



Shaped by Industry - Shared with Pride Seminar

Performing better: Reaching new audiences through participative theatre

Linen Hall Library, Belfast, Thursday 26th September 2019



Ashleigh Kirkpatrick, October 2019





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List of Participants

Name	Organisation	Occupation
Alastair Maxwell	Whitehead Railway Museum	Lecturer
Amanda Milligan	Department for Communities	
Amy Rudd	Waterville Cable Station (Kerry)	
Ashleigh Kirkpatrick		Heritage Consultant
Barbara Reeves		
Catherine Devine	Department for Communities	
Claire Torrens	Mid and East Antrim BC	Admin Assistant
Donald Bell	Mid and East Antrim BC	
Dr Jim McGreevy	National Lottery Heritage Fund	
Fred Hamond	FLAME! Gasworks Museum	
Gemma Reid	quarto	Heritage Consultant
Heather Lawless		
Hugh Forrester	Police Museum	
Jason Powell	Mid and East Antrim BC	Tourism Marketing Manager
Jayne Clarke	Mid and East Antrim BC	Museum & Heritage Manager
Jimmy Sweeney	National Lottery Heritage Fund	
Jonathan Lloyd	European Route of Industrial Heritage UK/Ireland Rep	UK Coordinator
Kathleen McCormick		
Kelli Bagchus	Carrickfergus Enterprise	Manager
Kevin O'Hagan		Mining Historian
Linda Logan		Evaluation Consultant
Linda McCracken	Big Telly Theatre Company	Project Manager
Margaret Edgar	CC&GBC	
Marie Murray		
Mary Watson	Carnlough Heritage Hub	Volunteer
Michael Bird		
Moira O'Rourke	North Down Museum	Heritage Officer
Natalie Bodle		Genealogist
Patricia O'Connell	Carnlough Heritage Hub	Volunteer
Patricia McCormick	Carnlough Heritage Hub	
Rachel Brady	Linen Hall Library	Education & Outreach Officer
Raymond Reeves	Carnlough Heritage Hub	
Robin Morton	Whitehead Railway Museum	
Ross Hickey	Mid and East Antrim BC	
Sarah Millsopp	Armagh County Museum	
Triona White Hamilton	Northern Ireland Museums Council	
Zoe Seaton	Big Telly Theatre Company	Artistic Director



Seminar Opening

Jayne Clarke welcomed participants and informed them of housekeeping arrangements and seminar timings.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund NI - Committee Member Dr Jim McGreevy

Dr Jim McGreevy thanked Jayne Clarke, and wished the seminar participants a good morning. Jim quipped that he would like to claim all the credit for National Lottery Heritage Fund funding the Shaped by Industry project – but admitted that the Heritage Fund couldn't claim all the credit. The project was funded by a partnership of Heritage Lottery Fund, Tourism NI and the Department for Communities Historic Environment Division.

Dr McGreevy's first exposure to industry was during his time working in the Ulster Museum. The industrial machinery needed substantial engineering skills to engineer, but this didn't tell us much about the people who developed the machinery and those who operated it. Similarly, with railways, Dr McGreevy was more interested in the people's stories. Dr McGreevy was struck by the power of performance to bring back memories which he had experienced to mark the opening of a small heritage centre in Coalisland. At this event, there were two first person interpreters, an owner and a worker, which brought the venue to life - it was very powerful. Dr McGreevy noted the possibilities for connecting the four sites involved with this project and their people present and past. Collectively, these projects will leave a strong legacy. Dr McGreevy stated that he was looking forward to hearing what has been happening during the project and taking part in the seminar.

Key note speaker: Jonathan Lloyd, European Route of Industrial Heritage

Jonathan Lloyd wished the participants a good morning, commented on the good turnout and offered thanks for being invited to speak at the seminar. Jonathan outlined that he would speak about how the organisation he represents can continue to work with the groups involved as they take their work forward. Two things about the project resonated:

- The power of theatre and working together
- The importance of sharing stories to promote interest in the impact of the industrial revolution on society. Ironbridge came to mind – the birth place of industry – this is where the seeds of industrial revolution were sown.

The presentation was in three parts:

1. What is ERIH? – Why it was established and what it does

The closure of industries had led to the loss of industrial heritage. ERIH was born in 1989 as a way of promoting and sharing the shared European Industrial Heritage.

The main aims were to attract bigger audiences, to popularise industrial heritage tourism and create a network for industrial heritage attractions. This often led to



increased community pride in the local area and local heritage. Another aim was to provide a support network for industrial heritage sites.

The achievements of ERIH include:

- Recognition by the European Commission and the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe raises ERIH's profile.
- ERIH is a certified Cultural Route of the Council of Europe.
- ERIH received Creative Europe Network Funding which originated in the EU Cultural Fund supporting European networks.
- ERIH has 300+ paid member sites with growing membership.
- The ERIH website, www.erih.net, provides information about sites and people, listing around 2000 industrial heritage sites of interest.

2. How the *Shaped by Industry - Shared with Pride* project resonated ERIH's aims

- Impressions of project are very favourable. It was a successful, imaginative project and a platform for further growth of the sector.
- The importance of cooperation was recognised - links businesses, sites, people, tourist agencies and communities. Cooperation is a key principle of ERIH.
- The project stimulated interest in the area's industrial past for visitors and residents. Increased community pride in their industrial past.
- The project has shown how successful and enjoyable participative theatre can be and an effective way to engage people and tell stories – with big impact.
- ERIH were delighted to be invited to be involved with the project and look forward to building upon it.
- The four sites involved with the project have now joined ERIH.

3. How can ERIH help partners build on the success of the project?

ERIH member benefits:

- Gain a profile within ERIH European sites, social media & website. ERIH has a particularly high profile in Germany and Eastern Europe.
- Members can use the ERIH logo.
- Networking with partners across Europe – ERIH holds an annual conference.
- Activity organised by ERIH such as the twinning initiative which provided funding for organisations to work together, to learn about each other and share experiences.
- Support and advice about good practice.

ERIH Regional Route of Industrial Heritage

- Tell the industrial heritage stories of particular locality - a region, district, city, or local area through sites participating in this route.
- They are designed to draw visitors in who will hopefully want to visit other sites on the route.



- There are 21 routes (across Europe).
- The sites can be very diverse - from mines, quarries, factories, sources of power, means of transport, statues and monuments to important events, to buildings funded through industry - mansions, town halls, workers houses' or planned communities.
- They can tell stories of the people and their lives and their link to industry – the whole point is connections – different sites tells different parts of same story.

What benefits would this hold for Mid and East Antrim?

- The opportunity for large and small sites to work together - smaller sites don't have large budgets and can potentially benefit from the budget of bigger site partners. The sites are partner, not competitors.
- Hotels, restaurants, transport operators etc can be involved - the visitor experience is enhanced by bringing together the whole offer.
- The story can be told in an interesting way to people. It is not just for specialists.
- Stimulus for regeneration – local economy, jobs and very importantly community pride can be improved when there is a better understanding of history. This is demonstrated by the site of a closed mine in South Wales which has now become a World Heritage Site - this stimulated community pride and the place is now a place on the up.

Final thoughts

Well done! Jonathan Lloyd stated that the project was innovative and successful. He hoped participants enjoyed the seminar and that it generated ideas of how to move on. ERIH was pleased to have been associated with this project and would like to build on the connection established through the project, for benefit of all.

Shaped by Industry - Shared with Pride Project Presentation Jayne Clarke, Donald Bell & Claire Torrens

Jayne Clarke stated that sharing the learning from this project could led to potentially wider collaboration across Northern Ireland and that ERIH could assist to make this happen. Jayne outlined that industrial heritage is significant in Northern Ireland but that it has much more potential to unlock. This project, using theatre was experimental but worth trying out with the available funding as a new way of animating and interpreting heritage sites.

Background to European Year of Cultural Heritage funding

The funding was the result of a partnership between the then Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Tourism NI and the Department for Communities Historic Environment Division to mark the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 (EYCH). The aim of the funding was to encourage:

- Animating & interpreting heritage sites in new & better ways
- Developing an arts, culture & heritage tourism offer that lives up to the Northern Ireland identity & brand



- Bringing value & distinctiveness to the market
- Partnering with arts to create authentic, stimulating, memorable stories as consumable experiences for visitors
- Taking risks

Tourism in Mid & East Antrim

Jayne outlined some key tourism statistics for the Mid and East ~Antrim area. It is an area of developing tourism infrastructure with room for further development and growth. The Causeway Coastal Route is a key aspect of the offering.

- Mid & East Antrim's priority for 2019-23 is growing the economy and creating sustainable jobs in tourism-*Shaped by Industry-Shared with Pride* aligns with these goals
- In 2015 there were 3,959 tourism jobs in Mid & East Antrim which accounted for 9% of total employee jobs-this has now increased to 11%
- Average length of stay in 2014 was 3.6, this increased to 3.8 in 2017
- In 2017 42% of visitors had visited Mid and East Antrim for holiday/pleasure, this increased to 47% in 2018
- In 2017 visitors spent 43 million, this increased to 51 million in 2018
- In 2018 there were almost 300,000 overnight trips to Mid & East Antrim

Project partners and participating sites

Project partners:

- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council was the lead partner in this project – providing up to £5k in funding and 2.5 staff.
- Big Telly Theatre Company- Artistic Director Dr Zoe Seaton and Development Manager Linda McCracken have delivered successful innovative participative performances for a range of clients
- Carrickfergus Enterprise-Manager Kelli Bagchus. Carrick Enterprise is a social enterprise company who ran their own funded coastal tourism initiative

Participating sites:

- Carnlough village
- Glenarm village
- Flame! Gasworks Museum
- Whitehead Railway Museum

It was a good time for these organisations to come together as the tourism offer is developing along the Causeway Coastal Route. The four participating sights came on board very quickly as they saw the advantages of getting involved. They are four key industrial heritage sites in the area.



Funder's Approved purposes:

- *Shaped by Industry - Shared with Pride* connected four key industrial heritage sites along the Causeway Coastal Route within Mid and East Antrim – the project centred on cooperation, collaboration and integration of heritage sites across the Causeway Coastal Route to consolidate the offering.
- The heritage sites were promoted alongside local tourism businesses and acted as natural staging posts by creating a way into these sites through engaging repeatable 15-20 minutes live participatory theatre performances, using a gaming format.
- A toolkit will be produced and will be available as a downloadable resource by the end of October 2019
- The legacy of this project includes the closing seminar, an exit strategy and marketing training, a downloadable toolkit, and an in-depth project evaluation report noting potential contacts and generating further ideas.

Project funding

The project bid was submitted in February 2018 and started in August 2018 with a £55,000 budget.

- £50,000: The National Heritage Lottery Fund
- £5,000: Mid & East Antrim Borough Council contribution plus 2.5 staff (for delivering and administration of project)

The budget was spent as follows:

- Research: £4,002 – Volunteers carried out research on notable events and characters at their sites supported by expert research provided by quarto
- Performances: £31,420 – performance was the main cost. There were up to 36 performances of a very high level of quality. The quality of the performances was reflected in visitor responses.
- Marketing: £5,835.92
- External evaluation: £2,989.60
- Seminar: £3,089.50
- Toolkit: £2,763.37
- Total spend to date: £50,100.39

Performances

Performances varied, but they all tried to tell the human stories of people's lives. Big Telly storylines were very strong. On the whole, there was very little reservation from participants. It was mainly a domestic audience, who didn't feel shy about participating and gained key messages about industrial heritage in an enjoyable way.

A short video of the participatory theatre across the sites was shown.



Claire Torrens

Industrial Heritage Month

- The majority of performances took place in May, as the participating sites requested this, to mark the opening of their summer season. It was then decided to brand May as Industrial Heritage Month – Mid and East Antrim having lots of industrial heritage stories to share.
- Coincided with National Walking month - walks were organised at Garron Tower and Glenarm to encourage attendees to attend a performance.

Marketing campaign

The audience needed to know that the performances were family friendly but that they were about industry. This is why the logo - a person integrated with a cog was developed. Yellow symbolises the better life industry could have afforded. Marketing feedback suggested that the logo was perhaps a little conceptual. However, as the project was just beginning there were no relevant project photographs. Marketing also had to inform potential audiences about what participatory theatre is. Project marketing also included, photoshoots, radio interviews, Facebook and advertisements in specialist family publication NI for Kids.

Volunteer roles

The volunteers' dedication and support were notable. The volunteers at each of the four sites played a vital role in aiding research, marshalling and set up. Claire Torrens thanked the volunteers for their support.

Performance attendance

Success for new initiative was 68% of target turnout. Some of the events were cancelled due to inclement weather. The audience enjoyed the events and were inspired to actively seek further sites in their area.

- Carnlough September performances: target 80, turnout 87
- Carnlough May performances: target 80, turnout 61
- Glenarm performances: target 80, turnout 69
- Whitehead performances: target 80, turnout 73
- Flame! performances: target 80, turnout 57

Tourism businesses' involvement

On 27th November 2018, a tourism business engagement session was held in the Londonderry Arms Hotel. The CEO of Hospitality Ulster; Colin Neil led an informal Q&A which focused on the issues facing the tourism and heritage sector including Brexit. This was followed by tourism colleagues who showcased their new tourism campaign for Mid & East Antrim: *Shaped by Stone and Sea*.



Afterwards, guests were informed about the *Shaped by Industry - Shared with Pride* project and were invited to take part in a mutually beneficial promotional opportunity with the project.

Following the workshop, four of the twelve businesses were interested in being involved with the *Shaped by Industry - Shared with Pride* project. Prior to the performances, special photograph opportunities were arranged with the businesses who were aligned to the project and actors from Big Telly Theatre. These were followed by various press releases to promote the aligned businesses.

- **Dobbins Inn** created a bespoke menu around the performances at the Gasworks as well as a 10% discount to those who attended a performance. Dobbins Inn also showcased some display items from Flame! Gasworks Museum
- **Carmel's Sweetshop** promoted the performances in Whitehead
- **The Bank House Café** staff members dressed up in Victorian dress and offered a special pudding to customers
- **The Lighthouse Bistro** offered special discounts to those who attended a performance

Tourism Ireland/NI Belfast meet the buyer trip

On the 6th April 2019 tour operators were treated to a taster performance at Whitehead Railway Museum by Big Telly. Following this performance, Big Telly delivered three more performances for the public. The feedback from tour operators (including international tour operators) was unanimously positive.

Donald Bell

Evaluation

An external evaluator produced an in-depth project evaluation report.

The main findings are below:

- Participative theatre can be used as an effective tool in the tourism & heritage market
- Performances at weekends worked best between 1pm & 4pm
- Everyone understood the storyline
- Performances were family friendly
- 20% of people were prepared to travel large distances to see performances
- Performances had a lasting impact on the audience
- Most were willing to pay £5 per adult to attend a future performance

Donald Bell noted further points:

- It couldn't be shown that tourism business gained financially – there would need to be a longer timeframe in future if this was to be demonstrated.
- Performances at regular intervals worked well



- Heritage sites could attract more diverse audiences, allow deeper understanding of sites and history and audiences could become emotionally involved.
- Social inclusion benefits - everyone from young children to older people could be involved.

Recommendations:

- After each performance there is an opportunity to invite audience members to upcoming performances
- A pre-booking discount could be offered to encourage more bookings
- Have at least one performance finish prior to lunch time so that audience members are more inclined to visit associated food eateries with the performances
- Briefing volunteers on performances & associated businesses is key so that they can pass on that information to visitors
- Performances to be added on to free events listings sites for more promotion
- Information about associated businesses to be emailed out along with tickets

Additional observations:

- This is not for everyone – non-English speakers who have limited English might struggle
- The project worked well to satisfy needs of culturally curious visitor.
- Membership of ERIH helped the sites to align with each other and marketing impacts regional roots. This is the way forward, not just for industrial heritage, but other offering too e.g. recreation etc.

Opportunities with ERIH

- Each of the participating sites are now members of the European Route of Industrial Heritage
- Networking is a key aim of the European Route of Industrial Heritage, where members of the site can network with other industrial heritage sites throughout Europe
- ERIH is the biggest industrial heritage information network in Europe
- ERIH is a fantastic publicity tool where awareness of these sites has been increased on a European scale

Jayne Clarke

Legacy & exit strategy

- Partnership with heritage sites & local businesses - Partnership based on 1-5-year plan based on individual location offer as well as multi-experience offer
- Establish a working group/cluster - to meet at least 5 times a year to plan sales & marketing activities
- Keep the performances fresh & up to date to have resell value in 5 to 10 years
- It is recommended each site identifies at least 3 additional trusted collaboration partners to work with to provide a destination offering e.g. hotel breakfast,



lunch, afternoon tea, overnight stay - Additional partners to come on board per site

- Take part in events & festivals such as the Glens Storytelling Festival or possibly Dalriada Festival. Linking in with these established events will give Shaped by Industry a cultural footprint on a wider scale.

Jayne Clarke welcomed feedback about how we can keep sites together, remain creative, appeal to new audiences and evaluate how the audiences respond.

Workshop 1: Working with volunteers

What is the difference between working with paid staff and volunteers-led sites What are the implications of this?

- Whitehead Railway Museum has 160 volunteers, who work in all sorts of roles. Many are very driven by specialist interests and didn't at first see how theatre could be used. Seeing the bigger picture was a challenge.
- Whitehead Railway Museum: Many of our volunteers are aging.
- From my experience of working with volunteers, it's important to ensure that volunteers know exactly what is expected of them. And the organisation needs to understand what strengths or skills a volunteer is offering the organisation, and make the most of those skills. Or else you get into lots of difficulties. Volunteers need to understand the story of a site, to have that big picture, of what the site offers, in order to engage with the public effectively.
- It is important that volunteers feel valued, respected, and they can be rewarded in different ways.
- Volunteers need to have good information about performances or events happening. There needs to be better communication so that everyone on site know about the performances and knew how to talk about them to visitors.
- There is no legal obligation for a volunteer to show up, therefore a strong established relationship must be achieved to ensure their support
- Conflicting agenda's: paid staff are there to fulfil the wishes of their employers, whereas volunteers are there out of personal interest/connections-Amy Rudd noted that a lot of her volunteers have family ties to the cable museum
- It is important that paid staff lead the project to stop it being derailed. However, it is equally important that volunteers can take ownership of the project to ensure their continued involvement
- It is difficult to attract younger volunteers, Triona noted that NIMC have run engagement programmes specifically at 16-24 to get young people involved in museums
- With paid staff, it's easier to be open specific hours
- Paid staff might have to do work they're not as interested in
- In some situations, paid staff may be experts with volunteers having a more general knowledge or vice versa
- There is a need for skills and knowledge in some form and this needs to be passed on when paid staff or volunteers move on
- Train the trainer – we all need to respect each other's skills



- Everybody doesn't need to know everything – work to volunteers' skills and interests
- Volunteers question whether there is the same passion and interest for paid staff
- Venues need to be open 6-7 days a week to get heritage sign posting so there is a need for a paid member of staff
- Are industrial heritage experts outside the heritage sector?
- Whitehead Railway –all volunteers must qualify as there are health and safety issues, therefore a pool of people is needed.
- Body count of volunteers is important
- Some volunteers might not want to multi task
- Need to keep volunteers interested by learning new skills
- Volunteers might be set in their ways
- Volunteers tend to be older – what happens when they die? Age profile of volunteers should be looked at
- Is there an increased reliance on volunteers with budgets being cut?
- It might be easier to attract volunteers if they can do things like performances
- Volunteers have no legal obligation to the organisation
- Volunteers may have a strong sense of place
- There may be structural issues in organisations that are volunteer led
- Volunteers are usually motivated by a specific interest/local knowledge or personal connection which can be strong positive
- All four participating sites have ageing volunteers - needs to be more attractive opportunities for younger people - succession and retention issues
- Difficult to have more than limited set opening hours when relying on volunteer effort
- Good and frequent communication, training and networking opportunities required to fulfil more of volunteers' potential - this takes funding and expertise

How can volunteer-run sites attract new audiences and better engage them?

- Whitehead Railway Museum: This project attracted new audiences; there is potential there to encourage new people to become volunteers, we wouldn't have had that opportunity if it wasn't for this project. It helped give the public a new perspective on the organisation. And turning the dining carriage into a theatre, that got us thinking outside the box in terms of what we could do. We were delighted that the plays were rooted in authenticity, they were based on real stories.
- Whitehead Railway Museum: We did find it difficult to sell, we didn't know how to describe it so people would understand what it was about; 'participative theatre' is a difficult phrase, even 'immersive theatre'. Participation can be intimidating for people, it's unfamiliar. The taster in April was really helpful. Now we know more about it, it will be easier to sell something like that to the public again. And it was very easy to get on with the council staff and Big Telly people.
- Whitehead Railway Museum: Marketing is key to making these events a success. And if we ran this project again, we'd reconsider charging the normal



entrance fee into the museum. There was a lot of confusion about that. I think we should have let people participate in the performances for free, and if they wanted to stay on afterwards to explore the museum, ask them to pay the entrance fee at that stage.

- Being very open to new ideas is very important
- Some sites want to offer an of a 1½ hour tour, but audiences want to choose their level of engagement, to dip in and out if they want to, depending on their personal interests.
- Whitehead Railway Museum: We've started doing self-guided tours – some of our guides might overload with detail.
- There is a real opportunity to work with the volunteers to help people engage with the site, to use the skills they have already to develop more creative approaches to interpretation. It would be very possible to close the gap between professional theatre and volunteers by sharing skills to create a different kind of product, that could be sustained by the volunteers without professional actors coming in.
- Whitehead Railway Museum: There has been a growing tension within the railway society with the need to operate as a sustainable business, and volunteers having pet projects. It's important for everyone involved to see the bigger picture. You need to remember that volunteers can't be ordered to do things. But when they're dealing with the public, there needs to be a consistency of service, and a good sense of discipline.
- Whitehead Railway Museum: Industrial heritage can be a bit dry, but we've started trying to make it more fun, more appealing, through new kinds of events. The Teddy Bears' Picnic was very popular, and we've joined in with Tray Bake Week in the village, we've been part of a Gin Trail and we do a Steam Jazz excursion. At least one of our volunteers likes to dress up and act in character, we could make more of his enthusiasm.
- Nothing beats a strong visual presence at the entrance and some 1st person interaction, the people on the door have the biggest audience contact, so make the most of them.
- The regional routes have their own brand. Some in Europe are signposted, which is very helpful. The UK routes rely on websites and leaflets. I believe this project warrants a wider audience, I'd like to create the opportunity to share it with the rest of the UK, perhaps through one of our regular meetings, I organise two every year. This project offers a great theme for one of the next meeting; it should be only the start of many more initiatives like this.
- Guide training
- Events
- Partnerships
- Industrial Heritage Day
- Whitehead Railway has done well marketing through posters
- Need to be careful to protect the heritage e.g. the Dark Hedges are getting many visitors – access and preservation needs to be balanced
- Councils can provide volunteers with new skills e.g. World Hosting
- Social media



- Better guide training
- Guided tours
- Visitor book and evaluation forms
- Do we know current audience and who isn't coming and why?
- Sharing stories
- Making interpretation methods more interesting
- Use college students for creative placements
- Engagement programmes
- Training and networking to see bigger picture
- Core volunteer cluster – don't need to be in heritage sector, can be neighbourhood tourism
- Infrastructural support
- FLAME 2.5% visitors outside N.I
- Operational/customer servicing and marketing responsibilities can sit outside this which can cause a disconnect for what a heritage site/attraction needs to achieve to attract audiences/new audiences

How can volunteer- led sites co-operate with other volunteer-led sites more successfully

- Signposting to other sites is an important role for volunteers to enhance visitor/tourist experience but this needs a wider view taken by volunteers and up to date information
- Whitehead Railway Museum: If the people at reception are well informed, then they can sell a number of things to people, they can make connections to other events coming up, or other sites and attractions in the area. Even for us, the familiarisation bus trip that was organised to the other sites was a new experience, and it was great to meet all those new people. We are already working closely together now, building relationships, there's great potential benefit in that.
- It's important to help sites become more outward looking, to see each other not as competitors, but as colleagues.
- Whitehead Railway Museum: If there is budget left over, it would be good to use it for some joint promotion, a leaflet linking all the sites for example.
- Bus tours
- Leaflet promotion
- Heritage Days
- Industrial Heritage Day
- Training
- Piggy back on each other's events
- Partner with each other for marketing
- Partnership for programming
- Knowing what could link museums or organisation together (e.g. themes like industrial heritage)



Kelli Bagchus, Carrickfergus Enterprise

Carrickfergus Enterprise offer support and training to the business sector. Kelli Bagchus, the manager, has worked there for 21 years. There has been a lack of support for tourism in the past, but opportunities to be involved now exist.

The development of the Coastal Tourism Hub includes amongst other things, mentoring in areas such as marketing to increase awareness of business as well as the opportunity to develop their social media or develop/upgrade their website to promote their business. The hub aims to create strong connections between tourist providers in the area in order to enhance the overall visitor experience. A key development is a joint marketing website and visitor map of the area. The Online itinerary planner helps to connect the dots.

In relation to *Shaped by Industry – Shared with Pride*, Kelli Bagchus stated that the partnership worked well, and that all partners and participating venues all had their own areas of expertise, it was therefore a complimentary partnership. It was an opportunity to engage with the industrial past in a real way.

On 27th November 2018, a tourism business engagement session was held in the Londonderry Arms Hotel creating links for tourism and hospitality. This was a good use of time, many participants thought it was relevant to their business and expressed interest afterwards. The event explored promotion of the Causeway Coastal Route and how to encourage visitors stay longer and spend more money. Things that were important to visitors included emotions, feeling and sensations - stories and connections. Experiential tourism is the opposite of mass tourism – it includes hearts and minds and personal exploration. The legacy of this project fulfils the needs of experiential tourism.

Jason Powell - Tourism Marketing Manager M&EABC

Jason Powell underlined the importance of understanding our product and what visitors are looking for. How do we get our brand out there? People drive past the MEA area going to and from the Causeway and Belfast. What do we need to do? What is our unique selling point? What makes people stop?

The new branding *Shaped by sea and stone* physically relates to the how the area literally was and is shaped by sea and stone from Slemish, Carrickfergus Castle, The Gobbins. It is what makes MEA unique. Visitors are culturally curious, they want to know what Northern Ireland is about, they want unique authentic experiences – that you can't do elsewhere. Visitors want to meet locals, to know what it is like to live in Northern Ireland, and what we do on a day to day basis. Many visitors will never have met a person from Northern Ireland before.

Culture is key to getting out and about, interacting with events like this helps to define people in Northern Ireland. Visitors want stories to connect them to the place and they want people to tell them the stories. The character stories in this project connect people to the attraction. Stories need to be told in an entertaining way. Interpretation including emotions, feel, touch and taste were animated and brought to life in this project and that is what visitors are looking for. Community engagement is important



– the local community need to be onboard if they want visitors. Businesses are similar, they can promote themselves more effectively showing visitors we're working together which is key to success. Council are facilitators, volunteers don't always have the time and skills needed and council can offer support. The key thing is how we all work together.

Workshop 2: Working with Tourism businesses

Local businesses and volunteer sites partnerships

- One participant noted that she holds sessions with local tourism businesses, actively giving them a tour of the museum then giving them a picture frame with some details about the museum which the businesses; particularly B&B's display at their reception desks
- One participant had established links with local bars & pubs for their autumn festivals
- Time is money for businesses, they will only be involved if there is a benefit for them
- Could make your business stand out – USP
- Partnering with performance might lead to audience members coming to your business as an extension activity or vice versa. It might build up bigger brand awareness over time
- Exposure to new audiences
- Culture night in Belfast example of success – businesses benefit
- It may not be instant success, but could slowly build up
- Increased footfall for both business and site
- Raise awareness even amongst locals
- Need a vision of what it's going to look like and the business needs to understand what the volunteer site is offering
- Could increase overnight stays in the area
- What is the vision, what to deliver, how to finance
- Outline clear benefits to potential business partners
- Engagement days with local businesses with info to take away
- Once relationship is developed with business keep going
- Sustainability
- We actually didn't really realise there had been such a good link with catering businesses in Whitehead during the project. I think the project was so fast that there wasn't really an opportunity to make more of that connection. But that could develop further in the future. And we are already involved in the Gobbins Cluster Group, which includes B&Bs, hotels and restaurants.
- It would be possible to make links with the tour operators as well.
- Whitehead Railway Museum: We have already established a link with Translink, and they sometimes sponsor events, like the Victorian street fair in the village.
- Because the piece at Whitehead was set in the Dining Car, that potential link with the local cafes and restaurants could be even stronger, with actors or volunteers going into local cafes and shops to perform taster pieces, which would draw people to the museum. In fact, it would be great if the whole concept



for the project was developed with local businesses as well as the museum, so there is buy in from everyone.

Participatory theatre & effective engagement:

- Participative theatre could be used in cable museum on a smaller scale
- Historic Environment Division participatory theatre could possibly work at Carrickfergus castle as a change to the living history
- It might not work at venues with sensitivity issues e.g. Police Museum
- Get kids interested and parents and grandparents will come along, this develops sustainability
- Make sure research and interpretation is authentic
- Shift from big bus tours to smaller scale in local area – bring characters and humanity into it
- Training from professionals, transferring and developing new skills
- Make it valuable to the visitor
- Whitehead Railway Museum: Visitors want characters; that involves a change of focus, away from machinery and engineering, to people's stories.
- From my experience, there are only about 10 professional actors in the country who can do this type of performance; it requires a certain charisma and persuasion to make people feel comfortable with participating. Using professional actors of that quality is difficult to sustain. But the concept is adaptable, the process could be designed and supported by professionals but delivered by volunteers, working to their strengths and developing their potential, so that it doesn't appear like a poor imitation of professional theatre, but makes the volunteers look amazing.
- It's very possible to bring that theatrical experience into the gallery space, through an audio tour, for example, where a particular character takes you on a journey through a space.
- It's done very effectively in Worcester, where pre-recorded scenes are acted out on a video screen in the gallery, and those characters lead you on to the next room.
- In Ypres, you get a card at the start with the details of a particular real-life character, and then as you go around the museum you find out what happened to them as the war progressed. Some survive and some don't, so there are happy and sad stories. It's very effective to take that personal journey alongside the curated experience of the exhibitions.
- Whitehead Railway Museum: It's similar in the Titanic centre, where you can follow the journey of about 10 or 12 passengers on the ship.

Developing the idea of cohesion and strategic marketing

- Whitehead Railway Museum: The Giant's Causeway has always been the biggest draw for tourism, and it is challenging to get people off those buses and stay in the area a little longer. But there has been a spin off from the Gobbins for our museum, particularly when there is bad weather.
- Hidden gems people don't know about
- Signage is a big issue
- Who is going to pay for it? Funding is an issue



- Needs externally marketed
- Whitehead Railway Museum: Most of the independent tourists are in hire cars, and websites, social media and signage is key to getting noticed, from before they come, when they are planning their trip at home.
- We need to be more creative about where the journey starts for visitors. There's no reason why it couldn't start on the bus at the Causeway, and then take people somewhere else. We can't just keep hoping they'll see the connection between different places or attractions, we have to show it to them. Rather than focussing solely on making our experience amazing, we need to start thinking about where people are and how to bring them from there to us.
- Whitehead Railway Museum: We also need to develop a wider perspective on the place in which we live. When you live here, you don't necessarily even know about an attraction on 5 miles up the road. But we need to be more aware of what is on offer around us and make the links across different places.

Workshop 3 Gemma Reid, quarto, interviews Zoe Seaton, Big Telly Theatre Company

Q1. Most people are familiar with living history; can you explain the difference between using living history and theatre as a method of heritage interpretation?

Zoe and Gemma come from very different working backgrounds – it was a learning experience for them as well as people working on the project. Living history is very effective but theatre brings something a bit different...

Zoe stated that the interest is in the narrative and story but that it doesn't necessarily need to be a story that happened. For instance in Carnlough we were very interested in factual events, like that there'd been a death at the quarry, and little snippets more than the dominant narrative was telling, there's lots of information about Lady Londonderry, her journey and her character was very well documented, but when we came across stories about unrest, we thought this might create a story. So, we created a character who never existed, her name is taken from the time, she was part of the people who were disgruntled and her husband was killed in the quarry. She then had to rely on Lady Londonderry again. There were lots of facts in it but we were interested in creating a character to drive the narrative. An important thing is that we were not necessarily looking for lead characters in the events but characters that can relate the human story – that is where the excitement was.

Theatre can also use the space differently, for example, the retorts in FLAME! looked like they held stories and we were interested in what else we could make happen in that space, just because you have a space that is naturalistic or real – doesn't mean you can't put other things into that space. Quite often with heritage work, it's treated like a reconstruction, but we were interested about what else they could add- which is different. So, with the retorts we had coloured smoking coming out of them and soundscapes coming out of the retorts – participants opened a door and then heard a story. Theatre can be playful and imaginative about how that space is used. Interactive theatre acknowledges the audience and they have a role to play – we were very gentle– nobody should ever feel uncomfortable, but there are opportunities to be involved.



In Carnlough the audience's part was in the welcome committee taking part in a competition, there was a Town Committee preparing for Lady Londonderry's arrival, the planning of a revolution, hiding from a manager, stealing poteen from a smuggler and hauling coal across a bridge.

In Whitehead the audience were dinners in the dining car and they were passengers on their way to the Gobbins, on an excursion to Lough Neagh, they were part of a crash. With that, looking at different ways of storytelling – the actors involved the audience in a smuggling mission, then they got caught, implicated in a cover up, a family choir and a hen party – the craic was mighty.

In Glenarm the audience were wealthy property buyers in an auction, buying sections of the Coast Road, which had stories attached, under cover spies, villagers at a meeting and had to pass by the angry fairies.

In FLAME! The audience were directors in a board meeting, mourners at a funeral, strikers at a protest, players in a gameshow and guardians of heritage. Each piece was only 20 minutes. With all of those roles, people could do very little – you didn't have to do anything, but some people gave loads, so there was an opportunity to play but the audiences was as welcome whether they played or not.

Q2. What types of stories make that interactive immersive experience? Is it about the human aspect, the characters, the people and how they fit into that industrial world?

It's about getting the audience to feel like what it would feel like to be the characters – that's what we were most excited about. In those experiences that are universal – funerals and weddings – what was it like to be part of that? What did it feel like to be there and to be included? For example, if you've been part of a riot, you feel differently than you would if you'd seen it on tv, or the stage where you're not acknowledged. We're looking for that sense of emotional investment and the sense that you take away that memory because you were there, you were part of it. For all the stories we were looking for stories that people could be part of it.

Q3. For the sites themselves which all had strong character - what does that bring and what limitations can that put on thinking creatively?

You can get swamped by the reality of the building – how can I be anything other than a worker on the railway, how can I use this creatively. With Whitehead, some of the other spaces were beautiful but the dining car has such atmosphere. There were loads of stories, lots of nuggets but there wasn't one story that we found that would sustain 20 minutes of narrative or one character so we found a way to curate those stories by having a menu of stories – crash of the day, smugglers etc and FLAME! was similar, we wanted to hold on to fragments of a story within a concept – moving between them becomes your energy.

Q4. What do you think this kind of approach can offer sites connecting with new audiences – in a different way from living history or exhibitions or tours?



I think the heritage sector is poised to take over the entertainment industry! Successful theatre is becoming more immersive and by immersive, I mean that you're not in a neutral space watching people in another space – you're all in the same location. Some of the great successes in the West End and Belfast - the audiences are acknowledged; they are part of it. There is great potential for the heritage sector – entertainment is all about immersion and experiences and heritage has got it all. There's a real opportunity to make extraordinary things happen in the heritage sector.

Q5. Heritage organisations, especially smaller ones don't often have the opportunity to work with arts organisations. Although we're part of the same cultural world, we can speak a different language and sometimes come from a different direction. So how do you feel heritage organisations can best meet an arts organisation in the middle to work together?

It's about being open – we're not there to tear the plaques and throw away the living history, we are there as a different quality, so everywhere where we work, there were brilliant things happening, there's a commitment and energy so there were ways to tell the story, and what we're saying is, here's another way, a different way, it doesn't challenge or compete. Once people trusted us, they were amazing but there was a bit of we've got facts that need told and I can understand that. We wanted to come in and be respectful of the facts and tell the stories but we didn't want people to feel that they were being educated, we wanted them to feel they were being entertained and where people were open to that, and everybody was eventually open to that, that was a really exciting, positive experience.

Gemma Reid opened to floor for comments and questions

Comment: Whitehead Railway: It's an entirely new dimension. Theatre on wheels – the actors and the four plays were captivating. With a change of a scene you were suddenly part of the new scene, after the immersive theatre, TV, now seems bland – you're not really engaged in TV, you're just watching it.

Zoe Seaton : Big Telly: That's where theatre and heritage have the opportunity, people like to have experience, the more things become digital, and I understand the need for digital legacies, but the more people will seek an experience they can be part of – we need to find ways to do that, that make it sustainable. There's no reason why a story can't start in one heritage site and end in another, and you have lunch there. There's no reason you can't start on the bus or the bus station and end up at the heritage site. There's lots of different ways that the arts world is a real resource for heritage but it's not just about making a play, it's about using those actors as a resource within the whole town, there's no reason why a story can't start in at Bob and Berts and end up at Whitehead.

Comment: I think this is a great way in which to really engage people but also from a marketing point of view it's a brilliant promotional piece. The use of professional actors is great but the cost can be quite prohibitive, how do you think we would be able to retain some of that entertainment value but do it in a more cost-effective way?

Zoe Seaton: Big Telly: With using professional actors there are models which we leave behind like an audio trail or using an actor onsite for a certain day and being



inventive about how they're used as a resource so there are scalable products in the projects. There are experiences that you can make for people who don't consider themselves to be actors which could add to a heritage site. We did a project with retired people who were running after school clubs – we went to see someone talking about the war – he was brilliant, he knew so much but the children weren't engaged. Big Telly worked with him on creating an interactive workshop where the kids went into trenches, there were sound effects, air raids – he took them through an experience which was a 45-minute workshop, which they still have in that school, but he needed support to design that into an experience. There are plenty of ways of developing experiences like this.

Gemma Reid: Heritage is art, staff and volunteers can be trained in lots of different ways to gain skills from other aspects of the cultural industry. So, how to write good exhibition panels, how to be a tour guide that's effective, how to deliver a theatrical immersive experience within their space, they can gain those skills from elsewhere.

Comment: I concur, I find that the most cost effective way to take this forward is to empower the volunteers better to deliver these experiences because it's not cost effective for each individual group to have professional actors coming in and bespoke plays all the time. Volunteer training, engagement with their audiences, knowing and understanding their audiences is absolutely essential.

Zoe Seaton: Absolutely, it's about creating structures that we support, so that it's not all reliant on the person delivering whether they're an actor or volunteer. Housewife challenge (**comment:** that was absolutely brilliant!) – could be redesigned so that it was led by volunteers as an event.

NIMC Comment: The heritage sector is a cultural sector, but there are very few opportunities for those working in heritage and the arts to come together to create fantastic experiences. Well done! The trail at Carnlough was a brilliant experience.

Zoe Seaton: It was theatrical, playing with that form and that's what it made it feel really special.

Comment for Jayne Clarke: Taking on board the opportunities that could come from this and that the volunteers are saying this would be something they're interested in doing – what could be next steps? We all realise it's a good idea, a good way of interacting. What do we need to do next?

Jayne Clarke: There are still a few months left in the project, so we can highlight areas to facilitate further work. We are very conscious today that we're opening this out to other people beyond the project – that might be a way to make it a bit more affordable and sustainable too. Anybody from another organisation who is inspired about this today, if you think you can in any way export this into your own experience, we could have a conversation – we are seeking genuinely to collaborate. Two things to note then: 1. We will have our own conversations at the end of the project in December. 2. To see if there's anything to collaborate on and share the experience and knowledge gained. There is more to explore.



Zoe Seaton: Yes, theatre is expensive to make but it's not as expensive to repeat so the costs are top ended but if repeated then it's less expensive.

Comment: I would concur with that, we've put so much effort in, it would be such a shame to put that on the shelf – it would be great to see what would be viable.

Comment: Thank you to Jayne Clarke for her vision and tenacity – people in your position don't always take risks and it's brilliant that you did and that's to be commended.

Jayne Clarke: Jayne thanked all the people that had made the project happen and thanked for seminar audience for their attention. She then introduced Rachel Brady from the Linen Hall Library who was delivering another EYCH18 project also focusing on industrial heritage (in Belfast City Centre) and working with community/volunteers.

Rachel Brady, Linen Hall Library, Linenopolis Project

Rachel welcomed everyone to the Linen Hall Library. The interpretive panels in the seminar room were some of those created through the Linenopolis project. Rachel Brady described some of the objects in the cases, from the Clifton House register for apprenticeships, to samplers from home industries.

- The project produced guided walking tours by training volunteers from community groups. The story of social history was very important.
- Aims were for the linen industry to be brought to life and local voices to be heard.
- Linen Hall Library worked with community groups in central Belfast. Ligoniel, a mill village shared some of their stories.
- Partnership with Belfast Exposed allowed access to good quality images for the exhibition and walking tour leaflet without huge copyright costs.
- Community groups acquired new skills – they key thing about it was training, not everyone can perform or talk to a large audience.
- Linenhall library partnered with Ormeau Business Park for training on developing a tour script, how to promote your business and research.
- The volunteers did a 6-week programme to develop script, test tour runs and evaluation.
- Once the project was launched, all launch tours have sold out.
- The tours cost £10 per person, which was a good income venture for the Linen Hall Library.
- The guides were paid
- Relaunch tours in the spring.
- Sharing industrial heritage that Belfast and the rest of Northern Ireland is known for.
- There are so many stories that can be uncovered. There was a gentleman in a care home that was interviewed as part of the oral history archive – his father examined the linen that Tutankhamun was wrapped in and he told a lovely story of this memory as a 6-year-old child. So, this project generated another archive for the library.



- The project focused on the linen quarter – with walking tour taking about 1 hr – 1hr 30. Lots of different sites were included, including how people spent their money e.g. Ulster Hall, Ormeau Baths, Robinson Cleavers
- A project aim was to bring out the personable side - one of tour guides as part of the Ligoneil group talks about Ewarts and growing up in the village, playing in the ruins of the factory and what that meant to the people there. Participants in walking tours really valued that experience, they want to hear about how then can connect to people and they're getting a little nugget of information that isn't available elsewhere.
- The exhibition produced through the project is going to PRONI

Rachel Brady closed by saying that she was pleased to have the seminar in the Linen Hall Library – an old linen warehouse.

Jayne Clarke thanked Rachel Brady and stated that the line-up between the projects was not just the industrial theme, but also working closely with the communities, telling the stories and connecting with audiences in new ways and to this methodology audiences were really responding to both projects.

Jayne Clarke draws the seminar to a close

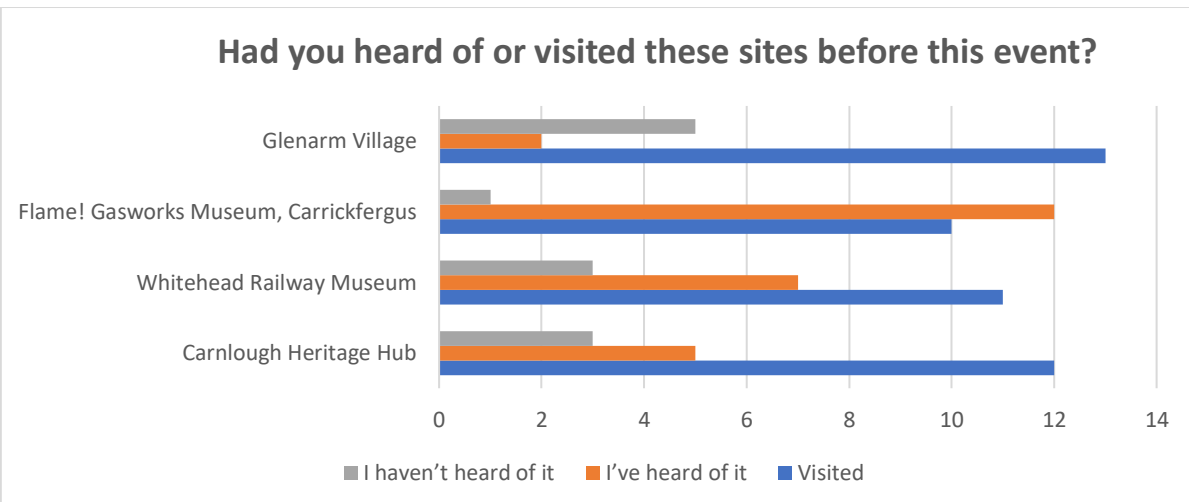
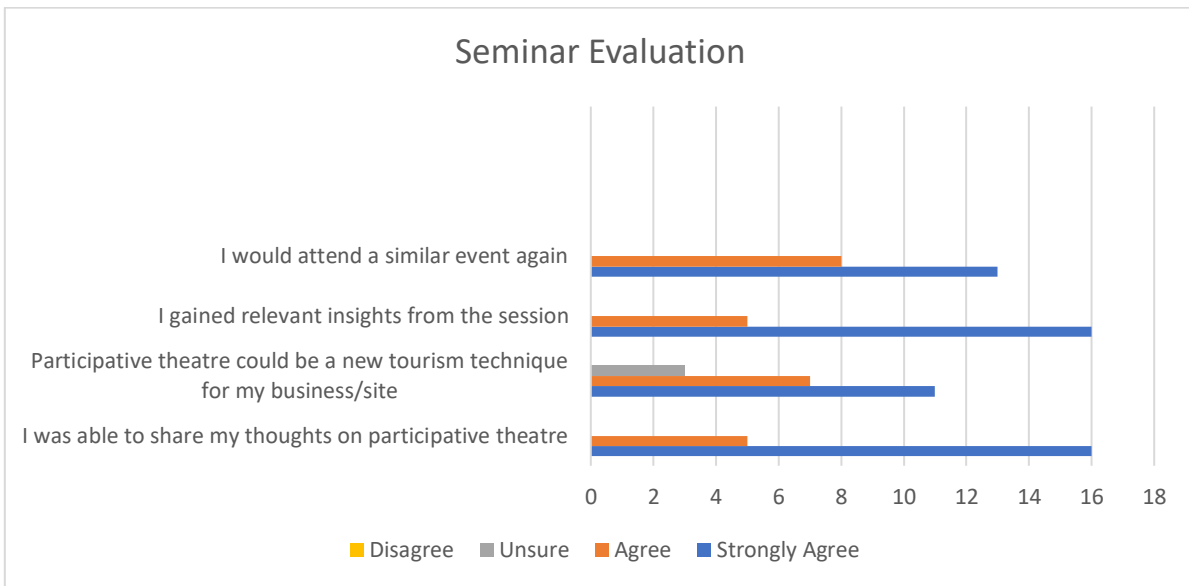
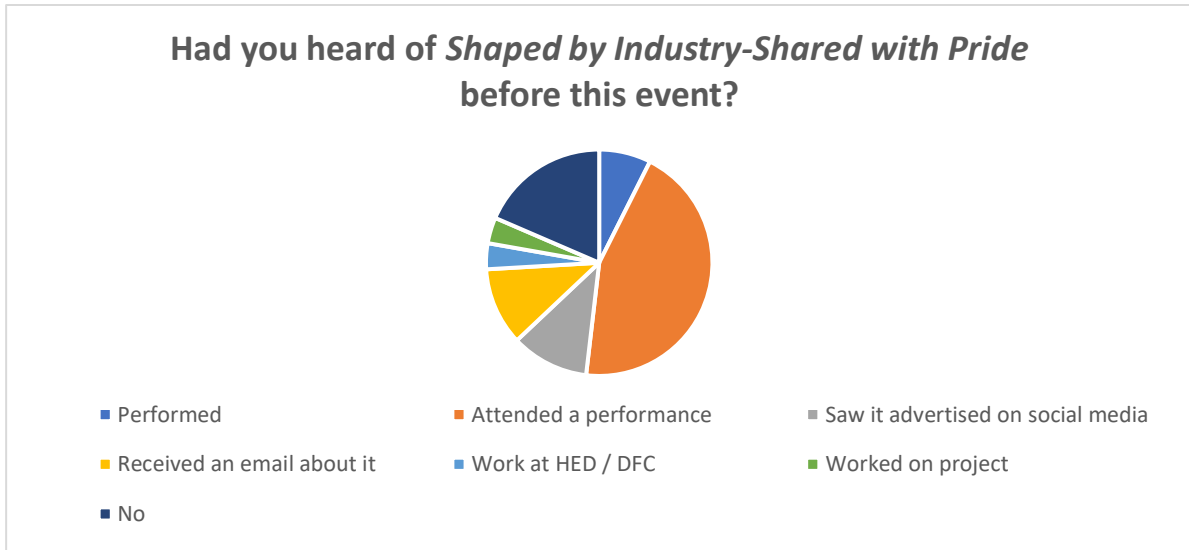
Three things are needed for collaboration:

- 1. Structure – to allow collaboration to happen we need to have it planned, you need to have a structure or a method to bring people together and have an agreed purpose.
- 2a Allow volunteers to shine to make the most of their contribution and make sure they're not being bogged down operationally but they should understand your site and audiences in their totality. If you get the mixture of training and buy in right it frees the heritage attraction up to optimise what you collectively want to achieve.
- 2b Small businesses don't have time necessarily, so make the right intervention to have meaningful interaction with businesses
- 3. Share opportunities and taking a risk with each other, sustain what you started, and each other. A lot of it is grass roots level but it needs to be planned for and supported more strategically as in the cultural sector we're not well funded, future isn't always very certain, so we should be working together with the tourism and arts sectors more.



Seminar Evaluation

Evaluation forms were provided to all participants and the closing of the seminar. The following seminar evaluation data is based on 21 attending respondents.





How do you think participative theatre could be used in your business?

- Much more opportunities to involve visitors than 'history' type – very impressed
- We are very open in Slemish Barn to host and facilitate events based on local history / Slemish. We already had drama holidays
- Could be used as an occasional event and could be done with other places in the village
- NIMC – We could support museums to work more in partnerships with arts / theatre etc
- I'd be keen to seek opportunities for similar partnerships – it's a great way to engage audiences emotionally and enjoyably with heritage
- Yes – Could make it more interesting and would help visitors remember their experience and pass on to others
- Could be used to attract new audiences
- We undertake living history and participating theatre
- Skills transfer to volunteers to enable them to better engage with audiences and visitors to the site
- Hoping we could engage local community and hopefully teenagers
- Enjoyed the Carnlough event
- As a way of increasing awareness of our historic sites and encouraging people to visit
- As an event at sites to offer a better and different visitor experience
- Not relevant at this stage due to security and site considerations
- Will help to animate sites along the Causeway Coastal Route

How relevant is participative theatre to your business?

