



Shaped by Industry Shared with Pride Creative Workshop

Performing Better: Reaching new audiences through participative theatre

Whitehead Railway Museum, Monday 25 November 2019



Ashleigh Kirkpatrick, November 2019

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List of Participants

Name	Organisation
Kelli Bagchus	Carrickfergus Enterprise
Ray Bennett	Flame! Gasworks Museum, Carrickfergus
Ivan Tennant	Flame! Gasworks Museum, Carrickfergus
Brain McKee	Flame! Gasworks Museum, Carrickfergus
Sharon Mushtaq	Flame! Gasworks Museum, Carrickfergus
Fred Hammond	Flame! Gasworks Museum, Carrickfergus
Robin Morton	Whitehead Railway Museum
Karen Edwards	Carnlough Heritage Hub
Emer Gallagher	Carnlough Heritage Hub
Kathleen McCormick	Carnlough Heritage Hub
Ian Scroggy	Carnlough Heritage Hub
Patricia McCormick	Carnlough Heritage Hub
Gemma Reid	Quarto
Ashleigh Kirkpatrick	Museum Consultant
Claire Torrens	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Zoë Seaton	Big Telly
Linda McCracken	Big Telly
Christopher Grant	Big Telly
Jayne Clarke	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council

Workshop Opening

Zoë Seaton welcomed the participants on behalf of Big Telly Theatre Company and Robin Morton of Whitehead Railway Museum, who hosted the event.

Purpose of the workshop

Zoë Seaton explained the main the purposes of the creative workshop. The workshop followed on from the Shaped by Industry Shared with Pride Project that focused on reaching new audiences through participative theatre at industrial heritage sites. The focus of the workshop was how to make the learning from the project sustainable. This included how to support the volunteers working at the participating sites to develop skills, and attract new volunteers to allow the sites to continue to offer this kind of experience to attract new audiences.

Zoë explained that the content was based on real events. The research was carried out by museum and heritage consultancy, quarto. This allowed interesting incidents, based in fact, to underpin the storylines that were presented.

Sometimes venues lend themselves with instantly recognisable opportunities such as the Dining Car at the Whitehead Railway Museum. With Carnlough – the Lady Londonderry story was already covered so they wanted to explore what other stories there were– the other perspective that can be brought out. Locations are very important, and, it is sometimes location that will completely inspire an experience.

Games

Big Telly consider using games – video gaming and computer games but also traditional games like Cluedo and Monopoly. For example, they worked with a Post Office and developed a pass the parcel game, as participants unwrapped the parcel, they got different stories in the unwrapping. Sometimes these can provide a really useful framework for creating experience.

In Flame Gasworks Museum, Big Telly created ‘The housewives’ challenge that was inspired by a gameshow format - where people have lots of tasks to do. Inspiration can also come from card games – where you collect things, treasure hunts.

Film

Sometimes Big Telly’s work is based entirely from a technical perspective. They’ve made miniature film installations where they create a model of an existing building – for example a big house or museum. The model will look a little like a dolls house. Film is then produced which animates the building, making it look like there are real film people inside. This can be used to tell the layers of a building – if it’s been multipurpose throughout its history e.g. dances, soldiers living there, families living there. This is a way of telling these stories which is entirely tech led and don’t require anybody to say anything or perform, and which can be more sustainable.

Audio

Audio is a real investment for any site to develop journeys and experiences by adding a new layer of content. Big Telly developed an audio experience with the Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council for listening to myths and legends in local beauty spots.

They also worked with Linen Biennale to make a collection of stories about people's experiences working in the linen industry and how important linen became to people. This is a static audio piece which people can sit and listen to, but it is also possible to make an audio journey which tells people where to go, or puts people in the narrative e.g. imagining that they're a spy, being spoken to in character and they follow the journey.

People

Sometimes the stories are based entirely on the people.

Big Telly worked with a gentleman who had been a pilot during World War Two. When he was delivering his talk to children in primary school, they were quite disengaged. Big Telly created an interactive World War Two sequence. The children had roles, it was all led by sound - air raid sounds then the children had to make a trench, then hide in the trench and they were given certain instruction. The World War Two veteran delivered it – he went around schools for about 10 years – it was about using the tech and using the narrative to support what he had to give, which was amazing.

Big Telly worked on a project that was about working with people who were recently retired, who had a lot to offer but didn't really know how to offer it. A retired farmer wanted to teach in schools. He brought in his amazingly well-trained sheep dog and taught children about discipline – he used the dog to round the children up.

Another lady thought she didn't really know how to do anything except bake cakes. Big Telly worked with her to develop a workshop where she tells the story of Hansel and Gretel and they make the witches house; the children love it.

Sometimes it's about using formats that support people to communicate knowledge in a way that they don't feel too exposed.

Big Telly also worked with a team of plasterers who wanted to teach plastering to children. The children didn't want to learn plastering. Big Telly created a wall that was part of a James Bond sequence. The children were James Bond and had to kick through the wall and plaster it up really quickly, to make sure they couldn't be seen by the baddies. That's the James Bond experience – it all involved plastering!

Story

When we talk about story, what we're interested in is ways of telling that story. When we talk about immersive, interactive or participative theatre we're talking about what role have the audience got inside that world. It's less about I'm here and I'm going to tell you the story that has nothing to do with me – it's more about we're all in this together. It's about looking at a story and looking at the situations in that, that you might be able to put people in, so

that they feel that they're in the middle of the story. For example, in Flame Gasworks Museum, Big Telly were interested in the workers strike, so the audience were in the strike, they had plaque cards to hold and things to shout. They were at the funeral and they were in the board room. It's very much about how do you put the audience inside the story and make them feel like they have had an experience, which makes them remember that story better, and feel part of it.

Research

Zoë handed around the research that quarto provided for Whitehead Railway Museum. The research is distilled so that the audience is not being asked to spend a lot of time reading material. This demonstrates where the starting points were for the stories in the Dining Car at Whitehead.

Other types of experiences

Other types of experiences led by Big Telly include the design of big scale games, such as at Carnlough. Actors can be stationed at different points in the town, they can be giving out clues, in disguise, in a limousine and participants have to hijack the limousine – things can happen on a range of scales.

Big Telly have used the mechanics of the idea of escape rooms as part of their games. In a café you might get an ice cube that you have to melt because it contains a clue, or a venetian blind that says something once closed that participants won't know unless they knew that they had to close the blind. How can the location be designed to hide surprises?

Whitehead Railway Station robbery

The story of the Whitehead Railway Station robbery happened in 1939. Actor Christopher Grant read out the story:

“Station Robbery, 1939. Two days of train and bus takings amounting to £132. 12. 11 were stolen from the office at Whitehead Railway Station on the night of 6th February 1939. After locking up the box office shortly after midnight, the Clerk, Thomas Stewart was cycling home when he was set upon by three men. They dragged him into a field, bound his legs and hands, blindfolded him and took his keys to the office and safe. One of the men stayed to guard the hostage while the other two headed to the station. About an hour later, the man freed Thomas' wrists and told him not to move for twenty minutes. Thomas saw a car move off then he went to the house of another railway official and phoned the police. Fingerprint experts made a close scrutiny of the safe and various other objects in the office – no useful clues were discovered as it was believed the robbers used gloves. A boy named Boyd recorded finding a banknote close to where Thomas Stewart was held up. The End.”

Those are the facts – Big Telly acted it out as a course in the dining car. Going back to that story and looking at different ways to tell the story from the inside - who are the audience, at what stage in the timeline of the story are we, it could be told as a court case where it had already happened and people were being accused, it could be told in a myriad of ways. One of the ways Big Telly thought about - there were three robbers, but what happens if

when the plans were made, there were lots of people who wanted to be the robbers. Imagine that you are an audience that has come in, you know nothing about the story of the station robbery:

Christopher Grant, Actor: A short participatory session - The robbery

[Click here to listen to The Robbery https://youtu.be/zYnvg_neGcA](https://youtu.be/zYnvg_neGcA)

This is an example of how to tell a story from the inside by putting the audience in the role. They would continue and decide whether to do the robbery –this is a way to make people remember the story and be part of it. Big Telly sometimes looks for a framework that can hold lots of different stories e.g. the Dining Car in Whitehead Railway Museum.

In Glenarm, the premise was as follows– what if there was an auction, that was going to sell of all the sections of the Coast Road, and the stories that were contained within the sections? In order to make the auction work you need to snap up the stories - look for ways to engage people in a number of stories simultaneously, within a framework that can hold stories.

Christopher Grant, Actor: A short participatory session - The auction

[Click here to listen to The Auction https://youtu.be/qvfTHNX5HIA](https://youtu.be/qvfTHNX5HIA)

Zoë Seaton explained that when people hear the word participation, they worry. Big Telly are trying to create a context where people can play if they want to but they don't have to. It's still fun whether you participate a bit, a lot, or not at all. They're always trying to create situations where people feel included but not pressured. That's an important part of everything Big Telly does – that people don't feel like it's awkward for them but they can absolutely participate.

Kelli Bagchus: Had taken her 12-year-old daughter to one of the events and although at that age, it's not cool to participate, her daughter couldn't help but participate, without feeling pressured – she got caught up in it.

Zoë: That's that the nice thing about working with small groups – if there are 100 people, you're much less likely to be playful, because you feel that people are watching you.

Zoë explained that the workshop would now move to the signal box. Big Telly were interested in two things in this site – one of which was taking the dining car and making it less actor dependant – less dependent on people having to learn lines and rehearse for a long time. Secondly, to make it an experience that could be led by volunteers, more easily – similar to what had been created before for the Shaped by Industry, Shared with Pride project, but less actor based.

The signal Box



Watch a clip at: <https://youtu.be/yx15JMifQJQ>

Performance Feedback

Zoë stated that Big Telly had only worked for just over one full day with volunteer Robin Morton to develop the performance from what it had originally been with more actors. Zoë thanked Robin for being open to being playful. There was a round of applause for Robin Morton.

For the two experiences provided in the workshop session (signal box and dining car) the dining car experience was the one that Big Telly were most focused on adapting as an experience using less actors.

Zoë explained that she was keen that the workshop was a conversation about this kind of work, and to receive feedback. Which of the different elements worked for the audience and which elements the participants would be comfortable leading or facilitating, in their own sites and locations?

Feedback about which of the separate elements of the dining car worked, which ones didn't, which ones needed more clarity.

Safety demonstration

Zoë explained that this was playing with the idea that it was time travel aeroplane whilst trying to also get in the story about the Queen and some facts of that but not to burden it.

Watch clip at: <https://youtu.be/ZiwndayGrv4>

Ambulance training in 1941 – working with the operations games

- Rather childish
- I thought it was fun – just struggled with the anatomy!
- Thought it was good for all ages – everybody

Watch clip at: <https://youtu.be/ZYWmLxphFm4>

Letters from the war

Watch clip at: <https://youtu.be/Cv7Dky03XZE>



This was a mixture of props and audio

- Very nicely done
- Mixture of props and audio really innovative – with the letters in the toast rack
- The audio brought feeling of nostalgia
- The mood changes from laughter to somethings really serious
- Robin Morton did really well in response to the atmosphere of that particular piece – it wasn't a comedy piece at that time.
- With the letters in the toast rack it was nostalgic of sitting at home with a cup of tea and toast and receiving one of those letters – the domestic context for it
- Maybe it could have been stretched out more – it was over very quickly
- Zoë responded that any one of these pieces could be easily stretched out – trying to find a way to cover lots of different stories. When you're facilitating or leading or volunteering – it takes the pressure off you when an audience have to do something whether that is manipulating something or reading something, you get a bit of a breather and it makes it less intensive for the person leading it.
- There was enough content for this section to be longer
- It contrasted the old with the new – the author of the letter wondered if someone had got married – nowadays you could find out straight away by texting
- Lots of positive response about having the audio and hard copy letters
- It would be possible to have longer letters recorded and shorter letters to read
- On a practical level – one of the participants didn't have her glasses with her – so really liked the audio
- Scripted writing is hard to read now, but it's lovely
- Even the language that was used is different than today
- A different writing style in those days – the tone was different “look after yourself, and talk about illnesses like rheumatism”
- The combination between audio and props and physical which is nice to give you things to do as well as listen, if you're more of a visual learner. You can just listen or just read or both
- It would be possible to add photographs in toast rack

- The content appealed to the emotional response

Customs Officer

- Robin Morton did very well as the Customs Officer
- One participant remembered being searched onboard a train

Watch clips at:

Part 1: <https://youtu.be/otK9KocOqdI> Part 2: <https://youtu.be/EaKxKOvB8s0>

Underwater diver

- The underwater bit was fantastic – the bubbles! Laughter, and the actions!
- There's a fair bit of volunteer input needed – prop input I suppose too, those would be the things one would have to bear in mind
- Zoë: We had hoped that more volunteers would be available and that it would be led by two volunteers without a Big Telly actor there. It's just practice, and being confident. Immersive theatre is a new phase for people to get used to.

Watch clips at:

Part 1: <https://youtu.be/zcCYsTx-1rQ> Part 2: <https://youtu.be/xKrXy57ZRj4>

Fireworks Display

Watch clip at: https://youtu.be/oWTeQFn_vUc

- Fantastic!
- Absolutely brilliant
- Simple but effective
- Maybe more time to investigate what was on the table
- Quite a lot of kit, that was part of the fun of it
- Just good fun, it was like being a child
- It could be simplified it a little bit
- The torches made it – especially when it was dark
- Nostalgia from the smell of the poppers – it brought back your own youth
- Could strip back the party bags for the budget - but you can see the benefit of it
- Things that create the maximum amount of play for the least money
- It was a bit multi-tasking at times – but that was fun

Questions for Big Telly and Robin Morton

- In terms of presentation do you envisage this being put on routinely? Or minimum number of people or pre-booked?

Zoë: That's what we want this conversation to be about. For me, if that was happening at Whitehead, I think that should be part of the experience that people pay their ticket price for, rather than an additional experience. Some sites don't charge an entry fee.

- Do you conduct people around Whitehead Railway Museum as a group Robin?

Robin Morton: yes, but visitors can do self-guided as well

- How do you deal with putting on a performance when you've got a quiet day with only two people visiting?

Zoë: The Dining Car can seat 20-24. It would be a lovely thing to do, say, every Saturday, or choose a day that's a bit busier. And to have a mix – you could extend or shorten it depending on your audience.

- It's the way that it's marketed as well. My 12-year-old daughter would love it.
- Maybe on a Saturday at 3 o'clock would be a good time? – it wouldn't be put on for one or two people
- Zoë: It's a bit like feeding the seals at the zoo, you learn when the things are on - there are fixed times.
- Jayne Clarke: At National Trust houses tours are on at set times for example at 12, 2 and 4 – sometimes they'll roll two together if there are only a couple of people booked
- We do that with storytelling day – have a board displaying session times
- Zoë: It would be the same amount of work to do it for 2 people as it would to do it for 20 people
- The need for bigger audiences for atmosphere, the experience wouldn't be the same with only two people.
- It would work well for a pre-booked group
- Could use social media to encourage bookings – this allows better planning

Robin Morton's experience as Whitehead Railway volunteer working with Big Telly

Christopher Grant was great to work with. I heard the design on Monday, and we did a rehearsal on Tuesday. I was really grateful for the instruction and I really enjoyed the participation. It's amazing what you can do. For the Railway Preservation Society, it is all historically based. The timeline in the gallery shows photographs of some of the events too. What we're doing in the signal box, is speeded up a bit, but that is what would happen. Taking the tablet from the driver on the single track. All based in fact which gives and that gives an authenticity from our point of view. We thought we had a dining car in there – but now we have a theatre! The possibilities you can do, with what you have already in a museum, it brings the museum to life and gives you a new dimension

Zoë: It's also using that structure to serve up different things. Children could design little shows for it that are about the future. it's finding a safe enough framework that holds stories within which then makes it easy to change it – you could have a new menu - a seasonal menu – Christmas stories about Whitehead, any thematic content within that.

Marketing and volunteers

- The folk who are there have enjoyed the experience, undoubtedly – how do you use that to get more folk there the next time?
Zoë: Word of mouth is the best way, encourage people to take photographs and put them on social media. It would be great if the marketing people from the museum were able to join us to really have that conversation about how you advertise these things. All these spaces have such great potential for theatre
- Getting message out wide and clear - through social media or through schools, it does all ages, a youth element too
Zoë: We designed this for a family audience. This is also a way to get new volunteers. Volunteers who maybe don't know anything about trains and aren't interested in trains, but are interested in tech, theatre, or other things to draw in other members of the family, otherwise places like this can become the provenance of the expert – not everyone who comes to a place like this wants that level of detail, they might just want to have fun in the space or be playful there.
- Costume really helps give feel of an era
- Zoë: In our dream situation we would have had six volunteers and a better sense of who wanted to do what, some volunteers are keen to dress up, some aren't. We wanted to run it that someone who was a bit shyer, could grow in confidence and then be more playful. We don't want it to be stressful for the volunteers to be involved in.

End of Project

- Is your expectation from today that people will go back and try to create, or, will Big Telly be able to be involved in the various places and help the volunteers develop things that might work?
This project is ending now. Big Telly are talking to HLF, National Trust, and museums councils about running something more, like maybe a 3-year programme, which is about developing projects just for individual sites. We're keen to do more – it's like a driverless car - you're trying to design something without actors, but to use actors to support people to have confidence. We want to do more of this kind of work. That can be on an individual basis with sites or a more strategic programme.
- That'd be great because – I don't like projects that just stop. That's it - never to be done again! It would be great with the buy in from volunteers to do something further with it. There is a place for it.
- Gemma Reid: It does take a three-year project a while to get up and running. If you don't want to wait for that - individual sites could put in their own funding application. Smaller grants are a much quicker turnover, if we wanted to trial something like that and keep it going.
- Zoë: Big Telly used their own speakers, so they won't be there but all the props were bought for the sites and they can use them, it's not entirely ready to go as is because

you would need your own speakers. It would be good to have properly designed audio, so it becomes a piece.

Linen Biennale

Zoë offered the group headsets to listen to one of Big Telly's projects with Linen Biennale. This was collecting stories of people involved with linen. It was a very atmospheric audio, with a range of different stories – conditions, jobs, craic, pranks, ghost stories, what people did during breaks (including hair perming!) and funny stories. It took Big Telly one day to complete the recording and three days to edit.

It's a properly recorded and edited audio track that then becomes an asset that you can use either by playing it in the space or by turning it into a journey. Headsets that are triggered by Blue Tooth, which means that a certain audio plays at a certain time – or you can just say, for example "we need to get to the signal box; right are you there?".

- So you're prompting people to go on a journey

Participants listed to the audio of the Linen Biennale

- How long did it take to do this one?
- Zoë: It took a day to record and three to four days to edit. Workhouse in Limavady had an audio piece that was in the graveyard, about grave robbing, it was really effective
- Zoë: This was static collecting piece that was just collecting people's stories. It's something that would be lovely to do at Flame. There are so many stories about how important the gasworks was in the community - to have that properly edited as an audio instillation.
- Flame: We have about 25 people interview for their stories
- Zoë: It's all about how you then put that into a format where people can engage with it, who maybe only want ten minutes of it, where people can choose a hierarchy of content.
- How do you store your stories at the moment?
- Flame: It was partly edited and parts of it are stored on soundbite

Participants listened to another piece of audio content, which was more theatrical

This is part of an app Big Telly created for Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council. It's called Echos of the Causeway Coast. It's eight stories to be listened to in eight different beauty spots. The one we listened to is to be played at Kinbane castle.

- I haven't heard that since I was at school – it's done beautifully!
- That was excellent
- People listen to it on their own devices
- It's brilliant because it's not just telling the Children of Lir, but they're narrators for lots of other things too
- Zoë: 15 headset and the ability to run them was about £800
- The background noise and cutting between stories keeps interest

- Really like the first one because a lot of museums use audio interviews now as a way of accessing more detailed information but the way Big Telly cut between lots of interviews, I found, keeps your interest and engagement a lot longer than listening to one person talking for ten or twenty minutes. The sound in the background really helped with that was well
- What are the logistics of that – where’s that audio virtually stored?
- Linda McCracken: You just need a device to play it off - I was playing that on my phone or a tablet or MP3 player would work – you get a receiver with the heads. It’s wireless, a transmitter.
- Zoë – The headset needs to be within 200 meters of the receiver
- It would be good for a gallery space, or an outdoor space
- An observation – for some with hearing aids, the background noise, sound tracks on top of soundtracks makes it inaudible, for others it is fine
- Zoë: It’s about creating a range of opportunities for people to engage with the site – some people prefer the interaction, some audio and some people just want information – there’s no reason why a site can’t offer a range of ways, a bit more variety
- If you just have just two visitors, something like this would be brilliant, rather than the performance,
- Auschwitz relies on audio, because of the multiple languages of their visitors
- If you needed to record a more accessible version, that’s not massively going to increase your budget, because it’s a similar script, you’re just tweaking it a bit to make it accessible for different hearing abilities
- Have you considered augmented reality?
- Zoë: This is available, but we’re not the company who deliver that, we’re not the tech company, we’re more interested in the audience experience
- Tourism NI had augmented reality grants out
- Zoë: There are companies that only do tech – they sometimes engage us to develop the narrative around it, or the experience around it but we wouldn’t be producing an augmented reality – we’re more interested in the live experience and the engagement and playfulness of an audience, the interaction of it, but audio can also do that, it can lead you through an experience where you’ve got to go and speak to the person. We’ve done a lot in games where somebody is talking to you live – so you’re on the street and there are ten of you and the person will say to you through your headset, (you don’t know where that person is) ‘there’s a red van pulling up I need you to get in it – an you’re completely guided – and that is craic! ‘you see that police man – avoid him!’ You can project a conspiracy on to the world with that kind of thing.

Miniature film installations

Zoë: I wanted to show a miniature film installation, we’ve got a short video that might just help that to make sense and that’s where you would create a model of a listed building or a site or train or anything with windows and then you create video which is projection mapped so that you see people moving between rooms – this is a rough version, we did in

one evening, but it shows the concept of how you might use video to animate or help tell the story in a building that becomes like a dolls house.

Participants watched video of a miniature film installations

Zoë: This can show the layers of what a building has been through

The carriage with the individual compartments (at Whitehead Railway Museum) you could be walking up and down and things could be happening at the windows but as if the blinds are down, you can just see the silhouettes

Zoë: Something like that would be fun to make with a school. The one shown was a very low-tech version – there are people who have made whole models of town and cities and had films going on in them. Big Telly are doing one in Ballycastle Museum to tell story of what that building used to be. That will then become an asset which you can take to other places, to say, this is the story of our building. It's about offering people lots of different ways to engage with the site. It's very magical. There's also an app you can download – Echos Creator, where you can make your own audio journey. It would work brilliantly in Carnlough or Glenarm. We couldn't make it work at Whitehead Railway Museum because the site has only one geotag location – on a map it's one place. Echos app is free you can you make audio journeys, telling a story that happened in different parts of Carnlough or Glenarm. When your phone is in a certain place you would hear the story connected to that place so, you're tagging audio files to a map and can decided what the field is when it's triggered, e.g. it's only triggered when you're standing outside the post office. It's really specific but it's a really low-cost way to try it out. This is a lovely thing to do with children in a workshop.

Zoë Seaton thanked participants and asked for questions or comments

- Need to be realistic – you might think your idea is wonderful but everything won't always work – that's why you'd do rehearsals and test it
- Your sense of humour could be completely different from someone else's
- With the signal box, it was great fun, but sometimes you might be in a room full of 20 people who all want to see three other people do it. That's a good example of the difference between getting an audience to do the show versus watch the show and be part of it
- Jayne Clarke: I think that was good - it was interesting as a cross over. For the closing stage of this project we had a marketing workshop as part of an exit strategy and it had touched on the profile of volunteers and volunteer recruitment because we were talking about successfully marketing sites at lower cost because they're almost all volunteer led sites. If we could look at recruiting volunteers at different age profiles, maybe younger people who want to get experience of using social media to market - that's building their CV. It might be that there's a different demographic, who might be attracted to being involved with your village or your site – if you're looking for particular skills or competencies – it could help them develop their careers and it's helping you because you're bringing in different skills. Maybe drama students or people who want to have a bit of experience, who might

volunteer for a season – they could develop ideas themselves rather than go to core volunteers – who have got involved with your site or village for a particular reason, usually around a sense of place, pride of place or interest in history and aren't coming on board because they don't necessarily want that kind of skill development. It's about upskilling people who want skills, that you have got a gap in, and there's a cross over there between people who can market your site and people who can animate your site. Also, in terms of legacy of this project, I think that going forward we can do things across the four sites but it'll need to be on a more homespun scale to make it sustainable. There are a lot of storytellers in the area, we might be able to work with storytellers just to give that extra bit of support – and keep it very local as well, so that local voices are directly involved and keeping it within our communities.

Fun Palaces

Zoë: Another project worth looking at is called Fun Palaces – funpalaces.co.uk. It's a movement towards cultural democracy – it's about opening up sites and asking volunteers to share skills that they have rather than to necessarily talk about the site. For example, playing the violin, or be interested in learning Hip Hop or breadmaking. It's about getting people to see not just heritage sites; it happens in schools and arts centres and theatres and ferries and trains. It's about allowing the identity of a place to be more about the people who are part of that place. It's about asking people to think more broadly outside their own agendas and think more creatively about what skills are within those volunteers that might happen in that site, that might surprise people. We are hosting the Fun Palaces Northern Irish ambassador so if you want to hear any more about fun palaces, please do contact us.

- Is there an event coming up?

Zoë: It happens once a year but there is always a build up to it. It happens one weekend in October, all over the world - there were maybe 600 Fun Palaces over the world in that weekend in October. It's very much about shining a light on the skills in a place. They've happened in phone boxes, Tate Modern – in massive places and small places. It's just about people –this place is not just about trains it's also, for example, about the fact that the person who runs the café is also brilliant at Cluedo. Big Telly ran a session for Fun Palaces and a lady said that she had no skills and nothing to offer and it turned out she had seen every single episode of Coronation Street. They had her at a table with a sign saying 'I'm the expert in Coronation Street – she had queues out the door. So, it's shining a light on what that person has to offer in a place, which may not be connected with what you think that place is about.

Gemma: It would be a great way of seeing what's out there if you just held an amazing event with all sorts of things happening and you could realise, actually we could use that for a project.

Zoë: Big Telly worked with a group of ex Loyalist paramilitaries, in Lisburn, in connection with Fun Palaces. At the end of that session, they were saying that they wanted to run a Fun Palace – one of them was a bee keeper, one was brilliant at growing Begonias, one could

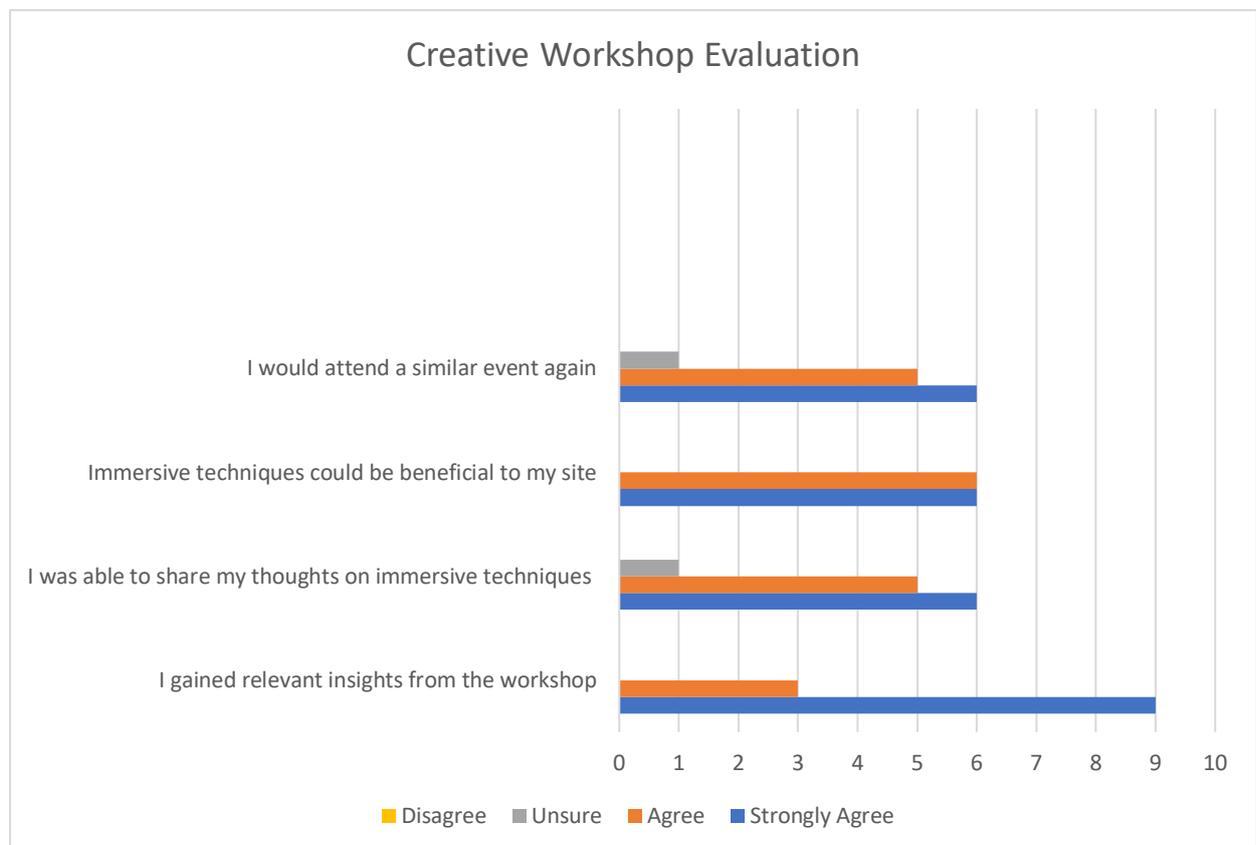
make amazing steak and kidney pie and one of them knew everything there was to know about Status Quo. They are running a Fun Palace and for them it's a real opportunity to present themselves differently to their community. There's real potential for people to think outside their own agendas and their own identities by shining a light on what people do anyway and do well. Fun Palace is a great idea and the people who run it say it's alright for Fun Palace to last a weekend, or an hour, it's about supporting people to develop their skills, their relationships in their community, so it's a gorgeous concept.

Jayne Clarke thanked Big Telly.

Workshop Close.

Workshop Evaluation

Evaluation forms were provided to workshop participants - evaluation data is based on 12 attending respondents.



How do you think immersive techniques discussed today could be beneficial to your site / upcoming event?

- Audible interaction would be good for Heritage hub in Carnlough. Interactive participation by audience would greatly help attract more people. Audio headphones are a very good idea to tell the old stories of the village.
- Enjoyed audio film techniques – would be very useful in our Heritage Hub
- Extend the service and provide more varied range of experiences. Interested in audio / film techniques and fun palaces
- Better audience engagement / enjoyment
- Could help visitor experience
- Possibly look into headsets with stories of past gas workers
- Provide extra interest to those without a technical interest in Flame
- I really enjoyed and it gave me ideas for possible future projects
- Given the museum a potential new audience, could bring the place to life and could find us new volunteers
- I think we could use participative stories – in fact a range of techniques including audio and miniature film installation
- Yes, we could use a range of techniques at the Carnlough Heritage Hub including participative storytelling, audio and miniature film installation and the Echos App could work well