**AHRC CARE FOR THE FUTURE EXPLORATORY AWARD**

**Final Report**

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**FROM THE SPORTING PAST TO FUTURE WELLBEING:**

**INTERGENERATIONAL SPORTS HERITAGE IN GLASGOW’S SOUTHSIDE**

Context For the Research

From the Sporting Past to Future Wellbeing is a pilot research and community project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council as part of its new strategic research theme ‘Care For the Future’. The research, carried out in the south of Glasgow between 1 February to 31 October 2013, explores interpretations of local sports heritage in the community involving people from diverse generational, gender and ethnic backgrounds.

In responding to the ‘Care for the Future’ theme the research in Glasgow encouraged young people to reflect upon the concepts that are used to join together the past, present and future – including ideas about memory, legacy, heritage, and wellbeing. One of the broader contexts for the research has been the prospect of the 2014 Commonwealth Games being hosted in the city, and a desire to connect aspects of the city’s sporting heritage to notions of legacy, prosperity and wellbeing that are commonly associated with hosting such global sports mega-events.

The research explored different creative, artistic and media modes of communityengagement with the city’s sporting past and through intergenerational engagement triggered senior members of the Glasgow sporting community to draw upon different emotions evoked by reflecting on the past – such as nostalgia, celebration and pride when reflecting on the longevity of particular sporting clubs in the area - many of which were formed in the mid-to-late Nineteenth Century.

The project was the catalyst for 24 young people aged 9 and 10 of mixed abilities and diverse cultural backgrounds from Shawlands Primary School to connect with senior members of the local sports community aged between 48 and 80. The children met senior club representatives and visited sporting venues from in and around Shawlands, Pollokshields, Pollokshaws, Queens Park and Govanhill to investigate sporting heritage. The academic purpose of the research was to develop our understanding of how the concept of heritage is understood, contested and authenticated, and assess the role and value of sports heritage for cultural and social change. The project investigated the transmission of sporting cultures of the past, and its influence over, or disconnection from, contemporary sporting practices of young people, which tend to be highly commercialised and mediated. The intergenerational research therefore enabled young people to learn why particular sports clubs existed in their local area, and understand how their membership and association with the community may have changed over time. Through community engagement the children were encouraged to think about the sustainability of sports clubs, and in some cases interview the people who were integral to the survival of such institutions. With this in mind, the children also explored local lost spaces sport, such as the former ice rink at nearby Crossmyloof and the former football stadium at Cathkin Park, to understand where sport used to be played in the south of the city and how the urban landscape of sport had changed over time. This aspect of the research connected with the pupils knowledge and understanding of new sporting arenas in the city (many of them being built for the Commonwealth Games), enabling them to think about why certain sports venues flourish where others do not.

The research used a variety of methods and activities co-created with the school and local clubs, to explore the relationships between people, places and discourses of sporting heritage, including:

* Intergenerational communication;
* Community heritage activities;
* Engaging communities in the interpretation of sports films and visual culture;
* Enabling communities to explore the continuities & transformations in sports cultures in their localities;
* Experience playing particular sports, in some cases for the first time.

Some of the most valuable resources used on the project were films held by Scottish Screen Archive and the newsreel archives of British Pathe, which had captured sport in the area throughout the Twentieth Century. For example, an amateur film from 1946 of the opening day at Shawlands Bowling Club, which is located adjacent to the school, revealed the ritual of the club president’s wife bowling the first bowl of the season - a tradition continued to this day. Both children and senior participants had the opportunity to share their thoughts on such film, interpreting the sporting past in relation to its present and future.

But by far the most valuable aspect of the research was the engagement of young people with senior members of the clubs including:

* Clydesdale Cricket Club
* Poloc Cricket Club
* Pollok Football Club
* Titwood Tennis Club
* Shawlands Bowling Club
* Govanhill Baths Community Trust
* East Kilbride Curling Club

The children recorded the reminiscences and stories of club members and used iPads to take photographs of heritage items stored by the clubs. The data collected was used to inform the pupils’ projects on each sport, and a selection of this material was later posted on the project blog and used in an exhibition.

The Outcomes and Impacts of the Research

The integration of community engagement, and the co-creation of the methods used in the research project, ensured the research embedded impact with the various partners from the outset. The driving principle of the research was the need to instigate intergenerational connections and dialogue between the participating school in the Shawlands Learning Community and the clubs with a view to enhancing future collaborations in the context of sport in the community.

The pupils used Apple**™** iPad Mini’s as a technological resource to access images, film, maps and a range of information and resource sheets uploaded and created by the researcher. The iPads were also used to visually capture visits to the various clubs in the community and access apps, such as Historypin, which were used to produce a cultural mapping of sport in the south of Glasgow available to view at:

(<http://www.historypin.com/channels/view/45478/#|photos/list/>)

Working with their teacher, the children produced a wide range of creative outputs from collage, paintings, poetry, models of sports places and objects as well as recorded presentations of their findings. All this material and a range of posters created by the researcher were curated and exhibited in an exhibition held at the school with invited guests including parents, representatives from the clubs, the local sports development officer, a representative from the Hampden Experience and other children from the school. One of the guests, now 80 and a former president of Pollok Football Club, had attended Shawlands Primary as a boy, nearly seventy years previous, which provided a special moment of connection between the past and the present.

Another significant output of the research was a blog maintained by the researcher: <http://sportheritage.wordpress.com/>. The blog became the main way of reporting on the various themes and activities of the heritage project, reviewing the available resources of sports heritage in Glasgow, aspects of specific interest around issues of gender equality, identity and place, and most crucially, providing a visual record of the community engagement activity itself accompanied by a narrative of each heritage visit written in an accessible and open tone. The blog posts were promoted via Twitter and have received an excellent reception from sports historians, sports professionals and organisations, sports charity’s, academics and wider publics.

The research has begun to be disseminated to a range of academic audiences including papers at the European Communications Research and Education Association conference at the University of Lund, Sweden, 8-9 November 2013, and the International Congress of the European Committee for Sport History (CESH), at Ramon Llull University of Barcelona, Spain, 21-23 November 2013. The researcher also gave a presentation on the research to the Stirling Media Research Institute postgraduate research seminar on 13 November 2013. Work has now begun on finalizing a draft journal article based on the research to be submitted to a leading international sports history journal. Finally, the researcher is being put forward by the University of Stirling to *The Game Changer Awards 2014,*a one-off event to recognise and celebrate the varied and significant contributions that Scotland’s colleges and higher education institutions are making to every aspect of the games and to sport in Scotland.

Contribution to Care for the Future Theme

The research revealed that intergenerational research helps build meaning around *shared experiences of sport*. It identified material and discursive heritage resources, in film, photographs, places, objects and reminiscences, which help create personal histories of sport for diverse audiences, young and older people alike. Through community engagement children learn a sense of place and time, how sport can aid civic engagement and the pleasures involved in learning from other generations. Moreover, senior people in the community have an opportunity to share their knowledge and pride in the sporting past, express their identities around sport and enhance partnerships with young people in new and innovative ways.

More specifically, the project fed directly in to Scotland’s new ‘Curriculum for Excellence’ in terms of the children’s capacities for ‘challenge and enjoyment’, as well as ‘depth and relevance’. As far as I am aware, this is the first enhanced partnership of its kind to bring together an academic research interest in Scotland’s sports and media heritage with the needs of a Scottish primary school to work with and engage with the local and wider community. Pupils also enriched their ICT skills through the use of the iPads, actively and creatively using digital technology to produce new sports heritage materials. The innovative methods used in this study illustrate the importance of academic researchers proactively bringing together different generations within a community to explore the connections between the past and the present, and in the context of heritage, to explore how material and discursive dimensions of heritage can be used to help inform future concerns of the community, in this case the development and sustainability of sports clubs and sporting practices.

To this end, the community engagement with sports clubs links directly in to local, regional and national initiatives around sports development, as well as a more immediate link to legacy policies of Glasgow 2014. As the dissemination of the research goes forward, the researcher has begun a dialogue with the sports development team of Glasgow Life to explore potential policy implications of the research. The connections made between sports clubs and schools will greatly benefit the visibility of sport in the community, raising the profile and development of particular clubs, as well as fostering sustainable relationships, which can grow after the life of the research. The researcher is currently in dialogue with the managers of the Cultural Programme for Glasgow 2014 regarding the potential for exploring the heritage of Scottish sport, and the Commonwealth Games themselves, to inform the Glasgow community and visitors to the city of Scotland’s rich sporting past.