Interpreting Heritage

Process

Elderberry

Below are some of the things Learner's need to take into consideration when creating their own interpretation:

Ask yourself why

Interpretation can be a powerful tool for influencing the way people think, feel or act. What do you hope to achieve by providing interpretation?
Turn your answers into a set of objectives that can be used later to measure if your interpretation is working. Split your objectives down into 'learning', 'emotional' and 'behavioural' outcomes. What do you want people to learn? What do you want people to feel? What do you want people to do?

What's the story?

Create a list of your interpretive 'assets'. These may be physical assets, such as buildings, objects, landscape, wildlife or archives. They may also be cultural assets, such as human associations with place, former industrial activities or events. Research and consult to gather as much information as possible. Local people may have unique, personal memories or stories that you won't find in any archive so invite them to participate in this stage of your planning. Use your list to guide the development of themes and storylines, or interpretive messages, which you want to pass on to your visitors.

Who is it for?

Your audiences may include existing visitors and people who don't currently visit, but could be enticed by the right messages and activities. You'll need to understand their interests, knowledge, abilities and motivations.

Selecting the right platform

You should know what you want to say, who you want to say it to, where your interpretation needs to go and when it should be available. Now it's time to think about how to present your interpretation. The variety of platform available falls into four main categories:

1. personal or face to face – walks, talks, performances, workshops etc
2. printed or graphic - exhibitions, leaflets, panels etc
3. digital or electronic - apps, audio, websites, touch screens etc
4. on-site installations – sculpture, way-markers, trails etc

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