



Morley Literature Festival

6-14 October 2012

EVALUATION REPORT

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Festival Facts & Figures

- 10 days of literature in Morley and Leeds City Centre
- 2042 attenders at 27 live events
- 5 new temporary public art commissions for Morley Town Centre by local artists
- 1 new video commission inspired by Morley by Northern Art Prize winning artist
- 921 children across Morley Schools involved in the Schools Programme

What the Audience Thought...*

- "I loved the quality of the guests and a really good vibe, no hint of the stuffy cultural elitism that can accompany "literature" events."
- "Having never been to a Lit Fest I didn't know what to expect. I absolutely loved it."
- "The programme this year was really varied and included loads of opportunities to hear some great speakers. The organisers should be congratulated for producing a great festival that we can all be proud of."
- "I loved the warm welcome from all festival officials, terrific organisation of seating, visual aids and wonderful food!; excellent speakers- enlightening, amusing and uplifting"

What the Authors Thought...

- I think the festival is getting better each year and I was proud to be part of it.
Gillian Rogerson
- I was so touched by, and grateful for, everything you had all done to make Val and me feel so welcome, from the delicious high tea to the lovely flowers. I thoroughly enjoyed myself and was so glad the audience responded so well.
NJ Cooper
- I really enjoyed coming up - an easy trip, a well-organised festival and an enthusiastic crowd. So ask me again!
Simon Garfield

*(quotes taken from our post-festival survey)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report evaluates the seventh Morley Literature Festival (MLF), taking account of opinions and feedback from the Festival Director, the Festival Committee, members of the public through audience survey, email and social media comments, and visiting artists and authors. It also sets out a set of recommendations for improvements for next year and beyond, for consideration by the MLF Festival Committee.
- 1.2 This year's festival was another critical success, with a 10-day programme of high profile events, new commissions, new and ongoing partnerships and considerable media coverage.
- 1.3 The festival maintained its turnover through a variety of income streams including the new fund Leeds Inspired, which allowed for the maintenance of activity at 2011 levels, the creation of a public art programme and the development its schools programme. Despite concerns about advance ticket sales, the final sales figures pretty much match last years in terms of attendance numbers. Although sales for the larger events were down, sales across the board were only slightly under 2011 levels.
- 1.4 Morley Literature Festival continues to maintain its reputation as a creative and playful cultural event within the region and attracts media coverage and visitors to Morley itself.

2. Festival Background

- 2.1 In September 2006 the inaugural Morley Literature Festival took place and following its success Area Committee agreed that the festival should become an annual event.
- 2.2 An evaluation report of the first festival recommended that a locally based organising committee be established and that a freelance Festival Director be appointed to develop the programme and deliver the 2007 Literature Festival. Since then the festival has run successfully on an annual basis on these terms.
- 2.3 Alongside MLF runs a smaller separate organisation Friends of Morley Literature Festival, set up after the 2007 festival, to support the festival aims and objectives. The Friends have their own committee and accounts.
- 2.4 In January 2010 a new festival director, Jenny Harris, was appointed. This year's festival was Jenny's third as Festival Director.

3. Festival Structure & Delivery

- 3.1 Jenny Harris was contracted as Festival Director for a further year from November 2011. Jane Zanzottera was contracted on a freelance basis to develop and deliver the schools programme and Anita Morris Associates were approached to run the Festival PR after their success in raising the festival's profile in 2011.

- 3.2 The Festival Committee met bi-monthly throughout the year. At the 2012 AGM, Cllr Judith Elliott was reappointed Chair. Dilys Hetherington, Shirley Varley and Janet Harrison continued in their roles as Secretary, Vice Chair and Treasurer respectively.
- 3.3 The Festival is a constituted voluntary group and Committee meetings during 2012 included executive members plus invited representatives from Morley Town Council, Friends of Morley Literature Festival, Leeds Town Hall's Arts Service, the Library Service plus the Morley Town Manager. The Leeds business sector was represented by Anys Williams, (AMA Associates) and Monica Tailor (Kilo75).
- 3.4 The Committee continues to function well and all members feel involved in the direction and organisation of the festival. Everyone is proactive in supporting the festival at every level, including volunteering during the festival week itself.
- 3.6 The Friends of Morley Literature Festival organised this year's stewarding and door sales, as well as refreshments for several events. They also organised a successful Short Story Competition, which resulted in 72 entries from around the world. The runner-up was presented with a cash prize donated by the Friends at a Mayor of Morley reception during the festival.
- 3.7 This year MLF benefited from its ongoing relationship with Leeds Met and 10 students who acted as volunteers during the festival week, invigilating the public artworks and being the public face of the festival to passers-by in the Town Centre.
- 3.8 Once again, the delivery of the festival put significant pressure on all contracted staff and volunteers and consideration of the length of next year's festival should take into account the human resources required to deliver a festival of this size.
- 3.9 MLF received in-kind support this year from Leeds Lights and Highways who advised on and installed artworks and banners in the Town Centre at minimal cost.
- 3.10 Morley Town Hall's heating system was not in operation for the first week of the festival. No prior warning was given to the festival that there was an issue with the building, and no contingency measures were put in place or suggested by Facilities. In the event, and with the intervention of Area Committee members and officers, heating was restored by Saturday 13th October for the festival's final two days. It is a concern that Facilities do not seem to take into account public events within the building and audiences at those events when planning and carrying out works. They also do not always operate in a professional manner when communicating with external hirers who are paying money to use the Town Hall.
- 3.11 The porters at Morley Town Hall were very helpful during the festival week, but we would discourage them from Front of House duties as they do not always create the appropriate impression to members of the public.

- 3.12 The library service supported the festival delivery through additional staff resources at events, ticket sales, free use of the building and marketing and programming support. Staff are very supportive of the event and there are opportunities to develop further the relationship in 2013, possibly through the joint-organising of a large readers day.

Recommendations

- I. Continue relationship with Leeds Met to recruit volunteers from the student body
- II. Develop and market volunteering opportunities to increase the pool of volunteers across the festival.
- III. Invest time in discussing specific event requirements with porters, particularly around the end of events and members of the public leaving the building
- IV. Develop joint delivery plan for some 2013 events/activities with Libraries

4.0 The Festival Programme

- 4.1 Once again, this year's festival incorporated 2 weekends, enabling us to programme more family events, as well as have wider date availability for headline authors.
- 4.2 The events programme comprised 27 public events. Of those, 4 were events for children and 2 were creative writing workshops.
- 4.3 The festival continues to enjoy the patronage of Gervase Phinn who judged this year's Short Story Competition.
- 4.4 The quality of the programme attracted praise - we were able to attract authors of the calibre of Peter Hook, Gavin Esler, Stuart Maconie and Val McDermid.
- 4.5 This year's events programme was enhanced by two bespoke public art projects, funded by Arts Council England and Leeds Inspired, which added value and depth to the festival:

Paul Rooney - Feral-Knowledge

Northern Art Prize winning artist Paul Rooney created a five minute video artwork inspired by Morley and its history of class, work and identity. The work combines still images with text and an ambient soundtrack and was projected in the Small Banquet Room at Morley Town Hall during the festival dates. The plan originally was to use an empty shop but we were unable to secure one during the relevant time-frame.

Signs of the Times

Five local artists were commissioned to create a series of playful public signs for Morley's pedestrian precinct based around the idea of Fact/Fiction. These temporary signs were displayed for the duration of the festival and audiences in the town centre encouraged to discover them via a leaflet.

- 4.6 The events programme attracted audiences from Lancashire, South Yorkshire, Wakefield, Kirklees, Bradford as well as all parts of Leeds for events (see Appendix 1 for detailed

audience figures). Sales were lower than expected for headline events, but across the festival were only slightly behind 2011's record audience figures.

- 4.7 Ticket prices were increased this year after several years at standstill rates and in response to the trend for authors charging more to appear at events (in previous years, we have had several free events that have subsidised the overall programme). We would not envisage a further rise next year however as prices are now in line with comparable festivals.
- 4.7 Venues used included Tingley Methodist Church, St Peter's Church, Churwell Community Centre and Gildersome Conservative Club, as well as our core venues Morley Town Hall and Morley Library.
- 4.8 A small charge was introduced for this year's creative writing workshops for adults and these remain popular. Prices should increase next year to match the prices of workshops at other regional festivals.
- 4.10 Community events were organised in Gildersome, Tingley and Churwell and were organised and promoted by individual committee members. All three were well supported by local audiences.
- 4.11 Literary fiction continues to attract low audiences, despite a varied range of authors. We also have little poetry in the festival and intend to develop a plan with libraries for 2013 to rescope our offer to audiences - potentially through the presenting of a Readers' Day, involving a range of authors and workshops and promoted across the city in partnership with Libraries.
- 4.11 We developed two new links with city centre venues this year, allowing us to reach potential new audiences and spread the MLF brand whilst presenting authors at Waterstones and City Varieties respectively.
- 4.12 MLF decided not to take part in Light Night this year as the resources required to do so last year were onerous. However as it takes place on the eve of the festival's first day, it remains a potentially great marketing opportunity for the festival and we will seek to show Paul Rooney's film as part of the event in 2013.
- 4.13 We were less able to secure exclusive headliners this year - such as Lucy Worsley and Ian Rankin in 2011. Many of our authors also appeared at Ilkley Literature Festival, which takes place over the same time period. The regional literature scene is also becoming more crowded: Arts Council England funded a new Wakefield Lit Fest which took place only a week before MLF. However, the festival relies on the Publishing calendar's Christmas schedule to ensure a good crop of authors during the October period at reasonable cost. It is recommended that we carry out some research and consult with funders and other professionals into the pros and cons of potentially moving the festival

dates to avoid clashing with similar events.

Recommendations

- I. Research and report on the potential pros/cons of moving the festival dates, and present report to the Committee in 2013 (No change to 2013 dates envisaged).
- II. Secure funding for another bespoke project for 2013 in order to maintain our regional distinctiveness
- III. Maintain pricing at 2012 levels but increase workshop fees
- IV. Develop new plan to present and promote literary fiction and poetry with Libraries
- V. Continue to develop links with city centre venues and partners, whilst maintaining bulk of activity in Morley itself

5.0 Schools, Family and Young Peoples' Events

5.1 Following the end of Find Your Talent the Schools Programme was rescoped in 2012 to ensure that we were offering as many children as possible quality creative experiences as part of the festival.

5.2 The Schools Programme this year had 3 elements:

Two Author Days in Morley Library.

Six free full class sessions in the library with an author were allocated to primary schools on a first come, first served basis. 178 children attended, from Asquith, Gildersome, Hill Top, Churwell and Seven Hills.

Horrible Science - A free author event at Morley Town Hall during the school day was offered to all schools. 391 children attended with teachers.

The Poetry Factor - the pilot for a new project, presented in partnership with ArtForms (Education Leeds) and offered to all schools. Working with spoken word artist Andy Griffiths, this included a whole day workshop in the participating school (for up to 75 children); selected children then attended a day-long boot camp and presented their poetry at a showcase event. The cost of this was £550 per school.

360 children from five schools participated in the pilot - Bruntcliffe, Asquith, Gildersome, Birchfield and Drighlington and 60 parents attended the final showcase at Bruntcliffe School. A DVD of the project will shortly be available and will be used as a promotional tool to encourage a city-wide roll out of Poetry Factor

5.2 Whilst several teachers expressed the view that it could be challenging/expensive to transport the children to a central location (Library, Town Hall), this did not deter places being filled and in the case of the Morley Library events, we had to tell schools that the places were already taken.

- 5.3 Having been to the library events, several teachers specifically mentioned how good it was to come to the library for an event “it’s a good experience for the children”, “takes them to a place they may not have been before”.
- 5.4 Horrible Science author Nick Arnold commented that it was “commendable” that Morley Literature Festival had a schools programme and cited several higher profile literature festivals that fail to do the same.
- 5.5 Both Emma Barnes and Curtis Jobling made it explicit in their Library sessions that being an author/illustrator/”creative” was something that the children could aspire to do (both now and as a career).
- 5.6 The connection with ArtForms eased the administration burden for MLF of extracting payment from schools. The schools who signed up accepted the cost and, in fact, saw it as good value for money when they compared it to the daily rate of other creative practitioners. All the teachers involved cited the impact it had had on their children, stating that it had increased the children’s confidence; motivated the children to “organise themselves to rehearse and get along” and supported their writing.
- 5.7 The combination of Morley Literature Festival and ArtForms working together is powerful. None of the schools wanted a “free” taster offered by the poet, Andy, because “we know that when it’s you organising it, it’s going to be good”.

Recommendations

I. Consultation with schools

Over the last 3 years, MLF has offered schools a range of ‘models’ of how the Schools Programme can operate. There are now enough variations and examples to actually do some meaningful consultation with schools on what they would like the 2013 MLF Schools programme to look like, to ensure that the MLF continues to offer a relevant and engaging Schools offer.

II. Libraries

The experience of hosting the author sessions in Morley Library was very positive. The staff were fantastic! To try to alleviate the challenge for schools around accessing a central location, we have discussed the potential for using Gildersome and Ardsley/Tingley libraries in 2013. These the libraries could be opened for MLF on days when they are closed to the public.

III. Balance

The 2012 Schools Programme has provided a good balance for differing levels of engagement in the Festival for children and young people in Morley eg large and small events and CYP participation (The Poetry Factor). For 2013, the Schools programming needs to look at addressing the balance in terms of meeting the needs of a wider variety

of ages. In 2012, there were limited opportunities for KS1 pupils and post-16 young people.

6.0 Finances, Fundraising and Sponsorship

6.1 The financial foundation for this year's festival was secured by the Outer Area Committee with an allocation of £10,000, with additional support from Morley Town Council and Land Securities. Arts@Leeds confirmed a new three year funding award for the festival from 2012 of £2000 per year. One off project grants were awarded from Arts Council England (£9,000) and Leeds Inspired (£8,500) towards the public arts programme and associated activity.

- 6.2 Support in kind was given by:

- § Morley Observer and the Culture Vulture - media partners
- § Blackwells - booksellers at all events
- § Leeds Libraries - use of free venue, selling tickets, staffing at out of hours and children's events
- § Morley St Peters, Churwell Community Centre, Gildersome Conservative Club, Tingley Methodist Church - free venues
- § White Rose Shopping Centre - marketing support
- § Love Arts Leeds - presenting partner at Waterstones
- § Harrogate's Theakston's Crime Writing Festival - presenting partner
- § Welcome to Yorkshire - online marketing support
- § Leeds Met - curatorial support and volunteers
- § City Varieties - presenting partner
- § Leeds Lights and Highways - in-kind production support

- 6.3 Detailed final accounts will be audited and submitted to the Festival Committee later in the year, but an indicative income and expenditure statement for the 2012 festival is given below:

Expenditure	Cost	
Professional Fees	Festival Director	£10,000
	Leeds Inspired project management	£1,500
	Schools co-ordinator	£2,000
	PR	£750
Artistic Programme	Guest speakers - fees/expenses	£8,350
	Artists commission fees	£3,100
	Leeds Inspired artists materials	£850
	Literary Luncheon - food	£2,125
Production	Production Costs - Artistic programme	£1,647
	Production Costs - Events	£2,046
	Town Hall hire	£520
Education	Schools and young people's activity	£1,650
	Breeze project (carryforward from 2011)	£1,000
Marketing	Website maintenance	£300
	Design & Print	£4,650
	Marketing support	£600
	Arts programme design & print	£1,300
Miscellaneous	Stationery/Postage	£400
	Volunteers expenses	£100
	Public Liability Insurance	£162
	Sundries - refreshments etc	£750
	Contingency	£1,000
TOTAL	£44,800	

INCOME		
	Profit 2011	£2,500
	South Leeds Area Committee	£10,000
	Morley Town Council	£1,000
	Land Securities	£2,000
	Arts Council England G4A	£9,000
	Income from Schools	£0
	Arts@Leeds	£2,000
	Ticket sales	£8,475
	Bar/raffle/Bookstall profits	£600
	Friends of Morley Literature Festival	£900
	Leeds Inspired	£8,500
Total		£44,975

- 6.6 The turnover of this year's festival maintained its 2011 level. Fundraising was once again very successful, with significant grants from the Arts Council and Arts@Leeds towards the public arts programme. However, these project grants, whilst enabling us to develop the festival's curatorial reputation, do not directly support the festival's core events programme and it is this area in which investment would really help develop and sustain

audiences.

- 6.7 Fundraising will continue to be a challenge in the coming 12 months and in the current financial climate, although the new 3-year scheme from Arts@Leeds is a welcome development.

Recommendations

- I. Consult with Arts Council England on the best funding approach for 2013 to support literature events
- II. Develop a new project idea for the 2013 Leeds Inspired grants programme (Rugby League theme)
- III. Consult with Morley's Town Centre Manager on potential joint funding bids for literacy and advocacy activity with young people linked to the festival
- IV. We have made an initial approach to Land Securities/White Rose to increase their financial contribution to the festival from 2013 to support the Schools Programme. This will be followed up formally in the new year.
- V. Explore options for Crowd Funding offered by Leeds Community Fund's new initiative

7.0 Marketing and Publicity

- 7.1 The festival brand was refreshed in 2012 but the overall look and materials remained the same following 2011's makeover.
- 7.2 8000 festival brochures were produced and distributed via direct mail and by hand to libraries, schools, arts venues and businesses in Morley, Leeds, and the Wakefield area. An additional 10,000 fliers were produced and most distributed via &Co to leaflet racks throughout West Yorkshire. Morley schools received and distributed fliers via book bags. 200 full colour posters were printed and distributed, including A0 posters for the White Rose centre.
- 7.3 The website was updated and from the programme launch to the end of the festival the site received 6,139 visits, of which 4208 were unique (ie new rather than returning) visits. This represents an increase in visits of 7.8%
- 7.4 Social media activity was carried out via the festival's Facebook page and Twitter. Twitter noise was considerable during the festival period, and enhanced by live-tweeting at selected events by guest tweeters. E-fliers were designed and sent out to promote the festival. E-bulletin subscribers currently number 286, an increase of over 100 since the 2011 festival.
- 7.5 Anita Morris Associates, the region's leading PR company for the arts, were contracted to produce an overall press release and listings for the festival. We had good coverage via leading articles and author interviews in the Yorkshire Post and Yorkshire Evening Post, as

well as plenty of coverage in the Morley Observer, and their Batley/Dewsbury partners. The festival was pick of the week in the Independent. The Culture Vulture, our online media partner, ran a preview and The Guardian online and Beyond Leeds ran favourable preview pieces.

A press book has been produced by AMA Associates indicating the amount and value of coverage generated (not ready at the time of this report but available on request).

- 7.6 Support from Radio Leeds was disappointing this year despite the offer of a broad range of authors for interview.
- 7.7 We received a complaint from a member of the public about the lack of access information in our marketing materials. As a result we immediately carried out a full access audit of all venues and made information available on our website. Ticket sales staff were also given a briefing sheet on access issues. From 2013 we will ensure that the brochure contains access information.
- 7.8 Vinyl banners and posters advertised the festival within Morley but otherwise it continues to be a challenge to create a real presence in the Town Centre, with most shops unable or unwilling to display posters and brochures.
- 7.9 Reciprocal marketing was developed with West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds Art Gallery, Opera North, Harrogate Festivals, City Varieties, Love Arts Leeds and The Grand Theatre marketing to their own mailing lists and through their online channels. Welcome To Yorkshire provided free online coverage on their website.

Photography from the 2011 festival features in the new Guide to Leeds Art Gallery.

- 7.10 A local photographer undertook some pro-bono work for the festival this year, covering our headline events. A selection of the photos can be found on MLF's flickr site.

Recommendations

I. Marketing Materials/Budget

The quantities and variety of marketing materials wasn't quite right this year and needs rescoping for 2013. In particular the festival would benefit from more pop up banners that can be used in partner venues, and less posters & brochures

II. Marketing Timetable

The timing of the brochure mailing needs moving forward in next year's schedule to ensure our marketing arrives before or concurrent with Ilkley's. This year we were slightly late and some of our regular audience had already booked for alternative events at Ilkley Lit Fest.

III. Marketing Channels

The cost of postage has increased dramatically and it will be more cost-effective to promote the email list as a communication method going forward, whilst still giving interested audiences the option of a brochure through the post. The facebook page continues to gain new followers and a considered social media campaign will be developed for 2013.

IV. Audience Evaluation

This year we introduced comment books to the festival and received some lovely comments from members of the public. We have also conducted our first online audience survey (results not yet in!). MLF should develop these and other methods of audience feedback in 2013 as they are useful for advocacy as well as planning.

V. Access

Following feedback from members of the public, next year's brochure will contain more information on venue access and parking.

8.0 Ticketing

- 8.1 The Box Office function for the festival was managed once again by The Grand Theatre with Morley Library acting as a sales agent. This enables the festival to offer a telephone and online booking service to audiences.
- 8.2 The Grand has updated its computer box office system and one of the unexpected side effects of this was that many online bookers found the online booking pages counter-intuitive, believing events to be sold out when in fact there were plenty of tickets still available. Unfortunately we have no idea how many potential sales were lost as a result as it was only after a couple of chance comments during the run up to the festival week that we realised there was a problem and sought to remedy it with the Grand. During the festival week however, there were plenty of other anecdotal comments to suggest that it could have been a significant loss in income and audiences this year.
- 8.3 There were also a couple of occasions when box office staff at the Grand did not deal with or pass on access enquiries from wheelchair users which resulted in embarrassment for the festival.
- 8.4 Ticket prices were increased this year, after a static 3 years, in order to manage the VAT increase and increase in author fees, and in line with other festivals in the region.
- 8.5 Sales were challenging this year, with concerns over ticket numbers right up to the start of the festival itself. In the event, overall ticket sales were respectable and only slightly down on last year, although we were disappointed by audience figures at the larger events, in comparison to 2011. This is felt to be due to a range of factors including:

- recession

- post Olympics event fatigue
- competition from Ilkley and Wakefield Literature Festivals
- problems with online booking (see 8.2)
- increased ticket prices

Recommendations

- I. Continue to use the Grand Theatre Box Office in 2012 but consult with Manager about best way to ensure all sales staff are fully briefed. Produce access information briefing sheets for sales staff and work with the Manager to ensure online information issue has been resolved
- II. Run sales briefing session with staff at the Library
- III. Maintain ticket prices at 2012 levels

9.0 Front of House and Production

- 9.1 The stewarding at this year's festival was very well organised by the Friends' Ann Dodgson. Generally the standard of stewarding was good, although the pool of stewards needs replenishing for 2013. There are other volunteering opportunities within the festival that need defining and promoting to attract a range of supporters with time and expertise to give.
- 9.2 The new drapes and lighting on the Morley Town Hall stage are fantastic and we will benefit in future years from these additional improvements thanks to Morley Operatic Society.
- 9.5 A licensed wine bar was provided for three town hall events which proved very popular, and helped raise income for the festival. Following feedback from audience members in 2011 we provided tea and coffee refreshments at most events this year, some of which were included in the ticket price.
- 9.6 Event management remains a challenge to deliver across the festival. This year, there were less concurrent events to manage, but the student volunteers needed meeting, briefing and managing, meaning the festival director worked ten 13 hour days during the festival. Additionally some of the older members of the committee were overtired at the end of the festival.
- 9.7 Bookselling for this year's festival was provided by Blackwells of Leeds. They provided an excellent service once again, although book sales were very erratic!

Recommendations for the MLF Committee

- I. Now that the new drapes and lighting are in place at Morley Town Hall we will invest in a flying banner for the stage for next year's Alexandra Hall events

- II. Event Management and human resources must be at the heart of next year's programme plan. Any additional projects will include an element of project management as part of the fundraising bid, and we will seek to use additional external experts to deliver these elements rather than keeping them in-house.
- III. Volunteering opportunities will be identified within the festival and job descriptions produced. These will then be promoted widely via the website and our partner networks to attract a broad range of volunteers to support the festival's work.

10.0 Friends of Morley Literature Festival

- 10.1 Once again the Friends of the festival were a great resource in terms of managing stewards, supporting the running of events and donating funds towards events.
- 10.2 The Friends ran the Short Story competition this year; 72 entries were received and Patron Gervase Phinn helped select the final winners.
- 10.3 Whilst the support the Friends give to the festival is clear and welcome, the benefits of being a Friend still remain unclear and the organisation would benefit from some support to develop their offer to the public.

Recommendations

- I. Continue to support the Friends
- II. Support the Friends to refine their offer to potential new members