



THERE BE MONSTERS

A Case Study



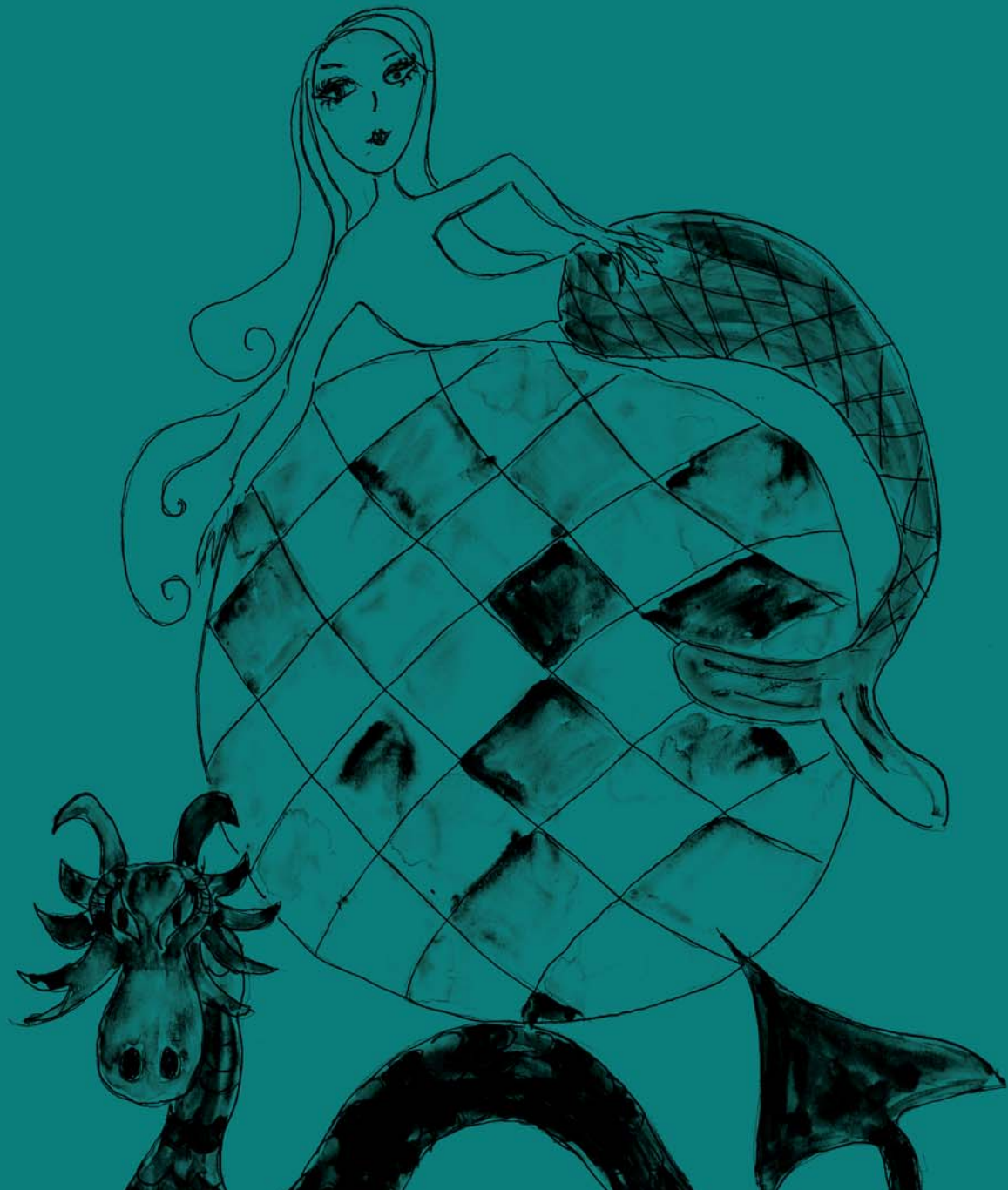
Supported by the
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Workshop
& Company

Central and North West London **NHS**
Mental Health NHS Trust



the national archives



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Project overview

The project was inspired by the Map and Atlas collection within The National Archives. The aim was to use devices and imaginary creatures inscribed on some of the oldest maps to inspire adults with experience of mental ill health. They would create a sculpture that was to be placed within the grounds of The National Archives.

The project included workshops at The National Archives led by conservators, map specialists and participants of the Outreach team for the service users from Workshop & Company. These sessions provided participants with the opportunity to handle original documentation and talk to experts about the conservation and care of these pieces of history. The project also involved skilled artists (mosaic, ceramic and model making specialists) working with the group to enable them to design and build the finished piece.

There Be Monsters was developed during April and May 2004, with a submission for funding to the Heritage Lottery Fund made in mid May. Permission to start the project was given by Heritage Lottery Fund in October and the sculpture was unveiled in February 2005.

This case study describes our experience of working on the project. It records the experiences of the partners involved and includes the views of the participants themselves. It features our own learning on the project and does not aim to provide a definitive guide to working with mental health users.

Project partners

The National Archives of England, Wales and the United Kingdom has one of the largest archival collections in the world, spanning 1,000 years of British history, from The Domesday Book of 1086 to government papers recently released to the public.

Workshop & Company is an organisation that forms part of the Central & North West London Mental Health Trust and is based in Westminster. Its service users have a range of mental health problems and the company offers a variety of services from arts and skills-based workshops to practical support in escorting them to and from college. They aim to give people practical experience to build confidence and assist them back into community and work settings.

Heritage Lottery Fund awards National Lottery funding to heritage projects that meet set priorities and criteria. Sue Bowers, Regional Manager for London team said, "This is a great project which enabled The National Archives to make its collections available in an imaginative way to people with mental health difficulties for the first time. The resulting globe sculpture is a triumph and we hope that *There Be Monsters* and the Case Study will inspire further access improvements for mental health and other hard to reach groups to be involved in their archives across the UK. We were pleased to award a grant of £14,000."



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Mental Health NHS Trust



the national archives

Summary of key lessons learned

The National Archives:

- Work with a partner organisation with a relevant client base and remit
- Devise a project in consultation with the partner organisation that meets the needs and experience of the participants
- Consult closely throughout, involving partners and participants in project planning, budgets, aims and objectives, timetable, delivery and evaluation
- Identify appropriate items within the collection to inspire creativity and commitment from participants
- Liaise with other departments (for example, Map Department, Conservation Department, Estates Management, Press Office)
- Keep records and develop evaluation throughout the project
- Work with partners to make visits to The National Archives run smoothly, with relevant staff aware in advance of the visit
- Maintain regular contact and visits to participants in their venue/s
- Be aware of pressure of deadlines on participants
- Be flexible in approach as unexpected delays will occur (e.g. delays in funding decisions, issues for individual participants)
- Manage expectations of participants and project partners
- Ensure a strategic approach to the project – i.e. how the project fits with the aims and objectives of The National Archives and its social inclusion strategy and those of the partner organisation

Workshop & Company:

- A better awareness of the scope and role of The National Archives. Prior to the project, most service users of Workshop & Company were unaware of the Archives and its collection
- A clearer understanding of working with a large organisation such as The National Archives, its procedures and methods of working
- Greater awareness of organising visits and workshops, managing deadlines and the impact of associated pressure upon participants
- Difficulty in budgeting for materials for a sculpture not yet designed
- The challenge of recruiting workshop leaders with experience of working with participants such as those from Workshop & Company
- The benefits of having a studio off-site to enable the participants to meet other artists and work more flexibly
- The value of the project in improving confidence and self-esteem among the participants
- The improved profile and reputation within the local Mental Health Trust
- Opportunities presented by organisations such as The National Archives for projects and sources of creativity

Summary of key benefits to partners

The National Archives

- Opportunity to highlight the extensive collection of maps and atlases to the participants and to the wider public
- Introducing a new and diverse audience to The National Archives and to the role and functions of Archives generally
- Direct experience of meeting and working with professional organisations in the Mental Health Sector
- Direct interaction with people with experience of mental ill health
- Greater understanding of the needs of people with mental health problems
- Building closer relationships with departments within The National Archives and securing their direct involvement in the project
- Highlighting the role of Outreach within The National Archives

Workshop & Company

- Improved group morale, increased level of independence and confidence of participants
- Identification of new talents and skills of participants
- Opportunity to work off-site in artists' studio
- Creation of new partnership with The National Archives
- Opportunity to work with a range of professionals including archivists, conservators and specialist artists
- Increased confidence of Workshop & Company to take on new commissions
- Increased profile for Workshop & Company within the Central And North West London Mental Health Trust
- Greater appreciation of the role of The National Archives specifically and archives generally

SUSAN MAKING FOAM FACE



Creating a partnership with Workshop & Company

We had already identified that the map and atlas collection of The National Archives could be used to inspire creativity in a new user group. In March 2004, the Outreach team discussed using this part of the collection to engage new users within the mental health sector.

Through personal contacts within the National Health Service, we learned of the work of Workshop & Company and set up a meeting to discuss the possibilities of working together with their staff and service users. ***There Be Monsters*** was the result of those discussions. We wanted to work with a professional body that could provide us with the support and links to a new community and we felt that, together, we could run a successful project.

We wanted Workshop & Company's service users to be involved in devising and organising the project in order to encourage a greater sense of ownership and engagement. In meetings with Workshop & Company, we saw examples of the service users' previous mosaic commissions. We agreed that the maps would inspire participants of their ceramic and mosaic art groups to create a piece of installation art that would be situated in our grounds.

We required external funding in order to carry out the project. To obtain this, we needed to plan and think through the various stages of the project as part of the application process.

Subsequently, we held a number of meetings to cover such topics as the timetable, budget, scope of the project, workshops and the division of management responsibilities. An agreed set of aims and objectives were set out and a timeframe including the application procedure was decided upon.

"IT SHOULD LOOK LIKE THIS!" MOHAMMED AND SUZIE IN THE STUDIO



Devising *There Be Monsters*

What were our objectives?

Our main objectives, agreed with all partners were;

- To host workshops at The National Archives that would enable the participants to learn about the role and functions of The National Archives and the various departments involved in collection, care and interpretation. Other workshops off-site would include Model-making, Ceramics, Sculpture and Mosaic-making, as well as a fact-finding visit to Goodwood Sculpture Park
- To encourage participants to view and handle original maps and atlases and to study the motifs and drawings contained within. We provided copies so that participants would have permanent stimuli to shape their inspiration in creating designs for the final sculpture
- To set a design commission for the participants that would result in a mosaic and ceramic sculpture situated within our grounds. The brief given to the participants set out guidelines to ensure the final sculpture would adhere to regulations on planning and on health and safety
- To celebrate the project with an unveiling ceremony and display

Heritage Lottery Fund surgery

Once our objectives were agreed, we met with Heritage Lottery Fund representatives at a surgery on offer for organisations wishing to make funding applications. This was a useful meeting and assisted us in preparing our final bid. It ensured that the needs of the group, those of The National Archives and those of Heritage Lottery Fund were clearly identified and correctly highlighted in the final bidding process.

Involvement of participants

We felt that Workshop & Company should devise the best way of encouraging their service users to participate in the project. Workshop & Company stressed that there were special factors that we should take into account when working with people with experience of mental ill health:

- Participants' mental and physical health could affect their ability to continue with the project
- That 100% participation from them would be unlikely as they had other calls on their time – such as attending hospital appointments, maintaining paid or voluntary work commitments and engaging with other activities
- That people may drop into the project and then drop out again
- That space on site was limited and access to the facilities of Workshop & Company may also be constrained due to space, budget and personnel issues

Budget

We drew up a budget to include sufficient funds for the different aspects of the project. This included Capital Costs involved in running the workshops and providing materials for the sculpture, as well as its final installation and maintenance. Activity Costs included project management fees, reproduction and exhibition costs, studio hire and travel costs, as well as the cost of promotional materials. We budgeted for contingency costs of 10%. This allowed for extras not anticipated at the start of the project – such as greater provision of refreshments for participants.

Having established the costs involved, we held meetings with senior members of staff at The National Archives to determine how much funding could be secured internally and how much we should request from the Heritage Lottery Fund (66% of the total budget costs).

Internal support

We also held meetings with the Estates Management department at The National Archives to locate a suitable site for the finished sculpture and to check on any Health and Safety requirements. We met with members of the Conservation and Map Departments to organise training and handling sessions with the group and to brief them on the project and our partner organisation.

SARA AND MOHAMMED, STUDYING MAPS
Photographer: Alastair Tallon
Illustration: Mark Murphy



How we managed *There Be Monsters*

Division of responsibilities

There Be Monsters involved a division of responsibilities between The National Archives and Workshop & Company. The National Archives was responsible for writing the lottery application, the financial management of the project, liaising internally with staff, organising the installation and maintenance of the sculpture, hosting workshops linked to the heritage objectives and organising the launch event and exhibition.

Workshop & Company took responsibility for ensuring that participants attended workshop sessions, organising appropriate specialist workshop leaders, producing sketches and diagrams and constructing the final piece.

Regular liaison between partners was essential for the project's success. Frequent visits were made to meet the participants and see the workshops held on their premises. Workshop & Company clearly appreciated the level of personal contact that was achieved with The National Archives and it resulted in a good relationship between project participants and staff on both sides.

Celebrating success

It was also agreed that there would be a special unveiling ceremony at The National Archives. This included the participants and their friends and families, National Archives' staff involved in the project, people from Central North West London Mental Health Trust, representatives from Heritage Lottery Fund and others (such as art workshop leaders).

In addition to the unveiling itself, a reception was held for all guests, giving them a chance to mingle and chat about the project and their involvement. It proved to be a very appropriate way of ending a highly successful project.

A VISIT TO THE MAP DEPARTMENT

Workshop & Company clearly appreciated the level of personal contact that was achieved with The National Archives and it resulted in a good relationship between project participants and staff on both sides.



Photographer: Alastair Tallon

How we evaluated *There Be Monsters*

Evaluating a project is always good practice and is especially important with externally funded projects. We requested the following information about the group as a whole, to avoid being in breach of the Data Protection Act;

- Ages of the participants
- Employment status
- Ethnic origin
- Information about the needs of the participants
- How many people attended the workshop sessions

We found the following methods useful in collecting information;

- Interviews with partners and participants
- Completion of questionnaires – both qualitative and quantitative
- Diaries by participants
- Photographs/video – and appropriate permissions to publish them
- Visitors' book for the final display

Apart from statistical questions, we tried to gauge learning areas from the group. Some of the questions we asked are written below;

- What worked well and how could the project have been improved?
- What benefits did the partners and participants receive from their involvement?
- What were the key lessons learned from the project?

Useful tips for the evaluation:

- We found it useful getting direct quotes from partners and participants about the project. Their enthusiasm also made the project come alive
- Request quantitative information. For example, how interesting did you find the workshop on the Map collection? (circle: 1 2 3 4 5). This enabled us to provide figures to back up the comments made
- We organised interviews with the participants and partners; these can be done on a one-to-one basis or as a group

A personal perspective

Sara Griffiths: The National Archives

A new departure

The National Archives usually seeks external funding for digitisation or cataloguing projects. *There Be Monsters* was a new departure for The National Archives as we were seeking funding in order to interpret our collection through creative art.

We were also keen to engage adults with experience of mental ill health; a new audience for us. Outreach experience has shown that some new visitors think our organisation may not be welcoming or hold anything of interest for them. *There Be Monsters* is proof of the contrary. The sculpture's permanent display in our grounds is a legacy to the imagination and talent of the participants and their ability to engage with our collection.

MAP AND ROSALIE'S ARMADILLO



Photographer: Joe Miles

Overcoming prejudice

Our first challenge was to overcome our own prejudice and ignorance about mental health. According to Mind, a leading mental health charity in England and Wales, one in four of us will experience a mental health problem at some point in our lives¹. Many of us have a family member or friend who has suffered a nervous breakdown, severe depression, eating disorders, alcoholism or other mental health issues.

The media, however, is quick to highlight unexpected or violent acts committed by a few individuals without providing the context necessary to educate us. A report published in 1997 showed that 40% of members of the public surveyed associated mental illness with violence and said that this belief was based on the media².

Media reports fuel the already great distrust we have of people whose behaviour does not fit in with our understanding of socially acceptable 'norms'.

We are ill at ease when we cannot predict behaviour in others; while we do not feel threatened by wheelchair users or people with visual impairment, we can become wary of people if we learn that they have mental health problems. Some people believe that the behaviour of people with mental ill health is something that they could control, if they really wanted to. Society tends to ridicule, rather than empathise with them.

¹ (www.mind.org.uk 29.03.05)

² (Greg Philo. 1997, 'Changing media representations of mental health', *Psychiatric Bulletin*, 21, pp. 171-172. published on www.mind.org.uk)

First visits to The National Archives

At the beginning of this project, we had some of these fears and prejudices. Fortunately, Workshop & Company had been recommended to us by contacts working within the mental health sector. Working in partnership with an organisation that had professional experience of mental health issues gave us some reassurance and guidance. We were invited to attend seminars at Westminster's mental health fair in March 2004. Gradually, we began to understand how commonplace and varied mental health problems could be.

Through Workshop & Company, we met staff and service users of Routes to Employment, an organisation that assists adults with mental ill health to gain skills and find work. Our new colleagues included people with direct experience of mental ill health; they are ordinary working people with valuable insight and experience. Slowly, our own prejudices started to dissolve.

By the time funding was agreed and visits by staff and participants from Workshop & Company to The National Archives began, we had started to confront different concerns.

- How would the forbidding appearance and working practices of our organisation impact upon the project participants? Our organisation can appear daunting for many visitors; weren't we automatically going to intimidate people already marginalised by society?
- Would we – or the project – overwhelm them?
- How would other members of staff treat the participants? How should we prepare participants for these sessions – and the staff involved?

We were particularly nervous about our bag checking procedures that are routinely carried out upon arrival at The National Archives by friendly but efficient security staff. Suzie, the project leader and community artist working for Workshop & Company agreed that she would tell the participants about the bag checking issue. Before their first visit, we had briefed our security staff about the need for extra sensitivity. Was this necessary? Perhaps not; but it made us feel less apprehensive. On the visits, there were no issues with bag checking.

Coats and bags needed to be stored in the cloakroom. The coat racks have a locking mechanism that baffles all first time visitors! We were around to assist. Everyone was pleasant and friendly – we were all on our best behaviour, keen to make sure the partnership got off to the best start.

A personal perspective

Sara Griffiths: The National Archives continued

A coffee break provided the opportunity to get to know one another better. We had chosen to talk about The National Archives and to discuss the project in an area that overlooked the gardens. We viewed some of the maps and atlases that we had selected to reflect the group's mixed ethnicity.

We had wondered whether, in touching the maps, the participants might object to wearing the gloves provided; this was never a problem. All participants were prepared to do what was necessary to ensure that they could enjoy the opportunities presented. There was no issue with mishandling. This was our own fear surfacing. The group wanted to be treated as ordinary visitors; we were the ones with the problems and fears!

Visits to meet conservators and map specialists had been arranged to teach the group about the importance of caring for our heritage and to provide context to our collection. These workshops were a great success; many questions were asked and interest shown.

We realised there was an unexpressed belief that, if someone had mental health problems, she or he must also be suffering from learning disabilities; that the two issues go hand in hand. This is an injustice. According to Mind, mental illnesses are not usually considered a result of damage to the brain and do not tend to result in permanent disabilities of intellectual functioning. In fact, there are many instances where people experiencing mental health problems have above average intelligence. Consider the creative and academic geniuses that have shaped our history and culture. Now think of the instances of severe depression or breakdowns that can accompany such intelligence and talent.

The design decision

Part of the project required the participants to present their ideas and designs to a committee of National Archives' employees; senior members of staff whose responsibilities ranged from the public face of the organisation to the management of its grounds.

The participants were apprehensive about presenting their ideas to a group of new people who would judge their work. This was understandable; the chosen design would have to meet the demanding brief given. The piece would need to comply with health and safety requirements, be weatherproof and fit aesthetically within our grounds. It should be sized so as not to require planning permission. It should also provide a link to our collection!

We had concerns about the competitive environment that we were creating for the participants. We reminded ourselves that this was a real life project, with budget and deadlines. We knew the participants did not want handholding, just an opportunity to prove themselves capable of the commission.

The design decision was set for November 26th. When the day arrived, we were thrilled to see Suzie with five of the participants. Attendance was never easy to predict on any of the visits. Many of the project participants had physical as well as mental health problems and some of our planned visits coincided with hospital appointments or periods of sickness.

Five of the participants had come prepared to present absent colleagues' work as well as their own. We were all nervous but we worked as a team. We set up the room, displayed models on tables, put up designs on the walls and arranged the formal meeting room into a friendlier layout.

Building 'the Monster'

We had chosen not to inform the participants of the seniority of the individuals on the committee as this might further intimidate the group. When the committee arrived, we introduced people using first names only and tried to keep the meeting as informal and relaxed as possible. The participants sat behind their work and the four-committee members were placed in the hot spot at the front!

The event went well. The participants remained professional throughout, presenting their ideas well, their nervousness gradually overcome as the committee became more enthusiastic and impressed by the quality of the designs. One participant who was initially reluctant to speak was soon chatting happily about the inspiration and effort that had gone into her work.

The committee's decision came as a surprise. A globe design by a female participant was chosen but the committee requested that her globe design also incorporate some of the wonderful 'monsters' created by the other participants. This was a coup! The participants were thrilled that they would have the chance to include some of their own ideas in the final piece.

FINISHING TOUCHES TO THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE



Photographer: Joe Miles

After this decision, the real work began on making the sculpture and all its ceramic 'monsters'. We were still concerned about the pressures that an externally funded, time-bound project would place upon the participants. What if their health deteriorated as a result of the demands of our project? Although they had worked on commissions in Westminster borough before, ours was a large project requiring new skills. Furthermore, the sculpture would be located prominently in front of a national building. The participants, the artists and we organisers were excited and apprehensive!

We were fortunate in the capability of Suzie, who discussed with us her other concerns. Christmas was fast approaching. The 'festive' season is often particularly unsettling and traumatic. For most of us, Christmas can mean stress and financial worry; often the season is tinged with emotion over lost loved ones. For people with mental ill health, this is no different. Christmas and the New Year is traditionally a very difficult period.

The sudden death of one of the group badly impacted the morale of the group but they spurred themselves on. Even when Suzie was on leave after Christmas, the group responded well, proving themselves more than capable of organising the workload as a team, without supervision.

Our own visits to see the participants and view their progress on the sculpture cemented relationships and showed our commitment. It also enabled us to see the project progress! As we got to know the participants, any fears of unpredictable behaviour or 'scenes' diminished and we felt increasingly comfortable with their visits to us or on our visits to their premises. So it is that, with knowledge, fears of the unknown were overcome on both sides.

A personal perspective

Sara Griffiths: The National Archives continued

Unveiling *There Be Monsters*

At the end of January, the sculpture was delivered and installed in the grounds. Two of the participants came to add the final decorative touches required. By now they were comfortable finding their way around the building, expressing their views and making suggestions.

The sculpture was unveiled by the group at a well-attended event on February 11th with speeches from representatives of The National Archives, Heritage Lottery Fund, Workshop & Company and, most importantly, from the participants.

Following the unveiling, we visited the participants at Workshop & Company to gauge how the project had gone. The feedback about the project's success was very positive. Participants volunteered that they had learned from the project and would feel more confident in undertaking another commission. They had enjoyed the project and felt more self-confident as a result. There is even talk about setting up an independent mosaic studio.

Mental health seminar

Shortly after the unveiling event, The National Archives held a staff seminar on mental health issues presented by employees and service users of Routes to Employment. The presenters included one of the project participants who spoke movingly about her involvement in the project.

It is commendable that people who are confronted daily by prejudice and misunderstanding feel able to stand in front of a new audience to raise awareness of the issues that affect their lives.

After the seminar, National Archives' staff gave positive feedback on what they had learned. We have proposed that our organisation offers training to its staff on how to recognise and respond to the needs of employees who may be experiencing mental health problems.



A personal perspective

Suzie Balazs: Workshop & Company

Perceptions of The National Archives

Most of the group had never been to, or heard of, The National Archives before this project. Some, like myself knew of the Archives but had never visited before.

Service users at Workshop & Company can be wary of the unknown, which can make them anxious and reluctant to try new experiences out. This made some people reluctant to go to Kew; some were adamant about not going and firmly stood their ground. Others, who were unwilling to go at first, came round to the idea after repeated requests from myself and they thoroughly enjoyed the visits. Prior to the visits, I don't think participants had any idea what to expect at The National Archives.

Perceptions changed due to the visits and tours. An insight into the work carried out by the Archives and its staff was gained by these very valuable sessions. We were all very surprised at the variety of material held at the Archives and the sheer vastness of the building and its collections.

Without knowing anything about the Archives one might think that it would be an overwhelmingly dull place – nothing could be further from the truth!

Overcoming barriers

First and foremost we need a reason to visit, for instance, a project on a specialist subject where we could only get relevant information from the Archives itself. Now we know what is held in the Archives, we would automatically think of going there if it was applicable to our needs.

The wealth of reference material available at The National Archives is a great focal point for a creative project such as ours. I would certainly consider it as a resource for another time. The complexity and massiveness of the building at Kew was a surprise to all of us. The wide range of departments and skills all held within was also a surprise. I think everyone felt very comfortable within the building despite it being a very alien setting. It struck the group and myself as a relaxed, supportive environment.

I was surprised that the Archives would be interested to work with a group like ours. I believe that people who have mental health problems are perceived as not capable or possibly too difficult to work with. Other organisations wouldn't give us a second thought.

I would advise other community groups wishing to work with Archives to go for it. I don't know if the Archives runs Open Days, but they could be run especially for groups such as ours, with flyers being sent out targeting relevant organisations.

The National Archives is a very rewarding, supportive organisation within which to work. Members of staff are sensitive and helpful.

Deadlines

When offered the chance to work on this project with The National Archives I was absolutely thrilled and beside myself with excitement. I really wanted the commission for Workshop & Company. I threw myself into the project without any comprehension of the huge amount of extra work and worry it would entail. I felt very unsure about how much time the whole project would involve and just hoped that we could do it within the tight deadline.

Working to deadlines was tough. But Workshop & Company is trying to help people back into work and deadlines are a real element at the work place, so I believe it was a healthy part of the project.

Staff involvement

In early discussions between The National Archives and myself it was envisaged that the project would involve several of the other projects within Workshop & Company. The computer and pottery groups were cited as potentially good partners for the project. However, as it turned out, the pottery tutor became overwhelmed by work due to receiving a grant to set up several courses with Westminster Adult Education Service.

Then, the computer/graphic design tutor left our service and her post was frozen. So in effect the mosaic group was involved but no other staff or group. A couple of months into the project, I realised I could not manage all of the work, so my manager agreed to put up my hours from three days to a four day week until the end of January.

PRESENTING IDEAS TO THE DESIGN COMMITTEE



Photographer: Gavin Houtheusen

A personal perspective

Suzie Balazs: Workshop & Company *continued*

Budget

I was severely unrealistic about the budget and had underestimated the cost of materials. I had also forgotten totally about the costs of feeding everyone whilst we were at the studio working on the sculpture!

One of the artists gave me a long list of materials and equipment required for her workshops. Unfortunately some of the materials and tools were superfluous and remain unused. This was pretty unavoidable as up until 26th November we were unsure as to what type of sculpture we were going to be making. Also we ended up having the structure made by an expert rather than our group trying to do it. This seemed the best solution, as we were limited in time and expertise.

Tutor recruitment

Art tutors needed to be found very quickly once we had been given the go ahead by Heritage Lottery Fund. This proved to be a problem. The artists I knew were too busy or unavailable. As sculpture is not my art form, I had few contacts. Where would I get reliable, sensitive good tutors who would work well with the participants at such short notice? An Artists' register at ACAVA (art tutors) was temporarily not functioning due to staff changes. This was bad timing. In the end I took on an artist whom I didn't know, to run the sculpture workshops.

The ceramic artist, Sara Robertson, was a person I had long wanted to work with. This project also gave me the chance to involve her with the participants. She was a big hit with all of us. After *There Be Monsters* Sara and I applied for, and were successful in getting, a hospital art commission on which we will be collaborating later this year.

AVIS' MONSTERS Illustration: Dragana Mikovitch



Group morale

Once we got the grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, fear gripped me. Could we deliver? The time frame was extremely tight. Our participants were fragile; it was approaching Christmas, potentially the most depressing time of the year for many of them. Would they commit fully to the project? How on earth could we make a sculpture – an art form I had no idea about?

A blow to the mosaic group's morale was the sudden death of one of the participants in the midst of everything. Another member of the group had suicidal feelings and was not to be put under any pressure I was told by her care team. Unfortunately this was one of the key members of the group. As a result she did have demands made of her. This made me worry for her wellbeing.

One member was so anxious and unrealistic about the project he suddenly dropped out once his design was not chosen. Another member who had shown interest in taking part was admitted to hospital and remained there several months, (her mental illness was unrelated to the project).

A number of our service users have physical and mental health issues, which resulted in many appointments and clashes with the project. Also, group members were busy with other aspects of their lives, they have full timetables going here, there and everywhere, attending other activities, studying, volunteering and doing odd jobs.

Our own studio

I was over the moon with the studio we located and hired through ACAVA. It was perfect! Light, warm and easily reached by public transport. Plus, it had a large goods lift to transport the sculpture from our second floor.

Another advantage was the 24-hour access, this suited our group who got up late and liked to work late. One member worked regularly until 11.00pm. Of course this is not an option at Workshop & Company as all groups are run regularly at the same times.

The other artists were friendly and welcoming to our group. At Workshop & Company we have a minibus, which has been indispensable to our group, moving materials and equipment back and forth. Although, initially I had planned that most of the journeys would be done by public transport, in actual fact we often used the minibus. As it has a disabled badge we were able to park for no charge. Some participants were happy to use public transport, whereas others preferred the comfort of the minibus. I was pleasantly surprised at how many were able and willing to make their own way there.

Being away from Workshop & Company meant that the group in many ways had to fend for themselves. There was no one else to do the washing up or make the tea, sweep the floor. This space was theirs and their responsibility. They took ownership of it. They became an independent group. It was refreshing to be away from the sheltered environment of Newman Street and out in a community of artists. The usual set routine of lunch, tea and smoke breaks was gone and this was quite disconcerting for some people. However people soon adapted.

I took on the responsibility of providing sandwiches. However, our group seemed to consist of a strikingly fussy bunch when it came to food. "Atkins diet", gluten allergies or sandwiches with specific fillings only would suffice.

A personal perspective

Suzie Balazs: Workshop & Company continued

Effect on participants

Care workers, GPs and psychiatrists have reported back to staff at Workshop & Company the excitement and increased self-esteem evident in those involved.

Some hitherto unseen talents have emerged from being challenged in this new project. The nature of the sculpture encouraged people to work together as a team. Discussions, decisions, arguments, tensions and sheer joy arose as a direct result. Much more 'banter' took place in the studio than is usual when we work at Workshop & Company's centre. All of us found it very satisfying to slowly see the piece evolve from the beginning sketch design to a unique piece of sculpture.

There Be Monsters has improved our reputation within the Central and North West London Mental Health NHS Trust and raised people's awareness and expectations of what we are capable of. The project has been featured on the home page of the Trust's website and in the Trust magazine in June 2005.

There Be Monsters has lifted the spirits of all who worked on it. It has enabled the group to be more confident in themselves due to seeing that they can achieve a really special, high standard, professional piece of art. The fact that so many other people have admired and praised the piece has backed this confidence up.

The unveiling was particularly enjoyable. The participants enjoyed being treated like VIP's. Because the project was a resounding success, participants' confidence has improved and has made them far more open to future challenges. The project enabled people to work as part of a team and this brought out people's talents and stopped them being so isolated. It also helped them with their social skills. The group has gelled as a result and improved relations between members.

Confidence has grown! We feel more able to work with large institutions in the future, possibly less intimidated. When we face our next big commission, it will be with a lot more knowledge and self-assurance.

Summing up

Despite all my anxieties during this project I have found it to be one of the most exciting projects I have worked on since starting at Workshop & Company nine years ago

- The group and myself have learnt countless new skills that will be very useful for the future
- We have also made numerous contacts and friends
- Collaborating with artists has opened up new horizons and possibilities

Undertaking a sculpture commission no longer sounds quite as daunting as it did at the start! The dream of setting up as an independent group off-site could be a real possibility for the future

Having prestigious bodies such as The National Archives and The Heritage Lottery Fund have faith in us to make a permanent public sculpture has given us an enormous boost

Life at Workshop & Company has gone back to a slightly slower, more relaxed pace – but the “buzz” has gone. We at the Mosaic Group look forward once again to getting our teeth into another challenging project this time, for Paddington Arts

MARK'S MONSTER

There Be Monsters has lifted the spirits of all who worked on it. It has enabled the group to be more confident in themselves due to seeing that they can achieve a really special, high standard, professional piece of art. The fact that so many other people have admired and praised the piece has backed this confidence up.



Photographer: Joe Miles

Participants' comments in response to questionnaires

What did you learn that surprised you?

- "I was surprised at the amount of restoration that was undertaken and very interested to see how it was done."*
- "How big and well thought out the building was; e.g.; the document tracks on the ceiling and the swipe control in the café showing if your document requests were available."*
- "I never knew The National Archives existed."*
- "Just how amazing the historical content and wealth of knowledge available is."*
- "It was a surprise that there were such a variety of displays and that "Archives" meant more than births, marriages and deaths."*

What was the best thing about the visits to The National Archives?

- "Seeing examples of the millions of maps held in the Archives."*
- "I loved looking at the very early atlases."*
- "The lovely, friendly staff and wonderful array of exhibits."*
- "Visiting the conservation room."*
- "I learned a lot about the paper conservation."*
- "Very interesting and well explained."*

What did you enjoy most about the project?

- "The team effort and also my first go at making ceramic objects."*
- "Being able to be left alone to work on the project."*
- "Inspired me to draw lots of designs."*
- "Seeing a project through from start to finish and then appreciating it in a public setting."*
- "The different workshops."*
- "Making a monster."*
- "Arranging and sticking down the mosaic tiles on the paper patterns."*

What did you enjoy the least about the project?

- "The time limits."*
- "The mice in our studio!"*
- "Travelling to the studio."*
- "The huge amount of worry."
(Comment from Project Leader at Workshop & Co.)*
- "Nothing really."*
- "The drawing – I was no good."*

What could improve the experiences you had at The National Archives?

"A volunteer to work with us would have been great."

"The security is a little daunting – I would not, in consequence of its manifest presence, think "Oh, let's go for a day out at The National Archives."

"We need more time... nothing goes exactly as planned."

"Walking audio players to provide history and information on the Archives."

What have you gained from taking part in There Be Monsters?

"Learning how to make mosaics using the indirect method, making ceramics using moulds, and watching the project evolve."

"More experience and a newly fuelled desire to move into more 3-D work."

"Learning what sculpture is."

"A massive successful project."

"Enjoying the time at the studio."

"A look at taking part in a project which treated all the workers with much dignity."

"When we worked as a group."

"Knowing I had good manual skills. The enjoyment of being creative and the pride I have in seeing the finished sculpture that will be enjoyed by the public."

"The feedback."

If you were to give The National Archives a piece of advice about the project what would it be?

"More time."

"Always give projects like Workshop & Company a chance."

Will you revisit The National Archives and why?

"Yes, I would love to visit them more. I should like to do a project on the Bethlem Hospital, how it moved around the city of London, out to what is now the Imperial War Museum and finally to Beckenham."

"Yes – certainly The Domesday Book."

Other general comments

"Going to The National Archives with Workshop & Company to present my design made me feel nervous. But when we came before the Board they made me feel at ease... To have a chance to have a design included for the project made me feel elated."

Comments from the visitors' book on the sculpture and display

"We are always so proud to fund projects with such a lasting impact and such benefits to those involved. Brilliant!"

Grants Officer, Heritage Lottery Fund

"What a sparkling gem – thrilled to be here and see the end result. Congratulations to all who worked so hard to make it happen."

Manager, Workshop & Company

"This has for me been an inspiring project to work on. I worked with members at Workshop & Company to make ceramics. They were a delight to work with and the end result is gorgeous!"

Ceramics Artist, Workshop & Company

"A fantastic display of talent."

Visitor to The National Archives

"Wonderful. You should all be very proud. It's good to see some colour in our grounds – a very attractive sculpture."

Member of staff, The National Archives

"Please come back and make some more. Best thing in the park!"

Member of staff, The National Archives

Conclusion

At The National Archives, we know the tremendous good that has arisen from this project and its resulting sculpture. We are lucky that we can see at first hand the positive reaction by visitors to the splendid new addition to our grounds. In spite of early fears, there was no need to delay the unveiling. The sculpture was completed to a very professional standard, on time and in budget!

Although the project is now complete, the permanent sculpture continues to offer opportunities for us to reach out to other communities who may find similar inspiration in our collections. The tactile nature of the sculpture and the availability of interpretation in Braille and large print will offer opportunities for work with new groups in the future - visually impaired people, for example. Residents from a local housing association have been studying the sculpture to gain inspiration for a mosaic-making project in their residential home. Who knows what other initiatives may arise from *There Be Monsters?*

Positive feedback via Workshop & Company on the participants' health and morale has been the most gratifying result. The participants' new confidence and optimism over future commissions will, we hope, be rewarded by further opportunity.

Finally, at The National Archives, we have moved a little closer to a deeper understanding of the talents and possibilities that exist in all individuals. Given the right motivation, opportunity and support, even the most fragile and misunderstood among us can achieve great things.

Sara Griffiths | Alastair Tallon

PARTICIPANTS AND PARTNERS WITH THE GLOBE



Photographer: Tariq Chaudry

Appendix: Design brief

You are being commissioned by The National Archives to produce a piece of installation art to be sited in its grounds.

There are certain design issues that you will need to take into account. These are:

- The final piece must be durable – it must survive in the open air, be weatherproof and stable
- The final design should reflect the fact that you have created your piece from drawings in an atlas. It needs to have a link with The National Archives
- It should be your own design work
- You may submit as many designs as you like, however only 1 design can be constructed
- The choice of the final design will be made by a Committee within The National Archives
- The final design should be no bigger than 4'x4'x4'
- The final design will be placed so that it will be seen by staff and visitors to The National Archives as well as the general public using its gardens; it should therefore be appropriate for public display
- You should keep all your sketches as we will have an exhibition of design work that will be displayed in the foyer
- From time to time you may be asked to complete very simple questionnaires, this is so that we can properly evaluate the project

Acknowledgements

There Be Monsters would not have been possible without the involvement and dedication of the individuals and organisations named below.

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Kari Haslam	Sarah Kay
Dragana Mikovitch	Mohammed Osman Mohammed
Mark Murphy	Susan Strand
Nicholas Roynon	Shirley La Sala

Workshop & Company Staff

Suzie Balazs	Anne Gibson
John Willis	

Artists

Sue Derbyshire	Charles Beauchamp
Sara Robertson	Profile Mouldings

Routes to Employment

Staff:	Diana Young, Gemma Samuel, Heidi Bimpong
Client Advisors:	Selina Nizamuddin, Richard Scimone

Heritage Lottery Fund

Val Bott, London Committee Member
Abigail Hiscock, Case Officer

The National Archives

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Jack Lincoln, Head of Security
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Rose Mitchell, Senior Archivist
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Sara Griffiths, Outreach Officer
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Tariq Chaudry, Gavin Houtheusen, Joe Miles, Alastair Tallon

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