

# Treloar 100+

Treloar 100+ is one of the 10 projects across South East England that make up Paralympic Region, itself part of Accentuate, a programme of 15 projects, inspired by the Paralympic Movement, which seeks to change perceptions and offer opportunities to showcase the talents of deaf and disabled people.

The Lord Mayor Treloar Hospital was founded in 1908, transferred to the NHS in 1948 and finally closed in 1994. Treloar's School and College evolved from the original 'Cripples Hospital' of 1908 and continues to operate and develop today. The archive collection associated with the Hospital came to Hampshire Record Office in 1994. It consists of a wide ranging selection of mainly film, printed and photographic material.

Paralympic Region is underpinned by the Revisiting Collections methodology. We ran four Revisiting Collections sessions with students at Treloar College and three student visits to Hampshire Record Office, working with 31 students in total, using archive film and 10-20 archive photographs from the Treloar collection. The students viewed the film and photographs and their comments were digitally recorded and notes were also taken. The transcripts were then typed up.

The visits to the Record Office lasted about an hour, with the students having a tour of the building and being shown some archive material, including film. (NB the archives they were shown in the visits were not part of the Treloar collection).

The Revisiting Collections sessions were part of and feed into a larger on-going project, which includes an Artist in Residence, oral history recordings, storytelling workshops for local schools and a touring exhibition. This larger project is a collaboration between Hampshire County Council Archives, Arts and Museums services and has funding from various different funders, including Renaissance SE and Heritage Lottery Fund.

## Target Audience

Elements of the wider project have a range of audiences. Overall the Revisiting Collections methodology will have benefitted Treloar College students and archive staff.

The exhibition is aimed at local schools, disabled young people and their families and the wider local community. This includes input by an Artist in Residence who worked with Treloar College students. A selection of online resources has been developed to be uploaded onto a countywide primary school Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Members of the public and academics should benefit from an enhanced catalogue as we make additional comments and interviews available through our CALM catalogue system. In the same way the oral history recordings of former staff and students will enhance the catalogue of Wessex Film and Sound Archive and benefit visitors using it.

## Aim

Our principle aims were to generate a legacy for the Paralympic Region / Revisiting Collections project through a touring exhibition, learning packs and online presence for schools and an enhanced catalogue to improve access and information on the Treloar collection for staff and the general public.

To achieve this we sought to revive use of the Treloar collection and to develop and augment the existing collection through new information, new accessions and new

interpretation.

At the same time we wanted to raise the profile of disabled users and in particular the work of Treloar's College and School and its 100 year history and association with Alton.

## **Process**

### General

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A Steering Group was established to complete the initial application to be part of Paralympic Region. This subsequently met on a monthly basis. Two archivists from Hampshire Record Office received training on the Revisiting Collections methodology which was followed up by a session with Caroline Reed (consultant supporting the Paralympic Region project 2010-2011). Contact was also made with Treloar College and Treloar Trust in order to progress the project and invite staff onto the steering group.

The archivists used an online guide on Revisiting Collections (the Revisiting Archive Collections toolkit).

In two Revisiting Collections sessions student questionnaires were completed, with additional student questionnaires being completed at the Artist in Residence sessions. Evaluation of the overall project is ongoing including the exhibition and storytelling workshops.

### Using and adapting Revisiting Collections

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We used Revisiting Collections because it was an exciting way to explore an existing collection and because many of the items in the collection lacked key information and details such as dates and names, e.g. in photographs and film. We therefore wanted to try out this nationally recognised methodology to see if we could improve our catalogues as a consequence by working with students and staff from Treloar's, as well as the local community through an exhibition in Alton's Allen Gallery.

We worked with focus groups (about 5 students each session). To date we have run four sessions and hope to run one more specifically with Treloar staff. The College selected the students to participate in the focus groups. The sessions were considered quite challenging. They collected exclusively emotional responses rather than factual information, which was interesting but often discussions went off the topic of the archives. For example, students often became preoccupied on what the people in the film/photographs were thinking rather than the content or context. The archivists occasionally found that they had to try and pull the discussion back to the content of the material in use.

Although Treloar staff had verbally agreed with students that the Revisiting Collections sessions could be recorded, one student later refused to give her permission to have her comments or recorded voice used.

A separate activity in this project was to use an established Artist in Residence, funded through the County Council's Arts service, using archives from the Treloar collection to create original artwork. The outputs from this collaboration will feature in the exhibition. In addition a Museum Trainee recorded oral histories as part of the wider project at people's homes, at the County's Museum HQ, and at Treloar's in one-to-one sessions. Participants in the interviews were volunteers who responded to adverts and were all former staff and students. These activities did not employ the Revisiting Collections framework as they were considered 'add-on' activities.

## The material

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Archive film and photographs from the existing Treloar and similar Treloar's related collections were used. Existing catalogue entries and item descriptions were printed out and used in the workshops with students and staff. Archive photographs were enlarged to A3, printed and laminated for ease of use and digitised film of Treloar's from the 1920s was also used.

## The Staff

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Two archivists plus teachers and teaching assistants at Treloar College were present at each Revisiting Collections session.

## What you found out

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Very little factual information has been collected to-date. The reason for this was that the film and photographs were beyond the memory of the students. We hope to run one final session with staff, which might result in more factual information being revealed. We collected mainly emotional responses to the material from the students. Their responses occasionally surprised the archivists, however. Emotions were strong about previous therapy techniques, such as hydrotherapy and light therapy, as well as changes in language, independence, dignitaries visiting etc. Their comments gave insights into objects, changes in care and health and safety.

Questions asked by students were often about what people in the photos and film were thinking or how they felt. Other questions were also about things the archivists did not know (e.g. who is in the photo). The archivists were surprised the students did not ask more factual questions. They were often surprised about the numbers of students attending each session, which varied and was unpredictable. When students did respond to catalogue descriptions the archivists were often surprised by their reactions, e.g. a student commenting on a photograph captioned "Four cooks in a kitchen" thought it should have read simply "Four cooks".

## Capturing and sharing the information

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We have not yet come to a conclusion about how to add our user information to our collection database, CALM. Much of the content is very emotive so may not be appropriate and also safeguarding issues at the College limit our use of student comments and their names. If we do add information we will not need to change CALM or use a parallel system.

The recordings and transcripts of the Revisiting Collections sessions are held on file but are not available via our catalogue as yet. These are not available to the public at present but staff can view them. It was understood that the College had granted permission for all participating students to be recorded, however, issues around permissions remain. In hindsight we would have preferred to have got signed permissions from each student in advance rather than rely on the College requesting permission at a later stage.

The oral history recordings and transcripts that were taken by a museum colleague as part of the project will be deposited with the Wessex Film and Sound Archive.

## **Number of participants**

31 students participated in the Revisiting Collections sessions and around 22 students came on the visits to the Record Office. These were different from the majority of our visitors in as much as they were all disabled. We receive few disabled visitors at the Record Office, and most of those are adults. Around 20 oral histories were recorded with former staff and students as part of the project.

## **Impact and outcome**

The key outcomes of the project are: a greater awareness of the Treloar collection by staff and students and the work of Hampshire Record Office and its role as curator of a history of disability and Treloar's.

Using Revisiting Collections has had some impact in that we would consider using it with other collections in which we would like further factual information. Realistically, however, it could not be used regularly due to the amount of core time necessary to apply the methodology. Using the methodology has not made a difference to our day to day working patterns or the way our collections and access teams work.

## **Evaluation**

See above. Evaluation of the overall project is on-going including feedback from the exhibition and storytelling workshops.

## **Tips**

What we would have done differently:

- Get signed permissions from each participating student in advance of the workshops along with information about students individual limitations and strengths
- Use digital electronic images rather than laminated copies as some of the disabled students found them easier to access
- Group sizes of 5 students, plus teaching assistants, was about right. However, although we found that splitting the groups up so they could record their own thoughts was easier for archivists, it meant that quieter students did not comment. Archivists received better responses when each individual in the group had time to comment.
- It was felt that it would have been useful to involve those delivering the Revisiting Collections sessions at the development stage of the project and to have had a clear project milestone document before activities started
- The training session on Revisiting Collections methodology came slightly too late to shape the project and would have been useful earlier in the planning stages
- Because some sessions were cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances combined with long summer holidays, momentum was lost which meant some difficulties for those delivering the sessions

Key tips for others:

- Allow plenty of time for preparing and running of sessions
- Very useful to have teachers and teaching assistants present at sessions
- Choose participants and collections carefully so that factual information, rather than just emotional responses can be collected

## **Future development**

The work of the Revisiting Collections sessions will feed into an exhibition on disability and Treloar's as well as the storytelling workshops and learning packs. We would consider

using Treloar students in helping with future cataloguing, although how this might work in practice would need to be explored with someone at the College who could manage students' workload at Treloar's. This might also help obviate access issues at the Record Office.

**Project website:**

[www.hants.gov.uk/archives](http://www.hants.gov.uk/archives)

**Case study record created on:**

04/03/2011

**MLA funded:**

Yes

**Institution:**

Hampshire Record Office

**Key partners:**

Hampshire County Museums & Arts Service; Treloar College; Treloar Trust

**Team members:**

Stephen Lowy, Community Museums Team Manager and David Bond, Archive Education Officer, Project Leaders; Mark Pitchforth, Archivist; Jenny Mason, Archivist; Moira Johnson, Treloar College LRC Manager; teachers at Treloar College; Nicola Pink, Project Manager; Sarah Lewin, Principal Archivist;

**Start date:**

May 7 2010

**End date:**

Ongoing – touring exhibition in 2011-12 and workshops with schools

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**Domains:**

Archives

**Social groups:**

Children and young people

Older people

People with disabilities

**Social outcomes:**

Celebrating local identity

Community cohesion & inclusion

Community empowerment & active citizenship

Health & well-being

Learning & skills

Positive outcomes for vulnerable groups

Raising participation

**Geographical Coverage:**

South East

(South East) Alton, Hampshire