

## CASE STUDY

# Intangible Cultural Heritage: Tobar an Dualchais' Stories from the Kist

Tobar an Dualchais/Kist o Riches collaborated directly with storytellers for the first time to deliver two events which raised awareness of the range of stories available on this rich online archive of audio recordings of Scotland's cultural heritage. Elsie Maclean, Marketing Officer for Tobar an Dualchais, tells us about the project's learnings and how best to use the archive to create storytelling events.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

#### GRANT INFORMATION:

- Awarded £4,000 from the Year of Stories 2022 Community Stories Fund.
- This fund was delivered in partnership between VisitScotland and Museums Galleries Scotland with support from National Lottery Heritage Fund, thanks to National Lottery players.

### THE PROJECT:

[Tobar an Dualchais/Kist o Riches](#) is Scotland's online resource dedicated to the presentation and promotion of audio recordings of Scotland's cultural heritage. Its principal content is stories and traditions, songs, music, history and poetry, recorded from the 1930s onwards. It contains over 7,000 stories from Fenian tales to tall tales, and supernatural tales to local folklore.

Although we have worked extensively with schools, delivered community events and provided residencies for artists in collaboration with ATLAS, this project provided us with our first opportunity to work directly with storytellers in an effort to bring contents of the archive alive for audiences.

The aims of the project were to:

- raise awareness of the stories available on the Tobar an Dualchais/Kist o Riches website and inspire people to listen to them
- stimulate people's imaginations
- give people a sense of both community and commonality within Scotland's multicultural society
- collaborate directly with storytellers (for the first time)

The events focused on showcasing some of the wonderful Scots and Doric stories to be found on the website, a significant number of which have come from the Scottish Traveller community.

For our 'Stories from the Kist' event, three skilled storytellers – [Jess Smith](#), [Tim Porteus](#) and [Jackie Ross](#) – told tales in Scots and Doric, relating to people's links to place and nature. We tasked the storytellers with researching older stories on the website and retelling them in their own way. As a result, these stories were given a modern, up-to-date twist, effectively creating new works for the audience.

The second event, 'Learning from the Kist', was a workshop in which participants were given the opportunity to develop their own storytelling skills with assistance from two experienced storytellers – [Donald Smith](#) and [Ruth Kirkpatrick](#). Stories from the website were used as resources to demonstrate different storytelling techniques and to enable participants to put into practice what they'd learnt.



## CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES:

- The biggest success was the enthusiastic response of the audience and participants – which demonstrates the level of interest in Scottish stories and storytelling, and the quality of performances delivered by the storytellers.
- We provided the audience with postcards about the TAD/KoR website so they could easily access and explore it following the event.
- We filmed the Stories from the Kist event and [shared the stories via our YouTube channel](#) afterwards, thereby widening audience access.
- We weren't able to visit the venue prior to the events due to COVID-19 restrictions but received helpful practical assistance from the staff there, which ensured that the events ran smoothly.
- [Two of our storytellers wrote blog posts](#) about their research for the events, exploring some of the Scots, Doric and Traveller stories on our website. This helped to raise awareness about the website contents and events.

## THE IMPACT IT HAS MADE:

- Reputation and audience-building; the events and their promotion increased awareness of the Scots, Doric and Traveller stories on the website and people's engagement with it.
- We plan to collaborate with other storytellers in the future (including Gaelic-speaking storytellers) to increase engagement with stories on the website. However, this will be funding dependent.

## LESSONS LEARNED:

- Working with storytellers meant that traditional tales were presented afresh in creative ways, and they were given a new resonance and relevance to the contemporary audience.
- Build some flexibility within your project so you are more able to adapt and still deliver the project in spite of circumstances outwith your control, such as COVID-19 restrictions.

## GUIDANCE:

- The Kist o Riches online archive is vast but can be searched by keyword, date, genre and language. If using the archive as a resource for storytelling events, it helps to have a particular subject matter in mind first.
- To make it easier to source suitable storytellers, check out the Scottish Storytelling Forum's useful online ['Book a Storyteller' function](#) and The Scottish Book Trust's [Live Literature Author Directory](#). In addition, you can apply to the Scottish Book Trust for [partial funding of Live Literature events](#) which can make delivering storytelling sessions and workshops more affordable.
- Work collaboratively with other organisations with similar aims to maximise promotion of your events – we partnered with the [Scottish Storytelling Centre](#) and [TRACS](#) to promote our events.

## USEFUL RESOURCES:

If you would like more information about this project or how to use the Kist o Riches as a resource for your own project, please contact Elsie Maclean, Marketing Officer, at [en.smo@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:en.smo@uhi.ac.uk).

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