

Summary Report for The St Hugh's Foundation

Context: Our idea for applying to St Hugh's Foundation was to develop from an indoor touring theatre into a company that could also offer specialized outdoor arts performances. The reasons for taking this step were as follows:

- Development of ourselves
- Finding new audiences
- Additional working opportunities
- To take a leading role in Lincolnshire's Cultural Provision

Methodology: We began with research, listing our aims, such as training needs, when to hire a marketing person, and what we would like to start to work on first. We then placed our objectives into our Business Plan Work Plan timeline, so we had a schedule to work to.

Training: This took several forms from mentoring to courses and took place throughout the year.

Proposals: One method of achieving our income was to apply to Arts Organisations offering funding opportunities to create new work. We applied to 'Transported' and were commissioned to create "The Case of the Curious Suitcase" street show. In addition to this we used Rhubarb Theatres input to create a fun walkabout 'Bonnie & Clyde' so we had more to offer festival bookers.

Marketing: By March 2014 we had interviewed and taken on a new Marketing Person. She focused immediately on marketing to festivals and put out a professional image to our potential clients. Rachel's role has started to merge into that of a Creative Producer. She has past experience of this role, and we are meeting with her currently to discuss this step.

Creative Outcomes: 'The Case of the Curious Suitcase' was a perfect show to get our work seen. We kept the cast down to 3, so we were able to tour in 1 vehicle. We auditioned and took on a new team of young artists who brought different skills into the company. The piece was mime, with no set, and offered an adaptable format.

Armed with such a versatile show, fun quirky walkabout characters, additional offers of storytelling and fun workshops, Rhubarb Theatre was an inviting choice for festival bookers.

Career Development: through experiencing the festival scene first-hand and talking directly to other companies delivering similar work, we were able to find our own niche. The training has given us more confidence to push the boundaries and try out new areas, driving our ambitions rather than staying with a safe format.

Future challenges will include adapting our performances for 'Light Nights', working with companies specialising in different skills to Rhubarb Theatre and continuing to push the company artistically and promote us as an asset to the Counties Art Service.

All that remains is for all of us at Rhubarb Theatre to say a huge "Thank you" to St Hugh's Foundation.

Kirsty Mead (Rhubarb Theatre)