

PROJECT REPORT

2020 | OCTOBER

MEMORABLE JOURNEYS

Lead: Shahiesta Raja, Education Development Officer

Lines: East Lancashire, Preston to Colne/ Burnley Manchester Road

Budget: £10,250

Funding: Connecting East Lancashire & Community Rail Development Fund





OVERVIEW

Memorable Journeys came about as part of Connecting East Lancashire and Community Rail Lancashire's initiative to get young people to think about the way in which they travel and how that can be made more sustainable. It builds on Community Rail Lancashire's Passengers of the Future initiative that encourages young people to travel by train by engaging them at primary school level to show them how easy and sustainable rail travel can be. Through this project we wanted to engage the young people in Accrington to take pride in their local station by having a hand in decorating a part of it with artwork produced by them. Memorable Journeys became the theme as we wanted children to think about the kinds of journeys they had taken to and from Accrington and how these journeys had impacted their lives.

APPROACH

Lead by Shahiesta Raja, Community Rail Lancashire worked with Peel Park Primary School and Hyndburn Park Primary School in Accrington to produce artwork that is now displayed on both platforms at Accrington station. Over two half terms two groups of Key Stage 2 children worked with local artist Alastair Nicholson who has considerable experience of working with young people. The school based sessions were focussed on teaching the children about painting and creating pieces of art about their experiences of travel. In order to do this effectively the children spent some time at Accrington Library to research the history of the communities that have migrated to Accrington over the last few decades and to see how their home town has changed over the years.

A significant focus of this project was the idea that certain journeys are special because they can change lives. The pupils from both of these schools come from diverse backgrounds, including some pupils who have recently migrated from Syria. Their memorable journey to gain refuge in the UK from a war torn country will be a very different story from a memorable journey to a holiday destination. Both are important and this project gave the pupils the opportunity to research the idea of a journey changing lives.

A majority of the children who attend Hyndburn Park Primary School are of South Asian heritage, mainly from Pakistan and some from Bangladesh. This project gave the pupils the opportunity to talk to their parents and grandparents about their memorable journeys to build a life for themselves and their families in Accrington. They interviewed family members to help them to understand how they travelled and how they felt about their chosen destination. This enabled the children to appreciate the journeys taken by others in their classes as well as in their families.

Over the weeks the children added to their artwork and their work was collated by Alastair who then turned it into the amazing work that is on display at Accrington Station.



OUTPUTS

- 42 pupils from 2 primary schools were involved in the project.
- 2 banners have been erected at Accrington Railway Station.
- Explanatory posters have been placed in CRL's branded boards on the platforms.
- A pull up banner about the project is on display in the station booking hall.
- A display of written work that formed part of the project is also displayed in the station booking hall.
- News items and tweets about the project can be viewed on the on the CRL website.
- Three short films about the project have been produced.

OUTCOMES

- We were able to engage with two primary schools, one of which was a new school that had not worked with CRL before but is keen to do so in the future.
- We delivered rail safety and sustainable travel talks to both schools.
- Through the schools, we were able to engage with currently under represented BAME groups.
- A sense of pride and ownership in their local station and a sense of achievement on being able to help to produce a significant piece of art.
- The children from Peel Park Primary School were able to experience rail travel first hand when they went to Blackburn Museum from Accrington. Unfortunately the national lockdown prevented the pupils from Hyndburn Park from taking a train trip but this will be arranged once it becomes possible again.
- A strong link was made with Accrington Library.
- A very useful link was made with Huckleberry Films who filmed some of the sessions and have produced three short informative films.

LINKS

www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/memorable-journeys-project-unveiled

www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/lets-connect



WHAT WORKED WELL

It was very useful to work in a team with Alastair as he is an experienced artist and designer who has considerable experience of working with children in school settings and so was aware of some of the school requirements of working with children.

Huckleberry films were very good at working with children and were able to get the best out of them. It was good to work with them as this was a great way to record the experience.

LESSONS LEARNT

It was helpful to have guidance from Huckleberry Films about various permissions required in order to film in the schools and other places. This is something I feel Community Rail Lancashire could do with having in case they are needed.

Working with the schools was a positive experience and help from the teaching and support staff was very welcome. In future I feel this would be something I would insist on as occasionally we were left to work with the children without school staff.

The COVID-19 situation meant that celebrating the completion of the artwork became difficult. We still managed to have a small celebration abiding by the local lockdown restrictions where three children from each school came to the station to view the artwork with one member of the school staff. This was not the way we had planned or would have liked for it to be, but we had to adapt to the situation. This is probably something we will have to bear in mind for the foreseeable future given the current situation.

