



Egremont Mobile Folk Archive Project — COMMISSION BRIEF

Fee:	£4000 & expenses allowance
Production budget:	Up to circa £10,000
Timescale:	February - April / May 2007 (project tours summer 2007)

Creative Egremont (CE) is an innovative community and public arts programme lead by Grizedale Arts in Egremont, West Cumbria. The Egremont Folk Archive is an ambitious project to create a new kind of museum for Egremont - a living museum which uses historic and contemporary creativity to document and sustain the unique culture of this area. The long-term aim is to house the Archive in a permanent home in the town with extensive cultural, community and social facilities. In the short-term we want to commission a creative person or team to develop and realise an inspiring, thought-provoking and accessible Mobile Folk Archive to tour the region throughout summer 2007, displaying artifacts, collecting new ones and engaging the public.

What we are looking for

This commission is an opportunity to lead the development of a contemporary vision of the regional museum. It should provide an innovatively curated and designed advance 'public platform' for the emerging Archive and – vitally - for the collection of more material from neighbouring museums, groups and individuals. We are looking for a strong curatorial vision from applicants, but also for fresh and user-friendly solutions to displaying, interpreting and collecting artefacts of all kinds with an emphasis on their relevance to social history. Finally, applicants should be able to demonstrate that they are able to realise their proposal in practical terms.

Practicalities

We envisage the commission will be housed in a fully operational vehicle - the selection, design and conversion of which is part of the commission's remit. The project has staffing to enable a 30-day regional tour of the Archive in summer 07, with the potential to travel further afield and to expand its remit into other kinds of exhibition. The vehicle will be kept in Egremont and maintained by Egremont Crab Fair Archive Committee.

The commissioned person / team will be supported by CE and assisted in their liaison with partners locally. The CE design team is also available to be involved in the design and production of print / web interpretative materials, marketing etc.

About Egremont

Egremont is a small market town with a population of circa 8000. It is the main service town for the Sellafield Nuclear Power Station, and is currently seeing the closure of its last working mine, Florence Mine. The town has a strong industrial heritage alongside its neighbours such as Workington, Whitehaven and Maryport, and is bordered by coastal and rural communities. The town has a significant Norman castle ruin at its centre, and the Egremont Crab Fair is one of the earliest and longest running English country fairs, dating back to 1267. This hugely popular event still dominates the town's calendar and hosts the famous 'World Gurning Championship' (face-pulling) annually. The town has recently achieved Fairtrade status, hosts a successful monthly Farmer's Market and has an active Regeneration Partnership involved in improvement schemes such as the Gateways Project that relandscapes the town's access routes.

More information can be found at www.visitegremont.co.uk

About the Egremont Folk Archive

The Egremont Crab Fair Archive Committee was set up in 2004 by a small group of enthusiastic local people with a particular interest in conserving and collating the unique artefacts and memorabilia of the 750 year-old Crab Fair, and in 2005 a successful Heritage Lottery Fund bid was made for a number of initiatives and part-funds this commission. Discussions with the Whitehaven Beacon Museum for curatorial representation on the Archive's Board have been successful. More recently the scope of the Archive has broadened to include artefacts relating to other aspects of local industrial and social history. This commission has the opportunity to significantly inform the Archive's future collection and curatorial policy, and to guide its engagement with contemporary practice in the arts.

Artists Jeremy Deller and Alan Kane have included documentation of the Crab Fair in their acclaimed Folk Archive, some of which will be housed on loan in the permanent Archive building.

A feasibility study looking at the Archive building project is being undertaken by consultants on behalf of Egremont and Area Regeneration Partnership, West Lakes Renaissance and the Egremont Folk Archive Steering Group concurrently with this commission. It is expected that there will be dialogue between the study and this commission, and consequently that this project will help inform the future development of the Archive.

Indicative list of Egremont Folk Archive artefacts

Please see www.creative-egremont.org for photographs of the following examples:

Bank Cheque;

An unused bankers cheque drawn on the Bank of York, Egremont branch, date unknown, unused Chq number A 24886

Purchased through Ebay.

Crab Fair 99;

Article from the News and Star newspaper, dated 1999, detailing the World Gurning Championships.

Donated by the Woods Family.

Necro;

Letter from City University confirming the appearance and invoice of the Egremont rock group Necromandus in 1972

Purchased through Ebay.

NFA War Memorial;

Screenshot of a black and white silent film documenting the opening of the Egremont War Memorial in 1922.

Donated by the National Film Archive.

Pair of Gossware ceramics;

A pair of 70mm high Gossware mugs depicting the Egremont Crest, date unknown

Purchased through Ebay

Pathe News Crab Fair newsreel;

Screen shot of film depicting the climbing of the greasy pole at the traditional Crab Fair, date 1969.

Purchased from Pathe News (ITN Source).

Rent agreements;

Original letting agreements for Scalegill Hall Farm, dated 1886 and 1905.

Purchased through Ebay.

Sale book;

Full details of many parcels of land for sale around Egremont in October 1924, with town map.

Purchased from anonymous local collector.

1936 Crab Fair poster;

Original advertising poster for the 1936 Crab Fair and Sports.

Donated by D Banks.

About Creative Egremont

Creative Egremont is a temporary (March 06 – July 07) programme of community and public arts that originated when the local Regeneration Partnership approached Grizedale Arts to provide a public art strategy for the town. Instead of a consultancy or paper exercise, Grizedale proposed a series of experimental projects aiming to promote existing local culture and raise local aspirations in all sections of the community.

Other ongoing CE projects include the Egremont FM community radio station; a RIBA Ideas Competition to design a celebratory building for the town's Castle grounds; and Jeremy Deller & Alan Kane's reinstatement of the town's 'Greasy Pole' as a public sculpture.

CE is managed by Alistair Hudson (Lead Officer & Deputy Director of Grizedale Arts) and p/t staff Karen Guthrie (Project Director) & Karen Storr (Project Co-ordinator). We have a steering group of local people and stakeholders who meet monthly and maintain close relationships with other local initiatives.

Application process & deadlines:

To apply please email or post an initial response to the brief (Max. 2 x A4), a CV and any relevant examples of previous work

Expressions of interest & examples of work emailed / sent – Midday on Wed. Jan. 10th 2007

Short listed candidates notified by – Jan 16th 2007

Interviews – week starting Jan 22nd 2007

Project R & D and production - Feb. – May / June 2007

Address for all enquiries & applications:

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