



the everydayness of play

BoP '10

September 2010

CONFERENCE SNAPSHOT

A conference with a difference;
two days of playful discussion
about play and playwork in the
open air

The Hayes, Staffordshire

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Play is present in all aspects of life; it can emerge for microseconds or last for days. Play is there 'everyday'. Play can be commonplace, it can be ordinary; can it be mundane? We explored this over two days in Staffordshire.

This year there were a multitude of experiences, everyday and otherworldly; comments, both extraordinary and helpful; and a wide range of poems, pictures, photos and pronouncements.

Rather than edit these and perhaps remove their original character, many are offered here as a record of what happened; some are interspaced with the facilitators' descriptions or own recollections. You will see, that as with play itself, we have touched people in many different ways. All the comments are included – including suggestions for future events – in an attempt to continue the dialogue and discussion; who knows where we will all be in 2011?!

Perry Else: Ludemos “a playful community”

Special thanks to:

- All the delegates for sharing and contributing to the spirit of the Hayes
- All the presenters – it would not happen without your generosity
- Elizabeth for sharing her photos
- Everyone for making it such a natural, relaxing and playful event
- Julia and Eloise for their passionate contributions
- Meynell and Sarah, Joel, Lynne and Tony for fire, light, guidance and bounciness – oh, and the large yellow thing
- Millie, Jane and Cath for the lovely food
- Rosie for going the extra mile in difficult circumstances
- Susie for making it all especially beautiful this year
- The Hayes Community for being so helpful and open

The Hayes, Staffordshire 10-12 September 2010

The positive points of the Conference:

- The people: a mix of new and familiar. A friendly, informal gathering. I felt fine being there on my own. The first evening's gathering was fun and a great ice breaker. There was always someone to talk to, wonderful conversations to eavesdrop, an easy place to be in. I love the soft sofas, and dining on fabulous food at tables with flowers, and the view from the windows, especially when the rooks swoop in as the evening sky darkens. I like the opportunities to contribute, it feels easy and friendly, and I love the old piano. I love the way Suzie decorates the place for us, and the way the magical evening fire space is held by Meynell master of fire ceremonies, and Sarah and Liam's skilled and inspiring fireplay. The workshop choices are so rich – It's always hard to decide, because of what you have to decide not to do! But it leads to interesting conversations, finding out what people did in the ones I didn't go to, and mulling over the reverberations of the ones I did go to.
- The atmosphere at BOP was always very laid back and positive, the setting as always beautified by Suzie and friends, the cooking by Millie and others and the chance to get involved with the preparation of the meals. Really appreciate the opportunity to catch up with old friends like Bridget and John, and also meet new ones like the people from Sefton.
- Meeting everybody
- Relaxed
- Well organised
- Good theme running throughout
- Sheltered area for the smokers
- A nice welcome from the 'car park attendant'
- Going brambling with Millie, Liam and Cath
- For a first timer I felt very welcomed.
- Food was fantastic!
- Getting to know other playworkers. Getting new ideas and re-jigging our memories of things we've done before but not done for a while.
- Seeing inspiring people I should make more time to see throughout the year
- Sharing ideas and concepts about play
- Very laid back
- Nice friendly people
- Excellent venue
- The location is beautiful, Saturday Evening fire and entertainment, good selection of workshop.
- People are always very friendly. Workshops are interesting and relevant. Such a lovely weekend not just for the conference but meeting people as well.
- The site was really nice and very relaxing
- Food was very nice
- Very enthusiastic tutors running the course
- Friendly, interesting people, beautiful place to be, great fun
- people
- place
- activities
- interaction

- learning
- experimenting
- experiencing
- eating
- chatting
- exchanging ideas
- laughing
- playing
- doodling
- relaxing
- wilderness
- house
- decorations

The things you'd like us to improve/change:

- A “taster” of each session at the beginning – on the Friday night – so we can start to choose what to attend. – maybe sign up there and then –
- a better sense of involvement and responsibility for completing tasks and providing for all the participants in the weekend
- A better way of getting to know the other participants – (how? – let each participant bring a one page “collage” of themselves – or do a mime of their lives – or stick a pin in the map to show all the places they have lived in – or)
- A vision of what is about to happen – and what has happened during the sessions I didn't attend
- A way of giving immediate feedback to each session attended
- Clearer description of activities.
- have a guided walk at 8 am each morning
- have ongoing “collections” during the conference – skipping songs, chants,
- It's not improvement that is needed – you hold a beautiful space, Perry and each moment is as it could be, because we create it. Perhaps a subtle shift is needed, a deconstruction of familiar routines ... we were all starting to explore that this weekend – working with everydayness brought us to that edge of deconstruction, and I am so excited by that. It feels as if at last we are touching on something truly creative.
- Make a group piece of artwork
- maybe have some really short sessions – 15 – 30- 40 mins –
- Maybe have the BoP conference during the summer holidays as it would be easier to get to on the Friday, and I was really sorry to miss out on the Friday night celebrations
- More stories!
- On the first night I think people should just meet and socialise instead of a workshop (people might not have seen each other for a year and sometimes it's good to talk).
- Overall a good experience.
- Ways of exploring the territory – the immediate one – the grounds of The Hayes – also the location – Stone – then Staffordshire – then England – UK – – trace the routes we used to come – and suggest alternative ways of going home....
- With it being my first time at the conference I wasn't sure what rooms had what conferences and ended up attending a conference I didn't enjoy and missed one I wanted

to attend. Maybe have the name of the conference on the door this will help anyone who is attending for the first time

- Would not change much as I had a very positive experience, I would have liked their too be some direction to when activities were about to start as nearly miss first workshop on the first day but cracked it by the end of the weekend. Would have liked more interactive activities in the outdoors during the weekend.

Three words that summarise the Conference:

- Friendly, inspiring and chilled.
- Friendly, Inspiring, Fun
- Fun, Practical, Different
- Funtastic! Friendly! Fabulous!
- Improvise. Distil. Listen.
- Informative, fun and relaxing
- Informative, Playful, Fun!
- Magical, Interesting, Fab
- Peaceful/Fun/
- Play, Fun, Welcome
- Playful, comfy, relaxing
- Stimulating, inspirational, restoring my faith in human nature

Comments on the individual parts of the Conference:

Perry Else, 'Out the corner of your eye'

Julia

Sexton

A playful introduction to the weekend and the theme of this year's conference. Then a workshop exploring the origins of play and the dimensions of human creativity.

- Wasn't really sure of the meaning of the Friday night session till the end then it made sense and was good.
- Friday evening – great – I liked the exercises – oh yes – could I have a copy of the questions we were asked? – I was thrilled to get the chance to do my own playing – (and that Millie accepted to paint my face) – and that I found Arthur with those lovely ink brushes – – and to see what everyone else was messing around with – and snap some photos – not looked at them yet
- I would have preferred Friday evening to have been more focussed
- 'First night' – a good gentle approach breaking down any barriers whilst introducing a flavour of what was to come

Out the corner of your eye 1 – Opening Session

What happens to those things glimpsed 'out the corner of your eye'? Those things not quite seen, they may be thoughts, feelings, ideas, actions that we thought we'd perhaps explore. The feeling is there as children but often fades as we grow older.

Where does it go? Can we rediscover it? What conditions do we need? How may it be manifest? Is it the same for everyone?

[Questions adapted from work by Sue North-Bates, David Rose, Julia Cameron, with thanks]

A/ Write your name on a large piece of paper (A1/AO) – as you like to be known – decorate it, portray it as you wish

[20 mins] Questions: one per minute – first things to come to mind

1. Write the crudest word you can think of in the corner of the paper – next write the names of three people who embody that for you next to it, fold over the corner if you don't want to see it.
2. Write the most beautiful word you can think of – write the names of three people who embody that for you
3. List eight things you loved when you were eight
4. If you had five other lives how would you spend them?
5. What is your ideal environment?
6. Five hobbies or classes you do or would like to do in the next six months
7. Five things you don't think you'll ever do
8. Five skills you think it would be fun to have
9. Five things you used to enjoy but don't do anymore
10. Five silly things you'd like to try at least once
11. Look at your lists – what prevents you from doing those things?
12. Now take no.1 and tear it up obliterate it (put it behind you)

B/ Write your name on a large piece of paper – as you are known at your setting

13. What elements of your ideal environment would you like to bring to your setting? Highlight the relevant elements
14. Anything from the section on how to improve your life that you could bring to your work? Highlight the relevant elements

Reasons

- We all have a spectrum of responses from the crudest to the most beautiful
- When we were eight we were at our most creative – so get in touch with your inner child
- We all have an inner critic that has been developed over the years
- The three commonest barriers are guilt, fear, ego
- We all have personal and public lives; how do we bring these together? How do we synthesise what's best in both?

The **Beauty of Play** 2010

- Further explore your ideal ways of living – how do you bring those together with your current life?
- Your ideal environment – how do you create that in your current life?
- Your big dreams – are there common themes?
- What obstacles do you see to making them real?
- What will you do now?

50 mins – now play; take one of your thoughts and expand it – do it, talk to your group

Final Challenge: Explore one of the things on your list over the weekend, see how it feels.

Perry Else, Julia Sexton, Eloise Green

Matt **Finding playful awareness**

Laurie What are the qualities of playful awareness? Is it necessary to embody these qualities in order to play in a satisfying way? Will satisfying play lead us to this state of mind?

Maggie **An outdoors session of everydayness**

Fearn To set out together with no idea what is going to happen next. We will have with us pockets full of stuff we might need.

- Great, remembered what it was like to play and enjoy the ‘flow’ - Very free session.
- Making fire burning rafts with Maggie was really brilliant
- Pockets of fun in the outdoors I enjoyed this session it’s relaxed approach to play I took away some great ideas to which I will be involving them with in my play training
- Session in the woods with Maggie was fun. Enjoyed getting out into the woods and playing.
- Thoroughly enjoyed the workshop, getting the chance to play with fire and getting ideas to do with the children we work with. We remembered how it felt to get an adrenaline rush when we were on the rope swings, great fun 😊

Outdoor everydayness

I wanted to risk my status as “facilitator” and say “come and play with me” instead, each person taking what they thought they might want from a pile of kit. Half of the group went off into the woods and did rope things and that was great because the rest of us could have a go later and they could have the fun of showing us – and we had the fun of creeping up on them, and I adored hanging upside down on the swing, swooping through the tree canopy. Meanwhile down by the stream, though we did do the idea I had, which was fire rafts – (I had had the advantage of plenty of time to think about it and knew the site, and didn’t keep my mouth shut!) everyone leapt at the idea and I

hadn't "made one earlier" so we genuinely worked it out together improvising with our combined skills. It led to sharing ideas, experiments and solving technical problems. And we linked the two groups with a flour trail. And went tree swimming. We mused on being outside in an environment like the Hayes, and why it's so special. Everyone vividly shone. It has inspired me to keep exploring the myriad ways we can unlock our resistance to surfing the flow of the moment.

Maggie Fearn

**Jacky Kilvington,
Heather Knight**

Everyday play – the key to the meaning of life – more important than religion?

Is play a unifying principle for making sense of the world, creating a code for living, happiness, problem solving, forging meaningful relationships, good physical and mental health and longevity?

- I didn't enjoy it as I found some people using words I was unfamiliar with and I'm a kinaesthetic learner so I found this a difficult session
- Interesting discussions that could have carried on – infinitely. Facilitators could have been more confident in their approach, but it was a hard one to gauge!
- Sparked conversations that could have lasted a week.
- Thought provoking, interesting and informative

Why might everyday play be thought of as some kind of grand unifying principle?

Just as there is the idea that 'we are all made of stardust' so might all our lives be made of play?

- Play seems to be related to all areas of life "Play is a layer of living that can encompass all the subject areas and processes of living." Guilbaud (2003).
- "...a symbolic expression of the ecstasies and anguish, the joy and grief of human (un)consciousness." (Russell 2006).
- "The proposition is that play appears to be universal and instinctive..." (Conway 2008)
- "It (play) is the infinite expression of the human soul in communion with its universe" (Hughes 2001)
- "It is one of the single most profound forces we share as a species but one most of us know little about..." (Hughes 2001).
- "Children need to play so that they can learn to become fully human" (Else 2009)."
- "It (play) can override hunger; deflect attention from pain, mute grief..." (Rennie 2003)

Links between play and religion

The quotes below are all from fairly recent publications and in some way seem to link play and religion.

- ...a symbolic expression of the ecstasies and anguish, the joy and grief of human (un)consciousness. (Russell 2006)
- Play is what happens when human children are propelled by a desire to know and understand, or by the thrill of attempting to transcend their previous limits. (Hughes 2001)
- The essence of play is perhaps one of the last aspects of magic and mystery which remains to us... But the part that one experiences when one is playing, and which lets us identify when another is playing, is perhaps as hard to define as the meaning of life and is perhaps as individual and universal. (Guilbaud 2003)
- I try here to set play into the frame of meditative and contemplative traditions. (Sturrock 2003)
- We play as a kind of enactment that has, in some traditions of the East, religious overtones.” “Play is a gift of Creation, not an artefact of culture. It is the still-point and the energy from which all else is evoked.....it is play’s underlying emptiness or absence of cultural categories and boundaries that enables it to encompass the fullness of life. Play’s patterns, forms and movements are our mother tongue, what Laurens Van Der Post has called the ‘forgotten language of God’ (Sturrock 2003)
- Sutton-Smith (1997) suggests play simulates the real world....to fabricate another world that lives alongside the first one and carries its own kind of life, a life often more emotionally vivid than mundane reality.

I think we only got a little way with this and I need to explore it more.

Jacky Kilvington

Joel Seath Managing everyday risk in play

Everyone takes risks every day. Even choosing a workshop to attend is a risk! Let’s get beyond the dreaded risk assessment to meaningful ways of supporting children to manage all types of risk for themselves.

- Didn’t get the one on RISK not what I expected really.

Arthur Battram The haiku tent: An introduction to western play haiku

What would western haiku about everyday play be like? The workshop will have some history of haiku, some examples and a chance to have a go. You will learn about haiku and have a chance to write one yourself.

The haiku tent will be around all weekend before and after the workshop to facilitate the elicitation of western play haiku.

- haiku – and everything else as well – great – so much to wonder at – amazing – I only got half a haiku written – I was so amazed by the next thing

In pools of sunshine
Behind you tree shadows move
Your torrent of words

|

sunshine on my tent
autumn coming on fast now
goodbye sweet playing

II
sun on tent
autumn soon
goodbye playing

Arthur's Haiku Tent -
rat on box balancing still
listening with awe

The Haiku Tent

I suspect that, due to the new path into the valley meaning that there was no reason to go round the side of the house, the location of the tent meant it was a bit too well hidden. The tent/gazebo was lovely – perfect for the task.

The actual session was a delight. We had 6 or 7 people, more than I expected to be honest, and my plans were abandoned in response to people's enthusiastic questioning. I had prepared exercises which I never got to use.

I found this on the web, not my words, but the statement is as true for me:

My love of haiku, and the way I write it was fostered by the works of those talented masters as translated by Peter Beilenson, who rendered translations of their poetry and collected it in three volumes; *Japanese Haiku, The Four Seasons*, and *Cherry Blossoms*. Peter began, and Harry Behn completed the fourth volume in the series, *Haiku Harvest*, because Mr Beilenson journeyed to the "other side". Each of the poems capture a moment with the deft strokes of the artist's words. The four works were published by *Peter Pauper Press*.

And it was these four books that got the session started. I think haiku share a lot of characteristics with playwork, particularly a kind of intense informed detached observation in involvement.

Arthur Battram

**Tony
Delahoy,
Liam
Delahoy**

Playing with Graffiti

How has graffiti been used by young people in their play, how it has developed from an underground art form into mainstream culture? The creative play aspects of graffiti will be explored followed by a discussion around why young people engage in this form of play.

- This was a very well delivered workshop taking on board the high numbers the tutor involved quick readapted his approach and met all learners needs
- At work, the Llwynhendy children wanted to do graffiti and we had no experience and didn't want to use solvents and propellants. We tried fence

and den painting with B&Q plant sprayers & tempera paints – they worked ok but the nozzles clogged and there wasn't much control and it dribbled, also when it rains the paint washes off which defeats the whole object really. Also have seen amazing graffiti in London and the massive scale paintings on buildings in Havana. So I was determined to go to Liam's graffiti workshop, to learn from a pro and to have a debate about using these paints in play settings. There was something special about an urban art form in a field and the image stays with me even now. The spray was very strong even outdoors. Masks were on offer and I should have worn one, cos I got a headache. Was surprised to find that the proper paint is also very hard to control, the nozzles clog and it dribbles – so don't feel so out on a limb with our invention. Am feeling better informed now and will look out for local graffiti pros to pass on their skills, and defo invest in those Banksy masks.

- I loved this session Tony and Liam were fantastic and I really enjoyed the spraying. I think this was one of the more popular course it would be nice to see it again next year but with more equipment or more sessions
- I usually do 'graffiti' with kids and young people with paint or felt tips, so trying it in the intended medium was hard! Liam gave some good advice on how to create a graffiti symbol, how to use the spray paints properly and what protective clothing/equipment to use.
- The graffiti session was great and I was proud of contributing to my "tag"
- Great, could have two sessions because there were so many people. More boards. Would have liked to have had more information on the history of Graffiti but there was too many people.
- Really enjoyed this as we've never done it before, defiantly will try this with the older children we work with.

**Perry Else,
Julia Sexton**

Out the corner of your eye II

Following on from the issues raised in the opening event, this session will explore the origins of play and the dimensions of human creativity.

- Informative, fun and interesting. Lots of information to digest and take back to ponder over.
- Fantastic, tailored session to knowledge of the group. Was led by the group decisions about what they wanted to learn.

Out the corner of your eye 2

Purpose

- Explain some of the various types of creativity
- Show how they are 'different but equal'
- Link the common traits of creativity to those of play
- Look at the common blockages
- Explore ways of enhancing playfulness and creativity for us and children

Bits of what we covered:

I do not seek, I find – Picasso

Conditions fostering constructive creativity (Rogers, 1961)

Psychological safety

- Accepting the individual
- A climate where external evaluation is absent
- Understanding empathetically

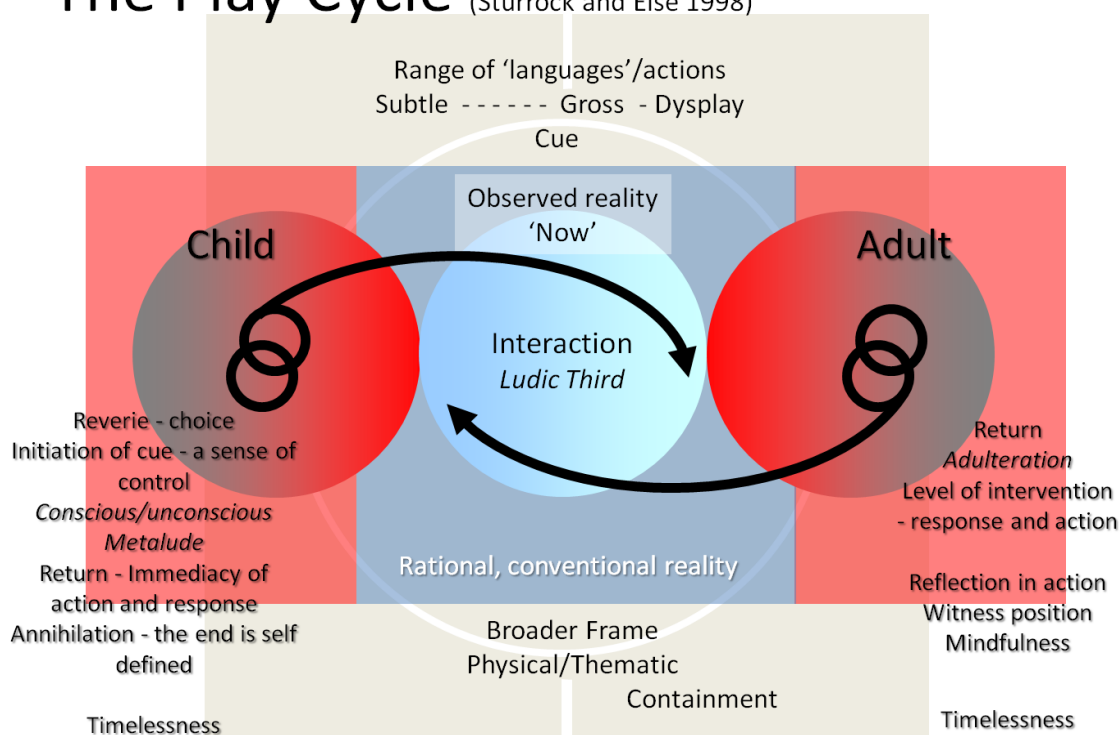
Psychological freedom

- Freedom of symbolic expression
- Personal responsibility

Our approach to children

- Children play in the space between themselves and others, in the space between reality and fantasy, between what is and what could be. They play for reasons that we can speculate on but never really know. (Else, 2007)

The Play Cycle (Sturrock and Else 1998)



This image adapted from an extended model of the Play Cycle after correspondence with Eddie Nuttall (2010).

For more on the Play Cycle see: <http://www.ludemos.co.uk/papers.htm>

Perry Else and Julia Sexton

Stuart Lester, John Fitzpatrick, Bridget Handscomb

Trivial Pursuits: enlivening the practicalities of everyday life

To remember and celebrate some of the obscure, utterly pointless trivialities, thoughts and messing about that were part of our daily lives.

- A potent mix of listening and doing.
- I enjoyed Stuart Lester and co. made me think about what we do and our role as playworkers
- Good fun, and thoughts. The game to break us into groups was good. (Reflections can be another 3 Ps 'painful plus positive')

Trivial Pursuits: enlivening the practicalities of everyday life

Aim: To remember & celebrate some of the obscure, utterly pointless trivialities, thoughts & messing about that were part of our daily lives.

Planning and Introduction:

..... I was about 9/10 I would walk along my road home from school or the shops or somewhere and when there was an adult on the other side of the road I would set myself a challenge that I could get to the next tree or lamp post before they would but that I couldn't run! So, I would start walking fast and when it seemed like I wouldn't get to the lamp post before them I would speed walk (some people might call it running!) and I would raise my arms as I crossed the finishing line... classified as lamp post play?!

.... It triggers off many memories of similar things – did you ever have bets on which drop of rainwater on the bus window would reach the bottom first?

... It is incredible how much we forget but with small prompts how much you can remember. Yes, I can remember doing that with raindrops not just with mates but on my own as well and thinking about it I can smell the dampness of coats as people huddled together on the bus

..... kerbies, marbles, hopscotch, wheelbarrow races, leapfrog, SKIPPING! We just skipped as a mode of travel from A to B, try it now and get the feeling – I laugh every time I say the word now because the sensation is activated!

I remember school play times on sunny days lying at the edge of the football pitch and selecting long fluffy stalks of grass to use for pretend make-up application, taking turns
.....

.... Going round the playground chanting 'who wants to play bulldog?' in that sing-song way

..... yesterday my bedroom was Mars

Whenever we played tag and competitive games there were forfeits for the loser which involved running through the tunnel. This was created by a line of us leaning against the wall with one hand and delivering a whack with the other!

Being able to spit a long distance, otherwise known as 'watering cans', was a regular part of games.

Some background theory:

Everydayness is the space that surrounds us, the world most immediately encountered, in these routines, everyday activity can be boring, space is ordered and controlled, desires suppressed. But equally everydayness may delight and surprise by creating moments in which time/space becomes different. These acts of disturbance are not grand gestures but more ordinary moments of fleeting but significant sensations that spontaneously rupture order..... (Lester, 2010).

<http://www.playworklondon.org.uk/upload/files/Playandordinarymagic3.pdf>

Sharing stories – snippets, narratives, tales or whatever you call this process of recollection and repetition of our versions of life's playful detritus – is an essential feature of reflective playwork practice. It contributes to teamwork, self-knowledge, analysis and sense-making. Sometimes the physical re-enactment of earlier experiences can enliven the sensations of an earlier experience and stimulate associations (or somatic markers) that enrich and enhance our disposition for playfulness (Handscomb, 2010).

<http://www.playworklondon.org.uk/upload/files/KeepingPlay-Centred%20%5bCompatibility%20Mode%5d2.pdf>

Some of what happened:

- We played some slightly silly games, chatted a bit, went off to play and then chatted some more. Topics covered included:
- Dens – inside and outside, biscuits, gangs, exclusion, access, privacy, gender, siblings, adults, did we mention biscuits?
- Skipping, horsies, taking sides, changing games and frames, hopscotch, 'jelly', paper/stone/scissors, dressing up, hide and seek, and so much more!

Consideration of what this everydayness means to playwork led to discussions around gender differences, gangs, cruelty, the significance or not of adult interventions and presence, and whether or not more planning of places to play actually helps or hinders. More questions than answers in true playwork style...

Bridget Handscomb, Stuart Lester, John Fitzpatrick

Meynell **The narrative of common play**

- Why is it that we venerate play? It is with us at every point in our day on all our days; so why do we exalt it?

If it is part of the mundane of life why do we glorify it and draw specific attentions to types of play, forms of play and the specialness of play? We will think about the ongoing narratives, the commonness of form and the non noticeable aspects of playing.

- Play – playful – children – adults – measuring – yeah – not bad – keep it light ... (grumpy ones spoiled it a bit – and for Meynell as well – pains and conflicts of academia coming out here perhaps)
- What was it like for me as a child to play? – yeah – good fun – being a child again – and playing with “my friends” – stirred up the emotions – of joy and excitement – also of being a bit scared – of what might happen – how others will react – yes – very powerful
- Meynell made me think about the many ways we play even as grownups and realise that play is an impossible area to measure

**Meynell
Games
Team**

Exploring the creation of space

At Beauty the Meynell Games teams regularly prepares the space for the evening fire, songs and stories. This year we are doing it as a workshop. So not only will you get to help in developing the concept and building the space; but also learn the thinking process that go behind the creation of a ‘spiritual’ space.

You are welcome to the workshop even if you don’t have the physical capacity to lug and carry!

- Creating a space this session was a challenge and gave some curve balls to it approach. The session was very well resourced and I could see what the trainer wished to gain out of the experience. I was supported throughout this session but felt a little unease with certain situations. I felt this could have been better if it was more directed in its approach as one of the learners suggested to provide a roof made from a heavy canvas and we spent a lot of time in trying to make this work when we could have save a great deal of time by putting up the light weight tarp provided later in the experience. An overall view was this was enjoyable and challenging workshop which I did enjoy but did not feel it was a session.
- With Meynell’s team putting up the shelter and making up the fire area was hard at times but worthwhile when we seen it all come together.
- Creating a play space was good but I found there was no theory behind what we were doing we just seemed to be building a den for the evening events. Didn’t appreciate people sitting relaxing when some people where building the den till 7pm
- Creation of the space- The hardest workshop we’ve ever done, very physical. We did enjoy it and the end result was worth all the effort.

**Meynell
Games
Team**

Fire and Chai

Coming together to share stories, songs and jokes. It's nice to end the day with everyone.

- The camp fire as always was brill – I really admire Meynell and the team's hard work in creating the space for us to enjoy the offerings of very talented (and brave) people. Millie's voice just gets better and better!

Misc

- Out in the grounds – making a "fire raft" – and camouflaging my face so the others wouldn't see us coming... – and playing on the swing – (scary) – and climbing on the rope bridge – and climbing through the string – and – yeah – I'd like to do more of that ...
- Playing in the woods was good

Cost

- Very good it was well worth it, the place was lovely and so was the food. More than what was expected before arriving
- Our boss deals with this but whatever the price is, it's always worth it!
- Fantastic value – who said conferences are so expensive these days? – perhaps have a sliding scale of costs – more for those who can afford it – and go on down...
- I appreciate the exchange very much; it means I can afford to come.
- good value for me as I didn't pay the full
- Excellent
- I have to pay for this myself, I wish I worked for someone who would pay
- Great – compared to some play conferences. The all inclusive price is a winner.
- Organisation paid
- Great for the full weekend and food included
- Excellent value

Information given

- As usual clear and timely
- Brilliant – well written and clear
- Enough without telling you exactly what the workshops were about.
- Excellent
- Good
- Good – but for those who connect with information provided visually or by voice or by someone with a twinkle in their eye – other forms of delivery would be good... (I'm tempted to say – using the Internet – and to have a website constantly available during the conference – but then again – it was so great to have a "technology –free" weekend....)
- Good information about the weekend
- Lots!
- Very clear and detailed
- Very good
- Very informative and tailored the sessions to knowledge level

- Was good, nice balance of information some conferences just bombard you with too much information before you even go but we received enough to tell us about the conference and what we may need.

Food/drinks

- Beautiful food ☺
- Delicious.
- Excellent
- Fantastic Millie and the other lady are great cooks!
- Good
- Great – as a vegetarian – I could relax – and eat! – I felt at ease knowing I could always get a cuppa whenever I wanted it -
- I helped out in the kitchen and cleaning up and as always Millie prepares a feast to behold.
- Lovely as usual, huge praise and thanks Millie and her helpers.
- Millie did an excellent job and the food was nutritious and tasty
- OK, as always I took some of my own but that's me!
- Outstanding
- Very Good

Camping

- Interesting!
- If only we'd brought a bigger, waterproof tent!
- Enjoyable
- Good :) although I didn't camp this year (I planned to stay in the car, but Heather told me to get in the house!)
- Good
- Very Good
- peaceful site and it was lovely to hear the owls hooting and the birds singing in the morning
- Not being a big fan of it was ok although Saturday night was freezing! ☹
- I didn't – though I would perhaps have tried it if I had been offered a dry and reasonably comfy space in a biggish tent – that someone knowledgeable had put up – so I knew it wouldn't fall down or blow away – or leak or ... I found a nice B&B a few miles away (Aston Hall Farm) – on N-bound carriageway of A34 – but would have preferred one nearer – even within walking distance... – Do you know of any?
- Good field was quite small but a nice site
- Needed a hot water bottle.
- OMG I now know that I cannot "sleep" (lack of any) under canvas again, which was the reason for wimping out the second night.

Venue

- The house is lovely and the grounds are great for the conference. Susie always manages to make it look like a magical fairytale.
- Venue – great!
- Love it.

- Nice the residents were very friendly
- perfect place to be
- Very Good
- Excellent
- The Hayes is amazing – peaceful, welcoming and perfect.
- Fantastic
- Beautiful
- Tranquil and beautiful
- Fabulously rustic! Kitchen much improved though

Facilities

- Rooms were comfortable and ornate
- Great
- Good
- Showers, kitchen, toilets and a welcoming house where tea and coffee are always on tap :) my idea of heaven!
- Good
- Very Good
- good
- Apart from the saws and drill etc hanging from the toilet ceiling it's good.
- Great!
- Fine for a weekend.
- Good it was great there was a shower and decent toilets. Nice living rooms very relaxing
- Basic but functional – OK for 2 and a bit days

Any other comments?

- Brill Thanks
- ☺ Thank you
- It rained!
- Millie should do a cooking session!
- Really good as ever, but can we have more stories!
- A gr* wkend – Thanx
- Splendid
- Fantastic for a newcomer, feel very welcomed – will recommend to colleagues – thank you! Also 'out the corner of your eye' workshop was fantastic – great that it was so interactive.
- Thank you for a lovely weekend Perry. Look forward to seeing you again next year
- Many thanks Perry for organising it.
- U R A *
- The native Indian sauna was good [at a previous event], we should do something similar. It would be good to have a workshop for building things, Tree house, Drag carts and race them at the end, Rope Bridge.
- Enjoyed the whole weekend and hopefully will be coming next year with more of a tribe!
- Thank you Perry for all your hard work it was as usual much appreciated by me!

Thank You

Thank You

Thank You

Can I come again?

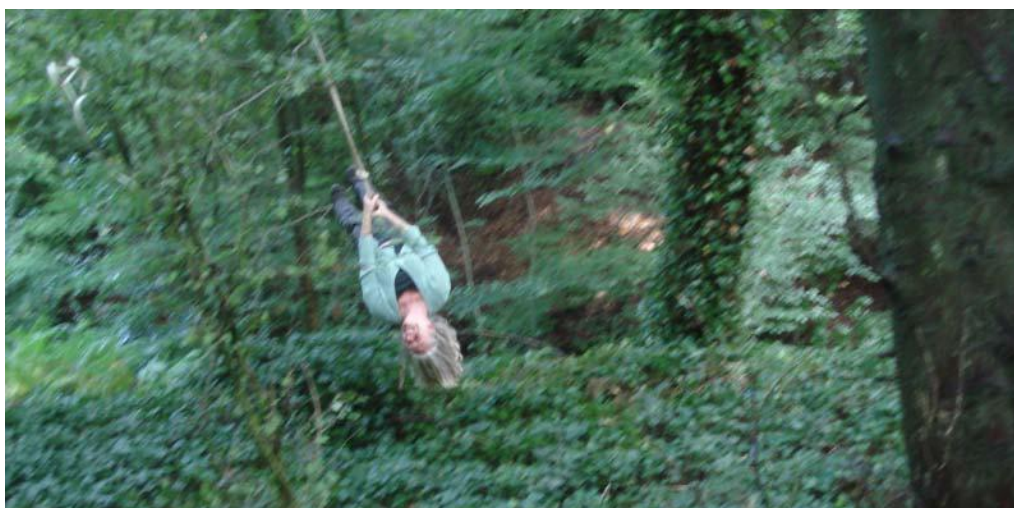
- Millie is a doll – I must get her a giant sieve for Christmas – or you could use Uncle Ben's next year! (And, what a lovely singing voice.)
- Perry – the Saturday scrambled eggs were the best
- Noel was such fun and such a laugh the first night – brilliant to meet him
- Don't Meynell's team work so hard – they're great
- I'm keeping in contact with Cath – we're sharing which new courses we're signing up for!!

I look forward to next year. Beauty of Play will be featuring in my calendar for many many years to come.

Perry has out done himself with the organisation and the calling together of some amazing play artists who gladly share their knowledge and spark my interest in subjects I have never thought about before.

Photographic memories

The following photos (some kindly shared by Elizabeth Birks) capture the **Everydayness** of it all.







The **Beauty of Play** 2010



