

KATE SULLY

Library Transformation

Over the last 3 years, RUOS has transformed the exterior of Balby Community Library using different themes. From using upcycling skills, to displaying giant poppies, seaside-themed décor to community Christmas decorations, all have involved bringing the community together and showcasing their hard work. We have also helped run regular craft activity making the venue a community hub for arts

Family Workshops

Throughout the project we have delivered family friendly activity in the library, schools and local community events.

Schools

- 48 Sessions in schools with 705 participations.
- 349 named participants in schools.
- 85% hadn't taken part in arts activity in the last 12 months prior to encountering RUOS.
- Of the 349 named individuals 56 people attended more than once (16%)

Library

- 169 sessions in total have been held, with 2412 participations
- 451 named participants
- 80% hadn't taken part in arts activity in the last 12 months prior to encountering RUOS.
- Of the 451 named individuals 209 people attended more than once (46%)

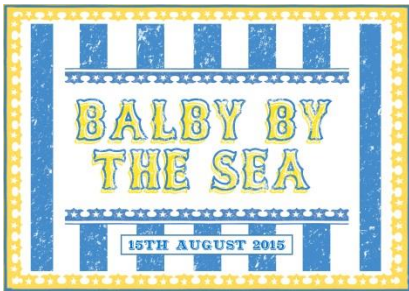
Woodfield Park

- 16 Sessions in total with 759 participations
- 159 named participants
- 73% hadn't taken apart in the arts in the last 12 months prior to encountering RUOS
- Of the 159 named individuals 5 people attended more than once 3%



A STRAND

Project Name



PROJECT DETAILS			
<i>Lead Artist</i>	Kate Sully, Arts Supporter, Balby		
<i>Location</i>	Various venues for community participation/Woodfield Club for the final event	<i>Date(s)</i>	Jan-August 15 th 2015
<i>Summary</i>	To engage and link the local community through a family approach in Balby & Hexthorpe by using a familiar seaside theme culminating in the final creative spectacle at the Woodfield Club		

PROJECT INFORMATION
<p><u>The Project in Context:</u></p> <p>The context for the project needs to come first as we built on learning from the previous year. Balby by the Sea was the natural development of a model we had tried and tested in Balby the previous year and that began with the Poppy project which had built the foundations already to involve a disparate and wide spread community. Local groups, schools, families all participated in</p>

the decorating of large scale wooden poppies that would form a field of poppies installation outside the community library as part of the remembrance of WW1. Over 600 people were involved in the making and around 3000 saw the Field of Poppies. They were not vandalized or damaged in over 6 weeks. The library enjoyed the attention and raised their profile and the project inspired everyone to do it again!

The Balby model

To use the family/intergenerational approach to engage adults through engaging the children. Key is to design activity that is suitable for this audience and to be strict about it being for families not just children.

To have a clear high quality artistic vision that drives the project forward and is broken down into appropriate sections for community participation whilst retaining the overall framing

To find and work with local partners such as schools, groups, venues (families/adults) and individuals to make thematic parts for a final spectacle/event.

To use professional artists to either frame the work or design/paint scenery/elements to ensure high quality.

To use participation as the way to engage the unengaged and to develop ownership of the project/theme - and so want to see the finished artwork/spectacle

To link the community through creative activity and celebrate that achievement in the final vision

To use the library as a stage to present the spectacle as well as promoting the venue

To build on the USP of the 3 different venues in Balby and develop those partnerships as well as the project vision.

The community team felt this was our strongest action research outcome and were all very proud of the Poppy project - so the theme of the seaside was born as a universal familiar theme that appeals to all ages /nationalities. It was decided to roll the project out from January 2015 to give maximum time and to develop that model further and build on the successes as well as pushing the artistic vision and incorporating performance and other creative elements to give a more extensive menu of artistic experiences.

The extensive work that has developed the library in both its audience and offer to families; and the fact Woodfield Park are both funded and managed professionally, naturally allowed the focus to be Woodfield Club as the venue for the final spectacle and for RUOS a target venue being non-traditional and off the beaten track. The community team felt the 3 venues then can offer different complementary activities which all enrich the local area and create a real sense of community.

The Project (Description): Balby by the Sea

The theme was decided and to use the model as described above - but to be more challenging and ambitious both in the vision and target numbers. The idea was to develop a creative project that at its heart involved participation by the public in making both artefacts and elements for the final event but also to marry that idea together in creative marketing to see if that could promote the project and encourage people to then attend the Woodfield Club summer spectacular final event.

The project would build on all the elements and networks already in place but also have other professionals involved to create a transformative seaside event complete with music, acrobatics and other seaside attractions - and be free and participatory. The vision was to transform the club

using professional scenery, buy in professional performers and recreate a high quality experience for the local community to see.

Project set up and management was a mixture of myself and the community team as the networks were already established - and new ones were added, generally by me, but also under consultation, by the team. The team agreed the model and also wanted to be ambitious so working backwards the club was booked for August 15th 2015 and then a programme of participation was agreed and set up.

Regular feedback was given at the team meetings and activity was then organized and managed at the venues eg library, club and Woodfield Park

Creative marketing approach managed by Kate

35 laser cut out wooden ice creams were fabricated and decorated by the group network and at specific events some independently /others with myself/Chelsea * see list

1000 stamped Balby by the Sea canvas bags were decorated by the network and at events to promote the final event as well as engage people in the creative process and inspire them with the theme and the vision

Other creative activity –actors/performers outside venues promo activity –team management.

Creative activity in existing venues/schools/groups managed by Kate

Artistic vision /framing of the transformation /scenery/products managed by Kate

Artistic content community team decision so Kate brought ideas and artists /concepts to the meetings to be discussed and examined .

Aims:

- The aims of the Balby by the Sea strategy was to further develop the model we had already tested in the area of using a familiar theme to inspire and connect the community in both the making of artefacts for the final event but also to engage them sufficiently to attend as well.
- To keep the existing local groups interested and to grow that number involved
- To tie all the creative activity and creative marketing together to test whether that deeper creative engagement would eventually make the final event numbers higher
- To involve the community team in decision making but to also model good practice
- Drive the theme artistically to ensure high quality
- Use professional artists to elevate the event to a quality creative participatory experience
- To ensure the 3 key venues were all on board and themed creative activity happened there
- To test whether a non-traditional venue could be transformed to host a high quality creative event which could become a legacy for the local community and continue
- Use the theme to bring lots of people together from all areas of Balby/Hexthorpe in a shared experience only possible through the arts.

Target Participants:

Balby by the Sea participants were from all areas of Balby/Hexthorpe and we worked with all kinds of groups, individuals both existing and new with mostly those not already engaged in the arts.

With the help of local DMBC officer and the community team in Balby we were able to find these groups and all activity was promoted to anyone through social media and word of mouth.

The project was very keen to be inclusive and we designed activity to suit all abilities and communities.

Target numbers were to develop ongoing numbers of participants rather than relying on the final event. This shows the original thinking /numbers and though things developed and some changed the target numbers are higher than expected in terms of actual participation with the audience for the library transformations same but that number should be considered as that helped the final event to be a success

Projected Dec 2014

Actual figures Jan –Aug 2015

Themed artefact making **1000**

ice cream, bunting, key rings **600**

Pop up photo events x 5 **250**

Pop up inflatable events x 3 **250**

scrapped by comm team

Annual library spectacle 3000 hits

library hits 3000+

Balby road windmills 3000 hits

not possible to do DMBC orders

Postcard wish you were here project **1000**

Balby seaside bag decorating **1000**

Woodfield park summer fayre **300**

Easter /summer fayre activity **109**

Woodfield club summer seaside event **500**

Balby by the sea spectacular **800+**

Partners:

See appendix 1&2 Icecream/bag decorating lists of groups/other venues

Artists involved

Chelsea Lord
 Allie Bell
 James Mulkeen
 Dave Gillan
 Jess Blamires
 Kevin Stanley
 Laura Cork/Meddling pixies performance team
 Bob Adams
 Jamie Rosser
 Layne Harrod
 Vicki Richards
 Dice

Key Venues

Balby Community Library
 Woodfield Social Club
 Woodfield Park

Public/Community Involvement:

Balby Community Team were regularly involved in the decision making and the development of the final event and though consulted were also happy for artistic decisions/expertise to also drive the direction. It was a partnership between local expertise/knowledge about the area and the agreed artistic vision that required professional input to elevate the work and final event from merely being a summer fayre. We met monthly to discuss all aspects of the project and all the learning about engagement we had found in Balby informed the direction.

The Comm Team felt the seaside event needed to be multi art form and that we needed to transform the club into a spectacular thematic venue that could transport the audience to a new place full of creativity and wonder. So, in order to achieve that, professional scenic artists were employed to do the transformation and the team respected that was required and why.

Social media was used to also both feedback to the community decisions and outcome as well as debate certain decisions/consultations e.g. whether we should have mobile fish and chips at the event and what people would pay. The public have been consulted along the way on times to hold workshops, whether to charge for workshops and feedback on the importance of family creative sessions .

The learning has allowed the project to develop organically and appropriately for the local community and everything from the choice of food/ice cream to the choice of performers/content became a discussion for the Community Team. So it felt that, by the time the event happened, with 8 months of engagement with so many people, we had arrived at a strong partnership of a mix of definite community decisions alongside strong artistic content and vision which lifted the whole event into creative spectacle full of participatory, visual and performance elements that suited the alternative venue.

Challenges faced:

The main challenges were not the artistic vision but the event making - issues like what food, the seaside themed extras, music content and the role of the club to name a few. This is where the shared event vision we all thought we had, became a problem because as the Arts Supporter for RUOS, which is all about creative engagement, it was tricky to deal with certain issues such as the food choice or ice cream choice because then it becomes a personal look at quality and lifestyle and not about the arts. As the project manager trying to direct the community to attend a seaside spectacle and attempt to transform the space into both a creative and atmospheric spectacular, it felt we needed to have traditional elements like seaside treats and fish & chips but after the social media storm against both the cost and preferences that idea was ditched. In the end it felt that this is a community project and those decisions needed to be decided by the local knowledge so we went with the community team/feedback decision and we had a local burger van and the club provided the ice creams - but were at least served from the pop up sheds painted like beach huts and so all worked very well. The shared artistic vision was challenging at times because it became apparent that members of the community, particularly the club, struggle to visualize things and when describing and showing them the model for the seaside transformation , they still were not

fully aware of what would have to happen. So it was key for me to ensure myself and the other scenic artists /performers were totally confident in what we had designed and planned so that everyone could be confident in our expertise to pull it off. There were many small challenges in the club itself – with, for example, building a 1 day temporary spectacle that was both durable and safe as well as cost effective and do-able to set up in a few hours. The scenery was then designed to do just that and then to be kept and stored at the club to re-use next year. We couldn't have the event over 2 days or more for fear of damage and the budget did not allow for security and so the challenge to transform the carpark enough to be both safe but wonderful and thematic was a constant evolution of ideas. The ongoing nature of having the theme driving us forward allowed many of these challenges to be resolved or at least decided on - and for the final event to be as good as we could all make it time and budget allowing.

The delivery model to involve all the groups/individuals and venues already was in place through the Poppy Project so we just needed to roll that out bigger and better to more of the community and that was challenging to both oversee the whole project whilst also delivering a huge range of workshops around the area. I did find managing the project a mixture of - enjoyable to drive the artistic vision - but also a big responsibility to ensure it all was implemented - let alone waiting to see if all the hard work in participatory activity resulted in developing an audience at the final event. The final event management did challenge me as my experience of that is minimum and I had to seek advice on that and support on the day from community and professionals.

What has been brilliant for both myself and the team is that we did challenge ourselves and the expectations of what can happen down a street in the car park of an old fashioned social club and prove creativity can bring people together.

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

Statistics (attendees, sessions, total reach): see appendix 3

Impact:

At the final event at the Woodfield Club, a non-traditional arts venue, not even that well known in the local area, and with a certain stigma for some community members, over 800 people came from all areas of Balby and Hethorpe. Of those people pretty much all who attended either participated in free creative activity or were an audience member for both the local pantomime and trapeze/performance work. The impact on the club was huge in terms of the transformation of the outside space and the high quality of the offer to the public. But some of the members were still separate from the activity and so the impact to develop their engagement is still ongoing but they do want a repeat next summer. I believe the project had a very positive effect on the public both attending the final event and being involved throughout with making things to both show at the event and to market it as well. Nothing like Balby by the Sea has ever been to the local area let alone the club and it gave people a free family event full of different content to experience and enjoy whatever their ability. The fact the club carpark was transformed using professionally built and painted scenery with the extra additions made by the community such as the bunting, ice creams gave it a real community feel as well as being high quality. The very fact people could see their work framed in such a way impacted on them as being part of a bigger vision and a creative link in a long chain of activity that has joined a very wide and disparate community together.

RUOS has impacted in Balby as people could talk about the project before and after and that shared experience was very positive and worked to connect people through creativity and that has not happened in the area before on such a scale. The impact of a familiar theme rolled out to allow local people to get involved in their own groups at events has I believe given the community

both pride - and shown the importance and role of the arts. I believe the project allowed the community to work together through this creative experience: the design of it allowed them to be part of it in their community as the workshops were designed to suit all groups/individuals in their own personal community within that. Then the different elements were able to be all shown together as part of the project vision.

Since the event in the summer Balby by the Sea is still a discussion point and has inspired people to want to be involved next year and already asking when the activity will begin in 2016. The project has proved the community team can lead on this activity and the public has responded by getting involved in high numbers and beginning to understand the role the arts has to play in their lives. Balby community library in particular is so keen to develop the thematic approach to getting families involved they have applied for People's Lottery Funding so the activity at the library to make and promote the event is then secure, leaving more of the Phase 2 funding to ensure the club can host the summer event in 2016.

See appendix 3vdata

THEMES / KEY-WORDS

Seaside, trapeze, pirates, deckchairs, inclusive ,performance, participatory, unengaged, community, transformation, spectacle, costume, accessible, elevated, scenery, family, free, creative, new, unexpected, changing spaces, nontraditional venues, community cohesion through the arts

Feedback

community feedback from the event plus peer feedback

See Appendix 4

CONCLUSION

I strongly believe based on Balby by the Sea that it is possible to engage the unengaged through creative activity if designed and tailored to both suit and work within the local community. Through a familiar themed project but one with high expectations and vision people feel comfortable to engage particularly as a family and then begin to realise they are being creative and to re-connect to the world of the arts. We felt as a team that the key focus for Balby was to use the family approach and that was rolled out through key contacts using the schools, groups and venues. I have learnt that works well for Balby and a key element was the participation ideally buying us ownership and then commitment to the project. This approach involved lots of workshops and artefacts being made to both promote the events and create pieces that would be integral in the final framing/transformation. We started with the final vision to change the club car park into a seaside spectacle full of high quality visuals, performance , making and participation and then broke it down to manageable sections for all abilities and ages to enjoy whilst retaining its vision and quality. Using creativity allowed us to create a free family event that at its heart was about participating in a range of things from seaside crafts to making giant bubbles to watching trapeze and no one seemed to miss rides, paying stalls or anything else usually present at summer events in the locality.

The idea was to bring the community together from all over Balby and Hexthorpe to see, experience and engage as a family through the arts and inspire people to find more, do more and participate more in the future. Everyone has fed back including the committee at the Woodfield Club that they would like Balby by the Sea 2. All the networks are set up: we just need a project manager and funding because the commitment and passion is all there but the community team all have either work or family commitments so time will be the issue to keep the momentum going to deliver all the content.

Future Development of the Piece?

- Using the event/project evaluation the final event can be added to and improved as it stands now using the seaside theme
- More trapeze workshops for the public, better food choices, more family workshops, live music and so on to keep raising the artistic bar each year and both elevating the content
- Taking more risks and challenging the audience as we develop the programme of activity more and more.
- Begin to involve more adults in the workshops and create pieces on the day
- Involve the club committee more in the event and develop content inside the club and encourage financial support
- Woodfield Players to apply for funding to add to the event as well as their development
- Have a project manager to do all the networking and drive the event
- Keep the creative marketing and develop it further
- Involve local businesses in the project more/financial support
- Use the themed approach to develop a more universal theme perhaps in Year 3 i.e. Carnival to allow further community cohesion through the multicultural theme and resulting food offers

Expectations and Realities?

The project surpassed my own and the community team expectations and all are very proud and pleased with how Balby by the Sea went and its impact on the local community. As the project developed over a few months I think a few expectations of the final whole event vision did alter - but I believe that was necessary so it was a community based event which is totally the ethos of RUOS. The reality is that it needed the strong unrelenting artistic vision to keep the quality and keep it different from just any summer event whilst balancing the expectations and ideas of the community. Now it has been a success the team feel able to learn from certain decisions and confident to discuss any failings in quality and to move on. I think the reality is without RUOS funding to use the arts to engage the unengaged Balby would not have had its own seaside family spectacle that focussed on participation for all and not on just being a passive audience.

Reflection and Connection to Future Practice / Personal Artistic Development:

Being an Arts Supporter on RUOS has been the hardest and most challenging role I have under taken at darts but it has given me new skills in project management, budgets and designing and implementing a project across the Balby community. I have used and developed my own practice to develop all kinds of ideas and ways to deliver the themed approach and designed with the community a whole artistic event working with a range of partners and professionals. Personally I have enjoyed very much the independence to work out there in the community and forge new relationships and approaches to engage the public and to test things out and learn how to successfully achieve those goals. Balby by the Sea definitely tested my artistic abilities and willingness to adapt, be flexible but more importantly rise to the new challenges as the role of the arts supporter has to be many things with always high quality outputs/engagement key to the offer.

