

Mary Hill Herself

Project Overview and Community Storytelling Workshop Plan



Project

Glasgow's historic [Maryhill Burgh Halls](#) are a community-led organisation, set up by Maryhill Burgh Halls Trust. The Trust was established in 2004 by a group of local people, after demolition plans for the building had been proposed. The [Regeneration Project](#) dramatically re-imagined the spaces and has put the Halls back into the heart of the Maryhill community with the official reopening taking place in 2012.

Overview

Rooted in its history the halls have been beautifully restored and are now a well used community asset. Largely volunteer run, they are a place to see and explore local heritage, through free walking tours, activities, workshops, and culture projects. The spaces can accommodate events of all shapes and sizes and the building is also home to local businesses and the council wards Member of Parliament.



In Autumn 2022 MaryHill Burgh halls invited the [Village Storytelling Centre](#) to partner with them on an exciting project aimed to uncover and share stories about Maryhill, in particular the *her-story* of the real woman after whom the area was named, Mary Hill herself.

As a woman in the 1700's very little information was known about Mary Hill, so alongside historical research by Halls Assistance, historian Aurora Segan, creative research was carried out by storyteller Shona Cowie with the local community to imaginatively bring the person and the area's history to life.

The process involved community workshops, with around 200 people from primary school age to people in retirement, people in integration programs who had recently moved to the area and those who had been there for generations.

In the workshop participants were introduced to the real Mary Hill and the little we know about her, they considered what the area was like in her day, and how it has changed. They were also gently invited to share stories of their own relationship to the area and its changes through sensitive storytelling exercises and creative map making.

The material generated in these sessions was recorded and collated along with stories from the other groups and turned into a performance shared at a celebratory Community day at the end of the project.

A base workshop was created which could be adapted to suit the needs and ages of each group. The techniques have been outlined below in a detailed session plan.

Community Heritage Storytelling Workshop

Mary Hill Herself

Overview

100 minute, base session plan, designed as an introductory or one-off session for groups of 5 - 40 people. Adaptable for a variety of ages and abilities.

Session Goals

- Introduce *Mary Hill*, the historical figure on which the project is focusing.
- Determine what information is known about Mary Hill so far and consider what could be deduced and imagined.
- Gather historical information from the community previously unknown to the Burgh Halls
- Introduce the concept of storytelling and gentle personal narrative reflection



- Encourage participants to think imaginatively and metaphorically about the area of Mary Hill, deriving new meaning about their locale.
- Learn about the peoples' connections, feelings and experiences of their area.
- Deepen community's sense of ownership and connection to the area and its heritage
- Gather testimony for performance material



Resources

Flipchart paper and pens, paper (a4 or a3) and writing pens for each participant, Jam Jar, pre written questions, slipper/sock, small post-its, reference images, large area map

Exercise	Detail	Objective	Time
Introductions	<p>Warmly welcome all to the session. Introduce self and organisations, the Village Storytelling Centre and Maryhill Burgh halls, Thank participants and contextualise the project (uncovering the her-story of Mary Hill herself and creating a new storytelling performance weaving in communities stories of the area today.)</p> <p>If the group is small and new to each other each person can introduce themselves and their interest in the session.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Settle the Group- Build Trust- Set objectives- Establish Working Dynamic- Gauge the group's dynamic and individuals needs	10'



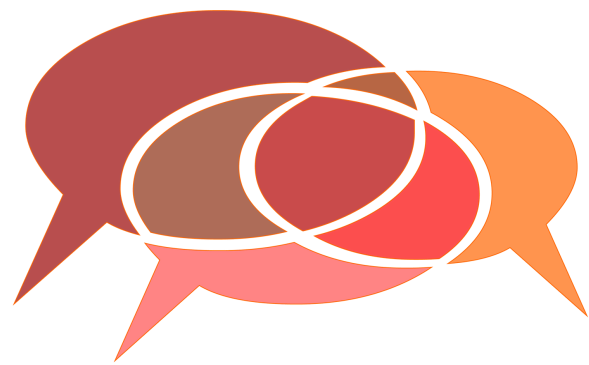
<p>Question Jar</p> <p>Group Discussion Activity</p>	<p>Gentle Questions are pre-written by the facilitator who invites a volunteer from the group to pick a question to read and start a conversation. Questions are gentle and stimulate themes of the session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What job might you have done if you lived in Scotland in 1770 - 250 years ago? - What is your first memory of Maryhill? - Do you have a family Heirloom? - What is the story of your name? - Question for everyone, what is an unusual symbol for Maryhill? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin oral exchange and basic narrative construction - Engage imagination, reflection, expression, play - Democratises the space - Establishes dynamic of sharing and listening - Builds group connection, pleasure, rapport and empathy Introduces time period and themes which will be explored - Reassures participants they will be listened to and that they have something to say which is interesting and worthy of being heard 	<p>10'</p>
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<p>Pass the Slipper</p> <p>Group Game</p>	<p>Parlour game, the like of which Mary Hill may have played.</p> <p>Game can be played in a seated or standing circle. One player is standing or seated in the middle of the circle and closes their eyes. The slipper is then passed from player to player behind their backs. When the person in the middle opens their eyes, the slipper immediately stops and the player in the middle must guess who is holding it.</p> <p>They have 3 guesses.</p> <p>The player in the middle is then replaced by a new player.</p> <p>This game can also be accompanied by music. The music stopping instructs the player in the middle to open their eyes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creates a playful atmosphere - Engages full body - Physically connects group members to the kind of activities that Mary would have been involved with. - Have fun and bond 	10'
<p>Creative Mapping</p> <p>Pairs or large group activity</p>	<p>Participants are given small removable stickers or post-its and are invited to place them on the map in response to the questions below. Discussing as they go. If a large group participants can work in pairs and then report back.</p> <p>Where is the heart of Maryhill? Where do you go to hide? Where are there secrets? Where would the lungs be? Where is the gut? Where is the mouth?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share stories - Gather information about the area and group members' relationships to it - Encourage group members to consider their area with new perspectives 	15'

<p>Mary Who?</p> <p>The signature/ The lure</p>	<p>Show the group Mary Hill's signature and use it as a stimulus to begin a discussion about - What can be imagined about the person who signed this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spark the groups imagination - Begin building a picture of the person with fac and imagination 	<p>3'</p>
<p>Building the Character - what we currently know</p> <p>Full Group discussion</p>	<p>On a large sheet of paper, the facilitator draws a basic outline of a person. Inside the figure, fill with information we know about Mary hill.</p> <p>Encourage the group to add as much as they can,, even if they think they know very little, they know her name, that she was a woman, that she lived in this area ect...</p> <p>As the figure begins to fill up, add the information that the historian has researched, building up a picture about what is known. Dates, locations, facts.</p> <p>Pass around the reference images.</p> <p>Once a clear picture has developed, reflect the information back to the group, speaking with conviction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informs group without lecturing - Gathers new information from group - Builds a collective picture 	<p>10'</p>

<p>Building the Character - what we can imagine</p> <p>Small group activity</p>	<p>In groups of up to 5 Invite participants to draw a similar outline of a figure on a large sheet of paper.</p> <p>This time, in their small groups, they are to fill in the figure with all the things they can imagine about this woman, based on the facts that they know. Encourage them to add as much detail as possible.</p> <p>If necessary offer prompts such as;</p> <p>What may her likes and dislikes have been? What kind of activities filled her day? What clothes would she have worn? What were her strengths and weaknesses?</p> <p>Use the same Question of The Day, the group has already answered to bring the character to life and build empathy with them</p> <p>On the outside of the figure write the people who she would have had some sort of relationship with. Servants, friends, family, farmers ect.</p> <p>Once a clear picture has developed, invite the groups of 5 to share back their ideas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants building a personal connection to the heritage figure - Using imagination and playfulness to explore heritage subject - Building collective story - Speaking in front of the group, taking ownership of the story 	<p>15'</p>
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<p>Good Day/Bad day</p> <p>Small group activity</p>	<p>As a full group, discuss what a normal day may have been like for this character, from waking up to going to bed. Illustrate this discussion with a simple timeline.</p> <p>In groups of 5, draw two timelines and describe what happened to her on a good and bad day.</p> <p>This will form a basic story which each group will be invited to share. Ensure loud clapping and praise to all who share.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Placing the semi fictional character they have created in a context - Creating and sharing story as a group - Taking ownership over the life and figure of the woman - Building a personal connection with the area in the past 	15'
<p>Final thoughts</p>	<p>Offer a lot of praise and thanks to everyone for their contribution and communicate the future direction of the project.</p> <p>Allow the group a moment to offer their reflections on the session, this could be verbally or on a written note. Collect these for facilitator reflection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inform all about the future of the project - Reflection - Offer a sense of closure to the session. 	12'



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