

# Participatory Arts Project Brief Evaluation

CREATIVE  
WRITING



These questions come courtesy of Culture Health & Wellbeing Alliance.

[bravebolddrama.co.uk](http://bravebolddrama.co.uk)

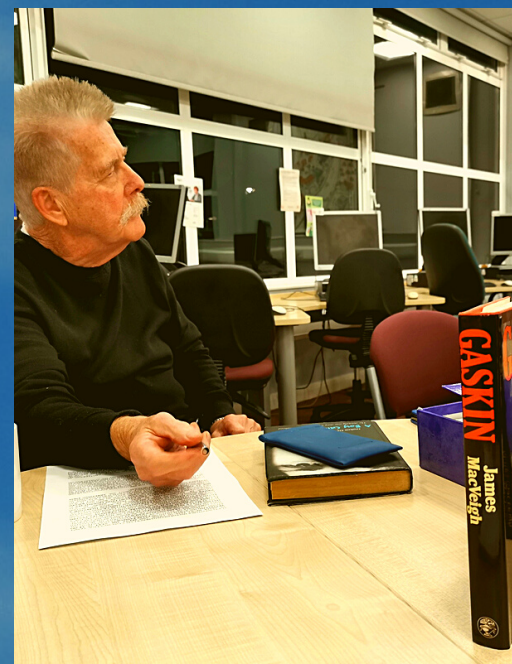
## Summary of Project

We worked with a small group of adults who live in BS13 for a year, delivering a range of term-time weekly creative writing courses. Roughly every month we had a visiting facilitator who ranged from musical composers to published authors, poets and creative writing therapists.

We changed the theme or form of creative writing that we were exploring roughly every 4-6 weeks. The participants negotiated between themselves which writing forms or genres they were interested in exploring and we would follow this lead and arrange visiting facilitators with a specialism in this area.

We published the participants' own creative writing on our website, on our social media. The group were particularly proud of a collaboratively written children's book called Hop Aboard. We had already worked with a professional illustrator (chosen by the participants) so we arranged for a small print run of the story to be made which we have distributed free of charge to libraries, children's centres and primary schools in BS13.

[view online publications here](#)



Some visiting writers: (left to right) Jack Drewry, lyricist. Jane Duffus, history writer. James MacVeigh, true crime writer



**Funder/s:** Bristol City Council Libraries Innovation Fund

**Who was it for?** Adults (18+) living within the BS13 postcode.

**What outcomes were we aiming for?** To provide free entry-level creative writing workshops for people living in BS13. To build participants' confidence as writers by showcasing their work as stylishly and professionally as possible. To let the group negotiate the content and pace of the delivery.

**Where did it happen?** The group was run as a hybrid offer. People could join in person at Bishopsworth Library or join online. The online offer was mostly used by people who had caring responsibilities, meaning they could continue to participate without needing to arrange child or elder care.

**Were you working in partnership?** We were supported by staff at Bristol Libraries, particularly those at Bishopsworth who gave us support with access to space and WiFi etc.

**How many people took part?** 5 people became a core group who attended regularly. A further 4 joined just for some of the courses.

**For how long did it happen?** It ran from October 2021 to May 2022.

**What were the main outcomes?** The group produced a wide range of creative writing in a range of forms and styles. The group grew in confidence as writers, and as the weeks went on, participants were more ready to share work in progress, give each other encouragement and supportive feedback. A wider outcome from us curating their work online and sharing it on social media is that this directly challenged the misconception that is definitely prevalent in some sections of the Bristol community that the BS13 area is a dead-beat area where no-one has any real ability or "culture".

**Feedback:** *"Coming to the group makes me feel better. It's so hard to find time to be creative. This group helps me carve out time for my creative writing. Since joining the group I am on my phone less in the evenings and I'm writing more. I feel loads better for that. I've made new friends in this group as well as feeling more confident about my writing. It's great too that we can borrow books from the library while we're at Creative Writing Group."*

**What were the challenges and successes?** There were some logistical challenges initially in getting access to library wifi in order to provide the online offer, but this was resolved a few weeks after the group started. We accidentally once locked the library keys inside the building, but fortunately library staff had duplicate keys!

The highlight for the group was definitely making the children's book "Hop Aboard" which is now a published book people can buy (to cover the printing costs). This is a powerful ongoing testimonial to young children and other parents in the BS13 area that adults from the local area are capable of writing a published book. Representation matters, and when we know from statistics that most writers are from privileged backgrounds, the group (and the company) are proud to be able to show that people from our local area have the wherewithal to make high quality creative work.

The successful outcomes of this project meant we were able to secure further funding from Arts Council England to continue running creative writing courses for BS13 adults in 2023.

**[buy a copy of 'Hop Aboard!' here](#)**