

Bolder Vision Photography Club evolved from a photography project originally funded by Growing Bolder (a 10 year participatory arts project in the Mansfield area).

When Growing Bolder could no longer fund the sessions, photographer Tracey Foster agreed to run a photography club for free. They now meet every Friday in and around Mansfield.

The Participants:



Angela Bartholomew is 66 and has been engaged with Growing Bolder courses since the project started ten years ago. She joined the photography course in January 2009 and has been attending ever since.

Expectations and Reality

Angela's motivation in joining the course was to improve her photographic skills and use of the camera, rather than just taking snaps on holiday.

"I'd had the digital camera as a present and wasn't really sure how to get the best from it. It seemed the ideal opportunity. I'd also wanted to start working on a computer I thought it was just the ideal opportunity to get on with both areas – the computer and the digital camera work."

Her expectations were that she would become more proficient in using her camera but the course exceeded this: *"I expected that I would learn more about the camera, but I wasn't expecting all the fabulous tricks that we have learnt and that's been really enjoyable. I guess I expected to be sitting in a room and just taking boring photos and it's been anything but that. It's been absolutely fabulous, which is why I'm still here."*

"Tracey has exceeded my expectations because she has been so good to us in encouraging us to take photos, to see things that we wouldn't normally see when we are taking the photos."

Enjoyment through engagement

If learning new skills has been an enjoyable part of participation there have been other aspects which have enriched Angela's life including:

"Meeting new friends – and they are true friends now. I've been to places that I wouldn't normally go to on trips – it's been really super. We've been to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park- not a place I would ever have booked a trip too – but we had a fabulous day out there and took all sorts of unusual photos. We've been into Mansfield on a trip and it's the first time in Mansfield that I

have looked up and seen all the beautiful architecture. It's something you don't do when you are just shopping."

Evaluating the impact of participating

"My life has been enriched through the course and use of the camera. The only thing I haven't enjoyed is when we don't meet! When the Growing Bolder finished we thought – oh that's it. But Tracey came through and said she was willing to form the Bolder Vision Photographic Club for us and that has been fantastic. She gives her time for free and I think it is because she gains something too, which is lovely".

Studying photography has also enhanced another of her skills– painting: *"I do photography and I also like to paint, so I have used photos that I have taken and made them into pictures. That has been a fantastic thing for me to do."*

"I just don't want it to end. Everything about the course has been inspirational."



Diane Parker is 64 and has been retired for two years from working in a council tax office. She is a cardmaker and attends regular card making classes.

She was given a digital camera one Christmas and then went on holiday: *"I took disastrous photos. So I thought, I have to learn how to use it properly. I took some photos of my grandchildren on the beach and you couldn't see because there was too bright sunshine."*

Expectations and Reality

The course wasn't exactly what she has been expecting initially – she thought that there would be more practical instruction in camera use:

"Tracey couldn't go through every camera and show each person how to use it. Instead she encouraged us creatively, to focus on something and to use that to focus, to guide you there - not just to click and move on. We've now progressed on to the computers so we can use them properly and download photos and edit them."

Enjoyment through engagement

A major factor in Diane's enjoyment has been meeting people and *"gaining the confidence to take more photographs and take them wisely, plus getting out and about. I've really enjoyed it."*

Evaluating the impact of participating

"Doing this project has made me feel I'm not on my own, there are other people in the same category – amateurs who want to learn. It has given me confidence to take more photographs and use the camera. Before it was just sat in a cupboard. Eventually I hope to incorporate my photos into my card-making but I haven't quite got there yet!"