

Introduction

HOMEBAKED: A Perfect Recipe

A journey of learning how to take responsibility together.

July 2014

Liverpool Biennial 2014 is opening and the bakery has just gone through its third refurbishment. The CLT is making definite plans for the development of housing in the rest of the block. Homebaked is now independent as an organisation and many of the most difficult hurdles have been overcome. This seems a good time to take stock. We've been trying to get this journal up before the Biennial opening, but as always, things have taken longer than expected. However, as we all know, you need to give things time to rise.

Descriptions of the project have been sent around in many forms: funding bids, reviews, poetry, personal letters, performance scripts, evaluation, building and planning reports, in-depth writing by imbedded researchers and, of course, recipes. Some of them are part of this journal, others of the extended archive of 2Up 2Down/Homebaked.

As an introduction, here we look back on some of the determining steps that we've taken along the journey of what is now called Homebaked.

One of the first things we did when setting up camp in the former Mitchell's bakery in February 2011 was to put up a timeline, as a frieze running along the wall of the front space. This twofold timeline marked the steps that needed to be taken, both in the social and in the building process spanning 2011–2014, in an attempt to map the way in which the 'a small-scale alternative' to the very apparent failure of Housing Market Renewal Initiative could be built for and with the community. Looking back, the timeline seems quite an accurate mapping of the actual journey, although the road has been curvier and bumpier to travel, and it's still continuing.

The journal you're about to read might give you an idea of some of these bumps, the moments when we seemed stuck in a loop and the freewheeling downhill. Like all such accounts, this one is slightly subjective, developing from the I that is Jeanne van Heeswijk to a we that stands for a growing and changing Community of Homebaked. When putting this account together even we didn't always agree on the exact succession of things and had to ask ourselves and others: how did this happen? For this journal, we commissioned people from within the project, as well as those who witnessed it from the outside. Their voices are woven into this narrative.

This is not a project – it is a communal on-going process

End of 2009

The first visits with the Biennial staff to the Anfield/Breckfield area. Although the north of Liverpool isn't unfamiliar territory to me, since I'd worked in Bootle in the past when trying to set up a project with FACT, the actual state of the Anfield/Breckfield area, the boarded-up houses, the fragmented and displaced community, is overwhelming.

They show me Granton Road (the birthplace of one of our members, as I find out later, who will become an integral part of the journey). They show me the small village green that the Biennial had used the summer before to hold a community fair as a result of workshops done with NEET kids (young people not in employment or education) on imagining alternative uses for the area. Interesting collages had come out of one of the workshops, led by a local architect.

For the rest of my visit, I'm accompanied by an artist who was born and raised in the area, and although she's reluctant to give me the nitty-gritty details of what it meant to grow up here, her way of formulating the tensions and conflicts in the area are a great insight. She's especially cautious since recent television programmes such as 'The Secret Millionaire' have been built on the stereotypically negative image of violence, drug-abuse, copper theft and the recurrent fires that some people think were actively enforced in order to roll out the red carpet for the Renewal plan.

As Jayne Lawless would later say in our interview while walking through Granton Road: 'The way I understand it is that there was a big pot of gold at the European union. In order to access this pot the area had to tick many boxes in the magical world of deprivation. So suddenly we were told all the time that we were from this deprived area. I'm not deprived. I don't feel deprived. We've all got food and clothes, both parents work. How am I deprived?'

In Becoming Homebaked Samantha Jones describes the process:

Homebaked has itself understood the importance of slow learning and cumulative change through this longitudinal model ... This open and long-term modality has been a difficult commitment to retain in the face of the urgency, and even desperation, that characterises the needs of the local residents of Anfield as regeneration strategies shift and change and continue to threaten not only Homebaked but also their own homes. But it has been crucial that Homebaked, its board, volunteers and members, have accepted this as a historic and ever-present normative reality in which to exist, so as to guarantee resilience against the ongoing risk that the needs of large corporations may seek to obliterate the needs of the collective.

Beginning of 2010

Back home, I'm thinking about a possible intervention. The thing that keeps haunting me is the state of despair of the area and the fact that if anything could or should be done, it has to be something that creates change on the ground level and in a structural way. A first proposal sent to the Biennial takes the history of the work already done by them as a starting point. It's formulated as 'a live building competition for TV' and titled 'Matters in Your Own Hands'.

Youngsters will be challenged to take matters of their living surroundings in their own hand. This will be done in the format of a building competition. Two teams will be formed consisting of youngsters, family members ... and experts in housing, such as young designers, artists and architects ... Each group is given one block to work with. Over the period of time the groups design and renovate the block according to their idea of community living, working and playing. At the end of the process a completely renovated and inhabitable block will be ready ... For each team a youngster homeowners' organisation will be set up and a collective self-built initiative construction will be created.

It's a first attempt to create a temporary framework in which to start working in the area; a frame of questions that I call a 'field of interactions'; temporary territories to play with, confront and discuss in. For this, a set of questions that circumscribe particular problematics or tensions has to be defined: questions about publicness, social interaction and politics, asking, how can places become public again – platforms for meeting, discussion, and conflict?

According to Paul O'Neill, we might also understand participation not as a relation or social encounter with artistic production, but as a socialised process necessary for art's co-production, in which negotiations with people and places are durationally specific, yet intentionally resistant to any prescribed outcomes, particularly within the context of urbanisation processes.

I take into account the people I've met and the questions they've had, at the same time trying to persuade them to join the journey. Is it possible to portray the area differently and show the resilience that's still there? How to create a small-scale alternative? How to work not only with NEET kids but also with young people from youth centres and schools? How to make it a cross-generational project? How to convince the city to give over a block of houses to begin working on? How to build teams?

We start with workshops in the community centres ABBC and BENEK, the leaders of which are invited onto the steering group of the project, working with young people again on looking at Granton Road and possible houses that could be created. The local architect (URBED) joins the team, and for the years to come will lead an amazing set of thorough design and building workshops, putting sustainable development both environmentally as well as socially at the core of the work.

'Housing is the battlefield of our time and the house is its monument' appears as a slogan. Behind the scenes, negotiations about a block to work with are ongoing. It becomes clear that if we don't want to make

a temporary intervention but implement a more durational project it can't be on Granton Road since the street is situated in zones 1–4, which are already earmarked for demolition and where most houses have already been put under CPO (Compulsory Purchase Order). We start to talk about a block of houses in zone 6–7 (now called The Anfield Village) instead. Meeting after meeting with Housing cooperatives, the City Council and the development company, skillfully orchestrated by the Biennial staff, turn out to be dead ends. They're all charmed by the idea but don't seem to want to give an inch of territory back to the community.

January 2011

The Mitchell's bakery, an important landmark in the community, has closed and a sign on the door reads. 'We tried to stick it out, but we can't. God bless you for your custom'. Since it's an important place in the community, we negotiate a temporary lease on the building with the Mitchell family and make it our project's base camp. In this way, the block of which the bakery was at the head becomes the ground of our struggles.

In Taking Space, Don Mitchell writes:

there's a reason why it's so exciting when people take over spaces – disused buildings, abandoned lots and public sites – and either temporarily or permanently make them their own. The reason is that such occupation disrupts the logic of capital as it seeks to produce cities in its own image, a process, we are told over and over again, for which there is no alternative ... The taking of public spaces shows that there are alternatives; it disrupts, sometimes quite radically, the capitalist production of space.

The former bakery is turning into a meeting space. We start to invite more people to join us. The young people begin redesigning the actual site. And people drop in daily, asking when they can buy bread again. This sparks the desire to reopen the bakery.

Different organisational forms are discussed and a steep learning curve starts for all involved, trying to find out about alternative models of co-owning and managing land and houses. In the end we settle for the model of Community Land Trusts (CLTs). These are non-profit, community-based organisations, run by volunteers, that develop housing, workspaces, community facilities or other assets that meet the needs of the area, are owned and controlled by the community and are made available at permanently affordable levels. The CLT model has its roots in the cooperative movement and garden cities of the nineteenth century, and has been extensively tested as an effective means for collective ownership in deprived communities in the US. More recently, CLTs have been used by rural communities in the UK to provide much-needed affordable housing for local families. This model was chosen because it presents the opportunity for an urban community to use the potential of the Localism Bill for significant social benefit and impact, and because it allows genuine community ownership of the organisation. Homebaked becomes one of the first urban CLTs in the UK. Many have followed since.

In Envisioning Public Cooperative Housing, Gabriela Rendon speaks about a similar situation in New York City:

Envisioning new housing paradigms amidst the current housing crisis may be overwhelming and sometimes disempowering for communities in large urban areas dominated by profit-driven development, as is the case with New York City ... To reclaim the city it is necessary to learn from successful experiences leading to housing justice and co-producing innovative processes achieving new housing paradigms. There is no perfect formula to embark on such an ambitious task, but the following actions can be adopted not only in this thrilling urban area but also in other cities facing the same problems and having similar capacities.

The bakery building and adjacent block remain demarcated under a clearance order, meaning that they're officially still earmarked for demolition and could be handed a compulsory purchase order at any time. We want to have the order lifted and buy the building. More negotiations behind the scenes; the situation in Anfield remains frozen.

Beginning of 2012

So far, the idea has been to work with an existing local entrepreneur to open the café and bakery. Now, a group establishes within the slowly growing Homebaked community who want to reopen the bakery themselves as a co-operative and social enterprise. Internal negotiations are made with the Biennial – do they trust the community that’s forming to go this far? In the end, they do. The group is asked to make a proposal. But there’s also discussion within the group itself. Are we ready to step up the responsibility?

With the support of the co-operative movement, we go through a process of learning and planning. The first business plan is put together and finally, in June, the Homebaked Cooperative Anfield Limited is established.

Summer 2012

Liverpool Biennial is about to open in September and we want to take the opportunity to be present. We don’t want to be seen as a dot on an exhibition map, a ‘temporary café meeting space’, but rather to tell how the city’s failed politics effect the daily lives of people who’ve been displaced or are still stuck in decaying housing. The format we choose is a performative guided tour. *The Anfield Home Tour* takes visitors from the city-centre main exhibition venue to Anfield through a historic landscape of clearance and displacement, meeting protagonists from the project on the way and in their houses, ending up at the bakery where all will sit down and discuss the situation. The tour is completely booked out for months. We have to put on extra performances. It generates enormous attention and focuses on the struggle of the community, giving people a voice and strengthening their ownership of the narrative.

In Performance, participation and (owning) narrative, Tim Jeeves, describes:

‘The Anfield Home Tour’ gave voice to the people with, arguably, the most entitlement to the area: those whose identities are meshed with the bricks and mortar of the houses bought through the Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI). The significance of this act of voicing narrative, (syn)aesthetically or otherwise, can be used to intervene in assertions of ownership, change the story that is told, and also alter claims to ownership.

November 2012

The story of the bakery as a place of resistance starts spreading nationally and internationally, which encourages us to start a crowd-funding campaign called ‘An Oven at the Heart of Anfield’ in order to buy the needed oven and kitchen appliances to supply the bakery. The campaign is hugely successful, giving the bakery group a lot of momentum. Throughout this time we start to be open on match days, with people bringing in baked goods to give out for donations. Our Twitter following is growing.

After the initial fit-out of the bakery as a project-space for test-driving the bakery business and making the space suitable for welcoming the public, Homebaked Co-operative Anfield starts a ‘warm-up’ phase of test-trading, market research and product development at the bakery, alongside organising community and engagement events.

More and more people are joining us. Baking turns out to be a direct (easy) way into what, in the eyes of a lot of people had still been a project that was either ‘too complex’ or ‘Art’ and in that sense not ‘real’.

Every day more people stop by. Business plans are fine-tuned and the first talks on hiring bakers and café staff are held. Also the first ruptures in the group take place as some of the people of the first hour find themselves overwhelmed by the newcomers. The first signs of fatigue are showing. Sometimes it feels as if our story is stronger than us. It’s time to actually bake bread now. Are we going to be able to live up to it?

In 2Up 2Down/Homebaked and the Symbolic Media Narrative, Sue Bell Yank notes:

Becoming media-savvy is a necessity for nearly everyone today, and it is very difficult to give up control of the symbolic media narrative in favour of the actual on-the-ground work, because it seems that one may determine the other ... A symbolic counterattack on prevailing narratives, carefully calibrated through self-branding and actualisation, can shift understanding and pave the way for progress, as surely as baking bread or laying down brick.

Summer 2013

The Community Land Trust has been awarded funding from the Empty Homes Grant and Social Investment Bank to start the building process of the bakery and the flats above. The bakery is ready to open in October with a team of staff. But in the background the unresolved issue of the ownership of the building and the clearance order that is pending on it looms. Whilst still renting from the Mitchells, we negotiate buying the building from them, at the same time trying to get the clearance order lifted by the city council. The plans for a new masterplan for Anfield, 'The Anfield Project', are made public. We're not on the map. Along with the rest of the high street, our block is to be demolished. We ask what the plans for our stretch are and who will build on it. There's no answer. Caught in a loop, we can't spend our funding on refurbishing a building that we don't own, but nobody wants to invest in a building that's threatened with demolition. Behind the bakery, the demolition begins. Granton Road is going.

Homebaked is asked to take part in Future City Forum organised by Liverpool Biennial. 'We Are Here to Stay' is planned as a one-day performative event where the individual voices of Homebaked unite and allow the audience to piece together our collective journey. We start off the process with a workshop. It's a big round table, with protagonists from the past and the now of Homebaked. We try to tell the story in chronological order person by person. At the end we share the news of the pending Compulsory Purchase Order.

Over the next weeks, people go in groups to speak to different councilors and the local MPs to make sure our communal efforts are being noticed and to ask for Homebaked to be taken into the new master plan for the area. This is the moment when local people take over the political negotiations.

The Board of the Community Land Trust is being reinforced with people with skills, expertise and connections to handle the difficult negotiations. And we decide to manifest physically by opening the bakery as a business. We do only the most necessary work on the building to bring it up to standard. We complete the shop fit by ourselves with lots of volunteers, partly using materials we find in the building. At the same time, the Biennial is slowly stepping back, handing responsibility over to the CLT. We're struggling daily, but somehow we manage to cope. We're exhausted, but new people turn up and step into the gap.

October 2013

The bakery is open for business and now working six days a week. The potential initial capital development of Homebaked CLT has been a movable feast over the past six months due to the changing politics. Originally, Homebaked CLT had been looking solely at the development of 193–199 Oakfield Road as a site for the development of a social enterprise, the bakery, and associated sustainable and affordable homes for 10 to 14 local people. We're in negotiations with the council and we decide to offer them a solution for the entire block. If they're absolutely set on demolishing, we'll build new, so long as we can keep the bakery building and integrate it into the new-build mixed-use scheme that would include affordable housing, retail and the use of the old rec in the back for urban growing and recreation under the stewardship of Homebaked.

January 2014

Discussions with LCC have been regular and a draft Heads of Terms agreement is now being finalised with them around the ambitions of Homebaked CLT. This includes the purchase of the bakery property by LCC from the current owners and then gifting the property to the CLT to refurbish and develop. Importantly, the Heads of Terms agreement also allows for the retention of the bakery property in some form, with an ambition to create a larger and more imaginative project. This is critical and will enable meeting the terms of the funding already secured through SIB and the Empty Homes agency.

In A Creative Alternative? Kenn Taylor states:

Power brokers need to be engaged and convinced that the system needs to shift and absorb these new ideas. In undertaking such engagement, projects like these may risk losing their outsider power, but

they gain the potential to change many more lives and even of becoming new orthodoxies. That is, of course, until the need arises for the next perforation from outside of the prevailing order.

July 2014

The final refurbishment of the bakery is finished. It looks great. The complex process and the business interruption nearly killed the bakery, but it looks as if we'll make it. Finding a way of working as a collective, as well as giving individuals the space to do what they're good at and to be able to make and learn from their mistakes has been key.

Perhaps our biggest strength is that we repeatedly dare, in the face of great uncertainty, to ground ourselves by manifesting our ideas in a physical form. Those moments of manifestation are the ones when, as a group and as a process, you're at your most vulnerable. The step from the project being a protest, a projection and a dream to becoming a functioning business has been the most painful. It's still going on and we shouldn't be afraid to travel back and forth on this trajectory or we'll risk becoming 'just another business' or even 'just another social enterprise' or 'just a temporary art event'. We're not here to 'save others', but to create a new pathway for ourselves and our neighbourhood.

We have big plans: we want to become self-sufficient as an organisation that can offer training and events for people to come together. Bits of funding are coming through to get things started. The CLT has hired a project manager to help us start on the next big chapter: the bricks.

Archive

To download a .pdf of the timeline, [click here](#)

Jeanne van Heeswijk and Britt Jurgensen

Jeanne van Heeswijk How can an artist be an instrument for the collective reimagining of daily environments, given the complexity of our societies? This is the question that artist Jeanne van Heeswijk, of the Netherlands, considers when deciding how to employ her work within communities. Van Heeswijk believes communities should co-produce their own futures. That's why she embeds herself, for years at a time, in communities from Rotterdam to Liverpool, working with them to improve their neighbourhoods and empowering them to take matters into their own hands, creating an alternative to the urban planning schemes which rarely take embedded culture into account, that are often foisted upon by local authorities. Her work often attempts to unravel invisible legislation, governmental codes, and social institutions, gradually enabling areas to take control over their future. She calls it "radicalising the local" by empowering communities to become their own antidote.

Van Heeswijk's work has been featured in numerous books and publications worldwide, as well as internationally renowned biennials such as those of Liverpool, Busan, Taipei, Shanghai and Venice. She has received a host of accolades and recognitions for her work, including most recently the 2012 Curry Stone Prize for Social Design Pioneers and the 2011 Leonore Annenberg Prize for Art and Social Change.

Britt Jurgensen Resident in Anfield, Britt Jurgensen is a German theatre and performance artist. She used to run an international touring theatre company and has worked on several community arts projects all over Europe as a workshop leader, director and project manager. Britt got involved in Homebaked in 2011 and is a co-founder of the bakery co-operative and a board member of the Community Land Trust. She directed and co-scripted 'The Anfield Home Tour' in the 2012 Biennial and 'We are here to stay', a performative conversation as part of the Future City event in 2013.