



TOLPUDDLE OLD CHAPEL TRUST

Company number: 8908950 Registered Charity number 1159578

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www.tolpuddleoldchapeltrust.org



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Activity Survey Evaluation - Tolpuddle Festival 2017

Forest School

Forest School workshops run by Dorset Forest School were organised in Orchard Meadow on Saturday 15th July. The two, 2-hour sessions were coordinated by Artsreach as part of their children's summer holiday activities. The workshops were titled 'How we used to play!' (in Tolpuddle 200 years ago) and related back to the living conditions experienced by children of the Dorsetshire Labourers. The workshops commenced at 10.30am and 1pm with 8 places available on each. The workshops cost £5/person and were financially subsidised by the Artsreach sponsors, TOCT received 25% of the taking with the remaining £60 going back to Artsreach to contribute towards the costs. Each workshop was full with no applicants turned away. The sessions were promoted through a leaflet drop to Tolpuddle residents, posters and the Artsreach programme. The pdf flyer was sent to local schools but it is unclear whether this was distributed to parents by email.










Attendees varied in age from almost 5 to 10 with 11 girls and 5 boys. Half of the participants came from Tolpuddle or nearby Affpuddle.

The afternoon session included a 7 year old boy with Downs Syndrome, through the support of Artsreach and West Dorset District Council, one-to-one support was provided by the Artz+ organisation.

Evaluation responses

Fifteen evaluation forms were collected (16 children attending)

Children were asked to circle the smiley face that best described how they felt, after taking part.

I enjoyed what I did today				?
I have learnt something new				?
I would like to do this again				?

Ten children circled the smiley face for all three of the statements:

I enjoyed what I did today

I have learnt something new I

would like to do this again



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The other children had circled a mixture of the happy face and neutral face for the three statements. Only one child circled the unhappy face as he felt he hadn't learned anything new.



When asked what the children most enjoyed about the day, most mentioned cooking bread around the fire.

Other things they enjoyed included "learning things to do with nature", "making new friends" and "whittling".



These were the specific comments written by the parents/carers.

"Fantastic workshop that was suitable for a mixed age group. Very well organised and supervised. Very suitable venue – would be great to have regular activities for the children to attend – good outdoor fun."

"Came from Weymouth specially. Great for slightly older kids (rather than toddlers). Nice to have different, more challenging activities. Needs better advertising!!"

"This park really is fab – I will definitely return to meet with friends and picnic – thank you so much"

"Brilliant and pleased been good – like to do more"



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“My granddaughter has thoroughly enjoyed these outdoor activities. It has been a great learning opportunity. Well supervised and extremely well organised. She is really hoping to join the camping trip in August 2017.”

“Such a lovely idea offering an interesting selection of activities for the children. The setting is just perfect.”

“Excellent venue, clean, tidy, interesting, fantastic play area, tastefully done.”



Conclusion

The Forest Schools workshop proved to be very successful with excellent feedback from participants and parents on the venue, leadership, organisation and activities. There was significant interest for the activity to be repeated. The cost of these sessions were subsidised through Artsreach. The Forest School workshops enable key messages about past living conditions to be communicated to children in a fun and participatory way

Proposals for the future include:

- To run the sessions again through the Artsreach summer holiday activity programme. As participants were predominantly local people rather than Festival visitors (who have their own children's activities) there is no reason why they have to be held during the Tolpuddle Festival weekend. They could be held at other times over the summer holidays.
- With the success of these sessions and word of mouth through local residents interest in future sessions is likely to grow
- Utilising locally skilled volunteers (with DBS checks) to coordinate the arrivals and participants on the day would reduce costs
- A toilet was hired for the weekend, with the provision of a toilet in the extension to the former chapel, this need (and cost) would be removed



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- The activities undertaken as part of the Forest School workshops show the range of potential activities that could be undertaken as part of school visits to Tolpuddle with activities being led by teachers, the TOCT Activity Officer and volunteers

Cob workshop

A cob workshop was run by Kate Edwards from the Lyme Regis based cob builders, Edwards and Eve. The workshop operated on both Saturday and Sunday between 10am and 4pm and was run on a free, drop-in basis. Children and adult participants were encouraged to try making cob and then to make their own cob head, which they were then able to take home (in boxes provided).

Evaluation responses

Ten evaluation forms were collected, 7 from children and 3 from adults.

The adults were asked “Why did you decide to take part today?”

They could tick all of the following statements that apply:

The activity sounded fun

I wanted to learn about the former chapel and how it will be renovated

I wanted to learn a new skill

I am interested in local history

My friends/family were taking part

All 3 adults ticked “sounded fun”, two were also “interested in local history”, with one respondent also wanting to “learn a new skill” and one taking part because of “friends and family”

The adults were asked to agree or disagree with the following statements:

I enjoyed what I did today

I would be interested in taking part in similar activities in future

I have learnt something new

I have a better understanding of the role the former Methodist chapel played in the lives of the Dorsetshire labourers, who later became known as the Tolpuddle Martyrs



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All the respondents ticked strongly agree or agree to all the above statements.



Children were asked to circle the smiley face that best described how they felt, after taking part.

Six of the seven children circled the smiley face for all three of the statements:

I enjoyed what I did today	☺	☹	☹	?
I have learnt something new	☺	☹	☹	?
I would like to do this again	☺	☹	☹	?

The other child had a neutral face for 'I have learnt something new' with smiley faces for the other two statements.

Specific comments from the children included:

"It's amazing, I love cob!"

"It's a lot easier than it sounds"

They also enjoyed "stomping the clay", "making punky hair on my clay face", "getting mucky" "poking the eyes, we called him Geoff!"

Every child answered "no" to the question "Was there anything you didn't enjoy?"



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Conclusion

The attendance at the cob workshops was less than hoped for. The messy nature of the activity did put people off. It would also have been easier if the workshop sessions ran at specific times which would enable all participants to be led by Kate through a structured process of material selection, mixing, making and curing/finishing. Participants could also then bring wellington boots and rough clothes.

At one point over the weekend Kate started to construct a cob wall to illustrate the technique. This proved more popular with visitors and particularly adults who were able to add a handful of cob to the wall, without becoming too involved in the whole process. In addition over the weekend Kate also talked to a number of adults about cob walling and spoke to people who had their own cob houses.

In the future this activity could be developed through:

- Running the activity with school children as a specific activity where they come equipped with boots and suitable clothing as part of an experiential learning session. This activity could be led by the TOCT Activity Officer/volunteers
- Running a longer day 'learn to cob' course for adults new to cob in Orchard Meadow with facilities (toilet, hot drinks) in the former chapel extension. This could be a 'charged for' workshop utilising the TOCT and Orchard Meadow/Village Hall gazebos which could generate future income to the Trust.
- Undertaking a specific cob construction project working with community groups, such as the creation of a habitat feature in Orchard Meadow.
- Illustrating cob and how it is made and used in front of the former chapel by building a temporary wall (with visitors encouraged to contribute a handful) where it has direct



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relevance to the building behind the demonstration. This would enable the 'new wall' to be seen by and discussed with a larger number of visitors, coming to view the former chapel, this activity could happen during the Festival in July 2018 before the construction work commences.

Rag rugging

The weekend activity coordinators, Pippa Brindley and Jacqui Warder also brought their own activity to the weekend. Pippa had partially completed a 'TOCT' rag rug with the TOCT logo. On the Sunday Pippa and Jacqui continued working on this and encouraged visitors to Orchard Meadow to join in. The rag rugging illustrates traditional techniques used to create household items from cheap, simple and in many cases waste materials.

Evaluation responses

Two evaluation forms were filled in by children after taking part in this activity

Both circled the smiley face when asked how they felt:

"I enjoyed what I did today" and "

I would like to do this again"

One child had circled the smiley face for "I have learnt something new" and one had circled the neutral face for "I have learnt something new"

They both enjoyed "prodding the holes" and when asked what they learned one said that "making in the past could be boring" and the other said "you need to be patient."



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Conclusion

The rag rugging was a slow process which although a good illustration may be more suited to a regular craft session. Pippa intends to finish off the rag rug which can then be used by TOCT to illustrate to other groups what can be achieved, it could inspire the community craft project and linked subsequent exhibition as described in the Interrogating Lives activity craft project.