



# Annual Report 2020 – 2021

Registered Charity Number  
1165997

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## Chairperson's Report

I was appointed Chairperson of Double R Arts in October 2019, having been involved with the Youth Theatre Group since 2015 and a Trustee of the group for 18 months prior to the appointment.

This report covers the period September 2020 – August 2021 during which time, due to the ongoing restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, there remained considerable changes for Double R Arts. As always, I should like to express the thanks and gratitude of the Trustees for how Beth, Rachel and their fellow workers adapted to the challenges brought about by the pandemic and of course to the young people who, in such difficult times, continued to embrace the work and ethos of Double R Arts.

Double R Arts virtually opened its door for a new academic year in September 2020, being forced due to the pandemic to hold all sessions on a virtual basis via zoom. The group was unable to meet in its 'home', Priory Lane Community Centre, throughout the entirety of the pandemic and workers were only finally able to step back into the premises in April 2021. However, the young people and workers learned quickly how to work virtually and to adapt to the new learning and performing environment they were placed in and created some brilliant and inspiring pieces of work along the way. Regularly Beth would use social media to provide memories of work that the young people had been involved in a year or two years previous which kept very much alive the spirit of Double R Arts. A very poignant piece of work, 'What a Difference a Year Makes', was created and performed by members of the Senior Youth Theatre and explored just how the pandemic had affected them personally. The virtual sessions culminated in a final 'virtual' production in May 2021 which brought to a close an epic 14-month journey that will go down in Double R Arts history as the one that was never meant to happen. As restrictions started to lift, Double R Arts was finally able to celebrate its first face to face session in 15 months in June 2021!

During the course of the difficult times created by the pandemic, all at Double R Arts have continued to operate with the professional, caring, passionate, creative and dedicated manner that they are renowned for. The team has not allowed any of the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic to affect the young people's enjoyment whilst attending virtual sessions and the attitude has continued to be "the show will go on". Evidence of the positive attitude and dedication to hard work is illustrated by the incredible work that has been achieved in the last 12 months, producing a wide range of shows and events throughout what was another very challenging year. The standard of work from both the workers, volunteers and the young people involved continues to be exceptionally high and a great deal has been achieved and celebrated. The young people continue to challenge themselves and have enjoyed participating in every activity, which has shone through greatly at every performance, be it in person or virtually. Their commitment and dedication is

commendable and the underlying ethos of the group to support each other within the “Double R Arts Family” flourishes as always.

We continue in our efforts to increase our funds in order to re-invest in the charity and to enhance our services and delivery. We welcome all fundraising ideas and we are exceptionally grateful for all support.

As the Chairperson, I am filled with confidence and assurance that, over the next twelve months and beyond, Double R Arts will continue to flourish and serve to be a welcoming, inspirational and motivating place for young people in the South Ribble area.

I would like to pay thanks to the Trustees, Co-coordinator, Workers, Volunteers and young people for making Double R Arts such a wonderfully imaginative and enriching haven, which enables young people to shine, build their confidence and feel part of something truly special.

Tracey Newsham

Double R Arts Chairperson

## Co-ordinators Report

Welcome to our sixth annual report that celebrates the fantastic work achieved throughout 2020 – 2021. However, like everyone across the world Double R Arts was still hugely affected by the Covid – 19 pandemic that first started in March 2020, meaning that most of this year was run through virtual sessions and performances.

As we moved into 2021, we also moved into our tenth year, and we did not let the restrictions stop us, as we used our virtual sessions and performances to remember and recreate some of our best moments from the last ten years. Despite the continued challenges that this year brought, we were still able to create some fantastic work, using technology to our advantage and creating some original pieces of work. Including performances focusing on the effects of the pandemic on young people, and how the pandemic has created many more social and economic issues. We were also able to continue to work closely with members of our Alumni, getting them involved in some of the original dramatic pieces, virtual concerts, and performances, which they probably would not have been able to do if we were operating in person.

Despite the many challenges and differing ways of working that this last year has brought us, children and young people continue to be at the heart of our work and their development, engagement and enjoyment is vital to everything we do. This year, again, it has never been more important, as for a large part of the year everything remained ‘online’ with home schooling and lockdowns, and a child/young person’s ‘normal’ way of life was taken away and any type of engagement had to be done via a screen. Even once lockdowns began to lift, resuming ‘normal’ life and engagement was often done carefully and slowly, with some restrictions still in place.

At Double R Arts we finally began face to face sessions again in June, but with strict rules in place around hand hygiene and mask wearing, and detailed Covid 19 risk assessments in place. We were lucky as we were able to run most of our sessions outdoors, meaning that we could be slightly more relaxed, but still ensuring we were following any rules and guidance in place. Despite the unusual nature of running sessions outdoors, and still being unable to do many of the things we would normally do, such as singing and dancing, it was still wonderful to see our members face to face after such a long time.

From September to June, we continued to create virtual performances that would still entertain and engage audiences, including a Christmas event ‘the Winter Warmer’ that included all members of the Double R Arts virtual groups, and some alumni members. In the new year, the D&D and Junior groups created their own original pieces linked to Double R Arts’ tenth anniversary, while the Seniors created numerous pieces of work including a satirical piece about the pandemic, and they also recreated the first ever Double R Arts production ‘Arctic Roll’, but as a pre-recorded film. We also managed a further two ‘live’ virtual concerts with members of our Senior Youth Theatre, alumni and workers performing, and three alumni members –

Harrison, Rachel and George were involved in a piece about the effects of the pandemic on older young people.

For the final 6 weeks of the year, we finally had our groups back together with the intention of doing a brief outdoor performance for family and friends in July, to signify the end of another unusual year. However, on the day these performances were scheduled, the weather was very bad, and we were unable to perform outdoors, so our end of year performances were closed events with the just the groups and workers indoors.

Double R Arts was originally formed in October 2011 because of very successful youth arts work being carried out across South Ribble for almost 30 years by Ron Blenkinship. He was incredibly passionate about the work and the positive impact it could have on a young person's life, and he believed in the 3 C's - Care, Consideration and Cooperation and these formed the basis and the ethos of all his work in the performing arts. When Ron retired in 2011, a group of his ex-colleagues, young people and parents of young people came together to form Double R Arts, as we all truly believed this work had to continue. When Ron passed away less than 12 months later in July 2012, we decided to carry on the work to continue his legacy and give many more children and young people the opportunities that so many of us had because of Ron.

Ten years later and we are still moving from strength to strength, and despite the challenges of the Covid Pandemic, we still had new members join us while we were working virtually. I am very privileged to be involved with and run such a passionate and creative organisation and I have an amazing team of workers who make it all happen on a weekly basis.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Double R Arts Team for 2020 - 21; who due to Covid did change and alter during the 12 months, with more alumni members coming forward and getting involved as well as workers coming back to run virtual workshops and perform in virtual events.

Stephanie Greer, Cat Morewin, Rachel Cooper, George Parkinson, Harrison Newsham, Ben Seed, Jorge Bradbury, Amy Donnelly, Zack Leigh, Rachel Blenkinship, Maurice Wright, and Angela Blenkinship have all been involved with different groups, performances and events both virtually and in person throughout the year. Their passion, care and creativity allow Double R Arts to operate, giving so many children and young people opportunities that they may not have had.

I would also like to thank the Double R Arts Trustees who have continued to provide excellent support 'behind the scenes' allowing us to continue to operate successfully. They have also had to navigate the challenges that the Covid pandemic has brought us as a charity, and their support these last 12 months has been invaluable. I would also like to thank the organisations that have provided us with funding over the last 12 months enhancing the work that we do, particularly as we have been able to create some interesting pieces of work virtually.

This last year has continued to bring challenges that none of us could have foreseen, particularly the length of time we remained virtual. Yet we knew that stopping Double R Arts was not an option and we had to find a way to continue our work with our wonderful members if we were going to survive. Even though we are not trained counsellors or psychotherapists we believe in supporting the 'whole child' and providing them with a safe and secure space where they can feel and do anything they want to, and we believe we were able to continue to create that space virtually for most of our academic year, finally creating it again in person for our last six weeks.

We know that we cannot solve many of the problems our members, alumni, and families experience, but if we can provide normality and in some cases fun for the member, that can be very important, when going through difficult times, as we all have this year. The need for our work and organisation has become vital for some of our members this year and we have been honoured to be trusted and brought into their lives, making me realise that is it so important we continue to carry on the positive work of Double R Arts. As a small charity, in an ever-changing environment there will always be challenges ahead us, however we will continue to remain strong and resilient, delivering our Double R Arts groups and sessions with the same ethos that we always have done, whether that be in person or online.

Beth Blenkinship

Double R Arts Coordinator

## Double R Arts Virtual Performances/Events/Recordings

### **Hate Crime Awareness Week Films for Progress Housing - October 2020**

Progress Housing approached us during the summer and asked if we would be interested in creating some pre-recorded drama pieces focusing on different themes linked to Hate Crime Awareness Week. During September and October members of our Junior and Senior groups, created several original pieces that were filmed and produced by Double R Arts, but then shared on the social media pages of Double R Arts and Progress Housing. Progress Housing provided funding for us to create these films.

The films were entitled: Acceptance, Don't Judge a Book by its Cover, Validity and Language Barriers.

Eloise Jenkins, our oldest member of the Senior group also recorded 'It Means Beautiful' – a song from the musical 'Everybody's Talking About Jamie', that was used to accompany footage and photos from previous Hate Crime Awareness events.

### **Winter Warmer Event - Sunday December 13<sup>th</sup> 2020**

This virtual performance including all active members that have been engaging with Double R Arts through virtual sessions since September 2020. The performance was a mixture of live and pre-recorded pieces that included drama, dance and songs. It was a Christmas themed performance, with the D&D and Junior groups taking on different Christmas related themes, creating light-hearted drama pieces, some which were performed live and some pre-recorded. Members of the Senior groups, some alumni and workers performed different Christmas songs and carols live throughout the performance. This was watched by approximately 70 people, including the Mayor of South Ribble.

### **Alumni Covid Film - February 2021**

In January after moving into the second calendar year of the pandemic, we spoke to some of our alumni members about the social and economic effects that it was having for them, as they were either still at university or recent graduates. Through these conversations we agree that using their experiences to create a piece of film that may support other young people in a similar position, would be a productive and positive use of their experiences. Harrison Newsham, George Parkinson and Rachel Cooper agree to be involved in the film, and the premise was that three questions were asked, all related to the pandemic and lockdowns, and they answered them in two different ways. The first answer to each question was the 'positive' response, and often the answer they felt they would give when asked about their experiences during lockdown. The second answer was the 'negative'



but often more honest answer. The film explored how the lockdown was affecting older young people in different ways and that it is 'okay not to be okay'. Once completed this film was shared across our social media channels and with partner organisations.

### **Alumni Magic Moments Event - Sunday February 21<sup>st</sup> 2021**

We invited our alumni members to take part in a virtual concert that celebrated their favourite Double R Arts moments from the last 10 years. We had eight members involved and they all chose one or two moments from their time with Double R Arts. This was explained to the audience and then clips, audio or photos were shown. They also they performed versions of the songs from previous productions, but often did slightly different versions as they were in their own homes and not on the stage. The alumni members involved in this event were Bridget, Rachel C, George, Louise, Ben, Harrison, Cat and Rachel B. This event was created with funding from the National Lottery Local Connections Fund.

### **'What a Difference a Year Makes' Senior Youth Theatre Covid Film- March 2021**

In January 2021, as we moved into another term of virtual sessions, we began to discuss with our Senior members the many changes that had happened during the previous nine months of the pandemic, and how the unpredictability and often quick changes in legalisation and guidance had caused a lot of anxiety and confusion for the general public. Through these conversations, ideas for a satirical but poignant film piece were formed and our seniors created 'What a Difference a Year Makes', which demonstrated the constant changes during the pandemic since March 2020. We took information, news headlines and personal experiences to create a piece that reflected the previous 12 months. Once completed, this film was shared amongst our social media channels and premiered to the friends and family of the Seniors via a Zoom session.

### **The Fabulous Females and Friends - Sunday March 28<sup>th</sup> 2021**

This virtual concert was led by the Fabulous Females, who are Double R Arts workers and alumni Rachel B, Cat, Rachel C and Katie. They were supported at this virtual concert by other alumni and senior members, including Harrison, George, Gabriel, Eloise and Kate. The theme of this event was 'strong female performers or songwriters', so all songs performed had to have been made famous by either a female performer or writer. This concert was again funded by the National Lottery Local Connections Fund.

### **'We are Revolting Children' D&D Group - Monday May 24<sup>th</sup> 2021**

This virtual performance was a combination of live and recorded pieces by our D&D members. They used the song 'We are Revolting Children' from the musical 'Matilda', which was done by the first D&D group six years previously. They learnt a dance and sang the song, (which was pre-recorded), and they did a number of school-based scenes and some script work linked to Roald Dahl's Matilda. It was a great performance and enjoyed by the friends and family of the group, via zoom.

### **'The Thursday Time Capsule' Junior Youth Theatre Group - Thursday May 27<sup>th</sup> 2021**

This project was begun in March and was run by Double R Arts worker Stephanie Greer. This project was linked to the Double R Arts 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary as the group were asked to look at memories from the previous 10 years of their own lives, as well as significant moments in history, pop culture and music from the previous 10 years. A movement piece and several drama pieces were created linked to the previous 10 years, which were then linked into the last 10 years of Double R Arts and significant moments during Double R Arts' history. It was quite a complex piece, but worked very well, and allowed us to create our own 'Double R Arts virtual time capsule' with this group. Again, it was a combination of live and pre-recorded pieces that were put together as one virtual performance and shown to family and friends via zoom. This project was run with funding from Community Foundations.

### **'Arctic Roll' Senior Youth Theatre Group - Monday May 24<sup>th</sup> 2021**

'Arctic Roll' was the first piece performed by Double R Arts in July 2012. It was an original piece written by a previous Double R Arts worker, and performed by the first Senior youth theatre, on stage to a live audience. It was performed again as the open piece during 60460, Double R Arts' 24-hour performathon that took place in March 2013. As we were in our 10<sup>th</sup> year, we felt that with some adaptation 'Arctic Roll' could be created as a filmed piece over Zoom, and still work well. The Seniors took the original script and adapted it so that it worked in a virtual environment. They worked for several weeks to create the performance and it was decided to film the different scenes separately and then for it to be edited together. The final piece was 'premiered' to the audience via Zoom, followed by a discussion with the cast and bloopers. It was a great way to finish the virtual sessions, and still link into Double R Arts' 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## **Double R Arts Face to Face sessions June - July 2021**

As restrictions began to lift, the Double R Arts workers and Trustees took the decision that we would carefully return to face to face sessions in June 2021. These sessions were carefully planned, with detailed covid risk assessments carried out before sessions began. Members' families/guardians were contacted and they had to register their child/young person's involvement in the sessions in advance. Strict procedures were in place regarding mask wearing and hand sanitizing. We ensured no workers crossed over between the groups, and cleaning regimes were brought in before and after all sessions. Due to good weather most of the sessions were able to be run outdoors in the caged area at the community centre, and this meant a little more freedom regarding the activities run.

Due to the rules and guidance in place at the time, we were unable to do any singing or dance sessions, so all groups did drama games and exercises, creating short scenes and scenarios. The 'check in 'that we did with all members at the start of virtual sessions continued, as we believed this was important, even as some sort of normality was resuming.

We did plan to do an outdoor performance/presentation event at the end of academic year in July for family and friends. However, the weather was very bad on the day that we had chosen for this, and it had to be cancelled at the last minute. All members still received their certificates, at a closed event with just members and workers, and the 'RON' award was presented to leaving member Eloise Jenkins.

## **Funding/Fundraising**

It was very important that parents/guardians did not feel pressured to pay the termly subscriptions during as virtual sessions, as we were acutely aware that the pandemic had affected peoples social and economic circumstances. Therefore. we gave the option to pay if parents/guardians wanted and were able to.

We also began a crowdfunding page, which was shared during all virtual concerts and events, and overwhelmingly this page raised over £1500 during virtual events. The was a fantastic amount of money and more than we could have anticipated., which all was reinvested into Double R Arts.

Successful funding was also granted from Progress Housing for the Hate Crime Awareness Project and the Lancashire and Merseyside Community Foundations Fund. The funding from this organisation supported all virtual sessions, allowing for workers and materials to be paid for.

We also received funding from the National Lottery Local Connections Fund, which was used for the Alumni and Fabulous Females concerts and allowed us to purchase a new Double R Arts laptop.

## Double R Arts Workers 2020 - 2021

Beth Blenkinship	Double R Arts Co-ordinator and worker on all Virtual Sessions.
Rachel Blenkinship	Senior Youth Theatre Lead Worker, Junior Youth Theatre and D&D Support Worker. Worker on Senior Youth Theatre, D&D, Junior Youth Theatre Virtual Sessions.
Amy Donnelly	Junior Youth Theatre Lead Worker and Senior Youth Theatre Support Worker on Virtual Sessions
Zack Leigh	D&D Lead Worker
Maurice Wright	Senior Youth Theatre Support
Molly Wyatt	D&D Support Worker on Virtual Sessions
George Parkinson	Senior Youth Theatre and Junior Youth Theatre Support Worker on Virtual Sessions
Rachel Cooper	Senior Youth Theatre support worker on Virtual Sessions
Cat Morewin	Senior Youth Theatre support worker on Virtual Sessions
Jorge Bradbury	Double R Arts IT and Technical Support

## Our Partners 2020 - 2021

Steve Caswell, Marie Curran, Councillors - Penwortham Town Council

Shaun Bradbury and Jorge Bradbury - Wrennalls

Samantha Beattie - Progress Housing Group

## Double R Arts Trustees 2020 - 2021

Tracey Newsham    Chairperson

Maria Adamson    Secretary

Marilyn Deverill    Treasurer

Irene Moore

Alistair Newsham

Jim Patten

Tim Young

## **Double R Arts Alumni Members involved in 2020 - 2021**

Harrison Newsham

George Parkinson

Ben Seed

Rachel Cooper

Louise Champness

Bridget Flynn

Lois Hunt

Agnes Roberts

Lottie Wyatt

## **Funders in 2020 - 2021**

Lancashire and Merseyside Community Foundations Fund

The National Lottery Local Connections Fund

Progress Housing Group



## DOUBLE R ARTS

Accounts to 31 August 2021

### INCOME

	2020/2021	2019/20	2018/2019
Subs	2195.00		
Penwortham Subs	0.00	4392.32	3443.00
D & D subs	0.00	892.65	1751.00
Summer subs	0.00	120.00	2325.95
Performances	0.00	4139.32	5401.48
Misc income	0.00	258.90	951.25
Sponsor	4468.17	2084.75	420.00
Donations	1334.40	377.80	513.00

7997.57	12265.74	14805.68
-7172.09	-12461.40	-15722.81
825.48	-195.66	-917.13

### EXPENDITURE

	2020/2021	2019/20	2018/2019
Insurance	402.92	402.92	345.88
Equipment	834.27	235.86	572.64
Rent	200.40	1692.50	2140.00
Training	72.00		
Publicity		305.89	738.9
Show expenses		1172.47	2807.52
Gala Festival/'Live'	18.03	0.00	67.26
Penwortham Professional fees	5119.40	2570.40	2383.28
Staff travel Pen	306.16	2235.44	3376.76
Summer Professional fees		660.00	1660.00
Summer Expenses		0.00	984.11
Sundry expenses	218.91	542.35	646.46
Donation from Christmas Show		2643.57	

7172.09	12461.40	15722.81
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Reviewed by

T Taylor

28/6/22