



Cultural Audit



A diary of community animation and a cultural
audit carried out in Scarborough between
February and April 2002

A Diary of Contact





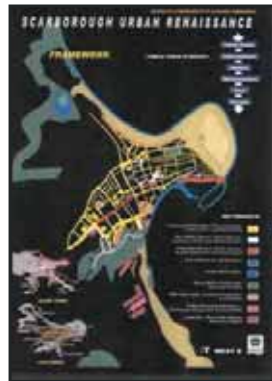
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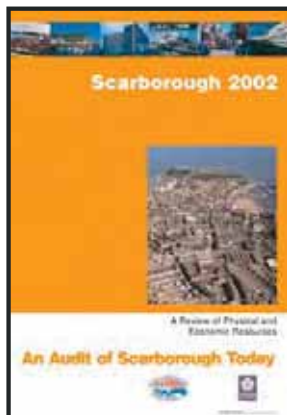
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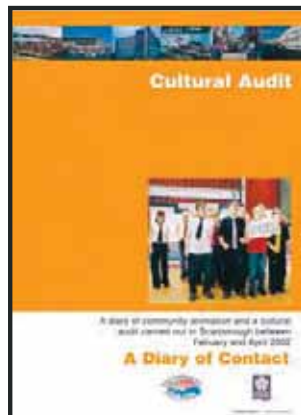
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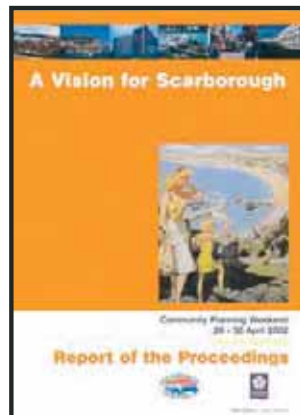
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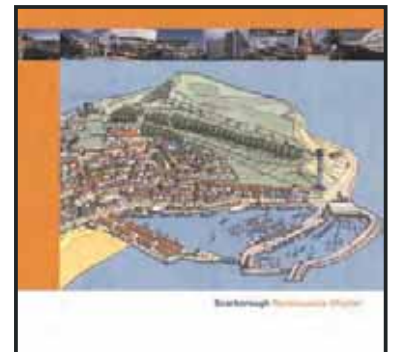
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Scarborough's Urban Renaissance

Publications

The Scarborough Urban Renaissance programme was launched in February 2002 with an explanatory Broadsheet (1), followed by an intensive period of information gathering and community 'animation', working towards a large scale Community Planning Weekend for which invitations (2) were distributed in March. Immediately following the Weekend, summary broadsheets of both the proceedings (3) and draft Public Space Strategy (4) were issued, followed in mid-June by a 12 page full colour summary of the Vision (5), which was distributed to the whole town, through the local free newspaper.

In August 2002, four companion reports were published: Scarborough 2002, an audit of the town today (6), A Diary of Contact, a diary of community animation and cultural audit (7), A Vision for Scarborough, the full report of the Community Planning Weekend (8), and The Scarborough Renaissance Charter (9).

Community Animation & Cultural Audit

Diary of Contact

This report has been produced by John Thompson and Partners, working as part of Yorkshire Forward's Urban Renaissance Panel. It presents a review of Scarborough's cultural resources in the form of a diary that describes meetings and discussions carried out between February and April 2002.



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Community Animation & Cultural Audit

Diary of Contact



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Acknowledgments

Yorkshire Forward would like to thank everyone who participated in the Vision for Scarborough Community Planning process, the people of Scarborough, the staff at the Spa Complex and Rounders, the Stephen Joseph Youth Theatre.

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Community Animation & Cultural Audit Introduction



Community Animation & Cultural Audit

Introduction

As a prelude to the Community Planning Weekend at the end of April 2002, a team from John Thompson & Partners made contact with a significant number of people in Scarborough. They included individuals, hard to reach groups and representatives from a variety of local organisations and institutions. The intention was to target those who might (or might not) come along to the public event, to ensure their views and aspirations would be taken into account; to mobilise enthusiasm for the Scarborough Urban Renaissance programme; and to encourage a large attendance at the Planning Weekend itself.

Debbie's Diary

The dilemma: how to describe, explain and evaluate my experience of working in Scarborough while at the same time imparting factual information about the many organisations I had come across. I was entrusted with so much valuable data from so many very different sources, it seemed wasteful to gloss over the material. I had gathered both written and anecdotal information, and the internet provided further details.

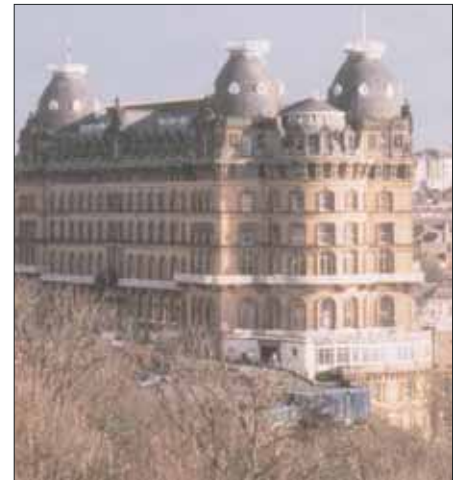
Whilst facilitating the Arts and Culture workshop at the Community Planning Weekend, I realised that participants were often unaware of other initiatives happening in Scarborough. There is as yet no effective and comprehensive Arts Guide that includes all the many events and activities that take place throughout the year. But through my interviews and meetings I had been made aware of the myriad of committed and talented people in the town. They may support one form of artistic endeavour in preference to another; the cultural activity may be high-brow, low-brow, educational or just plain old fun, but the wealth of artistic experience in Scarborough is simply too valuable to be ignored.

Besides which, I had fallen in love with the town: a fairy tale settlement on the edge of the Yorkshire coast. All the characters were there. The Borough Council to some extent forced into the role of the Wicked Witch; under-funded Cinderella organisations desperately wanting to go to the Ball; so much Sleeping Beauty potential waiting to be revived. The architecture itself is straight out of childhood fiction: there's a castle, ornate hotels with Rapunzel-like turrets and towers, and sheer cliffs waiting to be scaled by knights in shining armour. The wolf of neglect is all too eager to huff and puff and blow the house down. People are fearful of change, the dark forest of Hansel and Gretel. But, armed with the right attitude, the psychological equivalent of Dick Whittington's cat, I'm sure Scarborough will survive its adventures.

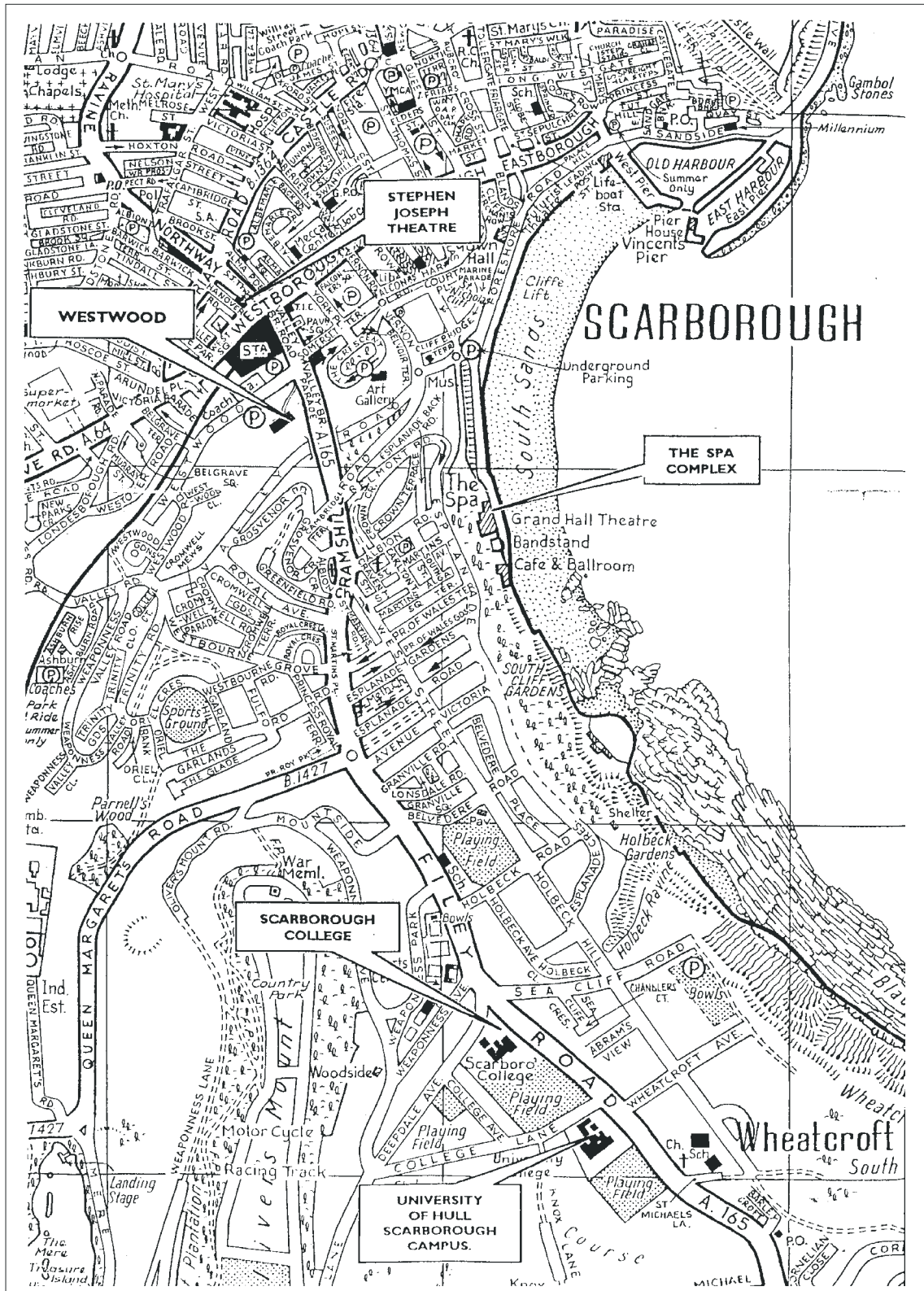
So, how to tell the story; write of people I've met, conversations I've had, facts I've learned. Day by day seemed the best way: a diary, a 'chronicle' - the story of my visit to Scarborough in Spring 2002.

Debbie Radcliffe

John Thompson & Partners
August 2002



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Go North!

It was a Thursday morning in February and the GNER train left at half past nine from London's Kings Cross station. Not quite the magical Platform nine and three quarters of Harry Potter fame. Though at this moment Scarborough as a destination was as unknown to me as Hogwarts School to J K Rowling's protégé on his first adventure.

Two hours later we reached York. A delayed cross-Pennine service meant that the train was late leaving for Scarborough, a not infrequent occurrence in the weeks to come. Nevertheless, the delay and a chance encounter unexpectedly gave me my first information about the town and reinforced my instinct that in terms of meeting people and 'animating' the community, it was vital to involve the world of arts and entertainment.

A confusion over a change of platform led me to enter into conversation with a young man also travelling to Scarborough. In my role as a community planner it is often useful to talk to people whom one meets by chance. Informal conversation can provide both background information and a link in the chain of human contacts that are necessary when trying to get to know a town and its inhabitants.

Qdos connections

It turned out that Kam Patel was employed as the IT Manager of Qdos, a successful business in the entertainment industry. He was based at the head office in London but he informed me that the firm's directors were both born and bred Scarboroughians. My ears pricked up - I was curious to know more. Jon Conway heads the Covent Garden office while Nick Thomas lives in Scarborough, where the Accounts department is located. There was a problem with the computer network, so Kam had been summoned to Yorkshire and, by chance, I met him on the train. A brief encounter which was repeated two months later when the John Thompson & Partners team boarded the train at York at the start of the Scarborough Community Planning Weekend. Quite a coincidence if I think about it.

Qdos was created in 1999 as the vehicle to purchase Nick Thomas and Jon Conway's former Artist Management Group (now Qdos' Talent Division) and Paul Elliott's former E&B Productions (now Qdos' Theatre Production Division). Originally a performer, Jon Conway is the producer/director of innumerable musicals, pantomimes, summer season shows and tours. I never managed to arrange a meeting with Nick Thomas though I did discover, during a conversation with Nick Grindley, that he had been a puppeteer in days gone by.

Performers and entertainers: the life blood of UK seaside resorts. Scarborough was obviously no exception. And my first contact - out of the blue, with a stranger on a train - confirmed my conjecture that the town would contain a large number of musicians, actors and artists of all kinds whom we should involve in the community planning process. But I was also mindful that such people often shy away from public events and I was convinced they would never attend the forthcoming Community Planning Weekend unless encouraged to do so.



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First impressions of Scarborough: arrival

My knowledge of the town was limited to an awareness of its status as a seaside resort - close to Filey, Whitby and Robin Hood's Bay - and as the home town of Sir Alan Ayckbourn. The fact that a famous playwright and artistic director chooses to premier each new work in Scarborough (61 plays to date) undoubtedly gives this particular resort a unique resonance and reputation.

The train eventually arrived at Scarborough and my first impression of the town was marked by the large buffers which seemed to define its location 'at the end of the line'. The station had an old fashioned atmosphere, but a clean, bright cafe called the 'Head of Steam' implied that visitors were welcome. There was a major traffic junction nearby and on one corner I could see the Tourist Information Office sited within a building of concrete ugliness. A disappointing urban view for a first time visitor.



Immediately opposite the station stands the former Odeon cinema, a classic 30s structure, now home to the Stephen Joseph Theatre. A wonderful location for theatre-goers coming by train, as long as the train isn't late. Mine was about an hour behind schedule, so perhaps not such an efficient means of public transport. It would be a shame to miss the first act of a play. I also wondered how late trains ran in the evening. The city of York, with its many tourists and culturally-committed residents, is such a short distance away - only three quarters of an hour by rail. But I had my doubts about the current availability of a reliable, regular and suitably time-tabled service.

First impressions: the streets

I was meant to be meeting my colleague Charles who was in discussion with the Reverend Graeme Parkins at the Christian Centre on the corner of Castle Road and Oxford Street. I took a taxi to the Centre; but the doors were apparently locked and no amount of banging produced a response. A few minutes later I was joined by a man also looking for the Reverend. He knocked too, to no avail. Charles' mobile phone was switched off. So we decided to abandon our respective visits, but not before I'd asked the gentleman his name. With one interesting contact made on the train, this could be another. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. He introduced himself as Colin Ellis, whose business was an Estate Agents nearby. He gave me his card, and I felt I was already beginning to develop a strategy for getting to know the town: talking to strangers was a start.



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I had no street map but I was assured that my next destination, the Royal Hotel on St Nicholas Street, was only a short walk away. When I think back to this moment, my first experience of a stroll through the streets of Scarborough, my emotional memory is dominated by a feeling of dullness. Perhaps there was evidence of specific neglect, I can't now recall; but my first impression of the route I walked was that it was all really rather boring. Nothing leapt out to say 'look at me', there was too much traffic, no particularly interesting architecture and the general streetscape seemed dirty and drab. I felt I was in the nondescript back streets of a city, not the centre of a charming seaside town, and it shocked me to find out later how close I had been to the retail hub of Scarborough. The route went down hill and I kept expecting to see the sea, but this particular vista was elusive.

Having reached St Nicholas Street I registered the existence of several banks on both sides of the road, a variety of independent shops, a restaurant and a Marks and Spencer store. A Yates wine bar stood on the left, next to a large building, which I learned later had been a department store. This was in a state of depressing decay. It had an interesting design and was surely of historical interest, so I was surprised to think that it had been left to deteriorate. In other towns it would have been a prime site for a thriving business or an exciting development opportunity. Strange.

First impressions: South Bay

I walked past the empty, boarded-up building and reached the Town Hall, a slightly sombre Victorian red brick edifice, weighed down with age and responsibility. And then, at last, a breathtaking view of the bay opened up in front of me. Until this moment, I hadn't realised that this part of the town was perched high above the beach. A charming harbour, complete with lighthouse, nestled at the base of a headland to my left, a wide expanse of sea stretched out to a distant horizon, there were green-capped cliffs to my right. It was an impressive panorama and the recent experience of dereliction and dingy streets was (almost) forgotten.

And, with the benefit of hindsight, this may be where Scarborough's problem lies. Perhaps, like me, people have been mesmerised by the glory of the natural landscape, especially on a sunny day. Maybe one's vision becomes distorted and a sudden revelation of beauty obliterates reality. Is it a kind of self-hypnosis that has bred an attitude which says, 'well, things aren't that bad, really'. Is it temporary blindness that in the past has caused insufficient effort to be made to stem the gradual decline that has washed up through the town like froth, seaweed and debris on the beach?



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First impressions: hotel accommodation

Opposite the Town Hall stands the flamboyant cream facade of the Royal Hotel, an example of frivolity in contrast to its sober neighbour. I entered the foyer to be greeted by a chandelier and an elegant flight of stairs curving effortlessly to the first floor. The quality of design spoke of an era when such grandness was the norm. It was a privilege to stay here for a day or two, to imagine life as a tourist in the heyday of Scarborough's eminence as a seaside resort.

Nick Taylor, the ever-helpful General Manager of the Royal, filled me in later with some details about the history of the hotel. Originally called the Long Room on Longroom Street (now St Nicholas Street) the building opened in 1725 to provide Assembly Room amenities for those who could afford them. It became the centre of social activity and was used by the town's elite for weekly meetings, billiards, games of chance, entertainment and reading. It was known as Donner's Hotel in the early 19th century and is first referred to as the Royal Hotel in the Town Guide of 1840, probably as the result of the crowning of Queen Victoria.



In 1935 the hotel was acquired by Tom Laughton whose memoir "Pavilions by the Sea" (published in 1977) describes his life as a successful hotelier in Scarborough. The Royal was the first hotel in the north of England to cater specifically for the conference business and by 1949 it was open all year round, with the whole of the first floor converted into private suites.

Walking around the hotel in the 1950s was apparently like visiting a series of small exhibitions, due to Tom's passion for art collecting, including contemporary work. The Royal's celebrity guests included Winston Churchill, Hugh Gaitskell, Harold Wilson, Osbert and Edith Sitwell, the actress Hermione Gingold (mother of Stephen Joseph) and of course Tom's brother Charles who became a Hollywood film star.



The Royal is currently undergoing extensive building work and the renovated sea-facing rooms are excellent. But the coffee at breakfast was, to my taste, 'disappointing'. The expanding links with continental Europe mean that tourists and visitors now expect both choice and quality. In my opinion, indifferent percolated coffee is not quite good enough.

However, change is in the air and, writing this in August, I am pleased to say you can now get a pretty good cappuccino next door to the Royal, in the recently opened Cafe Bliss. Ron Dixon's mobile coffee van in Westborough also supplies a 'Caffeine Rush' to those in need!

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Information gathering

The purpose of this, my first visit to Scarborough, was to attend the inaugural Town Team meeting, which was held at two o'clock in a distinguished panelled room within the Town Hall. Eileen Bosomworth, Leader of the Council, introduced the meeting and Yorkshire Forward's Urban Renaissance programme was explained to the assembled group of local authority representatives and local business people who constituted the 'Town Team', appointed to lead the process in association with the consultants John Thompson & Partners. As a member of the JTP team, my job was to encourage local people to attend the forthcoming Community Planning Weekend, to ferret out those who normally avoid such events, and to disseminate the aspirations of the urban renaissance process to the wider community.

But first of all, I had to try and absorb the situation as it stood from the Borough Council and others' point of view. I had missed the Inception Workshop in January so today was a useful information-gathering exercise. Gordon Somerville, Head of SBC's Planning Services, summarised the outputs that would be required at the end of the process. A Vision was to be defined, in terms of a long term strategy and the identification of a new role for the town. This Vision had to be underpinned by a consensus opinion, which would be consolidated by means of a Community Planning Weekend. With regard to funding priorities, a realistic and achievable strategy would have to be developed in order to attract inward investment by the Regional Development Agency, Yorkshire Forward. This would entail the identification of practical projects.

A lengthy discussion followed which included some interesting comments about the town and its role within a wider context. Scarborough is physically remote but dependent on its links to the rest of the world. 14 other populated towns around the globe have the same name. Some of these have adopted the Scarborough Fair tradition as their own, whereas it seems that Scarborough, Yorkshire, lags behind in capitalising on this pertinent marketing asset.

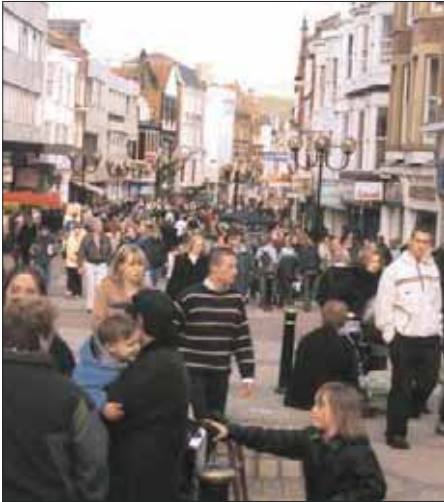
It was agreed that it was vital to establish a strong, constant, committed and most of all respected Town Team. The constituency of the team was questioned - were certain people missing? Knowing nothing about the selection process, I merely noted that there were considerably more men than women and few people under 35. Also that there was no one specifically representing arts and culture. Leisure and tourism, yes, but not the arts as such.

One of the aims of the urban renaissance initiative in Scarborough has been to gather information in order to produce an accurate picture of the town today. It was felt that a 'worst case' scenario



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would be necessary - to clarify what will happen if the spiral of decline is not reversed. But it was also considered important to inspire the town and its residents. The opportunity has arisen to focus on Scarborough's strengths and its potential to be a magnet and to host events, be they related to the world of conferences or culture - or both.

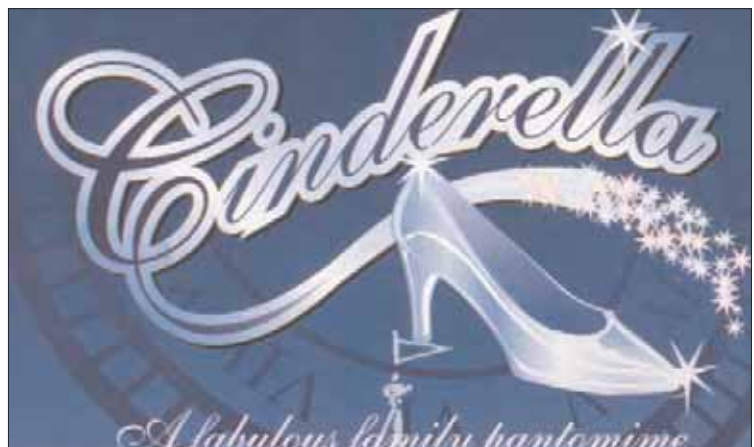
First thoughts

As a result of the meeting, it seemed fairly clear that there was a firm belief that Scarborough has wonderful qualities as a town, with an important historical past and a potentially exciting future, but that there were important social and economic issues that desperately needed to be resolved.

The forthcoming Community Planning Weekend was to be the catalyst for a consensus Vision. The event therefore had to be as inclusive as possible. Which is where my role lay: to find those who might not otherwise turn up. Where were the people with ideas and imagination, who could contribute a vision of their own? After all, we were merely the consultants, employed to act as a conduit for the ideas and aspirations that must already exist within Scarborough. But this channel needed a reason to start flowing.

The 7th February was the date of my introduction to Scarborough: a memorable day. I was beginning to understand the extent of the town's historical legacy and the despair with which people belatedly were realising that this once-prosperous resort had turned into a decaying seaside town.

I had absorbed some of its atmosphere, experienced some of its beauty, met some of its residents, but most of all I had learned something about its problems and its dreams. It was a start. I had some basic information and the enthusiasm to find out more. It seemed to be a story of Cinderella. Was Yorkshire Forward to play the role of Prince Charming? And would the shoe fit?



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"Change is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better."

Samuel Johnson, Preface to 'A Dictionary of the English Language', 1755

The second day of my Scarborough odyssey dawned after a restless sleep. My room, although refurbished and very comfortable, looked out on to an inner courtyard. The sash window was unable to be fully closed and some kind of generator rumbled away throughout the night until drowned out by the seagulls' raucous early morning clamour. I made a mental note to avoid this room in future.

A cycle of decline followed by prosperity seems to be the story of the Royal. According to Tom Laughton's memoirs, the hotel was run down and delapidated when he bought it in 1935, despite having been "fashionable and successful" in the past. With hard work and imagination the hotel's image and reputation was transformed. And then came the effect of six years of war, when the "hotel was in a shocking condition". It was re-vamped, modernised and transformed again.

The years pass and the Royal is once more having to upgrade its facilities - but what about other hotels in Scarborough? It struck me that the quality of hotel accommodation would be key to the future success of the town. People have a greater experience these days of reasonably priced, quality hotels - expectations have risen. Location and old fashioned charm are no longer quite enough.

Listening and learning

The day was devoted to factual information gathering in the Town Hall where we were based in another wood-panelled municipal chamber. As consultants, we were given the opportunity to discuss the state of the town with various Council Officers who provided data and opinion



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on a wide range of topics, from coastal protection to the immense difficulties of maintaining the vast amount of public gardens and parkland within the town. Lack of funding seemed to be a major contribution to Scarborough's woes. There was simply not enough money to do it all.

In addition, we were informed about the growing problem of houses of multiple occupation. With a decline in tourism, a large number of former hotels and boarding houses have become homes to people supported by the DSS. Many occupants have low incomes and chaotic lifestyles (a useful euphemism for the social problems that beset people addicted to drugs and alcohol.) They need support which may, or may not be provided. This in turn has had the effect of degrading specific local neighbourhoods. Of course, from an outsider's perspective, much of London's housing stock could be described as being of 'multiple occupation'. But a city is geared to cope with population flux and chaos; a seaside town has fewer resources at its beck and call in terms of police and social services.



I was however keen to point out that not everyone who is obliged to live on benefits is hopeless. Many artists do not earn enough to live on. Should they give up their work (which - if a painter - may later be worth millions) for the sake of 'earning a living' or should they continue to contribute to society through artistic endeavour that is in fact supported by the state, an unofficial 'Arts Council grant'? I believe it is important to keep an open mind on such matters.

Council departments: the category of arts and culture

The Council Officers who provided useful background information during the morning and afternoon meetings included representatives from technical services, planning, transport, conservation and archaeology, environmental health and housing, economic development, parks and countryside, tourism and leisure services. The Town Centre Manager was also present.



I was disappointed there was nobody at the meeting who had a specific responsibility for the arts or youth services, my personal areas of interest. In my opinion, 'arts and culture' as a category does not sit very comfortably under the banner of 'Tourism and Leisure Services'. As a seaside town offering seasonal entertainment, there is some justification for the label. But the Stephen Joseph Theatre operates twelve months of the year; there is a municipal Art Gallery, two museums, a small Arts Centre, two theatres in the Spa Complex, several performance spaces within educational institutions and a large civic theatre (albeit in severe financial crisis). In other words there's quite a lot going on in terms of art and performance activity. Surely enough to warrant more specialised attention.

I did however learn about the recent appointment of a Community Arts Officer within SBC whom I would meet in due course.

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It seemed to me that the lack of specific arts knowledge at a senior level within the Borough Council could lead to communication difficulties with regard to understanding the aspirations of arts practitioners. I don't think I am alone in identifying sport and recreation activities as 'leisure' rather than 'art' - and although leisure pursuits may be considered part of 'culture' - the particular focus of interest may be very different.

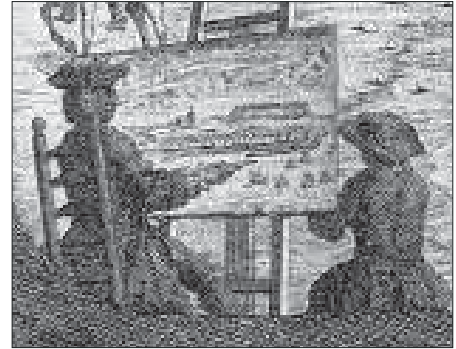
The role of 'the artist' has always been contentious, and it was Michelangelo, five centuries ago, who first insisted that artists were not just artisans and 'hirelings' of rich men, but 'artists' who should be respected in their own right. He convinced the Pope in the early 16th century and this had a huge impact on the relationship between patron and artist. But prejudices linger.

Heritage and history

Other than being overwhelmed by detailed information relating to a town I had never thought much about before, my memory of this first visit to Scarborough was dominated by the large number of magnificent heritage buildings. The immense, ornate and many-windowed Grand Hotel, now owned by Butlins. The Town Hall itself, which used to be the private home of a banker before taking on the mantle of Council headquarters in 1899. (Although alongside the imposing Victorian gothic structure lies an ugly 1960s extension that miraculously seems to have 'got through planning'.) There is the Royal Hotel with its regency splendour; the stylish terraces along the Esplanade, crowning South Bay with an aura of gentility. And of course the impressive Spa Pavilion, at the base of the cliff.

At lunchtime we walked across the 1826 Cliff Bridge to be given a guided tour of the Spa Complex. It was raining at the time, and exhilarating to watch waves breaking so close to such an impressive structure (albeit some of the modern extensions leave a lot to be desired). The architecture of the Spa and its location at the edge of a wild sea is breathtaking. The contrast of man-made elegance and the ocean's irrepressible vitality. The experience gave me a profound sense of Scarborough's inherent qualities: Nature and Man working in tandem to produce a town of memorable grace and stature.

The location of the Spa has undoubtedly caused a few problems in the past. In 1808 the building was damaged by heavy seas and it had to be completely rebuilt after a far worse storm in 1836. But then again, water - though often damaging - is the source of Scarborough's development as a prosperous Spa Town.



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Some time in the 1620s a Mrs Farrer discovered the existence of natural mineral water in springs flowing near the site. With its medicinal benefits firmly established, a well was built in 1698 to collect the water. The first "Spaw" House (the spelling used until the early 19th century) was constructed, a basic wooden structure from which people could taste and buy the (apparently) restorative waters. Dicky Dickenson, the eccentric first Governor of the "Spaw" was appointed to bottle the water and charge admission to "take the waters", the start of a very successful commercial enterprise.

However, it was the proximity of the mineral springs to the beach that accelerated Scarborough's reputation as the 'first resort'. Directions for 'Bathing in the Sea' were printed at the end of Peter Shaw's "Dissertation upon the Scarborough Waters" as early as 1730. A bathing machine and naked bathers can be seen in a 1735 engraving by John Settrington, available for sale at the Library.

The Complex itself has an impressive variety of spaces. These include the Spa Theatre with its ornate Victorian Music Hall decor; the Grand Hall, a vast auditorium with pillars, balcony and stage; the Ocean Room, the Promenade Lounge, the Sun Court with its black and white tiled patio; plus cafes, bars, shops and colonnades.

Thoughts from afar

After a mere 48 hours in Scarborough I was back in London, a world away from the pounding sea and panoramic views of hotel terraces, perched high on the top of a cliff on the east coast of Yorkshire. But I felt that coastal erosion, human negligence and the effects of social change had indeed taken their toll on the town. From what I had learned during the past few days, it seemed that the intervention by Yorkshire Forward was not a moment too soon.



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Tuesday 26 February

"The artist is a receptacle for emotions that come from all over the place: from the sky, from the earth, from a scrap of paper."

Alfred H Barr 1946

Community Arts in Scarborough

My next visit to Scarborough took place towards the end of February when I had an opportunity to talk to Helen Berry, the Community Arts Officer for Scarborough Borough Council. The meeting occurred at 4 o'clock on Tuesday 26th February. My train was late (again) from York, and Helen agreed to meet me in the lounge of the Royal Hotel. She provided me with invaluable information about the various artistic groups that exist within Scarborough, though she admitted that her personal knowledge and experience was perhaps more biased towards the visual arts rather than theatre.

Helen had been running Crescent Arts, the arts centre based in the Crescent for nine years until the recent post of Community Arts Officer post was created within SBC. Her role is to offer advice and support to community arts organisations and also to projects that require an art input, for instance the Percent for Art scheme in Scarborough General Hospital. Her role is to 'be responsive'; she offers consultation and encourages arts activity, helping others to develop new ideas, create exhibitions, and to 'make things happen'.

Funding for community arts

She has no responsibility for administering specific projects and a very limited Community Arts budget (£3,000) with which she can personally offer financial support. She administers the community arts revenue grant programme - which has at present a £35,000 budget. She can only offer grants to organisations (not individuals) but even a grant of £100 has to go to Cabinet for approval. In my opinion there seems to be far too much bureaucracy. There is a November deadline for applications for funding; the money will be available the following April.

Existing groups that are regularly supported include Create, Crescent Arts Centre, the National Student Drama Festival, Filey Festival and Whitby Regatta. Helen's role as Community Arts Officer has a remit beyond the town of Scarborough, and it seems that the rural areas within the Borough have a great need for support. A current project is the Rural Arts on Tour scheme. Through appropriate subsidy, professional theatre companies are now encouraged to perform in village halls within the Borough, therefore providing arts and cultural events to rural communities.

In terms of grant aid for individual artists, applications can be made to Yorkshire Arts. Apparently applications would be treated favourably as the Scarborough area has fewer people applying than elsewhere.



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There are opportunities to apply for funding for community based arts projects due to there being several areas of multiple deprivation within the Borough. These PACT areas include Eastfield, Edgehill, Barrowcliff, Falsgrave and Castle Ward and they are eligible for Objective 2, Priority 3 (European) funding. There is considerable rural isolation throughout the Borough and Filey already has SRB funding. One proposal is to organise some kind of youth event, with music, graffiti art, DJs, recording, roving reporters, etc - to provide arts input within the PACT areas.

I asked Helen to tell me about the various arts organisations in Scarborough and how they were perceived within the town itself.

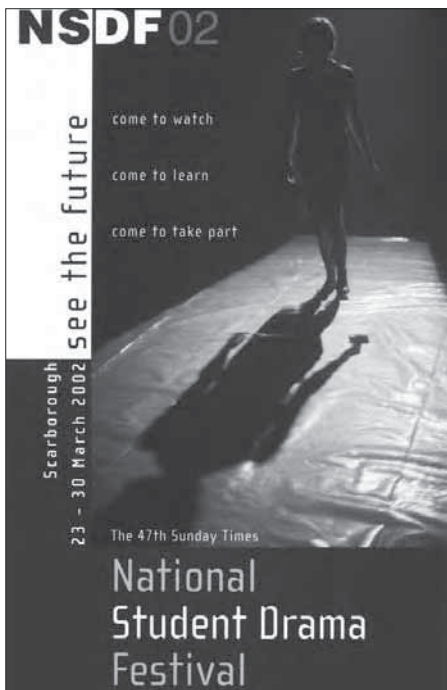
Scarborough's cultural assets

The Stephen Joseph Theatre is seen as an obvious asset; it premieres plays and new writing and brings people to the town. Helen however admitted that it is difficult to get people from the estates (Eastfield, Barrowcliff, Edgehill) to go to the theatre. It seems to be a matter of perception and fear - particularly of social inadequacy: not knowing 'how to behave', as well as priorities in terms of cost. The existence of a local, well-established, professional theatre doesn't mean you can force people to go to it. The SJT does however have an Education Department that runs regular workshops, and visits schools and youth clubs. Projects are apparently being planned for further outreach work in Whitby and the northern end of the Borough.

The National Student Drama Festival is an annual event that brings large numbers of students to Scarborough. It is now seen as being more accessible and connected to the town than it was in the past.

Create is an organisation run by Pete Massey: an advocate for the Arts in Scarborough. In my initial research about Scarborough's arts and culture activity, I had come across a Hansard entry on the internet. When questioned by Scarborough's MP Lawrie Quinn on how the government was widening access to the arts, the Minister for the Arts (Alan Howarth) defined Create as being *"an arts development consortium working in partnership with Yorkshire Arts to promote residencies and participatory events at the Scarborough festival and, indeed, all the year round. That also benefits Whitby and rural areas in North Yorkshire."* (House of Commons, February 2001).

Create was born out of the Festival of Youth Arts, which was founded 3 years ago and is currently based at the Council for Voluntary Services. They advise and support the DIY Collective, a young people led youth project who run their own venue called The Warehouse.



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Crescent Arts is a contemporary visual arts centre that has been in existence for 23 years. It has been (until very recently) run by Mary Butler, the Arts Development Officer, on a part time basis. There is an administrative assistant and outreach worker. Help is provided by studio holders who run workshops and offer skills support in return for subsidised workspace. It is located in the basement of the municipal Art Gallery and supported by the Regional Arts Lottery Programme. The space is small and inaccessible. New premises would help create a better learning centre for arts practitioners.

Scarborough Art Gallery has recently acquired a new curator: Lara Goodband. A current community-based project is the summer 2002 Fisherman's Choice Exhibition, financed by Yorkshire Arts Development money, under the direction of Sara Pepper. A team of retired fishermen and people from fishing families who live in the Old Town have curated their own exhibition, which opened in June.

Visits were made to York and Harrogate to select suitable art work and the project had a strong educational aspect, with information provided as to why pictures should be selected, and how they should be handled. Relevant events will take place at the Art Gallery during the exhibition and outreach visits have been made to community organisations such as the Women's Centre, Over 60s club, SureStart, Brownies etc. The intention is to engage people who live in the Castle Ward area, to change perceptions about 'art' being intimidating and to make the Gallery more accessible.

In addition to a range of community arts projects, there are a large number of professional practising artists in Scarborough, some of whom have come together to exhibit as part of the Smacme Arts Group. Members include graduates from the School of Arts, University of Hull, Scarborough Campus. Jo Davies is the Secretary.

A mural project has recently been proposed by Shirley Sheppard who has recently opened the Blandscliff Studio and Art Gallery in Blands Cliff.

I was informed that the library would have details of other art groups and societies within Scarborough.

Creative links

The meeting with Helen Berry provided me with valuable information about the large number of creative people living and working in Scarborough, particularly visual artists and those working on community projects.



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I had learned about the high level of deprivation within the Borough; also that a lot of effort was being put into outreach work, with the arts playing a vital role within marginalised communities. Fishing families in Castle Ward were being encouraged to enjoy and get excited by paintings; children in Edgehill were working with Crescent Arts on a print-making project; young people in Barrowcliff and Falsgrave were being invited to play music through projects organised by the Festival of Youth Arts.

I could see that to create a consensus Vision for the future of Scarborough we had to involve as many of these groups as possible. By contacting people who work in the arts, one could have access to those who might normally feel disengaged from such a consultation process. I was now armed with a list of names and phone numbers. There were people to be contacted, people to meet, people whose contribution to the forthcoming Community Planning Weekend would be crucial.

It was more obvious than ever that Scarborough is a town that has a thriving cultural life.

Castle Ward Tenants and Residents Association

My discussion with Helen Berry had alerted me to the fact that Castle Ward was one of the PACT areas, a deprived neighbourhood right in the centre of Scarborough. It was Castle Ward's Tenants and Residents Association meeting at 7 o'clock on the evening of the 26th February, so it seemed a good idea to go along as an observer.

It was also one way of discovering the important local issues as far as Castle Ward's residents are concerned. Perspectives can change depending on who you talk to. And of course, it was an opportunity to mention the forthcoming Community Planning Weekend and an informal way of encouraging people to participate in the urban renaissance process.

I telephoned the Chair, Bill Henderson, who was happy for me to attend. Committee members included Councillor Janet Jefferson and Michael Mulcaster from the local police. James Corrigan was also present, whom I had met at the Town Team meeting two weeks earlier.

It was a well attended meeting and approximately 60 people turned up at the Castle Choice Centre on Auborough Street. Items on the agenda included the recent SBC questionnaire about South Bay beach & West Pier; the Albion pub's application for a late night entertainment licence; lack of confidence in Sanctuary Housing Association at St Mary's Lodge and problems of dog mess, beggars and the anti-social behaviour of children. I was marginally surprised to learn that they were unable to find any projects of reasonable cost to apply for Objective 2 Priority 3 funding. There was a lengthy discussion on the difficulties of contacting police due to new police call centres; and I learned about the imminent closure of Castle Choice.



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The technicalities of funding: Castle Choice Centre

During the tea break I introduced myself to Lindy, a volunteer at the Castle Choice Centre, to find out more about the closure of what seemed to me to be an excellent community resource: the building was virtually brand new. Funded through the SRB Castle Pride Initiative it was created in 1996 as a Women's Centre, and although latterly much more widely used, it was still not making enough money to carry on. It would therefore have to close at the end of March.

The freehold is apparently owned by the Catholic Church. The Women's Centre pay rent to the Business Centre who have a lease from SBC. Castle Choice has existed for some time by eking out its original grant money and by volunteer labour, plus some income from incoming groups and organisations. The crisis was due to a simple fact: the money had run out. Castle Choice Centre had failed to get lottery funding, and I gather there had been some financial mismanagement in the past.

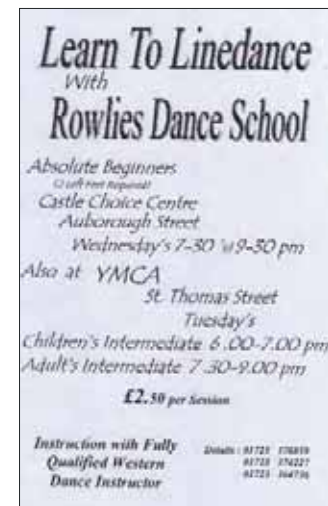
The Centre had many useful amenities: a garden, meeting rooms, disabled access, children's toilets, play equipment, kitchen, cafe, washing machine, creche and a paid creche worker, photocopier, clothes for sale (a charity shop), careers advice information. Activities included yoga, Indian head massage, art and craft classes, literature and communication / capacity building classes, line dancing, pregnancy counselling, residents and tenants associations meetings, children's parties and a Womens' Refuge (on Fridays).

A community resource in crisis

It seemed to me that here was a valuable community resource - for information, socialising, learning and starting new businesses. It obviously attracted a cross section of the community and a number of educational bodies were involved: Workers Education Association, University of Hull, Scarborough Sixth Form College, Yorkshire Coast College. I had been informed that Castle Ward had a high level of poverty, deprivation and attendant social problems. It also had a committed local Tenants and Residents Association. The ideal building existed for community purposes (although I gather the electricity costs were high). But it was due to close. As an observer, something wasn't right. I began to wonder why regeneration initiatives were able to generate capital finance to start things off but there was never enough funding to keep them going.

Networking

The meeting gave me the opportunity to talk to people during the tea break. It was a shame that the Community Planning Weekend was due to take place after the Centre had shut; otherwise it would have been an ideal opportunity for some vociferous lobbying. I was genuinely concerned about its demise and questioned Kerry Lee (recently appointed SBC Regeneration Officer for Castle Ward) about potential access to funding through other routes. She did not seem optimistic at the time.



CASTLE CHOICE CENTRE TIMETABLE		
ABBREVIATIONS: D= DONATIONS TO CENTRE F= FREE		
Creche available for children under 5. There are also other 1		
to please ask at reception		
ACTIVITIES	TIME	
Yoga	10am-12pm	
Pregnancy Counselling	1pm-3pm	
Twin Club	1pm-3pm	
German Language	10am-12pm	
Lets Talk	9-30am-12pm	
Reflexology	Come along	
Indian Head Massage	1pm-3pm	
English Studies	10am-12pm	
Communicating with Confidence	10am-12pm	
Line dancing for Beginners	7-30pm-9-30pm	
Meditation	10am-12pm	
Script Writing	6.30pm-8.30pm	
Art & Craft	10am-12pm	
Women's Aid Drop In	10am-12pm	
Health Visitor	11.30-1pm	
tea/coffee or a chat. To book or further details please call on		
these courses please call in or call us on above number.		

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We also talked about the forthcoming Community Planning Weekend and Kerry agreed to mail out the programme to people on her database. I was keen to ensure that those who are more difficult to contact were at least informed of the event. The Weekend had to culminate in a consensus vision. The opinions of those who lived in areas of multiple deprivation were important.

The second part of the evening was devoted to a presentation on the issue of the future management of the Council's housing stock. The Guest Speaker was John Evans of PS Consultants who were offering independent advice to local residents.

Images of Scarborough

After the meeting I was given a lift back to my hotel by James Corrigan who also offered a brief guided tour of Scarborough. I accepted the opportunity to get a feel for the town as a whole, to try to understand its very different character areas. These included the narrow streets of the Old Town, huddling under the castle headland and the elegant Esplanade, a spacious high level promenade, beyond which Holbeck Hotel lurched over the cliff.



We drove over Valley Bridge, wire-wrapped against potential suicide attempts; along several Victorian hotel dominated streets and past a secondary shopping district. Then to North Bay with its deserted summer chalets and the Sea Life Centre, a white blob in the distance. We passed the Corner Complex, a Council run theatre venue which hosts childrens' shows and cabaret in the summer. I saw the Atlantis swimming pool with a blue bendy liquorice-like water slide; there was even a Japanese pagoda in a park.

Valley Road had wooded banks descending to a roundabout (soon to be the site of some public art), ugly tarmac that ended at a wide expanse of beach.



The sea was pounding the cliffs with some ferocity and Marine Drive round the headland was closed to traffic. The illuminated castle kept a ghostly distance, hovering above the town; fishing boats rocked in the harbour and the lighthouse beacon flashed its warning.

I have a vivid memory of looking towards the town from the pier, over the harbour and across the beach, with Foreshore Road festooned in lights, resonant with noise and colour. High up on the cliff stood the shadowy shapes of imposing architecture. It was a memorable view. The end of a long day, but I had learned a lot and talked a lot. Scarborough was no longer quite such a stranger.

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"The end we work for must be closer, the labourer's wage, the pleasure in the work done, the summer lightning of personal happiness."

Tom Stoppard, 'The Coast of Utopia', Part III 'Salvage', 2002

Launch of the Urban Renaissance programme

The sea was still rough the following morning and from my hotel window I could see waves battering the harbour walls, white spray leaping high over the parapet. Black clouds glowered ominously above the water, but the sun shone with an almost visionary whiteness in a bay beyond, a marker pen high-lighting the line between a far off hill and the dark grey sea.

Today was the official launch of the Scarborough Town Team, and a press photo opportunity took place outside the Town Hall. It coincided with the publication of the first newsletter explaining the urban renaissance programme in Scarborough, which I had been working on with Paul Grahamslaw, SBC's Public Relations Officer, during the previous two weeks. I chatted to the journalist Matt Watkinson of BBC Radio York and also to Dr Jack Binns, the town's acknowledged historian. I had begun to read his interesting and erudite work "The History of Scarborough". Heritage and history are indeed a fundamental part of this beautiful town by the sea.

Public Art at Scarborough Hospital

I had arranged another meeting with Helen Berry, the Community Arts Officer, at four o'clock this afternoon, in order to visit Scarborough General Hospital. She spoke yesterday of her work with the hospital, which was an example of assistance given to a non-arts organisation wanting to have some arts input.

The project had been initiated by Dr David Humphriss, a diabetic and endocrinology consultant. Finding himself working in a bland building that was in need of some visual stimulus, he worked with Helen to develop an arts programme at the hospital. A new extension was in the process of being built and I was told how Dr Humphriss successfully managed to persuade the Hospital Trust to give a 'Percent for Arts'. 1% of the total budget was allocated to the arts project. Public Arts, Wakefield were commissioned to select artists who then produced a series of works of art which now adorn the hospital corridors.

I was very keen to see the work for myself. Here indeed was visible proof (if proof is needed) that arts practitioners provide a major contribution to Scarborough's well-being.



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The new reception area is entered by beautiful glass doors, etched with ammonite designs. Painted ammonites grace the walls and the corridors are decorated with a variety of works using painted ceramic tiles. There are shoals of blue ceramic fish, ceramic pictures of fruit and flowers, 'display cabinets' of items relating to fossils, fish, shells and coastal curiosities. Other ceramic pictures include exquisite designs of swallows overlaid on a map of Yorkshire.

Jo Davies of Smacme Arts Group is currently employed two days a week by the Hospital Trust to organise Artists in Residence to provide a continuing arts presence within the various Borough hospitals. So far there have been 8 artists employed. They research their projects by talking to a wide variety of people connected with the hospital - cleaners, porters, patients and medical staff - to create a relevant piece of art within a specific time limit.

Marie Brett was Artist in Residence at Scarborough General in 2001 and produced a number of colourful textile works.



There is a large and imaginative glasswork in the reception area in another part of the hospital building. This was created by Rachel Welford, who also works for the Festival of Youth Arts, encouraging creativity in young people, especially the disadvantaged. She used to be a studio holder at Crescent Arts.

The overall theme of her work was Scarborough, water and the seaside, and the imagery was based on elements such as sand, wave and water patterns, barnacles and limpet shells. It was supported by Yorkshire Arts, the Year of the Artist with additional funding from Newcastle & North Tyneside Health Authority Charitable Trust Fund. It is a memorable piece of art work, created by glass pieces made through fusing layers of glass in a kiln. Pieces of copper and silver wire and metal leaf were placed in between three layers of glass prior to firing. During the firing the layers fuse to form one piece of glass, trapping the metal and sometimes air bubbles inside.



Another project in Scarborough General Hospital is an audio installation which was created by Adrian Sinclair and Kypros Kyrianou, a Heads Together production for HAFNEY (Hospital Arts for North East Yorkshire). This too was supported by Yorkshire Arts Year of the Artist and Newcastle and North Tyneside Health Authority Charitable Trust Fund. Heads Together are a company based in Leeds.



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They were commissioned to create a permanent sound installation in one of the main corridors that link two parts of the hospital. They describe their work as follows:

"Being in the hospital you quickly forget what's outside. We wanted to bring something of the unique feel of Scarborough right into the heart of the building. We spent weeks wandering around the town with headphones and microphones recording everything and everybody we came across. Some of the sounds are left raw, others are treated, using the natural rhythms to make music....It's a corridor just exactly how you would imagine a hospital corridor to be, except when you walk down this one you might now hear the sound of the slot machines on the seafront, or the dawn chorus from the woods near the hospital or an interview with one of the seafood stall holders. There are over four hours of soundscapes that are played once a day, designed to bring the outside right into the heart of the hospital."

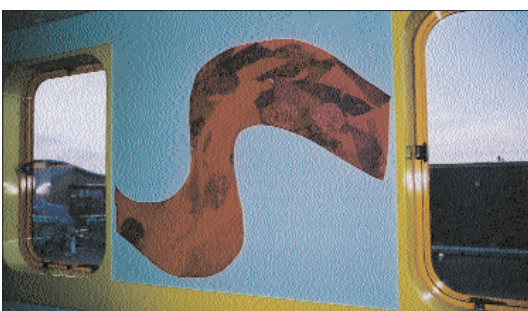
I was very impressed by the work I had just seen. This was quality art, and yes, it was in a hospital. But then, why not? This was Scarborough, where it was rapidly becoming obvious that the arts matter to a great many people - doctors too.

Video and media: Intelligent Television & Video Ltd

The Arts as a sector is not of course confined to ceramics, glass, textiles or soundscapes: it can include the media, which was my next port of call on Wednesday afternoon.

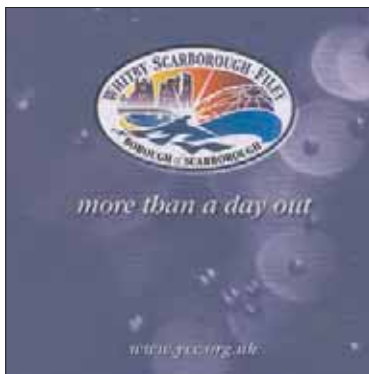
I had met Peter Wilkinson at the Town Team meeting. He is Sales and Marketing Director for GA Pindar & Son, based at Eastfield, one of the leading print and electronic media companies in Europe, specialising in producing high-quality business communications through print and electronic media at its 12 UK sites. Peter was very keen to introduce me to Nick Grindley, Managing Director of Intelligent Television & Video Ltd and offered to give me a lift from the hospital to Nick's office at 77 Westborough.

IT&V is a very successful niche business making videos for aircraft enthusiasts. Pilots in a variety of large and small aircraft are filmed in situ as they comment on and describe their flying procedures - prior to taking off, during the flight, as they land etc. The videos are advertised in aircraft magazines and sold all over the world. All editing and duplication work is done in house and the digital edit suite is also available for corporate video work.



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Nick Grindley, Peter Wilkinson, Mike Wilkinson of SBC's Tourism Department and John Monroe, of the University of Hull, Scarborough Campus, have recently formed Scarborough Media Group. Their intention is to create a DVD to promote Scarborough and attract inward investment. A CD Rom has already been produced entitled "More Than a Day Out", a sequence of positive images of the town which was funded by donations provided by local businessmen.

During general chitchat I discovered Nick Grindley had started his career as a professional comic and theatre technician. He knew Nick Thomas of Qdos Entertainment (formerly a puppeteer) and suggested I should join them in the pub at a future date. By now I was becoming used to finding some form of arts activity around every corner in Scarborough. If there is original art work in a hospital corridor, why shouldn't an ex performer be producing videos about How to Fly a Boeing 747! The town was getting more fascinating day by day.

Community concerns

I explained the Community Planning process to Nick and was curious to learn about his personal concerns and dreams for the town. He was quite blunt about the reality. In his opinion, "Scarborough died in 1954 because people stopped investing in the town". He considered there was an urgent need for 4 star hotel accommodation, a multiplex cinema, better road links and dual carriageway connections. The town should make better use of technology and the super-highway and he believed the potential of the Futurist Theatre should be exploited. "The Cilla Black show used to run for 18 weeks, getting 2000 people a night and bringing loads of money into the town." But for Scarborough to be really successful he felt there was a need to expand the town or build another one, near Seamer. The major problem seems to be complacency and self indulgence: "People think 'we're OK, we're self sufficient, we don't need jobs' - but we do...I think this town needs a kick up the arse!"

I left Nick's office, walking past the Stephen Joseph Theatre and the station, along the rather uninspiring pedestrianised shopping street, which was more or less deserted at half past six. The energy seemed to drain out of the town in the evening.

Nick and Peter had recommended Tuscany, an Italian restaurant near my hotel, where I relaxed with a glass of wine, a pleasant meal and a chat to Angelo, the proprietor: more discussion about the urban renaissance initiative, more explanation about the Community Planning Weekend, more 'community animation' under the guise of supper!

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"There are as many opinions as there are people: each has his own correct way."

Terence, c 190-159 BC 'Phormio'

Mobilising the community - an indirect approach

My first appointment this morning was at 11 o'clock with Kerry Grindley, Nick's wife and Financial Director of Intelligent TV & Video Ltd. In the conversation yesterday with Nick, he mentioned Kerry had an interest in amateur theatre, so I hoped she might be able to give me some information about those who take part in this particular artistic activity in Scarborough.

I also wanted to find indirect ways of disseminating information about the urban renaissance process. At the back of my mind was the reminder that the Community Planning event must be as inclusive as possible. In every town, in every village there are people who are naturally drawn to public meetings, who enjoy community events, who are happy to take part in discussions and debates about their neighbourhood. In my experience, however, the majority tend to keep their distance.

I was keen to spread the net as widely as possible, to at least try to scatter information by whatever means possible to individuals and groups in Scarborough who might otherwise never know about the project. These included the marginalised and disadvantaged; but also people who simply lead busy lives, whose daily rituals of child care, shopping and earning a living take precedence over consultation events. I needed to find some way of connecting with those people for whom the idea of community planning would not register, unless prompted. I was not so naive as to imagine everyone I tried to contact by these means would turn up to the event at the end of April, but I was keen to start a sort of 'chinese whisper', so that a breath of interest in the project could begin to waft around the town.

In my experience the indirect route to 'mobilising' the community requires time, energy and the genuine desire to converse with people, to be interested in the character of individuals, to respect the ideas and opinions of those of whose background, education, age and gender may differ widely. To enter into a dialogue with strangers can be highly enjoyable and entertaining. To ask questions, share experiences, to squirrel out individual stories, hopes and fears is both illuminating and fun. It should never be a chore.



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But to my mind the conversation has to go beyond a formal interview; there has to be some kind of mutual attention exchange. Both sides need to contribute to the conversation. And this takes energy, enthusiasm and above all, time. People do not really want to feel they are a mere cog in the chain of events that make up a timetable. Though this may of course be true. Ideally the discussion should last as long as it needs to; there is usually a propitious time to stop. Too soon as it can seem rude, too long and you may be considered a bore. And, of course, not all personalities are suited to this kind of intensive people-contact.

Conversation over coffee

My chat with Kerry Grindley was relatively brief as it was an impromptu meeting (only arranged this morning) and I was aware that I was interrupting her work. She was however able to provide me with a flavour of Scarborough from the perspective of a young working mother with two children, fund-raising talents (for St Peter's Church) and an interest in the arts.



She said that there were quite a few amateur theatre groups in Scarborough but "they keep changing". She mentioned the YMCA Drama Group, the Statement Drama Group, Cresta Players, Cross Fade Drama Group, Phoenix Players and The Outsiders. Performance venues include the Westward Theatre (the old Theatre in the Round), the YMCA Theatre, the Library and occasionally in the McCarthy auditorium, the proscenium arch theatre at the Stephen Joseph Theatre. She also commented on the presence of several established authors in Scarborough: Sue Wilding being a local playwright who writes regularly for YMCA Drama Group.

I asked Kerry about access to films in Scarborough and was informed that cinema provision is inadequate: "we usually have to go to York". The Futurist is a stage venue which shows films, "but it's freezing"; the Hollywood Plaza is viable but old fashioned; the SJT is unlikely to screen commercial blockbusters.



Multiplex cinemas may be non-existent, but in terms of Scarborough's assets, Kerry emphasised the attraction of North Bay for young families. There is "good visibility" so that parents can easily keep an eye on children playing, and no distracting slot machines. The beach chalets on North Bay are apparently basic but very popular. She did comment that tourist information needs to be improved and that it was very difficult to know what is going on.

Kerry agreed to 'spread the word' and pass on leaflets about the community planning process to Church acquaintances, theatre contacts, mums and toddlers.

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Lunch at the SJT restaurant

My next meeting was at 12.30 with Pete Massey of Create, a relatively new organisation in Scarborough dedicated to promoting innovative artistic work in the town.

Pete suggested we chat over lunch at the Stephen Joseph Theatre. It was my first visit inside the building. I walked into a spacious foyer with box office to the right and an enticing book-shop at the far end. The atmosphere was friendly. Stairs led to the restaurant and I was reminded that a theatre can be a great asset to a town in terms of offering informal places to meet, greet and eat. The food was tasty and very affordable. The coffee was good too!

Arts opportunity in Scarborough: Create

A Forum of the Arts took place in 1999, involving the local MP (Lawrie Quinn) and Yorkshire Arts. The Scarborough region is apparently classed as an area of low arts opportunity, perhaps 15 or 20 years behind other regions. This needs to change.

Create was formed as a result of a couple of festivals that took place in 1998 and 1999 in association with the Festival of Youth Arts. It has gradually become established as an important (though small) arts organisation in Scarborough. Create now receives regular funding from Yorkshire Arts and Scarborough Borough Council. It represents the interests of people wanting to bring imaginative projects forward in Scarborough.

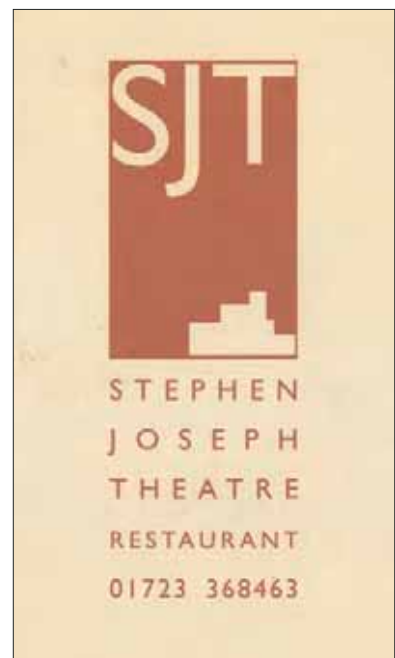
Create's Board has representatives from a variety of arts organisations within the Borough. These include:

- Helen Berry - SBC Community Arts Officer
- Stephen Joseph Theatre
- Festival of Youth Arts
- Crescent Arts Centre
- University of Hull, Scarborough Campus, School of Arts
- Yorkshire Coast College, School of Creative Arts
- Whitby Community Arts

In Pete Massey's words: "for the last 18 months the Arts has had a voice."

Arts advocacy

Pete Massey's role is that of an Arts Advocate: he makes presentations, attends meetings and meets policy makers. Create has established a good working relationship with SBC but is connected with two very separate Council departments: Economic & Community Development and Tourism & Leisure Services. Funding comes principally from tourism, even though projects are generally community orientated.



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Create: past projects

I had come across Peter Massey and Create during my initial research about the arts in Scarborough. The Google search engine provided website information on a project which had taken place in Scarborough in October 2000.

For two weeks the Talking Birds Theatre Company was 'in residence' at the Sun Court at the Spa. Using information provided by local residents, the company based their devised work on memories, anecdotes, photographs and historical material that focused on the Sun Court, the Cliff Lift and the South Bay Pool in particular. The result was a large scale mixed media performance in and around the Sun Court on 21 and 22 October 2000, combining film, theatre, live music and soundscapes. The Undercurrent project was part of The Year of the Artist celebrations, a collaboration between Talking Birds, Create and students from Hull University, Scarborough Campus.

Create was actively involved in organising last year's Festival of Light, an innovative art project that took place in December 2001. 60 ft high inflatable cones were installed in North Street, and MA dance students from the University of Hull, Scarborough Campus were commissioned to devise a dance work that interacted with the cones. An empty shop in Westborough was used to display digital art images throughout the festival. Cones were also positioned on the Castle headland and these lit up when people passed by. The festival was seen as being beneficial to retailers as it drew people into the town centre prior to Christmas. The Festival of Light will now be an annual event.

Create: Current projects

Two current projects focus on the use of arts as a aid to capacity building in disadvantaged communities. A 'Portrait Project' has been piloted in Filey, which will go to Falsgrave, Eastfield, Barrowcliff and Castle Ward, areas of multiple deprivation within the Borough. Residents will be given a digital camera to take photographs of other residents. They will be encouraged to use the exercise as an opportunity to talk about neighbourhood issues with each other, the aim being to increase confidence and reduce a sense of isolation.

'Faking It' is another proposed project, again being piloted in Filey, that will use role play and other drama exercises to help boost confidence amongst those who live in underprivileged communities. The project is being run in association with the Education Department of the Stephen Joseph Theatre.

A research study is being carried out to assess the impact of Festival events.

Pete Massey is also Chairman (unpaid) of Crescent Arts. The Centre urgently needs new premises (£10,000 has recently been awarded for an option appraisal). This would allow expansion of the managed workspace and the chance to add digital arts to its portfolio of activities.

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Create: ideas for the future

During our discussion Pete Massey mentioned a number of ideas which he would like to pursue.

These included:

- commissioning light-based sculptures for the town centre
- working with traders on redesigning street furniture
- reinventing Scarborough Fair Festival.

A festival would have a number of obvious benefits: it would make a significant impact on education and offer the opportunity for international cultural exchange. There are strong historical connections, and 2002 is the 750th anniversary of granting of the first Scarborough Fair licence. But a proper festival costs money. In fact the stumbling block for most creative ventures seems to be the lack of appropriate funding. As Pete admitted, "everyone is struggling financially."

New ways of funding obviously need to be encouraged. One idea could be for people to donate money to a Community Chest in memory of loved ones, instead of a park bench, the traditional (but perhaps over-subscribed) memorial. Pete is also trying to get a Percent for Art put into the Local Plan, a policy that is implemented elsewhere in the United Kingdom. He strongly believes that more projects which involve local residents, artists and architects will foster community spirit and provide a sense of ownership. SBC are currently committed to Half a Percent for Art, which is an encouraging step in the right direction.

I questioned Pete on his personal concerns and dreams for Scarborough. His comments included:

- Lack of imagination
- No proper public spaces in Scarborough
- Poor housing design
- Need for a concert stage for world music, perhaps Oliver's Mount would be suitable
- Better night clubs and bars: "The Spa Bar could be the best bar in the north of England"
- Need for improved links with Leeds and London
- More support is needed for internet businesses
- Crucial to keep young people in the town: "There are very few bright young things here"
- If South Bay Pool is filled in, a quality iconic sculpture should be commissioned: Scarborough's own 'Angel of the North'



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Arts and the voluntary sector

My two hour meeting with Pete Massey had given me a wealth of information about many artistic activities already taking place in Scarborough, including the use of the arts in outreach work with vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.

During our conversation I became aware of the valuable work being carried out by the Voluntary Sector in Scarborough. I heard more about the DIY Collective, a very successful youth project, who run their own venue: The Warehouse on Seamer Road. DIY members have apparently spawned a large number of local bands.

Another positive venture is the recent creation of the Public Art Group, a project initiated by the Civic Society, members of whom are working with the Council and local businessmen to commission pieces of public art in sites around the town.

Networking

One meeting with one well-placed individual creates the opportunity for many more. I now wanted to talk to someone in the Civic Society about the public art project; to meet Colin Barnes, Chief Executive of the CVS; to visit Crescent Arts and the Warehouse; to meet members of the DIY Collective; to find out more about the education department of the Stephen Joseph Theatre. Then there was the University of Hull and Yorkshire Coast College. And what about the amateur theatre groups, the YMCA and Scarborough Orchestra. I had picked up several leaflets from the library this morning. There was apparently an Electronic Organ Society in Scarborough too, and a choir called the Staxton Singers, and lunchtime concerts in the Library.

This was only my third day of contacting people in Scarborough. I was inundated with information about arts and youth activities. The list of people to meet was growing. My instinct about the town being a hive of artistic activity was certainly being confirmed.



Cultural Audit

Monday 4 March

"The value of life lies not in the length of days but in the use you make of them."

Montaigne, Essais, 1580

The Stephen Joseph Theatre

By now I had learned a fair amount about community art projects in Scarborough; it was time to find out more about theatre that is often termed 'mainstream'.

In my opinion, the Stephen Joseph Theatre is one of Scarborough's major assets. Many provincial towns have subsidised repertory theatres but it is Sir Alan Ayckbourn's status as a world famous playwright, a man who chooses to live and work in a town he loves, that helps makes the town unique. It doesn't mean that people have to like all of his work, or even any of it, after all so much of artistic endeavour is subjective, but the fact that he writes his plays in Scarborough, premieres them here and then, only then, tours and transfers to London, is surely worthy of respect.

As soon as I became involved with the urban renaissance project I wrote to Alan Ayckbourn, requesting an interview. I also checked out the website for practical information about the theatre and its history. A few facts at this point might be of interest.

Background information about the SJT

The Stephen Joseph Theatre was founded in Scarborough by theatrical pioneer Stephen Joseph, the son of actress Hermione Gingold ('Gigi', 'Bell Book and Candle', 'A Little Night Music') and publisher Michael Joseph. He had seen 'Theatre in the Round' in America and was determined to bring the genre to Britain. In 1955 he established a tiny theatre in the round on the first floor of the Public Library in Scarborough. In 1976 it moved to a supposedly temporary home on the ground floor of the former Scarborough Boys' High School (now Westward Campus of Yorkshire Coast College) at an initial conversion cost of £40,000. Despite the company's success, a new venue in Scarborough was hard to find. The local Odeon cinema closed in 1988 and by October 1990 the newly formed Scarborough Theatre Development Trust had gained the lease on the classic thirties building and fund-raising began in earnest.

This time, the conversion cost £5.2m of which £1.48m came from the National Lottery Arts Council of England; £500,000 from the Foundation for Sport and the Arts; £495,000 from the EC Objective 5 (b) fund; £400,000 from Alan Ayckbourn personally; £250,000 from the Chairman of the Development Trust, Charles (Mac) McCarthy; and other amounts ranging from hundreds of thousands to pound coins dropped in a collection bucket after each performance. There were many other fund-raising initiatives and hundreds of local benefactors bought square feet of floor space at £25 a time.



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The SJT is a subsidised theatre and the financial overview for 2000/2001 shows that 29% of its funding came from the government via Yorkshire Arts and 17% from Scarborough Council and North Yorkshire County Council. £207,000 approximately was received from SBC. Touring brought in 13% of the theatre's income, 32% came from the box office and 9% from sponsorship.

A community resource

The Annual Review gives a clear picture of the success of the theatre. In the course of the year 69,648 people attended the SJT. Of these 38% were residents of the Borough and 62% travelled in to the town, many of these making their booking through the Theatre Hotels package, which involves seven local hotels and as such has a positive impact on the local economy. The SJT is committed to making the theatre as accessible as possible to people with disabilities; it has an expanding education programme and offers many opportunities for links with the community. A total of 85 functions were hosted at the theatre during 2000-2001 including wedding receptions, fund raising events for local charities, conferences and seminars for a number of organisations. The SJT's Education Department organises a range of events and performances. The Annual Review states that 90 workshops took place, with a total of 2,500 participants from various age groups ranging from primary school children and university students to schoolteachers. There were five Rounders (Youth Theatre) sessions each week in term time for 120 young people aged between 8 and 25. At least 200 young people are on the waiting list.

The Stephen Joseph Theatre obviously plays a significant role in the town as a community and educational resource as well as showing films and providing a variety of theatrical entertainment. It also generates employment, with approximately 90 full time and part time staff.

The SJT website is a valuable source of general information for anyone wishing to visit or learn more about the town. As well as up to date information on events at the theatre, there are links with a number of hotels offering theatre tickets as part of the accommodation price. There is a brief description of the town itself, and an eloquent article from the Times (22 Jan 2000). Also a reference to Which Magazine (July 1999) that defined Scarborough as "a versatile and civilised seaside town with something to appeal to every taste. The piscatorially inclined can mooch around the fishing harbour, while those set on cultural improvement should time a visit for an Ayckbourn premier at the art deco Stephen Joseph Theatre".



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Further links provide information about the local Council, the wider region and an intriguing site called www.goferret.net tells you anything you might possibly want to know about Scarborough: from its history, to the weather, to where to find a GP. The Visitor Counter on SJT's website indicated I was number 24,257 (since 11 December 2001). That implies that the Stephen Joseph Theatre is of interest to a large number of people, who might as a result choose to visit or even move to Scarborough, benefiting the town's economy and reputation. It's free publicity after all.

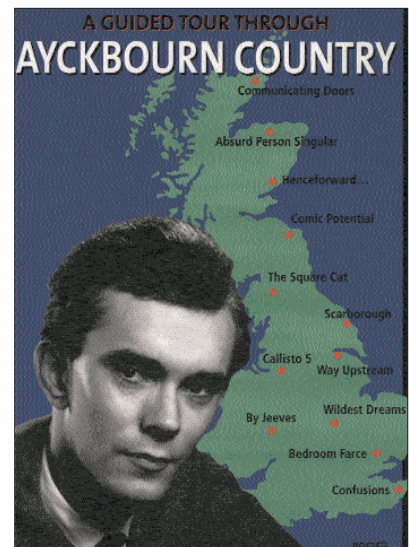
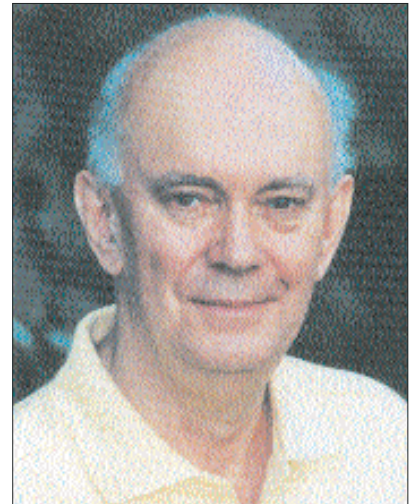
Ayckbourn Country

Following my letter to Alan Ayckbourn, I received a phone call from his wife and assistant, Heather Stoney on Friday 1st March, enquiring whether I would be free to meet for lunch on Monday. I was delighted to accept.

I have personally known of Alan's work for years, having seen several productions in the West End, performed in a tour of "Relatively Speaking" and I also recall he gave a lecture to the Drama Department when I was a student at Exeter University. But, until now, I had never visited Scarborough nor seen his work in the round.

In the spring of 1999 I had however been given a copy of Albert-Reiner Glaap's "A Guided Tour Through Ayckbourn Country" by the author himself (whom I met when performing in Germany). The book is based on a series of interviews with the playwright. I was to that extent conscious of the problems Alan had encountered during his long years in Scarborough: the accusations of elitism, public funding resentments, political tensions and, from some quarters, inadequate local support.

I was also aware of his amazing commitment to the town, not just in terms of staying there for over thirty years (which undoubtedly contributes to Scarborough's international reputation) but also by valuing its heritage and being concerned about the quality of its places and spaces. If you love your home town, there is nothing wrong with wanting it to be appreciated, cherished and above all looked after by its inhabitants and those responsible for its upkeep.



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website, the theatre now attracts more than 30,000 people from the UK and overseas to its annual 13-week summer season of Shakespeare plays. It seems important to learn lessons from elsewhere.

Promoting the assets

The Stephen Joseph Theatre obviously functions very well as an arts organisation, and the recent publication of a Best Value Audit confirms this in terms of audience attendance.

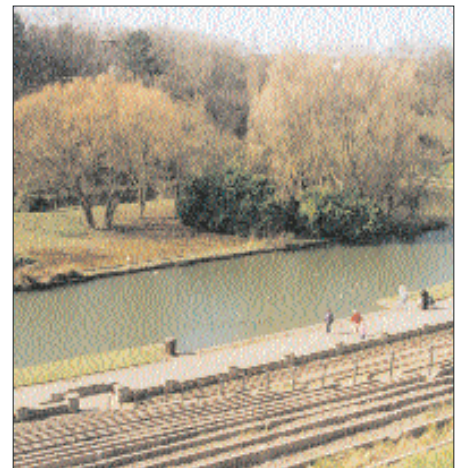
Towns need a focus. Scarborough certainly has one in the SJT. The arts can often be a catalyst for regeneration but if Scarborough is in need of a renaissance, it seems to me that first of all the town must start to value and promote the assets that exist already.

This means active and efficient publicity. Are residents and visitors made sufficiently aware of the many events that do happen in the town? How many people in Scarborough know about the pre-Raphaelite art in St Martin's Church? The town benefits from the Student Drama Festival that is held here every spring. It is a national event bringing over 1000 people into Scarborough for a week. This must add to the local economy, generating income for bars, pubs, restaurants and guest houses. But is this event sufficiently supported and promoted by the town?

Concerns and suggestions

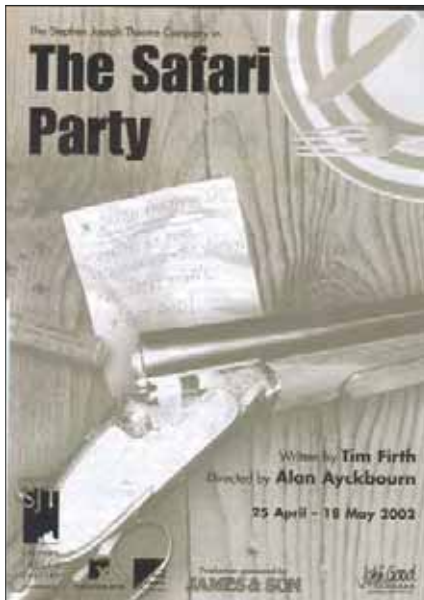
I asked Alan and Stephen their personal opinion on the kind of town Scarborough should become. Their comments included:

- Need for quality.
- More exposure about positive things that are happening. For instance: in the Old Town many houses are being restored and renovated with wooden sash windows; a new gallery has opened in Blands Cliff.
- Regulations have been flouted in the past. Corrigans is an example of a "classy arcade", but others are not.
- The quality of accommodation is a must. But there is a problem in how to fill beds out of season.
- The 1960s building on the corner of SJT and station spoils the town's image - a new facade is needed.
- Improve the 'gateway' to Scarborough: too many superstores and commercial units.
- Old Plaxtons could be landscaped.
- A change of attitude is essential. Local people seem to be opposed to the very things that bring in people and income from elsewhere, such as the motorbike racing on Oliver's Mount.
- Apathy is a problem. SJT apparently hosted a Forum three years ago: a chance for people to talk to and ask questions of the Head of Police, Head of Housing etc. It was poorly attended.
- There is a fear of change, for instance in relation to the North Bay (Zenith) project.
- Scarborough should be more ambitious: the town didn't put in a bid for Millennium money - why not?



Cultural Audit

Monday 4 March



The SJT - the arts in action

After a very useful and informative conversation, I was given a guided tour of the Stephen Joseph Theatre building.

The new theatre, known simply as the Stephen Joseph Theatre, comprises two auditoria: The Round, a 404-seat in the round and The McCarthy, a 165-seat endstage/cinema. The building contains a restaurant, shop, and full front-of-house and backstage facilities. Performances can also take place in the Restaurant which seats approximately 60. There are training and conference rooms available for hire.

The Round has two important technical innovations. The central stage area in fact moves down on a hydraulic lift to the lower floor where scenery is constructed, thus facilitating speedy set changes. The 'trampoline' is a Canadian invention which allows technicians particularly easy access to the lighting grid. Did I want to have a walk on the trampoline, says Sir Alan? How could I refuse! But for those of us with vertigo, the experience was a little nerve-racking - though it was intriguing to be able to stand virtually in mid-air above the stage.

The building is fully accessible for wheelchair users. An infra red audio system for the deaf and hard of hearing is available in both the Round and McCarthy theatres. Audio described performances are organised for each Stephen Joseph Theatre production and all SJT shows have at least one performance which is interpreted in British Sign Language for deaf and hard of hearing customers. The lift features Braille numbering and provides level access to all floors. Support dogs are welcome.

The Mission Statement of the Stephen Joseph Theatre has as its aim to provide the highest possible standard of theatrical experience via the staging of a balanced quality repertoire within a sound financial framework.

The theatre's output encompasses 5 key areas: Theatre (80%) Cinema (10%) Concerts and Platform Performance (10%) and Exhibitions which also champion and showcase the works of local artists. The majority of the theatre work is first productions of new plays. The intention is to produce imaginative, new and entertaining theatre, overcoming usual 'customer resistance' to the untried and untested. A series of formal and informal concerts is performed by local and national groups and artists. Output ranges from unaccompanied soloists to big bands/orchestras covering a variety of musical styles from classical to jazz. Platform Performances include short celebrity talks, by writers, directors and actors.

The Stephen Joseph Theatre is a place where things are happening. It is a hub of creative energy and enterprise. It is undoubtedly part of what makes Scarborough a town to be valued in terms of arts and culture.



Cultural Audit

Monday 11 March

"Youth is something very new: twenty years ago no one mentioned it."

Coco Chanel, 1971

SJT Education Department

I had an appointment this morning with Ian Wainwright who runs the Education Department of the Stephen Joseph Theatre. He was an important contact in terms of getting in touch with young people in Scarborough. In the back of my mind I also had an idea. If possible, it would be good to involve the theatre in some kind of performance on the theme of regeneration at the forthcoming community planning event.

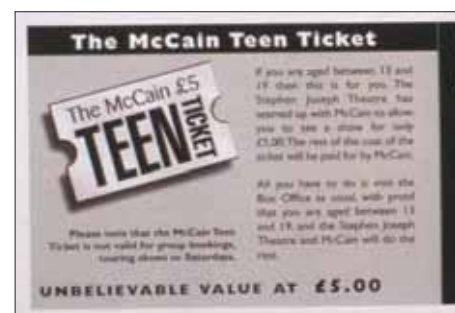
I was told that the SJT is committed to opening up all the resources of the theatre (building, facilities and staff) to young people. There is an extensive youth programme, started 6 years ago, which is run and administered by Ian, along with Cheryl Govan, assisted by volunteers, freelance practitioners, local teachers plus the resources of the building itself.

Rounders Youth Theatre

Rounders, the Stephen Joseph Youth Theatre is for local young people wanting to learn more about theatre; they also have an opportunity to perform at the SJT. There are about 150 current members with over 200 on the waiting list. They meet one day a week for two hours and work on all aspects of theatre: improvisation, masks, devised work etc.

There are two sessions on Saturdays (9.30 - 11.30am; 12 - 2pm). These are fun workshops in theatre and drama for children aged 8 to 11, approximately 25 in each group. Tuesday evenings (6pm - 8pm) are for 16 + teenagers. This is a performance-based group working on contemporary texts as well as devised work. A flexible group of about twenty, they are also involved in Front of House duties at the theatre. The Wednesday evening session (6pm - 8pm) is an intermediate group for 15 - 16 year olds who work on improvisation and performance skills. On Thursdays between 6pm - 8pm about thirty to forty 12 - 15 year olds meet for workshops in theatre skills and devised performance work. All Rounders workshops cost £2 per session.

Seven performances of work by the Rounders Youth Theatre are staged each year. However, young people's enthusiasm for theatre seems to be focused on participation rather than observation. As Ian admitted, "more young people are probably doing plays than seeing plays."



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Theatre and education

The SJT Education Department offers a series of workshops for Key Stage 1, 2 and 3, GCSE, A Level and BTEC students, tailored to class needs. These workshops are available both in school and at the theatre (depending on the availability of space and staff). Backstage tours take place around the theatre throughout the year. 'Act Your Socks Off' summer workshops involve 60 young people aged 9 to 16 who learn how to stage fight, improvise, devise and make people laugh. Two 'Now That's What I Call Theatre' Weeks give young people aged 9 to 18 the opportunity to devise, write, rehearse and perform in a play in five days - with help from the SJT's professional team of directors, technicians, stage managers and designers. In July 2002 a special five day course focusing on 'Ayckbourn and the Round' took place at the SJT, led by Alan Ayckbourn, in association with Manchester University. The Department of Drama was co-founded by Stephen Joseph as Britain's first university drama department. It has a leading reputation as an academic centre both in this country and around the world.

InterNational Connections - new plays for young people

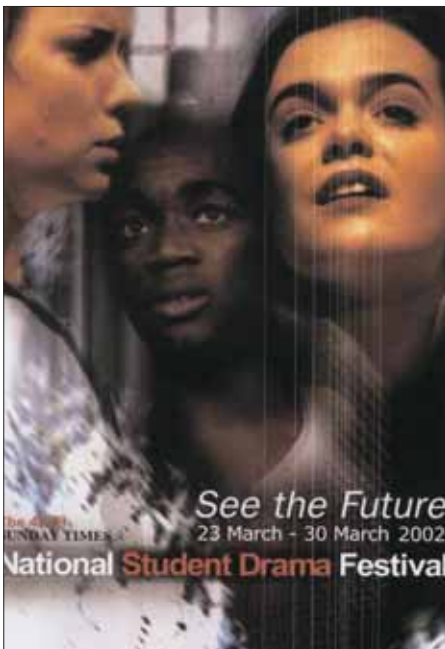
The SJT is also involved with the National Theatre's annual 'InterNational Connections' programme - one of the world's largest celebrations of Youth Theatre. Connections was established nine years ago in response to a demand for new plays by the best writers around, for young people to perform. Having produced their chosen play in their own venue (it be might the school performance space, community centre or local arts centre) the groups have a chance to perform it again at a Regional Showcase in the Regional partner venue, such as the SJT. One example of each play is then chosen to perform in the culmination of the programme - the National Showcase, hosted by the National Theatre in London to celebrate the creativity, talent, energy, humour and commitment of the many young participants.

National Student Drama Festival

Another youth orientated event is the National Student Drama Festival of which Sir Alan Ayckbourn is Patron. As I had already learned from Helen Berry, this is a major annual event that brings the best 21 student productions around the country to Scarborough.

The SJT is one of the principal performance venues as well as providing space for discussions and workshops. About 1500 students arrive in the town to perform, see shows and take part in discussions and masterclasses. It is a very intensive week's event, with the Spa providing the main focus of activity.

There's a perception that the Festival "doesn't leak much into the town", but Sir Alan and the SJT are trying to change this. The bar does well however. "The Spa earns more money in its bar during this time than at any other event".



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Theatre and capacity building

Ian Wainwright also mentioned the 'Faking It' project he is involved in with Pete Massey and Create. This three day project is being piloted in Filey. Drama exercises will be used to teach presentation skills and other capacity building techniques. The aim is to help people develop the confidence to be able to successfully handle job interviews etc.

Other gleanings

- Paul Elsam, senior lecturer in theatre at Yorkshire Coast College, Westward Campus is also very involved in young people's projects.
- The National Association of Youth Theatre Conference took place in Scarborough in May.
- Rounders workshops will soon also be held at the Coliseum in Whitby.

A space for young people

We discussed the ongoing popularity of skateboarding - which grew out of young people not having anywhere to go: they could amuse themselves on a board, anywhere, at any time. I also learned about Scarborough's band culture and the popularity of The Warehouse. There are apparently many disparate groups in the town, with a shortage of pub venues because "everyone's doing karaoke."

As someone whose job involves working with young people, Ian stressed Scarborough's need for a central space that should be given over to young people under 25. There should be skating facilities, band rehearsal space and a cafe. It needs to offer something to do; to be more than just a place for 'dropping in'. It must be "cool and funky", somewhere "kids want to go to". In his opinion it is essential there are clear boundaries, and discipline, so that if there is bad behaviour, people are "thrown out by a bouncer, like anywhere else". He felt that it mustn't be run like a youth club, nor run by SBC Youth Service, which is "not cool enough". The Youth Centre would need to have a proper management team, with older young people involved and appropriate qualified people employed to offer teenagers the chance to develop real expertise and training. In this way, as well as having a social meeting place, there would be the opportunity to do something, to learn a skill, to work as a team and to understand and appreciate the necessity for discipline.

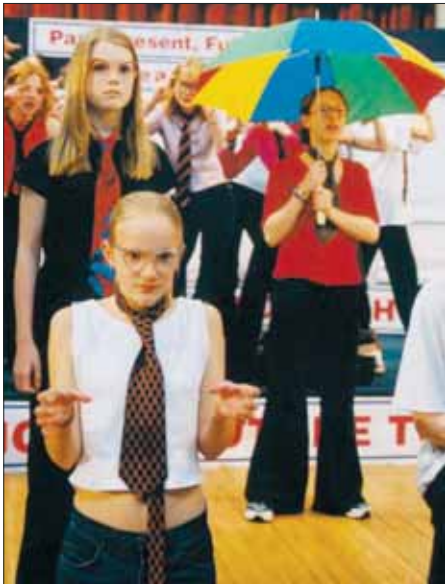
Rehearsal space needs

In terms of aspirations, the SJT Youth Theatre urgently needs more rehearsal space. This would give twice as much access to youth theatre projects and have a big impact on the town, as it would enable the "200 + kids on waiting list to be involved". Ian made the suggestion that a building already owned by the SJT might be suitable, if funding could be found. This is a large warehouse (called Tonks) currently used for storing props, furniture etc. Conversion would provide another performance area and more rehearsal space and enable the youth department to be less dependent on space at the SJT. The warehouse building would require flooring, lights, toilet facilities (plumbing is there already) fire exits and no doubt other legal requirements. Also I assume another space would have to be found for the existing storage.



Cultural Audit

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Rounders to perform at the Community Planning Weekend

At the end of our meeting I asked Ian whether it might be possible for a group of young people to be involved in some kind of performance at the forthcoming Community Planning Weekend. He readily agreed. As the evening workshops often involve devising a piece of theatre, this would provide the impetus for next term's sessions: a real 'commission'!

We agreed that I would run a short 'problems and dreams' workshop at the beginning of April with either the Wednesday or Thursday group, in order to get ideas flowing, and then Ian and his team would work with the young people in subsequent sessions to create a devised performance. The theme would be what young people currently think of Scarborough, what they would like to change - and how they see Scarborough in the future.

After all, the proposed Vision for Scarborough is for 20 years hence. By then the teenagers will either have left the town or be enjoying its renaissance. In many ways the future is in their hands. A long term strategy must involve the views of today's young people.



I was delighted that the Stephen Joseph Theatre had agreed to become actively involved in Scarborough's Urban Renaissance programme. In my view a short performance would have a number of benefits. It is an ideal way to promote the creative talents of local young people to a (hopefully) large and varied captive audience, perhaps comprising people who might not normally attend the theatre. It is a way to find out the concerns and aspirations of young people themselves. And as the Rounders members come from a variety of backgrounds, schools and neighbourhoods, it would be a way of 'spreading the word' about the community planning process. The young people would presumably tell their friends and family about the project. They would have to get permission to miss school, so the teachers would know too. By actively involving a group of 25 to 30 teenagers in the Urban Renaissance process, it would help 'animate' a much wider section of the community. And, of course, it is an example of cultural activity, proving once again that the arts are alive and well in Scarborough.



Cultural Audit

Monday 11 March

A chance meeting - conversation and lunch

The meeting with Ian Wainwright was my only official appointment today, but 'community animation' should never be defined simply by meetings. It is those chance 'hellos' which make up a network of useful and informative contacts. And that's what happened today, or rather it started yesterday, on the train from York to Scarborough. Platform 4, York station to be exact.

I was travelling with far too much luggage: a suitcase, a portable computer, a rucksack, and another bag containing a printer. I must have seemed sufficiently overloaded because a kind voice offered to help. This was the beginning of a conversation that started yesterday on the journey from York to Scarborough and continued for several hours over lunch today.

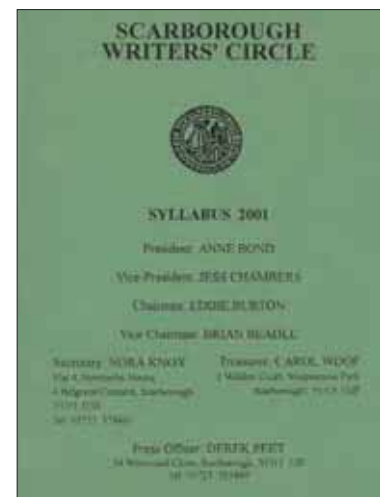
Originally from Kilkenny in Ireland, Alisé (pronounced Aylish) Kemp is a local resident who has lived in Scarborough for ten years. In her opinion, "it's gone down a lot since then." Her son, Paul is a professional actor and violinist. As I had guessed intuitively, Scarborough does indeed attract and nurture artists and musicians of all sorts. Alisé now uses her professional nursing skills on a part time basis at a Convent in York. A book lover, she also writes for magazines, especially on nursing issues, and has had a short story broadcast on radio.

Literary activity in Scarborough: the Writers' Circle

Of all the people one could meet by chance, it seemed very apt that I should have entered into conversation with someone with an active interest in the arts. And it was particularly useful that Alisé should be connected with the literary aspect of creative activity, as I had not yet made any specific contacts with writers. Here was an opportunity to cast my net to cover this particular section of the local community.

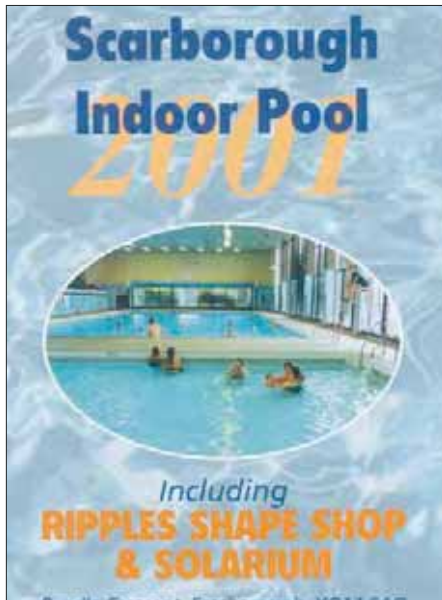
Alisé is a member of the Writers' Circle of Scarborough and agreed to distribute publicity material about the forthcoming Community Planning Weekend at their next meeting. The group meets every Tuesday evening at Allat House and produces a quarterly newsletter called 'Roundabout'. According to information gleaned from the winter issue, the Circle has fifty members, with an average attendance at meetings of twenty-three. The Circle's objective is to share practical writing experiences. Competitions are organised, manuscripts discussed and guest speakers are invited to talk on items of relevant interest. I was told that 50% of Writers Circle members are published writers.

From the Yorkshire Arts website I later read that "Yorkshire writing, reading and literacy have always been key elements in self development and expression - the tools of enquiry, affirmation, celebration and protest. We have a strong sense of where we live, we are also pluralist and outward looking. The region is rich in writers making all or part of their living through writing for publication, for the stage and for film, radio and television." It seems that Scarborough residents have a part to play in this success.



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Priorities for the future: a local resident's opinion

Alisé and I exchanged contact details on Sunday evening and the next morning she left a message on my phone inviting me to lunch at her flat in Westwood, not far from the Stephen Joseph Theatre. I accepted and we continued our chat about the arts in general and her personal concerns and aspirations for the town. She also gave me a brief guided tour of Valley Gardens, and the Crescent with its museums and gallery.

Alisé was succinct in her priorities for investment in the future of Scarborough.

- Theatre
- Swimming pool
- Art Gallery & Museums
- Clean the place up

The swimming pool was of major concern to Alisé and more specifically the Acquafit classes - which are currently discontinued in half terms and school holidays. This means people are unable to keep up their regular exercise, which is particularly needed by certain elderly and disabled residents: a funding or scheduling problem that obviously affects a number of people.

New writing in Scarborough

Today ended with a literary and theatrical flavour as I went to see a production at the Stephen Joseph Theatre, in the McCarthy auditorium. 'Something Blue' was the third production in the First Foot season, a programme of commissioned work by three new playwrights.

One of Scarborough's many assets is the new writing policy at the SJT. The theatre aims to produce at least ten new plays a year, with additional late night and lunchtime shows as funding allows. A large number of scripts are submitted to the theatre each week. A team of professional readers led by the theatre's Literary Manager assess all submitted material with a view to its suitability for the SJT.

If it is felt that a work or writer has potential, the script will then be considered by the literary department in conjunction with Alan Ayckbourn. Should the script continue to get a favourable response, the new writer may be invited to meet with the Literary Manager in order to discuss submission, commissioning or production possibilities. The intention is to develop long term relationships with writers who are attuned to the possibilities of the Stephen Joseph Theatre.

Alan Ayckbourn had his first play staged by Stephen Joseph when he was only 20. It is a significant achievement that the tradition of new writing continues to flourish in Scarborough.



Cultural Audit

Tuesday 12 March

"Men of culture are the true apostles of equality."

Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy, 1869

Museums and Gallery Department

My cultural odyssey this morning led me to the Crescent, only a short stroll from both the central shopping district and the beach, but worlds away in terms of atmosphere. Even the tarmac seemed to be imbued with heritage and learning. A charming park with iron railings, lawn, flowers and paths lies in the centre of the historic oval streetscape. There's an elegant arced terrace of hotels and residential accommodation on one side; three attractive honey-coloured stone public buildings on the other.

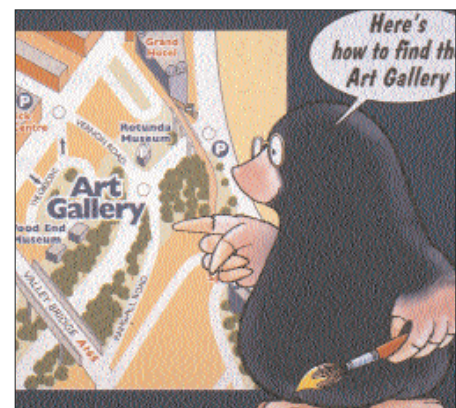
A meeting had been arranged with Jane Mee, Museums and Gallery Officer for Scarborough Borough Council. She was very keen I should meet other members of her department and so at 10 o'clock I was introduced to Lara Goodband, Curator of the Art Gallery; Cath Branson (Community Officer) Will Watts (Project Officer), both involved with the Dinosaur Coast project; Sara Pepper, Audience Development Officer for the Fisherman's Choice project and Jane Davies, Registrar, who looks after the natural history collection. Mark Kibblewhite from SBC's Tourism & Leisure Services was also present.

Art as a catalyst for regeneration

Over coffee in the Art Gallery we discussed the value of art galleries and museums as economic regenerators. There are now in Britain a number of examples of towns that have benefited enormously from the imposition of a new cultural building. For instance Oldham (gallery & museum collection), Liverpool (Tate), Walsall (art gallery), St Ives (Tate). Jane is from Walsall, Lara knows St Ives. They both commented on the positive change that had taken place following the arrival of an arts-focused building. "St Ives used to be bingo, now it's restaurants - it's completely changed."

There is a very committed and enthusiastic team working for the Museums and Gallery department, but they are obviously ridiculously small-staffed. The collections themselves warrant the employment of an archaeologist and anthropologist. The Curator of the Art Gallery has to reconcile the till's takings at the end of the day: a fact that underlines the parlous state of resourcing within the department. Shortage of personnel has also led to short opening hours: in winter visitors only have access on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Since July 1998 entry is no longer free: An 'S' pass ticket (currently £3; £1.50 for concessions, £7 for a family) gives admission to all three museums. A single visit costs £2. This seems good value for money in comparison to many other municipal museums, especially on the Continent. But there is considerable resistance to the charge and resentment that payment for entry should be necessary. There was apparently a perception among local residents that the introduction of a museum/gallery charge bailed out the Stephen Joseph Theatre.



Cultural Audit

Tuesday 12 March



In my opinion, this kind of rumour is unfortunate as it detracts attention from the real objective - which surely must be to generate support for the Arts and Culture sector as a whole. Factions are futile: the town needs to work together to value, support and promote all aspects of cultural and artistic endeavour. Individuals cannot be expected to like the same things: some people enjoy paintings and hate theatre, some people love plays and think stuffed animals are stupid; others find fossils fascinating but dislike contemporary music. Each person will respond differently to cultural exposure; each experience has its own value and relevance to the observer/participant. It can never be "all for one and one for all". And, of course (to quote Alexandre Dumas again) "all generalisations are dangerous, even this one!"

The Crescent buildings

Jane Mee then gave me a comprehensive guided tour of the museums and gallery: it was an extremely informative morning. I was personally amazed that such cultural gems exist in Scarborough, assets that in my view are crying out to be more widely promoted. But funding - yet again - seems to be the stumbling block. There is a cultural sleeping beauty in the Crescent that demands a prince's kiss. Attention, support and money as well.



I was given a folder of relevant information, from which I found out that Scarborough Museums and Gallery hold some 150,000 objects and specimens pertaining to the Borough and north east Yorkshire. Subject areas include archaeology, natural sciences (natural history and geology), fine art, local and social history (photographs, textiles and costume and ephemera). There are three public museums, two museum stores (in Eastfield and the basement of Londesborough Lodge) and a Civic Collection held at the Town Hall. With respect to content and importance Scarborough's collections can be ranked as follows:

- 1) archaeology - internationally and nationally significant
- 2) natural history and geology - regionally important, some specimens of national and/or international significance
- 3) Fine Art - local value particularly depicting local scenes
- 4) Social history - local value

It is interesting to note that the Borough has more listed buildings than York.



Although statistics imply otherwise, there is a perception among local people that the Museums and Gallery are not well-used. However, projects do get a lot of positive media coverage and although the introduction of an entry charge has undoubtedly affected attendance figures, many exhibitions are popular, particularly 'The Dinosaur Coast', an extremely successful people-orientated project.

The bottom line is that more space is urgently needed, new facilities, more staffing, more money. Heritage / lottery funding would perhaps be available, but I was led to understand that the overall 'Vision' needs clarifying. It was hoped that the Urban Renaissance process could help define and demonstrate the potential for a cultural quarter.

Cultural Audit

Tuesday 12 March

There is currently some debate as to whether the buildings should be the focus or whether in the 21st century it is more important to use outreach projects to disseminate the life long learning possibilities inherent within a collection of artefacts and paintings. From my personal perspective, surely it's not a question of 'either/or', but 'both'. Art and culture can surely be outside as well as inside a building.

Scarborough Art Gallery

In 1828 William and John Barry and John Uppleby acquired land from John Tindall, a Scarborough shipbuilder, in order to develop what was to become the Crescent. The Art Gallery is housed in an Italianate villa built in 1835/6. There were several changes of owners but after the death of a solicitor called Henry Edward Donner, Crescent House was bought by Scarborough Corporation and used as a maternity clinic before conversion to an Art Gallery in 1947.

Much of the permanent collection is made up of the bequest of the late Tom Laughton, the prosperous local hotelier, and there are many paintings by John Atkinson Grimshaw (1836-1893). Grimshaw lived in Leeds but often visited Scarborough in the summer. In the late 1870s, following the death of three of his children, he rented a house which he called Castle-by-the-Sea after a poem by Longfellow. The move to the coast inspired much of the artist's most attractive work, as throughout his career he was attracted by maritime themes: ships, docks and the sea. Pictures in the Gallery reflect Grimshaw's reputation as a painter of powerful atmospheric scenes.

My visit to the Gallery coincided with 'Scarborough's Family Album', a hands-on exhibition for all ages, telling the story of Scarborough from fishing village to fashionable resort. As well as seeing work by Grimshaw and others from the permanent collection, visitors are encouraged to touch and discover what an oil painting feels like, to experiment with paint and pigment and to try on period costumes. This is all part of the current trend to make the Museums and Gallery service less intimidating and more accessible to the wider community. I noted there was a child's loo seat on toilet door, which seemed to underline the 'family friendly' emphasis of the exhibition!

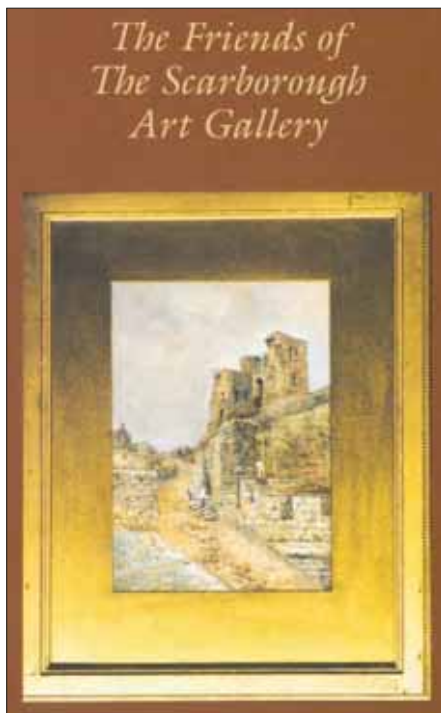
Another people-orientated project is the Fisherman's Choice Exhibition that will run from June to January 2003 at the Art Gallery. This brings together some of the region's best-loved fishing and maritime paintings, prints and drawings, all selected by a group from within Scarborough's fishing community. The exhibition will be accompanied by personal experiences and accounts by fishermen and fisherwomen, to provide fresh insight and understanding to these particular works of art.

Scarborough Art Gallery has both permanent and contemporary exhibitions and is regularly used by local artists to display their work. The East Coast Open Exhibition, with works for sale, had been mounted earlier in the year. At the time of my visit, there was a Craftspace Touring Exhibition on the 1st floor, called 'Ikons of Identity' which "examined the public face and private identity in front of and behind the mask"



Cultural Audit

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During later research I was interested to find a reference to 'The Great Yorkshire Art Exhibition' which had taken place at Scarborough Art Gallery from August to November 2000. This was apparently the first time an English region had presented its own history of art and the exhibition included works by over forty artists from the past 150 years, ranging from Atkinson Grimshaw, to Herbert Read, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Patrick Heron and Damien Hirst.

The catalogue to the Great Yorkshire Art Exhibition includes an essay written by Michael Paraskos, at that time a Lecturer in Fine Art, University of Hull, Scarborough Campus. It makes for interesting reading and puts local artistic endeavour into a wider context. Its concluding paragraph states: *"History suggests that Yorkshire art is at its most interesting and influential when it does not follow the mainstream art world of London, but draws on its own environment, history and traditions, and makes its own connections with the wider world. Somewhere in Yorkshire right now, someone is doing just that."*

I was once again reminded that a rich vein of cultural life-blood flows behind the more obvious image of Scarborough as a beach resort offering penny-arcades, bingo, ice cream and donkey rides.

Issues of concern

The buildings that house Scarborough's museums and gallery are seen as both an asset and a liability. For some people they are as important as the collections themselves and they do help preserve the built heritage of the Crescent area. They have domestic proportions and provide a pleasant working environment: "The staff like it too."

But there are obvious limitations in terms of their potential to provide the infrastructure necessary for a modern museum service. There is limited access for people with disabilities and insufficient public toilets.

The Museums and Gallery service is responding to changes in visitor expectations, particularly in the development of innovative outreach projects and the inclusion of hands-on exhibitions. But it lacks the ability and funding to provide quality exhibitions using modern presentation techniques that incorporate, for example, specialist lighting effects, interactive displays, computer technology and staff interpretation skills.

Of particular concern is the lack of infrastructure to properly care for the Borough's collections that are currently stored in basements and attics. These have inappropriate environmental conditions which will surely lead to gradual deterioration and costly conservation work at some point in the future. It also seems a shame that more natural history specimens are not actually on display: one of the many constraints of an under-resourced department.

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Londesborough Lodge Museum Store

I visited the Museum Store in the basement of Londesborough Lodge, another late Georgian villa, at the moment (and for the next 18 months) the administrative offices of SBC's Tourism and Leisure Department. The basement used to be a private Turkish bath. It is damp, cramped and far too small and inadequate for the museum's needs. Jane Davies, the Registrar, is currently identifying the collection and putting relevant information on a database with help from a large enthusiastic group of volunteers. "There's a waiting list a mile long for people wanting to help" - but there's no space.

Anyone can have access to see the museum collections - just make an appointment and it's "as accessible to the child as the professor."

While I was visiting the basement I met a PhD research student from Southampton. Stephanie was busy dating prehistoric bones: a skill called forensic taphonomy. These were pre-Bronze Age bones found locally in the 1960s. I gather evidence of singeing indicates potential cannibalism, but as the marrow itself was not singed, I was reliably informed that "they could have been roasting them, not eating them." It seemed like an ordinary old bone to me, but it was obviously much older than it looked. Scarborough may be a tourist resort but it was enlightening to discover how much serious academic research goes on behind the scenes.

Wood End Natural History Museum

The Natural History Museum is housed in Wood End, a house once occupied by the famous literary family, the Sitwells. It was built in 1835 and occupied in 1837 by George Knowles, a local JP. Osbert Sitwell was later to describe it as *"...a singular, oblong house of orange-yellow stone, in what I believe was known as the incised Boeotian style."* In 1870 the house was purchased by Lady Louisa Sitwell who added a conservatory: *"...the roof of which had continually to be raised to allow room for a palm tree, then some thirty feet in height, and said to be one of the tallest in England..."*

Lady Louisa gave Wood End to her son George. He made radical changes to the structure, adding the library wing to the west side of the conservatory (modelled on the library at Renishaw Hall, the family's main residence in Derbyshire) and a connecting bridge at first floor level supported on brick arches.

Of the three Sitwell children, only Edith was born at Wood End on 7th September 1887, but the family maintained close links to the house until the First World War. In 1925 the furnishings were removed and the property shut up. The house and grounds were purchased by Scarborough Corporation in 1934 but no decision was made about its future use until 1950. The conservatory was extended and after considerable restoration, necessary after years of decline, the building opened as a Museum of Natural History in July 1951.



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The restored west wing contains a conservatory and a library which is lined by an almost complete collection of the published works of Dame Edith, Sir Osbert, Sir Sacheverell and their father, Sir George Sitwell.

Edith's parents were apparently disappointed by the fact their first child was a girl, and further dismayed by her lack of conventional good looks and her attachment to literature. Edith Sitwell was a poet whose satirical wit and interest in technical innovation caused considerable controversy. The performance of 'Façade', a poem set to music by Sir William Walton received a stormy reception in London on 24th January 1922. She attempted to use new rhythms and images that did not conform to traditional poetic forms. Concerned all her life to justify her work, Edith carried on a number of literary feuds, notably with Noel Coward and FR Leavis but was fiercely loyal to her brothers and her friends. She became a Dame in 1954 and a Catholic in 1955, after which her poetry took on a more religious and reflective tone. Her death on 9th December 1964 was followed by the posthumous publication of her autobiography 'Taken Care Of' in 1965. She is known as one of England's great eccentrics.



As well as literary heritage, Wood End has an excellent natural history collection with a wide range of stuffed animals, tusks, insect collections as well as fossils and other items from Yorkshire's 'dinosaur coast'. But so much of it is hidden away, out of sight in cupboards and drawers. The collection needs to be brought out of storage and displayed in the museum. However, such aspirations demand money and human resources. And this is what Scarborough's cultural quarter so obviously lacks at the moment.

In addition to the permanent collection of natural history artefacts, an exhibition has been mounted called 'Making Sense'. This was created in consultation with people of all ages with disabilities, with the help of the Regional Arts Lottery Programme. There are large-scale artworks using texture, light and sound to stimulate the senses, with a moveable fish sculpture, and balloon birds with an accompanying soundtrack.

This exhibition again shows how the Museums and Gallery service is attempting to combat social exclusion and reach out to the wider community.



The Art Gallery seemed to me to be in good repair, but Wood End demonstrated the problems of maintaining a museum within a listed building. I gather the roof has been recently repaired but although it would benefit from larger tiles, its listed building status requires the use of small slates, less robust against the elements. I noticed some walls had peeling plaster. There was a general slightly 'run down' feeling and I'm sure that a large cheque would be needed to bring the museum up to a necessary higher standard.

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I was then shown into the basement of Wood End, a wonderful vaulted and hidden jewel of a space. Currently unused, it seemed to me to have amazing potential for a cafe/bar leading to a patio seating area beyond the arched facade one can see from across Valley Gardens. With imagination, quality design and appropriate funding, surely this could provide a focus for the Crescent which would help draw tourists to the museums and gallery. I was reminded of the marketing ploy used by the Victoria & Albert Museum in London several years ago. A great restaurant with a museum attached. Could this happen here too?

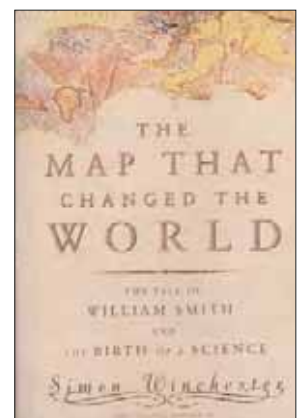
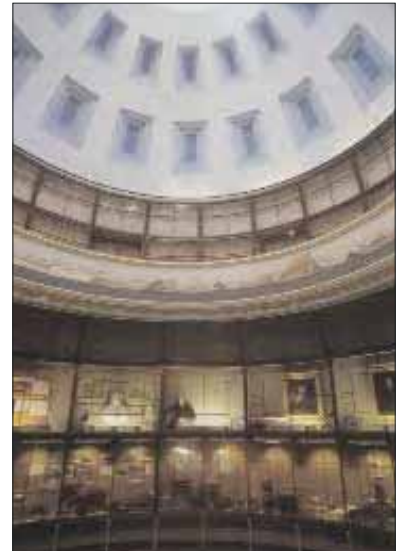
The Rotunda

I was also given a guided tour of the Rotunda Museum, an iconic building which is situated a short distance away from the Crescent, at the bottom of the steep Valley Gardens that back on to the Art Gallery and Wood End. It is a unique, purpose-built museum, designed by William Smith, one of Scarborough's most famous former residents. The museum was built in 1828 to display fossils & rocks in the order in which they occurred - youngest in the cases at the top, oldest at the bottom. The order around the walls reflected the order of rocks on the Yorkshire coast. The upstairs gallery is an artefact in itself with beautifully designed display cases. The mural shows geology from the Humber to the Tees by John Phillips, William Smith's nephew.

The Yorkshire coast is steeped in geological heritage. The rugged cliffs provide the most complete sequence of Jurassic rocks in the UK and have attracted geologists for over two centuries. In the early 19th century the area became a home for William Smith (1766-1839), known as the 'Father of Geology'. He was the first person to "understand what the rocks were saying". He matched fossil types to rock strata and produced the first geological map (hanging in Burlington House, London). Unfortunately Smith's original collection is no longer intact. It is now part of collections held in York, Scarborough and the British Museum, London.

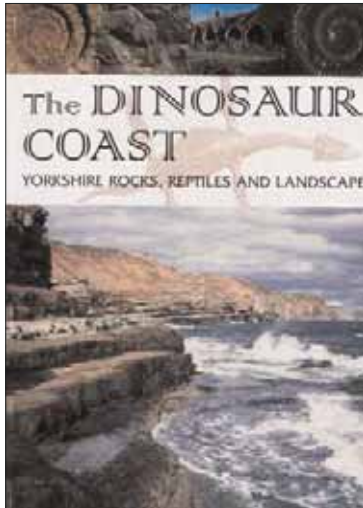
The publication of "The Map That Changed the World" by Simon Winchester in 2001 has certainly revived interest in William Smith. I found the Rotunda Museum so remarkable that, without having had any previous interest in geology at all, I decided to read the book. William Smith's story is fascinating and educational. Originally a canal engineer working in Somerset, his determination to produce a reliable map resulted in financial ruin. As well as being sent to debtor's prison, he had to endure the hostility of gentlemen scholars of the period. After losing his home, his wife and spending time in gaol, he succeeded in getting the map published, and spent his later years in Yorkshire.

One of Scarborough's assets is undoubtedly the links the town has with this talented and visionary man.



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The Dinosaur Coast project was established by SBC's Museums and Gallery Service in 1999 to conserve the geological heritage of the area by raising people's awareness and understanding through a programme of geologically-themed events and activities for the non specialist visitor, especially families, and the local community.

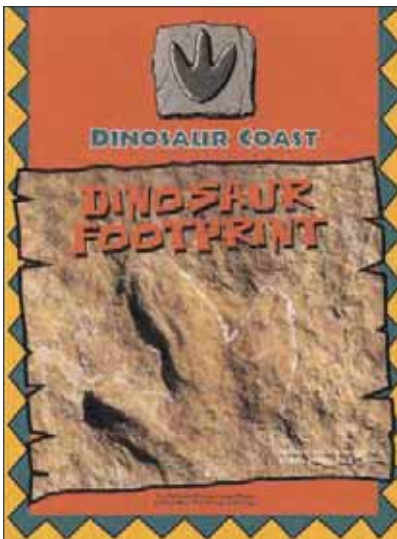
The pioneering project encompassed a large number of events, including fossil hunting sessions along some of the world's best Jurassic rock exposures, hands-on activities on the beach and in the Whitby and Scarborough museums, and expert days involving strenuous five-hour walks along beaches and up cliffs. A tent pitched on the beach became home to activities using the museums' specimens, including feely bags and boxes, taking rubbings from fossils, making fossil plaster casts, mineral sorting and making models of Jurassic scenes.

The ongoing success of the Dinosaur Coast project suggests a popular demand in the Borough for geology-based activities, which can involve both English Nature and the North York Moors National Park. It promotes the value of lifelong learning and encourages access for all. It helps conserve the natural heritage of the region and also stimulates the local economy. It has built bridges with traditionally disparate groups: schools, adult education groups, outdoor pursuits enthusiasts and commercial fossil collectors.

Ideas and aspirations

A variety of ideas were suggested by Jane Mee and her colleagues during my visit to the Museums and Gallery this morning. Aspirations include:

- A hands-on facility like the Natural History Centre in Liverpool - where members of the public can open drawers, touch exhibits, look properly at specimens.
- A Museum of the Seaside. Scarborough is known as England's 'first resort'. The seaside theme could link social history with Scarborough's other cultural assets, as well as providing a tourist attraction.
- Wood End: explore the potential for turning the basement into a cafe / bar / social amenity. Investigate the possibility of an outside seating area, which could perhaps also be used as a performance space. Could the available land (site of former green houses) perhaps be used to build a modern purpose-built extension for the museum?
- Provide some kind of link between the Art Gallery and Wood End.
- Part of Valley Gardens could become attached to the Gallery/ Museum to provide space for people to sit outside; also perhaps a sculpture garden. Although they would no longer be 'public', they might be easier to maintain.



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- Provide a new museum store in a suitable, purpose-built structure to house the natural history collection. The building should ideally cater for community use too, with cafe and performance space.
- Pedestrianise the Crescent: make it a Cultural Quarter.
- Scarborough could become Centre for Geological Excellence in the Region - it already has the appropriate building: the Rotunda.
- Commission a play about the life of William Smith.
- Better transport links are needed - connect Scarborough across the Pennines.

A personal reflection

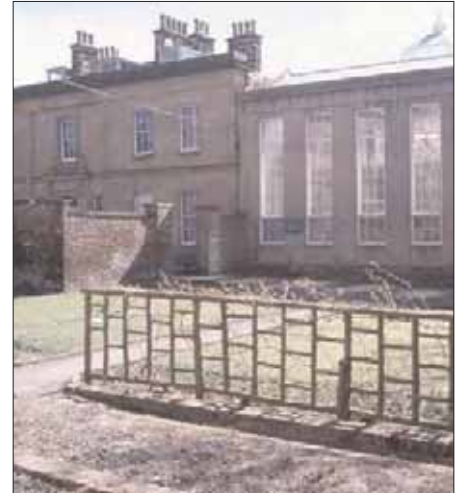
While contemplating the future of Scarborough's Museums and Gallery in the Crescent, I was reminded of a recent visit to Nîmes in France. It struck me that this was a good example of a place that has successfully managed to combine the old with the new. The Contemporary Art Museum, designed by Sir Norman Foster, is a striking glass and steel building that sits happily next to one of the world's most remarkably preserved Roman temples. Although a decidedly 'modern' building, the architecture is beautiful, innovative and perfectly complements the ancient structure. A major art exhibition was on display when I was there, along with works by local artists. From the upstairs restaurant you can both sip coffee and admire the view of the temple across the square.

The decision to link heritage with modernity does, in my opinion, prove that culture does not simply have to be a 'custodian of the past'. Foster's building doesn't detract from the ancient monument - it just says, 'we can be modern too'. There are of course other examples in continental Europe: the pyramid in the Louvre in Paris; the Ludwig Museum next to Cologne Cathedral.

So perhaps there is a precedent for building a modern, high tech, imaginative extension to the Wood End Museum here in Scarborough: a multi-purpose structure which could store the natural history collection, provide up-to-date museum amenities and still complement the Crescent's unique sense of heritage. It might be controversial, but controversy is not necessarily a bad thing.

A networking event in the Crescent

Through Helen Berry, SBC's Community Arts Officer, I had discovered that a 'Networking Event' was to be held at the Art Gallery between 11am and 3pm on Tuesday 12th March. This was organised by Chrysalis Arts, an artist-led organisation based at the Art Depot in Gargrave. In spring 2001 Chrysalis Arts was commissioned by Yorkshire Arts to carry out a survey of North Yorkshire professional artists, makers and craftspeople, to obtain an accurate picture of the range and scale of their activity in the county and identify future training needs. The survey showed that many felt a need for more contact with fellow artists.



CHRYSLIS ARTS LTD
In association with
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Invites **NORTH YORKSHIRE ARTISTS, MAKERS & CRAFTSPEOPLE**
to a **NETWORKING EVENT**

on **Tuesday 12 March 11am – 3pm**
at **THE ART GALLERY**
THE CRESCENT, SCARBOROUGH

*** FREE OF CHARGE ***
*** BOOKING ESSENTIAL ***
*** LUNCH & REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED ***
(£5 contribution is requested)

- A chance to network and meet other artists, makers and craftspeople living/working in North Yorkshire
- A presentation by Chrysalis artists about community consultation & involvement in public art
- Opportunities to make known your particular training needs.

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In response to this, Chrysalis Arts organised a series of networking events for North Yorkshire artists and makers, with the ultimate aim of developing a better infrastructure for artists in North Yorkshire. This was another of my Scarborough 'flukes'. By happy coincidence I happened to have scheduled my meeting with Jane Mee, the Museums and Gallery Officer, in the Crescent, on the very day this networking event was taking place: a perfect opportunity to combine some fact-finding with meeting people. All I had to do was walk up the road from Londesborough Lodge to the Art Gallery. Perfect timing!

Crescent Arts Centre

My first meeting was with Mary Butler, the part-time Arts Development Officer at Crescent Arts. She is also a practising artist who does predominantly installation work using non traditional materials including wallpaper, crockery, stitch and clothing.

I had already heard from a number of sources (Helen Berry of SBC, Pete Massey of Create) about Crescent Arts' space and accessibility concerns. Situated in the basement of Scarborough Art Gallery, visitors have to clamber down steep external steps to a space below pavement level. This is an impossible descent for the disabled, and a psychological barrier too for casual passers-by. Despite the welcoming signage, it does not feel the sort of place where one could just 'drop in'.



I was unable to properly assess the interior today due to the fact lunch was taking place for the networking artists. It seemed warm and friendly and full of people munching sandwiches and holding animated conversation. I chatted briefly to a sculptor from Whitby before being ushered into a tiny office for my meeting with Mary. Two chairs and a desk. Not much room to swing a cat.

I discovered through later research that Crescent Arts was set up in 1979 as the Crescent Arts Workshop, England's first artist studio co-operative, providing studio and exhibition space for professional artists in a space run by artists. The current Mission Statement states the aim is to "support and promote contemporary visual arts practice by providing individual studios and open access facilities for artists, a gallery with a diverse and stimulating exhibition programme and an extensive range of educational activities for both visitors and the local community." The social mission of art can be seen in the strong educational emphasis of the Crescent artists.

There is a maximum of seven studio holders whose rent is subsidised on the basis that the artists are responsible for the day to day running of Crescent Arts. This can be very hard work if there are few artists in the studios to share the administrative and educational duties. Tasks include organising exhibitions and running regular workshops for children, as well as life drawing classes for adults.

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Exhibitions

Crescent Arts has a public gallery which holds six exhibitions of contemporary art per year covering a diverse range of art forms in both one person and group shows. The exhibitions provide support and opportunities for studio holders as well as promoting the work of more established artists. The exhibition programme is intended to be challenging and to reflect both national and regional themes.

A recent exhibition at Crescent Arts displayed a series of panels produced by a group of artists called the Hayfield Palindromics who meet up and celebrate every palindromic date with events that have included eating 99 ice creams and ordering only food with the number 8 from a Chinese restaurant menu. 2002 is a palindromic year (reading the same backwards as forwards) and an art event took place in Scarborough on Saturday 2nd February, which of course is 02.02.02. This included a public forum on palindromics and activities such as 2 stump cricket on the beach and tea in the gallery at 22 minutes past 2.

Crescent Arts Youth Arts Outreach

A Youth Arts Outreach project commenced in 1999, with an outreach worker offering arts involvement to new audiences by working with existing organisations already serving young people between the ages of 10 and 25, for whom arts provision is not available for a variety of reasons: geographical, social or financial.

The outreach work aims to encourage and develop participation in the visual arts; to inspire creative potential and self-esteem; and to equip young people with social, administrative, managerial and artistic skills that will encourage and motivate them into education and future careers.

The project is a valuable community resource that promotes creativity as a useful and worthwhile activity. It strengthens links within Scarborough; develops transferable skills and emphasises the importance of arts projects as a way of contributing to life long learning. This in turn can lead to permanent changes in the community in terms of cultural, social and personal development.

But however worthwhile the aims, such projects require ongoing funding. It takes time to build up trust and confidence, especially with young people who are unused to taking part in arts activities.

Edgehill has been the focus of much of Crescent Arts outreach work where a process of gradual familiarisation in art has taken place. The artists went to the Youth Club every Thursday night and local residents were encouraged to come and work with them. To begin with, people were afraid to leave the estate. Now they happily come to the arts centre in the centre of Scarborough and make use of the print-making facilities. This is a good example of capacity building through arts activity. But it's a long, slow process. There is no continuous funding for outreach work: materials, administration and facilitating the project all cost money.



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Funding issues

My discussion with Mary Butler focused on two major issues: funding and the need for a new space.

The funding situation does seem to be acute. There is too much work for too few staff. This in turn limits marketing opportunities. I was given the New Year newsletter, but an old and malfunctioning photocopier tends to produce an inferior copy. Does the wider Scarborough population know about Crescent Arts activities and achievements? A glossy brochure might help - but there's no budget, or personnel to produce better publicity. Computers have apparently been donated, but there's no money for staff to be taught how to use the equipment. The outreach project is obviously successful, but funding officially ceased in March 2001.

Nevertheless, funding from Yorkshire Arts and Scarborough Borough Council does enable Crescent Arts to function, even though the future seems somewhat insecure.

The newsletter provided information on recent successes including outreach work with Home & Dry (Scarborough's Foyer scheme for the homeless) as well as Edgehill Youth Club. A Christmas scene was painted as a backdrop for the temporary ice rink on North Street; lanterns were made for last December's Festival of Light. Mary and Helen (the outreach worker) also took eight young people from Edgehill Youth Club to three estates that have been regenerated in Castleford. The day out was intended to show how young people can be positively involved in estate and community regeneration: a valuable lesson from elsewhere.

Search for new premises

Crescent Arts does seem to deserve a bigger and better home. An option appraisal for new premises is now possible as they have recently been awarded a £10,000 grant by Yorkshire Arts under the Regional Arts Lottery Programme. This study will review Crescent Arts current activities and location and assess the feasibility of moving to new premises, thereby improving facilities and activities for the organisation. Improved public access and more space could provide income-generating studio rental and the ability to store artworks before and after exhibitions.

It is only an appraisal of course, not a venue, but as Mary Butler said in her grant application: "This will make a massive difference to Crescent Arts and takes us one step further towards new premises. It means we can look forward to being more accessible and inviting to the public and having studios with daylight at last!"



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From Mary's comments I built up a picture of her ideal Arts Centre. This would include:

- Communal area - place for community to socialise
- Bar / cafe
- Rooms which could be hired out
- Studios that could be rented at a commercial rate so artists wouldn't have to help run the Centre
- Shop
- Library for reference materials
- Provision of two exhibition spaces (so that the gallery would not have to close while a new exhibition is mounted)

The dream is to have a 'Shopping Centre for the Arts' in Scarborough - where different aspects of the visual and performing arts would be available in the same neighbourhood. As well as amenities for fine arts, it could include recording studios, performance space, plus a new Warehouse venue for the DIY Collective to rehearse and perform.

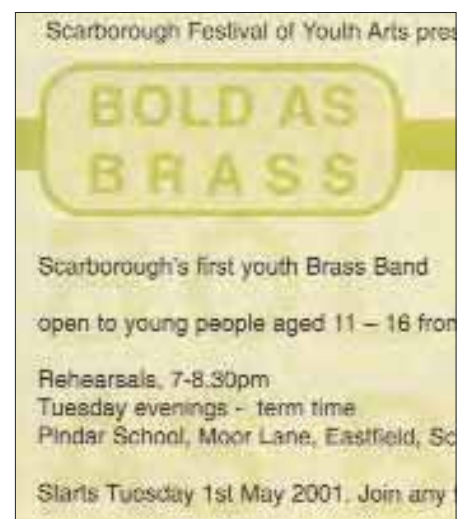
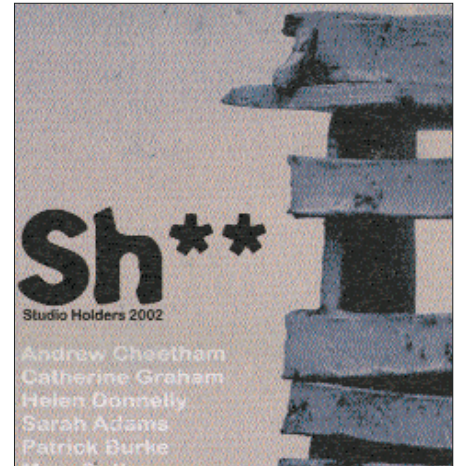
The Festival of Youth Arts

By this time I was already aware of the DIY Collective's existence in Scarborough, an aptly named group that has turned its hand to a number of diverse projects in the local area, all of which have benefited the community and its young people. The Networking Day at Crescent Arts enabled me to meet Rachel Massey and Rachel Welford who currently help administer the project through their organisation: the Festival of Youth Arts.

The FYA is committed to empowering young people through the arts. They work in Scarborough and surrounding towns and villages all year round to bring a broad programme of workshops and activities to the youth community. This includes literature, dance, drama, music, visual arts, multi media workshops and events.

FYA has existed since 1997, initially as a week long summer festival. The project was core funded under the Arts for Everyone Lottery Scheme. In the end, the actual festival didn't take place but the work with young people culminated in a number of Soundwave gigs later in the year. The FYA wanted to keep the young people together as a group and felt that it was important they were involved in organisation, not simply provided with an opportunity to play music.

The young people themselves felt there was a lack of support for local bands in their area, so they applied for and won a £5,000 grant from the Awards For All scheme. Funding could only be allocated to a properly constituted organisation: hence the creation of the DIY Collective. The name has a deliberate dual connotation: Do-It-Yourself or Determined Independent Youth.



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In February 2001, they successfully staged an all day music festival called Soundwave that brought over 900 young people together at the Spa Complex in Scarborough to take part in workshops as well as watching bands. The next Soundwave Festival will be held on 16th August 2002.

DIY Collective

The DIY Collective has a core membership of about 10 young people aged 16-25. They applied for funding to the Connecting Youth Culture (Yorkshire County Council) Millennium Awards for money to rent a space. The application was initially rejected as funding was not available for buildings. The DIY Collective insisted that a building was what they needed. CYC money was intended to 'empower young people through the arts'. The DIY's interest was in music but there was nowhere for bands to practise in Scarborough: they needed a building. Their determination brought rewards: a house on the corner of Seamer Road and Falsgrave Road which became The Warehouse.

The CVS is in charge of the lease and the Rachels offer support in a 'caretaking' capacity through their organisation, the Festival of Youth Arts. The DIY currently use their office at Allat House for administration. The FYA receives a grant of £2000 from SBC's Community Education Service, but with no regular funding status there is an ongoing necessity to "fund raise for our own jobs". Since July 2002 Rachel Welford has been running the FYA on her own.

It was suggested I should attend one of the DIY Collective's regular Monday evening meetings to talk about the forthcoming Community Planning Weekend and to encourage members to come along. The DIY Collective seems an excellent example of the Arts giving confidence to disadvantaged young people in terms of nurturing talent and building confidence and skills. I understand that one member is now employed as a youth worker. The DIY has obviously helped the community on a number of levels, primarily by providing an alternative to pub culture and the 'street corner.'

The Warehouse

The Warehouse is a 3 storey, shop-fronted house on the corner of Seamer Road and Falsgrave Road. It is used as a venue for band practice; also as a base for weekly meetings. There is an art gallery, workshop room and chill-out space. The idea was to create a space free from prejudice where young people can get together to be creative. There are ongoing video and photography projects and work takes place with a special needs group called Interact.

The DIY Collective has established its own rules for use of the premises. There is a fee to practise if not a member of the DIY Collective. Any member can practise alone at any time; non-members who are known to a member can be admitted and allowed to practise alone. All unknown non-members have to be let in and out and supervised by a DIY member.

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Thanks to initiatives kick-started by the DIY Collective, the number of activities available to local young people is rapidly increasing. The Warehouse is now enjoyed by a wide diversity of projects and groups. It is described as a voluntary arts organisation for young people, to encourage participation in many aspects of the arts: skating, poetry, dance, drama, ceramics, live music, DJing and drumming workshops. Employed and long term unemployed people use the venue, as well as 14-16 year olds, 6th form students, and those who have been involved in self-destructive lifestyles in the past. Younger children attend events and workshops.

Needs and aspirations

There is an urgent need for a bigger and better venue - another Warehouse, particularly as the lease is due to expire in September. Ideally, this should incorporate office space and a recording studio as well as rooms for social events and a variety of arts activities. The dream is to have a performance space capable of accommodating an audience of at least 300 people.

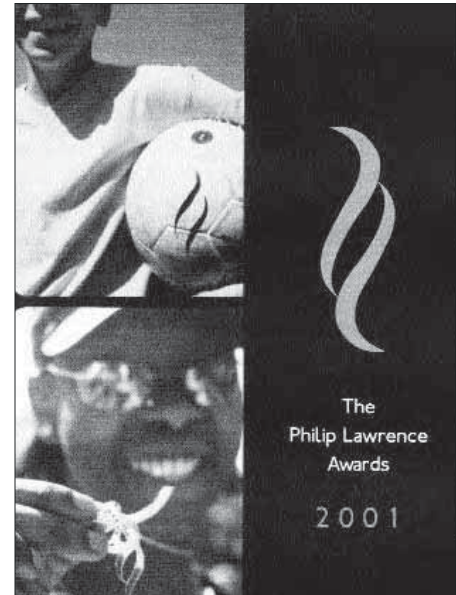
There are currently few suitable places for young people to perform in Scarborough. Fund-raising gigs take place at Murrays (they recently raised £160 on top of the £50 fee). But this causes problems with under-age drinking. The Westward Theatre is suitable for a teenage audience as there's no bar, but hire costs are high (£140 for a day). Venues close down or have a change of use, for instance The Talbot in Queen Street changed from a live music venue to offices.

The Philip Lawrence Award

The DIY Collective was one of 8 groups across the country to receive a Philip Lawrence Award in 2001 for outstanding achievements in good citizenship by young people aged 11 to 20.

The Philip Lawrence Awards "recognise contributions to the community which bring out the best in young people, empower them to take the initiative and make a real difference to their lives and the lives of others - building confidence, promoting safety and reducing crime."

Members of the DIY Collective met the Home Secretary David Blunkett MP at the award ceremony. His words of introduction in the programme state: *"The winners of The Philip Lawrence Awards are remarkable young people. Sometimes facing daunting odds against success, they show us that, by working hard together, we can solve some of our most difficult problems. It is this vitally important type of active citizenship that we all need if we want to succeed in building safe, strong and healthy communities. Well done."*



Cultural Audit

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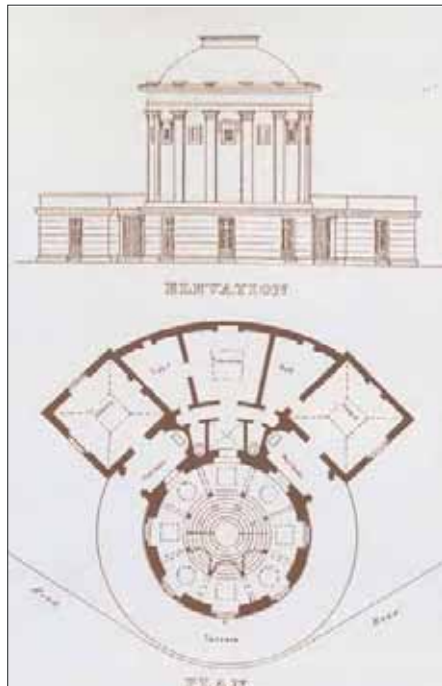
The National Youth Agency website (www.nya.org.uk) provides information on the Philip Lawrence Awards. There are several comments by members of the DIY Collective which emphasise the value of the group's work. "Organising our own activities has increased our self-esteem, confidence and sense of achievement", one young member reported. "I have also gained a sense of responsibility, as we are ultimately responsible for our events, and I've also gained a lot of good friends. The Philip Lawrence Awards will help our reputation - it shows that our previous work has really achieved something."

As well as attending the 5th Award Ceremony in London in December 2001, members of the DIY Collective were invited to meet Tony Blair on 24th April 2002. The group is an example of a highly motivated youth organisation and undoubtedly one of Scarborough's success stories.

The Crescent: Scarborough's cultural quarter

I left Crescent Arts about three o'clock in the afternoon on Tuesday 12th March, a full five hours after my arrival in the Crescent. I had visited three of Scarborough's major cultural buildings and now had a wealth of information about the town's museums, art galleries (both municipal and independent) as well as facts relating to the wide variety of art and music based community activities taking place locally.

The Networking Event had drawn a number of arts practitioners to the Crescent so I bumped into several people I'd already met, including Pete Massey and Helen Berry. I was also introduced to Colin Barnes, the Chief Executive of the CVS. The voluntary services seem key to many arts projects in Scarborough, so I wondered whether a chat might be possible when I returned to Scarborough in a couple of days. We agreed to meet at the Stephen Joseph Theatre on Thursday 14th March.



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"One volunteer is worth two pressed men."

Early 18th century proverb

Council for Voluntary Services

Colin Barnes is Chief Executive of the Council for Voluntary Services. I had seen his name on the formative Town Team list. I had also gleaned the fact that he supported the formation of Create as an arts development organisation. Colin seemed a good person for me to talk to, to gain another perspective - that of a non-arts professional with an obvious interest in the sector. I was therefore interested to hear his personal views on the future of Scarborough.

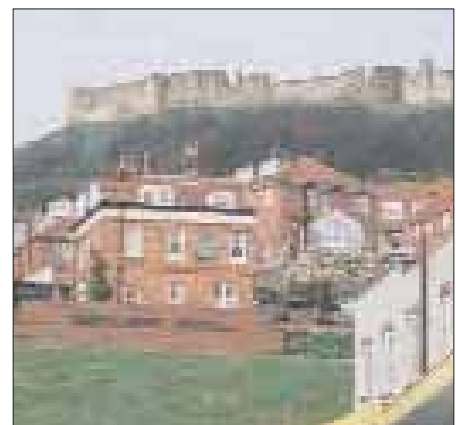
We met at 4 o'clock on Thursday at the Stephen Joseph Theatre: my third visit to the restaurant. It was officially closed at this time in the afternoon, but Colin managed to organise some coffee. He was well known by the staff, so I assumed this was a regular haunt and meeting venue.

Knowing little about the workings of the voluntary sector, I was informed that the remit of the CVS includes work with charities, policy making, local employment development, and capacity building in PACT areas. Arts activities are recognised as a useful mechanism for acknowledging and espousing the views of ordinary people. This in turn helps raise expectations amongst marginalised communities.

To date my investigation had been focused on organisations in the centre of Scarborough. I was aware of a number of outreach projects but Colin emphasised the fact there are many outlying neighbourhoods that are defined in terms of high levels of deprivation. In his opinion, any plans for the future of Scarborough must involve these communities. Many young people leave the town due to lack of opportunities and few people have a sense of 'ownership'. Colin felt that this was an important issue that needed to be addressed by the urban renaissance programme.

Disasters waiting to happen

I was curious to learn more about the Castle Choice Centre in Auborough Street. I said I had been to the Residents Association meeting there and was surprised to find such a positive venture being forced to close. Colin agreed that "it would be criminal to lose it". As I had discovered earlier, it was beginning to be well-used by many local organisations. Retaining the Centre for community use would seem to be an obvious 'Quick Win', especially as it would demonstrate an effective use of partnerships. But the next steps would clearly need to involve a proper Business Plan in which the organisational structure was clarified, lease negotiated and finance applied for. All this would presumably take time.



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I was concerned to learn that in Colin's view there are a number of "potential disasters" about to happen - due to apathy, inactivity, poor organisation and the technicalities of funding. These include the Festival of Youth Arts who need to be able to develop a permanent long term presence in Scarborough. I was told about a successful Fashion Workshop they had recently organised - an example of a worthwhile community project that empowered people and challenged perceptions. In this instance a public celebratory event demonstrated the value of women's skills, such as sewing and design.

Eastfield Community Centre is another area of concern. I gather it is poorly designed for today's uses and although European funding has been allocated for a feasibility study, "people become easily demoralised when nothing seems to be happening". More people need to be positively involved and "some umph needs to be put into changing the building around."



There are educational issues too. In Colin's opinion Westward Campus needs to "broaden out into the town" so that more people can take advantage of what's on offer at Yorkshire Coast College. There are also concerns about the University on Filey Road. It used to be part of York university, now it's a satellite campus for Hull. But apparently its long term future is uncertain.

The problem with Scarborough seems to be "a lack of will."

The future

Colin endorsed the view that the arts can be an important catalyst for regeneration. They contribute to self worth, provide jobs and keep people in Scarborough. "The one thing that tends to keep people here are arts activities"

I was very interested to hear his prescription for a positive way forward, as his aspirations are in fact embedded in the model of a Community Planning Weekend; an event which was due to take place in Scarborough at the end of April.

- Develop a common agenda
- Create a critical mass of ideas
- Link people together
- Focus on the residents (not the tourists) - the people who live in the town
- People need to feel they're listened to
- People need a sense of ownership



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Ideas for the town

Colin had a variety of ideas for the future regeneration of Scarborough.

- Focus on "food and performance"
- Roof over South Bay Pool
- Promote the seaside experience
- Build a hotel opposite the station
- Improve Scarborough's night clubs
- Provide more activities during the winter
- Better bus information: "none of the buses say where they're going"
- Restore the Mere: "it's a lovely place for a walk"
- Build a pub/restaurant overlooking the water at the Mere
- Create a Parks Strategy - link Olivers Mount to Jacobs Mount; Falsgrave Park and the Mere could be linked to the North York Moors
- Promote eco-tourism - could be developed as part of Falsgrave Regeneration Area. use children to design interpretation boards
- Make connections
- "Forty miles from anywhere can be an advantage"

The Futurist Theatre

My next meeting was with Ian Carpendale, General Manager of the Futurist Theatre. Located in a prominent position on Foreshore Road, the theatre's external appearance speaks volumes about Scarborough's declining fortunes and apparent lack of investment in key buildings. The yellow tiled exterior is dated and really rather bizarre. It appears to be covering an earlier facade: look upwards and you see remnants of white stonework leading to the roof.

The Futurist lacks the obvious status of a theatre building. The doors were closed when I arrived, the small box office easily missed.

Posters advertised current and future shows, along with a marquee promoting Louis Hoover's "Salute to Sinatra" in two days time. The lettering of Marine Bar on an adjacent building was as prominent as the sign saying Futurist. The theatre didn't seem to be very high on anybody's agenda, despite its stunning position overlooking the bay.

An uncertain future

Up till now my gleanings about the Futurist had been limited to the fact it was owned but not run by Scarborough Borough Council. A private sector management company receives some subsidy from SBC but they still find it difficult to make a profit. The Council can't really afford to keep the theatre going: maintenance costs are high, the heating deficient. For a town with a history of entertainment and 'show biz', it was depressing information, implying that the theatre was unappreciated all round. It seemed to be the usual 'Catch 22' situation: depleted audiences due to substandard amenities; too little income to pay for improvements. The Futurist was, I assume, limping on into an uncertain future. Who would be prepared to invest the millions needed to restore it to its former glory? An impossible task for the Borough Council, an unattractive idea (presumably) to commercial operators whose shareholders need profitable returns.



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History of the Futurist

Ian Carpendale, who has been General Manager for 14 years, filled me in with some facts about the Futurist. Built as a cinema in the 1920s (opened 27th June 1921) it has a vast auditorium with over 2000 seats: 1250 in the stalls, 788 in the circle and 100 in the balcony, making it the 6th largest theatre outside London. It was remodelled in 1958 as a theatre with a new stage occupying the site, and incorporating part of the structure of the Arcadia / Palladium Theatre. In 1968 it was extended and redesigned again.

Many star names have performed there, including Cilla Black, Billy Connolly and Victoria Wood. In March 1965 fans stormed the Futurist stage when the Rolling Stones played in Scarborough. Current performers include Daniel O'Donnell, a very popular ballad singer who regularly attracts audiences from Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield. "People camp outside to get tickets". Ken Dodd is a popular attraction, also Joe Longthorne, the Chuckle Brothers, and a variety of Tribute bands. There's pantomime at Christmas, along with touring musicals such as "Blood Brothers", and the occasional big name concert - Status Quo played there in October 2001. Opera is also on offer: Puccini's "La Boheme" and "Aida" were both staged last year. There's Irish Dancing ("The Spirit of the Dance") and international ballet too: "Nutcracker" was performed by the Vienna Festival Ballet in February.

The building is owned by Scarborough Borough Council who are responsible for maintenance and repairs. The theatre is currently managed by Clear Channel Entertainment (formerly Apollo Leisure). Some subsidy is provided by the Council to keep the theatre in operation. There has been a recent SBC Best Value Review whose figures suggest that in terms of value for money the Futurist does rather better than other Council owned venues.

The Futurist is open all year round to provide entertainment in the form of commercial productions and some (not for profit) shows for children. Films are also screened but these are never first run movies. However, "Lord of the Rings" and "Little Voice" were both shown at the Futurist. "Little Voice" was filmed in Scarborough and 11,000 people came to see the film over 7 weeks. The weekly programme is advertised in the local paper and via the theatre's web site (www.futuristtheatre.co.uk). The Futurist is the UK's largest remaining single screen cinema.

Up-grading and investment needs

The Futurist suffers from obvious lack of investment and modernisation. Radiators provide an inefficient form of heating - the bills are enormous. As I had learnt already from a Scarborough resident, the theatre is often very cold. Ducts were apparently put in the ceiling for a new heating system, which was designed and costed but the work never carried through.

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Touring theatre, especially a commercial production, requires certain minimal technical features: for instance the ability to fly scenery. Although wing and back stage space is very limited in the Futurist, flying is possible. Get-in access is however non-existent - all scenery has to be brought in through the foyer. This is a ludicrous state of affairs and apparently led to the cancellation of 'Calamity Jane' whose scenery couldn't get through the door. These poor conditions mean that it is impossible for a Scarborough theatre to host popular large touring musicals such as "Grease" and "Chicago".

The Futurist does however provide a variety of employment for local people. Both Manager and Assistant are full time positions. There is a full time Stage Manager whose role extends to being a projectionist and cleaner. The Sound technician (also a cleaner) is part time. There are two part time office staff; who are also involved in Front of House duties in the evenings. There is a Bar Manager and two members of staff work three days each in the Box Office. During the summer extra box office staff are employed, along with usherettes and kiosk staff. The Futurist has two bars and 3 kiosks. The theatre offers work experience to students from Yorkshire Coast College and a number of Scarborough schools such as Graham, Raincliff and Scalby.

Ian Carpendale is aware that financial constraints mean that Scarborough Borough Council cannot afford to keep both the Spa and the Futurist as entertainment venues. The rumour is that the Futurist will be sold off and demolished.

Re-thinking Scarborough's entertainment venues

Ian Carpendale informed me that an article about the Futurist had recently appeared in the Scarborough Hotel Association's March newsletter. By chance I had arranged to meet the author, Ian Grundy later this week. He provided me with a copy of the article. It is a persuasive argument.

It is suggested that

- The Spa Theatre should revert to its original design as a concert hall and become a permanent Victorian venue for the Spa Orchestra
- The Grand Hall should be used for exhibitions and conferences, not entertainment
- The Futurist should be upgraded and retained as a venue for large live performances.

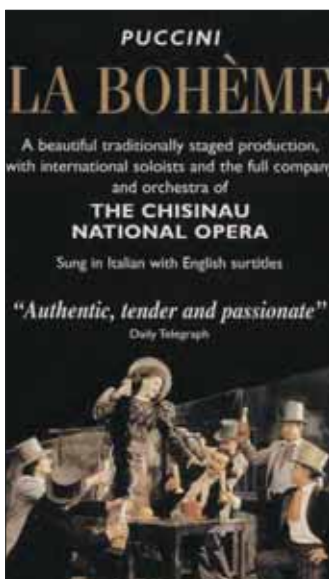
At the moment both the Spa and the Futurist compete for audiences. The Grand Hall is not really viable as a theatre, with lack of proper stage and blackout facilities, pillars, dreadful sight-lines and no flying facilities. "But it's a beautiful auditorium and looks great on TV when conferences make the national news." If the Futurist closes and is not replaced by another large performance space, it will be the end of commercial theatre in Scarborough. There would be no suitable venue at all to stage touring productions.

However, there is no doubt that the Futurist is in urgent need of modernisation and improvement



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Ideas for renovating and re-structuring the Futurist

Ian Carpendale's suggestion (endorsed by Ian Grundy's article) is to re-incorporate the Mermaid building next door. This space used to belong to the Futurist and was home to the small Arcadia theatre. It was sold off a number of years ago and has had a variety of incarnations: flea market, night club, roller skating venue and pub. It is currently vacant, an empty shell waiting to be developed. Its roof causes damage to the Futurist's dressing rooms, further degrading the theatre's facilities. In this instance the responsibility lies with the private owner, not the Council.

By incorporating the adjacent building, a dock door could be created to enable trucks to unload scenery straight onto the stage. The additional space would also provide an opportunity for bar and restaurant facilities with spectacular sea views. The Futurist could then become a venue for civic ceremonies, such as weddings, thereby generating additional income and a variety of community uses.

Ian Grundy's article mentions other potential improvements including a spacious foyer and box office at ground floor level. This would apparently release the current access corridor to become an under-stage full sized orchestra pit. It would also allow the side stage areas to be expanded.

A guided tour

I was given a guided tour of the theatre. The Futurist's auditorium is impressive: a vast space with rows of burgundy seating stretching to infinity. It may be cold in winter but the seating seemed to be comfortable enough. The stage was small in comparison, a low proscenium arch limiting the potential for elaborate staging. But of course, it was not built as a theatre, its origins lie in the 1920s, the heyday of popular support for cinema.

In venues of this kind elsewhere in Europe, modifications are often made to screen off part of the auditorium unless audience numbers warrant the use of the whole space. Acoustic sliding panels could be installed along the under side of the balcony to make a more intimate auditorium for smaller scale productions. To perform to an audience of less than 500 in a space of this size must be depressing. But there would be other technical constraints of course - the position of the lighting box for instance.



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The 1960s yellow cladding covers the original 1920s facade. A white pediment complete with cupids and elaborate decoration can be seen by crawling through an opening in the internal wall. Ian held the torch, I took some photographs. Like many things about Scarborough, the Futurist is not quite what it seems.

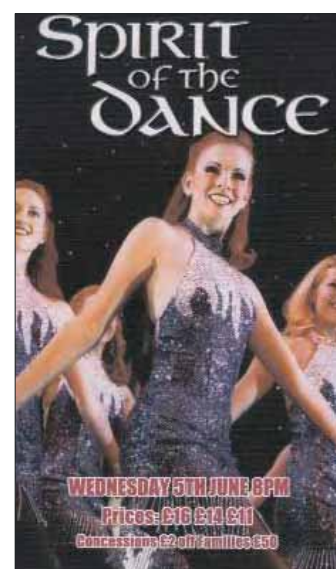
Entertainment programme - an overview

The programme of entertainment may not be to everyone's taste, but people do obviously go to the shows provided by the Futurist Theatre. Many people want to see Ken Dodd and Daniel O'Donnell. Irish dancing is popular. Opera, ballet and musicals are on offer too. I learned later that two girls who stayed a week at Interludes Hotel went every night for a week to see Joe Longthorne. Devoted fans fill theatres and provide income for the entertainment industry. Such enthusiasm should be encouraged, not derided. When the auditorium is full, when the theatre bars are turning over thousands of pounds, when audiences leave with a smile on their face after an enjoyable evening's entertainment - there is perhaps some justification for Ian's comment: "Do people who make the decisions actually go to the Futurist?"

Within the realm of arts and culture, there is as much need for commercial entertainment as there is for new writing, experimental theatre and the classics.

From a personal point of view, it seems that the Futurist Theatre is a major asset in need of money, imagination and support. There is indeed much that needs to be improved. A brand new purpose-built venue with modern amenities would be a better alternative to retaining a building that is perhaps unsuitable for high quality entertainment. But if the Futurist goes and no equivalent theatre replaces it, where will the big shows be staged in Scarborough? The people who want to see Joe Longthorne, "Aida" and the "Spirit of the Dance" will have to go elsewhere. It's one of the few all-weather and all-year attractions in the town; an amenity for residents and for visitors. It has knock-on effects in the hotel and catering industry. After all 'going to a show' is part of the holiday experience for many people.

The Futurist is up for sale. Is the future of entertainment up for sale too?





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Sidewalk

I had an evening appointment today with members of the Sidewalk Youth Organisation. Charles and myself had been invited to join one of their regular 'walk about' sessions. It was an opportunity to talk to young people and hopefully involve them in the urban renaissance process.

Sidewalk, Scarborough Churches Detached Youth Work Project, is designed to "meet the needs of young people where they are," particularly in the Old Town and Falsgrave neighbourhoods. It was founded in 1989 and receives funding from the Rank Foundation.

The Rank Organisation is of course closely associated with the film industry. Its founder Lord Rank was a Methodist lay preacher and among his original intentions was the making and exhibition of religious films. He and Lady Rank established the Rank Foundation in 1953 to provide funding for Christian and charitable purposes. It has maintained a tradition of supporting young people and ensuring the provision of activities and opportunities to allow them to develop to their full potential.

Sidewalk youth workers are on the streets 5 nights a week and in regular face to face contact with over 160 young people in need. They may come from broken homes, poor home environment and low income backgrounds. A low level of self esteem, poor self image and a lack of hope, love and purpose can lead to frustration, boredom and a rebellious attitude. This in turn may find expression in drug, alcohol or solvent abuse, leading to theft, vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Groups such as Sidewalk and Home and Dry (which, though now a separate organisation, apparently used to be connected with Sidewalk) hope to have a positive impact on the downward spiral that can propel young people into becoming outcasts of society.

The M.A.D. House

Sidewalk is based at the M.A.D. (Make A Difference) House on Victoria Road. Training and developing young people is integral to Sidewalk's work and Volunteers also take part in Making a Difference events that include mentoring sessions and residential capacity building weeks (one had recently taken place in Derbyshire) which give disadvantaged youngsters much needed one-to-one attention. Young people are also involved in practical work camps in developing countries such as Romania; some were shortly going to Brazil.

The M.A.D. House is a 'drop in' centre offering free internet access. It provides a place for young people to meet, be trained, develop their skills and educate their peers. It is open Monday and Friday afternoons; Monday and Thursday evenings until 9/10pm.

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Associated with the Sidewalk initiative through its similar aims and aspirations is Open Arms, a dry bar for young people in Queen Street. It is currently run by Dave Ward who attended the Community Planning Weekend. Its potential was discussed during the Young People's Workshop as it offers a venue for free internet access. Despite rumours saying otherwise, spending money on food or drink is not necessary; nor would the subject of Christianity be mentioned unless requested. James Koppert from the DIY Collective gave the report back, saying "We heard about the Open Arms. There was a bit of stigma about it but maybe it's a real cool place." The dissemination of information is vital. Attitudes can change.

Deserted streets and arcade culture

Charles and I were scheduled to meet Richard Pashby, Senior Youth Worker at seven o'clock at the M.A.D. House in Victoria Road. It was very wet and windy, far from ideal conditions for walking through the back streets of Scarborough. It was decided to take the minibus instead. We therefore drove around Falsgrave for a while, but the streets were empty, not entirely surprising as the weather would have driven even the most discontented and dysfunctional teenagers inside.

Richard, Charles, myself and Christina Hick, one of Sidewalk's Community Gap Volunteers, then drove down to Scarborough's Foreshore. This was my introduction to Arcade Culture. Glaring colours, flashing lights, loud music, the clatter of coins, the clamour of mechanised excitement. My ears were assaulted by high decibels and discordant sound. As well as deafening music, we were in a world of virtual reality. Cars screeched round corners, guns demolished a variety of mechanical enemies, virtual battle zones were everywhere. Screens and machines were blinking, flickering, whirring, whining, demanding to be fed and (occasionally) disgorging winnings. A cacophony of noise and confusion.

I was aware of a rise in the adrenaline level: partly the effect of constant noise, mostly the deliberate artificiality of the environment. There's a sense of excitement in the air. The atmosphere is vibrant and stimulating. No wonder an amusement arcade attracts young people. It's inside, under cover, worlds away from home and school. It's thrilling in a mindless, vacant kind of way: an assault on the senses which, for a short time, can be exhilarating and fun.

A mecca for young people

We went into several arcades in search of young people known to the Sidewalk team. We had a brief chat to a couple of teenagers called Hayley and Caroline from Raincliffe School (year 10) and Graham School (year 8). Boredom and "nothing to do" draw them to the arcades where they usually meet up in quite large groups and hang around the slot machines. They don't have any money to play, so are regularly moved on by the arcade officials. This gruff attitude is not however confined to teenagers. I was leaning on one of the



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machines, chatting to Christina about her life and personal attitude to Scarborough when I too was unceremoniously requested to move, unless intending to play. But of course, this is a business not a charitable organisation. The superficial flamboyance is attractive, but arcades are no substitute for a proper social venue. The girls we met want a disco for teenagers on Friday & Saturday "somewhere to go that's cheap." Cost of activities to defeat boredom is naturally an issue.

There used to be an ice rink upstairs at Olympia, now it's a bowling alley. In Corrigan's I was fascinated by the dance machines, which struck me as being rather good. They're popular but quite expensive at £1.00 a go. I observed some girls in action, their feet stepping from one mechanical pad to another, watching the arrows on the screen in front, moving to the rhythm demanded by the particular choice of music. Back, forward, to the side and back again: dum, dum, de-dum, dum, dum. It seemed an excellent way to develop a number of useful skills including concentration and co-ordination. Perhaps someone should donate a dance machine to an outreach youth organisation. It's something they enjoy and can be good at: an obvious aid to self-esteem.



Clubbing in Scarborough

As Sidewalk has a mini-bus, one of their tasks is to transport young people to and from the Sports Centre. Richard left to do this. Charles and I decided to complete our evening of community animation by going to Boleyn's Night club on St Thomas Street with Christina and her flat-mate Sarah. Thursday night, so women didn't have to pay. It was packed with people, of all ages, shapes and sizes. There were two dance floors: one playing old fashioned pop classics and disco music, the other catering for contemporary tastes. It was interesting to see what Scarborough has to offer in terms of night-life.

Unsophisticated and provincial would probably be my verdict, though I admit my clubbing experience is limited. But from brief observation the decor seemed unoriginal and dated, there was no high tech lighting, or dry ice 'smoke' effects. It was a pleasant enough experience, boys were hanging around the bar, girls dancing around handbags as in days of yore. Some social rituals never seem to change. The mating game continues but I felt that people were letting their hair down in a fairly restrained way. Boleyns of Scarborough is however a far cry from city clubs like Cream and the Ministry of Sound. And I dare say the young people of the town would agree.



It was still raining as I walked along St Nicholas Street, the wind so strong I could hardly stand upright. I was a lone female and passed a number of male revellers struggling drunkenly against the elements. A hand was outstretched to help me and some tipsy banter followed, but I can't say this was an example of particularly aggressive behaviour - something I had been told blighted the streets of Scarborough late at night.

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*"Tis not enough to help the feeble up,
But to support him after."*

William Shakespeare, 'Timon of Athens', Act 1, c 1607

Home and Dry - Young people in need

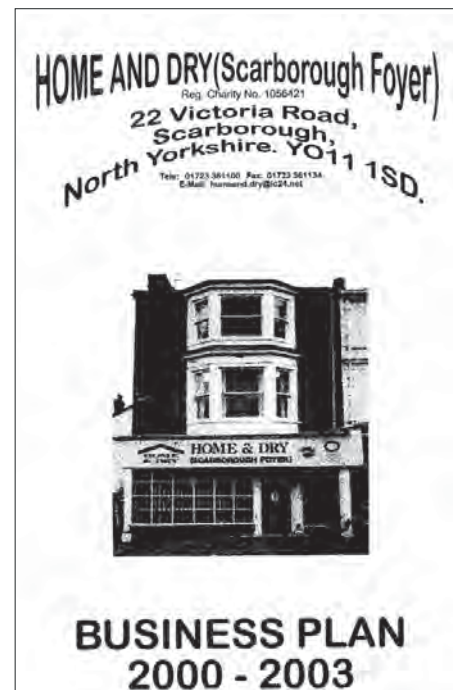
It was still blustery this morning as I headed back to Victoria Road with my colleague Bob Young for a pre-arranged meeting with Lindsay Hyde, Manager of Home and Dry (Scarborough Foyer).

Home and Dry is a 'Care and Cluster' scheme that offers a wide range of services including quality, safe, temporary accommodation for vulnerable young people aged 16 - 25, together with independent living skills, job search help, work experience opportunities and links with employers and training organisations. At the end of their stay in the Foyer, young people will hopefully have the skills and confidence to obtain and sustain permanent employment to be able to live independently as fully integrated citizens in the community.

Home and Dry was initially set up in 1992 as a drop-in centre for homeless young people funded by Charity Projects. While still maintaining drop-in facilities and services, expansion into a Foyer scheme was possible due to match funding from the National Lottery Charities Board and Single Regeneration Funding under the Castle Pride Initiative. Scarborough's Foyer scheme has a high profile nationally.

Home and Dry own and manage their own building. There is a subsidised bistro offering cheap meals and snacks. There are laundry facilities, showers, a relaxation room, a training room, a quiet room used for counselling, an administration office and an advice and information office.

There are 30 units of accommodation, leased by Home Housing Association, which are offered in three stages: the first is intensively supported communal accommodation with shared facilities and a resident caretaker. The second consists of less heavily supported refurbished studio flats. The third stage has fully self-contained unfurnished flats with 1 to 2 bedrooms in a converted refurbished church in Falsgrave. Young people progress through the stages if they show they are able to cope and can manage basic literacy, budgeting, health and hygiene issues. This is the prize for hard work and responsible behaviour: it's an accumulative process "like rewards in life". The holistic approach means that accommodation is always linked with training, employment and education.



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All young people accessing the service are in housing need with many having histories of family breakdown, abuse, neglect and violence. A significant number have learning difficulties, mental health problems and abuse drugs and alcohol. There are a number of single parents.

There are currently insufficient secure facilities and a shortage of skilled workers with enough experience to cope with school age children, 16-17 year olds whose problems may include heavy drug use, self-harm, mental instability, who can't communicate and go on wild drinking binges. They need a lot of support in the first stage, more than can be provided at present.

Learning through participation

Home and Dry uses a variety of methods to help young people to develop team spirit, a sense of morality and improved self esteem. They include 'themed' nights - for instance a 'Tex Mex' day where young people get a chance to cook and experience different foods.

I was interested to hear Lindsay stress the value of drama and role-play in work with vulnerable young people. They have had visits from the York based 'Risky Things' Theatre. Lindsay was also aware of Cardboard Citizens, the UK's only homeless people's professional theatre company.

Using Forum Theatre techniques Cardboard Citizens present a play to audiences of homeless people that usually focuses on the obstacles to employability faced by the protagonist when attempting to enact an 'escape plan' from homelessness. Members of the audience then get up on stage, exchanging ideas and experiences to create solutions for overcoming obstacles. The plays encourage people to consider the benefits of positive action and the effect that it could have on their own lives. Often much energy and motivation is created as a result.

Lindsay had herself been involved in a mask project with 10 drug and alcohol users. This resulted in a performance that impressed the audience and had a major impact on the lives of those involved.

A venue for young people

In a discussion about the needs of Scarborough's young people, Lindsay drew our attention to a recent paper she had written about Town Youth; an extract follows:

"From my understanding they desire a place where they can hang out that will house the resources they identify. A not for profit organisation that could plough all the profits into more resources. A cyber-cafe providing interactive games and a chance for positive socialisation. A well-equipped gym offering quality instruction and a good introduction to health and fitness. Most gyms locally do not allow young people access to facilities. Obviously a burger bar and light refreshment area with MTV. Second hand CDs, computer play-station stall, table tennis, pool and a regular film night/weekend.

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An outlet for local bands to practise, music technology workshop, guitar lessons, creating CDs, beat box, rap dancing, video, editing photography and dark room, theatre workshop, arts workshops to name but a few....The community say, "Get them off the streets" - into where? Scarborough has a wealth of empty properties screaming out for regeneration. We owe it to the next generation to approach this potential project in a positive way. We need to embrace the concept of partnership incorporating not only the police, the voluntary sector, SBC and NYCC but also the community. Most importantly the parents and the young people themselves."

We talked about potential locations for a young people's venue. It would need to be central, accessible, convenient and covered by CCTV. Rudy's, an ex night club above Samuels the Jewellers was mentioned, but apparently this has been recently purchased by the Police. Raffles, a former pub (currently being used for storage) was suggested, being easy to get to, already has CCTV, a place that would link Falsgrave and Castle Ward PACT areas.

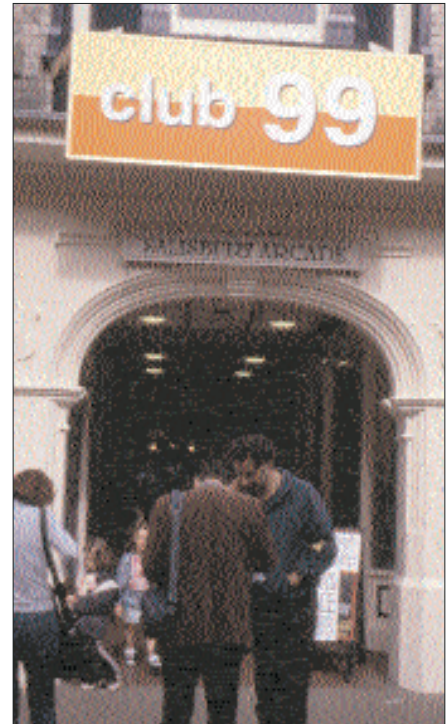
As I had seen last night, teenagers go to the Foreshore arcades because there's nothing else to do: it's fun and there's a roof over their head in wet weather. But gambling can become endemic in seaside resorts, further exacerbating the town's social problems.

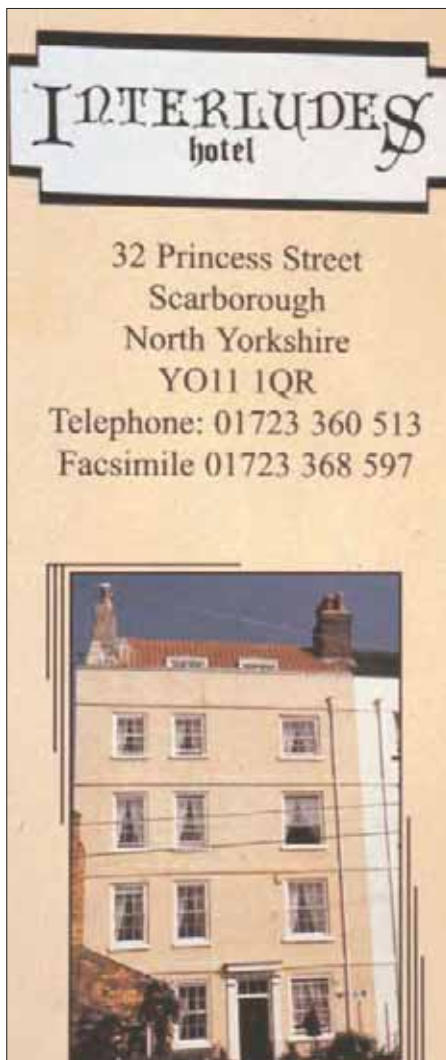
We also discussed the importance of identity amongst young people who are defined by their clothes and chosen image: "you are what you wear." Even if on Job Seekers Allowance, they will make sure that their clothes are right.

Young people at Home and Dry

At 11 o'clock it was arranged for us to have a brief chat with the young people who were using the drop-in facilities at 22 Victoria Road. It was an opportunity to talk about the urban renaissance process to those who would be unlikely to turn up at a formal consultation event. Obviously, we were keen to encourage their participation, but coercion is not the point. It was a chance to listen to the views of vulnerable and excluded young people. About 7 young men and women were present, aged between 16 and 25. They were a friendly group: some quieter and more withdrawn, others feisty and articulate.

Boredom is a major issue. Everything closes at 5pm so "you sit at home looking at the wall". "There's nothing for kids to do, nowhere for them to go, so they go and get a spray gun - graffiti means boredom". The shops do not cater for the needs of young people, especially young men. The need for a young people's venue is paramount. They echoed Lindsay's comments about centrality: "no one's going to go to South Cliff" and felt it should cater for the 11-25 age group. "Raffles would be a good place." Other dreams included the desire for an ice rink and access to an inexpensive internet cafe.





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Gay and lesbian issues were mentioned: "There's a lot of gay people but they're not catered for." We also talked about Scarborough's thriving music scene. Mojos Music Cafe is very successful: "He took a risk and it worked".

I stressed the need for young people to be involved in the Community Planning Weekend at the end of April. However, in their eyes the Spa is not an attractive venue: "it's too far to get to...The Spa is School." Nevertheless, it was agreed that they might be prepared to come along - if transport was provided!

Interludes Guest House

A town seems to shrink the more one gets to know it. Two weeks ago I might have ordered a taxi; today I decided to walk down to the Old Town. I had arranged to see Ian Grundy at the Interludes Hotel in Princess Street at one o'clock. I thought the views of a local hotelier might be useful. I'd also heard his name in association with the Stephen Joseph Theatre and the Futurist.

Interludes is a grade 2 listed Georgian building in the heart of the Old Town conservation area with five bedrooms, an elegant lounge and attractive dining room. And two cats called Penny and Dorcas. The hotel is owned and run by Ian Grundy and Bob Harris who live on the premises: it is also their home. They moved to Scarborough from the south of England eleven years ago and I was curious to learn what had attracted them to set up a new business in the town. The urban renaissance initiative is focused on physical and social regeneration issues. With so much emphasis on decline, it was good to be reminded of Scarborough's inherent qualities: the sea and beautiful coastline; a long summer season, affordable, good theatre, the ability to earn a living. In Ian's opinion, Scarborough is more successful than people imagine, though he feels the town needs to position itself as a quality resort of the north. "It's all here but not promoted right."

Vision for the future

From Ian's perspective, Scarborough can't compete with Blackpool in terms of its slot machine culture. It should therefore:

- Focus on the arts and the quality of what's on offer. The Spa Orchestra and the Stephen Joseph Theatre have a constantly changing programme, which encourages people to return.
- Create a cafe society - tables and chairs on the pavement.
- Keep the isolation, which benefits hoteliers.
- Learn lessons from elsewhere: effect of the Tate on St Ives in Cornwall.

We discussed the Futurist and I obtained a copy of Ian's recent article to the Scarborough Hotel Association newsletter. He feels that it is vital not to sell off the theatre until the proposed feasibility study of the Spa Complex has been carried out. If the Spa becomes a major

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conference venue, and business subsequently revives in the town, people will want and need large-scale entertainment.

There will be no commercial theatre if the Futurist is demolished. "If the Futurist was improved and maintained as a good working theatre, then we'd get first instead of third rate shows." Also, if in the future Scarborough establishes a reputation as a significant Festival Town, the Futurist will be needed to attract big name stars to "make headlines and attract audiences".

Missed potential

So what's gone wrong with Scarborough? In Ian's opinion, much has to do with lack of vision. Buildings have been allowed to run down, creating eyesores that "colour people's perception of the town." The derelict Opera House has an arson-burned foyer, water-logged auditorium, and trees grow from its disintegrating roof. The Open Air Theatre is unique "but they've just let it go".

There was apparently a chance to restore it some years ago as part of the Anneke Rice Challenge on BBC television. The programme makers approached SBC to let Anneke take on the challenge of restoring the theatre in a week. Was this really refused due to concerns about future maintenance costs and obligations? I haven't corroborated the story, but if true it does seem a wasted opportunity and implies a definite fear of 'risk'.

I also learned about a unique 1858 Music Hall that was demolished two years ago to make way for a shopping development. Alternative, more imaginative plans could have perhaps provided a mixed-use building, with shops on ground floor level and the auditorium retained above to provide a small jazz music venue in the centre of the town. Now only the facade remains.

Web site information

The Interludes web site is useful and informative, with a wide variety of links to other sites. There is a brief history of the town, a comprehensive Events Listings Guide and relevant information for gay and lesbian guests. They have a special package in conjunction with the Stephen Joseph Theatre and provide details about current productions. There is also information about a number of other theatres within a 90 mile radius of Scarborough. Matinee performances in Bradford, Hull, Leeds and York are accessible by direct rail links. The town need not be seen as an isolated outpost, miles from anywhere. "Why not combine a few days on the coast, when visiting the Stephen Joseph Theatre, with a performance or two out of town." Why not indeed. Be bold. Be adventurous. Be 'Interludes-friendly' - defined by the web site as "affable, open-minded, non-smoking and hopefully with an interest in theatre." It's certainly a healthy and positive approach to life in Scarborough.



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Visit to the M.A.D. House

Friday's meetings ended with another visit to the Sidewalk Youth Organisation at 7 o'clock this evening. It had been arranged for Charles and I to talk to several young people who regularly use the drop-in facilities at the M.A.D. House. Richard Pashby, Christina Hick and Sarah Armstrong - whom we'd met yesterday - were there too.

Also present was an imitation baby - a life-size doll that is used to combat teenage pregnancies: the essential tool of the 'Baby Think It Over' project. Teenagers can have the 'baby' for a weekend but this is not as easy as it seems. They must sign an official Agreement, answer a parenting questionnaire, fill in a birth certificate (naming the child) and find out costs of milk, nappies etc. The 'baby' is programmed to cry at intervals, including during the night. The head has a monitoring device to check it is being held correctly. Once in charge, the doll becomes the teenager's responsibility. No chance to go to the disco or pop down to the Foreshore arcades: there's a baby to look after. It is apparently a very successful scheme, and one young man sat there throughout the meeting with the 'baby' on his lap, looking very contented.

Scarborough issues and opinions

We discussed how the young people feel about Scarborough. Some negative: "it's tacky"; some positive: "There's a lot of nice buildings", "Peasholm Park is brilliant - I love walking there, and on the island." There was a view that it should be a serious tourist town: "If there's more for tourists, there's more for residents"

But there's an obvious need for clean, attractive, quality, up-to-date all-weather attractions in the town. A climbing wall and ice rink would be popular, also a place where young people can practise their DJ skills. This apparently used to be possible at the Sound Lounge in South Cliff, but there were problems connected with under-age drinking.

The North Bay (Zenith) project received a mixed reaction. "In theory it's a brilliant idea - but it's in the wrong place, it should be on the South Bay side." They felt it was a shame to make the North Bay too commercialised, and young people can be as nostalgic as the elderly: "If you take Kinderland away, you take away my youth."

The Skate Park which has recently open in Clarence Gardens in North Bay seems to have taken far too long to be built. Richard Pashby was involved in looking at suitable venues ten years ago. "It's taken 13 years of lobbying the Council to get something the kids don't want." In their opinion, "It's not a skate park - it's for BMXs - useless for skating."

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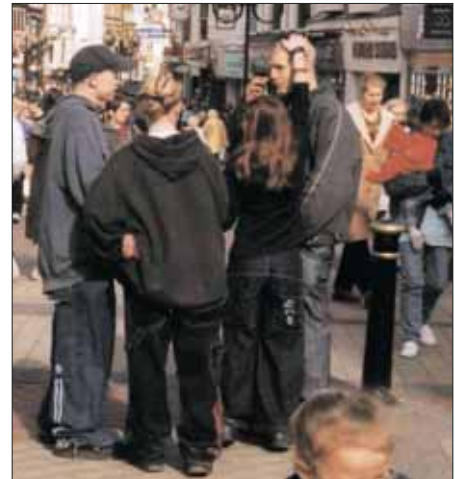
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I'd heard this morning about the many groups within Scarborough's teenage community, defined by clothing, attitude, image and music tastes. As an outsider, it's difficult to fully understand the nuances of such tribal terminology, and I was slightly reprimanded by Sidewalk for even wanting to know. On the other hand, it's useful to have some concept of how young people see themselves and each other.

So what did I learn? Well, there are Goths (black clothes, leather), Trendies (labels such as Calvin Klein), Moshers (baggy trousers, hoods), Townies (Adidas trainers, drink Red Bull), Old Townies (Ralph Lauren, Ben Sherman, Lacoste), Boarders (middle class - skateboards are expensive), Skaters and Surfers. A 'capper slapper' wears Rockport shoes, a 'dapper shopper' - clothes from Top Shop. If you are what you wear, I assume the signals can be misinterpreted. I was wearing leather trousers, a baggy hooded skater's top and jewellery. Would that make me a Goth or a Townie or a Mosher or a Skater? Or maybe the rules don't apply for people over 30!

It had been interesting to talk to some of Scarborough's young people and all gleanings are useful. But if one wants to really find out what they think about their town, an example of honest and unexpurgated opinion can be found on the Knowhere Guide web site. This is unedited information; views are supplied by users and may be inaccurate, biased or simply wrong. But as a source of information about "best" and "worst" things, "favourite buildings" or "demolish it now buildings", along with "stuff we can't fit in anywhere else", it makes for compulsive reading.

The day ended with a meal at Cafe Fish and a chance to observe Scarborough's social scene. Looking through the window, we watched a wave of people surge up and down the street, drifting into Vladimir's Red Square Bar and wandering out again: the ebb and flow of humanity echoing the rhythm of the sea below. Dressed in smart suits, micro-minis or fancy dress (I recall a number of police hats), tottering on high heels, striding out in trainers, in pairs or groups of ten or more, here were Scarborians out on the town, laughing, talking and generally enjoying a Friday evening social ritual.



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Saturday 16 March



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***"I must go down to the sea again, for the call of the running tide;
It is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied."***

John Masefield, 'Sea Fever' 1902

On the beach

Other than returning to the Futurist to take photographs of the original facade, I had no meetings planned for today. I therefore decided to explore Scarborough's seafront before taking the train back to London.

The sun was shining and it was the perfect day for buying fish and chips and sitting on the beach. Tiny tots were balanced precariously on donkeys that plodded their traditional journey up and down the sand. Children were digging sandcastles, even paddling in the sea. Bingo callers broadcast their mantra from the arcades - which were packed with people of all ages pushing money into slots and hoping for a cascade of coins to tumble out. Cars queued along Foreshore Road, seagulls screeched overhead. Boats bobbed in the harbour, the pier full of nets and fishing paraphernalia. There was that evocative seaside smell of fish and sea. Out in the bay surfers braved the waves, black suited figures on vivid yellow boards.

I was sketching the lighthouse when the Williams family said hello. When trying to discover the essence of a town, any human contact can be a source of valuable information, possibly providing an essential part of the jigsaw. We entered into conversation. Did they live locally? What brought them to Scarborough? What did they think of the town? 'Community animation' is not something you just switch off because it's Saturday!

Mr Williams was a football coach and he and his wife and two children had come from Derby. It was a two and a half hours drive from home, a painless journey: there were no problems getting here. He'd been several times in the past and particularly enjoyed the Cricket Festival in September. They were staying at a caravan park in Osgodby for the weekend. They'd come to sit on the beach in the sunshine for a while and planned to "potter round the town and go out to supper somewhere later."

So what were Scarborough's attractions for this particular family from the East Midlands? The beach, the harbour, the North Yorkshire coast, second hand bookshops and, of course, the cricket. They were happy to be here, happy to return.



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The South Bay Pool

Later in the afternoon I wandered south along the beach, up the steps to the Spa Complex (which had a rather desolate, 'out of season' feel about it) and on to the South Bay Pool. The tide was high and waves were breaking over the sea wall. It was tragic to see the dilapidated pool, a vivid reminder of former glory, now suffering from ignominious neglect. Times pass, fashions change, people fly to sun-soaked Mediterranean beaches in preference to shivering on Scarborough sands. Those hardy bathers who dived into the South Bay Pool are as much a relic of the past as 18th century bathing machines. You can't turn the clock back.

In their heyday these outdoor, salt-water lidos provided the equivalent of today's gym, combining fitness and social interaction in a spate of healthy urban living that dominated the early 20th Century.

Scarborough's South Bay Pool was completed in 1915, at 330 ft long and 167 ft wide, it was the largest outdoor pool in Europe. Associated buildings and chalets were constructed in the 1930s. I was told that the Olympic Diving Competition was held here in 1948. The Pool was closed in 1989 and the original high diving boards demolished. Three 1930s fountains stand forlornly in the abandoned basin.

I had read in the Scarborough Evening News that the 20th Century Society had applied to have the Pool spot-listed at Grade II, as they considered it worth protecting as a unique example of 20th Century architectural heritage. There is the recent example of Plymouth's Tinside Lido, which was neglected and shut for years. Following an Ideas Competition, Plymouth City Council is now committed to refurbishing and preserving the Lido as a leisure and tourist attraction.

Scarborough has fewer resources than Plymouth, but a conversation with a member of the 20th Century Society implied that with imagination, vision and drive it would not be impossible to make the South Bay Pool a spectacular success. Could it perhaps become a European-funded technical research project using alternative heat sources (solar, wind) to provide year-round swimming. Proper management and a variety of other activities and uses would obviously be required as part of the project. But there may of course be technical constraints to deter such dreams. Unlike its creator, Harry W Smith, I am not an engineer.



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Breaking waves

I was about to venture round the seaward section of the path that surrounds the South Bay Pool when someone suggested that it was unwise to do so. At that moment a wave rose high above the parapet and fell on a bicycle whose wheels skidded in the unexpected torrent, dislodging the cyclist from her seat. Going no further seemed sensible advice. But the waves were stunning: a wall of white-flecked water would rise from the sea, to crash wildly against the wall, the road in front awash with water. It was exhilarating to watch the power of the sea; utterly mesmerising. I snapped photo after photo, trying to capture the moment of madness as the wave broke. Of course the inevitable happened and one camera-shy wave took its revenge. I was totally drenched by a deluge of salt-stinging water. A hilarious moment which nevertheless reminded me that chasing waves can be dangerous.

However, this wave-watching episode in fact provided the impetus for establishing contact with a rock musician.

The Toby Jepson Band - a contact

I started chatting to the person who'd deterred me from venturing round the outside of the pool. Called Ian, but known by the nickname Mole, he didn't live in Scarborough. He told me he was the sound engineer for the Toby Jepson Band. Toby used to be lead singer / song writer for the well known British rock band, the Little Angels. Did I know them? (No, I didn't.) The Toby Jepson Band were currently on tour but a short break had, by chance, motivated Mole's visit to the South Bay Pool.

I discovered later (from a website) that the the Little Angels had achieved considerable success between 1984 and 1994. Toby had sung at the Hammersmith Apollo with Roger Daltrey, toured with Bon Jovi, played at Wembley with Bryan Adams. Their final performance was at London's Royal Albert Hall.

However, despite my obvious ignorance about the Little Angels, this was a very useful chance encounter on a Saturday afternoon in March. I found out Toby Jepson was from Scarborough. He was a musician. He was young. He was obviously well known. He had chosen to move back to Scarborough so must love the town. Would he be interested in the urban renaissance initiative? Would he come to the Community Planning Weekend? Could he be a potential champion for the town?

I had heard a lot about Scarborough's music scene but had as yet met no one involved in it. There seemed to be an opening here, albeit rather tenuous. I handed over a leaflet (soggy from the soaking) for Mole to give to Toby Jepson, and sloshed my sea-saturated way back to the hotel. Having changed into dry clothes, I sat down in the lounge of the Royal Hotel. All around me were men and women in cowboy attire, checked shirts, boots with cuban heels, split skirts, spangles and sequins. After my recent exposure to nature and the elements, it seemed rather odd to be sipping tea in the company of a Convention of Line Dancers



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***"A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness."***

John Keats, 'Endymion', 1818

Ten days passed before I was once again back in Scarborough.

Smacme Arts Group

Today's meetings started at 11 o'clock with Jo Davies of the Smacme Art Group. She was accompanied by several other members who are practising artists: Paula Zimmermann, Sue Sleightholme, Sally Gatie, and Steve Whitehead. Steve is a lecturer in Fine Arts at the University of Hull, Scarborough Campus. He's also a musician and member of General Cluster, a jazz group that plays regularly at Scholars Bar, Bedford Hotel. The Jazz Club is run by Mike Gordon and Dennis Hitch.

Jo Davies is secretary of Smacme and a non exhibiting member. I had already heard (from Helen Berry) about her work with the hospitals in the Borough, in terms of organising artists' residencies. She lives in Whitby and is also involved in Yorkshire Forward's Market Towns Initiative.

Smacme is a suitably memorable name, naturally open for misspelling (!) but in fact an acronym for Supporting Members Art through Community, Marketing and Exhibitions.

Formed by graduates of Hull University's Fine Arts Department, the group has been running for two years as a non profit making organisation. As professional artists, they do earn money from their work but usually "not enough to live on." They organise group shows as a way of encouraging and supporting artists as individuals.

"Smacme puts us on the map as a group." The focus tends to be on traditional media: painting, sculpture and ceramics. They are not community arts orientated, mostly due to the fact running workshops and doing other outreach work (as at Crescent Arts) can take up too much time.

The group exhibits locally and regionally, for instance Kings Manor, York; Wakefield Arts Mill; Hull University. A high proportion of members who sent in work for the Manchester Open had their work accepted. An exhibition is planned in Peterborough at the Gildenburgh Art Gallery later this year. Scarborough Art Gallery apparently has regular 'open' exhibitions and is well served by local artists.



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Finance

The group is unsubsidised and members pay an annual subscription (currently £10 for non-exhibiting members and £20 for exhibiting members.) They have 18 exhibiting artists at the moment and another 10 members who take part in their activities. A very successful fund-raising auction was held not long ago at the Stephen Joseph Theatre, with music provided by a local jazz band. The group has received a further £2000 in donations (from Harrison McCain and the McCarthy Fund) which has been invested for future projects.

Attitude and aspirations

The Smacme artists generally have a positive attitude to Scarborough. They want to stay and work here: they have families, commitments and genuinely like the place. The town was defined as "grotty genteel", not dissimilar to Brighton. Brighton has changed its image. So could Scarborough.

In their opinion, the town suffers from a combination of lack of vision, lack of pride, lack of support, resentment, envy and the "accountant mentality."

According to the Crysalis Arts 2001 Survey, there is a large percentage of practising artists in the area. Yorkshire has the highest proportion of practising artists in the UK, Scarborough the second highest proportion of practising artists in North Yorkshire.

However, I was told it is very difficult to make a living as an artist - galleries open and close, and there is a lack of decent space for artists to work and exhibit. Because the group is not a community arts organisation, it is apparently much more difficult to raise funding. Also, they're aware that their work is unlikely to appeal to the traditional Scarborough summer visitor.

The Smacme artists' aspirations include:

- The need for positive change
- The Arts need to be supported, promoted, valued and given a much higher profile in the town
- Scarborough itself needs a different focus; to attract new types of people. This would then attract a market for artists' work: "Once you build up a market, you don't have to struggle so much"
- Need for a funded administrator, to help organise exhibitions and market their work
- A designated arts space in Scarborough is needed - a proper Arts Centre (like Darlington Arts Centre for example). A potential venue could be St Thomas' Hospital - currently vacant on the upper floors.
- Bridlington Council has an Arts Officer - why not Scarborough? Local artists were apparently involved in creating a sculpture walkway - an example of local good practice
- The arts should be represented at the inception of all new projects.
- Scarborough could perhaps twin with Paphos in Cyprus. There are many similarities (tourism, sea, history). A summer school exists in Cyprus - run by Michael Paraskos, an honorary member of Smacme and former lecturer in Art History at Hull University, Scarborough Campus



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Fine Arts Department, Hull University, Scarborough Campus

During the meeting the discussion focused on the uncertain future of the University's Fine Arts Department.

Having a Fine Arts University Department in the town has undoubtedly added value to Scarborough's creative status: people have come from elsewhere to study and stayed on.

However, since Hull took over Scarborough's campus from York University two years ago, all arts subjects have been under review. The rumour is that the University wants to turn the campus into a technology based centre with emphasis on IT, computing, digital arts and music technology in preference to the more traditional forms of creativity.

I understand that it is no longer possible to do a 3 year degree course in Dance as it is now only a module of Theatre Studies. There are apparently 8 students currently doing a MA in painting but this will end soon. There is no longer a full time lecturer in the History of Art. The BA in Fine Art is being transferred next year to Yorkshire Coast College. The fear is that this move will make it less likely to attract students from elsewhere. Also, by no longer being part of a university campus, students may feel the course has a reduced status.

The problem seems to be that the University finds it difficult to justify Dance and Fine Arts courses in financial terms - they simply "take up too much space". Universities are currently desperate for money. Easels and canvases take up more space than computers.

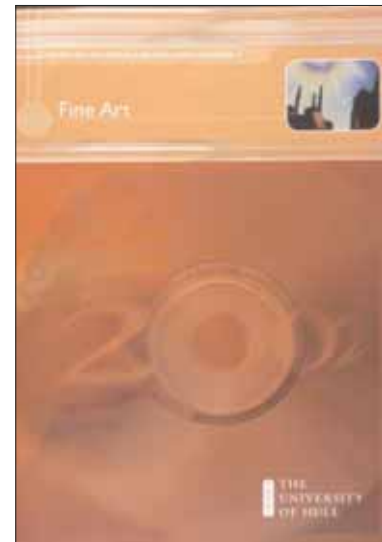
For existing University Fine Arts lecturers the options are likely to be few: to re-train in digital media, to move to Yorkshire Coast College (with perhaps reduced status and pay) or accept redundancy.

Technology versus traditional art forms

Financial constraints are a fact of life, but my personal view is that it is essential to promote and value the attributes and potential of all art forms, not one at the expense of another. All human beings need choice to be truly creative.

Digital arts and music technology have a certain popularity that can indeed be exploited. Many people are excited by and best suited to working creatively with computers. As the 21st century progresses, it is a valid art form.

But it seems foolish to focus on technology at the expense of traditional skills that have for many centuries provided a solid basis for quality creative work, despite being developed by the individual artist in non-traditional ways.



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Before today I had no idea that Scarborough had a university campus whose School of Arts encompassed Theatre, Music, Dance and Fine Art at BA and MA levels. But why should I be surprised? The town is surrounded by beautiful and stimulating scenery. It is likely that many art students should want to come here to develop their creative talents within an inspiring environment.

The surroundings in fact possibly encourage the more traditional methods of painting, drawing, ceramics and sculpture, but not necessarily. Freedom of individual expression is the artist's prerogative.

Following the meeting with Smacme Arts Group at Mojos Music Cafe, (great atmosphere, two excellent cups of coffee!) I was invited to look at their current studio space - above the Surf shop in Somerset Terrace which is currently used by 3 people (should be 4). It is small but affordable. However, new premises are a key aspiration.

The Civic Society's Public Art Initiative

My next meeting was at two o'clock with a lady called Barbara Foster.

I was vaguely aware of a Public Art project that had been initiated recently by Scarborough's Civic Society. It seemed appropriate to find out more. Peter Cooper, the Chair of the Civic Society, and member of the Town Team, put me in touch with Barbara, who is leader of the Society's Public Art sub committee.

Barbara told me that she and her husband Roger had owned a flat in Scarborough for 10 years but only recently retired here permanently. An ex primary head teacher, she is an Open University tutor with a degree in art & architecture. They came to Scarborough because of "the theatre, the atmosphere, a varied society, the potential. There's a heck of a lot going on". I was interested to hear confirmation that the Futurist is "packed full" when Joe Longthorne and Ken Dodd perform there.

The Civic Society

The Civic Society is a local organisation (with about 200 - 250 members) for those interested in Scarborough's history, its buildings and environment. The intention is to protect what is good and react negatively or positively to any changes in planning. They nominate and put up blue commemorative plaques, eg Charles Laughton (Royal Hotel); James Harland of the shipbuilders Harland & Wolff who was born in Scarborough (in front of M&S). It is however principally a social organisation; walks are organised and talks given. There are limited fund-raising activities.



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Commissioned designs

The Civic Society is working in partnership with SBC with regards to the public art initiative but they want to retain independence. Others involved include Pete Massey of Create, Eileen Bosomworth (Leader of the Council) and the Technical Services Officer of SBC. The Sub Committee involves Barbara Foster, Jon Allison (retired Planning Officer of SBC) Tony Stevens (Vice Chair of Civic Society) Alison Cooper and several local businessmen, including James Corrigan and John Senior.

Funding

Several society members have generously donated money that was matched by SBC. This enabled the Society to commission a well-established group of artists to provide proposals for the central area of Scarborough. A member of the sub committee had seen the Art on the Riverside project carried out in Tyne and Wear by Colin Wilbourne and the Bonnersfield Studio Group, so recommended they use artists from this group to launch the project.

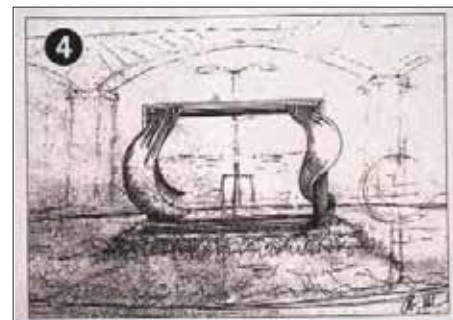
The aim is to use public art to create a sense civic pride. The design needs to be robust, of high artistic quality, to reflect local culture and site location, to have 'something for everyone'. Most importantly it should connect with the town: the community must have ownership.

6 designs were commissioned for 6 sites by 3 artists. These proposals were displayed at the Civic Society's AGM and published in the Scarborough Evening News.

Public Art can help regenerate towns and cities, but as Peter Cooper admitted in the Society's March Newsletter "We've a lot of catching up to do in comparison with other places."

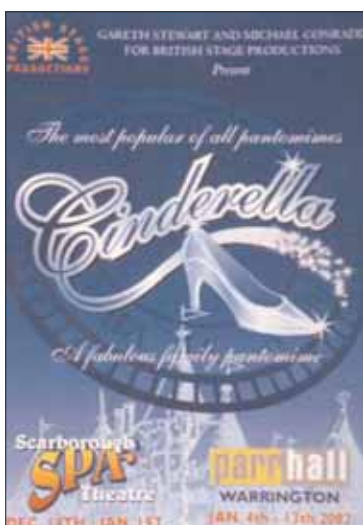
Sub Committee members will make the final decision, though the local community can comment. Funding for the chosen piece of public art will need to be raised through sponsorship, SBC grants, Percent for Art, and local Community Chest funding.

It seems to be likely that there would be community involvement in the public art project as it proceeds - using outsiders was just the first step.



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British Stage Productions

At three o'clock my focus moved from public art to commercial theatre as I had a meeting with Michael Conradd and Gareth Stewart who run a theatre production company from their base in Sherwood Road. I had seen posters of their shows both at the Spa and the Futurist. Their focus is traditional family entertainment, and as such they too contribute to the Arts in Scarborough.

From 1998 to 2001 British Stage Productions produced four consecutive summer seasons at the Spa Theatre. The summer 2001 programme consisted of two shows during each week. On Mondays and Saturdays it was "The Fabulous Fifties and Sensational Sixties", a light-hearted revue of songs from Cliff Richard, the Seekers etc. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday were devoted to the Krankies own "Fan-Dabi-Dozi Summer Spectacular."

During the autumn of 2001 British Stage Productions produced "We'll Meet Again", a nostalgic look back at the 1940s. The show played for three weeks at the Spa Theatre in September and then toured throughout October and November, mostly to venues in the north of England.

Their Christmas pantomime was "Cinderella" which played for three weeks at the Spa Theatre, before transferring to the Parr Hall in Warrington for a fortnight in January.

The presence of British Stage Productions in Scarborough also offers local dance schools an opportunity to perform. Children aged 8 to 12 from Rowlies Dance School (formed 6 years ago and based at Scarborough's YMCA) took part in the pantomime and several girls were also involved in the 50s and 60s summer season production.

Productions in Spring 2002 included a two month tour of a music hall show "The Old Bull & Bush", which had one performance in February at the Spa Theatre, and "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs", which played over Easter at the Futurist Theatre. The poor state of the theatre was confirmed. The building "needs a lot doing to it". It leaks on stage, there are poor dressing room facilities and scenery has to be brought in through the foyer. It is also far too large for many shows.

British Stage Productions provide professional employment for a director and choreographer, a stage manager and from six to ten artistes. There can be as many as 30 in the cast. The Sherwood Street building includes store, wardrobe, office but no performance space.

As a totally unsubsidised company, they have inevitable financial concerns. A 60/20 percent box office split does not provide a lot of profit once VAT, wages (at Equity rates), National Insurance, publicity

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and copyright (Performing Rights Society) costs have been deducted. There are the overheads of business rates, administration costs, production (set and costume) and touring expenses. A permanent venue would lever in funding, attract grants and guarantee business, but it could also provide its own headaches.

My discussion with Gary and Michael focused on their concern about the lack of clarity regarding SBC's entertainment policy for the Spa Theatre. After 4 successful seasons at the Spa, where as far as they knew "there had been not one complaint", they were suddenly informed they had to tender for the job, and understandably felt piqued. There seems to be a certain indecision as to whether the Spa Theatre should be presenting quality (and expensive) 'stars' or not.

The bottom line is that production companies need to be able to programme well in advance. The current state of flux regarding SBC's entertainment policy applies equally to the future of the Futurist. Will it be available for booking next year, or not? Clear Channel will run it until September. Then what happens? British Stage Productions naturally find the lack of clarity and disruption to forward planning very frustrating.

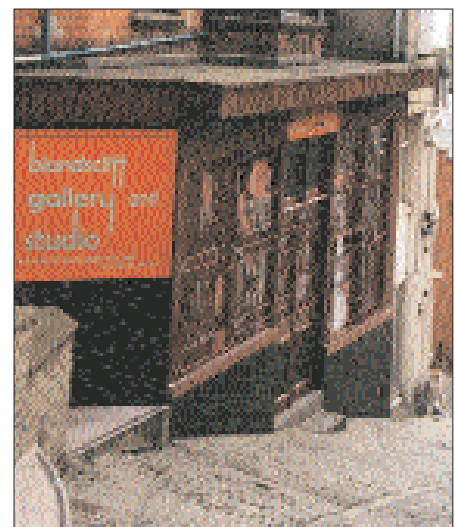
As a professional theatre company they will continue to tour, but it seems as though performances in their home town, and the opportunity to use local dancing school talent, may be limited in future.

From years of touring to places such as Cleethorpes, Bridlington and Warrington, it is apparent that towns can change for the better. In Michael Conradd's opinion it is essential to improve Scarborough for the people who live here, to "do something for the town", to take risks, make decisions and above all, "have Vision".

The Blandscliff Art Gallery

My next appointment this Tuesday afternoon was with Shirley Sheppard at the Blandscliff Art Gallery. We had spoken on the phone last week, and I'd already come across information about her mural project at Crescent Arts, and through my meeting with Alan Ayckbourn. After spending several weeks investigating Scarborough, many of the jigsaw pieces were beginning to match up.

Shirley is an Australian, originally from Perth. Before moving to Scarborough four years ago she lived in Friedrichshafen, on Lake Constance, Southern Germany where for 18 years she worked in the IT industry in software design and project management. She has a degree in Mathematics and a post graduate Diploma in Computer Science. She came to Yorkshire to do the Fine Art degree course at the University of York (now Hull)'s Scarborough Campus, from where she graduated recently with first class honours.



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Shirley is very concerned at the university's apparent desire to expand digitally-based arts at the expense of fine art tuition. She has personal knowledge of both computer technology and traditional and contemporary forms of art, and feels that the future of the Arts in Scarborough is being put in jeopardy by the University of Hull's plans to drop exciting and vital arts courses. There is a perception that Hull simply wants to get on the current "trendy but flash-in-the-pan" digital and media studies 'gravy-train' to bring in students.

Due to the Fine Arts degree course there is now a growing community of artists living in Scarborough. Some are known nationally and internationally, others are just beginning their artistic careers. But they share the desire to add their creative resources to benefit the town in terms of local economy and culture.



Since completing her degree in Fine Art, Shirley has been active in setting up an Art Gallery and Studio on Blands Cliff. She took on the lease of the Bland's Cliff property in 2001. It is also her home. The Scarborough Small Business Scheme provided a grant to assist in buying ceramic material for the studio. She has raised money for a continuing arts project for the town in the form of the Bland's Cliff Mural.

The Gallery was set up with help from Janine Baldwin and Paul Woyen, also graduates from the Fine Art department of Hull University, Scarborough Campus. It was officially opened by Heather Stoney on Easter Sunday 2002. It specialises in contemporary painting, etchings, sculpture and ceramics by professional artists in Scarborough and the surrounding area.

The mural project

Blands Cliff is a small, steep, cobbled, pedestrian street, once an important thoroughfare from the town to the seafront, now suffering from boarded up properties and subject to graffiti. Opposite Shirley's gallery is the Bell Hotel, owned by Goodalls who gave permission for the proposed mural to go ahead. Most, but not all, local residents gave their approval. Shirley's Business Plan for the project resulted in £4000 of funding: £2000 from Yorkshire Arts; £2000 from SBC (split over 2 years). This will pay for materials and the professional preparation and rendering of the wall. At this stage there is no available funding for artists but the mural offers exposure for local painters. As the project continues, it is expected that additional funding will provide income for the artists to be paid in future. In organising the project, Shirley has obviously contributed her own (unpaid) time and labour.



My first visit to the Gallery was just before its official opening in March, with Shirley and Janine busy choosing where to hang the paintings. I have returned several times since then. The display changes as new pieces of sculpture arrive, new drawings, new paintings, more creativity by talented local artists. Work continues to be sold - though slowly - mostly it seems to visitors who live in distant cities. But local support is growing and Scarboroughians too have purchased items.

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At the time of writing, the Blands Cliff mural is well on the way to completion. Each artist has been able to paint whatever they wish in their chosen style, and a variety of images now adorn the wall, depicting the history of Blands Cliff or relating to the immediate area, landscape and the sea.

Shirley's ideas

During my first meeting with Shirley on 26th March we discussed her personal aspirations for the town.

- Value the artists.
It wasn't the first time I had heard about the need for more support for the burgeoning community of local artists, a growing resource due to students attending both Yorkshire Coast College and the University. If not encouraged and supported, they are likely to move elsewhere.
- Make more of under-used resources.
In Shirley's opinion the Castle could be an ideal venue for an important and income-generating cultural event. What about a circus tent as a performance / festival space on the headland? The profits from food and drinks outlets could be ploughed back into supporting other arts events in the town. This happens in towns all over Europe, why not in Scarborough?
- The South Bay Pool.
With imagination and flair it could become an ideal space for families, tourists and residents. Why not have a barbecue area, with picnic tables, wind breaks, maybe some roof coverage, a licensed bar and mosaics on the flagstones?
- Make sure that public art is quality art, and that any public art is properly integrated into the public realm
- What about a mentor scheme for a public art project?
The budget for a piece of commissioned public art could include materials, a fee for the artist, plus money for a local apprentice to learn and develop skills.
- Provide more and proper cycleways
- Don't forget about the wealth of local music talent.
Scarborough's live music venues include Cellars Bar; Murrays, Indigo Alley, the Tap and Spile, Mojors A listings and news magazine called "Up for It" has the details.
- "It's important for art groups to work together."



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Shirley spends her day working in the studio, or in the gallery itself, painting, drawing and creating smoke-fired sculptures. Blandscliff Gallery is an example of quality in a street suffering from previous neglect and limited aspirations. People now pass by, glance inside, sometimes enter. Shirley chats to children, whose curiosity leads them through the door to experience a different kind of space, a room full of line and colour, where framed images cover the walls and ceramic sheep hobnob with naked torsos.

The Gallery has done wonders for Blands Cliff. It is a visible example of what can be achieved as a result of effort, imagination and will. It offers local artists valuable exposure. The level of graffiti has diminished. To date, people seem to be respecting the mural. The Council has been supportive of Shirley's venture. Her idea of using art to regenerate the street and turn the area into an artists' quarter is gathering momentum.

The National Student Drama Festival

Tuesday 26th March ended with a brief visit later this evening to the Spa Complex - to experience the atmosphere of the National Student Drama Festival.



This is a hugely successful festival that takes place annually in Scarborough. Nick Stimson is the Artistic Director, a playwright, theatre director and poet who lives in Devon. The Arts is celebrated for seven days and nights at a variety of venues in Scarborough - the Westward Campus of Yorkshire Coast College; the Stephen Joseph Theatre (Alan Ayckbourn is the NSDF Patron), the Scarborough Campus of Hull University; and Scarborough College.

During the preceding year a team of NSDF Selectors, (all theatre professionals) travel the length and breadth of the country watching and assessing student productions. From the dozens of shows seen, the NSDF will invite some fifteen or so student productions to perform at the Festival.

The festival is based at the Spa complex (Scarborough Borough Council provides the venue free of charge), where performances, workshops, discussions and masterclasses take place intensively throughout the week. Between 800 and 1000 students participate in the festival. They pay an all inclusive price (subscription tickets this year were £135 or £99 for concessions). This allows people to attend everything. There are also tickets for one off performances, workshops etc.

A significant number of well known actors and writers were former participants of the National Student Drama Festival, including Michael Billington, Ben Elton, Stephen Fry, Terry Hands, Bryony Lavery, Rik Mayall, Sian Phillips, Pete Postlethwaite, Simon Russell-Beale, Antony Sher, Timothy West, Michael York and many others.



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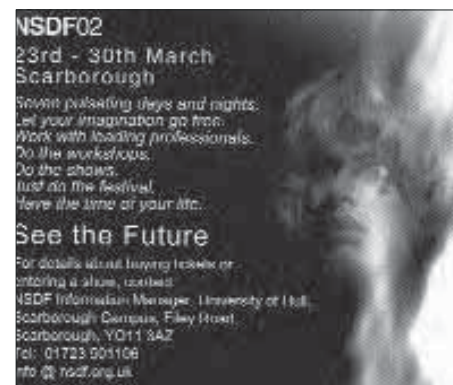
In a telephone conversation I had later with Tracey McGarrigan, the outgoing Information Officer (a shared 3 year post with Ian Abbot) there appears to be a persistent rumour that the student productions bring their own student following and that there are no seats available for anyone else. This is misinformation based on the fact that the NFSD subscription system of ticketing means that some (but not all) productions will be sold out in advance due to certain venues only being able to take a limited number of audience members. Another venue in Scarborough would therefore enable more productions to be seen by more people.

I was disappointed not to be able to attend a NSDF performance, but I had to be back in London the following day. However, a late evening visit to the Spa Bar seemed appropriate. It was a clear moonlit night, the waves breaking peacefully below the promenade.

Walking through the doors of the Spa Complex was quite a contrast. I wasn't sure whether scheduled events were still taking place at this time of the evening, but the place was buzzing. There were energetic dancers in the Grand Hall, lights flashing, music blaring from loudspeakers. The Spa Bar was crammed with people, groups of excited students talking animatedly about performances they had seen or been in, people they had met, recent successes, future dreams. There were lists of paper everywhere - 'put your name down' for workshops, masterclasses and lectures.

Publicity material about Equity, Dartington College, Yorkshire Coast College, the University and other organisations lay scattered around on tables, along with posters of events, spilt beer and plastic glasses. Lots of young (and not so young) people were having a good time.

But strangely the night sky and the sea seemed to absorb the student energy inside the building. Walking back up the hill and across the Bridge to St Nicholas Cliff, there was a stillness and tranquillity in the air that belied the frantic socialising at the Spa.



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'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view"

Thomas Campbell, 'Pleasures of Hope', 1799

Gleanings about Scarborough

I was beginning to be familiar with the part of Scarborough that is accessible by foot: the town centre, beach, seafront and harbour, but to explore the rest of the town needs a vehicle. This morning James Corrigan volunteered to provide Charles Campion and I with a guided tour. He is immensely knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the town. This attitude is apparently more widespread than one is led to believe. "They actually only really moan about the weather."

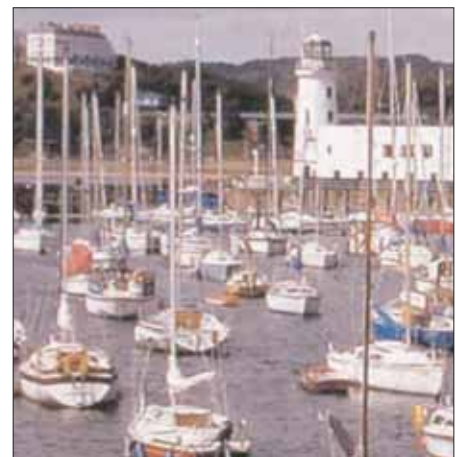
James is the young owner of Corrigans, an amusement arcade on the Foreshore. Despite running a very successful business, he is aware that the proliferation of arcades can have a negative effect on the image of the town. He personally wants "less of the same" and would be more than happy to see Sandside become a bohemian, cafe society neighbourhood, with the Foreshore retaining its 'Kiss me quick' character with bingo, slot machines and associated traditional seaside paraphernalia.

Work is apparently due to commence in de-silting the harbour which will give greater depth and allow it to be used for a longer period of time. The walls are porous so it could never become a proper marina, but there is the potential to use the harbour assets to greater advantage.

Surfing is a very popular sport and full sewage treatment means the sea is clean: "It's the cleanest stretch of coast in England"

We drove through Falsgrave, which, in the past (like Scalby) was a separate village community. It apparently used to be a very busy secondary shopping area. The Seamer Road leads out to the Mere with the rundown Edgehill estate visible to the right. Although less than 20 years old, much of the housing is being demolished, the result of poor design and social problems.

We turned off along Queen Margaret's Road and a large natural lake came unexpected into view, hidden from the road (and in-coming visitors) behind a barricade of trading estates and pre-fabricated buildings. The lake used to be the home of the Hispaniola (now in the harbour), which would ferry children to the island to see Long John Silver. A simple pleasure, which like the boarded-up cafe, seems a relic of the past. The far end of the lake has been revamped and developed for water-skiing; that nearest the town is used for model boats and fishing. Surrounded by beautiful natural vegetation, the Mere must be one of Scarborough's most unexploited assets.



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Above the Mere rises Oliver's Mount - the location for Auto 66's very successful motorcycle racing circuit. Attended by 6000-7000 people, the events apparently have "a phenomenal following". This brings a lot of income to the town, but the effect tends to be dampened by the 'anti-bikers' who live in Deepdale, the nearest residential district.

The views from the top of Oliver's Mount are phenomenal: the town and its iconic buildings fanning out behind two shimmering bays and the castle headland.

We drove back past the Sports Centre, along Filey Road and to the top of the South Bay cliff, the site of the Holbeck Hotel landslide and some beautiful municipal gardens. Havens of peace and tranquillity, there are the Italian Gardens, with its statue of Mercury, and the attractive Belvedere Rose Gardens. These lie just off the Esplanade, an elegant terrace of hotels and apartments, also home to Jimmy Saville, one of Scarborough's most famous residents.



James told us about Councillor Popple's "People Plan": a proposal to extend the sea wall and instal palm trees and a promenade; also about the need for an artificial reef to force waves to break further out to sea, thereby reducing coastal erosion.

Beyond the Castle headland lies the proposed location for the North Bay (formerly Zenith) project. Plans seem to be a-changing. We drove to the Sea Life Centre, and back past Kinderland to Peasholm Park. I saw for myself the Open Air Theatre, a sloping wall of decaying seating opposite an artificial lake, crying out for an audience and a Kenwood House type experience, with an orchestra playing Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture, and a dramatic firework display illuminating the night sky.



The Mere, the view from Oliver's Mount, the castle, the coastline, the harbour, the sea, the many municipal gardens. As James said, Scarborough does indeed have "pockets of beautiful things."



Cultural Audit

Sunday 7 April

***"The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils."***

William Shakespeare, 'The Merchant of Venice' (Act 5), 1596-8

It was now two months since my first visit to Scarborough. The Community Planning Weekend was due to take place eighteen days from now. This was my final week of talking to people. But of course each person I met gave me new leads for other contacts, new avenues for research: it was a journey I feared I would never finish. There would always be another group to investigate, another artist to meet. Scarborough and its people were just too interesting.

Life drawing at Crescent Arts

I had made an appointment to talk to representatives of Scarborough Orchestra this evening. I then recalled there was a Life Drawing Class at Crescent Arts during the day. This would give me an opportunity to meet arts practitioners who were not necessarily part of a specific arts organisation. I could also do some drawing myself. There were leaflets to give out, people to be told about the urban renaissance initiative. Part of my chosen route was to inform and 'animate' the community by using an indirect approach. A drawing class seemed appropriate.

By the end of the day my list of people to contact had of course increased. There was April Powell - president of Scarborough Arts Society with links with the Art Gallery; Eddie Burton, Chairman of the Writers' Circle, John Gayle of Brompton and someone called Tom Fox. I knew that it would be impossible to contact everyone, but the help and interest in the project was much appreciated.

I was also told that Susan Marling, a Telegraph journalist was at a hotel in the Crescent, writing an article about Scarborough having recently won an award for the most improved seaside resort. This was news to me. Her bad back had been treated yesterday by Don Glynn, an artist who also happened to be a professional physiotherapist. Did Sue Marling know about the Community Planning Weekend I wondered? Prompted by the thought of potential publicity, I went to Beiderbecke's Hotel after the class. She'd checked out this morning. Well, it was worth a try.



Cultural Audit

Sunday 7 April



There were about ten artists taking part in the Life Drawing Class and at least three lived in villages outside Scarborough. They were mostly male, generally late middle-aged or retired, a few quite elderly. They were talented, friendly and welcoming. They brought me mugs of tea and helped me with my easel. The chivalry was appreciated.

Andrew Cheetham, a Crescent Arts studio holder, ran the class. I learned he had just received a grant to do a project on Scarborough's fishing community.

Ideas from the class

Over tea and coffee breaks I chatted about the forthcoming Community Planning Weekend. One participant was aware of the community planning process and was himself organising a small scale event in his village. One very senior artist had a wide range of ideas for improving Scarborough but I was unable to persuade him to come along to the public event at the end of April. "I'll be dead before anything gets done". Nevertheless, every so often he put down his charcoal and crossed the room to give me another suggestion!

Tom Pearson, another artist, agreed to drop round a recent article which proved that space for artists assisted social and physical regeneration. "If you want to develop a place, create working space for the artists, the rest will follow."

My day at Crescent Arts produced a number of ideas, as follows:

- Banners in the town, like Bruges
- Sculptures (classical) around the town centre, like in European towns
- Live music (classical) playing in restaurants
- Create underground parking under the castle, when stabilising the cliff. The technology must be available if they can tunnel through mountains and under the Channel
- Bicycle track to link Eastfield with Scarborough Town Centre
- Train (or some kind of innovative public transport) to carry people from a Park and Ride car park at the A64 roundabout. (People apparently get so fed up with being in a traffic jam, they head off to Bridlington instead)
- Exploit sunken garden (near Rotunda Museum) where Scarborough artists display paintings twice a year (May & Sept)
- Provide a wet weather programme (and place) for young people
- Don't forget the importance of adventure type activities for young people, eg climbing, canoing, sub-aqua, diving, sailing. South Bay Pool could perhaps be used for such activities

It was an enjoyable and rewarding day. And creative too. I left with a bundle of drawings under my arm and walked up to Westborough, past the Stephen Joseph Theatre, past a Church, past a rather cute sign saying Victoria Road and eventually reached 45 Falsgrave Road, where I had a 6 o'clock meeting with Geoffrey Emerson and Hilary Marshall.

Cultural Audit

Sunday 7 April

Scarborough Orchestra

In my search for Scarborough's cultural community I had met a number of people connected with theatre and the visual and community arts. Although I had been told there were many musicians in the town, I hadn't yet met any. This would have to change. Weeks ago I'd picked up leaflets from the Library and one of them referred to the Scarborough Orchestra. A telephone call to its Chairman (Hilary Marshall) prompted the meeting this evening.

The Scarborough Orchestra creates an opportunity for local amateur musicians to perform together in public. It was founded in 1949 by Ronald Cole who served as a musician in the Royal Marines and was stationed in Scarborough as a bandmaster following the end of the Second World War. Since then it has performed an immense amount of music in many different venues, not only in Scarborough but also in Whitby, Bridlington and Malton. Over the years, many famous soloists have appeared with the Scarborough Orchestra, including Max Jaffa.

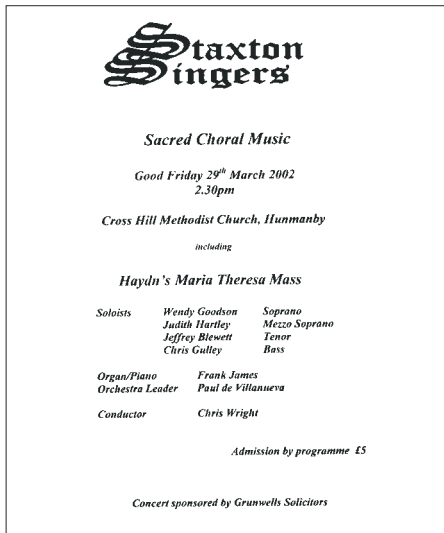
Since 1995 it has been conducted by Geoffrey Emerson, a professional horn-player, who co-founded and ran the Ryedale Music Festival for 15 years. The orchestra consists of about 80 players aged between 12 to 88. The average age is 30 to 40. They rehearse one evening a week (Tuesdays) and are well supported by children and students who are excluded from subscription charges and can get into concerts free. The Orchestra is managed by a voluntary committee that is elected annually by and from its members at the May AGM.

An interesting programme

Their current (52nd) season includes work by Mozart, Schubert, Debussy, Arnold, Rachmaninov, Verdi, Rimsky-Korsakov as well as the lesser known composers Suk and Martinu. To quote from the programme: *"People often comment on our bold choice of repertoire; we deliberately decided to be bold because there are no other large orchestras for 40 miles in any direction, and we want to have fun."* Seems reason enough.

The July 2002 concert has indeed some "rather surprising juxtapositions." The Overture from Mozart's "The Magic Flute", operatic arias from Puccini and Verdi, Wagner's 'Siegfried's Rhine Journey' and "Trial by Jury" by Gilbert and Sullivan. The programme notes continue with the information *"Sullivan admired Mozart and Wagner; whether Wagner admired Gilbert and Sullivan isn't known, though Stravinsky was somewhat surprisingly an enthusiast. Mozart might not have particularly approved of Verdi or Puccini. Who cares!"*. If the concert satisfies the performers and pleases the audience, who cares indeed.





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Practical matters

Running Costs include venue hire, rehearsal space, hire of scores and fees for outside artists. Scarborough Orchestra is funded by subscription (minimum £25 a year), ticket sales, some sponsorship and by selling advertising space in the programme. They were offered £50 guarantee against loss by SBC but the sum of money involved didn't justify the amount of paper work that would be involved.

They perform regularly at the Methodist Hall in Westborough; also the hall belonging to Scarborough College. They have seven concerts a year and about 400 people attend each concert. There are strong links with the Staxton Singers. This is an auditioned choir; with about 60 members, a new conductor (who also plays cello) and the choir is gradually getting a 'younger profile'. Scarborough Orchestra and the Staxton Singers often perform together. The orchestra would like to perform with dance groups too but this is more difficult due to space requirements. A space that is suitable for an orchestra may not have a sprung floor; appropriate dance venues are usually too small to accommodate an orchestra. I was however assured that the Scarborough Orchestra would be happy to collaborate on any proposed project with the proviso that some instruments are unsuitable for outside performance.

Aspirations: a Concert Hall

The desire for a permanent concert venue in Scarborough is high on the Orchestra's wish list, as the current conditions are inadequate:

- The Spa Theatre platform is too small - acoustics are "in a duvet"
- The Grand Hall's platform is wide enough but too shallow (it does have an extension but this is difficult to put up, takes time and adds to the hire costs). It's also "a barn of a venue."
- The SJT is used for small music groups but it is too small for a full-size orchestra; it also tends to be fully booked.
- The Scarborough College Hall is OK but there's no bar, front of house or back stage facilities.
- The Westborough Methodist Church is not really wide enough, and it has steep steps.
- The YMCA is suitable but usually fully booked a long time in advance.

A new concert hall, with a large platform and 400 or more seats would ideally form part of an Arts Centre for Scarborough. Having a proper base would greatly improve publicity and raise the Orchestra's profile; it would allow rehearsals and performance to be carried out in the same place and would supply educational needs in terms of music classes and workshops.

The ideal platform space to accommodate an orchestra is approximately 4 ft. wide x 35 ft. deep. Good acoustics are obviously essential. I was informed that orchestras tend to find it difficult to share space with theatre groups. They have different space requirements and usually want to perform on the same popular dates.

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Geoffrey Emerson and others are convinced there are enough music groups in Scarborough to ensure that any new concert venue would be in use all the time.

He suggested a number of existing venues that had Arts Centre redevelopment potential: Marshall & Snelgrove on St Nicholas Street; The Town Gaol in Dean Road (plenty of parking nearby); even perhaps the engine sheds next to the station could be converted and sound-proofed. This would be a good location and close to an existing arts building, the Stephen Joseph Theatre.

Apparently the Westborough Methodist Hall has a number of very large spaces, including the one used by the Scarborough Orchestra, which could perhaps be brought into community use. If the Church were to relocate to its Queen Street premises, the Westborough Church could perhaps become an Arts Centre venue.

Aspirations: better publicity

Geoffrey Emerson would like to see more and better local publicity for orchestral concerts. It seems that serious music events and organisations need much more exposure and support, especially by the local press. It is apparently very difficult to get reviewed by the Scarborough Evening News even though the concerts are always well attended. It was felt that the Tourist Information Centre could be more pro-active in promoting concerts to visitors.

Oh yes, Scarborough Orchestra needs a grand piano too. (He almost forgot to mention that!)

Scarborough's music groups

I was keen to find out just how many musical groups there are in Scarborough. The list includes:

- Staxton Singers
- Scarborough Choral Society (approx 60/70 membership)
- Scarborough & District Light Opera Society (SADLOS) - Perform at YMCA
- Scarborough Amateur Operatic Society
- Scarborough Concert Band
- Scarborough Brass Band
- Scarborough Electric Organ Society
- Scarborough Recorded Music Society - Perform in Library and meet every 2 weeks

I was told about a medium sized brass ensemble run by Roy Gunning, and that Nigel Blenkiron runs a very successful Saturday Morning Music School. There are numerous jazz bands of varying size and composition. Many musicians perform in the summer season at hotels and holiday camps.

We agreed that a comprehensive list of all arts organisations in Scarborough would be useful.



Cultural Audit

Sunday 7 April



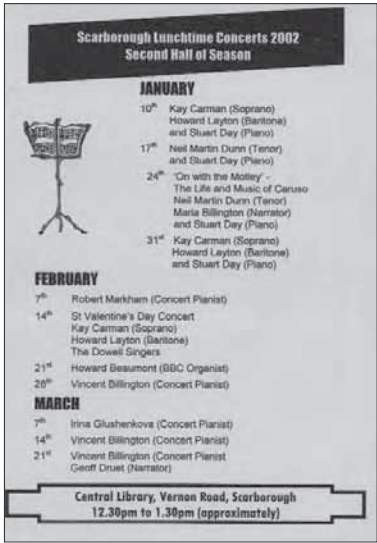
We also discussed Helmsley Arts Centre as a model for a successful Arts Centre. Helmsley was apparently "a cultural tundra 25 years ago". This former Quaker Hall now has a resident theatre company, it screens films, performs concerts and provides regular music and drama tuition. It has wide support amongst the local community and extensive national publicity. In Geoffrey's opinion, "Scarborough needs something like this, but bigger."

I began to realise that I'd probably only touched the tip of an iceberg with regard to Scarborough's musical talent. With time running out for meeting people, it was unlikely I'd be able to organise individual interviews with members of the numerous organisations I'd learned about this evening. Some groups I was aware of through other sources, but I wish I'd known earlier about the Music School, which might have provided a useful link to younger musicians.

Nevertheless, I had more names and addresses for our data base. I stressed the need for Hilary and Geoffrey to spread the word as best they could about the forthcoming Community Planning Weekend. If people had dreams and suggestions, they needed to come along to the Spa and air them in public. If eighty members of a local orchestra want a concert hall, that's significant agreement. If others in Scarborough support this idea, the consensus could grow.

The Spa Orchestra

Scarborough has two orchestras, one financed by the council, one not. The Spa Grand Hall is home to the Spa Orchestra which plays concerts there (and morning concerts in the Sun Court) throughout the Summer Season. The ensemble is made up of 10 professional musicians, drawn from orchestras throughout the country and under the direction of Simon Kenworthy who took over the job of conductor in 1992. It is the first and last remaining professional seaside orchestra in Britain and is joined by guest vocalists during the season. The musicians are paid from the SBC's entertainment budget. Apparently the concerts at the Spa can be poorly attended (though Gala Nights are successful), but they are extremely popular with Scarborough's elderly residents who can get very cheap subscription tickets. The concerts are also an attraction for tourists wanting classical musical entertainment during their holiday.



Cultural Audit

Monday 8 April

"The great source of pleasure is variety."

Samuel Johnson, 'Lives of the English Poets', 1779-81

The Delmont Hotel

My meeting with Colin Shrive and John Baxter this afternoon was the result of a telephone call by Gareth Stewart of British Stage Productions, who suggested I might like to talk to a Scarborough Hotel providing in-house entertainment.

The Delmont Hotel is a successful, friendly, medium-sized hotel overlooking North Bay. The owners decided to convert one section of the building into flats which turned the 77 beds into a more manageable 50 bed hotel. Several small and intimate modernised sitting rooms have good views over North Bay. A large dining room is also used for evening entertainment.

The hotel is a member of the Scarborough Hotels Association but Colin and John admit they "tend to do their own thing." They clearly love the job, love Scarborough, and are optimistic about the future. They know their market and are happy with their clientele, who fall into the bracket of late middle aged and elderly. Their guests are usually on a budget and unlikely to splash out, but they are prepared to spend what is necessary for a holiday in Scarborough. As Colin said, "we've not yet found a poor pensioner".

Colin and John ensure their guests have maximum individual attention during their stay in Scarborough; they remember names and send out personalised Christmas cards. The following year they mail out a brochure. Otherwise they use coach companies who act as agents, charging an all-in fee for accommodation and travel. There are group-booking rates and specific all-inclusive packages of 'special breaks' which include a full programme of live entertainment.

In-house entertainment

Dancing and entertainment is provided throughout the year and the regular entertainers need to be able to adapt to the needs of the guests. The programme usually starts with bingo, followed by traditional tunes and music for dancing. But if no one seems to want to dance, the entertainer will adapt his performance accordingly.

They employ a number of musicians, including one very talented performer who apparently has a habit of playing his own compositions. This may indeed be better music but it is not necessarily what the audience want to hear! Colin admitted they could do with a larger pool of entertainers - but their musicians need to be able to cope with the very specific requirements of the elderly clientele, which may not be very exciting!



Cultural Audit

Monday 8 April



One night a week there is no in-hotel entertainment and Colin and John usually try to encourage the guests to visit Scarborough's other theatres, most likely the YMCA, Spa or Futurist. They recognise that their guests enjoy lowbrow entertainment and prefer Nescafe. They do not try to change their tastes.

The formula seems to work: the price is right, the service is right, the entertainment is right. The guests therefore return again and again. The entertainment may not be to everyone's liking, but it pleases the guests of the Delmont Hotel and as such is another valid variant of Scarborough's cultural life.

The DIY Collective

The musical tastes of the DIY Collective, whom I went to meet this evening, would certainly be very different to the guests at the Delmont Hotel. These young people would probably shun the sentimental tunes played by the hotel entertainer; in much the same way as the elderly guests would be dismayed to have to listen to acid jazz or 'garage'! But preference remains an individual choice. Techniques change, fashions change, perceptions change. What one likes today one may hate tomorrow. A variety of music is required to feed all tastes. Musicians develop their creativity in different ways: one style is not necessarily 'better' than another.

But for the DIY Collective, music means drum kits, guitars, keyboards, amplifiers and speakers. All of which they've got, through hard work and determination.

Aims and constitution

The DIY Collective is a group of young people who formed themselves into a coherent group in order to initiate arts events and activities for themselves and other young people in the Scarborough district. Their publicity leaflet is worth quoting in full, a series of phrases that they have selected to define their aims.

"Determined Independent Youth
New young fresh artistic culture
Free from prejudice
A real mixture of people
Respect for one another
A community resource for young people
Full of creativity

The DIY is a really good place to do whatever you want, without getting judged, but praised
The DIY Collective takes what the youth of Scarborough feels is lacking
And uses it positively
In identifying what we want and setting about making it happen.
We gain a sense of achievement and independence as well as having a laugh.
Do what you want to do!

Cultural Audit

Monday 8 April

The DIY Collective's Constitution aims to:

- Encourage young people to become involved in arts activities
- Provide positive opportunities and options - an alternative to street corner youth
- Prove that disaffected youth can achieve, and gain a sense of self worth
- Provide opportunities for people to become involved in independently running activities and facilities
- Increase social and personal skills of young people.

"If you are 12-30 years old and interested in helping out in any way, give DIY Collective a call!"

A visit to the Warehouse

I was invited to join the DIY Collective's regular Monday evening meeting. It was an opportunity to see The Warehouse for myself, to talk about the Community Planning Weekend and to encourage them to come along.

Two people were busy throwing clay on a potting wheel as I arrived; others were chatting and relaxing in the front room which provides a meeting space for the group. The Warehouse is described as "a creative space for young people with band practice space, art gallery and chill space". I was given a guided tour of the premises. The street-facing room on the first floor is used as a Gallery for exhibitions. There's a small kitchen and toilet but no hot water.

The band practice room is on the top floor, the back room being used for storage. There was quite a lot of equipment in evidence, including a drum kit and a selection of guitars. Speakers have been purchased with money received from the DIY Collective's recent achievement - the Philip Lawrence Award. They have also raised money through performances, sponsored litter-collecting etc. They seem an enterprising and committed group, with music and the arts as the spur for creativity and self esteem. Young people with no equipment of their own can now play and practise at the Warehouse.

The DIY's work involves actively linking different aspects of the arts: music, painting, ceramics as well as developing communication skills, meeting people, learning how to cope.

But I could see for myself that the space they have at the moment is far too small. Success may be incremental and to have a place of their own is certainly a step further than before. But a larger space would be appreciated.



Cultural Audit

Monday 8 April



There were about 10 young people present at the meeting, as well as Rachel Welford from the Festival of Youth Arts. The names I remember are Dave, Becky, Charlotte, Steve, Pat, Jeff, James and Matthew. They were a dynamic if disparate group of individuals aged between 16 and 30.

We had an animated discussion about the urban renaissance process and they seemed intelligently alert to the opportunity presented by the forthcoming Community Planning Weekend. It was a chance for young people to put forward their views to a wider audience. The Warehouse has been sold for conversion into flats; they need to find a new venue by September. Some serious lobbying needs to take place soon.



Steve had several suggestions about publicity and he kindly offered to take posters and pin them up round town. I suggested that members of the DIY Collective would perhaps like to perform at the event itself, before the Report Back presentation on Tuesday 31st April. The music would need to be appropriate and professional, but there was an opportunity for a performance in the Spa's Grand Hall in front of an audience, many of whom were perhaps unaware of the DIY Collective's existence. Rachel agreed to explore this idea further with members of the group.



Cultural Audit

Tuesday 9 April

**" All passes. Art alone
Enduring stays to us;
The Bust outlasts the throne, -
The Coin, Tiberius."**

Henry Austin Dobson, 'Ars Victrix', trans. Gautier's 'L'Art', 1876

The Town Gaol

There was an opportunity this morning to visit the old Town Gaol. Chris Hall, SBC's Conservation Officer, provided a guided tour of these remarkable Victorian premises. It is currently used as the Council's Depot, but with my Sunday conversation with Geoffrey Emerson ringing in my ears, I could imagine the cells as individual music studios, sound proofed of course for students to practise their singing and piano skills. There is a small ex chapel on the first floor which would make a intimate performance space. No room for a 400 seat concert hall inside the building, but enough space outside, behind the impressive Victorian prison walls to create a brand new state-of-the-art Arts Centre, complete with all the desired facilities I had discovered from researching the needs of Scarborough's artistic community. All this was a personal fantasy of course, but the Gaol did seem to have wonderful potential for a new visionary building: a 'Shopping Centre for the Arts.'

Hull University, Scarborough Campus - Department of Fine Art

I had arranged to meet Steve Whitehead at the University later this morning to look round the ill-fated Fine Arts Department. The university itself seems rather out on a limb, up there on Filey Road. My first impression as I arrived at the main entrance was that of a rather old fashioned school building. Possibly due to its previous incarnation as a Teacher's Training College. But the amenities inside seem good. I could certainly see why those in the Fine Arts Department would be reluctant to move. There's plenty of space and light poured into a large studio with an elegant modern glass roof. This was formerly a courtyard and provides the perfect place to paint. Unfortunately for the artists, it seems this will soon be home to computer terminals.

Impromptu meetings: Andy Head

Although I had no specific appointments arranged with any other university staff, I was keen to say hello to anyone who could spare the time. As a result I had a number of brief meetings with people from the university.

Andy Head is a lecturer in Theatre Studies and Admissions Tutor. When we met he was busy trying to reorganise two classes that had been double-booked into the same studio theatre. The empty corridor was suddenly chock-a-block with students but eventually the crisis was solved and Andy could talk to me for a few moments.



Cultural Audit

Tuesday 9 April



He filled me in with a few details about Hull University's School of Arts.

School of Arts - history

Until 1993 Scarborough Campus was a Teacher's Training College (some teaching training is still carried out on site.) The Campus initially specialised in drama and theatre studies to 'kickstart' its Further Education role. It became a satellite college associated first with Leeds University, then York. It eventually merged with Hull and attained official University Campus status in 2000.

Department of Theatre Studies

There are currently 150 undergraduates studying theatre studies, approximately 50 in each year; 12 MA students and 2 to-3 PhD students. Many students come from elsewhere in the UK with a few from overseas (currently Ireland, USA and South America). The University's Scarborough Campus has a very strong theatre department with two studio theatres. These are used by students for their own productions. They are also available as venues for the Arts on Tour programme which brings contemporary performance to the Campus for both students and residents. As I had learned already, Scarborough Campus is an important venue for the National Student Drama Festival, whose administration takes place at the university as part of Arts Management Programme, a module of the Theatre Studies degree course.



A theatre case study module has been developed in association with the Stephen Joseph Theatre. Students work at the theatre and watch Alan Ayckbourn direct. SJT staff are also employed to teach specific classes at the university.



The university will soon be hiring the McCarthy auditorium for a three day festival of new work. Entitled "Maydays", the programme will include devised performance. It is the culmination of students' work on a module focusing on Samuel Beckett.

It seems that theatre projects at the university tend to focus on experimental rather than the more traditional forms of theatre.

Creative music technology is taught in an annex at 84 Filey Road. This is a popular course that trains students to be sound engineers, with skills in recording and electro/acoustic music. The facilities are very good as there has been considerable investment in recording equipment.

Andy is on the board of Create and therefore "supports its aims". The university also recognises and supports the need for an Arts Centre in Scarborough.

Cultural Audit

Tuesday 9 April

Contemporary performance

During my investigation of Scarborough's cultural life I had picked up a copy of Liveartmagazine, the national bi-monthly guide to hybrid and live art. The Editorial Director is David Hughes, Director of Theatre Studies at Hull University, Scarborough Campus. It included an advertisement for the University. So what would attract future students to the School of Arts in Scarborough? "Collaborative opportunities across a wide range of subjects" seems to be key.

The aim is to encourage students to "investigate, interrogate, innovate" from a base within Theatre Studies. The courses offered are BA (Hons) Theatre Studies; BA (Hons) Theatre Studies with Dance; BA (Hons) Theatre Studies with Digital Arts; MA Theatre and Contemporary Practice.

"Explore the broad range of ideas, art forms and disciplines that contribute to the diversity and dynamism of contemporary performance. Develop a flexible, questioning approach to the constellation of practices that defines and extends the terms theatre and performance."

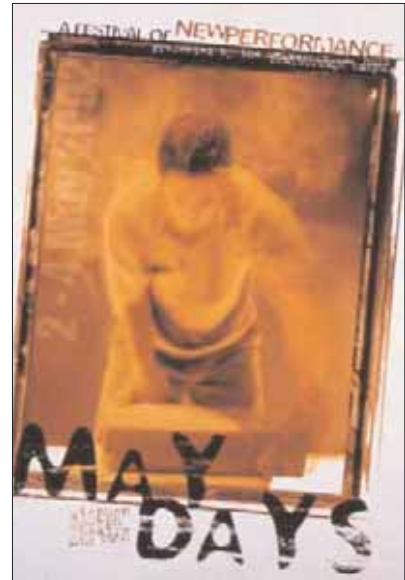
I did in fact meet up with David Hughes after the Community Planning Weekend (which he was unable to attend due to prior commitments). It turned out we had worked together in the dim and distant past when he was Theatre Director of a company called Red Light Theatre, based at Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff. It was my first Equity job, a children's show touring South Wales which was produced in association with Caricature Puppet Theatre. We never kept in touch. And then we meet again - in Scarborough!

Cultural regeneration studies

During the afternoon I was introduced to a Romanian PhD student called Monica Costea who is involved in a project on cultural regeneration in Scarborough, under the supervision of Professor Noel Witts. This is part of the Arts Management module of Theatre Studies. At the time we met she was sharing an office with Tracey McGarrigan, the outgoing Information Officer for the National Student Drama Festival. There's a fine filigree of cultural connections in this town.

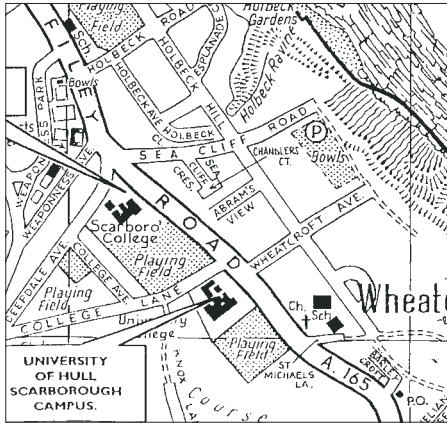
Monica has been working on a Cultural Audit, trying to identify cultural groups and organisations in Scarborough. She told me it "hadn't been easy". Her research has identified a rather "inflexible mentality... people seem not open to change". She plans to use her research to develop cultural links between Scarborough and towns in Romania, Denmark and Italy.

Monica used to work in Romania for Eurotin (Romanian Agency for European Youth Co-operation) which organises cultural projects, linked to other countries. She has experience of leveraging in European funding through partnering arrangements.



Cultural Audit

Tuesday 9 April



I was naturally intrigued to meet someone who was also trying to unravel the labyrinth of cultural activities taking place in Scarborough. Monica had already come across the programme for the Community Planning Weekend and planned to attend.

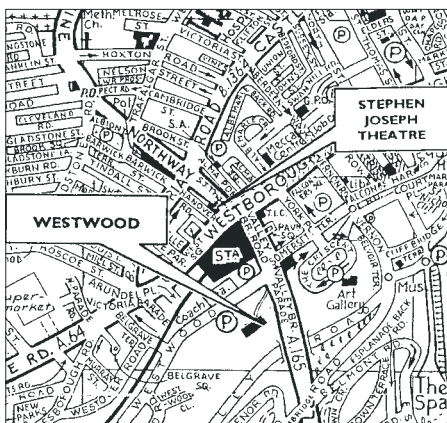
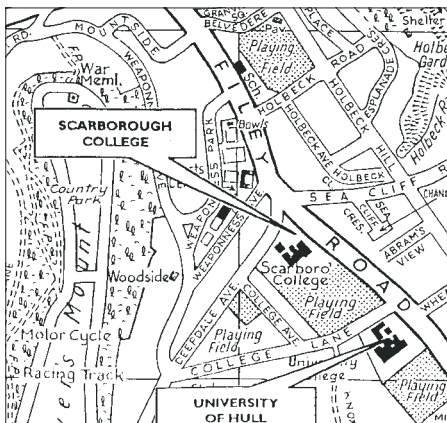
An impromptu meeting: Professor Noel Witts

My final impromptu meeting, just as I was about to leave the building, was with Professor Noel Witts. A Professor of theatre, he is the Director of Postgraduate Studies at Scarborough Campus and also runs the Arts Management module. He actually lives in Rutland so is only in Scarborough Tuesday and Wednesday of each week. I was keen to encourage him to attend the Community Planning Weekend, but this clashes with a planned visit to the USA.

We discussed Noel's personal ideas for the future regeneration of Scarborough. These included:

- Move on. "Scarborough must stop thinking of itself as an Edwardian seaside resort."
- Scarborough could be a Festival town. So many festivals already exist (Jazz, Chess, the National Student Drama Festival. Add to these - Film Festival (exploit the connections with Charles Laughton), a Kite Festival, Book Festival etc.
- Learn lessons from elsewhere and make use of what's here. For example, a town in North Italy suddenly realised it had more second hand bookshops than anywhere else. It now has an annual Book Festival, supported by EU money. This has been a huge success and has totally regenerated the town.
- Scarborough has lots of hotels, lots of large public spaces, theatres, studio venues, ballrooms in hotels: ideal for festival venues. Use them!
- A Festival could be scheduled to tie in with Edinburgh Festival. Attract people to Scarborough after or before performing in and/or visiting Edinburgh.
- Don't underestimate the value of students to the local economy: "My taxi driver said he loses £50 a week when the students go on holiday." There are 2000 students on the campus, plus those who attend day courses.
- Improve the A64 - better access is needed.
- The Spa could become an Arts Centre. It is already used for degree graduation ceremonies. There was a very successful drumming workshop held there during the NFDS Festival.
- Focus on Scarborough as 'a laboratory for creative work'
- Develop Ramshill as a specific 'quarter' within Scarborough
- "What about a glass roof over the Foreshore?!"

I took a taxi back into town. I suppose I could have walked but the University is a fair hike out of town and I haven't yet come to grips with the buses. To be honest, I haven't seen that many around.



Cultural Audit

Tuesday 9 April

At Mojos with Toby Jepson

I had a 4 o'clock meeting with Toby Jepson. My chance encounter with his sound technician on Saturday 16th March, along with a certain ignorance about rock music, made me want to find out more about the Little Angels. The Toby Jepson website supplied me with relevant biographical information. Some inspiring personal comments about creativity also confirmed my instinct that Toby would be a useful person to contact in terms of using the arts as a catalyst for regeneration. I also read about Jepsongs Limited, Toby's music production and marketing company.

I therefore took the plunge and sent a message to the e-mail address supplied on the website. A return e-mail said thanks and "Look out for the message on the Toby Jepson website message board." I'm not sure my comments about Yorkshire Forward's urban renaissance initiative would be quite what Toby Jepson fans would expect to read!

Correspondence

Nevertheless, a few hours later a long e-mail from Toby whizzed its way back to me. He was happy to meet up, and wrote eloquently about his experience of the town. The letter reflects the views I had heard expressed by so many different people during the past two months. It is worth quoting in full.

"I am a huge fan of Scarborough, it is the number one place for me and my family to live, but I have always thought Scarborough suffers from short term-ism when it comes to its self view. I regard the town not only as a lovely place to exist in but also as a vibrant, artistic place where many successful people have come from. Its atmosphere seems to help its inhabitants, should they feel so inclined, to reach for the stars and attempt success. The only trouble is that, from an outsider point of view, the actual feel of the town is heavily dominated by the holiday trade, which isn't a bad thing in itself; after all this is a sea side town etc, but it is a very old fashioned attitude. Kiss me quick hats, beer bellies and fighting in the town centre are the norm come summer. It becomes a place that is frightening to walk about in at night and the one dimensional feel of 'a sea side town' becomes the overriding feeling. I think it is worth more than that.

We are in a unique position geographically, what with the moors, forested regions and beach within easy accessible distances and the history of the town is enormous. I'm not suggesting for one second that we shouldn't welcome all the revellers into the town come summer, but I think it would be nice to improve the quality of overall entertainment and update the attractions so a wider, more diverse cross section of society can feel compelled to visit and live within its borders. Not every one wants to spend their holidays putting money in slot machines and guzzling chips out of newspaper, nice as it is to do so...



Cultural Audit

Tuesday 9 April



Why don't we have a multiplex cinema for example? It rains a lot here, and what do families have to do here when the rain falls on their holidays? Why no high quality indoor kids facilities? Whitby has a fantastic indoor soft play centre that is clean, attractive and FULL all the time because of it. Where are the good quality cafe's? Why is the Futurist left to go to wrack and ruin? Have you ever taken a look at the outdoor theatre, a place where international artists used to perform in years ago? Today it lays rotting, with no obvious care from the council. Why aren't we attracting the big name bands and acts to the town? They used to come...I fear progress is far too slow and the image is of an old fashioned town with nothing for the young and no style."

The H2002: Beached Festival

However, slowly but surely it seems that things are starting to change in Scarborough. Young people are taking control and having some impact on the town's image. The meeting with Toby Jepson began in fact with a general conversation with Steve Dickenson and Melanie Emms, who run Mojos and have started to organise regular music concerts on South Bay Beach. Last year 500 people turned up to the H2001 concert, organised as a charity event. Steve asked whether Toby would be prepared to play this year. He agreed, depending on the schedule of his forthcoming tour.

This year's H2002: Beached Festival was scheduled to take place on August 3rd.

Writing this after the event, I've just checked their website to see what happened. It seems that Scarborough's status as a Festival Town is gathering momentum. Scarborough Borough Council also backed the event, awarding the organisers £2500 from their Central Urban Area Fund towards running costs.



"Saturday saw the biggest live music event ever to hit Scarborough. 30 acts, over 100 performers, and 12 hours of live music, comedy, and performing arts, all performing in the open air, and for free! Although there are no official figures of numbers attended due to the fact that it was a free event, it is estimated that over 6000 people attended throughout the day. The biggest crowd of the day was for ex Little Angel, Toby Jepson who played to an estimated 4000 people. Another highlight of the festival was York/Leeds band Parisman, who played a blistering set as the sun set over the stage. The event has been deemed a great success and a definite asset for the town, not only on a financial basis, but as great entertainment for the people of Scarborough, and the surrounding area."



Cultural Audit

Tuesday 9 April

Returning to my notes of my meeting with Tony Jepson four months ago, it is interesting to reflect that change can in fact begin to happen quite quickly. As Toby said on the 9th April, "Make Scarborough feel like a success. If the town starts to feel really successful, then other things will springboard from there." The H2002 Beached Festival must have helped.

Organising a Music Festival

Much of my discussion with Toby revolved around the possibility of staging a big three day music Festival in Scarborough, involving national bands and organisations. He sees it as a opportunity to involve and mobilise the whole community, including the police, schools (grounds are needed for car parking), local businesses (for scaffolding, advertising etc). Business sense means that people will need to feel they can make money out of the Festival, but if it's good enough people will pay for the right to be there: income can also be generated from food concessions. Events during the Festival could attract different audiences and involve local bands and young people.

If the correct principles are put in place, it's apparently not that difficult to organise a large-scale event. But certain things are important:

- Make sure the whole community feels involved
- Have a proper approach to organisation
- Provide what people want: get the right bands
- Must sound good, look good
- Start with a head-on meeting with the right people
- Write a Business Plan

From Toby's experience, cohesion and good organisation are key to delivering a successful event. People will go to bands with a reputation. It is therefore necessary to deal with good agencies, and pay a promoter who will get the wheels moving. The event should have nation-wide focus, to bring in people from outside. Once the idea of a Festival has been initiated, it could become an annual event. There are many precedents, for instance City in the Park, Nottingham. In Toby's opinion the venue must be containable: suitable places in Scarborough include the Open Air Theatre (but how derelict is it?) or Oliver's Mount.

To ensure the event relates to young people and resonates of the future, not the past, the choice of name is crucial. As Toby wrote to me after our meeting: "Call the event 'The Mount' or 'Sea Breeze' or 'Tea by the Sea' or 'Top of the Hill', something that DOESN'T contain the words 'Yorkshire Coast' or 'Scarborough' or 'Fair' in any combination. We need to rid this town of its parochial tags. Get this right and a regular, money making, fun festival will be born that gathers prestige every year, I PROMISE you!"



Cultural Audit

Thursday 11 April



Cultural Audit

Thursday 11 April

***"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages."***

William Shakespeare, 'As You Like It', Act 2, 1599

YMCA Theatre and Leisure Centre

The YMCA Theatre and Leisure Centre in St Thomas Street is one of Scarborough's well-used community and performance spaces. I had come across a number of groups who use the venue and thought a visit might be useful. I therefore organised to meet Chris Wilby, the Executive Director at 11 o'clock this morning, to learn about what happens at the Y.

The YMCA is a venue for community use and local amateur production companies. It has charitable status and receives 100% rate relief from the Council. The leisure centre has a gym, dance studios, fitness centre and sauna, aerobics classes, football training and Ju jitsu. There is a coffee bar meeting area, rehearsal space and a 290 seat theatre.

A variety of community services use the YMCA, including the Youth Enquiry Advice and YMCA training advice. It also runs the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Apparently at one time Sidewalk, Home & Dry and the skate park project were all based at the YMCA. According to published information 5-600 young people attend the centre and 200,000 people come through the doors each year.

Organisations based at YMCA include:

- Susan Richards Dance School
- Variety School of Dancing
- Shannon School of Irish Dancing
- Rowlies Dance School
- Semi tones - Singing & Drama Classes
- Creative Writers Discussion group
- YMCA productions

Visiting companies and organisations (for rehearsal and performance) include:

- Phoenix Drama
- Scarborough & District Light Opera Society (SADLOS)
- Scarborough Amateur Opera Society
- Anne Taylor School of Dance
- Kevin O'Connor School of Dancing
- Dance Warehouse
- The Civic Society
- University (rehearsal space)
- Dance Explosion
- Filey Amateur Dramatic Society



Cultural Audit

Thursday 11 April



- Sweet Sensations Performing Arts
- The Studio (based in Falsgrave, next to Yorkshire Coast Radio)

The YMCA Theatre is obviously a popular and very successful community resource. It provides an ongoing entertainment service to Scarborough residents and visitors; also an outlet for performance skills. Last year's summer season grossed £30,000; £15,000 came from the Christmas pantomime. A total of 30 shows are planned between April and Christmas 2002.

The YMCA was originally located in North Street, where a small 100 seater theatre had been created. It moved to its current location in 1988. This was a former school and its two halls were transformed into a gym and theatre. Lighting and other theatre equipment came from the Floral Hall when it closed. YMCA members contributed to building the venue through individual skills and fund-raising events, effort which in turn "creates ownership."

There are only three other full-time staff. Chris Wilby has an Assistant; there is an Administration Director and an Assistant Theatre Manager who also deals with publicity and public relations. All other duties such as front of house, back stage, sound, lighting and stage management are carried out by volunteers.

The YMCA is currently raising money for an extension to the premises. A new sports hall will be built next to the car park. The existing gym will be turned into a new space for cabaret performances, dances and other social events. To accommodate these new uses and improve acoustics, the ceiling will need to be lowered and a stage and dance floor introduced. A new extended foyer for the theatre will be created, providing a better entrance from St Thomas Street. There will be new dressing rooms, costume department and scenery dock.

Their production of "50 Golden Years" was due to open on 26th April, the same date as our Community Planning Weekend. Chris is a keyboard player so would be unable to attend. I was nevertheless curious to discover his views on the town.

Issues and aspirations

- The climate
- Tendency for people to live in the past: "you can't turn the clock back"
- Need for a large undercover Sports Centre - all in one place. The Sports Centre in Filey Road is adequate but too far out of town; the indoor swimming pool lacks imagination and has poor facilities
- Unfair share of DHSS arrivals
- Too much red tape and governmental control



Cultural Audit

Thursday 11 April

We discussed Scarborough's needs in terms of performance spaces. In Chris's opinion there is a requirement for an 800 seat theatre. The currently derelict Opera House across the road from the YMCA used to be the ideal sized auditorium.

With over 2000 seats the Futurist is considered too large for most shows, it has poor sound and lighting facilities and is very expensive to hire. There is also a lack of car parking, though this could perhaps be rectified by having access from above.

The YMCA Theatre and Leisure Centre seems to be a popular, enterprising and energetic local organisation. Creative activity is available in the form of classes and performance. It obviously reaches out to a wide section of the Scarborough community.

Rounders, the Stephen Joseph Youth Theatre

At six o'clock this evening I attended the Thursday evening session of Rounders. They were a group of about 30 young people aged between 12 and 14. It was suggested I should run a short 'problems' and 'dreams' workshop with the group. This elucidated the following information.

What's Right?

- Arcades: "they're fun"
- Parties in Planet 2000 (held between 7-10pm) - an opportunity to meet friends and socialise, but small
- Skate Park - OK "but a bit small"
- Beach - but it must be kept clean
- Town Centre: there are shops - but there should be more that interest young people
- The Brunswick Centre provides somewhere to hang around
- Peasholm Park - but it needs a play area for young kids
- Nice countryside nearby

What's wrong?

- Boredom
- Skate Park - wrong place, no half pipe, not enough equipment, very cold
- Lack of quality in town centre
- Too many homeless hanging around the streets
- Not enough to do

What could make things better?

- Town centre needs to be bigger and "brighter", with different coloured shops ("it's all black and white and brown and boring")
- A mural on the walls - a graffiti wall, artistic spray paint
- Quality
- Buskers and street entertainment (like Covent Garden)
- More shops for young people
- A leisure centre "Have everything together in the same place"; Include an ice rink and climbing wall



Cultural Audit

Thursday 11 April



- If Atlantis is knocked down, it must be replaced
- Ideas for the South Bay Pool:
 - "clean it up and freeze it over"
 - Roof - heating - glass walls - a dome
 - Make it a leisure centre, with fun slides and diving pool
 - The design must be imaginative
 - What about a Sea/fish centre with glass floors, swimming above above fish and sharks
 - Safe scuba diving activities
 - Canoeing
 - Shops in the Chalets
- Create Scarborough 'Arena' - a place for pop and rock festivals, also ice skating and other shows. "The Soundwave Music Festival was VERY popular" (organised by the DIY Collective)
- Renovate the Futurist - needs painting, heating, carpets (The Susan Richards Dance School performed there - they were not impressed)
- Restore Opera House
- Provide a multiplex cinema
- Manor Road Park needs better play area
- Other attractions: Big Ball Pool; Paint Ball; TK Maxx (cheap designer clothes)
- Use themes from other countries (like China Town)

The purpose of my visit to Rounders this evening was to stimulate the group into focusing on Scarborough and its future. The urban renaissance process is a long term project. The teenagers will be adults and maybe parents themselves in 20 years time. What sort of town would they like to be living in then? What's wrong with it now and what would help it change for the better?

They were an enthusiastic and animated group of young people. After my 'free for all' discussion, Cheryl and Ian took control and the class continued in a more structured manner. There were some movement and concentration exercises, followed by a brain storming session in which single words were placed on a piece of flipchart paper.

Working in small groups, the class then created tableaux that related to the particular word or phrase chosen, such as: 'boredom', 'tourists', 'the weather', or 'waiting for a bus'. Improvised dialogue was added to build small scenes that were acted out to describe the specific mood or experience. The group worked with discipline and diligence and the results were impressive.

During the next few weeks Ian and Cheryl worked with the Rounders Group to develop this early work into a short devised piece that was performed at the launch of the Community Planning Weekend on 26 April. The performance was a huge success, demonstrating the value of drama in articulating ideas and opinions.

Cultural Audit

Thursday 11 April

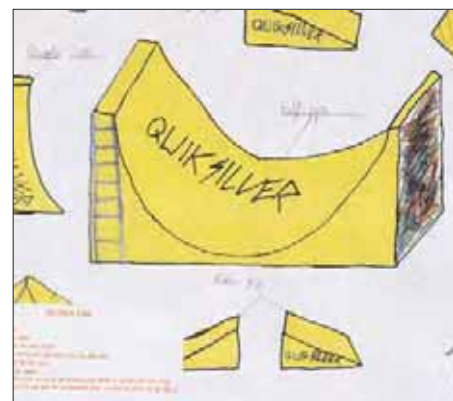
It was a witty and entertaining 20 minute piece of theatre that allowed these young people to express their views on the future of Scarborough. It was also interesting to see how some of the characters had been created at this very first workshop.

There were several volunteer youth workers helping Ian and Cheryl in the Rounders session. One of these was Libby Peat, a former Rounders participant herself who had recently been a primary school teacher. She agreed to use her contacts to encourage a primary school class to produce some art work for the Community Planning Weekend. So often it is a child who has the clarity of vision.

Libby kindly visited two schools - St Martin's CE (Year 4 and 5) and Seamer and Irton County Primary (year 6). She ran a workshop similar to the one I had just facilitated and brought the results to the Community Planning Weekend. A large number of imaginative designs were produced by the children of Seamer and Irton and displayed at the Spa during the Community Planning Weekend.

Socialising in Scarborough

It happened to be Ian Wainwright's birthday today. I was invited to join Cheryl, Paul McCleary (a visiting actor who had been observing the session) and some other friends at the local pub, before going on to Ian's party in his flat in the Crescent. Now, there's a nice place to live! Some familiar faces, some new ones. A glass of wine and more conversation with strangers about community planning and Scarborough's urban renaissance programme.



Cultural Audit

Friday 12 April



Cultural Audit

Friday 12 April

"Education made us what we are."

Helvétius, 'De l'esprit', 1758

Today was officially my final day of 'community animation'. I still had a few people to meet and talk to, but the process was drawing to a close. I was aware it could go on indefinitely, but I had a home to go to, friends to see, other work commitments to carry out.

Scarborough General Hospital

I had arranged to see David Humphriss on Monday - the doctor at Scarborough General Hospital whose energy and determination stimulated the Percent for Art project at the hospital. A sudden illness prompted cancellation; this morning was the only other available slot. Unfortunately it clashed with an appointment I had made with Michael Donaldson, Principal of the Yorkshire Coast College. In the end, I telephoned to say I'd be late and popped into the Hospital (conveniently situated next door) for a very quick chat with the Doctor.

Hospital art - the benefits

The impetus was simple: David Humphriss wanted a better working environment. Unfortunately most hospitals tend to be bland and boring, but he'd seen for himself what a difference art had made to Chelsea & Westminster Hospital in London and wanted to apply the same principles to Scarborough.

A new hospital wing was being constructed at the Scarborough General Hospital, so David insisted that that the new building should apply a Percent for Art as part of the Hospital Trust's Art Strategy. The Chair of the Hospital Trust (John Allen) happened to be ex Dean of Wakefield, and on the board of Public Arts, Wakefield - who, through an open competition, in fact won the design commission. Ian Hargreaves, an architect from Harrogate, was instructed to carry out the final finish based on Public Art's designs.

It is impossible to cut back on vital building materials such as bricks and mortar; but one can cut back on the finish of a building. The reality is, that unless told otherwise, hospital walls will be painted magnolia. The intention is for the Trust to control the finish, which will enable artists to contribute to the actual 'look' of a building. For instance, doors in hospitals have to be made of glass; lines have to be etched in them to indicate they're glass. It costs no more to etch an ammonite design on the glass than to etch a series of ordinary "do not walk through here" lines. It's the creativity of design that makes the difference.

The current project was completed in December 2000; it cost approximately £35,000. The intention is that Percent for Art will now apply to any new hospital buildings.



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There is a real need for hospitals to be environmentally pleasant. The idea of funding art within a Hospital has to be positively promoted. It is vital to continue improving the environment for patients, using art to help heal the sick. As David Humpriss said, "a Percent for Art is not a harmful thing."

Statistics prove that 225,000 people per year attend the hospital through admission or as out patients. 260,000 individual patients come through a hospital every year, plus their relatives and friends. It is likely that the entire population of Scarborough attends the Hospital at least once in a year. That is massive exposure for artists' work. Plans are afoot to have a proper hanging system for paintings installed; also designated exhibition space and meetings rooms.

Artists in Residence

Some £50,000 of funding was made available through the Newcastle and North Tyneside Health Care Charitable Trust. Combined with Year of the Artist funding in 2000 this has enabled a total of 8 Artists in Residence to be commissioned, plus Jo Davies employed on a part time basis for two years. The hospitals that are part of the project are located in Bridlington, Whitby and Malton as well as Scarborough.

To continue artistic involvement in the hospital, it is vital to find ongoing funding for administration. The budget is approximately £4,300 for each artist; administrative costs are £6-£8,000 a year. But for an Artist in Residence scheme to operate properly there needs to be somebody to make it happen. A permanent position is essential to ensure the ongoing management of the project and the organisation of appropriate fund-raising activities.

I asked Dr Humpriss about the future of the works of art. An Agreement will be put in place that they should remain the property of the Arts Project. If a painting is sold in the future, by mutual agreement, then all proceeds would return to the Arts Project. This is to ensure that if a commissioned artist "becomes a Van Gogh in 20 years time," the painting isn't "flogged off to re-carpet the Chairman's office."

The plan is to make the Hospital Arts for NE Yorkshire (HAFNE) a Charitable Trust with its own Board of Trustees. They will have the same steering group as the Scarborough Hospital Arts Project. It will have its own bank account; and will therefore be able to apply for (and receive) funding direct from Yorkshire Arts.

Those who currently provide advice regarding the choice of artists in residence are: Helen Berry (Community Arts Officer SBC); Paul Clifford (Head of Fine Art at Hull University, Scarborough Campus) and Jo Davies (part time administrator).



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Art works at the hospital

- Les and Lesley created the ceramic art works funded by Year of the Artist
- Scarborough Sound, a project by Talking Heads in Leeds, provided the corridor sound installation
- Glass work in reception area of North Entrance was by Rachel Welford
- Work by Artists in Residence: textile work outside Maternity Ward; Lino cuts outside operating theatre
- Links with the University Art Department have produced 2 sets of 5 oil paintings (not hung yet)

So what does Dr Humphriss think is needed to drive this successful project forward? Obviously: "money to do more."

Yorkshire Coast College

Two days ago, on Wednesday, a meeting of the Town Team had been held at the Stephen Joseph Theatre. By chance I happened to enter into conversation with Michael Donaldson, the Principal of Yorkshire Coast College. By now I was aware of the significance of YCC as an educational institution in Scarborough. But no specific meeting had as yet been arranged. My knowledge of the town and its cultural activities would not have been complete without a visit to Westward Campus. Thankfully it was not too late.

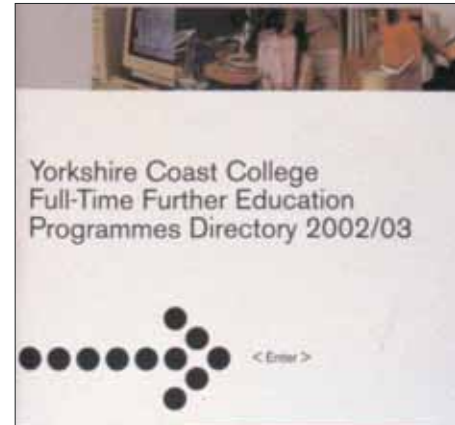
I had been to the hospital on Filey Road. I was late for my appointment. I could see an educational building in the distance. The most direct access seemed to be across a playing field. Perhaps a prohibited short cut, but I chose it anyway.

I had a brief chat with Michael Donaldson at the Edith's Road site and was then introduced to Rhona Wiley who used to be Head of the School of Creative Arts at Westward Campus. She has been recently promoted to Senior Curriculum Manager based at Edith's Road, but seems to miss working in an artistic environment.

Further and Higher Education

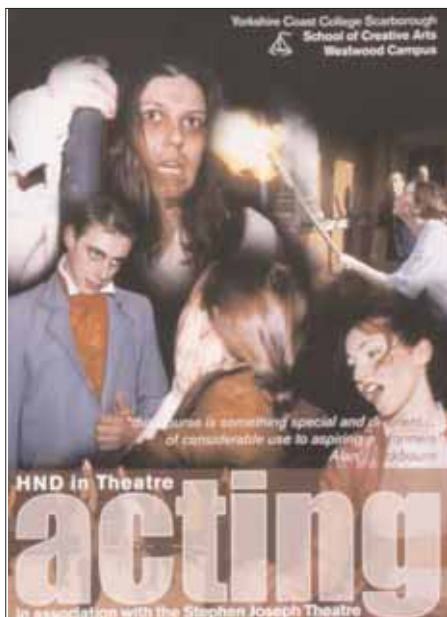
Yorkshire Coast College provides opportunities for local people to get training and experience in a wide range of subjects; it also attracts people from outside the town. The majority of students studying the new HND Performing Arts course are not from Scarborough.

20% students are currently receiving higher education; 80% further education. They are mostly aged 16 to 20. Some study part time, some are employed and attend 'day release' courses; there are some mature students. Until 1992/3 Yorkshire Coast College used to be known as Scarborough's Technical College. The College now offers degree and honours degree courses (in Fashion / costume design and graphic design). I was already aware of the somewhat contentious proposal to move the Fine Arts degree course from the



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University to Yorkshire Coast College. There is apparently more space to expand at Westward. I was assured that the BA Fine Art course would remain a degree level course.

Michael Donaldson believes that Scarborough's urban renaissance will have to be led by economic development but he agrees that culture and the arts have a major contribution to make to the town's regeneration.

Creative students

He detailed a number of successful Yorkshire Coast College achievements, which may - or may not - appear in official reports:

- Fashion students of YCC appeared at the National Clothes Show at the NEC in Birmingham
- Drama students performed on the sea front as part of the Viking Festival
- There are numerous performances in the Theatre in the Round
- The YCC production of "Lady Chill" was entered into the International Connections new writing scheme
- YCC students received 6 commendations in the BBC run Teesside Animation Festival
- It is also one of the venues for the annual National Student Drama Festival

The Arts in Scarborough contribute to the cultural complexion of the town. Students from Westward Campus are part of this cultural fabric. Many of the staff are also successful artists in their own right.

Michael Donaldson's personal aspirations included:

- Scarborough needs to be more up market
- New industry needs to come to the town to attract investment and to encourage the development of executive housing
- Things need to change to create a demand for this type of housing (there's currently very little 4 bedroom housing in Scarborough).

"If you attract the high rollers, the demand would be there."

Westward Campus

Rhona and I received a lift down to Westward. From Julie, our driver's perspective, "Scarborough is a career graveyard." In her opinion there needs to be someone dedicated to making the A64 road improvements happen: a committed champion to the project.

Having anticipated a brief interview with Michael Donaldson, I was delighted, though a little overwhelmed, to find myself taking part in an unexpected in-depth visit to the School of Creative Arts at Westward Campus. I was first of all invited for lunch and Rhona had arranged for me to meet a number of senior staff. There was a guided tour to follow, a video to watch (the Fashion Show at Birmingham), a drama class to observe ("Midsummer Night's Dream") and several innovative computer projects to absorb. It was a busy afternoon!

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Yorkshire Coast College's School of Creative Arts is located in Westward Campus, a former Boy's Grammar School. It is a Grade 2 listed building which has been extensively refurbished to meet the needs of students. It has large well-resourced studios, workshops, theatre spaces, technology areas and a library. There are very strong performing arts and fine art departments with approximately 900 students, full and part-time. The only dedicated BA (Hons) degree in Costume with Textiles north of London will be launched at Yorkshire Coast College in September 2002 in association with the University of Huddersfield.

Facilities include:

- 220 seat Theatre-in-the-Round (the former Alan Ayckbourn Theatre)
- 80 seat Studio Theatre (which apparently hosted the very first performance of the West End hit "The Woman in Black")
- Rehearsal space
- Sound studio
- Graphic Arts
- Photography and film
- Digital Arts -and computer technology
- Textiles
- Fashion and costume design studio
- Model making
- Painting studios (including rooms for artists to 'mess around')
- Sculpture studio
- Library
- 4 major lectures a year by visiting experts (eg Jeff Banks)

There is less emphasis on music though members of Scarborough Orchestra have played in YCC productions. There are also few links with Scarborough's Sixth Form College due to timetable constraints.

A tour of the campus by Kane Cunningham

I was given a guided tour of Westward Campus by Kane Cunningham, Head of Art and Design and a lecturer in Fine Arts. He is also an established and successful painter and a founder member of Pixelism.

Westward Campus provides an ideal location for a Creative Arts School. It is situated in the centre of Scarborough, and inherited resources such as the Theatre in the Round give the Campus a certain cachet. The Westward Theatre was home until 1996 to Alan Ayckbourn's Stephen Joseph Theatre Company and provides first rate facilities for the Drama course. Students who perform in the 200 seat theatre are working in an historic atmosphere, following the footsteps of famous actors such as Michael Gambon.



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The tradition of Art Education in Scarborough goes back to 1882 when the Scarborough School of Art was founded. Now based at Westwood, there are a wide variety of courses in Art, Design, Media and Drama, all leading to Higher Education and career opportunities. Many students are successful in getting good jobs, particularly in the fashion industry. The co-existence of related arts subjects encourages students to work together on projects. There's a versatile, close-knit teaching team that aims to provide students with skills, dedication, enthusiasm and the right 'attitude.' Many of the staff are working artists, designers and actors.

We discussed the value of quality public art and its effect on a town. From Kane's point of view, it changes the environment, creates an 'artistic presence' and helps change people's perceptions. Once again, I was reminded that Scarborough needs to "learn lessons from elsewhere". The example of Dean Clough in Halifax was mentioned. An old mill was turned into an Art Gallery and cultural quarter, "then Industry just followed". "Look what the Guggenheim did to Bilbao."

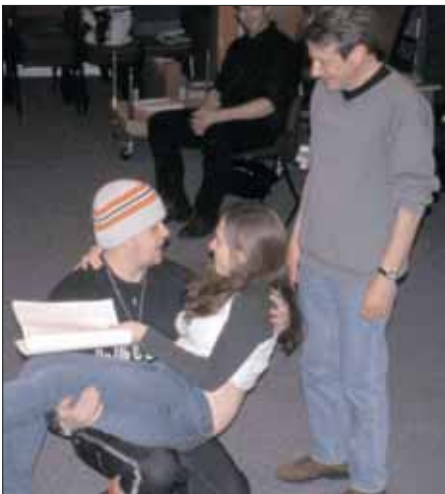


I wondered whether local artists and makers ever painted or practised their craft in a public area. In other European towns and cities it is often possible to walk down a street and see artists at work, carving sculpture, blowing glass, making furniture etc. Kane told me that artists had in the past used the vacant (and seemingly derelict) chalets near South Bay Pool. But tourists were so interested, the artists found it hard to work!

Drama students at Yorkshire Coast College

After lunch it was suggested I might like to have a brief chat to the drama students who were taking part in a Shakespeare workshop led by the guest lecturer and professional actor, Paul McCleary whom I'd met at the SJT last night. The two year full time HND Theatre (Acting) course is a new, contemporary, industry-related training for actors which makes something of a return of the 'apprenticeship' style of actor-training. Sir Alan Ayckbourn and his staff have granted valuable access for the students to the Stephen Joseph Theatre. Links include:

- specialist practical workshops (eg Alan Ayckbourn on directing / writing)
- regular classes with SJT staff (one unit is led by the SJT's Education Department)
- in-depth observation of the full progress of a professional production at the SJT
- transfer of a production from Westwood to the SJT's McCarthy Auditorium
- work experience which allows students to participate backstage and front of house on a SJT production.



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I gave a brief explanation about the forthcoming Community Planning Weekend to 10 drama students followed by a 10 minute 'brain storm' on their views about the town. 2 students were from Scarborough, 8 from elsewhere. The local residents were generally more positive about the town than the outsiders, who were able to compare their experience of Scarborough with other towns and cities. A brief summary of their comments follows:

What's good about Scarborough?

- Sea
- Beach
- A seaside town
- Much cleaner than elsewhere, eg Cleethorpes

Shortcomings of Scarborough?

- Old fashioned: "behind the times"
- Lack of exciting night life
- Crime
- Lack of transport
- Some students were unaware that there was an Art Gallery in the Crescent

What would make it better?

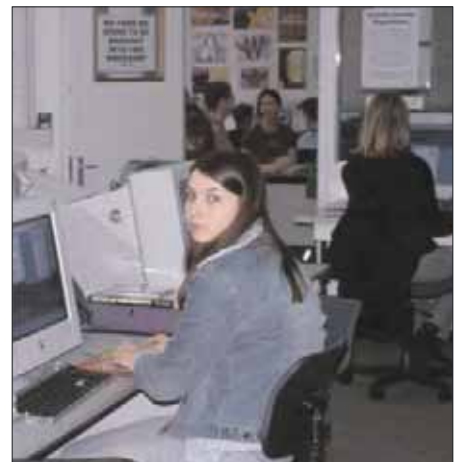
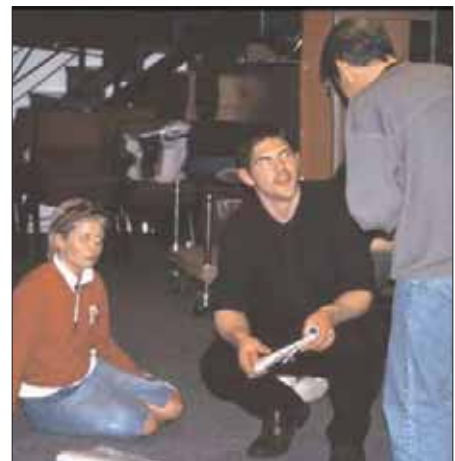
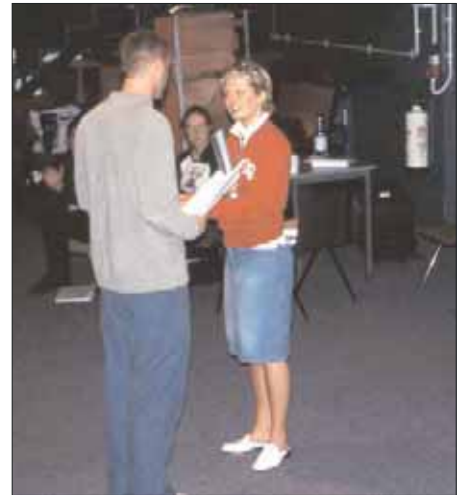
- Multiplex Cinema
- Improved night clubs (need for air conditioning in XS)
- Double glazing on windows - noisy seagulls!
- Make use of South Bay Pool
- Attract big bands / have a music festival - eg Love Parade

Later in the afternoon I returned to observe the Shakespeare Workshop. The young drama students were working in pairs on a scene from "Midsummer Night's Dream", concentrating on aspects of text, metre, character and vocal technique. Their acting skills were being developed through practical instruction by an experienced professional actor. It was fascinating to watch education in action.

Multimedia Department

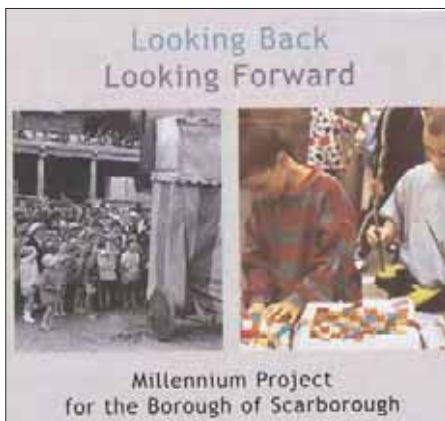
During my visit to Westward Campus I also met several lecturers from the digital arts and multi media department. The Higher National Diploma course is designed to prepare students for a career in interactive media and includes designing for CD Rom output and the internet.

A team of three second year HNC multimedia students have recently designed a new website for Wheatcroft Primary School in South Cliff. By working closely with the school, the team developed a site that services the needs of teachers, pupils and parents in a lively and entertaining way. The site also contains educational games and animated caricatures of the teachers. It can be accessed at <http://members.lycos.co.uk/wheatcroftprimary>.



Cultural Audit

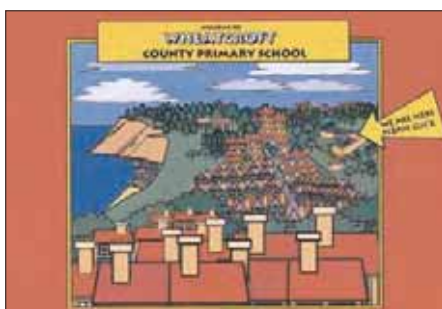
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Looking Back - Looking Forward

Keith Wood, Head of multi media and graphics also gave me a copy of the "Looking Back Looking Forward" CD Rom which was a collaborative project in 2000, involving Yorkshire Coast College, Crescent Arts, Scarborough Museums and Gallery and the people of the Borough. It was a Millennium Commission Lottery Project with a £40,000 budget that took eight months to produce and involved the participation of over 2000 people.

"Looking Back" was an oral history exercise covering the whole Borough, exploring the theme of tourism through the memories of residents and visitors. "Looking Forward" was an arts project celebrating hopes and dreams for the future through artistic creativity. Artists in Residence worked with schools, community groups, individuals and the general public in six specific areas in the Borough: Whitby, Danby, Goathland, Filey and the Eastfield and Old Town districts of Scarborough.



Each area was allocated a period of 'artist hours' during which participants could take part in creative activity around the theme of 'the environment', working in a variety of methods and media under the guidance of professional artists. Some ran one-off workshops or a series of drop-in sessions; others worked for week long periods in schools and public venues. Exhibitions and performances of the work created were staged on completion of the residency in each area.

The double CD-ROM records the year 2000's events for the interest and use of future generations. The first disc has selected highlights from the "Looking Back" interviews, illustrated with photographs from the museum archives. The second CD includes video footage, photographs and interviews, bringing to life the creativity and development of the "Looking Forward" activities. All multimedia production, including the sound track, was undertaken by a team of second year HND Multimedia students.

The project in Scarborough's Old Town involved one artist working in four different sites over an intensive three week period: a week at a primary school, drop-in workshops in a church, working with groups at a community centre and a week of activities at Scarborough's Market Vaults. The resulting artwork was then exhibited in an extensive multi-venue art trail in the Old Town.

In Eastfield, an area lacking in arts provision, the Festival of Youth Arts arranged to work with four groups: the Flying High Club - a drama and art club aimed at improving literacy and numeracy; the Youth Club; the Detached Youth Project, working with young people in the streets; and Braeburn House, an Old People's Home. The project involved over 100 Eastfield residents of varying ages who took part in drama, photography, computer music, lantern making and oral history interviewing. The activities were brought together to create an evening performance at the Community Centre.



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Pixelism

As part of my information-gathering at Yorkshire Coast College I was introduced to Pixelism by Michael Ambler, a full time lecturer in Media and Photography. He and Kane Cunningham (the other co-founder) along with other artists in Scarborough are working to establish Pixelism as a new Arts movement. The Oxford University Dictionary confirmed the word is not in use. All that is apparently needed to bring the word and its definition into the public domain is media attention and public exposure.

I was informed that Pixelism blurs the boundaries between traditional painting and digital media: it's where art and technology meet. "It's a new term, invented by ourselves to describe the synthesis of traditional media with digital technology. This may begin with a painting, a photograph or a print, which is scanned into the computer and manipulated in Photoshop or other packages. The printed image can either be exhibited or worked into a mixed media artwork. The image is then reclaimed by the artist. Pixelism describes the artist or artwork."

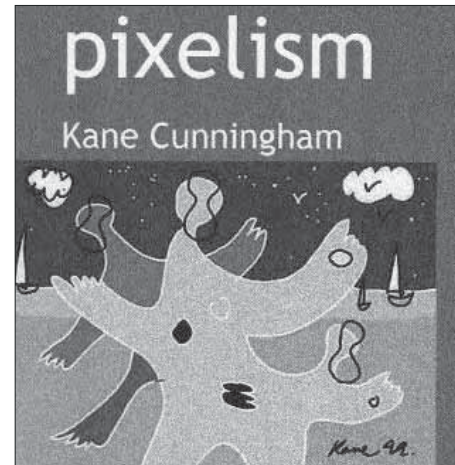
The website: www.pixelism.org gives the following information on the nature of Pixelism.

"The 21st century moved dramatically into the digital age: it has revolutionised communication and the way we receive information. Society will become visually literate and able to decode, encrypt, assimilate and deconstruct images, text and language. Artists are now able to locate themselves within this semiological and theoretical framework, to establish a dialectical response through digital and traditional fine art methodology to the on-line information revolution. Artists will be able to critique through analysis, propositions, research, enquiry, the internet, world wide web and information highway. It is the aim of this site to establish a forum, a platform, a virtual gallery that engages in the debate and practice that moves forward contemporary art within blurred edges of painting, photography, drawing, mixed media, graphics, digital art and multimedia. Pixelism is a term used to describe the practice of artists working within this field; it encompasses a whole range of ideas relating to elements that make up a work of art."

The opinion of Sir Christopher Frayling. Rector. Royal College of Art.
"Hate the title, admire the vision, support the thinking behind it."

The website gives examples of the work of five established artists: Kane Cunningham, Michael Ambler, Scott Wicking and Julia Gatie, and one student, Victoria Radisson, who writes: "My work is a young artist's perception of Pixelism as someone who likes contemporary, cutting edge art, as opposed to those who have developed their artistic aesthetic in a different cultural climate."

Art history is constantly being updated. Many 20th century art movements can be traced to specific towns in Europe. As we move into the 21st century, why shouldn't Scarborough be known as the birth place of Pixelism?



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Documentary links

Claudia Nye was another member of staff I met during my visit to Yorkshire Coast College. A professional documentary film maker (with experience of working on Channel 4's "Cutting Edge" series) she moved to Scarborough 4 years ago. As well as teaching at the College, she is also helping the DIY Collective with post production for a video project aimed at raising drug awareness amongst young people. She regularly films the DIY Collective to ensure there is a record of their many enterprising activities in the community.

She hoped to be able to film the forthcoming Community Planning Weekend to create documentary footage of the urban renaissance initiative in Scarborough.

A final conversation

I was about to catch the train for London the following day, Saturday 13th April, when I thought I would make one more visit to the Art Gallery, to pick up leaflets and perhaps take a photograph. I fell into conversation with the Gallery Assistant, a young man called Phil Wearing and handed him a leaflet about the forthcoming Community Planning Weekend. He mentioned surfing.

I was aware that this was one of Scarborough's key leisure activities; I'd seen the wet-suit enthusiasts in action and someone had suggested I should have a chat to Roger Povey and Paul Tomlinson of The Surf Shop. I hadn't had time to do so, but now, right at the last minute, was a chance to focus on surfing, even if only for five minutes.

I was interested in Phil's idea of using the South Bay Pool to develop a 'wave pool'. These exist in Germany but there are none in England. Apparently a generator is used to create a static wave which can go up and down in height. There can also be some kind of pulsating wall. This means that surfing is able to take place irrelevant of sea or weather conditions. Phil seemed to have done a lot of research. I suggested that the Planning Weekend would be an ideal forum to make his views known to a wider audience.

There seemed to be a number of benefits for the town, as the use of modern technology would:

- Enable major (national and international) surfing competitions to take place in Scarborough
- Attract people from elsewhere
- Provide something for young people - surfing is very popular.

Phil's other ideas included:

- Use North Bay for wind-surfing competitions - it's "a perfect amphitheatre".
- Develop opportunities for teaching wind-surfing
- Convert an old trawler as an imaginative arts and theatre space for kids: it could provide a small stage and classrooms in the harbour.

I ran for the train, reeling yet again from the realisation that even a ten minute chat can reveal Scarborough's essential character: a town full

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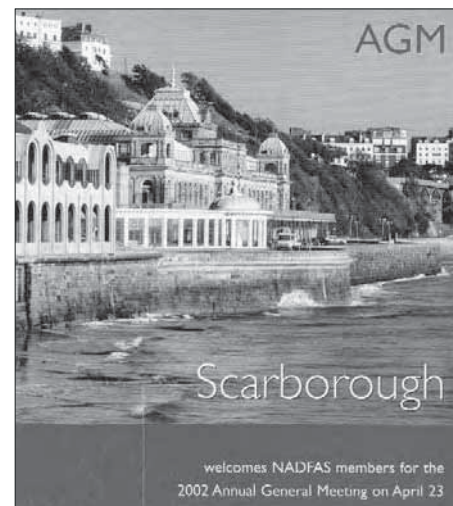
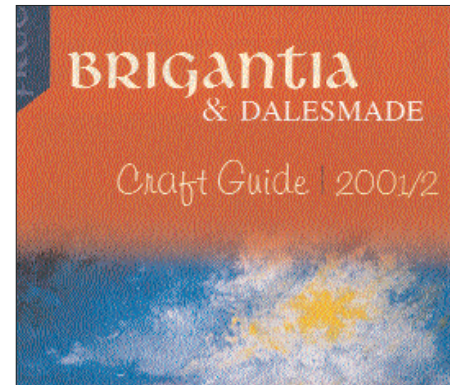
Cultural audit

My period of 'community animation' had come to an end. As well as talking to a large number of Scarboroughians, I had accumulated information from a variety of arts groups and cultural institutions within the town. However, I was aware that in terms of a Cultural Audit, it was probably far from comprehensive.

I facilitated the Arts and Culture Workshop at the Community Planning Weekend that took place later in April. I began the session by asking participants to identify 'what is already going on in Scarborough.' It was encouraging to discover that I had covered most, but not all of the groups mentioned.

Those omitted included Yorkshire Sculptors, Harbourside Artists, Brigantia, Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society, English Heritage (though I did visit the castle), the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts (whose conference recently took place at the Spa), Pictures in the Park, Friends of the Library and a number of choral, operatic, jazz and orchestral groups that I had heard about but not met.

There are sure to be other individuals, more groups, many other organisations whose existence makes up the warp and the weft of Scarborough's cultural tapestry. But I felt that I had achieved a fair overview of the town's artistic and cultural assets. I had kept a diary, notes of conversations and meetings that had taken place during the past two months. There were also memories, a recollection of my own personal experience of Scarborough. Now, all I had to do was to write it down.



Cultural Audit

Epilogue

"Living is my job and my art"

Montaigne, 'Essais' 1580



Two months ago I had never heard of the DIY Collective, nor Yorkshire Coast College, Crescent Arts, Create, Smacme and the innumerable creative ventures taking place in Scarborough. I had no idea you could walk with the dinosaurs, listen to music at Indigo Alley or do 'cool moves' on a dance machine in an amusement arcade.

Scarborough's status as an 'entertainment town' may have declined due to the demise of the Open Air Theatre, the Floral Hall and the Royal Opera House but plenty of live performance is still on offer. In fact the variety of cultural activities is impressive, given that Scarborough is a small town on the Yorkshire coast. There's new writing, old writing, comic, serious and experimental drama; there's pantomime, revue and opera, light or otherwise. And so many different types of music: orchestral, choral, jazz, folk, rock and cabaret. As well as young bands, with names and styles of music that I always tend to forget. Do it yourself, or watch others perform.



And venues: on the beach, on a stage, in a pub, a school, church hall or restaurant. The theatres: some old, some new, proscenium, studio or 'in the round'. Not enough of course, for all the creative things people want to do.

The visual arts come into focus: painting, drawing, print-making, ceramics and sculpture; costume design and textiles. Where to see them: in formal and informal places - a hospital, a gallery, on a rendered wall. And all those new and innovative technology-based arts: multimedia, digital arts, computer graphics, desk top publishing, web design. Not forgetting creative writing, poetry, photography, film and video. The list is endless.

And what about all those people whose talents are as yet untapped? The power of local projects that demonstrate the art of the possible to a wider community. The inspiration of history and heritage. And education too, of course: the desire to learn, the talent to teach.



I've discovered now that so many of these art forms in Scarborough seem to be linked: in reality, through individual practitioners or projects, but mostly through attitude: the desire to be creative - as a participant or an observer - and to engage in what is really an ongoing learning experience. To work out how to play a chord, learn a song, memorise a scene, to take snap-shots, make lanterns, write a poem, an article, a play, a novel. These activities require knowledge and application. They are not for the faint-hearted or idle. There are degrees of skill, degrees of intellectual endeavour. But the fundamental quality is innate: a wish to use individual talents in a positive, life-affirming creative way.

Cultural Audit

Epilogue

Two months ago I was like Jack climbing the Cultural Beanstalk, curious to know what was at the top. Conversations with so many people helped me on my journey. The generosity of time and information by the people of Scarborough has been overwhelming.

And I suppose what I've discovered in my investigation of this fairy tale town on the edge of the North Sea is a giant that's genial but ineffectual, living in poverty in a dilapidated dwelling. The giant is not really a 'baddie', and the beanstalk mustn't be cut down. I know that's not how the story is supposed to end, but things change, people change, so why can't stories? Here in Scarborough, the cultural beanstalk needs daily watering, plenty of Baby Bio, and many gardeners working together to keep it growing.

So, in my view, it's time to build on the positive links that are already being made between existing artistic, cultural, educational and community outreach projects.

Scarborough has an excellent resource in the Stephen Joseph Theatre: it needs to be appreciated as the jewel in the crown, not treated as an 'extra' by an indifferent public. Scarborough has an enthusiastic Museums and Gallery team, with amazing collections, attractive buildings and a unique history. They work hard to make connections with the wider community. Scarborough also has a large number of talented visual arts practitioners, working by themselves or with others, on canvas or computer. The DIY Collective project is an inspiration to others of what disadvantaged young people can achieve.

There are writers, writing; players playing; and musicians of all sorts, all over the town, composing, singing, teaching, jamming, in pubs, in theatres, on stages, on beaches, so "if music be the food of love, play on!"

I'm left with evocative images in black and white: the chequer-board floor of the Sun Court, illuminated cones on the castle headland, fossil-hunting on the cliff tops, a stark lighthouse, sunshine sparkling on an scowling sea, white flecked waves crashing over the parapet.

The arts can be a catalyst for regeneration. The assets are here. They just need to be valued, supported and promoted. The rest will follow.





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Diary of Contact Appendix 1

During February, March and April 2002, meetings were held with the following:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 7 February | Scarborough Christian Centre: Rev Graeme Parkin and others related to youth work |
| 26 February | Helen Berry, SBC Community Arts Officer
Attendance at Castle Ward Tenants & Residents Association |
| 27 February | Nick Grindley, Intelligent TV and Media
Visit to Scarborough General Hospital with Helen Berry to view Percent for Art project |
| 28 February | Pete Massey, Create, Arts Development organisation |
| 4 March | Sir Alan Ayckbourn, Artistic Director & Playwright and Stephen Wood, General Administrator: Stephen Joseph Theatre. |
| 11 March | Ian Wainwright: Education Dept, Stephen Joseph Theatre |
| 12 March | Jane Mee, SBC Museums and Gallery Officer plus staff of Natural History Museum and Art Gallery (Cath Brayson, Will Watts, Jane Davies, Sara Pepper)

Mary Butler, Arts Development Officer: Crescent Arts Centre

Rachel Welford, Rachel Massey: Festival of Youth Arts |
| 13 March | Reotas: Education for Children out of School
4 one to one interviews with teenagers out of school

Hinderwell Primary School: Workshop with 30, year 5 and 6 pupils

Boys Brigade: 2 workshops with junior and senior boys at Wreyfield Drive Methodist Church |
| 14 March | Colin Barnes: Council for Voluntary Services

Ian Carpendale: Manager of Futurist Theatre

Hull University Scarborough Campus: Workshop with 25 students of Destination Planning and Tourism

Homeless Support Services and Housing Advice & Resource Project and Trevor King, Manager of St Mary's Social Action Centre

Meeting with care workers and two formerly homeless people

Sidewalk Outreach Youth Organisation: Detached Youth Work with Richard Pashby and Christina Hick |

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Diary of Contact

- 15 March** Lindsay Hyde, Home and Dry: Meeting with care providers and users
- Ian Grundy: Proprietor, Interludes Hotel, Old Town
- Sidewalk Drop-in : Informal discussion with young people
- 20 March** Scarborough Rotary Club Dinner
- 21 March** Kim Siddall, Community Education Worker, Graham School
- Young at Heart: Workshop with 30 elderly people
- Katharine Scott, NHS, Manager of Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale
- 25 March** Theresa McKillup, NHS, Specialist Health Visitor for the Homeless
- 26 March** Jo Davies, Steve Whitehead, Paula Zimmermann, Sue Sleightholme, Sally Gatie: representatives of Smacme Arts Group
- Michael Conradd, Gareth Stewart: British Stage Productions
- Barbara Foster: Civic Society
- Shirley Sheppard: Blandscliff Studio and Gallery
- Anglolang Business Language School: Meeting with Neil Harris and Gustav Edner
- Castle Ward Tenants & Residents' Association Meeting
- 27 March** Town tour with James Corrigan
- 7 April** Crescent Arts Centre: meeting with Andrew Cheetham, Don Glynn and other participants of life drawing class
- Meeting with Geoffrey Emerson, Conductor of Scarborough Orchestra and Hilary Marshall, violinist and representative of Staxton Singers
- 8 April** Graham School : Workshop with Year 10 students
- John Baxter, Colin Shrive: Proprietors, Delmont Hotel, North Bay
- Meeting with members of the DIY Collective (Youth arts organisation) at The Warehouse



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Diary of Contact

- 9 April** Tour of School of Arts, University of Hull, Scarborough Campus with Steve Whitehead, Lecturer in Fine Arts
- Meetings with Andy Head (Theatre Studies), Prof. Noel Witts, and Monica Costea (PhD student) at University of Hull, Scarborough Campus
- Toby Jepson, rock musician with Toby Jepson Band; also MD of Jepsongs Ltd, music production and marketing company
- 11 April** Tour of YMCA Leisure Centre and Theatre and meeting with Chris Wilby, Chief Executive
- Telephone conversation with Tracey McGarrigan; National Student Drama Festival
- Workshop with 25 members of Rounders, Stephen Joseph Youth Theatre in preparation for their devised performance, to take place at the Community Planning Weekend
- 12 April** Meeting with Dr David Humphriss who initiated the Percent for Art art project at Scarborough General Hospital
- Meeting with Michael Donaldson, Principal of Yorkshire Coast College
- Tour of Yorkshire Coast's School of Creative Arts at Westward Campus and meetings with Rhona Wiley, Paul Elsam, Kane Cunningham, Michael Ambler, Keith Wood, Claudia Nye and students of the HND Drama Course
- 19 April** Scalby School
Scarborough Sixth Form College
Eastfield Tenants and Residents Association
Raincliffe School
Falsgrave Community Group

Every effort was made to reach those members of the community who are not part of organisations and the JTP team held many more informal meetings during their time in Scarborough.

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Illustrations

Most illustrative material used in the Diary is self explanatory and relates to the text alongside. Selected illustrations follow:

- Page ii Charles Campion with students at Scalby School
- 1 Debbie Radcliffe with Richard Pashby and Christina Hick of Sidewalk, with young people met in an amusement arcade (also p 67)
- 8 Middle: Tom Laughton in 1975
- 10 A busy afternoon in Westborough
- 13 Top: Artists in Scarborough from a 1735 engraving
Middle: 19th century illustration showing the Cliff Bridge and the Rotunda (before the wings were added)
Bottom: 18th century drawing of the first "Spaw" House
- 14 Top: Early bathing machine & naked bathers (1735 engraving)
- 15 Art on the walls of a ward in Scarborough General Hospital
- 16 Top: View of Edgehill
- 20 Top: View of Longwestgate, Old Town
Middle: Valley Bridge
- 21 Bottom: Helen Berry at Scarborough General Hospital
- 23, 23 Art work at the hospital
- 25 Publicity for the Scarborough Urban Renaissance programme
- 26 Bottom: North Bay chalets
- 27 Top: Pete Massey, director of Create
- 31 Middle: The Theatre in the Round, Westward Campus
- 33 Sir Alan Ayckbourn
- 35 Top: "The Song of Norway", 1950 performance at the Open Air Theatre
Middle & Bottom: Views of the Open Air Theatre today
- 40 The Rounders performance that took place 26 April 2002
- 41 Top: Anne Bronte, a watercolour portrait by her sister Charlotte
- 43 Top: The Crescent
Bottom: The Rotunda Museum
- 44 Top: Scarborough Art Gallery
Bottom: Wood End Museum
- 46 Top: Exhibition of contemporary furniture design, Art Gallery
- 47 Top: Londesborough Lodge in The Crescent
Middle: Dinosaur bone in Wood End Natural History Museum
- 48 Top: Dame Edith Sitwell
Middle: The library at Wood End
Bottom: The 'Making Sense' exhibition at Wood End
- 49 Top: the Rotunda Museum. The interior & glass cases are as they were in 1829 when the building opened
Middle: William Smith, 'The Father of Geology'
- 50 Land in front of Wood End museum
- 52 Entrance to Crescent Arts Centre
- 53 Exhibitions in Crescent Arts, Spring 2002
- 54 Studios at Crescent Arts
- 58 Top: Scarborough Art Gallery from the rear
Middle: Plans for Rotunda Museum, following William Smith's design
Bottom: Studio holders at Crescent Arts
- 59 Top: View of Edgehill
Middle: View of Eastfield
Bottom: View of the Old Town in Castle Ward
- 60 Middle & bottom: People taking part in the Community Planning Weekend which was held on 26th & 27th April 2002
- 64 The Scarborough Museum

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Illustrations

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- 76 Images of the beach and harbour
- 77 Top: the Williams family from Derby
- 79 Middle: Debbie Radcliffe
- Bottom: Ian (Mole), sound technician, Toby Jepson Band
- 80, 81 Smacme Art Group's studio
- 82 Bottom: St Thomas' Hospital
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- 90 Smoke-fired figures by Shirley Sheppard, sculptor & painter
- 92 Top: The Mere
- Middle: view of the town from Oliver's Mount
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- 95, 96 Life drawings by Debbie Radcliffe
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- 99 Suggested venues for an Arts Centre? Top - Marshall House
- Middle: The Town Gaol
- 101 Middle: Colin Shrive at the Delmont Hotel
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- 103, 104 The Warehouse & members of the DIY Collective
- 105 Bottom: University of Hull, Scarborough Campus
- 106 Studios in Fine Arts Department, University of Hull
- 111 Middle: Toby Jepson performing at H2002 Beached
- Toby Jepson taking part in the Community Planning Weekend
- 112 Cafe and gym at the YMCA Leisure Centre
- 113 Bottom: Chris Wilby in the YMCA Theatre
- 115, 116 Improvisation by members of Rounders Youth Theatre
- 117 Drawings by children of Seamer & Irton Primary School
- 118-120 Art work at Scarborough General Hospital
- 121 Middle: Yorkshire Coast College - Edith's Road site
- Bottom: Yorkshire Coast College - Westward Campus
- 123 Top: Kane Cunningham. Head of Art & Design, YCC
- Middle, Bottom: Studios at Westward Campus
- 124 Top: South Bay Chalets
- Middle: Paul Elsam, Lecturer in Theatre, YCC
- 125 Top, Middle: Paul McCleary directing HND Drama students
- Bottom: Multimedia student at YCC
- 126 Keith Wood, Head of multimedia and graphics, YCC
- 127 Pixelism art work: Top: by Kane Cunningham
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- Bottom: by Michael Ambler
- 128 Top: Claudia Nye, film maker
- Bottom: Example of artificial wave pool
- 129 View of the South Bay Pool and the coast beyond
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- 131 Top: Italian Gardens
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