

City Bridge Trust – Monitoring Visit Report

Organisation: Royal Fusiliers Regimental Museum Trust	Grant ref: 9714 (John Merivale)	Programme area: 02. Bridging Communities\b) Joint work
Amount, date and purpose of grant: 21/01/2010: £25,000 over two years (2 x £12,500) towards a project to promote active citizenship and inter-racial understanding in Tower Hamlets, subject to a satisfactory updated budget for 2010.		
Visiting Grants Officer: Tim Wilson together with Mr Bird and Mr Henderson- Begg	Date of meeting: 19 March 2012	
Met with: Colonel Nigel Easton (City of London Regiment) and Dale Copley (Museum Officer)		
1. Introduction to the organisation: The Royal Fusiliers Regimental Museum (RFGM) exists to preserve the heritage of the Royal Fusiliers, and to present it for the education and entertainment of the public. It is based in its historic headquarters, formerly the Officers' Mess of the City of London Regiment, in the Tower of London – but it is not a part of the Historic Royal Palaces. The museum conserves and explains the regiment's history, from its inception in 1685 up to the present day.		
2. The project funded: City Bridge Trust funding contributes towards Fusiliers Engage! a project promoting active citizenship and inter-racial understanding in Tower Hamlets. Three specific activities take place each year: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Out of the Darkness – drama based on the Indian Mutiny, engaging 10 – 15 young people 2. Completing the Picture – a history research project among 7-12 local people, resulting in contributions to the museum and its website 3. Speak to Me – a project with 8 – 10 local young people engaging with current and former Fusiliers who have served overseas, documenting oral histories and filming them for the museum's records <p>The most recent monitoring report was received in February 2012 and was rated 'good'. The charity's financial year corresponds to the calendar year, and accounts showing the first year of Trust funding are not yet available so it is not possible to comment on how City Bridge support has been acknowledged.</p>		
3. Work delivered to date: Entirely scripted and staged by the participants, Out of the Darkness has been delivered twice, with 40 young people (aged 13 – 24) taking part. The first group, who were slightly older than the second, enjoyed researching and writing the drama. Over 60 parents attended performances at the Tower. Young people were recruited from drama groups in Tower Hamlets, Southwark and Greenwich. Only one participant had previously visited the Tower, and 38 of the 40 were from black and minority ethnic communities.		

Completing the Picture has been delivered in partnership with Bethnal Green library. Eight local people participated and focused their attention on the Royal Fusiliers Jewish Battalions of the Second World War, an aspect of Regimental history which had not previously been researched. At the end of the project the group exhibited at the library, a venue which receives around 10,000 visitors a month.

Speak to Me is an oral history project and has involved young people who approached the Fusiliers Museum seeking work experience. Eight young people took part, and they interviewed serving as well as retired Fusiliers who spoke about their experiences at the Tower and whilst on active service. The Museum reported that this activity has been particularly helpful in recording the personal histories of private soldiers which are otherwise rarely captured.

4. Difference made:

Young people reported that they enjoyed their involvement in Out of the Darkness and Speak to Me. The Museum receives over 800,000 visitors each year, but most are foreign tourists, so Trust funding has enabled the Museum to embrace community outreach work for the first time. With the older volunteers involved in Completing the Picture, work has helped to build up the Regimental 'memory'.

The charity reports that as a result of these activities there is now greater interest from volunteers coming to the Museum to help with document care and collection management. As a result of the economic crisis, many of these volunteers are highly skilled.

5. Concluding comments:

Having exceeded its output targets for the first year of activities, in 2012 the Museum intends to run the programme of activities again. Drama productions will a focus on the Regiment's Jewish Legions, and Completing the Picture will examine the Fusiliers and sport.

The Museum is developing a fundraising and development plan for the next ten years and is looking to organise its archive, including its oral history records. To this end, the Fusiliers are particularly keen to gather histories from soldiers involved in Korea.

It is clear that the charity has used City Bridge Trust funds to do something which it would not otherwise have been able to deliver, and to engage a greater number of local people in its work. The Fusiliers have shared lessons learned through these activities with other Regimental Museums, so Trust support can be seen to have had a 'multiplier' effect.