



artsalive2006
10th ANNIVERSARY 1996 - 2006

ARTS ALIVE 2006 EVALUATION REPORT

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	p2 – 3
2. Overview	p3 – 4
3. Literature programme	p4 – 5
4. Youth events	p5
5. Sponsorship	p6
6. Marketing and publicity	p6
7. Audience evaluation	p7 – 8
8. Artists' and organisations' evaluation	p8 – 9
9. Conclusion and recommendations	p9

Appendix 1	Table of evaluative comments made by artists and organisations
Appendix 2	Table of audience figures for each event
Appendix 3	Financial statement

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2006 Arts Alive celebrated its 10th anniversary as a district-wide community arts festival, drawing in almost 24 000 audience members from Mole Valley, Surrey and further afield. Since its inception in 1997 Arts Alive has developed in many ways. For several years now the festival has included a successful youth and education programme and a distinctive calendar of literary events, and is delivered through partnerships with a variety of individuals, community groups and organisations, both amateur and professional. Although it has expanded significantly, from just 22 events in 1997 to 116 events in 2006, Arts Alive is and continues to be a festival owned and enjoyed by the local community.

The aim of this report is to:

- evaluate the successes and shortcomings of Arts Alive 2006
- review the audience and organisers' evaluations
- give recommendations for the next festival

The 2005 Arts Alive evaluation report set out some key aims and recommendations for the 10th anniversary of the festival. It stated that the organising committee would:

- attempt to attract additional sponsorship and public funding to maximise the budget
- attempt to include a celebrity or guest speaker to attract national press
- continue to pursue the BBC for live recordings of Radio 4 programmes
- tighten the focus of the literature programme and include at least one well-known figure for the literary world
- continue to develop the youth arts programme
- create a more high profile launch
- consider a special 10th anniversary marketing campaign

The Arts Alive Committee was successful in achieving most of these aims. Internationally renowned polar explorer Tom Avery was our celebrity guest speaker at The Leatherhead Theatre, and BBC Radio 4 recorded a live performance of their popular *News Quiz* programme at Dorking Halls.

The literature programme was a huge success with celebrated authors Louis de Bernières and Penelope Lively talking about their latest works, and local poets Lance Pierson and Christala Rosina giving fascinating performances on the life and works of John Betjeman and Percy Shelley respectively.

The youth arts programme offered children and young people in Mole Valley opportunities to work with the famous children's poet Chrissie Gittins, showcase their artistic talents at the Dorking Halls, learn street dance or storyboard and video editing skills, and be transported back to the age of piracy through mask theatre.

The launch was well attended with approximately 50 guests from the many organisations and groups involved in the festival and representatives from Mole Valley District Council and the festival sponsor, KBR. However, BBC Southern Counties radio failed to attend as promised, and so the organisations and artists present missed out on a valuable opportunity to promote their events.

The 10th anniversary publicity campaign was expertly managed by the Arts Alive committee and was key to the success of this year's festival. The central theme of celebration attracted the interest of the local press and there was extensive coverage of the festival in the local newspapers and on BBC Southern Counties radio throughout the month of October.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE OUTCOMES OF ARTS ALIVE 2006

For the second consecutive year Arts Alive took place throughout the entire month of October. Due to the anniversary celebrations there were 116 events this year, compared with 87 in 2005. Taking into account the fact that many exhibitions and performances ran over a number of days, this amounted to 278 opportunities for the public to see, experience or participate in arts events. This averages out to four activities and events per day. The festival presented a wide range of art forms, including music, drama, literature and poetry, visual arts and crafts, photography, participatory activities and talks.

In total, 23 973 people attended the Arts Alive festival and over 900 people participated either as performers, exhibitors or facilitators. In addition to the many people who directly took part, over 200 volunteers helped to organise events.

103 people returned audience evaluation cards, compared with 124 returned last year. The audience evaluation indicates that 99.98% of those who attended were highly satisfied with the quality of festival events: 97% of respondents rated events as excellent or good. **Please refer to page seven for a full review of the data provided by the audience evaluation cards.**

For the majority of the voluntary and professional arts organisations involved in the festival, Arts Alive plays a very important role in enabling them to reach a wider audience and to promote their work within the local community. Several event organisers commented that they were proud to be part of the festival and welcomed the invaluable support provided by being part of a wider network of artists and art organisations. Many organisations attracted new members through the festival or were able to forge new links with venues. Participants also received widespread press coverage, which they might not otherwise have had access to. Almost all of the events were promoted in the local press and/or on the radio, and organisers cited this as a major advantage of taking part in Arts Alive. **Please refer to Appendix 1 for a full list of evaluative comments made by participants.**

In addition to directly benefiting the arts community, Arts Alive makes a direct contribution to the delivery of Mole Valley District Council's priorities by providing an extensive range of activities for children and young people. This year over 3200 benefited from taking part in or attending Arts Alive events and activities: 800 young people participated in the school workshops; 53 in the half term taster sessions; and 150 performed in showcase events at Dorking Halls.

The festival also has an impact on the local economy. The audience evaluation cards show that 45% of respondents combined attending an Arts Alive event with visiting a café, bar or restaurant, making use of a local amenity e.g. a leisure centre or shops, or paid for car parking.

Arts Alive invests in individuals by encouraging them to participate in events, which aid personal development and lifelong development. This year there were two 'open-mike' sessions providing people poets, singers, musicians and comics with the opportunity to perform their own work to a live audience. The festival also promotes social cohesion by bringing communities together - contributing towards another of the council's priorities, Safer and Stronger Neighbourhoods. For example, the lantern procession organised by Street Processions involved approximately 150 people from different groups within the community working together to make the event a success. Pupils and teachers from local schools, Dorking Round Table, samba percussionist group Bloco do Sul, volunteers from MVDC and members of the public all worked together to ensure that the procession was well-promoted and facilitated.

3. THE LITERATURE PROGRAMME

This year's literature programme was more varied and wide-ranging than ever, with 12 events in total. It featured six talks and discussions, two workshops, two poetry performances, one open mike session and one schools residency.

The Arts Alive committee set out to include at least one well-known figure in its literature programme and succeeded in inviting two best-selling authors, Penelope Lively and Louis de Bernières, to talk about their current or forthcoming work. Author Pamela Evans also talked about her work and her initial struggle for publication.

Local performance poets Lance Pierson and Christala Rosina gave fascinating performances based upon the life and works of John Betjeman and Percy and Mary Shelley, and Jacqueline Banerjee talked about the author EM Forster's strong links with the Surrey countryside.

New for this year was the Readers & Writers day. This event was a day of talks and workshops led by authors Michelle Magorian, Alison Weir, Veronica Heley and Christine Leonard. Unfortunately the event was not as well attended as the organisers had hoped, but those who went found it

immensely enjoyable and useful, and asked for another similar event next year.

Mole Valley Poets again held their popular 'Poetry Pub' event, which provided around 30 people with the opportunity to read their own work and mix with other poets in the local community. The Moles Storytelling Group and the Leatherhead & Bookham U3A also held successful readings.

4. YOUTH EVENTS

This year more children and young people than ever were involved in Arts Alive, in over 16 events, and many attended events with their families. In total over 3200 children and young people benefited from the festival either by performing, exhibiting, or as audience members.

Around 100 young people performed in Let Us Entertain You, a showcase of youth talent from local arts organisations in Mole Valley. Similarly, over 50 young people worked with drama practitioners to devise a short piece of theatre to celebrate the 75th birthday of Dorking Halls.

Four different schools participated in the festival by performing drama or music pieces or by holding events, and there was an exhibition of art produced by children aged nine to sixteen years studying at Mole Valley schools, which attracted around 850 visitors.

There were many opportunities for children and young people to try a new art form: a dance and drama open day; dance classes in half term; a storyboard and video editing workshop; and lantern-making sessions in three primary schools. In providing activities from children and young people we also made use of some of the youth facilities in the district; namely the Mulberry Youth Centre, Dorking Sports Centre and Leatherhead Leisure Centre.

As well as performing or exhibiting, children of all ages and abilities had several opportunities to experience live theatre, including:

A Midsummer Night's Dream – performance by popular group Shakespeare4Kidz

The Singing Kettle – children's singalong

Hell & High Water – mask workshop and performance

The Small Kingdom – pantomime for special needs students

This year our artist-in-residence was the best-selling children's poet Chrissie Gittins, who visited seven infant and primary schools around Mole Valley to inspire children to read and write more poetry. Chrissie spent a day in each school reading from her new poetry collection and working with pupils on their own poems. This residency was a huge success and enjoyed by over 800 children.

5. SPONSORSHIP

Again the Arts Alive committee was grateful to receive sponsorship from KBR, a global engineering company based in Leatherhead. The sum of £6000 was given in order to allow us to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the festival. Arts Alive has a long-standing partnership with KBR and it is hoped that they will continue to support the festival both in sponsorship and by attending events. KBR staff attended the festival launch party, The Dorking Prom, concerts by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and The Yehudi Menuhin School, the lantern procession and A Celebration of Polar Exploration. The in-kind support provided by the KBR graphics department was invaluable.

6. MARKETING AND PUBLICITY

£7186 was spent on marketing and publicity, an increase of £1225 on last year's costs. This was mainly due to an increase in printing costs in order to produce 30 000 calendars as well as 10 000 brochures. However, working with the in-house graphics department at KBR cut our design costs. Many event flyers were designed and printed at Mole Valley District Council on coloured paper; this was a low-cost and effective way of marketing individual events.

The marketing budget was spent on:

- Logo design
- Design and printing of 10 000 full colour brochures
- Design and printing of 30 000 full colour fold-out calendars
- 2 free standing banners
- brochure distribution
- 1000 audience evaluation cards

This year Arts Alive received more exposure in the local press than ever before, beginning in mid-September and receiving coverage on a weekly basis throughout the month of October. The Guide entertainment supplement continues to be very supportive of the festival, dedicating a whole page to weekly Arts Alive event listings. There was excellent photo coverage of all the events covered by the Dorking and Surrey Advertiser, and the Arts Alive logo was used frequently by The Guide.

BBC Southern Counties Radio was the festival's official media partner this year, airing live telephone interviews and welcoming committee members John Usher and Samantha Watson as guests.

7. AUDIENCE EVALUATION

Audience evaluation cards were distributed at as many events as possible and returned by freepost. 103 evaluation cards were returned, giving a return rate of approximately 10% of those distributed. Below is a summary of the data gathered from the audience evaluation.

Opinion of the event(s)

Excellent	87%
Good	9%
Average	1%
Disappointing	2%
Entertaining	17%
Though provoking	10%
Good value for money	14%
No answer	1%

Overall our customers have a very high level of satisfaction with festival events.

Reasons for attending

Something to do with the family	6%
Social outing with friends	16%
Simply wished to be entertained	60%
Family / friend connection with the artist / organisation	14%
Curiosity about the event	11%
On holiday / visiting for the day	1%
Personal development i.e. trying out a new skill	3%
No answer	2%

40% of those who responded were attending a festival event for the first time. This figure would suggest that whilst we are retaining a large percentage of our audience base, the festival continues to draw in new audiences.

Marketing and publicity

The majority of respondents found out about Arts Alive through the brochure (38%) or through an artist / organisation participating in the festival (25%).

14% heard about it through word of mouth
17% saw an event in the Dorking Halls brochure
3% saw an event in other print
3% were on a mailing list for Arts Alive information
9% saw and advert or article in the local press
1% gave no answer

Impact on the local economy

The evaluation cards show that 45% of respondents contributed to the local economy combined attending an Arts Alive event with:

Visiting a café, bar or restaurant	67%
Making use of a local amenity e.g. a leisure centre or shops	11%
Travelling by car and paying for parking	28%

Audience profile

Gender

Male	38%
Female	62%

Disability

Yes	4%
No	83%
No answer	13%

Ethnicity

97% of respondents were from a White British or other White cultural background
3% gave no answer

Age

11 – 18	0%
19 – 24	0%
25 – 45	11%
46 – 60	27%
over 60	48%
no answer	14%

8. ARTISTS' AND ORGANISATIONS' EVALUATION

Every artist and organisation that participated in Arts Alive either by holding or performing in an event was asked to complete an evaluation form, giving them the opportunity not only to evaluate their event, but also the support of the Arts Alive committee. The return rate for these forms was approximately 70%.

The evaluation forms show that over 900 people participated in the festival either as performers, exhibitors or facilitators. In addition to the many people who directly took part, over 200 volunteers helped to organise events.

Below is a list of data gathered from the organisation evaluation forms:

- 38% of organisations who completed the finance section of the form found that their event raised less income than they had expected,

compared with 25% who found that it raised more and 25% who found that it raised an expected amount.

- The organisations involved estimated that an average of 21% of their audience came from within three miles of the venue, 42% from within Mole Valley, 17% from within Surrey and 4% from further afield.
- 97% rated their events as successful and only one organisation rated their event as disappointing.
- 100% of those who responded rated the communication, organisation and helpfulness of the Arts Alive committee as good or excellent.
- Out of those who responded to the Publicity section of the form, only one organisation rated the Arts Alive brochure as poor; 69% rated the Arts Alive calendar as good or excellent; 86% rated the support of BBC Southern Counties as good or excellent; and 72% rated the support of the Dorking & Surrey Advertiser as good or excellent.
- However, the evaluation forms revealed that roughly 50% of the organisations who responded were either unaware of the publicity provided by BBC Southern Counties and the Advertiser group, or did not consider the support provided significant enough to comment on.

Please see Appendix 1 for a table of evaluative comments made by the artists and organisations who responded.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From this evaluation we can conclude that:

- 23 973 people attended an Arts Alive event
- over 900 people performed or exhibited in the festival
- over 200 volunteers helped to organise festival events
- there were 116 events in total
- this amounted to 278 opportunities to experience art; an average of four per day
- over 3200 children and young people benefited from the festival
- 96% of those who returned audience evaluation cards rated the event(s) as excellent or good; 40% of respondents were attending an Arts Alive event for the first time and 45% contributed to the local economy
- 97% of the artists / organisations who participated in the festival rated their event(s) as successful

The Arts Alive committee met in November 2006 to carry out a general review of the festival and for Arts Alive 2007 aims to:

- work with the BBC again to produce a live recording
- maintain its large and successful literature programme
- provide events for children and young people, particularly during the half term period
- continue to promote the festival through the Advertiser group and BBC Southern Counties, whilst also pursuing regional and national media