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OUTREACH OFFICER
FOR LEOMINSTER MUSEUM**



Please feel free to get in touch with us if you have more questions, via our [Contact Us](#) page at www.leominstermuseum.org.uk

Q Where do you want the museum to be in 10 years? How do volunteers feel about this?

A The trustees are just embarking, with support from AIM under their Prospering Boards programme, on reviews of our governance and our mission. The mission strand will look, among other things, at how we want the Museum to develop over the coming years, and it would be wrong to pre-empt the results of this exercise.

Q What a lovely story! How can you use digital platforms to tell the story to more people?

A We already use digital platforms as much as we can. Stories about Leominster in the First World War uncovered by primary source research during 'Rifles & Spades' which was our 2014 HLF project, can be seen at www.leominstermuseum.org.uk/our-story.

Pictures & descriptions of *Trails of the Unexpected* can be seen at www.leominstermuseum.org.uk/a-creative-museum/#Unexpected. We are looking into ways in which our website, Facebook & Twitter accounts can be used to tell more stories.

Q You talked about "cracks beginning to appear" in determining Leominster's future. Is there a way to bring Scratch to the process of working together to solve this?

A The working groups of trustees mentioned in number 1 will report back at the end of the year to the rest of the Museum's stakeholders, and I think we may be able to use elements of Scratch in coming to a final decision together about how we move forward.

Q How do you enthuse volunteers to taking on such a new way of working?

A I think it would have been helpful to have had a longer lead in time, explaining in greater detail to the volunteers how the methodology evolved, and how it can be used. In retrospect, I think it would also have been extremely helpful for them to have seen Scratch in action, either in real life or perhaps in a video tracing the

whole process of decision making, from beginning to end, in a particular case study.

Q **How can stories be incorporated with collections within museum spaces – thinking about objects you used?**

A By encouraging volunteers to learn more about the objects in the Museum, and share what they know with visitors.

By the creative use of oral history recordings, and displays of digitised still photographs and video as part of the displays.

By using devices such as tablets, & sound guides which allow visitors to access different levels of interpretation – narrative as well as factual information about the objects themselves.

By ensuring that a very full history is taken and recorded when new objects are donated to the Museum.

Q **Shown that Scratch needs bravery and vulnerability and buy in. Having the same set of values.**

A Absolutely; this is why we have begun the process of looking carefully at our internal mission & governance.

Q **I wholeheartedly recommend that you read “The Anatomy of Peace” by the Arbinger Institute. You describe bringing your factions together as likely to be painful but it doesn’t need to be like that.**

A Thank you for the recommendation.

Q **What were the challenges to doing the Scratch process with a volunteer team?**

A The current lack of an overarching ethos at the Museum.

The variety of life stories & cultural experiences, amongst the volunteer team.

The average age of the volunteers, most of whom are past retirement age.

The ‘culture shock’ that the Scratch methodology, represented to some of the team.

Q **How will you know when your governance is up to Scratch? (So to speak)**

A When we have completed the process described in question 1 hopefully by the end of 2017, and there is a shared sense of mission & purpose amongst all the Museum’s Trustees.

Q **Please tell us more stories! Next steps and the exciting challenge of building resilience in a volunteer-led organisation.**

A See number 1 above & 19 below; hopefully I’ve outlined a little bit more here.

Q **Culture shock of Scratch – volunteers learning/changing. Realities of achieving vision? Different ages, backgrounds, experiences.**

A Yes. In my answers above, I’ve outline more of these challenges.

Q How will you embed what you've learnt from Scratch into your museum?

A By seeking to use the ideas & the methodology we have learnt as often as we can in decision making at all levels within the Museum.

Q Will you continue to use Scratch?

A We will certainly keep the idea and the methodology in our toolbox and use Scratch wherever we feel it would be useful.

Q Any tips for supporting volunteers through the scratch process?

A Have outline more detail here within my answer for "enthusing volunteers"

Q I love the idea of the bun! What is the alternative to "change" at Leominster? Will it survive?

A The alternative to change would appear to be stagnation, which could be a real threat to long term survival.

Q Never underestimate how much community/locals/people want to and like to get involved.

A We don't!

Q Who are the ordinary people of Leominster? Who were the community groups who told the story?

A The two community groups who helped to tell the story were the Leominster Town Cadets, a youth organisation for 8-18 year olds in the town, and ECHO, a small independent charity working with and for disabled people in Herefordshire. (www.echoherefordshire.org.uk).

The 'ordinary people' of Leominster are local people without any particular profile in the community, who would think of themselves as ordinary, but whose lives or achievements nevertheless provide an interesting or inspiring story. The Museum should promote the message that everyone has an interesting tale to tell about the present or the past, however insignificant they think they are.

Q What groundwork would you like to do? If Scratch was done again?

A See number 4 above.

Q How different do you think it was being volunteer-run? And do the other museums agree?

A Volunteers come to offer their services for a much wider variety of (often personal) objectives than paid staff; volunteering doesn't necessarily imply a shared ethos. Unlike a paid member of staff, leaving the team has no financial consequences for a volunteer or their family, so is an easy reaction if an individual feels uncomfortable with changes they disagree with. On the other hand, the challenge of recruiting to fill volunteer vacancies can be significant in a small town like Leominster where the pool of available and willing volunteers is small – with potential risks to the continuity of the Museum's operations; so it is important to 'bring everyone on board' to a new idea or method of working.

I don't know if the other museums agree with this analysis, as it was not something that was ever discussed while I was present.