

Erasmus+ Project Adult Education Strategic Partnerships

# Eco-management: yesterday's knowledge, tomorrow's know-how



## **British report on Ethnological field surveys**

Results of Phase 1 of the practical work

2017-1-FR01-KA204-037222

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## INTRODUCTION

During the preparatory phase of the project the Gatehouse Development Initiative prepared good practice sheets on the transfer of traditional skills to local young people. We organised a meeting of local experts and held a brainstorming meeting. We also met with local partner organisations such as the Local Authority, the local biosphere team, the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain and the Galloway Fisheries Trust. As a result of these meetings and our own research we were able to identify both the relevant skills in our area and a number of people with a long experience of holding these skills. In total we identified six skills which would make interesting and useful interviews.

Our network of contacts provided us with information on young people who might be prepared to take part in interviews and record their findings. While it would be possible for us to find at least 12 young people, it was apparent that it would be difficult to find three groups of four young people to work together. We therefore decided to choose six distinct skills to ensure that we involved sufficient young people. In all thirteen young people were involved in six interviews. All the interviews resulted in the production of a video record of the interview and appropriate records and permissions were collected.

The principal objective of this practical phase of the project was to fully engage young people in the project and to introduce them to older people with traditional rural skills which might provide job possibilities in the future. The age of the know-how holders varied between 51 and 95 years. The depth of knowledge of the know-how holders was more important to us than their age. The idea of recording the interviews was to provide further motivation for the young people, to develop new skills and to give them a sense of achievement. Another objective was to involve our partners and members of the local community in the project and we were fortunate that there were local seniors and members of partner organisations ready to help.

## WORKING METHOD

The Gatehouse Development Initiative used its network of contacts to identify young people to interview a variety of older people with relevant skills. The young people were matched with know-how holders depending on the relevance of the skill to their own needs and the availability of the know-how holder and the young people themselves. For instance, dry stone wall building is one of the skills taught on the Rural Skills course for school leavers at Kirkcudbright Academy but the young people would not have the opportunity of working on a wall unless a project such as ours was available. It therefore made sense to involve these people in drystone wall building. Similarly, through our partner the Galloway Fisheries Trust we were put in touch with a young person who was doing a project on the sparling fishery, so it made sense for him to interview an old fisherman whom he had found. The traditional masons could only be interviewed during the time they were working on a monument project at Gatehouse and the cheese making and cooking interviews depended on the availability of the skill holders. In all cases the young people were either at serious risk of finding themselves without work or were seeking work, for instance in the environmental field and they welcomed the opportunity to show that they had taken part in an Erasmus+ project.

In all cases we asked the young people if they would like to take part in these interviews. In some cases young people were concerned about carrying out interviews, so we always emphasised that all persons carrying out interviews would be trained before carrying out interviews and the young people welcomed this assurance. We also approached our partner, Dumfries and Galloway Council and the expert from the Archive Department came over to Gatehouse for a training session with young people and also provided recording equipment. We were pleased that all the seniors who we approached were happy to be interviewed, although our oldest interviewee, aged 95, suggested that his memory was not as good as it used to be (This was not in fact the case).

All the young people prepared for the interviews. The preparation depended on the situation of the young people carrying out the interviews. For instance the Rural Skills group learned the theory as part of their studies, while the person interviewing the masons found out about traditional techniques and looked up the work of the company involved. The young people who interviewed the cheese maker met together to brainstorm possible questions before meeting him and interviewing him. They then returned to the farm another day to see the cheese being made and to interview him in greater detail on the process and his involvement in cheese making. They also interviewed the retired farmer to put modern cheese making in its historical context. The person interviewing the retired fisherman had researched the subject and the young people who interviewed the cook had been doing a summer job with her in her kitchen.

The Gatehouse Development Initiative made arrangements either for the young people to be brought to the interview place or took them to the interview place at the time agreed. In the case of the interview with the retired fisherman, the young person made the arrangements and carried out a long video interview.

The Rural Skills group were brought to a section of wall which they would repair. They had prepared questions in class and put these to the know-how holder who answered them fully. They were then shown the section of wall to be repaired and spent the rest of the day learning on the spot about dry stone wall building. On their return to school they wrote up their notes and made presentations. During the wall building session the young people were accompanied by a teacher and a local person who took part in the wall building and two local citizens took photographs and filmed the interview and training session. The three young people who interviewed the cheese maker were also taken to the farm, where they recorded the interviews. One of the young people is a keen photographer and, as well as taking part in the interview took a large number of photographs. The young person who interviewed the masons was taken to the monument and had to climb the scaffolding to interview the masons at work. Two local volunteers also climbed the scaffolding to take photographs and film. Following the interview she returned to Gatehouse to attend a talk to celebrate the completion of the restoration. The interview with the retired fisherman took place and was filmed at his home and the cook was interviewed in her kitchen where she showed the two young people and a community member how she makes traditional Scottish recipes.

## **COLLECTION OF INFORMATION SHEETS**

The Local Authority archivist who worked with us made clear to the young people, not only that there was an ethical dimension to interviewing but that it was essential to have the permission both of the people doing the interviews and the people being interviewed both before the interviews took place and after the interviews. The young people were generally familiar with this need and the people with know-how also agreed that it was important that they should give their written permission both for their voices and images to be recorded. In all cases interviews were either captured on sound equipment or on video or both. The material collected provides a valuable insight into rural skills in the Gatehouse area and will be deposited with the archive service as a record of local skills and the transfer of skills between older people with know-how and young people locally. All the media files and the administrative data can be found on the project Google team drive. Links to the videos can be found in the appendices.

## **RESULTS INCLUDING RESULTS OF EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES**

The overwhelming impression is that the ethnographic exercise was appreciated by all concerned. The 13 young people all felt that they had learnt a lot from speaking with the know-how holders and the 7 older people enjoyed being interviewed by the young people. The young people were all a bit nervous before carrying out the interviews but, having been given guidance on conducting interviews, they became much more confident as the interviews proceeded. They gained confidence by conducting the interviews and learnt new skills in handling equipment. The know-how holders chosen, all work in fields where there is a demand for their skills. The cheese maker, for instance indicated that the farm was building a new dairy and they would need new people to work there next year. He also indicated that at some point he would have to retire and would need to be replaced. The young people carrying out the interview might not become cheese makers but they left the farm with a very positive view of the ethical farming practices carried out there. The young

people who interviewed the dry stone waller were impressed by his assertion that there were definitely good prospects for a young person who would like to learn this trade. There is also a need for traditional masons and there is a growing demand for cooks who can prepare authentic local dishes. The members of the local community who joined the interviews or who participated in the activities such as wall building or helping with photography or video making all improved their own skills and were happy to be involved in the intergenerational transfer of skills and the involvement of the local community.

In general the evaluation questionnaires showed satisfaction with the interviews. They only required comments if there was a lack of satisfaction, therefore comments were really only related to the final question, which indicated the young people's enthusiasm for the project and their belief that if they were to do the project again they would do it better, which reflected their good motivation.

At the local seminar held on 5<sup>th</sup> December, a presentation was made to nearly thirty people in the Mill on the Fleet visitor Centre. This was an excellent opportunity to present the Eco-management project to the local community and to representatives of our partner organisations. Videos produced during the course of the ethnographic survey were shown to the audience. These gave a very good impression of the work undertaken by the young people and the older people with rural skills. A highlight of the event was the showing of the interview with James Finlay the 95 year old retired farmer, who remembered farming in general and cheese making in particular on the farm of Rainton at a time when many local farms produced cheese. Mr Finlay was present at the local seminar. The audience was able to compare Mr Finlay's experience with that of the cheese maker who has helped to reintroduce farm house cheese making.

The seminar was also an opportunity for networking and passing on our experience of working with young people to another project which is planning to teach rural skills.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Following local meetings and network contacts we identified rural skills, skill holders and young people. The timing of the interviews depended on the availability of the skill holders and the young people. In all cases, the young people prepared for the interviews in advance, researching the skills to be recorded and the use of recording equipment. In most cases we helped to make the arrangements for the interviews, which took place at the work place or home of the skill holders.

The interview material will be added to the Local Authority ethnology archive, which is a really positive result of the project.

Our conclusion is that the interview process was a positive experience for all concerned and that the young people gained confidence as the work progressed and also learnt new skills. They also discovered that there are job opportunities in the skills studied. The general satisfaction was reflected in their response to the evaluation questionnaires.

The videos of the interviews are a valuable tool for demonstrating the project and for networking purposes and were well received at the local seminar

## APPENDICES

### 1 Cheese making and retired farmer

3 young people aged 19, 20 and 22

1 know-how holder aged 51

1 know-how holder aged 95

2 members of GDI to introduce young people to know –how holders and help with filming

KNOW-HOW COLLECTION SHEET	
<b>Name of the activity / know-how</b>	Artisanal cheese making at Rainton, Gatehouse of Fleet
<b>I.-Description of the activity</b>	<p>Rainton farm was a traditional maker of farm house cheese. The know-how had been lost. This spring a skilled cheese maker with 25 years of experience was employed to develop traditional cheese making at Rainton which had begun again few years earlier on an experimental basis.</p> <p>On 20 August three young people interviewed the cheesemaker. They Returned to the farm on 1 September to see cheese being made and to interview the cheese maker in more detail about the process. They also interviewed retired farmer James Finlay to ask about farming and cheese making in his youth</p>
<b>II - Link with the territory</b>	Cheese making at Rainton is very closely bound up with ethical farming practices and sustainable production methods, which are key elements of the production practices at Rainton
<b>III - Opportunities and limits of current development</b>	<p>At present cheese making takes place in the same premises as ice cream making, although on different days. A new cheese dairy is under construction and chees making will move to these premises next year</p> <p>The new facility will allow the dairy to meet increasing demand</p>



**IV - Opportunities  
to organize a  
training session  
around the activity**

Cheese making takes place in very controlled conditions, which limits the numbers in the dairy at one time. However, the increase in production may well provide opportunities for young people who would like to become involved in cheese making.



**The young people prepare for the interviews**





**Interview with Mr Finlay above and interview with cheese maker below**

**Link to the Videos**

**<http://www.gatehouse-of-fleet.co.uk/index.php/project-media/406-rainton-cheesemaking>**

<http://www.gatehouse-of-fleet.co.uk/index.php/project-media/413-rainton-cheesemaking-stephen-palmer-master-cheesemaker-full-interview>

## 2 Dry stone wall building

7 young people aged 16

1 know-how holder aged 52

1 GDI senior and 1 community senior to help with filming

1 teacher

1 GDI member to help know-how holder

KNOW-HOW COLLECTION SHEET	
<b>Name of the activity / know-how</b>	Dry stone walling
<b>I.-Description of the activity</b>	Learning about the skill of dry stone walling from a skilled dry stone walling teacher
<b>II - Link with the territory</b>	Dry stone walls remain an important feature of livestock farming in the Gatehouse area. Maintaining the walls is essential for preventing livestock from straying,
<b>III - Opportunities and limits of current development</b>	Some 80 years ago there was a real danger of losing the art of dry stone walling but initiatives were taken in the Gatehouse area to train wallers and to organise competitions to encourage the know-how.
<b>IV - Opportunities to organize a</b>	The Rural skills course in Scotland develops basic practical skills for land

**training session  
around the activity**

use industries. It also shows young people the possible employment prospects. Young people taking the rural skills courses are those most likely to be unemployed if they do not find work. It is therefore important to be able to offer them practical work experience.



**Kevin Butters explains the principles of building dry stone walls**

**Link to the Video**

**<http://www.gatehouse-of-fleet.co.uk/index.php/project-media/410-dyker-training>**

### **3 Traditional masonry, use of lime mortar**

1 young person aged 32

2 know-how holders aged 62 and 59

2 GDI members

1 local senior to help with filming

2 members of partner organisations (architect and National Scenic Area officer)

KNOW-HOW COLLECTION FORM	
<b>Name of the activity / know-how</b>	Traditional masonry, use of lime mortar
<b>I.-Description of the activity</b>	<p>In the summer of 2018, the historic monument dedicated to Samuel Rutherford in Gatehouse was restored by masons specializing in traditional techniques. The project was guided by a qualified conservation architect.</p> <p>The monument was partially demolished and rebuilt and then the entire monument was grouted.</p> <p>During all the work a photographic and video file was made. A young woman, Lucy Brown, did a detailed interview with the masons. She prepared the questions in advance, did the interview and filed the recording.</p>
<b>II.-Link with the area</b>	There are local stone structures that require restoration using traditional techniques, especially if the structures are classified.
<b>III.-Opportunities and limits of current development</b>	There is an ongoing need for this know-how.
<b>IV.-Possibility of organising a training session around the activity</b>	This type of work is often carried out at a high level, but in some cases we have been able to organise training sessions on low level structures





**Lucy conducts an interview on the monument scaffolding**

**Link to the Video**

**<http://www.gatehouse-of-fleet.co.uk/index.php/project-media/414-traditional-masons-working-on-the-rutherford-monument-full-interview>**

## **4 Traditional Scottish cooking**

2 young people aged 21 and 20

1 GDI member to help with filming

1 Know-how holder aged 62

1 member of local community

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<b>KNOW-HOW COLLECTION SHEET</b>	
<b>Name of the activity/know-how</b>	Traditional Scottish cooking
<b>I.-Description of the activity</b>	<p>The Drop in Centre of young people in Gatehouse has recently installed a kitchen. The organisers have recognised that families in difficulty have often lost the know-how to cook dishes. Inspired by the project, the young people have done cooking lessons, have visited a cooking school and have prepared meals. They even made biscuits for the Eco-management steering group meeting in Gatehouse.</p> <p>A custom of traditional cooking was the preparation of dishes for meals taken in the field at the time of haymaking and harvest. Two young people did an interview with a cook who makes traditional recipes such as scones</p>
<b>II.-Link with the area</b>	The production of foods like scones was closely linked with the rhythm of agricultural life in our area
<b>III.-Opportunities and limits of current development</b>	Today there is an increase in demand for home-made baking and there are possibilities for young people to find opportunities in the hospitality industry
<b>IV.-Possibilities for organising a training session around the activity</b>	Following the interview, the cook, Barbara indicated that she would be ready to organise a training session around the activity





**Interview with traditional cook. Barbara prepares scones and Kezia asks her questions. Lesley, a senior who works with the young people was present. Megan was also there.**

**Link to the Video**

**<http://www.gatehouse-of-fleet.co.uk/index.php/project-media/407-artisanal-baking>**

## **5 Sparling fishing**

1 young person aged 27

1 know-how holder aged 71

KNOW-HOW COLLECTION SHEET	
<b>Name of the activity/know-how</b>	Traditional net fishing in the rivers of our territory, particularly sparling (smelt) fishing
<b>I.-Description of the activity</b>	In the past there were traditional fisheries in the rivers and coasts of our area. One activity that has disappeared is seasonal sparling fishing.
<b>II.-Link with the area</b>	<p>There are not very few rivers in Scotland with sparling populations. There is a stock in the River Cree estuary near Gatehouse and possibly in the Fleet River estuary. Our partner Galloway Fisheries Trust is looking for other stocks with the aim of restarting this fishery.</p> <p>Jack Wootton who did an internship with Galloway Fishery Trust made a video interview for us with Ronnie Plunket, a former fisherman who had the necessary expertise. His father and uncles were traditional fishermen.</p>
<b>III.-Opportunities and limits of current development</b>	Development opportunities depend on the ability to reintroduce sparling to other rivers in our area.
<b>IV.-Possibilities for organising a training session around the activity</b>	Galloway Fisheries Trust organizes awareness days and school visits.



**Interview with traditional fisherman**

**Link to the Video**

**<http://www.gatehouse-of-fleet.co.uk/index.php/project-media/408-the-sparling-fishery>**