

Institution: Scottish Maritime Museum

Name of Project, Exhibition or Campaign: Garnock Connections Skiff project

Key Contact: Martin Hughes

Project description:

The project was devised to offer the opportunity for young disenfranchised people from Rathbone Training a charity who supports young people into the world of work and Volunteers of the RSPB to work alongside our own young Community Jobs Scotland employees and apprentice boat builders in a real workshop environment to gain basic woodwork skills develop those skills and then construct and row two 22ft. St Ayles Skiffs.

The projects aim was to engage with the young people in a meaningful yet challenging environment and provide them with new transferable skills during the construction phase.

Upon completion of the Skiffs we would facilitate the implementation of a rowing programme and formalise two Community rowing clubs. Both vessels are now owned and operated by local community groups who can reconnect with their environment whilst building up social and team skills and becoming healthier. Both clubs are now established and members now have the opportunity to engage in social rowing and take part in racing the skiffs at numerous regattas throughout the year.

Project Outcomes:

To provide the opportunity for engagement with others in a challenging yet rewarding way.

To increase confidence, social and communication skills.

To become healthier.

To engage with peers and the environment in a constructive and worthwhile way.

Phase one Construction: This phase of the project took place over 16 weeks in the museum workshop and provided the participants with full health and safety training followed by training in the use of appropriate tools and materials.

We engaged with 8 young people and four older volunteers during this phase and they produced both skiffs to a high standard. There were initially some engagement problems as the younger participants had a misconception of the older volunteers being authoritarian as this had been the experience from their past. This was resolved through discussion and allowing the young people involved to take the lead in individual stages of the build for eg. Oar design and construction, colour scheme for the skiffs and naming the skiffs.

During this phase the workshop was open to the public who could engage with the participants and learn about the project. This engagement allowed our staff to witness first hand the behavioural and social improvements in the young people involved. Their self confidence and self belief was great to witness and feedback from the visitors was fantastic. All the participants received a museum certificate for their efforts.

One of the participants 22 year old Edel McCarthy is now an apprentice boat builder at the boat building school and is the first ever modern apprentice employed under the new scheme. The Museum managed to secure funding through the Shipwrights Apprenticeship Scheme and this will cover her first year salary. Her apprenticeship education will last 3 years.

Phase 2 is underway and the official launch of both vessels took place at the museum in July 2019. The boats are now in regular use by the community and two cubs are due to be constituted in the coming months.

A small written evaluation survey was completed by all participants all who took part in the project gave very positive feedback on the project.

Project Budget:

The overall budget for construction of the vessels was £11,000 which included all construction material costs and full safety equipment for both vessels. Staff time was donated to the project by the museum and approx 2500 volunteer hours contributed by the young people involved.

On the link below you will be able to find photos of the skiffs and Edel our new Apprentice.

Link to Website (if applicable):

www.facebook.com/scottishboatbuildingschool/?ref=br_rs