A project to find out about the wildlife experiences of different generations
Contents

Project Summary
- Why & What? 3
- How? 4
- Targets & Achievements 5
- Acknowledgements 6

Project Delivery
- Promotion & Recruitment of participants 7
- Reminiscence kits 8
- Sessions 9
- Events 10
- Interviews 11
- Follow-up sessions 12
- Project outputs 13
- Celebration events 14

Session Case Study 15 & 16

Event Case Study 17 & 18

Project Evaluation
- Feedback from participants 19 & 20
- Challenges 21 & 22
- Successes 23 & 24

Project Conclusions 25 & 26

Recommendations 27
PROJECT SUMMARY

Why?
The *My Wild Life* project was created by Froglife in response to comments regularly heard at events along the lines of “there used to be newts everywhere, where have they gone?” The project celebrates wildlife and wild places and considers how they have changed over time. Through reminiscence events we have captured elements of intangible natural heritage - stories about playing outside and meeting wildlife, bringing changes in biodiversity and interactions with nature to life.

What?
*My Wild Life* was an inter-generational reminiscence and oral history project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Reminiscence is “the recollection of one’s personal experiences.” Reminiscence work is “the stimulation of social, educational and creative activities that value people and their reminiscences.”
Source: Age Exchange website (www.age-exchange.org.uk)

Oral history is the recording of memories for historical archive. This may be written accounts, voice recordings, film footage or a photographic record. “Oral history records the living memories and feelings of all kinds of people, many otherwise hidden from history, and creates a more vivid picture of the past.”
Source: Oral History Society website (www.oralhistory.org.uk)

“Intergenerational practice aims to bring generations together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations.”
Source: Centre for Intergenerational Practice www.centreforip.org.uk
How?

For 2 years Froglife hosted reminiscence events in Peterborough, London and Glasgow encouraging different generations to share their memories of wildlife and playing outside.

The project ran reminiscence sessions in many different settings, from parks to nursing homes, inviting young people from schools and youth groups along. We provided a reminiscence kit at each session to help bring back memories, which included items such as old cameras, books, skipping ropes and conkers. This proved an excellent way to prompt the sharing of a wide range of fascinating childhood memories.

Some participants were willing to be interviewed on film about their experiences and the resulting DVD and video archive provides an oral history record of the project and the memories gathered by it. Other memories were contributed in writing so that they could be included in the project book and evaluation.
Summary of Targets & Achievements

Every target set for the project (detailed in the table below) was met or exceeded, with the exception of volunteer days which was offset by staff time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TARGETS</th>
<th>TARGET NUMBERS</th>
<th>ACHIEVEMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruit volunteers</td>
<td>84 volunteer days</td>
<td>34.5 volunteer days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13 half staff days</td>
<td>83 half staff days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reminiscence events</td>
<td>480 people</td>
<td>25 events - 1219 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterborough</td>
<td>24 events with 20 at each</td>
<td>789 older, 430 younger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reminiscence events</td>
<td>London 160 people</td>
<td>10 events - 781 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London &amp; Glasgow</td>
<td>8 events with 20 at each</td>
<td>310 older, 471 younger</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Glasgow 100 people</td>
<td>8 events - 533 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 events with 20 at each</td>
<td>336 older, 197 younger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training of staff and</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>14 staff and 9 volunteers were trained in reminiscence &amp; oral history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volunteers</td>
<td></td>
<td>techniques. 7 staff and 3 volunteers were trained in filming and editing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral history interviews</td>
<td>100 people</td>
<td>57 interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 interviews with 2 at each</td>
<td>31 older, 26 younger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total 100 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(31 older, 69 younger)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create DVD and publication</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>70 page book and 30 minute film created</td>
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<tr>
<td>Celebration event</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1 event in each location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up events</td>
<td>100 people</td>
<td>10 events. 135 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 events with 10 at each</td>
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Acknowledgements

Froglife would like to thank the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Co-op Community Fund and the Garfield Weston Foundation for funding this project.

We’d also like to thank the project volunteers who gave their free time to help at sessions and events.

We also received fantastic support from Storm Events who loaned us professional filming equipment and editing software, and provided technical advice during the project delivery phase. They also supported our celebration events and the production of the DVD.

This project would not have been possible without the support and enthusiasm of the participants who shared memories, photographs and artwork, and gave up their time to take part. Thanks also to the group leaders who helped to arrange sessions.

Finally we’d like to thank Hugh Warwick, Professor Roger Downie and Sir John Lister-Kaye for supporting our celebration events as hosts or speakers.

Project volunteers; Sian, Ash & David

Photos: Laura Brady
Promotion & Recruitment of Participants

It was originally planned that we would hold the majority of the Peterborough events prior to rolling the project out to London and Glasgow to enable us to get experience of running successful sessions on familiar ground. However, an opportunity arose for us to attend an event in London very early on, so we actually ran sessions in all three locations for the duration of the project.

In order to recruit groups of participants, we wrote to schools, youth groups, churches, interfaith groups, charities and housing associations to introduce the project and request their involvement. A project booklet and poster was included in this mailing to encourage promotion by the target groups. The response was good but not as emphatic as expected, so reminder letters were sent out, and articles were written for local magazines and newsletters. We also attended the Intergenerational Conference in Peterborough where we hosted break-out sessions which promoted the project to intergenerational practitioners and group leaders.

Groups ultimately taking part in the project include primary and secondary schools, church groups, rotary clubs, Age UK groups, sheltered housing schemes, residential care homes and volunteer groups. Many of these groups became involved as a result of another group or individual from their organisation being involved in a session, showing the value of word of mouth once a project like this gets going.

Project poster
Reminiscence Kits

Following some training from a reminiscence practitioner, Froglife created a wildlife reminiscence kit to encourage the sharing of memories and remind older participants of their childhoods.

Items for the kit were found in antique and charity shops, and at car boot sales. The items included cameras, toys, books, photos, fossils, feathers and games. Each item was carefully chosen to remind participants of varying ages of their childhoods.

The cameras were the most popular items and showed perfectly the contrast of experiences between the generations. School children often looked at the back of the box brownie to find the image preview they have come to expect from digital cameras! The majority of the items dated from the 1940s-60s.

The kit was stored and transported in two picnic baskets to help give sessions an outdoors theme. Items were laid out on picnic blankets for young people to investigate and sitting on the floor gave the sessions an informal feel.

Reminiscence kit and items

Photos: Jodie Coomber
Sessions

Sessions began with a brief introduction to the project. Children were then asked to have a rummage in the reminiscence baskets to find something they liked, or were interested in finding out more about. Once they had a few items, they took them to an older individual or a group of older people to talk to them about it.

Once conversation was flowing well, the children were asked to complete a simple interview with an older person. This asked for a few memories and was designed to keep conversation flowing on the right lines. Young people were also asked to compare their own experiences with that of the older people. All age groups were asked to complete a quick survey of which of the UK’s reptiles and amphibians they had ever seen in the wild.

Refreshments were provided and froggy cupcakes went down well. Feedback forms were completed by all participants at the end of the session. Goody bags containing further information about amphibian and reptile species, sweets and games were also given to each participant.

Photo: s Laura Brady

Jim (93) being interviewed by Megan (11)

Children asking about items from the kit
Events

In order to promote the project and reach a wide audience, we carefully chose a number of large public events to attend, as well as organising our own sessions. These ranged from local events such as community fun days, to national events such as Birdfair and the Scottish Gardening Show.

For these events we used the reminiscence kits as visual prompts and asked members of the public to complete memory postcards or memory bunting. This proved to be an excellent way of engaging people with the project and collecting memories. Although different age groups were then only occasionally present at the same time, this method did enable us to gather a wide range of stories for the memory bank for the project. The memory board or bunting was a draw for all ages and children enjoyed both reading older people’s memories and adding their own.

Wildlife memory board used at events

Memories written

Photos: Laura Brady

My Wild Life Project Delivery Report  www.froglife.org  Page 10
Interviews

Following training from a professional cameraman, Froglife staff and volunteers were able to record interviews using a professional camera. Anyone willing to be filmed taking part in an interview was taken to one side at a session. It was often the younger people who could persuade an older person to take part. There was some fear of being captured on film and therefore a reluctance to take part, but very few declined. This was a change from the original project plan - we found it beneficial early on in the project to do the interviews as soon after the reminiscence session as possible to keep the flow of discussion flowing.

Everyone who was filmed thoroughly enjoyed the experience and we were able to collect some fantastic oral history from people who had grown up all over the world. Children definitely enjoyed being filmed and this was a major draw for schools taking part. We were also able to film a few celebrities at events which adds some more interest to the film. Additional wildlife footage was filmed whenever the opportunity arose.

Children conducting filmed interviews
Photos: Jodie Coomber

Photo: Laura Brady
Follow-up sessions

Some groups requested follow-up events which were adapted to suit the needs of the groups involved. The project brief suggested that we offer guided walks on local nature reserves for example, but this proved to be impractical as many of the older groups were not mobile enough to take part.

We ran several pond dipping sessions with groups of pupils from Thorpe School, and did some additional filming with them on those occasions. We also returned to Ken Stimpson to do additional filming and arranged a fun Christmas lunch with traditional games for students from this school and residents from Pinetree. We were also asked to go back to a church group after a session to deliver a talk about Froglife’s other educational and conservation work.

Although not all groups were able or interested in taking up the offer of further sessions, it was great to be able to arrange further activities for those who were interested.

Thorpe School pupils enjoying a follow-up session

Laiba meeting her first newt during a pond dipping session

Photos: Laura Brady
Project Outputs

Once all the sessions had been completed and the majority of interviews filmed, we sought the advice of a professional film editor. He assessed our film footage and made some suggestions of what else to include in the final project film. This additional footage was collected and we revisited a few of the interviewees to correct issues with the original sound or light where possible. The film was then edited in a professional editing suite, kindly loaned to us by a local events company. The editor then finished off the film, adding artwork to make it more polished and complement the book. Filming this ourselves and with the help of volunteers did present some technical challenges, but we were happy with the way we were able to collect memories in this way.

The project book was compiled from written memories collected during the project, and transcribed memories from film footage not included in the final film. The book was designed to look like a childhood scrapbook and to provide young people and their families with practical guides for activities mentioned in the project, such as wildlife spotting and outdoor games. As wide a variety of memories was included as space allowed so that everyone who contributed a memory was mentioned in either the book or the film.

Every project participant received a copy of the DVD and book, and they were made available to other interested parties at the celebration events. Local archives were also sent copies to ensure that the memories are preserved for future generations.

Excerpts of the film will be included on the Froglife website, and we will be encouraging people to continue to share their own memories through our Dragon Finder project.
Celebration Events

We opted to host a celebration event in each of the three cities the project had worked in during January 2013, and decided to make each event a premiere of the project film. The weather in January posed some challenges, even though all the events were indoors.

The Peterborough event was held in a theatre and was due to be hosted by Mike Dilger who unfortunately couldn't attend the event due to bad weather. Despite the snow, this event was attended by 50 of the 100 people who booked to attend, including many project participants, the deputy mayor and the local press.

The London premiere was held at the London Wetlands Centre in Barnes and again the film was screened in the theatre there. This event was hosted by ecologist and author Hugh Warwick, who had done an interview for the project which was included in the final film. This event was attended by 46 of the 65 people who booked to attend, including funders and representatives of London organisations. This was also a launch event for our Dragon Finder project, which builds on My Wild Life and other work in the city.

The Glasgow premiere was held in the Glasgow Science Centre and was hosted by Professor Roger Downie. We were also lucky enough to have Sir John Lister-Kaye, a renowned Scottish naturalist and author, as a guest speaker at the event. This event was attended by 40 of the 100 that booked to attend, including project participants and representatives of local and national organisations. This event also promoted the development phase of our Scottish Dragon Finder project, and acted as a networking opportunity for this new project.

Sir John Lister-Kaye speaking at the Glasgow event.
Photo: Sam Taylor
SESSION CASE STUDY

Building relationships between a residents’ group & secondary school

This session was held in May 2012 at the meeting place of the Pinetree Close residents’ group in Peterborough. Fourteen residents attended with their group leader and the session was planned for the time of their usual coffee morning to encourage attendance. A group of six students from Ken Stimpson Community College attended with two members of teaching staff for just over an hour.

As the residents had their usual tables and groups of friends, we did not alter this, but placed students on the tables with them and laid out the reminiscence items on the tables to aid discussion. As the session went on, every table developed a unique dynamic, depending on the individuals, and some very strong bonds were quickly formed. On leaving, the teaching staff were keen for me to invite the older people to the school to thank them for being so hospitable during this session.

Left Kris (11) with Norma (93)

Right Liam (12) with Yvonne (73)

Pinetree residents with Ken Stimpson pupils

Photos: Laura Brady
After the session, several of the older people said it had not lasted long enough and that they wanted to meet the children again. As the school had already expressed an interest in hosting another session, the residents were over the moon.

In July we organised for some of the residents to travel to the school to meet the children again. In the meantime the school had brought a different group of students to a session with a local church group. Some children from the original group, others from the church group and some who had not taken part in sessions at all, joined in and we effectively ran another session.

One of the children had prepared leaflets welcoming the residents to the school which was a lovely touch, and the students made tea and coffee for their guests. On this occasion we filmed some interviews, and we also presented Christine (who was 101 that day) with a card and gift and sang happy birthday. Christine’s age amazed the children, particularly as she is so young in herself, and she became a celebrity for the day, which she revelled in!

It was great to see how talking about wildlife and childhood could build relationships within the local community.

Pinetree residents meeting Ken Stimpson pupils for the second time

Photo: s Laura Brady

Christine (101) chatting to Lauren (13)
We decided to attend Birdfair in August 2012 in order to collect memories from a wide audience of people with an interest in wildlife. This also linked in with our Wildlife Ambassadors project and we were able to take along some young volunteers to meet passionate nature enthusiasts and celebrities from the sector.

To encourage reminiscence and collect memories, we gave our stand a vintage picnic theme. Staff and volunteers got dressed up in 1940’s outfits and the stand was designed to bring back early memories of picnics and wildlife watching.

The reminiscence kits were displayed and memories were collected on bunting which was strung up on the stand throughout the three day event.

The colourful stand was very different to the other displays at the event and attracted a lot of attention from visitors and other exhibitors.
We spoke to 400 people during the event and collected over 150 memories. We were able to get memories from some high-profile birders including Mark Avery, David Lindo and Mark Cawardine. We were also able to film some interviews at the event, one of which was with BBC presenter Mike Dilger.

Having frog cupcakes on the stand really helped staff and volunteers to initiate conversations with passers by and explain the aim of the project. This was the project’s most successful event in terms of engaging with the public and gathering a wide range of stories from different ages. It was also interesting to target a group of people so interested in nature and find out what kick started their passion. Our strong theme was eye-catching and people were very willing to share memories with us to benefit the project.

Completed memory bunting

Staff and volunteers with wildlife celebs David Lindo and Mike Dilger

Photo: Laura Brady

Photo: Ashlea Jarvis

Photo: Sam Taylor
Feedback was collected from participants at the end of each session using simple forms. Young participants were asked if they enjoyed it, what the most interesting thing about it was, what the best thing about it was, and what they would do to improve it. Older participants were also asked which items brought back the most memories, and if they would like to be involved in a follow-up activity. Those who were interviewed were also asked whether they enjoyed it and what could be done to improve the experience.

The vast majority of feedback from participants of all ages was incredibly positive. We asked participants to give us 3 words to describe their session. Below is a word cloud created from these words which gives greater prominence to words used more often.
Feedback was monitored after each session to ensure that changes were made in time for the next session. For example, it quickly became apparent that cameras were the most popular items, so we purchased another box brownie for the reminiscence kit. We also received feedback that the sessions were not long enough so we aimed wherever possible to extend planned sessions.

Feedback was also requested from group leaders who had been involved in more than one session. Below are some of their comments.

"The opportunity to meet and chat with an older generation opened the children’s eyes to life before the age of technology and computers...The meeting was especially interesting for our students, as the majority of them are Muslim and come from very different backgrounds to the adults they chatted with." Deputy Head Teacher, Thorpe Primary School

"Just to let you know that they had a great time!! ...We had a meeting yesterday & they couldn’t stop talking about it" Scheme Manager, Pinetree Close

"My Wild Life project has been invaluable to the Holmesdale Tunnel Open Space Project. It has been incredibly successful in getting younger people talking to older people and vice versa...it has led to the schools involved wanting to engage with the older residents for future activities." Community Outreach Officer, Enfield Council
Challenges & Lessons Learnt

We faced several challenges in delivering this project. The first one was a lack of interest from residential/nursing homes and schools. We had expected a high take-up from these groups, but many schools were unwilling to make provision for a session in their timetables, and we can only guess at the reason for a lack of participation from residential homes - possibly promotional materials did not reach events coordinators, resident’s may not have been interested or we may not have communicated how much fun the sessions were going to be. We also had the issue of the gap between the development of the project bid and receiving the funds - some community groups who were interested during development had disappeared or changed staff by the time the project started. However, once word spread after a couple of successful sessions, pick up really improved.

Once groups had been recruited it became obvious that logistical issues were going to be a challenge. We always asked schools to come out to visit the older groups as our reminiscence training told us that sessions run best when the older people are in familiar surroundings. However, one school refused to bring children out of the grounds. Fortunately, we were able to match this school with a rotary club group who were happy to travel. Timetables were also a problem as older groups tend to meet at set times on set days and it was difficult to fit this in with school timetables. However, this was solved by juggling groups around, and every group that expressed an interest in the project ultimately took part in a session.

It was very difficult to predict how many participants of each age-group would be present at a session, and what the layout of the venue would be. This meant that occasionally the number of older people far outweighed the number of children or it was impossible to have one central reminiscence ‘zone’. To combat this we developed a very flexible way of delivering sessions which meant that we could work with any number and ratio of participants and in any setting.
Groups that felt strongly they wanted to meet again were offered follow-up sessions which they thoroughly enjoyed. As previously mentioned, we often received feedback that one hour was not long enough for all of the activities. We viewed this as a positive because participants obviously enjoyed the sessions and wanted them to last longer. However, it was usually restricted by school timetables.

Occasionally groups complained that they hadn’t known enough about the session prior to taking part. This was often because information hadn’t been passed to them by their group leader, or because they didn’t understand the concept of reminiscence. This problem was solved by a short introduction to Froglife and the project given by the project officer at the start of each session.

Although the project had 3 dedicated volunteers for much of its duration, we did not hit the target of 84 volunteer days for a number of reasons. Recruited volunteers had changes in circumstances and we then failed to recruit other volunteers. From the first session so we always had at least 3 staff/volunteers present to ensure sessions ran smoothly, off-setting the volunteer days with staff time.

The project aimed to be inclusive and work with the diverse communities in London, Peterborough and Glasgow, with most sessions held in Peterborough. In terms of working with schools, a broad cross section of cultures and ethnicities were represented. However, with the older community groups we reached a less diverse cross section with a greater take up of activities by white British groups, although we did collect memories from people who grew up all over the world. This is something to bear in mind with other oral history or wildlife projects, and it could be beneficial to run both sessions for groups to opt into alongside more ad hoc activities out in the centre of the community.
Successes

Despite the slow take up initially, the number of people who engaged with the project far exceeded expectations. The range of ages of people involved in the project was also fantastic. The youngest participant was a 1 year old, whilst the oldest celebrated her 101st birthday at a session.

The project was a great opportunity for Froglife to learn more about film making. There were some technical challenges to doing this ourselves, and the use of a professional editor at the end of the project to bring the film product together helped a great deal. The project film includes the memories from a wide range of ages and backgrounds and features several celebrities and will be a useful tool for prompting discussions about how we interact with wildlife.

The My Wild Life book contains over 130 memories recalling a huge variety of places and activities. We were also sent wonderful photographs and artwork for inclusion in the book by interested members of the public.

The project volunteers gained valuable experience and training from their involvement in the project. Ash and David both included their volunteer work with Froglife on their CVs, gained part-time employment whilst helping on the project, and continued to volunteer. Ash also recently received an ‘outstanding contribution’ award for her volunteer work from a local volunteering organisation. Staff and volunteers gained confidence and experience of working with both young and older people through the project.

The project also allowed Froglife staff and volunteers to be trained by the project officer in reminiscence and filming techniques for use in future work. This will be particularly useful in our up-coming Dragon Finder projects (funded by HLF) which include reminiscence modules. The kits will also be a legacy that can be used in future projects or one-off sessions.
Successes

“It made me feel young” Horace, 89

“Learning old people had fun” Dominic, 15

“Good for children to meet older people because we must seem ancient to them” Di, 88

“It brought back memories of things I hadn't thought about for years” Joy, 77

“Wonderful to know that old people are not boring” Jasmine, 10

This project has been very successful in bringing generations and cultures together. Groups that would not otherwise have met have engaged with each other and learned about each other’s backgrounds. Some groups have formed strong bonds and will continue to spend time together in the future. This has led to greater respect and understanding between generations, as shown by some of these quotes from participants.

Some of the older participants, particularly those living with dementia, have gained an increased sense of worth from being involved in sessions and have enjoyed recalling their childhood adventures. Wildlife and outdoor play is not a topic often used in intergenerational work, so even those who had been involved in similar projects, found this one particularly interesting.

The project also gave Froglife an opportunity to involve people who are not usually involved in conservation activities in our work, explaining biodiversity loss and climate change simply using participants’ own stories. This is a very powerful way to spread our conservation message.
PROJECT CONCLUSIONS

“Kids no longer do what we did when we were young” Connie, 91
“How society has changed” Liam, 12

As a result of the project, Froglife now has a really interesting body of qualitative data about intangible natural heritage from the three locations the project worked in – the thoughts, opinions, rituals and habits that build up around natural spaces and wild species. We have just scratched the surface of the possible analysis of these stories.

We were interested that the memories did not create a clear picture of older generations having had it better than young people growing up today - reality is more complicated and subtle than this. The vast majority of participants agreed that children today have less access to the outdoors than previous generations. Many different reasons were given for this; more traffic, entertainment technology, increased health & safety, more fear of strangers etc.

However, some argued that the environment was a more important topic in schools than it had ever been, so children today were in fact luckier as they were taken on trips to nature reserves etc. The young people themselves could see the positives and negatives of both their situation and the childhoods of previous generations.

Many of the memories collected make the point that a certain species is ‘not there now’. Many participants said they think there is less wildlife around now than in previous generations. The results of our species survey shows that on average older people had seen one more of our native species in the wild than younger people.

“We had more freedom to go out” Jim, 93
“their world is so much different to our lives” Suheera, 10
“Talking about the difference in hobbies and freedom” Annie, 60

“That in the early days the parents would let children go and play out around the beaches and further than usual” Kondwani, 10

The interesting outcome for Froglife, was that the overwhelming majority of older participants had collected frogspawn in their childhood. The image of spawn in a jar is truly iconic and it’s clear that messing about in ponds was important and is probably still important. However our ‘have you ever’ survey found that only 21% of the young people asked had done this activity, the lowest percentage after swimming in wild water.

“The reason they (children) don’t do the “simple” things that (we) used to like hopscotch etc. is because of safety and also the fact that there is so much more available to them with advanced technology!” Pinetree Residents

“How unaware the children were of the frogs, newts, toads and sticklebacks that had disappeared from our dykes and rivers” Peter, 69

Discussions at the screenings backed up the decision to include some of the more negative stories about human interactions with wildlife, including injuring or even killing wild creatures. There were some questions about whether it had been right to do this, whilst others respected the decision not to edit out this type of memory and give a false impression. One person commented that it raised an interesting point about the drive for young people to understand how creatures work, how they live and die, and there is a lot more debate to be had about instilling conservation ethics in young people vs. their sometimes natural attraction to the gory or destructive.
The idea of ‘wildlife mentors’ that analysis of the memories suggested is really interesting and a good area for further research. Although the stories highlighted the importance of families and young people accessing wild areas in an unstructured and free way, a large number of people mentioned that there had been a key person in sparking their interest in nature.

This links back with the more destructive stories shared through the project—a nature mentor can be someone to place activities in an ethical context and explain why it would be harmful to do certain things but not others. Although the freedom and access of children to wild spaces on their own and with peers was important, to grow future conservationists this does need to be accompanied with learning how to care for and nurture wildlife. A number of those sharing more destructive memories expressed a great deal of regret about their activities, and are now actively involved in wildlife conservation.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Longer Together
Any follow-up project could benefit from participants spending more time with each other on a regular basis. For example if the same two groups met once a month for 6 months, a bond would build up and more in-depth information could be exchanged between the generations. This is how reminiscence work is often done, but was very difficult to achieve with My Wild Life as we were working with so many different groups.

This method would also allow scope for sessions to include practical activities so that more hands-on knowledge is also exchanged and new skills are learned by both age-groups. Simple sessions appropriate for the time of year could be devised which would be enjoyable for all ages and encourage the sharing of long-forgotten memories, such as making daisy chains or playing conkers.

Working Together
Taking this a step further, a larger project could be devised enabling young people to help improve a local green space with the older people. This could be the garden of a residential home, or a school nature area. It would enable older people to pass on their knowledge, provide opportunities to see wildlife in the flesh, and get both groups outdoors.

Although a project delivered in this way would provide a new set of challenges, the bonds created in the community between the generations would be long-lasting and strong.
Further Research
Further research, analysis and further collecting of similar memories could help to answer some really interesting questions, such as:

- Are there key areas where people have had memorable encounters with wildlife, that could be mapped and then conserved for cultural as well as biodiversity reasons? Are these places already nature reserves or parks, or are there smaller areas, brownfield sites or less obviously valuable areas that would benefit from protection?

- What impact does growing up in a rural vs. urban environment have on someone’s view of the natural world? With more and more people living in towns and cities, are we moving away from caring for nature or closer towards a conservation ethic?

- How can we engage more younger people in wildlife conservation?

- How do we break down the socio-economic imbalance within the wildlife conservation sector?

- How do we evaluate memories i.e. an older person’s memory may not be accurate; it may only give a snapshot; it may not be in historical context; it could be biased and determined by props etc. The same applies to the younger people - are they saying what they think they should say? Is the impression given to the younger people that they should be in awe of the older people’s memories – that they had a better time etc?
Find our more about Froglife’s work and projects at

www.froglife.org
Facebook
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You can find the My Wild Life film and booklet online here