

Covent Garden
Dragon Hall Trust

Annual Report

2019

to
2020



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Dragon Hall Annual Report



Delivering a wide range of social, educational & recreational activities & events, developed & delivered in partnership with users to serve the needs of our diverse communities.

”

2019 - 2020

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It was a lovely afternoon, lovely food, lovely people and lovely service from the staff. I really enjoyed it. Thank you also for all the massive effort you've made to provide us with a year of opportunities for visits, theatre, social events and many others. Your work, and that of your assistants, is very much appreciated.





Chair of Trustees' REPORT

Sue Vincent Chair of Trustees

After three months of lockdown due to Covid-19 the situation is easing as we sign off last years' accounts, look back at our achievements and look ahead to a different future in an exceptionally unstable and unpredictable time.

This year has seen Dragon Hall maintain financial reserves as discussed in last years' report for probity and good governance purposes. The Trustees are pleased to report robust partnership work and continued support from Camden and Islington Councils as Dragon Hall and its partners continue to provide essential services to our local communities.

A visionary 15-year youth provision at Soapbox was commissioned by LB Islington and a £1.4m grant awarded to Dragon Hall's youth team to focus on the creative and digital arts, music, dance and live performance to support young people in all aspects of their lives and development. This year has also seen Dragon Hall youth services deliver 120 after school club sessions with 107 local young people supported by our youth work team, including homework sessions and a popular drama performance at the end of the term.

The Dragon Hall seniors group for age 55+ has reached over 500 members with 25 volunteers supporting a huge range of activities, including visiting John Soane's Museum, the British Library and the London Transport Museum, Battersea Dogs Home, British Museum, Queens Gallery, Camden Archives and Kew Gardens. Camden Giving supported a summer intergenerational 'green fingered' project in partnership with Phoenix Garden for young people joining seniors to learn about growing and looking after plants and creating bee homes in tins.

These activities would not be possible without the steadfast investment in our communities from trusts; our thanks especially to: City Bridge Trust, John Lyons Foundation, St Giles Educational Trust, Mercers Charitable Foundation and Children in Need. Alongside generous donations from Shaftesbury PLC, Old Union Lodge and Derwent, our earned income from commercial hires such as The Walt Disney Company, City Academy, Kingdom Faith, Drury Lane Tap, the BBC,

Oxford Playhouse, ECE Travel, SOR Productions, Florida State University, Theatre Academy London, London City Swing, Synergy Dance Community and Stagecoach Performing Arts, has not only helped maintain our youth and senior services but extended our support within the community.

We thank the committed partners in our community who provide invaluable opportunities for all our diverse people and activities, enriching their lives and offering hope in the future: these include Shaftesbury Theatre, Ageing Better Camden, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, Covent Garden Community Centre, Phoenix Gardens, Somali Youth Development Resource Centre, at the N1C Centre, Holborn Community Association, Fitzrovia Youth in Action, London Youth & UK Youth, and St Joseph's Primary School, St Clement Danes, 7 Dials Housing Co-operative, Soho Housing Association and Covent Garden Community Association. We continued to host the monthly and quarterly Advice Surgeries for our local Councillors and Member of Parliament, providing free space to local housing groups and unfunded tenant associations and activists.

The closure of our face-to-face activities mid-March 2020 will reflect in next years' report and financial outturn. Suffice to note all commercial income fell away at this time, and a swift lifeline and grant support was gratefully welcomed from Camden Council and businesses in Covent Garden, as well as the government furlough scheme. This enabled our community activities to move on-line where possible.

As Trustees take a cautious look to the coming year, we appreciate the importance of working with local people, local authorities and businesses to make a successful place in which our communities can thrive. As we move slowly out of lockdown we will retain and strengthen our services whilst we continue to physically distance, keeping us all and the wider community safe.

As the pandemic ebbs and flows, mass unemployment, particularly in the entertainment industries, and the climate crisis will require us to be fleet of foot and respond quickly and effectively to support local people – and this, alongside financial stability, will be our priority in the coming year.



Sue Vincent

Chair

Holborn & Covent Garden ward
Councillor for LB Camden and
local resident



Jeff Hopwood

Treasurer

Former Camden council officer
and supporter of the voluntary
sector.



Tim Lynn

Trustee

Sound Engineer in West End
Theatres and former resident of
Covent Garden.



Alex Lloyd

Trustee

PhD student in Psychology at
Royal Holloway, University of
London researching when and
why teenagers take risks.



Claude Asgill

Trustee

Experienced fundraiser and
mental health advocate working
in the construction industry.



John Quigley

Trustee

A data protection lawyer
advising companies of legal
obligations on personal data
and an experienced independent
mediator.



Simon Breugger

Trustee

Local resident, merchant banker.
Used to be a teacher & continues
to support young people.



Kate Matheson

Secretary

A local resident in Covent
Garden, member of West End
Women's Institute, retired.



Francis Go

Trustee

VP of Engineering at Distributed
Ltd, a Technology Startup
changing the future of work.



About Us

Dragon Hall Trust

Delivering a wide range of social, educational & recreational activities & events, developed & delivered in partnership with users to serve the needs of our diverse communities.

Aims

To promote the benefit of the inhabitants of Inner London by associating local authorities, voluntary organisations and such inhabitants in a common effort to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure-time occupations with the object of improving the conditions of life for the inhabitants.

To promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the said inhabitants and in particular the advancement of education & skills (with particular but not exclusive reference to technology & the arts).

To educate the public in the geography, history, natural history and architecture of the area and to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of buildings or features of historic or public interest in London to enable them to be enjoyed by the public.

To establish or secure the establishment of community centres and to maintain and manage the same in furtherance of the above objects.



*'I like going to
Dragon Hall -
it's always fun!'*

After School
Club User



Young People

After School Clubs

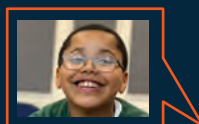
Dragon Hall runs after school clubs for the 8 to 11, 12 to 15 and 16 plus age groups. All of our work with young people is free of charge & funded by a variety of Trusts and Foundations & with our own earned income generated by room hire

120



After School Club Sessions

Arts and crafts, sport, drama, music, games, technology and live performance plus a supported homework session.



79

Coding Sessions

Young people have the opportunity to learn Scratch to create their own games, HTML & Python.

51



Homework Sessions

We offer a quiet space & printing, free use of computers, arts & crafts supplies plus university volunteer.



84

Inters Sessions

For ages 11 to 17, including cooking & tech sessions, photo competitions, trips out, group games & BBQs.

21



Regular Volunteers

American students from Arcadia University on a study abroad programme volunteer with us.



10

Intergenerational Sessions

15 young people joined 10 seniors over 6 weeks to learn about growing plants, & creating bee homes in tins.

After School Clubs

Young People

Thanks to our funders - LB Camden, Children in Need, Peabody Trust, Camden Giving & St Giles & St George Education Charity



When young people attend Dragon Hall for the first time it can be quite daunting, we are a large group and the young people may only know a few people from school and they are often shy and hesitant to join in.

During our Monday sessions we concentrate on group and circle games, these are designed as slow and incremental development sessions. The activities start with small groups working to achieve a goal, with people they are friends with or people they know a little. Slowly we start to introduce changes and move the young people to new groups, engaging in games that require different communication skills. We created games around first aid, Pictionary, blind drawings and the instructions games. These required different communication skills including learning about body language, explaining, speaking clearly, asking questions and their ability to listen.

One session considered planning an intergenerational event. One group working to a budget, deciding on snacks and equipment and another group considering decoration and capacity. They discussed the other group's ideas and work together within the budget to decide what was possible and what wasn't.

We found that only 66% of the group were engaging in group settings initially, which increased to 87% by the end of the year



Drama Club

This year the Drama club proposed that we could create our own Christmas play. We ran workshops to form the storyline and the main message behind the performance. Young people created a structure and script for each character.

The Christmas play was then performed for some of the Seniors who attend Dragon Hall. The play was 15 minutes long, with live music, 10 actors and 2 directors. We have found the session invaluable for their confidence, public speaking, script writing, organisation skills, interpersonal relationships and creativity in many other capacities.

82% felt they had developed their confidence

Intergenerational Sessions

One of our highlights from this year was our funding from Camden Giving, which supported a summer intergenerational project with The Phoenix Garden. 15 young people aged 11 to 17 joined 10 seniors over 6 weeks to learn about growing & maintaining house plants, growing herbs at home and creating bee homes in tins. These activities were a great opportunity to develop new relationships between the two groups, to develop skills together and for the older people to support some of the younger people.

93% stated that they had improved their communication in a group setting

Homework Sessions

On Tuesdays we support young people in secondary school with their homework and on Fridays young people aged 8-11. We offer a quiet space to concentrate on homework, access to printers, computers, arts and crafts supplies and dedicated university volunteer support. This initiative has had a positive effect on young people, enabling them to complete homework tasks that previously would have been a challenge.

86% of parents felt the homework club was useful for supporting the young people



*'It suddenly
struck me what
a brilliant
service you are
doing for us all.
Thank you!!'*
Sue



Over 55s - 2019 to 2020

518 members this year attended events, activities and benefited from support provided by Dragon Hall Trust. We continued to provide opportunities for lifelong learning, including digital sessions, art, jewellery making and aromatherapy, chess, cookery & home budgeting as well as social themes including ancestry, music & art appreciation. In lockdown we continued to support members. We set up a telephone befriending scheme offering a daily chat, advice and a friendly ear. Volunteers collect medication and shopping and organise laundry. We have a regular program of Zoom activities that include meditation, yoga, pilates, flamenco, virtual coffee and workshops. A daily blog goes out that includes information on shopping, health & art and cultural links. At the end of March we opened the Covent Garden Food Bank.

Flamenco@DH

Providing dance and exercise classes for the over 55's is very much a priority for Dragon Hall and the members. The opportunity to learn a new skill, keep fit and meet new people is all rolled into one with our Flamenco Class, which is aimed at actively mobile older adults and is a real feel-good session! Incorporating anti-ageing posture, mind/body coordination, joint flexibility and hand/arm strengthening exercises, flamenco-style!

Run by Sam Quy, an award-winning dance tutor, freelance dance artist & choreographer. Sam is the flamenco dancer on Strictly Come Dancing and has performed over the past decade in productions at London's Royal Opera House.

As well as providing a weekly dance class, Sam is committed to our over 55's project and goes above and beyond. She has organised theatre visits and arranged for the students to perform at the Westminster Cathedral Hall.

Tuesday@Bloom

In partnership with Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church Tuesdays Club provide lunches, arts & crafts, workshops and lunchtime talks. Over 30 sessions were provided this year. Members still talk about the afternoon when animal rescue came to talk about their role, and brought in snakes and lizards for members to hold, touch and wear around their neck.

This year two extra staff joined the team. Genia Kay and Amber Khan. They provide direct support and 1-1 activities with many of the more vulnerable members.

We work in partnership with **Ascential**, a local global information company, who, as part of their Corporate social responsibility, volunteer 6 times a year, providing a free lunch to both the over 55's and the homeless as well as providing social afternoons (music quizzes, bingo) and a fantastic free Christmas lunch for more than 60 people. This was the highlight of the year, bringing the whole club together.

Xmas@CGCC

This year's Christmas lunch was a tremendous success, with over 152 attending. Thanks to Shaftesbury PLC for funding the event and the local business community for the great raffle prizes - a Seven Dials Market Gift Pack, sparkling wine from Adam Handling, a meal for two at Homeslice, Prosecco from 26 grains plus restaurant vouchers from Hawksmore.

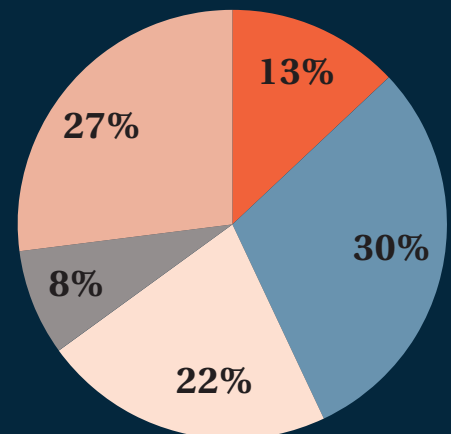
Phil Walls and the team at the 7 Dials Club provided a spectacular meal, served by professional waiters and accompanied by an impressive supply of prosecco!

'Just want to say a big thank you for a great lunch at 7 Dials yesterday. It was a lovely afternoon. Thank you also for all the massive effort you've made to provide us with a year of opportunities for visits, theatre, social events & many others. Your work, and that of your assistants, is very much appreciated. I wish you, and Dragon Hall a very happy Christmas and all the best for 2020.'
Eileen

Over 55s Activities

“2019 has not been an easy year for me, I have appreciated the various classes and events that you have introduced me to during the year - they have helped a lot “
Sarah

”



8% Age 85+
22% Age 75 - 84
30% Age 65 - 74
13% Age 55 - 64
27% Rather not say



Visit to the John Soane's Museum by the Men's Group from Dragon Hall



518

**Registered Members
for Over 55s
Activities**

857 Activities

During the last 12 months, DH members participated in a wide range of workshops including writing, dancing, portrait making as well as exclusive access to exhibitions including 'quiet time' sessions. Despite the lockdown, Dragon Hall worked closely with The Queens Gallery and supported developing their project "Learning in Lockdown", piloting Zoom sessions on storytelling, creative writing and portraiture.

6,010 Attendances

Dragon Hall is contracted by Ageing Better in Camden (ABC) to deliver 'gold standard' activities, including Badminton, Tai Chi, Flamenco, Evening & Weekend Sessions (museum visits, concerts, workshops & tea dance). The focus of these, & all our activities, is to create an inclusive welcoming atmosphere. Members feel this has a positive impact on their wellbeing, increases social contact and decreases loneliness.

Men's Group

Emily Miles (Learning Manager: Families, Schools and Communities) from the John Soane's museum worked closely with us to develop an outreach program which included providing a talk to members and arranging a special private tour for our men's group. This activity was specially designed with John Soane's Museum to support isolated men and provide an opportunity to meet other like minded individuals.

"...there is always something very special and inclusive about being in a space that just breathes stories whilst being surrounded by beautiful objects. You just find yourself learning and absorbing and Emily of Soane Museum has that rare gift of combining passion and knowledge which she shares with great skill and an open heart..."

Chris

There is a real community feel to the services provided by Dragon Hall, despite operating from 5 different venues - Dragon Hall, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, Covent Garden Community Centre @ 7 Dials Club, The Phoenix Garden & N1C Centre in Kings Cross



Work with Islington Schools

One of the strengths of our work at SoapBox and a particular highlight during 2019/20 has been our work to support Primary, Secondary and Further Education in Islington, seeing us deliver the following work:

Central Foundation: weekly art group for 6 students, weekly enrichment activities for 25+ young people, two football groups with 30+ participants and 4 key individuals who took additional responsibilities in helping to run SoapBox

Richard Cloudesley: we continued to run our weekly audio-visual workshops for up to 4 students and added in a new weekly After School Club for 2 students with a passion for Games Design

Courtyard: continuation of our successful Discover Tech programme for 15 young people and a new weekly lunchtime music club with Dj Shorty

City and Islington College: we built on our existing relationship to include weekly podcasting workshops for students on Thursdays, work with 12 college Ambassadors, our Young Women's programme for 6 participants and the development of a social action project for 20 students

EGA: between January and March 2020, we developed a connection with EGA by delivering a weekly creative performance After School Club, as part of our wider Young Women's work, led by Genia Kaye

New River College: work on Stress on the Brain



Soapbox Youth Centre Old Street, Islington

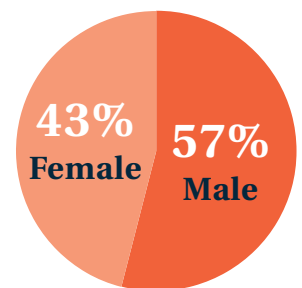
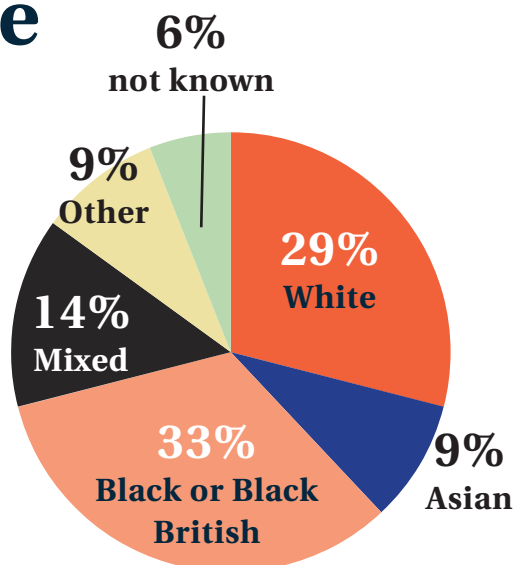
As we entered the final year of our 3.5 year contract with LB Islington to run Soapbox Youth Centre we reflected on the progress we had made

- Soapbox plays an important part in the delivery of high quality youth work across Islington
- Soapbox is becoming embedded into the fabric of local communities in Bunhill & Clerkenwell
- Soapbox has excellent pan-borough partnerships with key local organisations, primary and secondary schools and Islington Council
- Soapbox engages a broad and diverse spectrum of socially excluded young people through our expansive network of specialist groups and schools
- A broad, impactful and growing programme of nonformal education, that was recognised externally, valued by young people and has identified expertise in Digital, Media & Technology.

2019 - 2020

777 Attendees

5,813 Attendances



Stress on the Brain

In September, SoapBox was invited by The Peel Institute to be part of a partnership opportunity with New River College & CAMHS to deliver a 6-week audio-visual project for 9 students at New River College. This piece of work saw Mister Lees (Recording Artist and Music Producer) support young people to record a music track, before Mikey Bharj (Filmmaker) worked with the group to create an accompanying video.

Released on June 22nd 2020, Stress on the Brain has had 9773 views on YouTube (as of July 8th 2020) and a further 1800+ engagements on Instagram.



Competitive Tender

Soapbox Islington

Entering 2019 - 2020, the prospect of the existing contract with LB Islington coming to an end and the upcoming re-tender process loomed large. We have learnt so much in this period and were committed to continuing the work and realising the potential that Soapbox offers.



Writing a tender, in this instance for 15 years to a value of £2.4 million, is an all-encompassing experience. The preparation began right at the start of our final year and we were determined that no stone should be left unturned. And this saw us work with socially excluded young people, forge new relationships with partners and deliver new programmes, all of which placed us in a position to make a compelling case for the new contract. Many sleepless nights later, we submitted the application and breathed a sigh of relief and pride. And then we waited...

We were notified that the application had been successful and we had won the contract to run SoapBox until 2035.

Against the backdrop of a sector decimated by £1 billion austerity cuts, this was a remarkable achievement, providing medium-long term security for the charity, offering consistency and continuity for young people and enabling us to further develop our 21st Century youth work.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Ian Smith and Trevor Whelan from Winning Tenders for their invaluable advice and guidance in securing this contract.

We would also like to thank LB Islington for their foresight and commitment to offer a 15 year contract when London Authority finances are so fragile and unknown.

Of particular note, we want to thank Councillor Phil Graham, who believed in us from the start and Emma Charlton (The Peel), Joel McIlven (New River College), Francis Gonzalez (Richard Cloudesley), Sharon Long (PYL), Vinny de Falco (Think Forward) and Elena Vidal (Courtyard), all of whom wrote wonderful statements of support for the application.



Case Study

Soapbox Apprentice

Lucas has attended Soapbox since September 2017 and since then he has become one of the centre's stand out individuals.

In that time, he moved from being an active participant to a valued volunteer and now he is the centre's first ever Apprentice.

As our Infrastructure Technician, he is responsible for areas including maintaining all our amazing tech, leading on our Virtual Reality work and being a crucial link to the needs, voices and talents of his peers.

These achievements contrast with Lucas' experience of formal education. Of particular note is the supportive environment that he found in the period after he had been excluded from college. The offer of a nurturing setting, at a point when his self-confidence and self-belief had taken an understandable knock, was an important step in his transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Lucas is making positive progress with his apprenticeship. He has completed all the assignment tasks to date and has passed all of the examinations at his training days, which, in turn, is beginning to address/ combat his negative feelings towards formal academic study. As this was a key consideration in terms of his apprenticeship, it is very pleasing to see.

Lucas' training is having a substantive and ongoing benefit at SoapBox. He has now created his own Maker & Repair Workshops, which includes working with his peers to build a computer from scratch.

One final thought, Lucas is now being seen as a role model by other young people, who can see that, through hard work and effort, they can go on to realise their goals and aspirations.



Funding Support

The work that we do at Dragon Hall Trust and Soapbox would not be possible without the support of all of our funders. We are very proud to be considered for their support - this year and in past years.





Funding for Young People

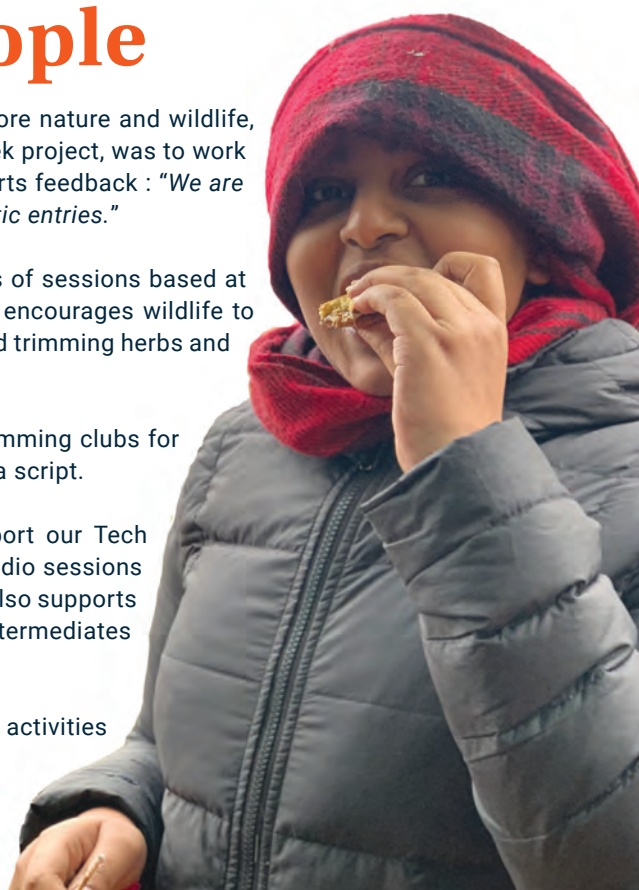
London Youth - Keeping it Wild - Wildlife project where young people explore nature and wildlife, the green spaces in their area and how they can conserve nature. This 6-week project, was to work together using visual art and produce a final piece of work. London Youth Arts feedback : *"We are so pleased you got involved this year and a massive well done on your fantastic entries."*

Camden Giving - Intergenerational summer gardening programme - 6 weeks of sessions based at Phoenix Garden learning how to grow seed and tomatoes, how the garden encourages wildlife to visit, creating bee boxes, growing house plants and learning about cutting and trimming herbs and plants.

Coderdojo - Monthly free, volunteer-led, community-based computer programming clubs for young people, where young people learn Scratch, Python, HTML, VR and Java script.

John Lyons and William Shelton (St Giles) - Both of these funders support our Tech sessions around 3D printing, Coding, Virtual reality, music production and radio sessions as well as the running of After School Club and our Youth Clubs. John Lyons also supports the development of our homework clubs for both After School Club and Intermediates (12+)

Children in Need and Peabody Trust - fund our After School Club including activities like film club, Intergenerational work, arts and crafts, sports and trips.





Partners

Partnerships with other organisations are really important to ensure a wide range of activities, opinions and viewpoints that cover all sorts of topics and subjects to engage and delight our users. We would like to thank all of our partners for their involvement and encourage new ones to contact us to see what we could do together.

As the post pandemic reality unfolds we know that the more varied and interesting activities we can provide will help everyone cope with whatever is coming next.

Mary Ward Centre - A wide variety of adult Education Classes and Workshops including: Aromatherapy, Digital Inclusion, Art and Line Dancing

Royal Collection Trust - Variety of workshops (writing, portrait creating), tours and private viewing to exhibitions as well as weekly Zoom presentations and seminars

Covent Garden Transport Museum - six week workshop, looking at the history of travel, future of transport and individuals relationship to getting around

Camden Archives and Family History - monthly talks and presentations

Hampstead School of Art - Weekly Art Class

Magnum Healing - weekly Yoga sessions

Info at Flamenco - weekly Flamenco dance classes

John Soane's Museum - Talk and private tour of the museum

Battersea Dogs Home - Talk and (future) tour of the organisation

Somerset House - Talks and Tour - including 'history of mushrooms' and 'How to grow your own'

Camden Adult Education - Weekly workshops including Photoshop, Jewellery Making, Massage and Complementary Therapy

British Museum - weekend museum previews

Outings in Art - Monthly Cultural Talk and Monthly Walk and Talk

Kew Gardens - Monthly Walk



"We have had a great experience working with Dragon Hall. There has been positive community engagement and we feel our partnership is continuing to grow as we support Dragon Hall in offering a diverse programme of activities. The strength of the partnership is one of reliability, reflection and an understanding of how we work together. The staff have been understanding in times of change and invested a lot of time to make the programmes successful. A very big thank you."

Mary Ward Centre

Contact Us



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