



An audio installation of children's experiences of life during the COVID-19 lockdown.

About Filament Projects

Filament Projects is a Cheshire-based theatre company producing creative adventures for children and families.

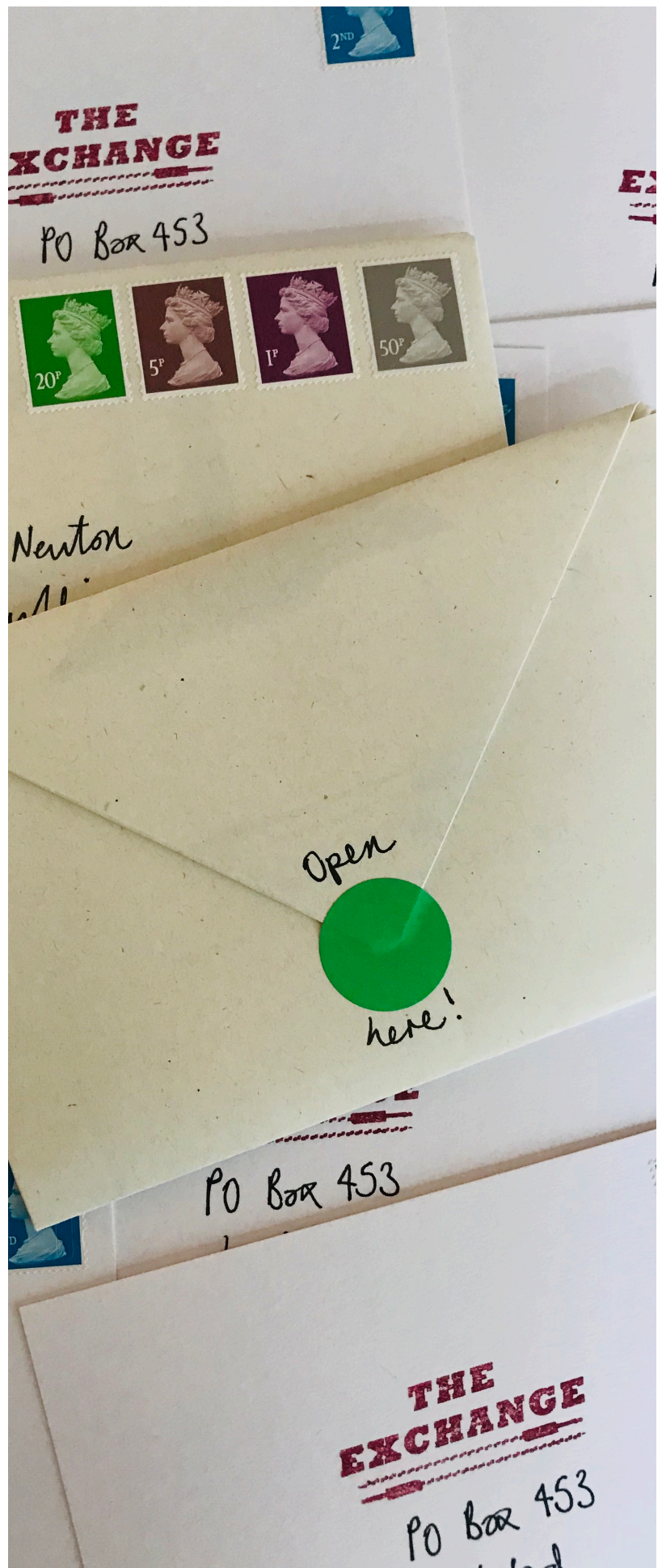
Since 2017 we have worked in partnership with schools, local authorities and cultural organisations such as the National Trust to dream up high quality performances and installations that invite children to discover and explore new stories and worlds and encourage them to use their own creativity to reflect on the world they are growing up in.

The Exchange project

The Exchange started life in early 2020 as an in-school project to gather children's thoughts, ideas and concerns about the issues currently facing the environment. However as the COVID-19 situation developed the children we were working with started to have more questions about 'the bug' than the environment and when schools across the country shut down on 20th March we took the decision to change the focus of the project.

During lockdown 150 children from across Cheshire, including children from the school we had been working with pre-lockdown, took part in an online adventure to 'Save The Exchange' during which they took part in a series of creative tasks to share their individual thoughts and experiences of life in lockdown.

The Exchange installation now holds an audio collection of these children's voices.



The Exchange installation

The Exchange installation has been designed to tour to schools, libraries, theatres and other cultural venues. It has also been designed to be used by children. However very young children may need to be supported by a parent or teacher.

There are two headsets, enabling two people to listen to The Exchange at a time.

The audio recordings can be listened to by plugging the two plugs into the sockets on the switchboard. The recordings are short, encouraging people to listen to multiple recordings during their visit.

The recordings are arranged into four themes; School, Family & Friends, Lockdown Life and The Future.

Recordings can be chosen by looking at the reference grid, which gives a brief description of each recording and its topic, or by just plugging in and taking pot luck.

On the reverse of the installation are examples of some of the written and visual responses sent in by the children taking part in the project.

Transcripts of all of the recordings are available to enable access for people with hearing impairments.



Project aims

- To provide children with creative tools to explore big ideas
- To provide an opportunity for children to work with a team of artists to develop their creative and critical thinking skills
- To provide children with a greater understand of different creative roles, and widen their employment aspirations.
- To increase children's confidence through a range of drama activities
- To provide children with a platform through which their voice can be heard, nurturing in them a sense of ownership and empowerment
- To create an audio installation which would house these voices, and be able to travel to local venues, art festivals etc. so the wider community could have access to the installation, and the children could feel a sense of pride in their work.

Delivery outcomes

During February and March 2020 we delivered in-school workshops to 60 Year 4 children (8 & 9 year olds) at Dee Point Primary School in Blacon, Chester. These workshops used drama games and techniques to encourage the children to embrace their similarities and differences, work creatively as a team, listen to each other and deepen their thinking about the world around them, in particular about the natural environment and the issues currently facing it.

Filament directors Sarah Richardson and Helen Slevin led these workshops alongside sound designer Paul Rogerson, who led singing games and exercises to boost the children's confidence to express themselves vocally.

To support this work we sourced a collection of beautifully written and illustrated environmentally-themed books which were gifted to the school.

When lockdown came into force at the end of March 2020 we were no longer able to deliver in-school workshops. However, we continued to engage with the children at Dee Point Primary by working remotely to create a series of online films and by posting letters to them containing instructions for creative tasks to do at home (or in-school for those key worker children still attending school).

At this point the project's focus changed from the environment to the COVID-19 lockdown, reflecting the

children's own desire to discuss the events taking place but also in recognition that what was unfolding was a unique moment in time and that The Exchange had the potential to capture the children's experiences of these events as they were happening.

An unexpected benefit of working digitally was that we were able to extend the reach of the project. In total 150 children from across Cheshire took part in the project, including key worker children at another Cheshire primary school.

The responses of the children taking part have been uploaded to our website (with the consent of their parents and teachers) to create an online gallery for others to view.

The children's audio responses have been uploaded to The Exchange Installation enabling this valuable collection of these young children's voices and of their experiences of this unique moment in time to be listened to again and again as The Exchange visits schools, libraries and other cultural venues.



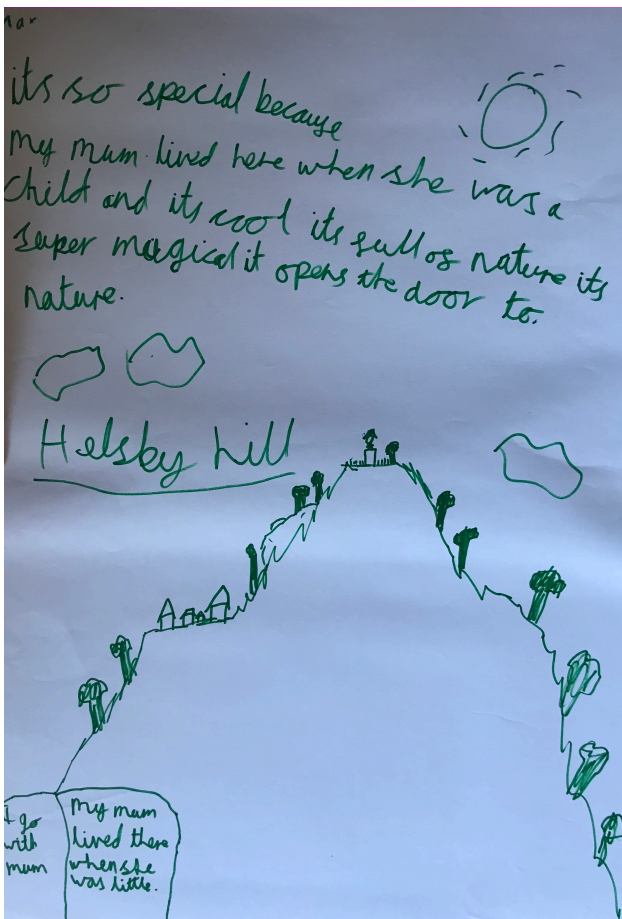
Case study



These images show one child's progression throughout the project. Featured are the drawing they did of Helsby Hill during the in-school sessions exploring nature and the environment, and their responses to the lockdown tasks, which explored the impact of lockdown on young people.

These creative tasks provided the tools for children to reflect on what was happening during lockdown, and how it was impacting on them specifically. They also supported conversations that might have been happening at home, or in school, due to COVID-19.

On these images you can also see drawings of the two cats, who were obviously of particular importance to this child, and featured in their final audio recorded conversation, now held within The Exchange.



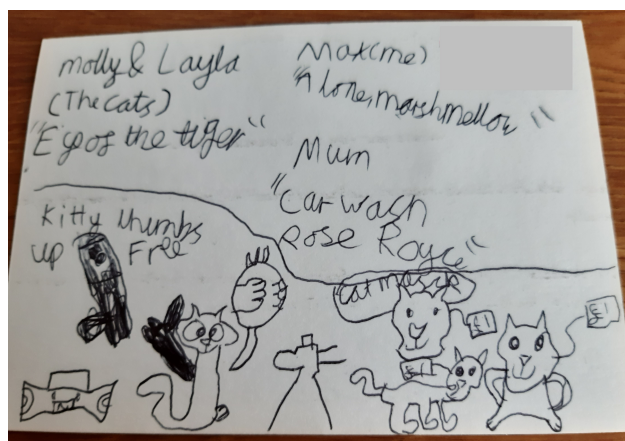
Throughout lockdown:

1. What has changed for you?

Not going to school and clubs, I have homeschool now. I miss seeing my friends but I can call one of them. Plus my hair has grown ridiculously long!

2. What has stayed the same?

Everything has changed, it's not like school holidays because we can't go on trips or visit people. Although when it's really warm we can still have a BBQ and pool in the garden which we did before.



What Has changed:
I have found the biggest change for me is not being able to see my friends. Because it's nice to see them at school or somewhere else.

What Has stayed the Same:
That I still have to go to school and wake up early. So it doesn't feel completely different to how I live my life.

THE EXCHANGE

My life is awful because I don't get to see my friends and don't get 2 hours of my switch so more work.

But I see my mum more and Delamere forest.

EMMA Emma has drawn her Reception class, with lots of hand washing!

What has changed for you?

- Not meeting friends.
- not going to school.
- Is we meet friends or being socially distanced.

Whats stayed the Same:

- not feeling secure.
- meeting & raring
- Sometimes walking the dog.



What has changed for you?

Our School has changed throughout lockdown with all the measures in place.

What has stayed the Same?

My family has stayed the same no one has changed.

Lizzie

What has stayed
school has stayed
Shops has stayed
we have stay at with our family
you still get good from school
were still learning at school

What has changed
not going swimming
not going on holiday
not going to lalton park
not seeing family
not going to friends



THE EXCHANGE

Thomas's Playlist

Lockdown Memories

- Thomas - Thread (Keane)
- Jamie - Best of You (Foo Fighters)
- Mummy - Mr Brightside (The Killers)
- Daddy - Thank You Baked Potato (Matt Lucas)

My teddy

My teddy is my best friend!

my bike

because I love my bike.

Phoebe has drawn her white-board, where she does her school work at home!

Phoebe

My laptop

it has my life on it.

BOOKS

because I like Reading.

Fergus

Shops were closed. we can't go for a bike ride.

Bea has drawn her doing her homework in the garden!

The Exchange was produced by Filament Projects - contact us at www.wearefilament.co.uk helen@wearefilament.co.uk

Created in partnership with Dee Point Primary and Peover Superior Primary. Installation design by Stand+Stare. Sound design by Paul Rogerson.

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