

## **Playday Report 2008**

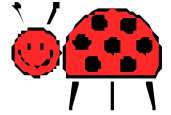
‘GIVE US A GO’

**Often Children don't get the opportunity to be involved in risky play adults are being more cautious for their children's safety. We understand adult's natural desire to ensure the safety of children, but it's equally important that children learn to take risks, push the boundaries and learn from their mistakes.**

(Editorial Playday/Playtoday 2008)

**Play Network (Bradford)**

**August 2008**



### **Playday report 2008 – ‘Give us a go’**

The theme for 2008 ‘Give us a Go’ was to inspire organisers to offer a range of more challenging and adventurous play activities which supports widely researched belief that children taking more risk in play become more confident rounded individuals. The Playday arena is an ideal forum for organisers to push the boundaries and be more creative in their choice of activities.

With thanks to the Children’s Play Programme, Big Lottery Funding, Bradford welcomed two new resources for the district; Mobile Climbing Wall and Mobile Skatepark both of which fit nicely into the theme and provided centre stage for the events. Other key activities; messy play, large inflatable’s, reptile house, build your own obstacle course, loose parts, gloop run, and the now infamous water slide further provided children with the opportunity to get really messy, dirty, and suitably challenged.

This year’s key Playday event held as always in the grounds of Baildon Recreational Centre is the districts central hub with smaller events taking place across the district; Playday becomes Play Week across the city which welcomes in total nearly 2000 children, young people and families.

Thanks to the recent Persil sponsorship the Network received the week before Playday oodles of ‘t’ shirts catered for every size, posters, bunting and other handouts which meant that every volunteer, helper or child could be well ‘kitted out’ in Playday attire. This invaluable free resource undoubtedly helped to raise the profile of the event and brought the Playday hopper logo to the forefront of delivery.

As always these events could not take place without the support from a range of partners; this partnership strengthens and enhances each year as does the quality of play activities offered during this week of ‘free play’. Statutory, Voluntary Sector, Community Residents and Volunteers meet on regular basis prior to the events to organise, coordinate and plan the activities. Short of ensuring personal guarantees that the weather stays fine every ‘i’ is dotted and ‘t’ crossed after all when did ‘rain ever stop play’.

## Cockleshell Adventure Playground – Saturday August 2<sup>nd</sup>

Thanks to the success of the Big Lottery Children's Play Programme Eccleshill Adventure Playground, The Big Swing, as it has become fondly named by the children and young people, has been able to offer a more extensive play provision for 2008. This combined with additional commissioning from the Early Years Childcare and Play Service and CPADU Holiday Playscheme funding enabled the Playground to offer a full programme of activities for the duration of the 6 week holiday period. The Lottery revenue funding is a two year funding programme until March 2010 which enables consistency of play provision for the immediate and surrounding locality. The five team members of staff have worked tirelessly over the last few months to ensure the playground offers children and young people with quality play opportunities in a safe environment which fully endorses the Big Lottery's ethos of the '3 Free's'; Free to come and go, Free to access, Free to decide what, how and why they play. The Playground further perfectly supports the theme for this year's Playday in allowing children to push their own boundaries and take more risk in their play.

The week of Playday started with the Big Swing's annual birthday party/Playday event. This event as always relies on community residents to support the day with music, food and volunteers. From cake baking to BBQ, Sumo Wrestling to Zip Wire and the largest sand pit in the district. The event was enjoyed by over 60 children with plenty of volunteers, parents, grandparents and Management Committee members helping out.

Despite the odd flurry of rain and gusty wind first thing the sun shone for virtually the whole afternoon. A recent addition the zip wire was launched thanks to a recent Participation Fund which enabled children of all ages to fly down a 20m length and fall hopelessly to the crash mats, occasionally managing to get to the platform. The last six months has witnessed the regular children with support from the staff develop a very large jumping tower; some of the more confident children climb assertively to the 10m landing area at the top of the tower and lunge off to a well padded crash mat below. Some of the less confident children climb cautiously managing to get to the 5m platform to a no less padded landing below with a HUGE degree of glee and self- satisfaction.

The huge trampoline pit turned into a pretty big sand pit for the day much to the delight of children from 5 upwards, take a few steps to the left and follow the path to the secret garden. A rugged path provides the ideal spot for an array of secret tunnels; dens and hideouts have been spontaneously built and linked together in an impromptu catacomb of play spots. Find little faces covered in ketchup as they sit amongst friends in their secret dugouts eating the remnants of a burnt burger, followed by a large slice of home made millionaire's shortbread. This epitomises play at its most spontaneous; children who have meticulously built their array of ramshackled dens made from pallets, twigs and branches and bits of old carpet. Sheer imagination and creativity highlight the importance of providing such a provision to nurture play at its most fundamental and why all children should have the right to experience such joy.

## **August 4<sup>th</sup> 'The Ashy Site' Scholemoor**

The Ashy Site is located behind the Scholemoor Community Centre and owned by Bradford Community Housing Trust / 'In Communities'. Since the last Playday event in 2007 the area has seen the addition of a Multi Use Games Area which seemed the perfect arena to launch and house the Mobile Skatepark. As last year this event is very much a community Playday which gives local partnerships the opportunity to work together for the benefit of children's play. The Scholemoor, Lidget Green and Clayton areas count many cultures as part of the makeup of their communities, this does present many challenges for providers who work really hard to offer a wide variety of quality play opportunities for the children, this Playday event helps to support this ethos. The Scholemoor Beacons very kindly award the centre for meeting planning, The Lidget Green Community Partnership offer consistent enthusiasm for continued development of Children's play in this area; our special thanks to Lynne Edwards, Colin, Karen Hodgson and her mum for providing drinks throughout the day and other community partners for providing support before, during and after the event. It is the wish of the Play Network that this event will grow particularly in light of funding awards through the BLF Children's Play Programme to enable this community to enjoy a Playday event on the scale of Baildon.

Our thanks to the CPADU team for providing sports teams and creativity to the afternoon, a mass of squirry paint, hand prints, finger printing and general messy art was enjoyed by some of the smaller children. Early Years Childcare and Play Service for their support in adventurous play; giving children the opportunity to develop their own obstacle course went down a treat, Charlie Watson for the Boxing which went down a storm and most importantly the Children and Young people who attended on the day to make it what it was.

Some of the activities enjoyed on the day included; Messy Play Arena, Face painting, Boxing, Loose Parts, Den Building, Creative Activities, wide variety of sports games and the Mobile Skatepark.

This was the first outing for the Skatepark which gave the staff the opportunity to trial a number of different combinations to challenge participants. There was a great deal of enthusiasm before all the ramps were set up and once fully arranged skaters and bikers alike were experimenting. Some of the children took shelter from the intermittent rain underneath the ramps ensuring that regardless of the weather spirits remained high. This activity needed no introduction as no matter what your skill level was it pure unadulterated enjoyment from start to finish.

Endless vats of playdough were made which as the afternoon went on became the ideal medium for impromptu throwing and catching games instigated by the parents, the face painting remained as ever popular right to the point when the marquee was being taken down around them. Charlie Watson gave some very positive feedback with regard to some natural displays of boxing talent; in particular a couple of the girls proved exceptional and further talks have been around how this may be accommodated in the future. Councillor Paul Flowers and Cllr Joanne Dodds attended the opening of the event as did the district's new Play Champion Ian Shackleton together with his two boys. Both Cllr Flowers and Cllr Dodds are prominent figures on the local community partnership forums and the event received positive feedback from both members.

Further thanks to Colin for his very creative publicity and the endless supply of nails, wood, rope and milk crates, special thanks to Lynne for her endless support and work within the community. The day itself was if it could be better than last year despite the missing curry. Overall the day was enjoyed by 120 families from the immediate and surrounding communities.

Since the event discussions have been how the event can be better supported by a wider participative audience. Due to the location of the 'Ashy Site' and potential housing developments there has been a suggestion made as to whether the event maybe better located elsewhere, the nearby rugby field has been muted. This is something that will need to be further discussed over the coming months; it is the intention of the Network to widen the steering group to involve other community partners with the potential of offering a much larger event for next year. Watch this Space!!!





## **Community Play Activities and Development Unit – Baildon Recreational Ground**

### **National Playday**

**Wednesday August 6<sup>th</sup>**

This year The Play Network Bradford has been awarded a two year commissioning to work in partnership with two other VCS agencies to deliver play outcomes in the community. Amongst our targets is to support the coordination and development of Playday as a district wide event in celebration of Children's Play.

Community Play Activities and Development Unit (CPADU) and their team host this fantastic event and work collaboratively with The Play Network and other key partners to enable this event to engage with more and more children and young people every year. The theme 'Give us a GO' definitely gave the organisers the opportunity to let thoughts run wild and really experiment. Initial ideas ran from zip wire to abseiling from the top of the recreational building which unfortunately proved not possible to a somewhat tamer but no less challenging range of activities. New activities for this year included, Reptile House; bearded dragons, snakes and other reptilian enough to help overcome all phobias, some fabulous inflatables, Mobile Skatepark and Climbing Wall, archery, and gloop run. These together with the old favourites made this event one to remember.

The sun did not shine but it did not rain either, the weather did what it seemed to do all summer remained cloudy all afternoon, spirits were not dampened and the event was enjoyed by 1068 Adults and Children from across the district.

Our new Lord Mayor and Play Champion opened the event; The Right Honourable Cllr Howard Middleton and Ian Shackleton. Cllr Middleton spent a good hour walking round the event talking to children and young people, building an escape raft from WASP's stranded island, made a lovely sparkly badge, handled a few horny devils and made several references as to how well the event was organised and presented.

The layout was slightly different from 2007; there had been some consultation with providers since the event last year for ideas as to how to improve. Some of the comments included; splitting the inflatables up to enable better management, to this end they were located across a wider spectrum of area. The hay bales provided natural boundaries for all the activities as well as impromptu climbing stacks and the ideal support for the 'gloop run'. The donkey man enjoyed the remnants for his hard working mules which provided supper on the way home. Bogey building and den building was ever popular, tepee's, wigwams and hideouts, some strategy required if you were going to EVER get off the desert island, hunt for worms in the mud play, get unbelievable dirty on the mud slide and who first to the end of the obstacle course.

Special thanks to Carl Dalton and his team at CPADU and all those who help make the event what it is; Cheery staff, willing volunteers but above all children and young people who attended on the day.

Comments received on the day

‘What a fantastic event, and its free’ Holiday playscheme organiser

‘The climbing wall is brill! I’ve been up it 3 times already’ a smiley happy boy about 8yrs old.

‘The best activity for me has got to be the obstacle course it’s wicked!’ girl aged 14yrs.

‘The Playday event was an excellent venue with exciting and planned activities, friendly staff and the bonus of being free. Many of the children and families we work with have limited play experiences, the afternoon was enjoyed by all and the parents will have benefitted from the experience of seeing the children have such fun. Thank you to all for the hard work’ Rainbow Children Centre, Keighley.

As always there was plenty of publicity both leading up to and after the event. Prior to the event publicity included; flyers and posters sent out to all holiday playscheme organisers and Network members and partners, Telegraph and Argus, Play Day website and Play England Regional Offices, local BCB radio. After the event the T&A ran a double page spread with some fantastic photographs from the afternoon although the accompanying article made a number of inaccuracies.

The Play Network would like to add that as an organisation we are fully aware that it not just one organisation involved in developing this event it would not happen without the support from key partners. As a Network we value our partners and have worked hard over the last 2 years to nurture strong partnerships. The article in the T&A did not reflect this crucial element as many quotes were taken out of context. The Network did forward an email direct to the columnist involved complaining about the article although did not receive a response.

We apologise unreservedly for any misrepresentation or offence incurred as a result of this article.

## Some Facts and Figures

Children: 869

Adults: 199

**Total: 1068**

### **Some specific activity breakdown:**

50 x children recorded having their face painted

63 x children recorded accessed the Skatepark

150 x children recorded climbing the wall and 9 x adults.



### **Playday Allerton > Ladyhill Park Friday 8<sup>th</sup> August**

This was a new location for Playday decided in conjunction with Allerton Children's Centre. The essence of this event was again very much community based. The Network has worked closely with Allerton Children Centre over 2008 providing a range of resources into the centre. The Centre has an outreach cabin in the middle of Ladyhill Park>The Veteran's Hut which is used to provide external play activities for children and families within their cluster. This provided the ideal opportunity to develop the first of many playday events in this locality.

The scale was very much as Scholemoor and had the weather been better I am sure would have engaged in far wider participation of audience.

Activities included; Skateboarding, Climbing Wall, Messy play, Face Painting, Inflatables, Sport related activities, bogey building.

108 Children and Young People attended on the day which considering the damp weather was pretty good.

One of the highlights from the day has to be one young girl with cerebral palsy climbing the wall, the sheer determination and squeal of delight from her and her mother as she reached the top and then arrived safely at the bottom is just one reason we do what we do. The same girl was then made to sparkle and shine with a great big sparkly butterfly all over her face the remnants of which can still probably be found. Other highlights included the bogey racing down the park slope, with thanks to EYCS for their endless supply of wood and wheels the children absolutely had a real ball!

Some special thanks to all the staff, volunteers, mum's and dad's from Allerton Children's Centre who helped make the afternoon go with a whiz and loads of other partners for their ongoing support with a range of activities this event and others could not go ahead without this.