

OUT THERE

Festival 2009 Report

“The best event in Yarmouth...ever!”

Compiled by Celia Makin-Bell, Development Manager at SeaChange Arts

Key facts & figures

“Spectacularly outstanding – I’m standing here amazed and I’m loving every moment of it!”

Tony Smith, Mayor of Great Yarmouth

The Out There festival took place on 19 & 20 September 2009 in Great Yarmouth. An estimated 50,000 people, 80% of whom were local to the borough, came to the festival which took place in St George’s Park, the Seafront and the Market Square.

Key facts about the festival:

- Over 600 artists from 8 countries performed and delivered workshops
- There were 30 acts and 90 performances across the weekend
- 350 people took part in the Musical Masquerade parade which launched the festival, with 750 taking part in workshops in the run up to the festival
- 18 people took part in volunteering for the festival. They all stated that they had enjoyed it!
- 84% of attenders and 97% of local businesses surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that Out There was bringing different communities together
- 90% of attenders and 100% of local businesses surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that Out There was having a positive effect on Great Yarmouth
- Festival attenders stayed a long time in the town, with 38% staying up to 3 hours, 34% 3-6 hours and 26% for the whole day
- Out There is the largest free street arts festival in the Eastern Region
- 75% of local businesses surveyed saw an increase in trade during the weekend



The response from attenders, businesses, artists and local stakeholders were all highly positive, of the view that the festival played a key role in contributing to the regeneration of the town and toward community cohesion. The audience, largely local, was highly diverse.

"It's really put Great Yarmouth on the map."

Festival attender

Out There... What's it all about?

"It is the talk of the town"

Festival attender

Launched in 2008, the first Out There festival took place in a range of indoor and outdoor sites in October 2008. Despite inclement weather it attracted audiences of around 30,000. External funding from the EU Interreg fund was sought for 2009 and a number of developments were planned for 2009. These included moving the event to mid-September to extend the tourist season; instigating large-scale community work and making all events free-of-charge.

The long term aims for the Out There festival are:

- To develop an annual celebration of Great Yarmouth, bringing together people of all backgrounds and a sense of community involvement and ownership
- To increase tourism, by extending the season and attracting a broader range of visitors
- To enhance Great Yarmouth's image as a historic and diverse international cultural location
- To celebrate international links and communities and build community cohesion
- To provide a platform for work created throughout the year by artists and communities, residencies and commissions as well as visiting artists and shows

The creative vision of the festival is:

- The use of outdoor public spaces
- The weird, wonderful and unusual
- Community participation and emerging talent... getting 'out there'
- Great Yarmouth's geographic position out on the East Coast
- Making and exploring links with other countries, cultures and communities 'out there'

SeaChange Arts manage and promote the festival, working in partnership with a range of organisations. One of the key partnerships is with ZEPA (Zone Europeenne Projets Artistiques) - An anglo-french partnership of street arts organisations, the project has received a total of 6.4M Euros of funding from the EU Interreg programme to fund activities until December 2012.



Over the next 3 years SeaChange will work with these partners to co-commission projects and tours and work with major street arts companies to develop new work. SeaChange will also work with local and regional artists to develop their potential and enable them to undertake international exchanges and collaborations.

Very interesting and dynamic programme. Not only were there shows/installations for kids and families but also artistic dance and culture made accessible to a public who may not see this live, but enjoyed it."

Festival Performer

2009 Highlights

"Kumpania Algazarra" - absolutely loved them and downloaded the album!" **Volunteer**

The festival was launched by a 'carnavalesque' parade, with three routes converging on St George's Park, followed by an afternoon programme of walkabout acts, performances and free family workshops. The evening culminated on the seafront with bands, a high wire show and fireworks, followed by a cabaret programme in three cafes

Highlights included Didier Pasquette's *Head in the air, Nose to the wind* – a nautical circus comedy show with trapeze, high wire walker and contortionist. French act, Les Trois Points De Suspension drew huge crowds with their surreal stunt filled show full of acrobatics, comedy and music. The Saurus (dinosaur stilt beasts from Amsterdam) terrified the younger audiences and Titan the Robot was hugely popular with his singing and stand up comedy routine. The Portuguese band Kumpania Algazarra also provoked an enthusiastic response from audiences.

A buzz was created by using certain acts like Titan the Robot to create strong word of mouth around town and driving people to the main festival centres.

"3 points were fantastic – a good mix of people watching a very complex performance"

Local Authority Officer

It's all about participation!

"The teachers were amazing and I learnt so much in such a short time. They were full of energy and made you feel good about yourself. It was an honour to work with such special people. Thank you for such a great experience"

Residential participant



The Musical Masquerade was the key focus for community involvement consisting of three parades from different areas of town gathering in St George's Park. Each parade was made up of professional artists/companies and community participants.

The parade was a theatrically animated processional performance which included street theatre, dance, music and song, accompanied with an array of carnivalesque costumes, masks, head dresses, and large scale puppets, which followed the theme *'myths & legends'*. Once in the park the three parades converged for a choreographed musical climax to launch the festival.

The parade brought members of the community and professional artists together to create, co-commission, and perform together.

Throughout the year local and international artists worked with numerous community groups to create performances, costumes, and high impact visuals for the parade.

Out There... got 'out there' with:

North Denes Primary, Centre 81, Ageless Opportunities, Include, Middlegate Residents Association, Great Yarmouth Lithuanian School, Caister High School, Great Yarmouth International Association, The Gables, Firkins Hobbies Group, Caister Infants School, Stradbroke Primary School, Winterton Primary School, Rollesby Primary School, Cliff Park Junior and Cliff Park High Schools, Southtown and Cobholm Youth Club, Norwich and Norfolk Community Arts, Gorleston Community Choir, Samba Magdalena, Great Yarmouth Brass, Norwich Samba Band

Professional artists from Lithuania, the USA and UK also worked with fifty nine young people on two creative residences (funded through Children in Need and Youth in Action) to create a performance piece incorporating theatre, clowning, puppetry, street dance and contemporary dance.

"Enabling communities to engage with and become a part of the build up, design and delivery of the festival offers not only opportunities to develop skills, build links and foster a sense of community, but also enables local communities and individuals to take ownership and further develop and encourage participation in activities and programmes delivered in the area".

Local partner organisation

Community Workshops

"All 3 of my children thought it was fab and we had to come back again Sunday"

Parent of workshop participant

SeaChange also employed local artists to run a wide variety of free workshops for all ages during the weekend.



The big purple V-Bus attended the festival on Saturday, providing a fold-out mobile film making and performance space. Recent work from SeaChange projects were shown and the screen was also used as a base for free film making workshops for 16 to 25 year olds.

Workshops for young people included street dance, VJing, DJing, spray art, parkour, and film making, giving everyone the chance to try out something new!

The economic impact

"The festival brought a lot of business to Great Yarmouth and boosted the local economy"

Local Authority Officer

One of the key objectives of the festival was to extend the tourist season by staging a high profile, free event outside of the traditional holiday period.

Post-event evaluation revealed

- Local traders and street wardens identified the town centre as busier than the equivalent period in the previous year
- People stayed at the festival and in the town for a good length of time – 34% said they were intending to stay between 3 and 6 hours and 26% the whole day
- The majority of people intended to spend significant sums during their visit - 29% between £5-£10 and 24% £10-£50
- Local traders supplying the catering at the festival found it to be busier than they had expected
- 75% of local businesses surveyed said they had experienced an increase in trade because of the festival, with 85% of these seeing an increase of 25% or more
- 100% of the local businesses surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that the festival helped local businesses and to extend the tourism season.

The festival was delivered thanks to external funding; the main sources being the ZEPA (Zone Europeenne Projets Artistiques) initiative funded through the European Union Interregional IV Cross Channel Programme. This was matched by local investment from Great Yarmouth Borough Council. Out There also had additional support from the following funders:

Big Lottery, GY Enterprise, Visiting Arts, Sing Up, EU Youth in Action programme
V for Volunteering, Children in Need, Comeunity, Norfolk County Council

"We come on holiday here every year in July but this year we came in September. There is more on now and more people than when we normally come in July"

Festival attender



Bringing the community together!

“Yarmouth was buzzing. This wasn’t some middle class ‘culture-fest’ where smartly dressed people sit on picnic blankets and clap politely, this was a whole community joining in, laughing out loud and getting swept away by the atmosphere. It was fun, outrageous, beautiful and inclusive.”

Local Authority Officer

The festival undoubtedly attracted a wide range of attendees with large groups of culturally diverse residents, particularly families. 79% of attendees came from the borough of Great Yarmouth

While 85% of attendees identified them as White British, the most significant next grouping was White European - Lithuanian dance company Aura, who performed at the festival, were delighted to receive gifts from the local Lithuanian community following their show.

Out There enjoyed a broad range of ages amongst its audience with large numbers of families of multiple generations attending over the weekend. We asked a range of questions around how attendees and participants felt that the festival contributed to bringing communities together in the town and found very positive results:

- 90% of volunteers felt that Out There brought different communities together
- 84% of attendees agreed that Out There was bringing different communities together
- 90% of attendees agreed that Out There was having a positive effect on Great Yarmouth
- 81% of parade participant groups felt that they were part of a diverse community event

Around 1/3 of those surveyed stated that they were not regular arts attendees, indicating the festival was successful in attracting new audiences for the arts.

The festival was successful in opening up parts of Great Yarmouth that people don’t usually see. With positive feedback on the town’s architecture and the redeveloped park area.

“Kumpania Algazarra were a good showcase for Portuguese culture”

Local Authority Officer

From the outside, looking in...

“Great Yarmouth put on a good show that weekend – we didn’t look small town, we looked a big town!”

SeaChange board member



Over the next three years, Out There will strive to put Great Yarmouth on the map, changing people's perceptions of the borough and encouraging new visitors.

The festival attracted significant local media coverage. There was extensive coverage of Didier Pasquette's high-wire routine from both the EDP and BBC Look East.

Over the weekend itself, BBC Look East spent several hours filming, as did Anglia TV. BBC Radio Norfolk gave coverage in the Friday breakfast show, in news bulletins and also with a two-hour live broadcast from St. George's Park on Sunday.

Extensive research was done on audiences to determine how they heard about the festival, the outputs of which will be inputted into 2010 marketing strategy, ensuring the reach of the festival extends further.

"We have known Great Yarmouth for many years and it has improved 100%."

Festival attender and tourist

Looking forward...

Out There 2009 was a great success! There is real appetite for this kind of work locally and the diverse nature of the event celebrated and brought the different communities of Great Yarmouth together. Local stakeholders felt that the event brought a completely new audience to the town and raised the profile of a part of Great Yarmouth that is not usually visited.

Mixing crowd pleasing acts, challenging international street theatre and community participation, Out There received a positive response across the board.

The challenge for 2010 will be to build upon the success. For next year SeaChange will implement a number of changes identified as a result of this year's research. These include:

- Implementing a more year-round approach to marketing and promoting the festival
- Implementing some changes and developments of festival sites
- Reconfiguring the nature of community involvement including the parade
- Building and developing local partnerships sooner
- Building the festival into year-round cultural provision in the Borough

Join us and get Out There!

Photography courtesy of Adam Shawyer. www.lightstalkers.org/adamshawyer

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OUT THERE