

American Years Revisited - Recording our Holy Loch Heritage

Freelance Heritage Project Co-ordinator

Contract Details

Client: American Years Revisited Voluntary Group

Contact Details: Ann B. Campbell, Facilitator
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Timescale: Project to be completed by **30 September 2020**

Rate of pay: £20 per hour (approximately 16 hours per month)

Maximum Available Fee: £3,000 (inclusive of VAT)

This piece of work is being funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Background

Dunoon, Sandbank and the Holy Loch were home to many thousands of American service personnel for over thirty years from 1961 to 1992. Individuals and families were moved here and experienced a culture, community and landscape very different from their home.

A small rural town, that was predominantly a holiday resort, was suddenly exposed to a significant number of US servicemen (and later their families) with their own very different cultures and expectations. In response, there were protests, tensions, friendships, marriages, new families, immigration, emigration, cultural influences and significant economic impacts.

The first generation of American families and local hosts are now approaching their 80s and a wealth of stories and experiences which have not been recorded could be lost if we don't act soon. In addition, there is an interesting and varied collection of archive materials and photographs, held by individuals here in Scotland and in the USA, which could form a fascinating educational resource for younger generations. Serious consideration is needed on how to preserve, store and display this archive to avoid losing it altogether.

Not only was there a massive impact on Dunoon and its community over this 30-year period, there was also a significant impact when the naval base was withdrawn at very short notice in 1992 - that struggle to recover provides an interesting story in its own right.

We believe that the development of a **permanent archive and exhibition**, which acknowledges the 'American Years', could have a positive economic and social impact on the community by attracting tourists from the USA to visit Dunoon to explore their family connections to the area, as well as helping to develop and consolidate an interpretation of recent heritage and place in the communities of this area.

Project Summary

The aim of the American Years Revisited group is to preserve the history and heritage of Dunoon and the wider area, in relation to the American presence from 1961 to 1992 and its impact on the community and the people involved. Our group was formally constituted in 2018, following the Think Dunoon Charrette in 2017, which identified a strong local interest in exploring the options to establish an archive, and potential visitor attraction, commemorating the area's 'American Years' heritage.

This project is being funded thanks to a small grant from National Lottery Heritage Fund. It will involve older volunteers working alongside younger people to uncover and record the wealth of information from Dunoon and across the Atlantic and to preserve and present this in ways that engage with local people, visitors and people online around the world. The project will mark the 30th anniversary of the US base arriving in the area with a touring exhibition of pop up banners and talks in schools and community venues.

The purpose of the project is to find new and interesting ways to share what we learn with the widest range of people, especially younger generations who may have less awareness of the impact of the 'American Years'.

Project Aims and Objectives

Funding has been provided to engage specialist support to assist with the delivery of the project, which will include:

- arranging training to support the voluntary group in the development of a series of interpretation banners, oral history podcasts, archive preservation and storage, oral history interviewing and recording, interpretation and event planning.
- organising reminiscence activities in local venues, as well as online using our well established Facebook page.
- working with a designer to interpret information and create engaging display materials.
- considering the longer-term options for creating a permanent archive and exhibition that can provide learning and research opportunities for new generations and visitors.
- conducting an Options Appraisal on the potential for a permanent resource in order to inform the development of future funding applications.
- creating a podcast series and making it available online to anyone who is interested, and particularly the many thousands of people connected to the US Navy personnel who were based here over the 30-year period.
- adding resources to SCRAN as an educational resource for all.

- producing an evaluation report on this project

The successful candidate will:

- support the group to plan and deliver targets set in NLHF application.
- make and maintain contact with Dunoon Grammar School and Argyll College UHI to engage young people in the project
- co-ordinate the organisation of training events and activities
- co-ordinate the design and production of interpretation materials
- co-ordinate the production of a series of podcasts
- co-ordinate a local tour of pop up exhibition materials
- work with the group to gather information on options for the development of the project as an asset for the community of Dunoon and as a visitor attraction, including potential premises and costs, archive storage and presentation options, funding opportunities and income generation / fundraising ideas
- gather data, information and photographs to inform the end of grant evaluation report
- support the group to promote and develop their activities

Consultant Specification

The American Years Revisited group is seeking the services of a contractor with experience in supporting community heritage activities. The successful consultant will:

- be able to cover the full set of tasks required
- be able to complete the project by 30 September 2020
- be able to actively engage with people of all ages and abilities across the community
- be available to work in Dunoon on a regular basis

How to apply:

Please submit a CV and covering letter to: Ann Campbell at ann@surf.scot by 12noon on Thursday 7th November 2019