

Festival of Bathing Beauties, Mablethorpe – FESTIVAL

The Festival of Bathing Beauties (FOBB) is an exciting extension of an imaginative project conceived by artist Michael Trainor. With funding from the Coastal Action Zone programme, he created a gallery of dramatic new seaside architecture along a ten mile stretch of the Lincolnshire coast, between Mablethorpe and Chapel St. Leonards (www.bathingbeauties.org.uk).

Trainor seized on the opportunity offered by LCSl funding to take the Bathing Beauties programme a step further, and to work with the Mablethorpe Tourism Forum to build a new annual festival for the resort. In September 2006, the Forum was amazed by the international reaction to the pilot edition of FOBB which saw the exhibition of scaled model entries for the major international competition 'Re-imagine the Beach Hut for the 21st Century'. 240 models from artists in 15 countries were displayed. The four winners were offered a commission to build their huts – launched at FOBB 2007 alongside the 'Gin and Tonic', Trainor's own beach hut.

- 'Halcyon-Hut' draws inspiration from traditional beach huts. At night however, it transforms into an abstract art object, creating a glowing beacon.
- 'Eyes Wide sHut' is a glamorous 'picture frame' hut featuring two ornate hand-crafted timber frames, carrying floor to ceiling dark tinted mirrored panels.
- 'Jabba' re-interprets the idea of the beach hut by drawing on its more ancient predecessor – the cave!
- 'Gazing and Canoodling' has an indulgent interior with its Canoodling Bench inviting hours spent in the company of an intimate companion.

The first full edition of FOBB took place in September 2007. The Mablethorpe Tourism Forum took on the organisation, supported by Mantle Arts, a professional arts company which the LCSl grant enabled them to engage.

FOBB 2007 succeeded in its aim to generate economic benefits for the town. The event was deliberately timed for the late summer, to extend the visitor season and encourage businesses to stay open longer. Architectural aficionados descended upon Mablethorpe from across the UK – alerted by the word of mouth publicity stimulated by the successful exhibition at The Hub, National Centre for Craft and Design during the summer.

Mablethorpe saw 10,000 additional visitors to the resort over the weekend of the festival, generating an estimated secondary spend of £60,000 for the local economy. By supporting the Festival of Bathing Beauties, LCSl has been able to assist the town to take the investment of the Coastal Action Zone programme further. The Mablethorpe cultural and tourism offer has been further extended, and the drive to bring the highest quality contemporary arts to the east coast in a dramatic and positive fashion has been fully realised. Uniquely, FOBB engages all age groups and has had a major economic impact in extending the tourist season. Without LCSl funding the festival wouldn't have been possible – and Mablethorpe would have lost out on a major new feature for the local community and visitors alike.

'I haven't seen so many people in Mablethorpe for 30 years!'

Nicki Gardner, East Lindsey District Council

'LCSl has been instrumental in bringing arts to the east coast, boosting the tourism industry and extending the tourist season, especially in Mablethorpe and Sutton on Sea.'

*Helen Matthews,
Mablethorpe
Tourism Forum*

Image below: Festival of Bathing Beauties – FESTIVAL

