would be inadequate.

I'm a control freak, I'm like we don't have enough time! (Partner 5)

They wanted to achieve so much in such a short period of time. (Partner 4)

Balancing the focus

At the close of the project, some of the partners commented that they would have preferred to see a greater focus on heritage.

For some of the young people the heritage is why they joined, so there could maybe a heavier focus on the heritage side for their sake. Work it up a bit more. (Partner 3)

I imagined they would be much more focused on archives, I feel the direction of the project got diluted and the archive element got lost. (Partner 5)

There was maybe not as much heritage, maybe the links were not completely overt. (Partner 9)

Geographic location

It was noted that locating the project in Stirling may have been inconvenient for some, and so may have put people off participating.

We advertised to project across three campuses, it may have put some learners off focusing on Stirling. (Partner 1)

Linked to this, a number of the participating young people mentioned that regular travel to Stirling had been an issue for them.

Too much to travel. (Participant session 1)

It is an hour away for me! I live in Glasgow! (Participant session 2)

Do it in Alloa! (Participant session 2)

A further concern was that it may have been difficult for the young people to connect with Stirling's heritage if they were not local.

Although it is based in Stirling, not all of the young people are from Stirling. So they might not have local stories. (Partner 3)

That said, one of the participants felt that not being local was an asset.

Sometimes things stick out more, that if you are a local you don't notice. (Participant session 2)

Terrible weather

I was out in the freezing snow drawing away. (Participant session 2)

The project coincided with an unusually prolonged period of heavy snow and bad weather, which made it challenging to work outside.

The weather! The time of the year, as a lot of it was outdoors and they were outside. (Partner 2)

They still met up when the weather was not so nice. (Partner 4)

This was the year we had the snow. Stirling was closed! (Participant session 2)

That snow became quite a recurring thing, we were blighted by the weather! I wouldn't do it in the winter! It was very much learning out of doors. (Partner 5)

Support for the project model

The following section describes the support that the Stirling Heritage Arts Award project received.

Support for a partnership project model

I had the chance to learn from true professionals. (Participant email feedback 2)

The partners spoke about their support for the project plan.

We were supportive of the project, it sounded like a really good project. (Partner 1)

As a project model I was really keen to be involved. (Partner 6)

We're very open to working with partners offering opportunities with young people. (Partner 12)

I think it is a really good idea, a good model to have different practitioners to feed a project then to stop that and explore the different creative ideas. (Partner 11)

The scale and quality of the partnership was appreciated.

They got so many people and partners involved. (Partner 2)

The partners were all open and supportive and flexible. (Partner 6)

It was a very good partnership. (Partner 7)

Several mentioned that this kind of approach was personally appealing.

I'm from an architectural background and a lot of the work I do can be quite removed from that, so this seemed like quite a hands-on opportunity. I was excited about the prospect. A really nice project to be involved in. (Partner 9)

It sounded quite exciting and interesting. (Partner 3)

I was really happy, it is what I like doing best. (Partner 11)

It was also a good opportunity to build professional networks.

It was good to make links with different organisations, I enjoyed watching how other artists worked. (Partner 10)

Meeting other professionals doing similar work, that isn't always the case. (Partner 9)

We met other potential partners in Stirling to create a network for us. (Partner 5)

Support for the Arts Award

I wanted to prove to myself that I could achieve [an accreditation of the same standard as] a National 5. (Participant session 2)

The Stirling Heritage Arts Award project was based around the Silver Arts Award.

Several partners said that they had been interested to take part in the project to learn more about the Arts Award concept.

She told us about the Arts Award and that she was keen to do a heritage-related project. She was keen to try out some new things within the Arts Award framework. I was quite excited about the prospect of it. I thought it was a great opportunity to do a different kind of project. (Partner 5)

I think Arts Award works because it is about the art skills and the leadership skills. It is quite holistic. It was nice to see the model could be used that way. (Partner 10)

Arts Award is not something we've had the capacity to follow up on, so I was interested. (Partner 12)

Many of the partners commented that being able to offer an accredited Award was very beneficial for participants in terms of recognition and employability.

Anything that certifies, a certified award is good for their confidence and employability. Something tangible to be achieved at the end. (Partner 1)

The Arts Award sets a particular standard. In the competitive marketplace for university or college or jobs if you've undertaken something in your own free time and free will it should be recognised and rewarded. (Partner 7)

It is something concrete they can put on their CV, a qualification. (Partner 3)

For those that haven't been able to get another accreditation, well that accreditation is really important. (Partner 12)

I think it is incredibly valuable to acknowledge the achievements, so having the award is excellent. (Partner 5)

As a consequence of working on this project, two of the partners intended to take on the Arts Award concept in their own workplaces.

I think we may well take Arts Award forward, it is a distinct possibility. (Partner 5)

I'm now looking at how we can incorporate Arts Award into our programmes, so that has been positive. (Partner 12)

Merging arts and heritage

An art project that mixed history and art I thought that was pretty cool. (Participant session 1)

The partners were extremely supportive of the concept of a project combining arts and heritage.

I think it is great, there is so many stories that you can take from heritage and the past. And have a creative way of expressing stories of the past and inspiration for new ideas. All entwined, it works well together. (Partner 2)

It was good to bring arts and heritage together. They go hand in hand. (Partner 4)

It is a natural crossover, they feed each other. (Partner 5)

Creative ways of engaging with heritage bring it to life and helps you interpret the stories and what it means to you personally. It is extremely powerful. (Partner 7)

It is a good way to engage young people with heritage sites. They experience the stories, and they also make their own stories. (Partner 8)

Broadening of the creativity agenda, understanding how arts can be used within a greater remit. New perspectives on what can be quite drab, dull material. (Partner 10)

The opportunity to combine something heritage based and arts based, which is quite unique. (Partner 10)

I've been interested in the idea of art that has a social value and art being paired up with other disciplines. I think art and heritage is an interesting place for me. Really interesting things emerge when you put two things together. I'd like to think it is the future of art-making. So it seems like a good thing to do. (Partner 11)

Similarly, some of the feedback from the final event also supported combining arts and heritage.

Wonderful to see how heritage can be brought to life by different creative arts. (Final event feedback card)

Love to see more projects like this blending expressive arts and history. (Final event feedback card)

The value of the model

I think this project is a brilliant way to learn about the heritage and make young people care more about their history. (Participant email feedback 2)

At the close of the Stirling Heritage Arts Award project, all were very supportive of the project and what had been achieved.

It was a really valuable project. (Partner 1)

A very good project. I love to see these kind of projects happening. (Partner 2)

It is a good piece of work. (Partner 4)

It was a high quality accessible opportunity. (Partner 12)

From my point of view the whole project went really well. (Partner 7)

Similarly supportive comments were collected at the final project event.

It's excellent. (Final event feedback card)

This project is inspiring! (Final event feedback card)

A wonderful outcome. (Final event feedback card)

Happy to see young people get such a fantastic opportunity and chance to explore their talents and boost confidence. (Final event feedback card)

I think the project was a great success and inspiring. (Final event feedback card)

Further enablers of success

The following section describes further enablers of the success of the Stirling Heritage Arts Award project.

An alternative to mainstream learning

The young people engaged well with the project, and for some a particular benefit was that it provided an alternative route to learning.

Some of the young people had problems engaging with college, but really engaged with this project. College and school isn't always right for everyone. (Partner 12)

It's not like college where you do history or you do art... it is this blurring. I think being away from the college environment was really important. (Partner 10)

One of the learners struggled at college this year but has thrived on the heritage project and will be on track for the arts award. (Partner 1)

He said how different it is from college for him. (Partner 6)

Ability to provide bespoke individual attention

Although the numbers participating were low, this enabled the partners to work intensively with individual young people and give them the one-to-one attention that they needed.

Having the time to work intensively with the young people, for some of them that really really benefits. (Partner 1)

It is working on their soft skills, where they wouldn't have had the same support at the college. That one-to-one attention that they need. (Partner 3)

It was nice because of the particular needs of the group and how everybody had a different approach. So I could find more time to talk to them about their making. (Partner 11)

The right project lead for the job

The project lead – Sarah Longfield – was praised for her vision, project management and engagement with the young people.

Sarah was great in how she was organised and her manner was supportive and encouraging. (Partner 1)

Sarah did really well with the young people getting the ones to come back to the fold that had started to disappear, and making sure the end product was led by what they wanted to do. You need somebody on the ground constantly in contact who is understanding if they sleep in or miss the bus... (Partner 3)

Sarah is very thorough in her project management and plans and she got a great team to work on it. (Partner 6)

Sarah is very easy and straightforward to work with. (Partner 7)

Building relationship with Sarah has been great and learning a lot from her as I'm looking at doing more projects. (Partner 10)

Using Trello

**Trello. It works. But it took me a while to work out how it actually works.
(Participant session 1)**

The online collaboration tool Trello was used to plan the project and maintain individual portfolios, and this worked very well.

They had their portfolios up on Trello. (Partner 3)

The portfolios were on Trello. (Participant session 2)

The way the portfolios have been put together using Trello is quite new and it really does work. (Partner 6)



Summary and conclusions

At the close of the evaluation, those involved with the Stirling Heritage Arts Award were very satisfied with the progress and outcomes of the project.

Positive impacts on participants included:

- Enthusiasm and enjoyment;
- Developing creative skills;
- Engagement with Stirling's heritage;
- Developing teamwork and connection with others;
- Enhanced confidence;
- A sense of pride and achievement;
- Gaining a recognised qualification;
- Access to an alternative route to learning.

Positive impacts on partners included:

- Personal interest and enjoyment;
- Learning about the Arts Award;
- Building professional networks.

As such, there is no doubt that the project attained and exceeded the Heritage Lottery Fund outcome: *Outcomes for People – With our investment people will have: developed skills; learnt about heritage; changed their attitudes and/or behaviour; had an enjoyable experience.*

This was a complex project to manage, and it was challenging to participate in due to its open nature which demanded a 'leap of faith' for partners and participants alike. The group was small and hugely varied, including young people that were 'chronically shy' and could be unreliable. It was not straightforward to pitch the project at an appropriate level or generate the cohesiveness necessary to enable the intensive stage to develop organically. However, it worked. The project lead must be commended for her vision, and the time and energy that she put into building relationships with the partners and young people – which proved a substantial challenge but for which she received only glowing praise.

Overall, as a model the Stirling Heritage Arts Award worked well and retrospectively the partners were supportive of the approach taken including the Arts Award and the subject matter. Ultimately the project succeeded in delivering against the needs of multiple partners and providing positive impacts for the participating young people which will surely have a lasting legacy.

Through trial and error many useful learning points and elements of good practice came out of the project and may be useful in the planning of future projects:

- Engage with potential partners at the earliest opportunity;
- Work with a wide variety of partners to inspire participants;
- Expect a drop-off in attendance;

- Expect attendance to be unreliable, and plan to spend time getting to know individuals and encouraging them to participate on a case-by-case basis;
- Plan to provide bespoke individual attention throughout every stage of the project;
- Look for ways to manage the group dynamic and build teamwork opportunities in the early stages;
- Use Trello (or similar) to prepare portfolios.

For future projects, earlier consideration could be put into:

- Project timings, to optimise conditions for working outdoors;
- The balance of arts and heritage across the course of the project;
- Ways to engage partners and participants with an open process;
- Ways to support the young people to continue with their creative work after the project has ended.

The success of the Stirling Heritage Arts Award and the useful learning points identified through careful reflection should provide a useful model upon which others could base their work in the future.