

Music at the Heart of Teesdale (M@HoT) Final Report

HoT Ref B5



1. Name of Project

Music at the Heart of Teesdale (aka 'M@HoT' for short)

2. Funding allocated from Heart of Teesdale

In total: £37,000, as follows:

- £25,000: 01 Jan 2012 - 31 Dec 2014 (3 years); &
- £12,000: 01 Jan 2015 - 31 March 2016 (15 Months).

3. Have you provided additional funding for this project?

In total: £14,047, as follows:

- Daleforce - £2,020;
- Teesdale Action Partnership (TAP) - £1,632 (2 awards);
- Co. Durham Community Foundation (CDCF) - £2,400;
- Mewhort Trust - £1,650;
- Earned income - £6,345 (from parents' termly fees, contributions to trips & visits, performances, ticket sales, CD sales, sponsorship from the Dispensary café at The Witham, donations, schools' workshop fees).
- Plus a huge amount of volunteer time (as included in each financial claim/ report).

4. Short introduction to the project

M@HoT was set up in 2011 and is run by a dedicated and passionate team of six who are mostly entirely unpaid volunteers. In order to provide opportunities for young people in the dale to learn and perform the traditional music and dance from the area, we have formed a number of partnerships to support our work, including:

- Local schools
- Durham Music Service
- Newcastle University Folk & Traditional Music degree course
- Blaize Community Arts
- The Hub
- The Witham
- EFDSS (English Folk Dance & Song Society)

5. Aims and objectives of the project and how they have been met (including number of children and adults reached through the project)

Our aim with the Music at the Heart of Teesdale (or 'M@HoT') project is to work with young people from the area to revive Teesdale's folk music, song and dance traditions, inspired by the landscape of Teesdale. The project is now well into its fifth year and in that time we have:

- Run a series of folk music and longsword dance sessions and workshops for young people, primarily aged between 8 and 18, who live or go to school in the Heart of Teesdale project area, based in Barnard Castle; and in addition...
- Established a youth folk band, 'Cream Tees', who have successfully played a number of gigs throughout the area and in the wider region, and gained a growing reputation;

- Founded an enthusiastic Longsword dance team based at Teesdale School; and
- Set up a 'Friends of M@HoT' group to help run and support the project.

By the end of the first three years of the project (from 2012-14) we:

- Gathered together all the material discovered from our research into the history of folk music from Teesdale and produced an accessible on-line archive on our own website. We use the Teesdale folk material gathered in our sessions, workshops and gigs as much as possible;
- Produced, recorded a CD and performed the UK – and world! – première of a new piece of music, called 'Rooted - A Teesdale Suite', inspired by Teesdale's folk traditions and the special landscape qualities of Teesdale.

In total:

- Over 50 young musicians have *performed* with Cream Tees, and some 200 more have actually attended at least one workshop with us;
- Run Longsword dance workshops for over 500 primary and secondary school students in the area introducing them to the tradition in the dale;
- Worked with a core team of a dozen and more volunteer music and dance tutors
- Performed to a variety of audiences numbering in their several thousands in total at many festivals, gigs, school concerts, etc, and taking the music of Teesdale to local, regional and national audiences;
- Our Longsword dance team have likewise performed to hundreds more at local, regional and national events, and we pride ourselves in having the most active youth group of such traditional dancers in the UK.

6. Additional achievements and legacy – community involvement/benefits and the future

- M@HoT won a 'Best Community Engagement Project' award in the Teesdale Business Awards in 2014;
- Cream Tees won the 'Pride of Teesdale Young Achievers 2014' Award run by the Teesdale Mercury;
- Cream Tees were also winners in the national 'New Roots' Folk award 2015 competition for their 'Rooted - a Teesdale Suite' composition;
- With additional funding from HoT we have undertaken a short oral history project to research the memories of social dance and music in the dale;
- In addition to our website mentioned above, we produce a printed Newsletter twice a year, have a Facebook page with over 200 'Likes', produce regular press releases about our activities and are featured frequently on local radio;
- With a healthy core number of young musicians, and a dedicated team of tutors leaders, Cream Tees are now established in the community and look set to continue into the foreseeable future, if support from future funding bids are successful;
- We have established a tradition that every child who starts in Year7 at Teesdale School gets the opportunity attend a Longsword dance workshop;
- Younger, primary school-aged children are thus more aware that, if you go to school in Teesdale, this (play for Cream Tees, Longsword dance) is just 'something you can do';
- M@HoT's Mike Bettison & Rosie Cross continue to perform their 'Notes from Teesdale', a self-penned performance piece largely based on Mike's research, to a number of community groups in and around the dale;

- Thanks to our growing reputation, both Cream Tees and our Longsword Dancers are being increasingly invited to attend important local civic functions to represent the dale and to perform at local visitor centres, etc.

7. Lessons learnt

- Given the opportunity, there *is* sufficient interest to run a youth *folk* project in even a relatively sparsely populated rural area, where the traditions had - apparently - died out. (We have 'plugged the gap' between the formal education sector provision and what private music teachers are able to offer.)
- Maintaining the support of a number of partners - in the community, regionally and at national level - has been crucial to the ongoing success of the project.
- A dedicated team of - mostly volunteer - tutors, leaders, fundraisers, PR people with an overall 'project co-ordinator' is required to make things happen.
- Having sufficient funds to bring in young, highly-regarded professional tutors and musicians, as well as to pay for venue hire charges, enables standards to be raised to a much higher level - and provides wonderful role models for our young musicians and dancers too.
- The 'M@HoT' model is thus replicable elsewhere.

Sample quotes

'What you have done with those youngsters is just fantastic. It's so vitally important that there are people like you creating opportunities such as this for young people - thank you!'
David Ferrari, Director for The Arts and Design, Teesdale School, November 2014

'It was wonderful to watch the joy, the fascination and sheer pleasure in the faces of the audience and participants.'

'Cream Tees were absolutely superb. The piece nearly brought me to tears and the third part made me gasp at the end. Brilliant!'
Audience members, première of Cream Tees 'Rooted' suite, November 2014

'I was at the concert at the Witham on Saturday night and thoroughly enjoyed the Cream Tees. What marvellous talent and opportunity for local youngsters to enjoy folk music.'
Judith Pressley, Headteacher, Ingleton Church of England Primary School

'The children have benefitted enormously from having expert input and have been able to investigate an historical tradition and learn more about their community and where they fit within this community. They were able to share what they had learnt at the annual village festival and this filled them with pride and confidence. Without the M@HoT project this aspect of local life and community link may have been lost, as it is certainly not a skill we as a school can provide. The project worked so well and had such an impact in the village that we are looking forward to facilitating a second year of the project.'

Jill McLachlan, Gainford CofE primary school teacher

'Pupils strive to do their best and enjoy learning new skills. For example, as part of the 'Music at the Heart of Teesdale project' they have learned an ancient form of sword dancing... Pupils learn about key aspects of British culture through a celebration of special events such as longsword dancing, a local tradition which has recently been revived.'
from the Gainford CofE Ofsted report, July 2015

'Not only are they all talented musicians, they have been some of the politest and most impeccably behaved artists we've had the pleasure to host. Every one is an immense credit to M@HoT. I hope you are justly proud.'

Erica Morris, former manager of The Witham in Barnard Castle

'Just wanted to thank you and Cream Tees for your wonderful performance on Saturday. We all really loved having you all with us and really hope that you will all come again to the Manor House!'

Nicky Morse, Events Co-ordinator, Manor House Residential Home, Barnard Castle, April 2015

I have been actively involved in folk music since I was a teenager and helping with the revival of traditional ritual dance in Teesdale has personally meant a lot to me. I believe that it has given many of the youngsters in Teesdale a sense of participation and ownership of their traditional culture. It has also given them experiences which they otherwise would not have had – performing in front of appreciative audiences at prestigious events from Cockermouth to Sidmouth.

Patrick Langdon, M@HoT volunteer Longsword Dance tutor

'During my time with Cream Tees I have been offered many great experiences including the amazing opportunity to go to the Folkworks Summer School in Durham. It was truly amazing and I had a great time and this has been a highlight of my life as not only was I surrounded by music but people who were complete strangers were hanging out and playing together.'

Cream Tees band member

'The best thing about being in Cream Tees was creating lively music together that I loved to play and perform as a band.'

Former (now retired!) Cream Tees band member

'I only wish I'd had this opportunity when I was younger!'

Cream Tees parent, March 2012

N.B. One additional quotes to follow from Patrick...

Neil Diment

M@HoT project co-ordinator, 28th April 2016