

ABSTRACT: SILVER STORIES INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

## History in our hands - exploring elders life stories with digital storytelling and ceramics

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### Abstract

Between 2013 and 2015, Curiosity Creative has worked in partnership with the Grange Centre, Newcastle and ceramicist Annette Poulson to record life stories and experiences through digital storytelling and ceramics.

The Grange Centre is a charity providing day opportunities for elders who require day care support to prevent social isolation, family breakdown, relapse of functional illness, or to offer support and respite for families/carers. This enables people to retain their independence and remain in their own homes for as long as possible.

By offering the opportunity to engage with and tell stories using two very different techniques, our project has helped reduce barriers for elders to express themselves in different ways.

Our project also aimed to challenge participant's perceptions of their own abilities and looks to continue to challenge the perceptions of elders' worth and abilities within the wider community, helping to dispel negative stereotyping. It has also increased self-worth and confidence and invigorates morale of participants.

It has proved to be a brilliant opportunity for participants to share fun times of their lives with others. The joy in their faces when reliving parts of their youth was a delight to behold and at times family and friends viewed them in a new light. For others it gave a safe environment to express themselves emotionally and to voice fears for the first time. Raised self-esteem and therapeutic value of the project was clear to see and helped participants bond and create friendships that would not have been possible without it.

**Keywords:** Digital Storytelling, Ceramics, Wellbeing, Empowerment, Dementia friendly



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