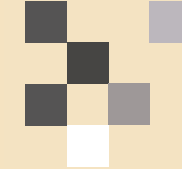


home from home

A three-year programme facilitated by Skippko



home from home

Three years of reaching communities

Spring 2023 to Summer 2026

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A message from the chair of Trustees

This little book is a big celebration of three years intensive and inspiring work with communities across Leeds.

Building on nearly 40 years' experience of running creative projects, the team at Skippko worked in partnership with diverse groups across the city, to deliver the magnificent programme described in this book.

We know that active participation in creative arts builds health, strength and resilience. The joyful and soulful activities devised by communities working with professional artists on 'Home from Home' are a lasting testament to the participants zest for life and care for each other, in spite of many obstacles and hardships.

This level and quality of activity was made possible with the support of the National Lottery Community Fund. Imagine every last donated penny as a tiny seed, taking root in hearts, homes and communities across Leeds. Each one enabling people to join together, sharing common experiences and actively growing a positive future for themselves and their city.

Here's to many more seasons of flourishing creative communities!

Emily Harvey (chair), Gabrielle Hamilton, Val Hewison, Jackie Hobson
Skippko Board of Trustees

introduction

In the Spring of 2023, we were delighted to learn that our application to National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) for £371,000 was approved.

The funds were to fuel a programme entitled 'Home from Home.' During the pandemic, participants had invited Skippko into their homes by engaging in our 'at home' creative activities. Now, following the pandemic, we wanted to invite participants into our home and, offer a safe, warm, creative space where participants could, once again, meet and socialise.

The programme was driven by an ambition to reach new communities, form new communities and enable our participants play a leading role in forming our on-the-ground projects for the three years.

In this publication we present the thirty three projects we delivered during the three years. Against each image is a short piece of text contextualising the image and, the project.

These images and words cannot begin to speak to the scale of work Skippko was able to deliver between Spring 2023 and Summer 2026. Over this period, Skippko's projects engaged with 23 of Leeds' 29 postcode wards (including all of which fall in Leeds' most deprived 1%) and we engaged with each of Leeds' 5 Priority Areas.

Skippko is fortunate to be able to call on the services of incredibly talented artists who are also gifted facilitators. The combination of the two coupled with deep experience has enabled a small, part-time core team deliver the projects we see displayed in this publication.

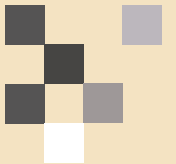
As ever, the essential and fundamental elements of Skippko's successful work are the participants. Since arriving at Skippko in the Autumn of 2016, I have been continually humbled by our participants' generosity of spirit and inspired by their commitment to Skippko, artists and creative work.

The last word rightly goes to two of our participants:

"all I can say is please carry on, if it wasn't for Skippko I don't think I would be at this stage, over time my mental health has improved"

"I'm always giving and at Skippko, my jug gets re-filled so I can go back and give again"

Arthur Stafford
Director



Year One 2023-24



Under the Canopy

'Under the Canopy' mental wellbeing project started during lockdown and developed over the three years of 'Home from Home'. Sessions took place at the wonderful Hollybush Conservation Centre plus a range of outdoor green spaces across Leeds. Participants were able to feel the benefits of being outdoors and in nature, to learn more about the natural environment and be creative with natural materials, storytelling and poetry writing.

'I've really enjoyed this project, and it has really had a positive effect on my mental health. I've been struggling quite a bit lately and this is a total lifeline.'

Skipko Community Research Team – Pages from Leeds

The Skipko Community Research Team has been together since Spring 2019 and blends local and family history with creative activities. 'Pages from Leeds' saw the group researching information about Leeds based objects from the personal collection of Robin Dove, a shopkeeper and local historian, who spent much of his life researching and writing about Leeds and Chapel Allerton. The team created a large-scale book containing artworks, research information and poetry written by group members.



Tea-Party Poem

White, green, yellow, oolong, black, fermented -
Bright, clean, mellow, cooling, dark, demented.
Six different tea types, six different flavours,
Six different cupful's to sip and to savour.
To some they're delicious to others quite vile,
Some teas bring a frown and others a smile.
A treat or a terror for each of the senses,
All of them born of Camellia Sinensis.
Some flavours subtle and others much bolder,
Beauty's in the eye of the teacup holder ...

Teacup Tales

Around 100 teacups and saucers were decorated during our winter at home project which included a tea party gathering with a tea quiz, poetry writing and creative activities.

'It has been good to connect with new people through a shared activity. I enjoyed using my imagination and the chance to learn new things. Thank you'

A Room in Leeds groups

'A Room in Leeds' project blended traditional Skippko arts workshop techniques with an exhibition, a publication and a performance. During 2023/24 four groups took part in the project creating visual artworks, taking 'objects' from the home as their starting point.

'Lifted my spirits, my confidence increased participating in group activities and increased belief in myself.'

'This is the absolute highlight of my week, meeting up with friends who were once strangers and knowing we can ask for help and be supported.'



AVSED members created a large scale fireplace based on a miniature model made by one of the participants; OPAL members shared stories of tea drinking and made a large teapot, complete with tea related words pouring from the spout; Aspire CBS members projected animated characters onto a large collage and the Photography group created a collection of object related photographs which were made into stained glass window pieces. We also sent out 130 miniature wooden houses that were decorated by people from across Leeds, who shared their stories of objects of personal importance.

**Camera-arderie
exhibition at HEART**

Camera-arderie (formed in 2016) is a dedicated group of people who discovered the love of photography through Skippko projects. Following these projects they set up their own group, continuing to meet to take and exhibit photographs. Skippko artists Nicki and Sally mentor the group when they need extra support, such as curating and hanging this wonderful exhibition at HEART gallery in Headingley, Leeds.



'Skippko took me from a lot of mental pain that I was going through at the right time, they took me to another level with my photography.'

Pop ups

During the first year of 'Home from Home,' we facilitated several pop-up taster sessions to enable people to have a go at creative activities and to generate ideas for projects they may want to pursue. This included visual arts activities for people with mental health problems at Bewerley Croft; paper crafts with a Mexican slant; textiles at New Bewerley Primary School and consultation sessions with our Under the Canopy and Research Team groups.



'Skipko has kept me going in very difficult times it is a playtime for adults, where you are respected, valued and cared for. It is as given me confidence to find a part time job at Leeds.'

Year Two 2024-25



Tales of HOPE

'Tales of HOPE' celebration of place project involved older people, children and parents creating 3 large stained glass effect panels, working with Halton Moor and Osmondthorpe Project for Everyone. During 2024/25, the group took research trips to look at stained glass including at The Leeds Library (to see an original stained-glass piece from Osmondthorpe Hall dated 1598), tested lots of different glass paints and techniques and gathered lots of stories about the local area.

'I felt down before I came here today but it has really helped me.'

**A Room in Leeds
Abundance
performance &
exhibition at Leeds
City Museum**

In a first for Skippko, 'Abundance' featured participants working as performers with a theatre director and included a presentation in a professional theatre, The Carriageworks; alongside an exhibition of work created during 'A Room in Leeds' project during year one. A display of the work then went on show at Leeds City Museum for four months including the 130 little wooden houses.

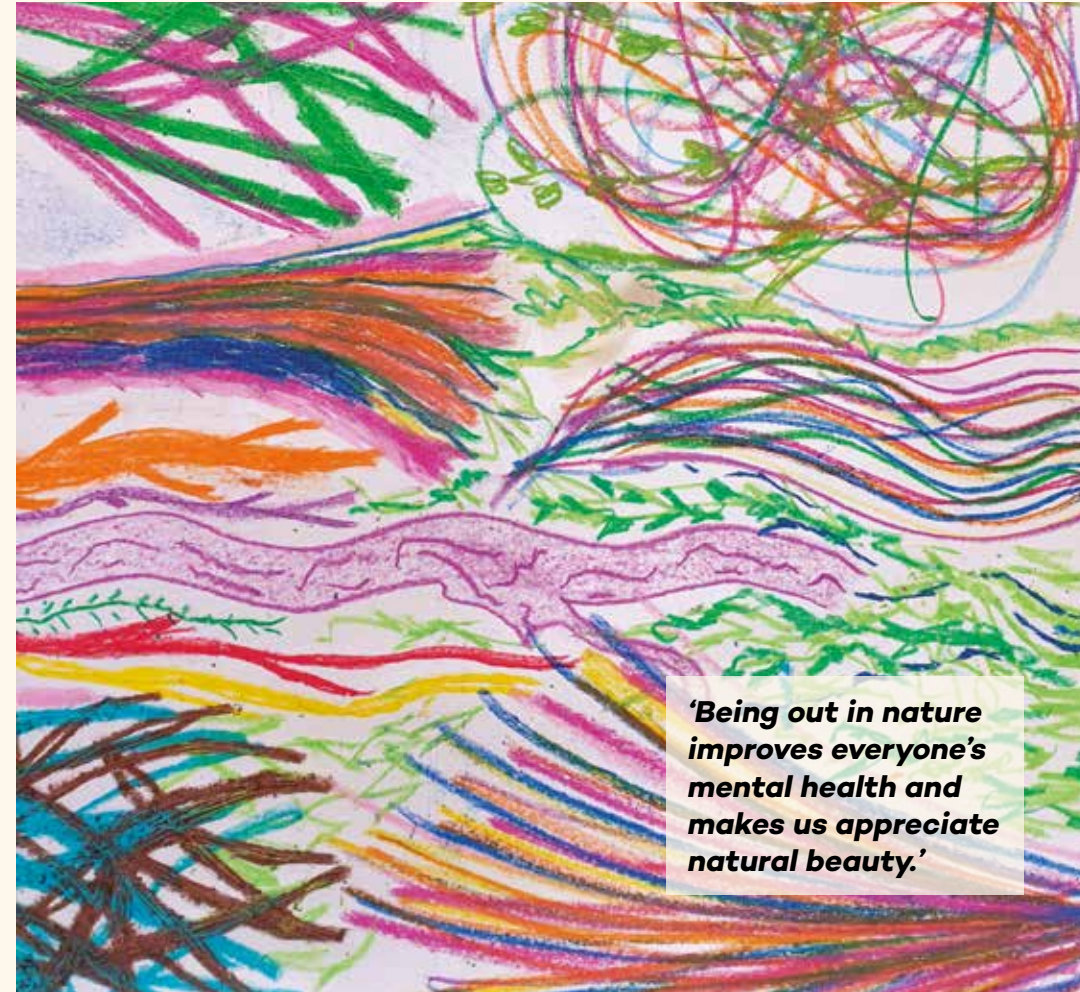


***'The personal
benefits to me
were massive.
Since Covid, I have
lost quite a bit
of my confidence
and being part of
this performance
definitely reminded
me of who I was
before.'***

Winter Wonderlights

110 packs of creative materials and guidance were sent out to 7 groups and 40 individuals across Leeds for this year's winter at home project. All the wonderful lights were displayed together at a sharing event in March 2025.

'A really good project to work on over the dark winter months. Good resources in the box. The instruction leaflet was easy to follow and it gave me lots of inspiration. This project helped me get through the dark days in January and February.'



'Being out in nature improves everyone's mental health and makes us appreciate natural beauty.'

Under the Canopy

Due to popular demand, Under the Canopy project continued during years Two and Three of 'Home from Home.' The natural environment of Hollybush Conservation Centre providing the perfect backdrop to explore the great outdoors, natural materials, storytelling and poetry writing. Having lunch together in the café at Hollybush also became an important part of the project – time for people to socialise over healthy food and support each other through life's ups and downs.

Skipko Community Research Team – Top Stats

The team produced the idea of creating their own version of Top Trumps: ‘Top Stats’ showcasing a range of statues from across Leeds. All the artworks and information to create the cards were made and researched by group members. Everyone had the chance to play ‘Top Stats’ at our ‘In the Frame’ event, July 25.

‘I feel empowered when I see the results of my work. It’s good that I get to choose what I work with and what subject. That means a lot.’



‘It was very beneficial to be able to tell my story, It brought back some happy memories.’

Camera Connections pilot

‘Camera Connections’ photography project enabled six groups of older people from across Leeds to gain a taster of portrait photography over three sessions each. Inspiration came through looking at artists work, lively discussions and experimentation, with each participant able to share their own portraits in a way they wish to be seen. The groups involved were AgeUK Leeds, Otley Action for Older People, Burmantofts Community Friends, Seacroft Friends and Neighbours, Health for All and AVSED.

Monthly Art Club

Monthly Art Club was set up in response to people asking what they could do after their Skippko project had ended. Having the certainty of lottery funding meant that we could respond to their requests and the Monthly Art Club was established. The art club has an 'art school' feel with participants exploring sketchbook exercises, different materials, group and individual pieces, plus a healthy lunch together.



'I'm surprised at the different perspective it has given me – I've had no previous experience of art and being creative, but I'm enjoying and getting a lot out of the sessions.'



'I've come along completely out of my comfort zone never having done anything acting or art and craft, last time I did art was when I was about 12 so it's been a completely new experience for me and I love it.'

Performance and Making Club

Performance and Making Club grew out of our 'Abundance' performance at the Carriageworks Theatre. Participants had got the bug for performing and wanted more. Again, the certainty of lottery funding meant that we could respond, and the performance club was born.

'For me, the best bits were really getting to know each other over the whole process, supporting each other and sharing our personal stories.'

Sharing Events – April and October 2024

During 'Home from Home' we facilitated several sharing events. The events were about celebrating the achievements of participants and for people to meet each other across the different projects and groups. Sharing events became a great opportunity for us to gather feedback from participants about the direction of the programme and to find out what they wanted to happen next.



'Skippko has brought me back to life! How amazing you all are and I don't think you realise what you do for us, mentally and physically! A cuppa, bread and soup, a meeting, socialising and creating – but so much more. Hopefully never ending. A great big thank you!'

'You have no idea how these creative sessions have helped me. I have made lots of new connections with like-minded people. I feel so much more positive about the future. With Skippko I feel a lot less isolated/lonely.'

Year Three 2025-26



'Felt very proud to have taken part in this project and seeing my ideas had been added to the project.'

Tales of HOPE

During the 2nd year of 'Tales of HOPE' group members finalised their designs and made 3 large stained glass effect panels which will hang in Halton Moor and Osmondthorpe Project for

Everyone's new venue at the Temple Learning Academy in Leeds. We held a celebration event at Skippko where participants received a framed copy of the work and a certificate.

'Seeing the finished panels, I felt totally emotional, pride with the way it was finished, proud of the bit I saw I had done.'

Flowers of the Sky

In medieval times comets, meteors, meteorites and shooting stars were poetically referred to as 'Flowers of the Sky.' During this year's winter at home project, we made our own hand woven 'flowers of the sky' and hung them together during a sharing event.

'I would like to say thank you to you all for organising Tuesday. It was brilliant to see our beautiful art pieces displayed together and I loved doing the craft activities.'



Under the Canopy

The words of one 'Under the Canopy' participant perfectly sums up what this project has meant to people.

'It's the best thing that I have to help me through. You're surrounded by people that don't judge you and help you to see things that you have never appreciated before. It's a surprise every week – nature, trees, crafts, drawing, writing. I feel like my

inner child comes through. Sharing Matthew's hot herbal teas; listening to Matthew read poems and stories; Anne showing us different types of natural crafts; growing seeds, painting, picking up leaves, choosing a tree and sharing lunch with people

that show you compassion and have empathy.

I feel so lucky. I feel like I belong. Life is better for me whilst I am part of 'Under the Canopy.' It gives you hope and purpose and a reason for living.'

Skipoko Community Research Team – ‘wish you were here’

During this project the team have researched stories about people who holidayed in Spain from the late 1950s to the present-day. Especially in the 1960s and 1970s, when millions of working-class Britons who had never travelled abroad before enjoyed new leisure opportunities in Spain. We have been working alongside Professor Peter Anderson, School of History, University of Leeds to undertake first hand audio interviews with people who travelled to Spain which will feature in Peter's research and a publication.

‘I like the socialising aspect and how everyone's bringing in different bits of information. It's like we're creating a brand-new holiday that we've shared together – bringing together all our different memories.’



Camera-arدير exhibition at High Petergate, York

Camera-arدير took on the challenge of curating and hanging an exhibition of their photographs at Skipoko's pop up gallery in High Petergate, York, with the support of Skipoko artists Nicki and Sally. The exhibition was very well received with many great comments...

‘A clever exhibition, with photographs that get more interesting every time you look.’

‘Loved it! Reminds us of the hidden depths in familiar objects and places.’

Monthly Art Club

Due to popular demand Monthly Art Club continued during year three of 'Home from Home.' The dates are changed each term, meaning that different participants can attend. Participants have explored a huge range of techniques and created both individual and group pieces.

'Socialising with other people, this has helped me over the winter months. It has given me a positive focus every month. After art club I have come away uplifted'



'I always wonder how we are going to top the last project. But we somehow do!'

Performance and Making Club: 'Up Top'

In our first project, 'Abundance', we meditated on the stuff we accumulate in life, in the next, Escapism, we explored our attempts to escape paramount reality and in our third project we were inspired by a story from Irene in our group which was all about hats. We called this project "Up Top" so that we could include all head coverings, such as scarves which

don't come under the category of hats. The performance included three personal stories about hats and scarves from the group as well as some instant physical picture making which celebrates "doing before thinking", "copying is absolutely allowable", "be obvious, not original"; all these things help spontaneity, creativity and fun which is what we aim for in the group.

The group perform in blue boiler suits, which has become our performing costume and follows in the tradition of surreal artists who adopted a dress code which would not make them stand out from the crowd, so making their actions surreal not themselves. Our performing troupe would not stand out in some of the industrial units in Barkston House.

Art Club on tour – Touchstone

Touchstone approached us about facilitating activities with their members in their own venue, and so we took art club on tour to Harehills. Over several taster sessions group members created their own folded books using a range of visual art techniques.

‘Always welcomed and included at whatever level I can join in at.’



‘Learning more about photography makes me happy as I find it very therapeutic. It has brought out a creative side in me I didn’t know existed.’

Camera Connections

The aim of Camera Connections project with older people, was to create a body of work that explored the feelings and emotions of what it is like ‘at our age now.’ We started by looking at various photographer’s work to discover the emotions they evoked. Many wonderful group

conversations were had about how and why you connect with some photos more than others. Many participants picked up and used a digital SLR for the first time, whilst some brought their own cameras or phone camera to use. A wonderful selection of objects, personal to the participants,

which had meaning or an emotion attached to them, were brought in to photograph and wow what amazing photos were shot!

The groups involved were AgeUK Leeds, AVSED, Burmantofts Community Friends, Crossgates Good Neighbours and Touchstone Dementia Support.



Me-Time Practice

Me-time practice was a short research and development project following requests by participants to have more time for self-reflection. Me-time is hard to come by for many of our participants. There are so many different demands on our

time, and it happens so often that we get to the end of the day and realise we've done nothing for ourselves. When this is the rule, and not the exception, we can feel like we're crashing, burning out, or fading away. Sarah-Jane and Oscar helped

'It gave me the motivation to get up, dressed and out of the house. I've been more mindful and aware of the need to take time to do things that nourish me and bring me joy.'

participants to create, build, and protect their me-time. Through creative activities and simple routines, they practiced different methods and techniques of finding and nurturing quality time and space for themselves.



'I have loved every minute of my time at Skippko, learnt so much, made lots of friends and felt much better about myself. Long may it continue!!'

In the Frame sharing event

'In the Frame' was a new venture for Skippko, which brought participants and artists together to share their talents. The event was an arena for people to share ideas and projects in development with an audience, in order to get feedback. From poetry to performance, drawing and raku clay demonstrations, we had a wonderful time, sharing ideas and supporting each other's creative endeavours.

Ripples and Reflections sharing day

As our sharing days developed, people's confidence in sharing their views with us grew. During Ripples and Reflections, we asked participants to share their thoughts on the knock-on effects of taking part in creative activities at Skippko. How did coming to Skippko enable them to take the skills and knowledge to other parts of their lives? And did the effects of being creative in a safe space, benefit other areas of their lives? A marvellous day of ideas, sharing, creativity and poetry.



'It has brought out my inner child, laughter, joy, peace and happiness, mental health and wellbeing, hope, purpose. At Skippko I belong.'



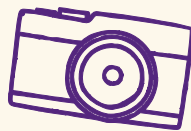
Skippko Fest

Skippko Fest took place over two days at Barkston House in Holbeck. Participants from across the three-year programme were invited to come along to celebrate achievements, reconnect with old friends and share project artwork in a mix of performance, creative activities, poetry, and much more. Everyone received a copy of this 'Home from Home' publication, as well as learning about the impact of the programme through reports and audio recordings.

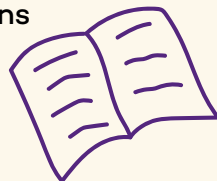
'Skippko has been a breath of fresh air and a never-ending supply of inspiration and ideas to try.'

Three years in Numbers

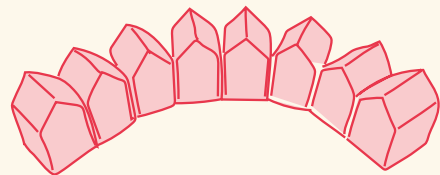
The programme, funded by National Lottery Community Fund, spanned **Spring 2023 to Spring 2026** and in that time, we:



Created and implemented **33** projects together with **6** publications



Collaborated with **20** individual third sector organisations



Worked with **1,472** participants drawn from **23** of the City's **29** postcode districts, all of which lay in the **1%** most deprived

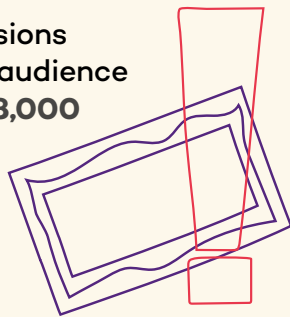


Worked with participants from all **5** of the City's key priority areas to tackle health inequalities

Presented **1,608** workshop sessions



Provided **342** exhibition sessions attracting an audience in excess of **68,000**

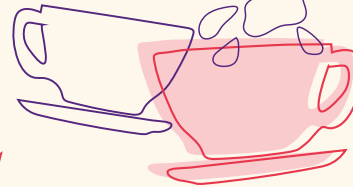


55% of our participants were older people

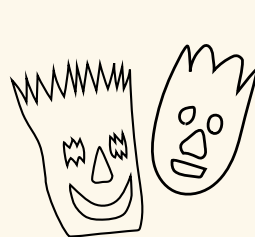
25% of participants self-identified as having a disability



21% of participants were carers



Matched the **£371,000** from National Lottery Community Fund with **£470,000** of our funding, totalling **£841,000** income over three years



Provided work for **15** local artist facilitators, coordinator and, independent evaluator / critical friend totalling **£250,000**



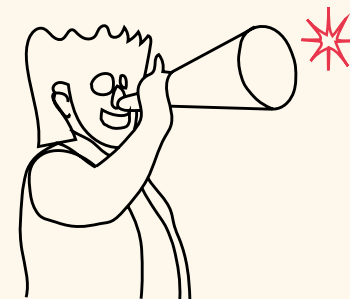
Invested **£100,000** to Leeds City Council by way of rent, rates and service charge



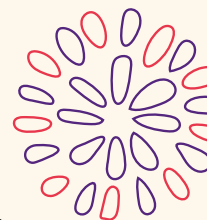
Invested in excess of **£125,000** by way of local purchase of goods and services



Invested in excess of **£50,000** to the local transport economy



Delivered the entire programme with an office team of **3** part time workers at a cost of **17%** of total income



"a lovely chance to be alive and playful in wonderful nature and company"



"feels like we're a big cuddly family"

Acknowledgements

Project Partners: Age UK Leeds, Armley Helping Hands, Aspire CBS, AVSED, Bewerley Croft, Burmantofts Community Friends, Camera-arderie group, Cross Gates Good Neighbours, Good Grief Guiseley, Health for All, HOPE Project, MAE Care, MHA South Leeds, Middleton Elderly Aid, New Bewerley primary school, OPAL, Otley Action for older people, Seacroft Friends and Neighbours, Touchstone BME Dementia Service, York NHS Foundation Trust.

Director: Arthur Stafford, Skippko

Project Manager: Cath Brooke, Skippko

Finance Officer: Steve Procter, Skippko

Learning Partner: Rachel Vernelle

Artists: Emma Baim, Annie Beech, Matthew Bellwood, Anne Crowther, Alice Duckworth, Rozi Fuller, Anthony Haddon, Sarah Jane Mason, Oscar Stafford, Sally Storr, Nicki Taylor, Emily Whitaker.

Project Volunteers: Alice, Amanda, Amy, Christine, Derek, Harvinder, Jo, Joy, Karen, Pearl, Sam, Sarah.

And most importantly the many individual participants who have attended our projects with enthusiasm and commitment. It's been an absolute pleasure to work alongside you all.

Design and Layout: Donna Heath

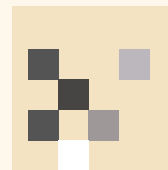
Skipppko Board of Trustees: Gabrielle Hamilton, Emily Harvey, Val Hewison, Jackie Hobson

Skipppko is an arts organisation based in Holbeck, South Leeds, formed in October 1988 by two female artists. For more than 30 years we have committed ourselves to developing creative projects with communities across the North of England.

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Thank you to our 'Home from Home' funders





home from home



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