

Workshop Review: PAULINA

Question 1. What was the most useful aspect of the workshops?

PAULINA:

In general, thinking about local stories, actually making the video was very useful and its something on my list to come back too I just haven't yet.

I think thinking about local stories and what makes you local to a place, because obviously I am from somewhere else but knowing the stories gives you a sense of connection and knowing how to create my own story in relationship to the place. Again it builds that sense of connection, another bead on the bracelet if that makes sense. I've lived a lot of different places and so I know stories about different places and thinking about it in those terms is really useful. In terms of settling in and all that good stuff.

Question 2. Do you see any far-reaching effects from being involved in this workshop?

PAULINA:

Yes is given me a different view of Milton Keynes because I had to look more closely at the landscape. It's changed the way I live here and I also think that properly used with various populations, because Milton Keynes is one of the most diverse areas of Britain because a lot of people come here from out of the country, I think done properly, and always the devil is in the details. But done properly you could harness the storytelling to help the new people settle in to give them a sense of place in a positive way so that there's not that part of the problem when new people come in with the old people that they are telling different stories and they have different views. But I think use properly you could weave those stories together. And create peace in our time.

Question 3. What was most difficult element of the workshop?

PAULINA:

Finding the time for it honestly, sorry. Just everything else is happening at the moment and it was just kind of bad timing.

Question 4. What you think could be improved about the workshops?

PAULINA:

I don't know if you'd want to, I think they're good for small groups. I know you wanted more people but, but I wouldn't make it larger than five or six at the time.

Interviewer: The largest it was going to be was five.

PAULINA:

Improving it? Improve the bus service outside. No, I think it was well done. I'm not sure. Maybe a public display at the end like a Facebook page at the end.

Interviewer: We do have a website that it all goes on to.

PAULINA: Cool.

Question 5. Has the workshops increased your interest in: a) storytelling, b) Milton Keynes, c) intangible cultural heritage?

PAULINA:

Well I was already passionate about storytelling. I already liked living here, I thought yeah it's good enough. It [the workshops] enhanced my view of things. It's not a life changing shift it's just sense of there's a lot stories here and a lot of interesting things that I should chase up more of them.

I need to find a story for the ichthyosaur.

Question 6. What you think other people will get out of hearing stories about Milton Keynes?

PAULINA:

They will get a better understanding that Milton Keynes is not just a plastic drop in. That there is history and culture here. I think it might help different groups live together better because this is a place that requires them to live together. I think it will make people respect the area more if you understand the stories about the trees then you're nicer to trees, if you understand the story of what happens to plastic when it goes down the stream you take care of your plastic, that kind of thing.

Question 7a. Comments on Digital Story

PAULINA: I think I like the video better than when I told the story.

It was a good overall process, knowing that it can be done, being guided by someone who knows how to do it. And just researching the story and finding out that bit more it was all to the good. I would recommend it to other people, it gives you an archive, you can go back and look at what you've done and say 'I need to tweak that'. Just experience of how to do it. Thank you.

Question 7c. Comments on Recorded Oral Story

PAULINA: Rather look at the camera, avoiding the camera made me look awkward I think.

Interviewer: Are you happy if both go on the website?

PAULINA: Yes, although I instantly want to tweak them both. But it's fine.

Question 8. Has taking part in these workshops altered your perspective about Milton Keynes in any way?

PAULINA: Yes it's given me a deeper understanding about it, of the place, and particular places.

Question 9. How did taking part in these workshops impacted your sense of place, if at all, in regards to: a) local connection, b) your impression of local identity, c) and your local knowledge?

PAULINA:

It is definitely improve my local knowledge. It has improved my perception of Milton Keynes. Milton Keynes has a reputation of being a bit plastic and dropped in. I know a lot of people who don't like Milton Keynes because it doesn't have that resonance of history. What this has shown me is that the history is there if you know how to look for it, you just have to find it. There are dragons in Broughton if you know where to look, dinosaurs in Willen, strange faces in Shenley, who knew? I'm going to go and find that door now.

Question 10. What, if any, qualities make Milton Keynes unique?

PAULINA:

It was built recently so it doesn't have 1000 year-old history like most of Britain. It is one of the most diverse places in Britain. People from all over come to Milton Keynes, I know a lady from Brighton, she was tired of Brighton says she basically stuck a pin in a map and it landed on Milton Keynes, that's how she came here. People from Dubai vacation here because it's cooler here in the summer than Dubai. Who knew?

Question 11. In your opinion, what element of Milton Keynes is: The best. The most exciting. The hardest. Lacking. The most culturally significant. The richest in heritage?

PAULINA:

Best - The concrete cows without a doubt, actually no the red ways seriously the red ways.

Most Exciting - The place where you can pretend to fly at the escape

Hardest - The bus service absolutely sucks, sorry but it does

Lacking - A good bus service, public transport in some form.

Culturally significant - Stony Stratford has certainly made an industry of its history.

Richest in heritage - Probably Stony Stratford, probably Bletchley does but it's hidden, probably Wolverton does but it hasn't been brought out and polished. So I'd say the outlying towns that have been swallowed up.

Question 12. Has Milton Keynes played a part in helping you gain any achievements which you might not have been successful in if you lived elsewhere? Has it aided any failures?

PAULINA:

Milton Keynes has made me a storyteller I probably wouldn't have done that anywhere else.

Question 13. If you were in charge of advertising Milton Keynes what tag line would you give it?

PAULINA:

I've had this discussion. I would go in a circle, I would go from Stony [Stratford] to Wolverton to Bletchley to Milton Keynes proper and say this is the place that brings English history into focus.

Because you go from ancient times to present days if I was a tour guide that's what I would do.

Question 14. If Milton Keynes was a person could you describe them and the type of 50th party they might have?

PAULINA:

I would say they were very loaded and a bit shy, kind of a geek. The type of person that wears white socks with sandals.

I think they would have a rave, they would want to be cool. They're the social geek, they want to be cool they just don't know how. So they throw rave and it would be a bit cringeworthy, but I would just bring some spirits.

A leather bag to wear over their shoulder I don't know why, it would be one of Hermione's [reference to Harry Potter] bags so they could stick whatever they wanted to in it.

Question 15. What you think the role of storytelling is within communities, especially new communities?

PAULINA:

Partly it's just basic entertainment, if you're too serious or heavy-handed you lose your audience. So partly it's just to cheer people up and relieve stress give them something to think about. I'm reading the *Assembly of the Severed Head* by Hugh Lupton, helping people work through some of their issues is very much what the storyteller did. Which I suppose is part of the point of stories. I'm hesitant to go too far in that direction partly because I think too much of what should be just for fun has been therapised in different parts of the world. And I don't want to do therapy I just want to tell a story and let people work through it at their own speed. Just bringing people together giving them an understanding of where they are and how to live together. Different groups of people have been coming together for all of humanity's history and we have plenty of stories of how to do that.

Question 16. Will you continue to share the stories you created in the workshops?

PAULINA: I think I will yes.

Various open mics around town, I might take them to the Northampton storytelling club, but definitely local stories for local people so definitely in the Buckinghamshire area.

Question 17. Do think you will look for other local stories?

PAULINA: Absolutely yes.