



AMBASSADOR CASE STUDIES 2018

Co-creating with communities in Cornwall, Bristol, Stoke, Sheffield and Scotland



Fun Palaces – Scotland Case Study – ONFife Libraries, Christine Cook

Project Summary

Christine from ONFife Cultural Trust has been involved in Fun Palaces supporting activities in libraries in Fife since 2016, starting with three workshops. After hosting a Fun Palace workshop in August 2017, three venues hosted Fun Palaces with activities from more Makers involved.

In 2018, we hosted the Ambassadors' Action Research meeting in Dunfermline with Christine, bringing Makers from across Fife, Scotland and the rest of the Ambassador regions that was a lovely opportunity to reflect on challenges, celebrate and share learning. For the most recent weekend, there were seven Fun Palaces across Fife libraries (and a theatre), including its most diverse makers and activities yet.

Why did you get involved in Fun Palaces?

"I came to a Fun Palaces workshop in Edinburgh a few years ago organised by Lewis, before he was the Ambassador, and once I heard about it, it seemed daft for us not to get involved. Fife itself can be quite fragmented, people live and travel very locally, and we want to be able to encourage people to know that there is lots of stuff going on locally, not just in the bigger venues. Also, as an arts and cultural organisation, the health and wellbeing elements of getting creative and connected are really important to us too."

How has your involvement made a difference or impact to your community?

"Fife has always had a lot of self-contained community groups, and running Fun Palaces has helped us take this and encourage the groups to face outwards to new communities and participants and widen the scope and remit of what they do. For us, Fun Palaces is about saying that culture is for you, it's not an exclusive thing. Since the first year, it's grown slowly in number in terms of participants and the core people who are getting involved which I think is more sustainable.

We just want people to think differently about their libraries, broaden what we have on offer and challenge what people think happens in libraries – it's not just books! – and that there are plenty of free spaces in their communities, which is especially important these days."

What Next?

"There's going to be an even bigger team of Makers next year, way bigger than just me, with more autonomy, pushing the control wider. We had the volunteers coordinator involved this year and this helped massively. For us, there's been real buy-in from management that has been really important, and it's now part of my job remit and part of the annual calendar just like Book Week. Now it's important to encourage more venues in other areas to take more ownership along with organising skill-shares with community members – hopefully with a poster campaign for more local participants to get directly involved next year too!"



Fun Palaces – Scotland Case Study – Living Memory Association, Miles Tubb

Project Summary

The Living Memory Association has been involved with Fun Palaces since 2016, originally as a partner and host for our Leith Labs activities. Over the last two years, they have run their own Fun Palaces with their team members sharing their passions including music and dance with a pop-up dance hall, stand-up comedy and brass bands with participants actively getting involved sharing stories through reminiscence & workshops.

Why did you get involved in Fun Palaces?

We initially got involved with Fun Palaces as we were already working with the Scotland Fun Palaces Ambassador on the Leith Labs project at Ocean Terminal shopping centre and when we heard about it, thought we had to do one ourselves! We liked the fact it goes on all across the country at the same time celebrating local groups – it helps us feel part of a wider community. It's like what they say – the local is the only universal!

How has your involvement made a difference or impact to your community?

This year we ran two Fun Palaces – one in Leith and one in West Lothian with our new project. It's been wonderful as in West Lothian with our brass band project, we don't usually open on the weekend and so we were meeting completely new people – some who have since come back. In Ocean Terminal (Leith), around half of the people were known to us, but the Fun Palaces atmosphere made a big difference. For example, one regular gentleman and his wife who has dementia, visits up to three times a week for a chat, but has never participated in a workshop before. However, for the Fun Palaces weekend, a member of our team ran a stand-up workshop and the man ended up not only writing, but even reading out his material, to the delight of his wife. Because there were back-to-back activities, they even stayed to then get involved in the following reminiscence sessions too. Comedy was a really good subject – we even had a 94-year-old Scottish lady with dementia finish the workshop with a funny story – complete with northern male accents and everything!

What next?

We're keen to do Fun Palaces again at the two centers next year – maybe we can even do another event collaborating with other groups! We want to pick more themes like dance and humour that are involving and engaging – subjects that bring people together and give people a chance to do their bit!



Fun Palaces - Sheffield Case Study - Pitsmoor Playground, Katie Lee

Project Summary

We first opened in the 1960s, and from 2014 have been community-owned, led by a board of local volunteers, offering a valuable resource for local children and families.

We heard about Fun Palaces through the Sheffield Fun Palaces Ambassador, who visited and asked if we wanted to join in. We then went to a workshop to find out more and made our first Fun Palace in 2017.

Why did you get involved in Fun Palaces?

I could see instantly how finding ways to share and celebrate skills and talents could support the work we do helping children to build their confidence and self-esteem. Staff and volunteers are in a position to potentially make a direct impact on a young person's life, and helping them to see what they're capable of is important. I enjoy trying new things and could see opportunities to benefit the young people.



How has your involvement made a difference or impact to your community?

Joining in with the annual weekend means we've now got a specific time to celebrate and share skills, supporting our young people year-round to build their confidence and encourage them to get involved. This year's Fun Palace was definitely more driven by users of the playground rather than staff – 12 year old Harry ran a science workshop and local Dad Rob brought his tool bench along to teach woodwork. It's good to feel more connected to activity across the city through networking, and taking up opportunities through our relationship with Sheffield Theatres.

What next?

I'm confident we'll make a Fun Palace in 2019, and keep encouraging more people to join in. It would be great to have more children sharing their skills and talents. Rob now runs a regular woodwork session following the success of his workshop, and there are plans to ask Harry to be a science 'adviser' to Fun Palaces in Sheffield next year. And a group of our children are performing in the Crucible foyer next month, which is exciting!

Fun Palaces - Cornwall Case Study - Treneere Team Spirit, Debbie Sims

Project Summary

We heard about Fun Palaces through a local contact and were interested in finding out more so met with Chloe, our local Fun Palace Ambassador, and agreed to give it a go! The first Treneere Fun Palace was a great success with over 70 people coming along to enjoy an array of activities including arts and crafts; board games; jewellery making; cake decorating; badge making; stone decorating; marbling; smoothie making and refreshments.

Why did you get involved in Fun Palaces?

The residents on our estate, many of whom are on a low wage, always ask us to organise family activities and we thought this would be a great way of getting people out in a local venue to take part in activities which don't cost a lot of money and would get them meeting other people who live in our community.

How has your involvement with Fun Palaces had an impact on your community?

Most of the activities were provided by residents both from Treneere Estate and other housing estates around Penzance. We would like to thank FEAST for providing some funding in order for them to buy items to be able to provide the activity. Many residents don't have the spare cash to be able to provide these so we were very grateful. The feedback from those attending was so positive and many of them are asking that we organise again next year!

What next?

We were lucky enough to have the room given to us to use for free, with thanks to the Lescudjack Centre and three organisations came along to support us – Penzance Soft play provided the arts and crafts table, Penlee Museum and volunteers came along to do the marbling and LiveWest Housing provided refreshments and had the opportunity to speak to residents. They have all suggested they would like to be involved again in the future. I was also approached by a lady that attended and works at Porthcurno Telegraph Museum and has said they would like to be involved next year.



Fun Palaces - Stoke Case Study - FoodFest, Jayne Fayre, food & sustainability activist

Project summary

I have been involved with Ceramic City Stories as a volunteer for about 7 years. I had not heard of Fun Palaces & got involved through my contact with Ceramic City Stories & our local Fun Palaces Ambassador.

Why did you get involved in Fun Palaces?

The work we have done through Fun Palaces and the training I have led & been part of has supported my practice in other areas. It has helped me consolidate what we do with FoodFest, an annual event about food poverty & sustainability that I help organise.

How has your involvement with Fun Palaces had an impact on your community?

I have been involved in a variety of Fun Palaces activities in recent years. In addition to supporting the annual weekend I was also responsible for bringing a Fun Palaces workshop to North Staffordshire in 2017. This enabled me to strengthen links between FoodFest, Ceramic City Stories, Fun Palaces & the Eden Project which, in turn, led to me coordinating another skills workshop with Eden Project Communities in 2018. More than 50 participants have benefitted from the Fun Palaces & Eden Project Communities training workshops & related follow on opportunities. The people who attended were from a wide range of backgrounds. I used an informal word-of-mouth approach & asked various contacts to invite people they felt would benefit. I also approached a local funder & received £500 to enable everyone to attend without any transport &/or childcare costs. This was important & ensured truly inclusive opportunities

What next?

In 2019 we intend to do two events, one in spring and one in autumn. These will follow and build on our tried and tested formulae of using the arts and sciences to highlight our core issue. We look forward to working with Danny again at either or both of these and using the Fun Palaces ethos of 'everyone an artist and everyone a scientist' to underpin our work.



Fun Palaces - Bristol case study - GP surgeries/wellbeing research

Project summary

Mairead Murphy and Cindy Mann, Senior Research Associates at the Centre for Academic Primary Care at the University of Bristol, got involved in a 'Living Well' Fun Palace at the Bristol Central Library in 2018. The theme of many Bristol Fun Palaces in 2018 was "patterns", and this was what interested Mairead and Cindy; they wanted to bring their research around GP consultations into the community by setting up a workshop space where passers-by could discuss the "pattern" of their own GP appointments and how they might be improved. Mairead and Cindy invited attendees to take part in a series of games and activities that aimed to stimulate them to consider how to prioritise what they want from GP consultations, and how this aligns with the GP agenda.

Why did you get involved in Fun Palaces?

Mairead and Cindy were invited to get involved with Fun Palaces by the Fun Palaces Ambassador hosted by the Elizabeth Blackwell Institute, based at University of Bristol. Their aim going into the day was to test out their research ideas with hands-on thinking, have some great conversations and focused discussions, and interact with communities that don't regularly venture onto the university campus.

How has your involvement made a difference or impact to your community?

Preparing for Fun Palaces invited Mairead and Cindy to challenge their own research. They thought hard about how to explain their research projects to members of the local Bristol community in a way that would invite people to be involved, and this will certainly help them with developing and presenting this research in future. The community members who got involved seemed to enjoy it and were engaged and interested in the ideas – but not everything went according to plan. Improvisation and creativity is definitely part of Fun Palaces. The team left the library with confidence in their approach and plenty of ideas about what we want from a visit to the GP – top of the list was being listened to.

What next?

Mairead and Cindy hope to present their Fun Palace experience to the primary care research community at a conference in 2019.

