

## **Project Art Works ILLUMINATING PEOPLE Transcript**

0:04

Dan:

So, your holiday to Scotland? Did you like it, going on an airplane? Yeah you liked going on an airplane! The thing with Scotland was, it's the wild, isn't it, Paul, it's like nowhere we've ever been before. You're out in the middle of nowhere. You take an airplane with a big group of friends. And just spending that time in somewhere that seems so remote and inaccessible. It didn't seem possible.

0:43

Mandy:

When it was explained to me, it just seemed exciting. I was a bit nervous at the possibilities. And then I decided it was too interesting to ignore. And I would have regretted it possibly if we hadn't have gone. So that based my decision, really. And the other reason was that I felt we were going with people that were understanding, and we were familiar with. And I didn't feel afraid.

1:20

Charlotte:

I think it was a good experience for us in that we found that we could do it. And I thought the family groups being all in different chalets was a good idea. Because that made things simpler. For each group I think... so as a family, I think it was a very positive experience in that we all emerged from it in one piece. So, with more confidence, that this was something that we could do. It was very beneficial in that way.

1:53

Dan:

Adventure is important isn't it... new challenges. Travel, I mean, you love traveling as well, like going places. We've done quite a few little trips around the country sort of quite local, sort of Suffolk and Cornwall I suppose. But just the act of leaving, and going somewhere new, I think is challenging as well. Because you, you'd like the familiarity of your surroundings, like you'd like going to Art Works because you know everyone and know the layout. So, when you're in a new environment, like Scotland is vast, and sparse and open and crazy scenery wasn't it? Not like anything else. I just think that's so stimulating for you, your brain, and just thinking what's that mountain doing over there. I hope we don't have to go up it!

2:49

Mandy:

Gabby was you know, completely informed. And had she said to me that she hadn't wanted to go or she was dubious or anything like that? If I've got that sense, then I would have had to say no. But no, she was very keen. Particularly when she heard you know, some of the other characters that were going.

3:11

Charlotte:

One thing's for certain with George and Sam is that cities are difficult. So you know, Glen Affric in that way was ideal. So we are, we'd always be looking at the great outdoors, and absence of crowds. So, where we go next, anywhere in the British Isles, I still don't think we're tempted to take George

and Sam abroad, because I don't think that they particularly would benefit or be interested in any of the things that being in a foreign country brings.

3:44

Dan:

And just the landscape, the landscape is different. So impossibly varied, those hills, watching you go down those hills Paul. In the film, I was like.... my heart was going like that! And like having all those people around you that sort of, making it possible by having such a wonderful group of people, this huge group of people like the logistics of that holiday, holiday! it was a holiday sort of. It was working holiday, you know, it was a working holiday. Just, just accessing that landscape takes such a skilled team of people, and not just people that know you really well, but people who are helping, you know, other people experience that as well. And just the dynamic range of all the people somehow, even though everyone was so different, everyone got on really well because you're all in it together.

4:39

Charlotte:

Yes, you're absolutely right to talk about them individually because they are extremely different from one another. And though they both have the same diagnosis of autism; they manifest it extremely differently. Almost in some ways opposite to one another. So individually for George, I think the overriding negative of his condition is anxiety. And that does manifest itself more acutely when he's away from home. No, he didn't suffer very strongly from it. Actually, when we were in Glen Affric, partly probably because I was there because I'm the sort of security for him, and partly because of all the familiar people from Project Art Works. But I think whenever George is away from home, he's always thinking, When and... Am I going to go home? Sam doesn't seem to suffer from anxiety. Or if he does, it's very, very submerged. Sam's Autism is well, it's, it's very hard to say what the dominant characteristic is, but there's certainly a very strong sensory reaction to things, both good and bad. George is always asking himself and others questions Why, why, what when? What? Sort of anxiety questions. And I think Sam doesn't ask any questions, Sam just receives stimuli. I think that's a big difference between them.

6:16

Mandy:

Gabby is 25. And she has autistic spectrum disorder, and complex needs, and can have behaviours that challenge. She likes to be very independent. She knows her own mind. She likes to do things on her terms. She is very warm, and loving, kind... can be very supportive, especially when it's really needed. She can get very angry at times, when she panics at something, or has high anxiety over something, she can be easily misunderstood. And behaviour can, it can make some people judge her wrongly,

7:25

Lee:

Very similar to Scotland, but I like the going away with Paul. For a period of time, I've done quite a few holidays, respites or breaks. Because you get to spend a week or weekend with Paul. And you get to see everything, you know, you get to see how Paul experiences with the mornings. You know how Paul adapts to things being different in the bathrooms and the layout, you know, Paul can, with enough time and enough support, can do most things, you've just got to be a bit, we've got to make sure that Paul knows what's required. And just, just hanging out and having fun, doing those things being in a completely different environment. You know, like in Scotland, learning when, where

everything is that Paul wants and, you know, showing Paul where his bedroom is, you know, either in Scotland, for example, the first night at three o'clock in the morning, Paul come and found me. And I think personally that was, he just wants to know that someone was, because he came walking in, saw me, turned around and walked back into his bedroom, like to get back into bed. So, to me, that was, oh Lee's just there.

8:30

Charlotte:

George and Sam are power walkers. And they. And they can run up hills very fast, as you may have noticed, and so there's no such thing really as a kind of slow amble with them. And so you just have to let them forge ahead. But we were really confident that we weren't going to lose them, because even though it looked as if we were perhaps leaving a dangerously large gap between us and them. We could actually sense the geography of the place, that the path going on ahead meant we were confident that we weren't going to lose them. And I think that both of them, they like to be together but they don't like to be... like terribly close together. They always know where the other one is. And they decide or it's actually it's usually George who decides who's going to go in front. Usually George goes in front. Not always. But George orchestrates that. And so, we're actually.....we, it's the norm for us to be plodding along behind.

9:35

Mandy:

We got an experience that is really treasured, we'll never forget, and I feel very passionate about. We were included. But there was no emphasis on you must or this is what we're doing. So, we had a freedom I saw Gabby free to be herself, she was respected, she was valued, she was loved and wanted. And it was pleasant to be in an environment and amongst people who understood Gabriella, didn't judge her. And that made life really pleasant. So, we got an awful lot from it.

10:20

Charlotte:

Given that there are people who don't really speak to each other, they're actually very close. And they do exchange a few words. But that... but speech is not the main basis of their communication at all. But George particularly you need Sam to be around, he needs to know where Sam is. And Sam's a kind of security thing for him. And Sam less so. But he is completely tolerant of George nearly all the time. Yeah, they do. I mean, I, it's very hard to describe a sort of nonverbal closeness, but they do have it. And they have, after all, spent vast majority of their life together,

11:06

Dan:

What we gonna do today Paul?

11:08

Lee:

Today's is a bit of a strange one innit...

11:09

Dan:

it is innit...

11:10

Lee:

It's not a... you know what we said about timetables

11:14

Dan:

A bit of Irish music!

11:16

Lee:

The bus needs to go in for an MOT up in Ore. And we need to wait around for that, and then go to the walk. So its stuff like that, which I think Paul would, adjusts very well to as well, you know, it's the change is really good, you know, oh lets go in here, we're gonna get out here and go for a wander around or find a cafe, do some exploring, you know, do that sort of stuff, which you really enjoy. difference...

11:38:

Dan:

You're the best. I just want to add that you're the best. And I love you.

11:42

Tim:

Will you have lunch out?

11:46

Dan:

Depends, I'm kind of thinking we should walk down to the Rye, because we've got to drop the bus off in the Ridge, to retest the MOT. So, I'm kind of thinking we should walk down to the Rye Bakery. And get some nice sandwiches from down there. It's about time I bought you lunch, isn't it? You always buy me coffees and stuff. So yeah, so I think with the support workers, you just have to be really nice. And, and patient and, and understanding really, and I think a lot of people have got that capacity, they just don't maybe see it as a real profession. And I think that needs to change, the, the sort of emphasis on a professional qualification, like maybe support work as being accredited, which would really raise the profile. Yeah, definitely good rates of pay. You know, I think the job is? Well, I mean, some people say it's demanding. Not really is it, going to Scotland and that.

12:50

Lee:

Going on an aeroplane

12:53

Mandy:

I don't think she realised just how much of a contribution she was making, just by being there. Because I don't think that she necessarily realised her worth, and what it meant to Project Art Works, what it would mean to society to be able to watch a film like Illuminating the Wilderness. So, I don't think she was aware, but afterward. I think she was extremely proud of herself. And I think she, she felt very confident about having joined something like that, such an experience. When she found her name was on the credits, she cried. When she sees references to Illuminating the Wilderness, she runs off and she gets the booklet that was produced. And as the film, we watch it, then she'll sort of, pick out the parts in the book that are coming up on the screen. Yeah, in answer, I don't think she was aware that she was contributing until afterwards. And then she realized what a contribution she'd made, and she was thrilled, yeah.

14:17

Charlotte:

The Explorers project has I suppose done what its name suggests in pushing, pushing the possibilities further. So, would I on, would we, as a family on our own have taken George and Sam off to an extremely remote part of the ancient Caledon forest? No, we wouldn't have done that. Are we glad we did that? Yes, we are. So yeah, the Explorers Project put that into, that made it happen... if the Explorers, if a similar project was available in in the future, doing something similar? Would we sign up for it? Yes, yes, we would. So yeah, it's just about sort of literally exploring, isn't it?



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