

## Do the people of Hull know the power and reach of their voice?

In order to investigate we propose to **Hack the city...**

...by bringing back **Hulls Angels and the Wiring Gang.**

Reinventing a new role for 'Rediffusion' 30 years to the day since they locked the doors on the Hull headquarters\*, Aswarm will celebrate this unique piece of Hull's history in a playful and surreal series of interventions.

The re-formed Hulls Angels, informed and in partnership with original staff from Rediffusion, will transform familiar urban landscapes into extraordinary experiences in order to<sup>1</sup>:

### **Explore how we can create a sense of intrigue within sites of everyday rituals...**

- Animating the places where people live, work & play
- Interrupting everyday experiences with astonishing occurrences that engage new audiences
- Enabling people to reconnect with their public spaces and understand the power of their voice to make positive change possible.
- Catalyse a sense of ownership over 'their' public domain

- Celebrating things that have happened in Hull and which could only happen in Hull
- Inviting people to look at their City through a new lens
- Creating worm holes that connects the people of Hull with one another and to far off, mysterious lands

### **Inspire curiosity & unlock the imaginations of people across the city & beyond...**

- Connecting individuals and communities to one another through dynamic shared experiences

---

<sup>1</sup> Rediffusion was the trading name of Broadcast Relay Service Ltd, formed in 1928. In 1929 the company introduced its first cable radio service in Hull, the first of its kind in the UK. It issued special Rediffusion speaker units and a selector switch to households across the city enabling people to listen to the radio. The cables can still be found in households networked across the city.

In the 90's a group of local hackers including Cap'N B & Gremlin, published online instructions for how to hack the network.

Hull's Angels were Rediffusion's promotional team and had role calls before work every morning. The Wiring Gang were responsible for laying the cable across the city.

### Catalyse Magic...

- Bringing intrigue to the suburbs
- Inviting people to play
- Playing with expectations
- Making the impossible possible
- Prompting engagement from the sceptical
- Embracing the surreal in order to create experiences with long lasting memories

### Why Hacks?

The hack transforms something familiar into something magical and gives people the agency to reconsider the potential of their public amenities.

We want to breathe a new life into Hull's defunct amenities in order to unlock people's imagination and allow them to see their city through a new lens. By creating contemporary art that people can stumble across and affect in tangible ways we reach new people in unexpected ways.

### What Hacks?

#### Hack one: Voice as Magic

*Inviting audiences to play with the potential of their voice in imaginative ways*

The K6 phone box is defunct.

The K6 phone box is stuck in its role as a monument of civic pride.

How can we harness its symbolic value (of Hull's Independence and resilience), to explore the power of the individual's voice within the city today?

We propose to Hack the K6 as Hull's Angels and use it as a voice capturing booth or 'broadcast relay service musical cabin'<sup>2</sup>

The booth will enable people's voice to trigger magical and unexpected transformations within their immediate urban environment.



*Hull's Angels*



*The Wiring Gang*

For example:

- The street lights flicker in response to the volume of the voice
- Hit the right note and the 'faulty' (we broke it) fountain is activated and lit up with green light
- The post box exudes green smoke in response to low pitched notes
- Hit the highest (god) note and you can make the church cross ignite with EL wire
- Dial Anson Electronics and bring his shop front to life
- Dial Grannies Kitchen to see what happens there...

nb. If we have issues getting access to public amenities we can re-channel our resources into self sufficient pre-rigged cars and/or fountains and access public buildings to play with (like the library).

On the final evening of the hack we propose a finale moment that would Hack the rediffusion branded cherry picker van (which we will be hiring for the rig) and trigger a confetti cannon from it's platform.

## **Hack two: Voices to take you places**

*Challenging boredom in the suburbs with words of the people of Hull (past and present, famous and unknown)*

Bus stops are boring.

How much time do the people of Hull spend bored at bus stops?

How can we transport people to other places whilst they wait?

We propose to hack the bus stops near Rediffusion HQ and 'rewire' the many voices of Hull into a digital text display panel for a captive audience.

The display will provide a mechanism to discuss the potential for 2017's interventions and test responses to our R&D hacks happening in different parts of the city. By developing new content with local schools and creative writing groups and channelling the words generated in Hack 3 to this location we celebrate both famous and unknown voices equally. e.g from Lucy Beaumont to Phillip Larkin, John Prescott to Wilberforce, Maureen Lipman to Luke Campbell. The lollypop lady's haiku about daydreaming at bus stops is presented alongside Thomas Feren's words to champion women's rights)

Bus stop waiters are invited to reflect, discuss and document their personal opinions and ideas on an evolving bus stop brain map, facilitated by tea-making Hull's Angels, heating kettles on pop-up wood burning stoves (strangely emitting green tinged smoke...).

### **Hack Three: Voice as Currency**

*Exploring the power, reach and resonance of Hull's Voice*

Empty booths in shopping centres are uninspiring

Shopping centres have become great gathering hubs but their purpose is for commerce.

What other purpose could they serve?

Could they be sites to explore and inspire change?

We propose to create an 'information receiving booth' to record both historic voices in contemporary vernacular and current contributions inspired by change makers of the past.

By populating the central glass atrium space with a flock of speaking umbrellas we will create a swarm of Hullian voices old and new, voices you can walk amongst and find connections between. The audience becomes the curator of their own experience and this intervention, in the heart of the shopping centre, becomes the catalyst that inspires them to contribute, lending their voice to historic words or their words for other to voice.

People will be invited to make a choice from a crop of tags, suspended in amongst the speakers.

The tags will be from two sources, firstly from change makers of the past (gathered with support from and in partnership with WISE, freedom festival and Lucy Beaument) and secondly in response to a question, posted in situ, inviting people to consider the power of their own voice.

Hull's Angels<sup>3</sup> welcome visitors with glasses of fresh mint or ginger tea and support them to select the tag of their choice before taking it to the 'Information receiving booth', located in a rented market stall near to the atrium. Their voices are recorded and added into the installation in situ.

The voices gathered at Northpoint will travel to Wilberforce Gardens to mingle with voices from across the globe and be shared with an audience of thousands at the international freedom festival in September 2016.

Hack three will capture and celebrate the distinctive Hull accent, with the broadest vowels in the UK, as a powerful voice with a global reach.

---

<sup>3</sup> Aswarm, volunteers from Hull 2017 & Hull University's creative music technology BA course students

## Why there?

In 2017 we are interested in playing with connections across the city and beyond. For the R&D we propose to work across three distinct and different areas of the city, exploring the latent potential of each and forming connections between the three by using the historically inspired narrative of Rediffusion, Hull's Angels and the Wiring gang.

### Site of Hack 1: **Boulevard** (Riverside)

The location's vintage street lights, fountain sculpture, library and wide tree-lined roads position it as a frontier, its opulent street furniture is far removed from the sparse roads of the more socially deprived areas that it butts up against. The layout and proximity of shops and amenities enables us to create a hack that animates multiple aspects of the urban landscape simultaneously and bridges divides between communities by inviting people from neighbouring roads to play with the 'posh street furniture'.

### Site of Hack 2: **Beverly Road** (Wyke)

Home of the original Rediffusion HQ (now ASDA and GP surgery), this area will be our linking site and grounds our narrative in an undervalued, and for the most part, unknown site of historical significance. A site that hosts, in addition to Rediffusion, Fountain road with no fountain, a derelict cinema and grade 2 listed British extraction building, this is a place of forgotten industry and latent potential. We propose to awaken the ghost of the Rediffusion centre in 2016, extracting voices from across the city (past and present) to play with in public spaces. In 2017 we propose to build on this by expanding at this location to incorporate the physical relic of the extraction building and both extract and diffuse these voices on an industrial scale.

### Site of Hack 3: **Bransholme** (North Carr)

Northpoint shopping centre naturally lends itself to exploring the relationship people have with Hull's most infamous, far reaching voices. With roundabouts named during the 100th year anniversary activities for the abolition of slavery act, this is a site which celebrates social reform but raises the question of what this means to the people who live there now. e.g. Exploring the freedom of public space within a privately owned shopping centre and exploring the potential for individual voices to facilitate change just off from Change roundabout, surrounded by buildings and institutions named after Hull's poster boy, Wilberforce.