



The Story of a School

Ox Close Primary School, Spennymoor, Durham

"Spennymoor Ox" was a community celebration of the history and contemporary use of Ox Close Community Garden adjacent to the primary school. It was designed to offer a lyrical evocation of the relatively recent but easily forgotten past and provide a permanent link to it.

The Grand Opening took place on Friday 17th September 2010 with afternoon and evening programmes of a variety of events marking the main features of the garden: the pathways, the beech circle, the new log cabin, the mound, the mini beast zone, the pond, the bird hide and the growing beds.

Since January the children have been involved in working with Storyline topics highlighting the historical themes of the area – farming, coal mining and steel production.

With the marvellous support and help from The Centre for Creativity and Learning, Creative Partnerships Durham, a group of creative practitioners from 'Dead Good Guides' created three significant installations at the heart of the programme. The first was a temporary large sculptural clay kiln in the shape of a fire-breathing ox. This was designed to fire the previously modelled tiny clay oxen on the day of the event. The second was a large metal sculpture of an ox but with tuned pipes that linked the steelwork motif with the ancient role of the farm with oxen.

Finally, the listening post which invites visitors to listen to taped recordings of local stories and memories gathered from the community. This device is started with a handle and then the batteries, which have been charged with solar power, take over. The low volume sound is only heard on demand.

