



Rollo May, the American psychologist, talked about creativity as *an act of bringing something new into being* ... a new idea

a new way of living and being

a new story

a poem

a painting

a song

... all arise from the same extraordinary human attribute we call creativity.

That is why Inside Out is committed to re-awakening creativity through an engagement with the arts and encouraging people to make it the centre of their lives.

To live a creative life is to live more fully, more deeply, more wholly. The arts can offer so much to our sense of wellbeing and to the enrichment of life.

This year 2013 – 14 has been another great year for Inside Out. Sixty seven (67) workshops have been delivered (42 open arts workshops and 25 music workshops). A strong art's and well being movement is emerging locally with Music In Our Bones continuing to deliver uplifting, soul stirring singing workshops at the Library and Juliet Lockhart continuing to provide imaginative and stimulating Art in Mind courses in satellite towns in East Suffolk.

Thirty eight individuals have attended Inside Out's open arts workshop programme during the year (average attendance 13) and twenty five people have attended the music workshops (average attendance 11). Including associate programmes - Singing and Art in Mind, around 140 individuals attended workshops last year. People of all ages and backgrounds attend although the majority of participants have tended to be white British, in the middle years of life. We need to think how we might more accurately reflect the towns ethnicity (16% are non white British) and consider how we might more effectively work with young adults experiencing mental health issues and with older adults with emotional and cognitive problems associated with ageing.

Financially we have again ended the year with a reasonable balance £10,869. It is no mean feat keeping a small charity like Inside Out alive and running for 11 years, providing high quality arts and mental health programmes throughout the year every year. That we have done so is attributable to our team of trustees and volunteers committed to the vision for Inside Out. Since our inception we have received funding from many quarters but it is unlikely we would have survived to continue our work without the fantastic support of Suffolk Community Foundation who understand the nature and value of our work and have helped sustain us with regular grants.

The open arts programme facilitated by Sian and Paula continues to be well attended and valued, and has again offered an eclectic mix of high quality workshops. Drama to drumming; singing to sculpture; creative writing to circle dancing. Where else could you gain such a rich experience of the arts? Everyone will have their own highlight; for me this year it has been the drama workshops led by Kirsty, a community theatre worker and actor from Red Rose Chain. To be able to dramatise a story in an improvised way involves 'letting go'; involves allowing your imagination to 'take flight', a process which leaves you feeling freer and more energised. Why sit at home when you could be '*tracking down the thieves of time in a tropical rain forest* and turning it into a piece of improvised musical theatre'!

The music project under George Fothergill's leadership has gone from strength to strength playing a set at last summer's Music in Park and a Christmas gig at the Steamboat. The group continues to write, arrange and perform new music as well as performing covers. Something exciting and interesting musically is always like to emerge at any session.



Music belongs to us all; it is the soundtrack of human life, every life; it must have its roots in the shit and the sublime of everyday experience from where it emerges. It must never become too elitist and professionalized. The music project offers anyone searching for their pathway to better mental health, the opportunity *sing their song*.

One of the great benefits Inside Out has experienced over the years is being able to work with some inspirational visual artists; Juliet Lockhart of course, and more recently Jen Hall and Susie Mendelsson. They have enabled so many individuals, most of whom have no background experience in the arts, to explore and create interesting, sometimes extraordinary pieces of art work using a variety of media and techniques. This year we again exhibited work at the Ipswich Art Society show which was appreciated and enjoyed by visitors to the exhibition. A consistent comment was that the Inside Out work had a 'freshness and freedom' that was sometimes missing from other paintings in the show.

To quote a well worn maxim of arts and health 'it's all about the art' meaning that it is the process of making art that is the healing element in what we do. Of course the social aspect of Inside Out is important which is why we have the word community in our name; but beyond that, taking risks creatively, allowing what comes to come, and enjoying the liberation and expressiveness of that, can allow us to feel as if we are coming home to ourselves, perhaps for the first time.

Rollo May was interested in how people become more fully themselves; he says that *we don't become more human painlessly*. Life can at times be painful - joyful too, but it is at those times of emotional discomfort that change in our way of being and living becomes most alive as a possibility. Inside Out workshops offer everyone, particularly at times of adversity and distress, the opportunity to discover more of themselves through art.

Peter Watkins
Chairperson
Inside Out Community

