



## City Research Online

### City, University of London Institutional Repository

---

**Citation:** Atkinson, J. (2015). Having fun with zines. CILIP Update, 2015(Dec), pp. 42-43.

This is the published version of the paper.

This version of the publication may differ from the final published version.

---

**Permanent repository link:** <https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/13476/>

**Link to published version:**

**Copyright:** City Research Online aims to make research outputs of City, University of London available to a wider audience. Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the author(s) and/or copyright holders. URLs from City Research Online may be freely distributed and linked to.

**Reuse:** Copies of full items can be used for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge. Provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way.



**James Atkinson** (@jamesatkinson81, james.atkinson.1@city.ac.uk) is Senior Information Assistant, User Services, at City University London and MA Library Science student, Department of Library and Information Sciences (#citylis) at City University.

**James Atkinson** reports on a Fanzine workshop that he and other #citylis students helped to lead at Clapham Library, as part of the recent Fun Palaces weekend. The workshop was a way for Lambeth's young people to mix art and literacy and self-publish a zine about a favourite topic.

**FOR one weekend in early October, spaces across the UK including libraries, churches, disused garages and market squares transformed themselves into Fun Palaces, running activities that aimed to make every attendee an artist or a scientist.**

All 10 Lambeth Libraries (plus Lambeth Archives) were turned into Fun Palaces. Across the service, a massive range of activities took place in collaboration with local organisations and groups. Just at Brixton, there were yoga, language and guitar lessons (not combined, sadly) as well as gardening workshops, story recording and various science activities, such as pinhole camera making classes.

Elsewhere, there was geodesic dome making, vegetable sculpting, martial arts, chess and short story writing. One hardy group, including Fun Palaces head honcho Stella Duffy, spent the day walking around Lambeth visiting every single palace. Check out the dedicated Twitter feed for another view of the day: @LamLibsFP

## From Citylis to Fanzines

I spent the day at the Guggenheim-esque library in Clapham, where various spaces were taken over by Fun Palace crews. I work in the library at City University London, where I am also studying, and I was there with a group from the Department of Library and Information Sciences (aka #citylis, the Department's twitter hashtag) to be one of these crews, as an initial attempt at outreach. Alongside Dr Ernesto Priego, Course Director and Lecturer at City University, I helped lead a group of #citylis students run a Fanzine Workshop.

Our handout stated: 'Zines are a DIY way for anyone to produce self published works. Zines can be about anything from your favourite band to what you did on your summer vacation. Any topic is valid!'

'There are several ways to make a zine. A common type of zine is the half-size, staple-bound booklet. You can also simply have a two-sided A4 page and call it a zine too. If it's on paper and you have made it yourself, it's a zine!'

Our aim was to get Lambeth's kids engaging in this different form of expression by asking them to think about something they liked before handing them piles of old newspapers, scissors, glue, sticky tape, pens and plain coloured paper challenging them to make their own zine.

## For the love of Minecraft

The participants really took to this medium, which mixes art with literacy. Fanzines were created about a diverse range of topics, including Chelsea FC, the computer game Minecraft, and the lives of millionaires. The children took to the task quickly (encouraging all the #citylis students who were helping out).

For Tristan Hooper, one of the most fascinating zines of the day was made by 'a

## About Fun Palaces

The idea of Fun Palaces came from theatre director, Joan Littlewood, and architect, Cedric Price in the 1960s. They dreamed of creating a 'laboratory of fun' and 'a university of the streets' – moveable spaces in which anyone could come along and participate. In 2014, Stella Duffy and Sarah-Jane Rawlings organised Fun Palaces in spaces up and down the country (and in Canada and Iceland too). In 2015 they took place on 3 and 4 October. Next year's Fun Palaces take place on 1-2 October 2016.

*'We believe in the genius in everyone, in everyone an artist and everyone a scientist, and that creativity in community can change the world for the better.'*

*'We believe we can do this together, locally, with radical fun – and that anyone, anywhere, can make a Fun Palace.'*

**See also Matt Finch, 'Pushing the limits: play, explore, experiment', May 2015 Update, pp. 34-36.**

- @FunPalaces
- Funpalaces.co.uk

“

This weekend of events up and down the country really showed how valuable libraries are to their communities.

# FUN PALES



The fanzines workshop took place at the Guggenheim-esque library in Clapham. Zines are a DIY way for anyone to produce self-published works about anything from a favourite band to football clubs or computer games. 'If it's on paper and you have made it yourself, it's a zine!'

teenage boy named Ahmed who based his zine around his love for the game Minecraft. Throughout the afternoon, Ahmed divided his time between playing Minecraft, browsing for information online and making his zine. Interestingly, Ahmed chose to base his zine around a game he himself described as being educational – I really hope he learnt something from his zine-making experience too – I know I did.'

Amy Rees spent time with one child 'who dived into the activity; every time I turned around she was furiously cutting and pasting and adding to her ever expanding and multi-themed zine. I was particularly impressed that she chose to draw her own comics, instead of searching comics on the computer and printing some out'.

While Hannah Kolleff was impressed with one child's creativity: 'One of our kids, Ben, made a fanzine about Chelsea football team. Ben wrote the word "football" using two pictures of soccer balls for the "os".'

Then, as if that wasn't cool enough, he substituted white out [Tipp Ex/correction fluid] for a white pen and drew a football field on the back of his zine. The kid was creative. I wish I had taken some pictures, but after helping the kids my fingers were too covered in glue to work my phone!

'All the kids were really creative, and I loved working with them to bring out their ideas and push them to think outside the box. They really didn't need much pushing – all it took was the opportunity to be creative and the materials we provided, and bam! Out came these awesome projects.'

We made our own, too, of course, to help encourage others by creating examples (and because it was fun). Among ours were fake film reviews, hot men, photograph projects, cars and, because I found a picture of Marilyn Monroe blowing out a candle on a birthday cake, I made the Birthday Fanzine; though, I rather inexpertly glued the cover

on the back/made the whole thing back-to-front!

## Value of libraries

This weekend of events up and down the country really showed how valuable libraries are to their communities, not just as a place to learn or study, but to be creative and learn a plethora of new skills. Most people will respond best to a subject in its practical form: libraries can give people a space to both do this and take their interest further by searching for other resources. Such events can boost their use too.

Clapham Library had over 1,000 visitors on 3 October, well above the usual Saturday attendance. A timely reminder to Lambeth Council, just one day after they published a report on the future of their borough's libraries. **[U]**

● More from citylis students at: [https://blogs.city.ac.uk/citylis/category/student\\_perspectives/](https://blogs.city.ac.uk/citylis/category/student_perspectives/)