

marvellous marketing for **story** selling

Creative ideas to generate
interest in your library events



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Creative ideas to generate
interest in your library events

by Jayne Williams

and Ideal Friends in libraries, neighbourhood centres,
community groups with artists, writers, creators and
theatre makers.

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Sylvia South and the Word Catcher
display the art of gentle persuasion.

Introduction

You are a toddler timer, rattle and roll rhymer, front-line smiler, self-service explainer, alphabetical shelf arranger. You are a homework helper, exam stress deflector, information sharer, knowledge spreader. You are a word wrangler, story shaper, a book pusher, a door opener into other worlds, best friend of the book bear (you may even wear the blue and white costume). You are a summer reading challenger, giver of medals and smelly stickers, a storyteller, listener, child whisperer, assembly giver, maker of classroom visits and half term crafty afternoons. You are a calm atmosphere creator, conflict stopper and, on occasion, a toilet un-blocker.

With great power comes great responsibility, so we have created this easy to use toolkit for you to flick through, read some bits now and other parts later whilst you get on with saving the world with literature. Use it as your reference to spread the word about all the fabulous events you have for families. It can help you plan and deliver adventures through arts activity and get the whole community excited about your library. Dip in and out as you see fit, keep it somewhere handy.

Picasso supposedly once said 'good artists borrow, great artists steal' so we have magpied this knowledge from hundreds of library staff in creative collaborations with artists, writers, creators, theatre makers, housed in 54 different library places and community spaces across the East Midlands. All made possible through four years of Imaginative Neighbourhoods artist residencies and 18 months of Among Ideal Friends live performance tours. Developed and produced for families and schools by The Spark Arts for Children.

The Spark are a small team who together with their Ideal Friends have made big things happen, and here's the toolkit to keep the great creative work coming. For more information about The Spark and partnerships with Libraries go to www.thesparkarts.co.uk

Why

Arts and culture for all of us not just the few

We are bombarded with advice of how to be healthy these days but whether you eat your greens or shake your stuff at the leisure centre, there are still no gyms for the brain. Whilst mindfulness is marvellous, engagement in arts and culture has the power to nourish from head to toe and you have the key to a place where we can engage in something far better than any protein shake.

A great play can stir the emotions, inviting us to connect with a character, and with the very people we are sat alongside. Being immersed in a piece of art may take us to other worlds without the need of a passport. Participation will provide the opportunity to explore and resolve thoughts and feelings about ourselves and others, and has been proven to raise self-esteem in individuals and develop empathy, understanding and acceptance within communities.

Libraries have the potential to reach people who don't normally see culture as for them - offering amazing experiences in *their* environment. 1 in 5 parents who attended an Among Ideal Friends performance said they had never seen a theatre show with their child before.

Healthy heARTS

Access to the arts and culture as participants and audience develops the imagination, fires the growth of exciting new neurons in the brain and invites us to become better, healthier and happier human beings. Shout this from the rooftops! (There are fantastic reports on the Arts Council England website if you fancy some extra reading).

Multiple Intelligences

Parents and teachers may strive for something more academic. Let them know that the arts develop social and emotional intelligences that also benefits academic learning. (Search for Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences if you want to find out more.)

Creating excitement

for your creative activity / event

What is it about books that you love? The crack of the spine on a hardback as you open it up to explore what's inside? The smell of old paper that's been turned a thousand times by inquisitive minds? The weight of the hundreds of pages of an epic novel?

We access stories in so many different ways these days with stories found on pages, computer screens, tablets, DVDs, stories sung by parents with toddlers on their knees; there are stories in each stitch at Knit and Natter.

You enable these in your creative hub, your library, so think of a creative activity / performance / event as just another exciting story.

The title is the hook that grips our interest and reels us into a world of intrigue and wonder. Steal the techniques an author uses to get us picking up their books, to gather interest in your event. A catchy title can be instantly memorable. A colourful image that infiltrates the brain. An intriguing blurb that gets under our skin. Catchy titles like Toddler / Tots Time work, they are memorable and alliterative. Similarly, Word Wednesday, Tuesday Tales, Story Saturday, Messy Monday works too for regular week activity. With these repeated sessions, you can build your participants / audience over time but with a performance that is more of a one-off event, we have to try to spread the word as far and wide as possible.

Think about Who? What? How?

Who

Who is it for?

Who is the performance/event for? Age group? Teens? Adults? Families with small children? School groups? Step into the shoes of the library user and wonder whether they may want to be a participant or audience member for your performance/event.

Making a splash

Imagine dropping a pebble into a puddle and watch the ripples of water spread wider. The pebble is your performance/event, the first ripple are the people who regularly use your library. Is this event for them? Can you gather their interest? Will they help spread the word?

The next ripple might be your local schools. Deliver an exciting assembly or gain permission to hand out flyers whilst chatting to parents at the school gates during drop off/pick up.

The ripple following is your local community groups; e.g. if a performance event involves dance, would your local dance school/group be interested in experiencing how professionals make performances, the same for a narrative based drama. After school drama clubs or the local am-dram society will be interested. Ask the company/author/artist/facilitator providing the performance or event if they can do a Q and A after? That might be the hook for some.

In the community

Local business owners benefit from community cohesion too so they will probably be happy to display your posters/flyers. The local chippy gets flooded with teenagers after 3pm, if the performance/event is for them, stick a poster up above the fryer or some flyers by the wooden forks. Share your info with the local police officers, their job is to keep the peace and so events like yours are a delight to promote.

Start spreading the news

The final ripple reaches out to your local press, social media 'likes' and 'shares' (you can rely on friends and family and fellow staff to start that virtual ripple). Schools have their own forms of social media to keep in touch with parents, they could add your performances/events to their online news (remember you are providing an opportunity for their children to continue reading and writing outside school times and are offering access to arts and culture which has a direct impact on the brain's capacity to learn, so schools owe you!).

In brief

- Establish who the activity/performance/event is for
- Find out where they are
- Spread the word
- Get your regular users to embrace the event and enthusiastically chat about it
- Gather support from local businesses, shops, spaces, churches, doctors surgeries to put up posters and community movers and shakers, police, teachers, parents, lolly-pop people to have flyers at hand
- Arm everyone with info, posters, flyers, bookmarks (don't under estimate a good natter)
- Dive into digital, make it an event on Facebook, post on local group pages, share news from the company about the performance on Twitter with hashtags a plenty



Plan the journey ahead - but be prepared to take diversions

What

What is the event about?

Find out as much as possible about the event. Discover clues in the story and sell it like you would a good book. Get them hooked on an image and some blurb.

The company bringing the performance will have clear ideas of content, even if it is new writing. Can you read the script or have some indicators as to the theme, characters, adventures?

Find creative ways to explore the themes, people and places that will feature in the performance / event. You will most likely have books that link with these, maybe a display just like you would create to promote a new book?

In brief

- Be in touch with the company bringing the performance/event
- Ask for a copy of the script to discover themes, people, places you can make links with
- Have they toured it before?
- What marketing ideas can they share? What's worked well previously?
- Remember, the company want to grow audiences too, so they should be happy to help with posters, flyers, bookmarks, films of the rehearsal process, social media updates
- Have a good nosy at their website

How

How to promote the event.

The power of conversation

There's no such thing as a bad idea, just good ideas that can be developed to become great ones. A single brain can spark off ideas that multiple brains together will fan the flames of inspiration. Don't underestimate the power of conversation, have a chat in the staff room and spark off one another. Share your thoughts, however wild and wonderful or daft they may seem.

Friends and influencers

There's nothing like word of mouth. Having a natter about what's on offer is the most infectious way to engage a community. Whether it's a visit to the local school with a fun assembly at the start of the day or a chat with families at the gates at the end of play. A chinwag at the bus stop or a conversation in the local café.

You can't be in all the places at once, but can gather interest of well-connected community members who will spread the word. Posters may prompt them in the waiting room at the doctors to say 'ooh have you heard about what's on at the Library?' Maybe appoint some patrons as ambassadors to spread the word for you. As a thank you they might receive a free ticket if they promote the performance / event or invite them to review it and share with their local paper.

Face for radio?

Your local radio station has hours to fill, they're always hunting for stories. Identify that perfect certain someone you can build a relationship with (you may have a communications team that can do this for you). Suggest a regular weekly or monthly slot on what you've got coming up, along with stories of the people and places in your community (maybe invite some regulars to rave about why they love their library).

Conversation starters

Look at ways other industries engage the interest of their local community. The big shops that have staff wearing badges that say, 'happy to help'. You could wear a sticker, or a sash if you're feeling fancy, that says 'ask me about...' or have a laminated photo of yourself popped on the end of a shelf that says, 'have you heard about the word catcher?' to gather intrigue and start a conversation.

Tempting Titles

Food places have different themed meals for the days of the week 'Fish Fryday', 'No Meat Monday'. When delivering activities, you could have a theme for each day of the week like 'Word Wednesday' for the writing exercise or 'Messy Monday' for all things crafty, children will wake up and think 'what day is it...It's Story Saturday' and will probably nag their parents to take them to the library. You can gather committed participants with regular weekly activity then theme these sessions to promote your upcoming performances/events.

Top Tips

Top tip 1 - **Happy to help**

Make yourself the friendly face of the space. Happy to Help style badges 'ask me about what's on'. Laminated smiley faces at the end of shelves 'have you heard about...the word catcher?'. Simple snippets of information and images that start a conversation.

Top tip 2 - **Face for radio**

Make a list of local press contacts (radio, newspaper, online publications, listings) share info with all and see if you can get a regular monthly slot.

Top tip 3 - **Make an impact**

Make an impact with posters, flyers, bookmarks. Create some social media memes if you're feeling digital. Put up a display and don't always use the same space on the wall, look for places that will catch the eye.

Top tip 4 - **Sense and sensibility**

Fire up interest via the five senses. In your activities or marketing material, think about how you can make things audible, edible, tangible, visible and wiffable.

Top Tip 5 - **Staffroom stealth**

If your library is near an industrial park or retail outlet, don't just think of the customers getting to see your info, there will be hundreds of staff, pop a poster up in their staffrooms.

Top tip 6 - **Checking the checklist**

Create an event checklist with names of who has agreed to each task and the deadline. You could have this list up in your staffroom or at the main desk. Create some healthy competition between staff or even between other libraries.

Top tip 7 - **Love a bargain**

Offer ticket deals, group bookings, buy ten get two free, early bird, family discounts, everyone loves a bargain especially when there is so much pressure on purses and pockets.

Top tip 8 - **Mouth piece to mailing list**

Gather feedback at performances, give your audience a voice via creative questioning that shares their thoughts and feelings. Maybe film or audio record quick interviews on your phone (with permission). You can use quotes to promote your next show and gather contact information to build a mailing list. Maybe offer a prize draw that their completed forms are entered into (the prize could be free tickets for the next one).

Top tip 9 - **Mood for Music**

Music can fill a vast space, create a mood, an atmosphere, welcome an audience in. If you can, use music during activities, before and after a performance/event to promote creative thinking and set tasks 'when you hear this track, that's time to tidy up'. Music can make it more fun and a steady beat can help to de-stress and slow the heart rate down.

Community Connections

Who are those movers and shakers within your community? Hopefully they are friendly and have a huge mouth to shout about your fabulousness.

Most places, whether they be a village town or city, will have a community forum or network of passionate people who meet monthly to discuss ways of making their place great. You'll know who these people are, maybe they even meet at your library but if you're new to the area or the role, here are few ideas of who to get in touch with.

Map out all the public places in your surrounding area;

- Leisure Centre / Swimming Pool / Gym
- Schools / Colleges / Universities
- Community / Neighbourhood Centres
- Doctors Surgery / Health Centre / Dentists
- Churches / places of worship
- Your library

Populate these places on a map in the staffroom, maybe have a colour coded pin system which shows what places contain contact names who already support you and identify the ones you need to work on. Once you find that passionate person who believes in their community, strike up a deal where you share each others info. Get a slot at the monthly meeting to chat about what you're planning and gather knowledge and support as to how to reach residents.

Find out which groups frequent these places;

- Fitness fanatics
- Children / Young People / Parents / Educationalists
- Support Groups / Interest Groups / Activity enthusiasts
- Residents Association

Match these with your target audience. Can you pop in and do a quick 'hello, look what we've got coming up'? Keep them up to date with your posters/flyers on the community notice boards.

Map out the places where the public pop in but might not spend so much time:

- Bank / Building Society
- Shops / Shopping Centre / Retail Park
- Café's / Pubs / Chippy
- Post Office
- Police Station
- Town Hall

These are the perfect places for posters and flyers but prime the staff there who are happy to chat about what it is. Conversation inspired by a poster is always more powerful than the thing on the wall.

It is easy to get to know your community if you visit the places where people gather. This can be time consuming and those of us who go to work on foot or by bus have an advantage of getting to know the locals with a smile from the passer-by or a natter at the bus stop. Arm your colleagues, volunteers, friends and neighbours with the knowledge and let them know how much you appreciate them sharing the info with fellow residents during their daily routines.

And pop a poster in your car window.

Create a stir on social media

Social media is a great way to create a buzz about an event, both to existing audiences and new friends and acquaintances. It might be you don't have access to the library's accounts but find out who does and send them the words, the images the handles and hashtags - they will be delighted to receive them and send them out on your behalf. Don't forget to report on your own accounts and spread the message further.



On Facebook

- Find local groups and pages on Facebook by putting your area in the search (e.g. Mansfield has a page called 'mansfield cultural partnership' and one called 'mansfield arts directory')
- By typing your area in, loads of groups and pages will pop up
- You can send friend requests or like and follow the page of the appropriate ones (even if they are a taxi firm, they will be interested and therefore may be appropriate)
- Most areas have a buying and selling page, you can write a post with a link to buy tickets on there, something a bit different from an old teapot or pair of shoes
- Launch a competition with details of the performance and a family pass or 4 free tickets as the prize if they; follow your page, share your post, add three of their friend's names in the comments section – that'll get your info spreading
- Make your performance a FB Event, make sure you tick 'public' so people can share it. There's an invite button where you can invite all your friends and it pops up in their digital diary



On Twitter

- # your area in the search section (#Mansfield #BeaumontLeys #Beeston etc) you'll see everyone who is tweeting about your area
- The performer / facilitator /company have a vested interest so follow them or make a list of their @ handles and add them to your tweets about the performance/event, ask them to #share or #RT (Re Tweet)
- Your local MP, Police, shops, businesses, schools, community groups use Twitter and will probably share your info if you ask them to
- If they follow you back, you can send them a private message asking them to help you out by sharing your events info (copy and paste the same message to all local movers and shakers).
- Use hashtags like #theatre #arts #libraries #books #CultureMatters #ACEsupported (if it's a performance funded by Arts Council England)
- Local arts practitioners and theatre companies might be interested, follow them and ask them to #share
- Remember to add the @ of the company providing the performance, they should RT
- Pin a tweet with info of your next performance/event so it always appears at the top of your tweets
- Follow the trend. Don't be afraid to crowbar your event into national trends or local stories or common themes.
- Twitter traffic is fast moving and can be easily missed so post more than one tweet, Post production photos, posters, quotes about the performance, quotes from past library shows, countdown number of days to go, link to you tube trailers,



On Instagram

- Why write a long-winded post when you can post a picture? Rather than respond to the question "what are you doing?", why not post a picture of exactly what you're doing?
- Great for connecting with the younger, millennial generation.
- Use lots of hashtags - include facts, information, fun, partners

The journey in brief

These examples relate to a visiting company bringing a performance to your library but they could equally be used for an author visit / workshop / facilitator / or home grown event.

FIRST STEPS

- Remember, the company want to grow audiences too, so they should be happy to help with posters, flyers, bookmarks, films of the rehearsal process, social media updates
- Have a good nosy at their website

MARVELLOUS MARKETING IN THE LIBRARY

- Trails according to the theme (everyone loves a good search)
- Theme your weekly creative writing, arts, crafts and homework help activities to promote the performance / event
- Creatively themed workshops can promote follow up visits too (think about the before and after)
- Get them dressing up and snap photos in picture frames made from posters, encourage parents to share online with your @ or hashtag #
- Competitions
- Create a healthy competitive spirit between libraries in your area
- 'Happy to help' badges or 'ask me about' stickers...
- Snippets of intriguing info written on a bookmark slipped in between pages
- 'Have you heard about...' on the end of shelves or popping up on the self-serve / main desk
- Tell them why it's a bargain (the same show in a theatre would cost around £10 per ticket)
- Communicate the social and emotional benefits of experiencing live performance

START SELLING STORIES

- Contact local radio, newspaper, tv (you can find email addresses and phone numbers online)
- Get it on listings including local school news
- Eye catching posters in shops, community spaces, churches, public places, on buses and at stops, in car windows, at the chippy, police station, docs waiting room, notice boards, laminate and attach to school gates. Once you gain permission and support from the right people, they will get into a routine of doing this for you
- Get digital on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat. Steal from others, look at how they do it, what hashtags to use. Share news from the company about the performance, find local @ to add into tweets
- Ticket deals, early bird offers, discounts for families
- Invite local dignitaries, Headteacher, Police, MP, offer free tickets in return for tweets

ON THE DAY

- On the day, designate space for the company and welcome them in
- Let library users know it's happening in half hour and there's still time to buy tickets
- Welcome the audience as they arrive, introduce the company and the performance if that's what you have agreed
- Enjoy the performance

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE / EVENT

- Gather feedback in easy, fun creative ways, maybe film or voice record some thoughts on your phone to share on your website/social media pages (with parental permission of course)
- Gather contact information to add to central mailing lists to send details of future performances / events
- Make a list of what you did (all the good stuff) and use it as a checklist for the next time, keep adding each time; you learn as you go

The Spark Arts for Children presents

THE FIRST

by Jayne Williams

A play about World War I
for younger audiences



**NO ONE COULD BELIEVE HOW
QUICKLY THE WAR HAD BEGUN
AND THEY FEARED FOR HOW IT MIGHT END
THEY'D SEND LETTERS BACK AND FORTH
BUT NO-ONE SPOKE OF THE TRUTH OF BATTLE
THE GRUESOME RATTLE OF DEATH IN THE TRENCHES**

Tried and tested cases

The First

In the very first year of our artist in residence programme - Imaginative Spaces - writer Jayne Williams began to create a new play about WWI. Based at The BRITE Centre, the library for Braunstone (a large estate in the west of Leicester city) and working with the local history group and the children who visited the library regularly, Jayne immersed herself in the local knowledge and the imaginations of the young minds off the estate to create *The First*.

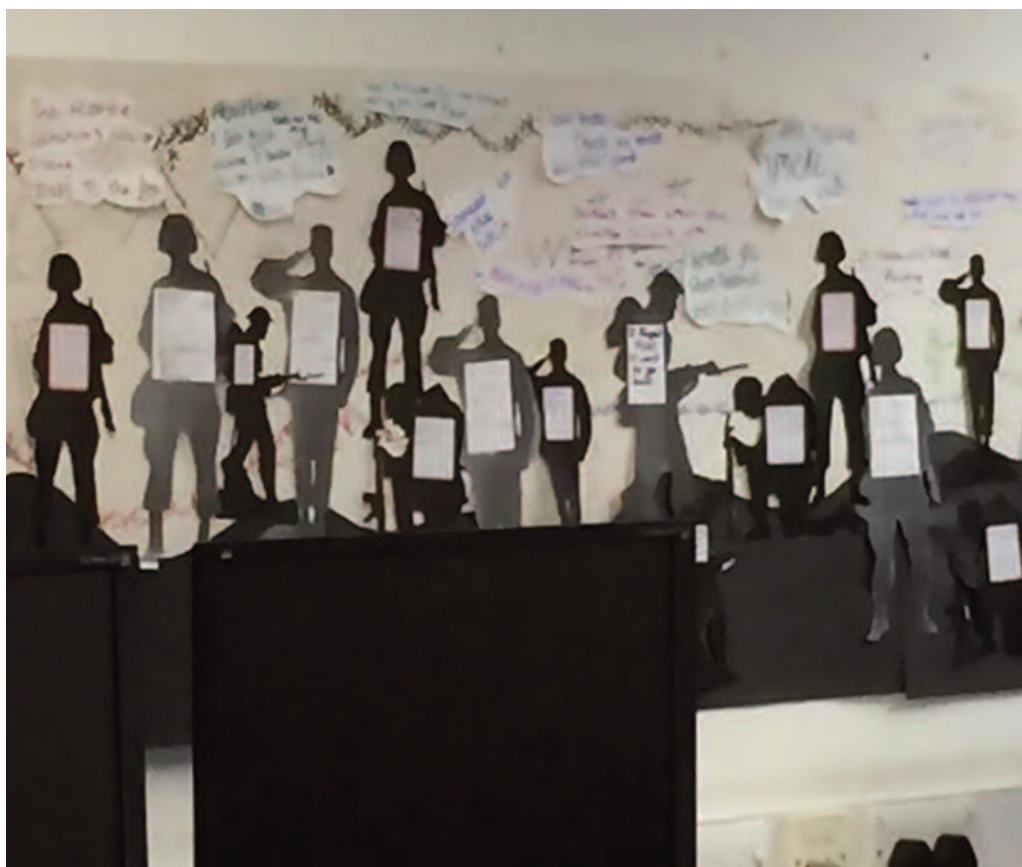
This was a live performance for primary school audiences to come and see in their local library. Even in the early stages of writing the play, we knew that the theme of WWI would have multiple links to the national curriculum which would be a huge pull for schools.

The story would follow two friends as they grow together, play together and enter the Great War together. This would be a catalyst for young audiences to explore their own local stories of war, with the intention of being able to tour throughout the four-year centenary commemorations. In those early stages of creation, it was the writer's intention to leave the narrative just open ended enough to invite the children to write the next scene / chapter / story.

The 'what happens' was a call to arms to write the next stage of the journey for the one boy who survives the first day on the Front Line. An opportunity for the libraries to work more with their local schools and inspire repeat visits, to work with the staff (possibly the local history group that meets in the library) to engage in wrap around cultural activity.

In the Among Ideal Friends tour of *The First*, 94% of the 2,038 children wrote the next part of the story and many took their families to see their creative writing, pride of place in a display created at their local library.

Most libraries found this easy to sell as they sent information of the performance with the extra curricular links to schools and just needed to gather interest from one or two contacts.



“

It has made me realise how little we utilise the library so this is something we will address

Killisick Junior School

The visit was fantastic. I cannot stress how much we enjoyed it and how valuable we feel it has been. We would love to be contacted again if any other opportunities arise like this. Thank you

Barnby Road Academy

The First

School Engagement Examples

Here are a few of the ideas used to liaise with schools and encourage a regular contact.

Artist in residence at Belgrave library, Parmjit Sagoo, made an exhibition of soldier silhouettes which were displayed in the library and neighbourhood centres. The community were invited to leave their thoughts and comments as part of the display.

Displays were made of school group's creative writing, including next scene/chapter with supporting images created by schools, local history groups and library staff. Invitations were sent to family and friends to visit the opening of the exhibition. This was a great way to spread the word of the incredible theatrical experience the children had received.

Local oral history groups held show and tell sessions with WWI artefact 'handling boxes' borrowed from the local museum service. Is there a local group that could add extra value to your event?

Copies of the script, including creative follow up activities for teachers and young people to do in class, were given to all participating schools.

Stickers were handed out to all children at the end of the performance or in class afterwards. A child wearing a sticker is a great conversation starter when their parent / carer collects them at the school gates.

The Spark Arts for Children presents

LIVE FAMILY THEATRE IN YOUR LIBRARY

Sylvia South and the Word Catcher

by finegan
KRUCKEMEYER



the **spark**
arts for children



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Tried and tested cases

Sylvia South and the Word Catcher

The final live performance for the Among Ideal Friends libraries tour was *Sylvia South and the Word Catcher* by Finegan Kruckmeyer, which toured in July and August of 2017. This play, like *The First*, was commissioned especially for the Among Ideal Friends libraries but was very different in theme, style and target audience.

Sylvia South is for families and therefore libraries took a very different approach in the way they gathered audiences, which inspired fantastic creativity and a little friendly library to library competition. *Sylvia South* is set in a library, the perfect place to explore its themes of imaginary worlds and characters, tiny towns and massive personalities, super heroes, villains, even an exciting chase scene on a push bike. These themes lend themselves to an abundance of creativity in displays, secret trails with intriguing messages found between pages 'have you heard about the word catcher?'

Crafty afternoons saw the making of paper towns, from simple paper structures that were illuminated by tiny torches, to the papering of life sized push bikes. These amazing creations came from the imaginations of the collective minds within the libraries. Most said that this was an easy sell as there were so many identifiable characters and themes within the narrative to explore. Even though the play was still being developed, the script still had plenty to offer.

This play was inspired by the celebrated book by A.F Harold, *The Imaginary*, which was given to Adel by librarian Sandy. She was enthused by the themes which she thought would make a brilliant play and The Spark and Ideal Friends made it happen.

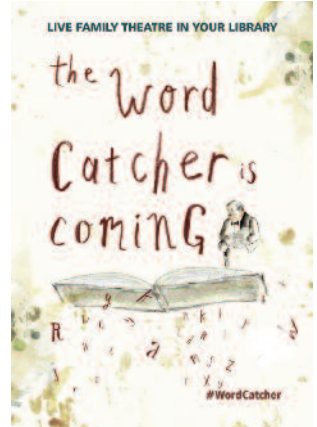
Sylvia South and the Word Catcher

SUPER HERO NAME GENERATOR

What's YOUR
Super Hero name?

Use the first letter and last
letter of your first name to
discover your Super Hero name

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| A - Amazing | A - Catcher |
| B - Night | B - Tickler |
| C - Thunder | C - Galaxian |
| D - Rainbow | D - Screamer |
| E - Super | E - Boy / Girl |
| F - Book | F - Bandit |
| G - Brain | G - Hero |
| H - Hamster | H - Shadow |
| I - Nostril | I - Tweaker |
| J - Cloud | J - Spring |
| K - Library | K - Beast |
| L - Iron | L - Weasel |
| M - Silver | M - Masher |
| N - Bee | N - Raider |
| O - Wolf | O - Mystic |
| P - Storm | P - Spirit |
| Q - Lightning | Q - Time Traveller |
| R - Raspberry | R - Freezer |
| S - Word | S - Snatcher |
| T - Power | T - Thief |
| U - Claw | U - Wrangler |
| V - Atomic | V - Robot |
| W - Story | W - Mystic |
| X - Rocket | X - Rascal |
| Y - Steel | Y - Wrestler |
| Z - Ace | Z - Outlaw |



Sylvia South and the Word Catcher

Marvellous Marketing Examples

Here are a few of the ideas used in libraries to promote the performance.

Displays - All Nottingham libraries created a display based on Sylvia South's bike -with an inter-library competition and a prize for the most creative display. Displays included bikes covered in paper, made from paper and even a knitted bike from the library Knit and Natter group.

Dressing Up area - A Super Hero themed dressing up area with masks and capes next to posters of the performance. Encouraged everyone who joined in to share photos on social media #wordcatcher

Paper Planes & Bumble Bees - In the script 'Super Boy' Eddie had several encounters with bees, and an enchanted paper plane took flight, so paper planes and bees were hung from shelves and ceilings.

Teaser Flyers were slipped in to specially chosen books to target potential audiences with specific interests such as action / adventure stories and graphic novels. These were aimed at a slightly older audience with intriguing messages 'Looking for Adventure?' 'The Word Catcher is coming' and 'Feed your Need to Read'

Badges were provided for library staff to wear, with the slogan '*Ask me about Sylvia South and The Word Catcher*'. These were a great conversation starter.

Super Hero Name Generator (pictured) initial letters of first & last names were matched against an alphabet of super hero characteristics to create a brand new super hero name. These were added to library displays or shared online.

Family Ambassadors were charged with spreading the word in work, in the playground, in the community. Handing out flyers, putting up posters and spreading the word.

Paper Worlds - crafty afternoons saw the making of paper towns, from simple paper structures that were illuminated by tiny torches

Example Event Checklist

Author and Title of event

Date and time

Interval yes / no

Event duration

Performance capacity

Ticket price

Event organiser: who arranged the event at the library?

Company / author contact details

Agreed fee and details of when agreed

Confirm arrangements with company/author a week before

Time of arrival / Parking arrangements / Exchange contact numbers for the day

Do we have publicity material?

Printed leaflets / posters / electronic marketing / press release

Any in Library 'Marvellous Marketing' such as displays / trails etc.

Is the event on twitter / website / what's on listings?

Send guest list invites to VIPs / headteachers / police / MP

Are they bringing:

Books to sell / a sound system /

lighting equipment / audience feedback forms

Are we providing refreshments for audience?

Is there a budget? Buy supplies / Organise catering

Keep the cleaner(s) informed

Who will be staffing event

Check payment details - If paying on night do you have money?

On the day

Set up the performance space / seating areas / authors book display.

Check not blocking fire exits.

Check all cables/trip hazards are marked/taped down.

Sort refreshments / changing room for company / author.

Put up signage: photography / toilets / performance in progress etc.

Print out ticket sales / guest list.

Check how the event will start:

Does it need an introduction from you?

How will they know when you have all your audience?

At the event

Welcome the audience, take tickets or count and record numbers

Hand out programmes or flyers for other events

After event, encourage audience to complete evaluation forms and sign up for the mailing list

After the event

Make sure completed evaluation forms/ mailing list requests are passed to the correct person.

If necessary get signed confirmation from company / author for receipt of fees

Thank the company / author and help with their get out.

Turn the performance space back into a library

Evaluate how things went. Share your findings with the team.

Sit back, relax and get ready for next time...



Leicester pupils enjoying their local library as an out of school classroom space

Creative activities

to promote your performance / event

This section of the book has some tried, tested and fun ways to use creative activities as part of your *Marvellous Marketing*. Use your regular activities or these new ideas to build audiences and sell stories through participation. Why not encourage school groups to use the library as an out of school classroom.

The activities have been split into three sections:

Off the shelf

quick and easy activities, something you can kick start with ten minutes of your time and leave for the fun to continue without you, if you're quite busy.

A few pages

activities that take half hour or so, that you can start off and come and go.

The full chapter

an hour-long session with families or a class visit, that requires more of your time to plan and deliver.

Off the shelf

Quick and easy activities

Quick and easy activities, something you can kick start with ten minutes of your time and leave for the fun to continue without you, if you're quite busy.

Marvellous Marketing

Theme your weekly crafty afternoons to build excitement for the performance/event. You can even invite the participants to share and make their marvellous marketing ideas. Simple colouring in of images of characters that may appear in the performance, these may be provided by the company or may be generic.

Print black and white images in shapes that can be coloured in then used as marketing material, like bookmarks or bunting. Empowering your participants to engage in the creation of displays will help them invest greater interest in the performances/events and create a sense of community, something which all human beings thrive off. Just some colour pens, paper, card, scissors, glue and imaginations will do.

Trails

You are the experts of these during the Summer Reading Challenge so create a 'find 10 pictures' or 'collect x number of letters to make a word' type trails for adventurers to find throughout the library and theme it to promote your performance/event. Maybe the prize at the end is a secret paragraph from the play or a bookmark or sticker promoting the event?



Dressing up box and photo frames

Make a giant photo frame that could fit one or two faces in it and decorate with the marketing for the performance/event. You can invite participants to make these in your crafty afternoons cutting up posters and flyers to make a promotional photo frame. Invite all ages (with parental supervision/permission) to take selfies with the frames and tweet #wordcatcher or #libraryplay or something that may link to your performance/event. You could even have a dressing up box with charity shop hats, glasses, jackets, wigs etc.

Competitions

Guess the number of buttons in the jar. Name that bear and have a chance to win it when you buy a ticket. Healthy competition between libraries even, with who can make the biggest paper town – these all get us entering into the spirit of it with a possible prize at the end (even though the performance will be the biggest gift).

A few pages

Half Hour activities

A few ideas that take half hour or so to complete. You could start these sessions off, then come and go.

Instant Team Story

School assembly

You can create an Instant Team Story in an assembly as a ten-minute task or expand the activity to 30 minutes or an hour for a class visit.

Things you need

- quick version - five volunteers
- extended version - lots of children
- audio recording device or your phone (optional)

How it works

Invite 5 children from across class ages (ask for someone with a big voice and massive imagination, the teachers can help you choose) up to the front and stand in a queue.

Give them a theme that links with your performance/event.

First person begins to tell a story based on the theme, then, when they feel like it, they run to the back of the queue and the next person should instantly continue the story from exactly where it was left off.

You can audio record this and play it back. Hearing your own voice gains lots of giggles at any age.

Thank them and relate their instant story to the themes in the upcoming performance and show them a poster, say you will share the info with each class teacher who will put up a poster in the classroom.

If you have more time, have a few rounds of different stories and use the end of the first story to start the next.

Debating Game

Class visit

The debating game can be used to explore subjects linked to the curriculum (a good pull for schools wanting to extend their curricular learning) or you can use it to explore the theme of your upcoming performance/event, as a promotional tool.

Get them intrigued in the subject, passionately debating their thoughts and feelings will have them wanting to come back for more. It can work very well as a class visit but equally as an after-school invitation, maybe in Study Support or Chatterbooks.

Things you need

- Books based on the particular curriculum link, or social theme that you are exploring
- Five or six chairs
- A class of children and teachers

How it works

Divide the room down the middle with the five or six chairs, placed side by side, one facing in, one facing out (a bit like musical chairs) to make 'the fence'.

Give each side of the room a label, for example 'this side is crisps, this side is chocolate, go and stand on which side you think is the best.' You can use music to get them there in a particular time. If they can't decide, they can sit on 'the fence' (the chairs in the middle) but there are only five or six spaces.

Each side is now a team that should confer and create strong points as to why their side is the best, using speaking and listening skills, to persuade the others off the fence onto to their side.

Once the task is understood, you can introduce the chosen subject / theme to encourage debate. You may have books to hand that link to the theme so as to allow for some researchers from each team to gen up.

Word Wednesday – Themed

class visit or after school library session

Word Wednesday (or *Tuesday Tales*, or *Saturday Stories*) is usually a story writing task but you can theme it to promote your upcoming performance. A bit of prep time is required but once created it can be rolled out and used or adapted again and again. Search 'Spark Word Wednesday' to see the results of a Word Wednesday session.

How it works

Type several different missions, fold each mission and pop each one in an envelope with Word Wednesday written on them. Invite each child to choose an envelope and complete the mission inside.

Mission Example

Find the children's section

Go to the middle shelf

Find the middle book on the middle shelf

Open the middle page of the middle book from the middle shelf

Close your eyes and point at the page

Open your eyes and write down the nearest word to your finger

Have post-it notes and pens at the ready for them to write down the word that their mission led them to, these can be stuck on a wall under the title of your theme, where they can be seen by everybody.

When everyone has returned, share the words along with any images they may conjure, and invite them as individuals to write a book based on, featuring, or simply inspired by one or more, or all of those words and according to your theme.



A folded A4 paper or thin card becomes their book, which they can create a front cover for, with a title and their name as author. Illustrate a picture that will be a window into their story.

Maybe write a bit of 'blurb' on the back cover that entices their reader into the book.

Then set them off to write their short story on the two pages in the middle. There's no possible wrong way of doing this as it is their story, they don't have to worry too much about spellings etc, it is best to suggest a free flow of ideas from head to hand.

This can take 20 minutes or longer and can be completed back in class if it is a short library visit. Music playing throughout will aid creativity and inspire ideas.

Once gathered back together they can share their stories in a relaxed way or it is great fun to become a Living Library. Line them up as extra shelves holding their books for the grownups to peruse.

They may be talking books too, which give a description of their story when the book is chosen. These books can also be displayed in the library for the children to bring friends/family to come and have a look at - encouraging a return visit.

The hook is the excitement of the mission, the ideas flow when the words and theme are gathered, then they are intrigued and you can leave them with the opportunity to experience a live performance based on that very subject.

The full chapter

Longer activities

is an hour-long session with families or a class visit, that requires more of your time to plan and deliver.

Story Bag

Story bag is essentially a creative pass the parcel that inspires the reassembling of stories. You can play this in a class visit or at a family event. Theme it to what you want to promote or keep it open. It can be an hour-long activity or can be condensed.

Things you need

- A bag (pillowcases are good)
- Shredded paper
- Colourful lollypop sticks
(Pound Shops and Wilkos have these)
- Other items that go with your theme

How it works

Fill your bag / pillowcase with paper from your paper shredder.

Write some words or phrases on the colourful lollypop sticks. You need a mix of characters 'hairy dog,' 'scary giant', 'a small child', with some locations, 'tall trees', 'an empty house', 'a grassy park' and add in some seasons or weather, 'a windy day', 'warm summer', 'winter'. You can add in whatever you like that links to your theme and offers suggestions of characters, places and scenarios.

Mix the lollypop sticks in with the paper shredding in the bag and add some objects (plastic poos always go down well if that fits your theme).



The final thing you need is music - instrumental is best. Film soundtracks are good because they are composed to promote a particular atmosphere or evoke a certain emotion. Music will spark the imagination and inspire creativity and is best played from a wireless blue-tooth speaker which can sit in the centre of a circle. A CD player will be fine too.

Sitting in a circle (whole class/group, with teachers too), introduce the Story Bag as a bag full of shredded stories, show them, 'this is a dilemma as the stories are ruined'. Invite the children/young people to re-create the stories by playing the Story Bag Game (which is essentially 'pass the parcel').

Play the music. When the music stops, the story bag holder pops their hand in, to find a lollipop stick or object. They read it aloud or show it. (It is good for the facilitator to repeat what they say for emphasis).

Music begins again and the bag continues its journey around the circle. There may not be time for everyone in the circle to bring something out but it is best to have at least 30 things inside, so that there are plenty.

When you feel its time, stop the music and recap on what we have discovered out of the bag. Place items in the centre of the circle. Invite the children, in pairs, to create a story using all, most of or some of the lollipop stick words / objects.

Give them a few minutes to discuss then invite some (or all if you have time) to share their stories. Celebrate each story and link their ideas to the themes in the upcoming performance.

Word Bingo

Word Bingo can be played in an assembly, with the usual set up of sitting in rows, as a twenty-minute task to promote Summer Reading Challenge or other projects. Or can be played as an hour-long lesson with two classes sitting in a big square with all the action taking place inside the square.

Things you need

- Two Bingo cards with words/phrases numbered 1 - 31 (see example using the Roald Dahl theme of Revolting Rhymes, on the next page)
- Lots of A4 paper (can be scrap)
- Felt tips
- Lots of children

How it works

Choose two children to be bingo callers for the first card and two to call the second, stand up where everyone can see them, encourage them to use big voices.

Ask a child for a number from 1 - 31. They say '5', the bingo callers read out the words on number 5, ask another child to write that word(s) big on an A4 so everyone can see.

Keep doing this until all 31 numbers (or thereabouts) have been called, it is loud and raucous but so much fun and activates everyone.

Re-cap on the words on A4, say them out loud or ask a child to. See if anyone can guess what they link to (Author? Theme?).

Then invite them to either chat to the person at the side of them and come up with an instant story inspired by those words or if you have more time in a lesson, they can write their stories and share/perform them.

1 Revolting

28 Giraffe

2 Disgusting

1 Revolting

2 Disgusting

3 Rhymes

4 Little Red

5 Big Bad Wolf

6 A pistol in her knickers

7 Three Little Pigs

8 Child Eating Crocodile

9 Tummy Monster

10 Growling and Grumbling

11 Mushy Peas

12 Brussel Sprouts

13 What a load of Gobblefunk!

14 Frobbscottle

15 Swogswallowed

16 Dirty Beasts

17 Bald Headed Witches

18 A Rather Large Peach

19 Medicine Made by George

20 Hairy Faced Men

21 Twit

22 Muggle-Wumps

23 Chocolate

24 Squirrels

25 Charlie

26 Adventure

27 Friendship

28 Giraffe

29 Monkey

30 Pelly

31 A Ticket Made of Gold



Sign Off - You Did It!

Hang on a mo...are you one of those people who skip straight to the back pages to squeeze in a sneak peek at who done it?!

Well, it was you - *you* did it.

Congratulations!

But wait, that's not the end... it's only the beginning. Now it's time to challenge yourself to use more marvellous marketing, keep the ideas coming and the conversations flowing to keep building your audiences.

So, until next time...

About Among Ideal Friends

Among Ideal Friends is a theatre touring consortium developed by The Spark Arts for Children in partnership with Libraries in the East Midlands and supported by Arts Council England Strategic Touring funding.

During the 18 month project Among Ideal Friends toured five live theatre shows *A Boy and a Bear in a Boat* (July 2016), *The First* (Nov 2016), *Big Sister, Little Brother* (Dec 2016), *Where the River Runs* (Apr 2017) and *Sylvia South and the Word Catcher* (July - Aug 2017).

These were a combination of special commissions of new writing, fresh versions of established stories and an opportunity for companies to bring their work to the East Midlands. All high quality live performance experiences for school groups and/or families inspired by books and stories for children 5-11 years, at affordable ticket prices.

Among Ideal Friends reached a total audience of 7961 (2134 adults and 5827 children). Almost 1 in 5 had never seen a theatre show with their child before and many, children and adults, experienced live theatre for the first time. 38% of the audience were classified as low arts engagement groups according to Audience Finder segmentation. There were a total of 151 shows, in 54 different venues, mostly libraries and a few community venues, and roughly 1 in 4 shows sold out.

Find out more about the project and the impact it made at www.thesparkarts.co.uk/amongidealfriends

About The Spark

The Spark Arts for Children is a registered charity which offers children and young people the opportunity to immerse themselves in the arts by experiencing a wide range of high quality work, which inspires, empowers and educates. We offer children the space to discover their own skills, passions and potential, as audience, participants and creators of their own work through a year round programme of Participation & Learning and bespoke events. The annual Spark Festival is the largest children's arts festival in England and Wales, taking place every May. The festival presents the very best theatre, dance, music, visual arts and digital media events in Leicester schools, theatres and community venues. The Spark works to increase its impact on the creation and presentation of arts for children in the UK and beyond. www.thesparkarts.co.uk

About Jayne Williams

Jayne has been creating and sharing stories on pages and stages for twenty years. She began working with The Spark Arts for Children in 2014 when she bagged the brilliant role of writer in residence in partnership with Leicester Libraries. This is where she developed a new-found respect for library staff, and experienced the secret super powers they possess. It is within this residency that Jayne achieved her proudest moment, watching local children become immersed in the story of *The First*, her play about WWI which she was supported to create and which went on to tour libraries across the East Midlands. Jayne continues to work with The Spark and with libraries and was delighted to be invited to help create this marvellous manual.

Acknowledgments & Thanks

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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



the **spark**
arts for children



delivered by



“

”

good artists **borrow**,
great artists **steal**

Picasso

Top tips, case studies and marvellous marketing ideas 'maggied' from hundreds of library staff within creative collaborations with artists, writers, creators, and theatre makers during an 18 month project that toured live family theatre into local libraries - Among Ideal Friends.

