



ABERTAY 25 EVALUATION REPORT

About this report	1
Evaluation methodology	
What is Abertay25?	2
Project Aims	4
Outputs & Outcomes	6
Project Impact & Covid-19	8
Reflections and key lessons learnt	10
Legacy & Conclusions	12
Further information	13

CONTENTS

About this report...

This report has been created for public viewing. It is based on a longer, more detailed, report written by Heather Roberts of HerArchivist which can be requested to view by emailing archives@abertay.ac.uk

The purpose of this report is to celebrate the successes of the Abertay 25 project, funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund, and share some of our reflections from the project.

Evaluation Methodology

This evaluation is a culmination of both qualitative and quantitative methods, taken from the following activities and events;

- Records of training sessions, hours dedicated by Young Ambassadors and volunteers, records of attendance at events and number of unique views to online events.
- Continuous reflection with team members, volunteers and Young Ambassadors throughout the project, including feedback forms and open discussions both in groups and one-to-one
- Interviews undertaken by team members including Abertay 25 team members, volunteers, teachers and participants. Interviews were conducted and recorded by HerArchivist.

This project was very enjoyable and pupils looked forward to working on their own projects each week. I hope to carry out a similar project in the near future!

- Feedback from a teacher



Developing skills through training and activities for Secondary School pupils, community volunteers and university students

Researching & working in partnership to collect information about Abertay's 130+ history

Promoting Abertay University's archives as well as the various uses of archives within local, national, and international communities

What is Abertay 25?

Abertay25 was designed to highlight the university's 130+ years of contribution to innovations in technology and industry in Dundee, and enhance the local community's knowledge of Dundee's heritage.

An ambitious 2-year project began in 2019, connecting with student and community volunteers, secondary school pupils across the city and oral history participants from the UK, India and the USA!

Meanwhile, the university's first archivist, Ruaraidh Wishart, had his own mission: to establish a working archive and begin actively collecting and researching stories from Abertay University's incredible past.

“

In school history isn't really interesting. It's the world war and the Picts and things like that. But [this project] had things that were more interesting. I am interested in science and technology and would like to learn about it further. Speaking to older women who have done what I want to do, was really useful. I want to be a woman in science and it was really good to speak to other women who had done it.

Abertay25 Young
Ambassador

”



Image: Young Ambassadors create a puppet show based on the story of David Reid Tait

Project Aims

The project aimed to:

- Unlock the significant contribution made by the institution to economic and cultural life in Dundee and beyond and increase public knowledge of this
- Uncover hidden histories of women and individuals of minoritised ethnicities
- Enrich and extend information and stories held in the archives
- Develop skills among secondary school students

Project Outcomes

The project's outcomes are exciting and varied, and have been achieved by the Abertay 25 team working in cooperation with volunteers, teachers, community groups and colleagues.

- Heritage will be identified and recorded
- Heritage will be better interpreted and explained
- People will have learnt about heritage
- People will have developed skills
- People will have an enjoyable experience.

How?

Starting in May 2019 and running to May 2021, it had a three-phase structure of activity to accomplish this ambition.

- Phase 1 focused on researching the collected archive
- Phase 2 delivered an inter-generational memory exchange
- Phase 3 finalised the lasting outputs created by the project.

26 creative arts responses based on 11 stories from the archives

**14 oral histories,
7 hours of stories!
71% conducted by Young Ambassadors**

257
pupils engaged with Abertay University's archives

21 volunteers helped research over

25 stories from the archives -

16 facilitated research projects in secondary schools

Project Outputs

Over 60% of the project's planned outputs were either successful or exceeded, including recruiting 150 Young Ambassadors from schools and young carers groups, designing 2 school packs, developing exhibitions and online interpretations of the archives. While some output targets were not reached, this is only a matter of quantity, for example 25 stories were found and told instead of the planned 50. The quality of all outputs are impressive.

Project Outcomes

All the outcomes the project was designed to achieve have been successful. Identifying and recording heritage, as well as interpreting and explaining it have both been realised with extracting stories of changemakers and innovations from the archive as well as innovative online interpretations and exhibitions.

The most impressive outcomes from this project have been those for people. Participants have learnt about heritage, developed skills, had an enjoyable experience, and volunteered time. Most notably, the participants were impressed with the skills they developed on the project and how transferrable they were to other areas of their life such as their own family history research, working with young people, and even supporting their career.



Young Ambassadors making observations
of images from the archives



The extra-curricular element was good. It was a really good selling point for the project. It showed how skills gained can be used in their education, and that they can learn useful things outside of their school lessons. It showed their skills, not just their knowledge, and showed how other people have used their skills in their lives by talking to these people who have done so many different things. It shows that it's possible to apply skills in different ways.

- Dundee Young Carers, supervisor



Project Impact & Covid-19

If you would like more details on outcome analysis and impact, please contact archives@abertay.ac.uk to view the full evaluation report, written by HerArchivist.

When lockdown hit in March 2020, the team immediately began planning how the project could be moved to an online platform.

We already had teachers, volunteers and pupils signed up to take part in our Memories: Reanimated project, so changing our project or putting it on hold was never an option. We knew how important it was to see our promises through, and although we wouldn't be able to invite people to the university, we would do our utmost to being the university to them.

Abertay University's heritage has not only been identified and explored, it has been interpreted by young audiences for young audiences. The Young Ambassadors and volunteers who participated not only got an exciting opportunity to feel connected to their local university and indeed the city of Dundee. They discovered powerful female role models, pioneering individuals from all over the world, amazing innovations that have impacted our present and future.

Many positive experiences with lasting impacts were had by the participants, including staff, volunteers, teachers and Young Ambassadors, leading to changes in attitudes and behaviours towards heritage, intergenerational contact and the university itself.

Before the project Abertay never crossed my mind. Learning about its history was interesting and the university has all these opportunities. Now I'm thinking about universities and I think Abertay is a really good uni.

- Feedback from a Young Ambassador

40mc of archive material has been identified, surveyed, displayed and explored

78% of Young Ambassadors* stated that they would recommend a similar project to a friend (*Feedback from Phase 1 of the project gathered before lockdown)

Project Impact Continued

The evidence gathered throughout the project through qualitative and quantitative evaluation shows that this project has met its aims, and has left a positive impact on colleagues, young people, and volunteers alike.

Our Young Ambassadors have had an opportunity to gain a wide range of skills, and many have identified their own skills development as well as areas they would like to improve, through reflective evaluation - self-reflection being a very important skill in itself! Communication skills, independent research and teamworking skills, and creativity have all been explored and built on throughout the project. More formally, they have explored presentation skills and some have developed skills in stop motion and oral history interviewing.

"I'm not the best at talking to people. I can stutter and forget what I want to say. I feel like I do that slightly less after the oral history part of this project. I feel more relaxed."

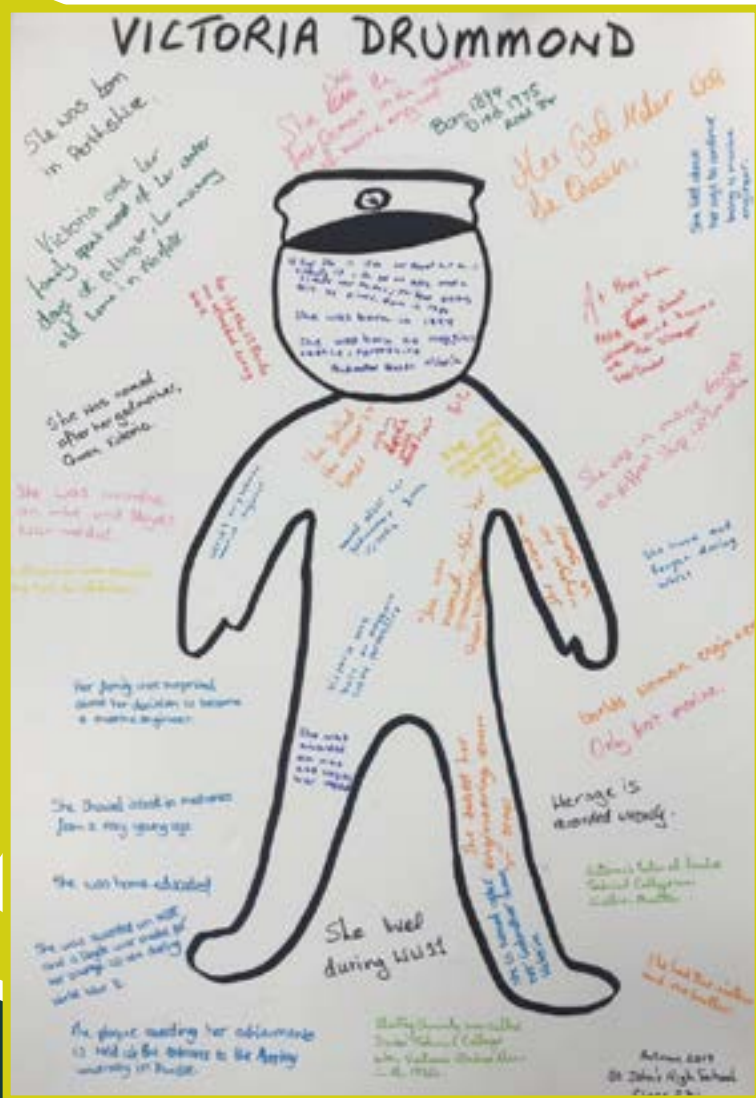
- Young Ambassador

The project's impact extends beyond skills development. It successfully provided access for a variety of users to learn about Abertay University's heritage not only in those who participated directly with the project, but also visitors to talks and online exhibitions. For example, 25 innovations and innovators were identified by the Abertay25 Team with the help of colleagues, volunteers, and other heritage workers in the city. Members of the public were encouraged to vote for their favourite, and these 25 stories reached 600 people! In addition to the skills developed for volunteers and Young Ambassadors, they gained a unique insight into how research can be improved by seeking out and interpreting archives.

"You learn about how to do these things just by being around the kind of people who do this kind of thing. You do learn. Using different resources like online newspaper archives and I'll ask better questions now than I might have done as a result of the project"

- Oral History Participant

Reflections and key lessons learnt



What worked well?

This project was very successful in a number of ways. It achieved all of its initial aims and outcomes despite a global pandemic and received very positive feedback from all participants. The final stage of the project, the Abertay 25 Education Packs, are a wonderful legacy for the project and have been created using participant feedback and collaboration with other departments in the university.

The Abertay25 team worked very well together, with regular meetings throughout the project to ensure its smooth running. Using the expertise of individuals and organisations within and outwith the university has vastly improved the professionalism of many of the project's outputs, including the online exhibition, Education Pack

designs and publicly available videos from oral histories and events.

The Covid-19 pandemic forced us online, however this brought the opportunity to develop new skills not only for the Abertay25 team, but for the volunteers and pupils who were still able to take part. It meant we were able to connect with people living in India and the USA, not just our UK-based alumni.

What could have been improved?

There were challenges around recruitment of volunteers and schools in the initial stages of the project and then challenges around retaining participants once the lockdown hit in March 2020. This wasn't necessarily due to lack of interest in the project, but due to competing pressures and demands for their time, particularly for teachers and Young Ambassadors.

When the project kicked off in June 2019, once the Public Engagement Officer was in place, there wasn't much time to build relationships with participants, and the project itself, how it would be delivered, was evolving alongside the team's understanding of what the archives held. This certainly had an impact on the team's ability to recruit and advertise opportunities with the project.

To conclude, although the successes by far outweigh any challenges faced during the project, a key lesson learnt is to allow for time for preparation. This would include more time exploring the archives, more time to build meaningful connections with schools and participants and in particular, more time to ensure the project fits with the schedules of the schools involved.

Ultimately, I think the project worked brilliantly and there isn't much I would change about it at all! This project was very enjoyable and pupils looked forward to working on their own projects each week. I hope to carry out a similar project in the near future!

- Feedback from
a teacher



Project Legacy & Conclusions

Project Legacy

Although the project is now finished a lasting legacy remains not only in the availability of particular information online, but also through the lasting impression it has had on participants.

The stories identified and researched in Phase 1 are available online for anyone to explore, and further information will be available on request. Furthermore, the online exhibition “A Factory in Miniature” is available to view and is in itself a very innovative way to display archival material. Oral history interviews from Phase 2 are also available to view, in full, and share a wealth of information about the university, the individuals who studied and worked here and some fascinating events that took place, such as Royal visits, sky dives, and how science and music can intertwine. Finally, and possibly the most impactful legacy, are our Education Packs. Three research projects designed for schools and community groups to use that guides them through a research project which will not only reveal fascinating people and events, but also challenge participants to grow and develop their skills and knowledge, just as those who took part in our project have.

78% of Young Ambassadors have indicated that they would take part in a similar project and we believe there are plenty of opportunities to build on this to create more projects that would benefit all stakeholders. There is still so

much to explore, and still so many anniversaries to come, such as the anniversary of Scotland’s first science-based nursing degree. These will provide more opportunities to build on relationships and make new ones, publicising the university’s heritage whilst also making connections in the community and acting as a vehicle for developing skills for the future.

This project has demonstrated the invaluable benefits of an archive service in contributing to the university’s strategic objectives around community outreach, and it has established a good foundation to build upon.

A member of the Project Partnership Team put it best in explaining that this is only the beginning, and their words are a fitting conclusion to this report.

Today’s data files are tomorrow’s archives. The fact that the university is proud of and willing to put resources towards its heritage is to be lauded. It shows the university values its present activity as well, it shows its current work is as relevant to the future of the city as its previous work is relevant to the present. There is a sense of pride and belonging in the community, and vice versa, that the community feels part of the university. We’ve only begun to scratch the surface.

- Member of the PPT

Links to project outputs and further information

A more detailed evaluation of the project is available.
Please contact archives@abertay.ac.uk

Abertay 25 First of Abertay's Firsts

Abertay University Archives

Exhibition - A Factory in Miniature: Abertay
and Jute Training, 1889-1984

Abertay 25 Changemakers

Abertay 25 Memories Reanimated

Abertay 25 Education Packs