

Ian's Story

**Head of Participation and Engagement
Lakeland Arts.**

Making strong connections between local people, visitors and the stories/cultural heritage of the area.



Lakeland Arts is an arts and heritage organisation that includes: [Abbot Hall Art Gallery](#) and [Museum of Lakeland Life & Industry](#) in Kendal, [Blackwell, The Arts & Crafts House](#) and the brand-new [Windermere Jetty Museum of Boats, Steam and Stories](#) both situated in Bowness.

Describe your work

My role is to attract local people and visitors to the organisation through arts, culture and the heritage of the area.

How does this fit with wider team at Lakeland Arts?

I manage a small team of practitioners, workshop leaders, artists, freelancers etc.

There is another team at the museum that drives income.

Describe your typical day

My work is largely about project management, working creatively with different organisations; theatre directors, dancers, writers, artists.

What do you love about your work?

I love working with young people, arts and participation. Art and creativity are so important in taking communities forward, thinking differently. It's also good for well-being.

My best day is seeing our venues very active and full of people, engaging with the arts and enjoying what they are doing in a creative way.

Creativity is a great way to enable people to connect, be listened to.

Which skills are essential to running a successful business?

Working in an organisation like this it is essential to have a shared aim. Key is clarifying what that is for everyone from those working on the front desk, in customer service roles through to the chief executive.

How do you make a living from your business? What is your business model?

Most of this type of work relies on charitable donations, trusts or funding so it's useful to have a good knowledge of funders in the heritage and arts sectors. It's also important to understand how arts, culture and heritage organisations work.

There are different trusts and foundations that provide funding for projects (National Heritage Lottery Fund, The Clore Foundation, Arts Councils, Esme Fairbairn Trust fund cultural organisations to connect with local people and audiences). Organisations write bids and if they are successful, they receive funding but they often have to meet very specific conditions.

If you could work with anyone in the world, who would that be?

Designer, Thomas Heatherwick.

Why are you based in the Lakes and Dales?

Working in the Lakes is good for wellbeing but transport is an issue. It's about quality of life and different mindset.

It's a beautiful place to live and work. Creativity can take you all over the world, but do come back and share what you've learned.

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