

**'Know Your Place' Project
Walsall (Blakenall)**

Independent Evaluation

What next. . . ?

Money Saved. Quality Assured.



'Know Your Place' Project Walsall (Blakenall)

Independent Evaluation



**Know Your Place Exhibition Event
Project Coordinator (3rd from left)**

Commissioned by
Local Community 50 Plus Forum

Funded by
Heritage Lottery Fund

Delivered by
Wider Impact Consultancy Ltd
www.widerimpact.com



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Appendix A Partner Agency / 'Expert' Feedback

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Wider Impact Consultancy has been invited by the **Local Community 50 Plus Forum** to independently evaluate the '**Know Your Place**' Project, which has been operating within the **Blakenall, Bloxwich and Leamore** areas of **Walsall**.

The over **arching aim** of the Project, funded by the **Heritage Lottery Fund** has been to *enhance community cohesion by re-aligning peoples' knowledge and experiences, capturing local heritage in the 1920s onwards.*

1.2 Our Approach

Our approach to this commission has been structured, involving desk and field research. In addition to examining documents such as the original funding application, agreements between the commissioner and the funder and client evaluation / feedback forms, we have met one to one and interviewed those closely involved with the delivery of the Project. We have also taken opportunity to visit the area, and observe key meetings and events.

1.3 Our Findings

We are delighted to present an extremely **positive report**, and have no doubts that the over arching aim has been **achieved**. As will be noted within the body of this report:

- Individual Project aims have been **100% achieved**
- Project objectives have been **largely achieved**
- Activities agreed with the funder have been delivered as agreed

We have no doubts that in addition to largely delivering on agreed aims and objectives, the Project has demonstrated clear **value for money**. We note in particular comments made by a key member of the **Walsall Local History Centre** - *There can be no doubts that this Project has been of immense value to the local community, the Borough, and the Country as a whole. The Project has 'discovered' a large number of photographs, images and audio tapes that were previously unknown to us. We cannot put a price on what we now have at our disposal; the material is of **high quality** and is **priceless**. It risked being lost forever, **but for this Project**.*

We also note '**wider impacts**':

- Enhanced **community cohesion** achieved by re-alighting peoples' knowledge and experiences of local heritage
- Enhanced '**community well-being**' as local people (young and older) continue to socialise, support each other, and share '*life's experiences*'
- Enhanced **use of local facilities** such as the **Stan Ball Centre**

1.4 Conclusions

It is our view that the achievements of this Project should not go unnoticed at local and national levels. We have noted **good practice** that is worthy of note and replication by others delivering similar community based projects and initiatives.

We are pleased to **commend** this Project and all of those involved in its delivery. We make particular note of the **Project Coordinator**, whose hard work, dedication and interest in such a vibrant and historically important community has certainly paid dividends.

2.0 Acknowledgements

2.1 Introduction

We are grateful to the following individuals who have kindly contributed to this report:

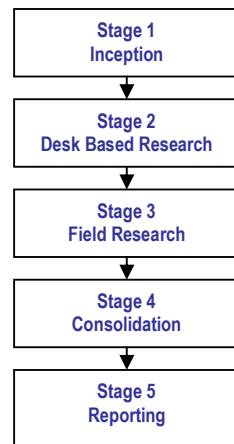
- **Eleanor Boycott**, Chief Executive Officer, Bloxwich Community Partnership (BCP)
- **Professor Carl Chinn MBE**, Professor of Community History at Birmingham University
- **Jenny Cartwright**, 'Know Your Place' Project Coordinator
- **Peter Heath**, Head Teacher, Blakenall Junior School
- **Albert Hodgkins**, Vice Chair, Local Community 50 Plus Forum
- **John Jones**, Chair, Local Community 50 Plus Forum
- **Barbara Mulqueen**, Local Resident
- **Vicky Rimmer**, Local Studies Assistant (Oral History), Walsall Local History Centre
- **Stuart Williams**, Senior Achieves Assistant, Walsall Local History Centre

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

As **Figure 1** outlines, we have taken a structured approach to this commission.

Figure 1



3.2 Desk Research

We have accessed and analysed:

- The funding application to the principal funder (**The Heritage Lottery Fund**)
- Agreement documents between the funder and the commissioner (**Local Community 50 Plus Forum**)
- Evaluation forms / letters / emails submitted by participants / local community members
- Emails / letters / emails submitted by partner agency members / 'experts'
- Photographs / images collated by the Project
- Flyers / marketing material produced as a result of the Project

3.3 Field Research

Field research has been varied:

- One to one meetings / interviews with the Project Coordinator, local people, partner agency members / 'experts'
- Observational – e.g. visits to the area / attendance at key meetings / final exhibition

4.0 Introduction

4.1 Introduction

Wider Impact Consultancy has been commissioned by the **Local Community 50 Plus Forum** to carry out an independent evaluation of the '**Know Your Place**' Project, which has been **100%** funded by **The Heritage Lottery Fund**.

4.2 About the Project

The Project, which aims to *enhance community cohesion by re-alighting peoples' knowledge and experiences, capturing local heritage in the 1920s onwards*, has been operating from January 2010 to 31 May 2011 within the **Blakenall, Bloxwich** and **Leamore** areas of **Walsall**.

Project Aims

1. To build inclusion within a socially isolated community, to capture and enhance local knowledge of bygone years.
2. To encourage local residents to participate and learn about local history.
3. The opportunity to gather photographs, memorabilia about Blakenall, Bloxwich and Leamore to add to the minimal archive material of Walsall Local History Centre.
4. Generate interest from the general public on the history of the area.
5. Add to the resources / knowledge of the specialist museums in the area.
6. To develop an intergenerational opportunity between young people and elderly.

Projected Outcomes

1. People coming out of their homes and visiting talks, locations, and interacting with others with a common interest.
2. Archive material to add to the Borough resources for future generations.
3. Some people may use their experience to further their own knowledge with attendance at credited courses.
4. Possible creation of local history groups to sustain the interest that has been generated by this project's unique opportunities.
5. People's experiences may be published as additional material on Walsall's Local History web page, or on the private website of the Bloxidge Tellygraph.

Project Activities

Table 1 provides a summary of planned key activities / outputs agreed with the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Table 1 Summary of Agreed Key Activities / Outputs

No	Subject	Additional Information
1	Appoint Project Coordinator	
2	Deliver keynote event	
3	Design / distribute leaflets	
4	Delivery talk	100 people to attend
5	Analyse questionnaires	
6	Deliver 2 workshops	40 people to attend each
7	Arrange 2 visits / trips	50 people to attend each
8	Gather / display resources at Walsall Local History Centre / other museums	
9	Establish a website	
10	Evaluate the Project	
Summary of Attendees		280 'attendances' at all events

4.3 Project Management

The Project has been managed by Project Coordinator, **Jenny Cartwright**, who has had responsibility for the set up and delivery of the Project and key activities.

The Project Coordinator has been based at the **Blakenall Community Centre**, and payroll and 'in-kind' support, in the form of access to office / admin support facilities have been generously provided by the **Bloxwich Community Partnership (BCP)**.

Overall supervision / 'day to day' support / direction has been provided by members of the **Local Community 50 Plus Forum**.

5.0 Research Findings

5.1 Introduction

We are pleased to provide details of our findings, which outline how the Project has been delivered, and its success in achieving key aims and objectives.

5.2 Project Activities

Table 2 provides a summary of key activities.

Table 2 Summary of Key Project Activities

Date	Event	Adult Male	Adult Female	Total
April	Launch Event	18	27	45
May	Trip – Black Country Museum	19	43	62
June	Workshop – <i>Life Story</i>	1	5	6
June	Workshop – <i>Life Story</i>	0	6	6
August	Reminiscence Session	5	10	15
August	Trip – National Arboretum	28	69	97
October	Black Country Show	8	44	52
October	Workshop – <i>A Blakenall Eye</i>	4	7	11
November	Workshop – <i>A Blakenall Eye</i>	2	7	9
November	Photo Exhibition	10	22	32
December	Talk to Lower Farm Junior School	4	0	120
December	Talk to Blakenall Junior School	n/a	n/a	36
January	Talk by Dr Carl Chinn	4	16	20
March	Trip – Blists Hill	16	14	30
May	Final Photo Exhibition	15	55	70
Total Attendances (All Events)		137	325	611
Total Number of Individuals Involved in the Project		84	146	382

Source: 'Know Your Place' Project

5.3 Summary of Activities

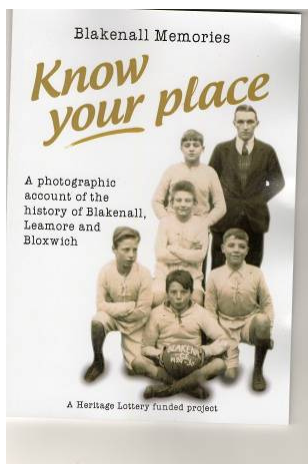
- 382 local people (including 152 school children) were directly involved with the Project
- 611 attendances at various activities have been recorded
- Activities included:
 - 1 launch event

- 2 workshops (run over 2 days each)
- 4 trips
- 2 talks by elderly residents to 2 local schools
- 2 photo exhibitions
- 1 reminiscence session at a local Care Home
- 1 session when local people were given the opportunity to hear / meet local 'celebrity', Dr Carl Chinn

5.4 Other Key Outputs

We are pleased to provide details of other key outputs achieved by the Project:

Figures 1 / 2



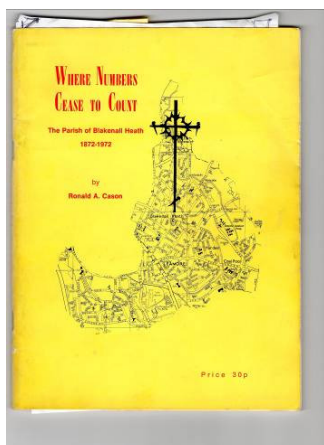
- Over **130** previously unknown / unpublished photographs handed to the Walsall Local History Centre
- **18** previously unknown / unpublished new audio tapes of local peoples' life stories / history handed to the **Walsall Local History Centre**
- Publication of a 'unique' set of previously unknown / unpublished photographs – '**Know Your Place**'.

See **Figure 1**

- Scanning / e-book publication of a previously 'out of print' book about the local area by a local author / historian, **Ronald A, Carson - Where Numbers Cease to Count.**

See **Figure 2.**

- Funding / material to support the on-going development / delivery of a local website **The Bloxidge Tallygraph** – see <http://www.thebloxidgetallygraph.com/>.



5.5 Community Feedback

We are pleased to highlight feedback noted from evaluation forms completed by **local people** attending activities organised by the Project Manager:



- *Until two years ago I had never been to Blakenall. Through attending Know Your Place workshops, trips and social events I have come to very much 'at home' there*
- *The success of the photography exhibition was due to Jenny's [Project Coordinator] hard work and enthusiasm for the whole 'Know Your Place' Project*

- *Found pictures of myself on display – a big surprise!*
- *Fascinating to have old memories revived – especially remembering Leamore Pavilion Tennis Club and being invited to a cricket tea. Happy times!*
- *It was fab seeing lots of people I know (Lovely)*
- *A good exhibition. Found photos of myself and my Auntie there*
- *Brought back good memories. I've lived in the area for **50 years***
- *The trip to the regimental museum was a rich source of information about the Staffordshire Regiment*
- *Jenny [Project Coordinator] organised a lovely outing for us, taking into account all our needs e.g. transport, refreshments, facilities etc.*
- *At the National Arboretum I was reminded of the huge sacrifices of ordinary people during the war. It all had a real effect on me*
- *Enjoyable [National Arboretum]. Very thought provoking!*
- *I have lived in this local area for 12 years, and was one of eight children. My mother was closely involved in community activities before she died, and was actively involved in securing the land that the Stan Ball Centre now sits on. This Project and Jenny has been fantastic! It has helped to bond local people, bring the community together like it used to be. It has reminded us who and what we are; and that the **community** is at the centre of what we do, not buildings or local councils. **Barbara Mulqueen**, Local Resident*



5.6 Partner Agency / 'Expert' Feedback

Appendix A provides a summary of partner agency / 'expert' feedback kindly provided by:

- **Professor Carl Chinn MBE**, Professor of Community History at Birmingham University
- **Stuart Williams**, Senior Achieves Assistant, Walsall Local History Centre
- **Vicky Rimmer**, Local Studies Assistant (Oral History), Walsall Local History Centre
- **Peter Heath**, Head Teacher, Blakenall Junior School
- **Eleanor Boycott**, Chief Executive Officer, Bloxwich Community Partnership (BCP)
- **John Jones**, Chair, Local Community 50 Plus Forum
- **Albert Hodgkins**, Vice Chair, Local Community 50 Plus Forum

5.7 Project Coordinator Feedback

We are impressed with the clear commitment of the Project Coordinator, **Jenny Cartwright** to the Project, and are pleased to provide a summary of feedback from meetings:

- The strategy of 'working within the local community' has been highly successful and an 'enjoyable' experience for all involved
- Confidence has been built; and as a result, unique audio tapes have been produced, and large numbers of photographs and images have been freely provided by local community members
- In addition to being informative and relevant to the Project, trips and other events served to 'bond' local people, re-establishing old and establishing new friendships
- The strategy of approaching key agencies for advice and support at the commencement of the Project has been highly successful; particularly in relation to the **Walsall Local History Centre**
- It has proved difficult to involve 'teenagers' with the Project. As a result efforts were directed to 'younger' children; with positive results being achieved in innovative partnerships with local primary and junior schools
- It has not been practical to establish a 'stand alone' Local History Group (**Outcome 4**), there being a lack of support from local people
- It has not been practical to establish a 'stand alone' website. Whilst a website could have been created, there would have been insufficient funding / support to maintain such a site after the Project ends
- With the agreement of the funders, funding, support and materials (e.g. photographs, images and stories) has been provided to an established local website - **The Bloxidge Tallygraph** – see <http://www.thebloxidgetallygraph.com/>.

6.0 Summary of Findings

6.1 Introduction

Table 3 summarises the 'success' of the Project in terms of projected 'aims' agreed with the funder.

Table 3 Project Achievements – 'Aims'

No	Aim	Achieved?	Comments
1	To build inclusion within a socially isolated community, to capture and enhance local knowledge of bygone years	Yes	Highly successful – with potential for previously isolated local people to continue to meet after Project ends
2	To encourage local residents to participate and learn about local history	Yes	Highly successful, and clearly 'fun'
3	The opportunity to gather photographs, memorabilia about Blakenall, Bloxwich and Leamore to add to the minimal archive material of Walsall Local History Centre	Yes	Highly successful – high quality 'priceless' material delivered to Walsall Local History Centre
4	Generate interest from the general public on the history of the area	Yes	Highly successful
5	Add to the resources / knowledge of the specialist museums in the area	Yes	Highly successful – high quality 'priceless' material delivered to Walsall Local History Centre
6	To develop an intergenerational opportunity between young people and elderly	Yes	Innovative links with local schools. Work to continue by BCP

Table 4 summarises the 'success' of the Project in terms of projected 'objectives' agreed with the funder.

Table 4 Project Achievements – 'Objectives'

No	Aim	Achieved?	Comments
1	People coming out of their homes and visiting talks, locations, and interacting with others with a common interest	Yes	Highly successful – with potential for previously isolated local people to continue to meet after Project ends. Membership / visits to local Stan Ball centre increasing as a result of the Project
2	Archive material to add to the Borough resources for future generations	Yes	Highly successful – high quality 'priceless' material delivered to Walsall Local History centre
3	Some people may use their experience to further their own knowledge with attendance at credited courses	Ongoing	'Work in Hand', which will be continued by the BCP

4	Possible creation of local history groups to sustain the interest that has been generated by this project's unique opportunities	No	Lack of interest from local people
5	People's experiences may be published as additional material on Walsall's Local History web page, or on the private website of the Bloxidge Tellygraph	Yes	Highly successful – local people are making positive links with Walsall Local History Centre, and contributing to the Bloxidge Tellygraph

6.2 Summary

We are pleased to summarise our findings in relation to our evaluation of the **Know Your Place Project**:

- The overarching aim of *enhancing community cohesion by re-aligning peoples' knowledge and experiences, capturing local heritage in the 1920s onwards*, has been **achieved**
- As outlined within **Table 3** individual Project aims have been **100% achieved**
- As outlined within **Table 4**, Project objectives have been **largely achieved**
- Activities agreed with the funder have been **delivered**
- The Project has **over achieved** in relation to **outputs** agreed with the funder:
 - **382** local people (including **152** children) have been directly involved with the Project (target **280**)
 - There have been **611** attendances at events organised by the Project Coordinator
 - Individual evaluation forms report **100% satisfaction** from local people participating in the Project
- Partner agency members / 'experts' agree that the Project has been **worthwhile, highly successful** and has made a '**priceless**' contribution to local / nation history / heritage due to the collection / collation of unique and extremely important photographs, images and audio report
- Partner agency members / 'experts' agree that there is strong evidence of '**good practice**' that is worthy of note and replication in other areas of the Borough / Country:
 - The Project Coordinator working from 'within' the local community
 - Time / resources (e.g. trips / events) utilised to connect with, and build the confidence of local community members
 - The close involvement of local community members in the design and delivery of the Project
 - Regular events / exhibitions involving local community members
 - A ethos of 'fun' built into the delivery of the Project
 - The appointment of the 'right person', with appropriate people skills / attributes (e.g. partnership / organational skills) to deliver the Project
 - An understanding of 'what's in it for them' (**WIFT**), in relation to those directly involved in the set up and delivery of the Project – community members and key partner agency members

- There is a consensus of opinion that the success of the Project is due to the support provided by the , **Walsall New Deal 50 Plus Forum**, services provided by the **Bloxwich Community Partnership (BCP)**, and most significantly, the energy, commitment and innovation of the **Project Coordinator, Jenny Cartwright**

6.3 Value for Money

We have no doubts that in addition to largely delivering on agreed aims and objectives, the Project has demonstrated clear **value for money**. We note in particular comments made by **Stewart Williams**, Walsall Local History Centre:

*There can be no doubts that this Project has been of immense value to the local community, the Borough, and the Country as a whole. The Project has 'discovered' a large number of photographs, images and audio tapes that were previously unknown to us. We cannot put a price on what we now have at our disposal; the material is of high quality and is **priceless**. It risked being lost forever, but for this Project.*

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

We are delighted to present such a positive report. This has been 'hard earned' by all involved with this worthwhile Project.

7.2 The Way Forward

We have no doubts that the benefits of this Project will continue to be felt by the local community and historians long after the Project has ended. We believe these will include:

- 'Priceless' photographs, images and audio tapes that *'risked being lost forever, but for this Project'*
- Enhanced **community cohesion** achieved by re-alighting peoples' knowledge and experiences of local heritage
- Enhanced '**community well-being**' as local people (young and older) continue to socialise, support each other, and share *'life's experiences'*
- Enhanced **use of local facilities** such as the Stan Ball Centre

7.3 Conclusion

We are grateful to all those who assisted with this interesting commission. We have no doubts that the Project will continue to benefit the local community for many years to come. We are also confident that outcomes will contribute significantly to our knowledge and understanding of our history and heritage.

We feel that '**good practice**' developed and delivered by this Project is worthy of note and replication by others delivering similar community based projects and initiatives.

We are pleased to **commend** this Project and all of those involved in its delivery.

Appendix A

Partner Agency / 'Expert' Feedback

I am replying to you in my capacities as Professor of Community History at Birmingham University; writer of a weekly local history feature for the Express and Star; and presenter of a weekly local history for BBC WM.

In all three roles I have been deeply impressed with the Blakenall 'Know Your Place' Project and with Jenny Cartwright, Project Manager. I interviewed Jenny on my BBC WM show for 30 minutes and she spoke engagingly, knowledgeably and inclusively. She emphasised the democratic and egalitarian nature of the Project and the importance of people gaining self-respect through an understanding of the history of where they live.

She highlighted the importance of a variety of sources such as oral interviews and photographs, and importantly she reached out to make plain the significance of Romany Gypsies and their histories to that of Blakenall. Just as importantly she drew out the intention of engaging older people with younger people and building bridges over the gap in generations.

I also featured the Project in my weekly local history column in the Express and Star, including material and photos from Jenny which again stressed the qualities she made clear in my interview with her.

This has been a most important and worthy project, one of the best that I have come across through my wide-ranging work as Chair of Community History at Birmingham University. I have met several of the people involved in the Project and they told me how much they had gained in knowledge and self-confidence from their participation. I congratulate all involved, especially Jenny Cartwright, for her empathy, ability, and hard work.

Professor Carl Chinn MBE, Professor of Community History at Birmingham University

There can be no doubts that this Project has been of immense value to the local community, the Borough, and the Country as a whole. The Project has 'discovered' a large number of photographs, images and audio tapes that were previously unknown to us. We cannot put a price on what we now have at our disposal; the material is of high quality and is priceless. It risked being lost forever, but for this Project.

The information gained will inform local authorities and generations to come about this local community, and most importantly 'what works' in relation to building local communities, and community well-being.

Jenny's [Project Coordinator] approach to the task has been extremely successful, and a model of 'good practice' that other could learn from in other areas of the Country. She has taken time to 'be-friend' community members; almost becoming a 'member' of the local community. She has worked from within the community and gained peoples' trust and confidence. As a result they have freely and proudly presented photographs that we could never have hoped to gain access to. I cannot commend this Project and Jenny in particular enough.

Stuart Williams, Senior Achieves Assistant, Walsall Local History Centre

My involvement with the 'Know Your Place' Project was with sessions on oral history awareness as part of local and personal histories. Photos, maps and oral history extracts were taken in to prompt discussion, but thanks to Jenny Cartwright's personal enthusiasm, locals were already very engaged! The appreciation of her presence, reaching them in their own environment was palpable.

The activities she organised involved different ages, sexes and abilities, helping to bridge gaps between generations by emphasising what people had in common instead of differences. Over the sessions it became clear that she had helped locals realise the intrinsic value of their own local knowledge as a unique source.

Combined with this, Jenny also raised awareness of what local historical resources and sources were in the area and how these were relevant. Local people were therefore given an appreciation that traditional historical records can be augmented when given their local dimension.

To simply have this area recognised in its own right to warrant the project itself did much to enhance local pride in the area as it encouraged a sense of belonging, and especially place, in an often difficult to define geographical area. The self-worth of individuals locally has, I feel sure, also been increased through the work of this project recognising their contributions.

Vicky Rimmer, Local Studies Assistant (Oral History), Walsall Local History Centre

The adults who attended our school to talk to the children were clearly knowledgeable about the history of the local area. For example, they were able to give the children a real insight into what it was like in the area during World War Two. They were able to speak out about their first hand experiences, and engaged well with the children, answering a wide range of questions.

We would certainly welcome this type of activity in the future and hope that it may become a regular part of our History Curriculum.

Peter Heath, Head Teacher, Blakenall Junior School

*We are extremely grateful to the **Local Community 50 Plus Forum** for leading on this Project. We have been pleased to act as 'host' for the Project Coordinator and provide payroll services, admin support, and a desk for her to work from within the local community.*

There can be no doubts that the project has been a success. In addition to 'discovering' so many photographs and images, it has brought local people together, which is good for our organisation. We have noted lots more people visiting and returning to the Community Centre as result of being involved in the Project.

We are looking to bring young and old together, and we can use the 'good practice' developed by this Project to assist us in such new areas of work. Well done to the Over 50 Form and Jenny Cartwright.

Eleanor Boycott, Chief Executive Officer, Bloxwich Community Partnership (BCP)

This Project has been important to us. We are a group of local volunteers, who are determined to lead on such projects. We applied for the funding in our own right and have closely supported the Project Coordinator. We are grateful to the Bloxwich Community Partnership for the valuable support they have provided.

There is no doubt the Project has brought people together, and will hopefully have a lasting effect in the future. We all remember the 'good old days', and this Project has made us realise they were also tough times, which young people today could learn from.

It has been wonderful to see people who we have not seen for years, coming from behind their closed doors, and back into the community. Too many 'old' people are frightened to come out these days, or have no motivation to do so.

People also have to learn there are a number of generations in a community. For example, people who are over eighty and ninety think people who are fifty and sixty are 'young people' – the same way we think teenagers are 'young people' This Project has made us think about such things.

We have learnt a lot due to this Project. It has given us the confidence to hopefully apply for funding to deliver similar projects in the future. It is our community and we want a say in how we run it!

The Project Coordinator has been great, and we are so pleased with what she has achieved!

John Jones, Chair, Local Community 50 Plus Forum

Albert Hodgkins, Vice Chair, Local Community 50 Plus Forum

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