

ABCINEMA ACTIVITY: MORPH

**GETTING THE NEXT GENERATION CURIOUS,
ENGAGED & EXCITED ABOUT FILM HERITAGE
AND CULTURE.**





Morph's Home Movies & brand new adventures

ACTIVITY IN A NUTSHELL



Cinekids: Morph Screening + Model Making Workshop as part of Slapstick Festival 2015:

The iconic animated clay character Morph made his TV debut in 1977 and entertained an entire generation with his slapstick antics. Almost 40 years on Morph and his mischievous pal Chas are back with 15 brand new adventures, which premiered on Morph's YouTube channel recently.

Primary Target audiences / Activity: Kids aged 6 - 11years old & 30 - 40 years old friends & families who grew up on Morph / Slapstick Festival fans and his mischievous pal Chas were invited to watch classic Morph moments on the big screen and to make their very own Morph model with expert model maker and animator Jim Parkyn from the Aardman studios. They also got to create their own Stories with some storyboarding tips from Peter Lord and access to a free downloadable app Animate It! and YouTube resources.

Seeing Double! Morph and Chaz special family event with Peter Lord
We also presented a special family event with Morph's creator Peter Lord selecting classic and new Morph clips and, exclusively, the final episode in the latest Morph series.



SLAPSTICK 2015: Seeing Double! Morph & Chas at Watershed, Bristol:
Morph's creator Peter Lord © Adam Johnson/Slapstick Festival 2015.

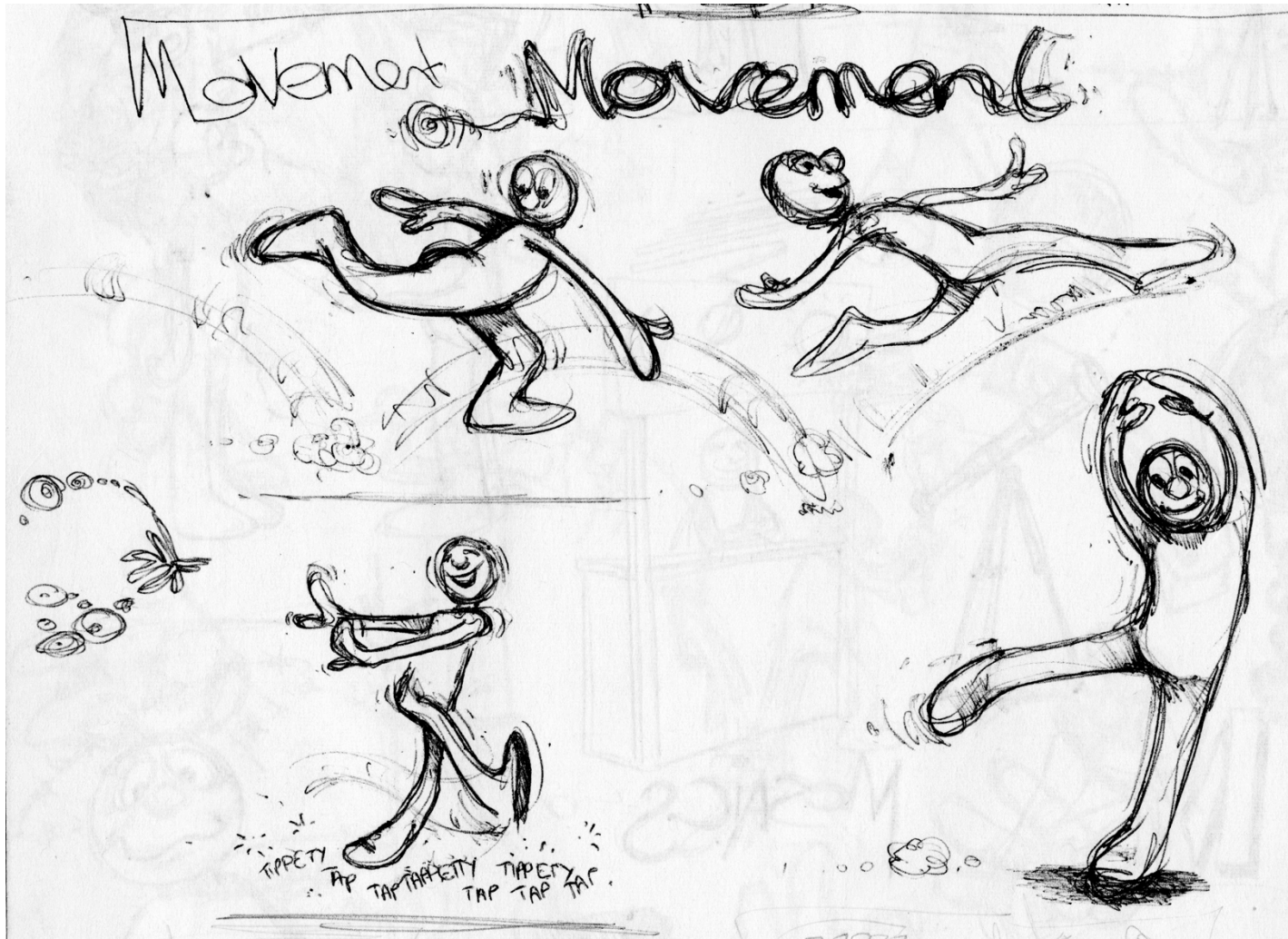
ACTIVITY CONTEXT: WHY MORPH

Aardman model maker / animator Jim Parkyn:

“Morph is beautifully simple. It’s a table top and some accessories and a box and a lump of clay; 5 and a half ounces of clay (0.16 kilograms) I think you can learn a lot from paring things down back to the raw ingredients.”

“I think it’s really important for kids and adults really professionally and starting off in either education & learning about animation to look back at the history of animation; from Willis O’Brian’s work on *King Kong* and Ray Harryhausen in *Jason & The Argonaut* and up to *Morph* and *Wallace & Gromit* to see the different approaches.”

“A much simpler pared down thing like Morph is a really nice way into animation. It doesn’t have to be a massive production; it doesn’t have to be really expensive; all singing and dancing.”



Peter Lord sketchbook © Aardman Animations Ltd. All rights reserved

ACCESSIBLE FOR CHILDREN FROM 5 TO 95

Aardman model maker / animator Jim Parkyn:

“From Morph’s original idea of being for children who were Deaf, it breaks down a lot of barriers because it doesn’t really use real words and it plays to all the best bits of Slapstick comedy and the silent film era. They all transcend culture and age and language because it’s body language and there’s nothing funnier than somebody falling over or getting splatted with a bun. I think it travels across generations and countries.

“The great thing with stop motion especially model a model making workshops like this is that it’s for children from 5 to 95.”



RESOURCES

- 1 x professional model maker
- 1 x workshop space with a large table & chairs set up in a U shape
- 1 x Morph's Home Movies & brand new adventures DVD (projection from a laptop)
- 2 x members of our team (facilitation + documentation/evaluation)
- Morph Storyboarding Notes
- Pencils
- Clay (0.16 kilograms per Morph)
- Wet wipes and cocktail sticks

APPX COSTS: Animator £150 + Room in-kind (£250) / Staff (£250)



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Slapstick 2015: Cinekids: Morph + Model Making Workshop is part of ABCinema. Presented as part of the Slapstick Festival at Watershed.

Co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union

SLAPSTICK FESTIVAL WATERSHED Aardman

Morph Since 1977 MAKE A MORPH MOVIE

STORY

First you are going to need to think go a story. If you need some inspiration, watch some episodes on Morph's YouTube channel. Morph's creator, Pete Lord, has also shared some of his top story tips.



PETE'S TOP TIPS

THE CHARACTERS - Morph and Chas, of course, and Nailbrush who acts like a dog. I often think of Morph and Chas as brothers, they sometimes fight and annoy they heck out of each other, but they are not enemies. The enjoy working together to fix a problem.

THE SETTING - Morph lives on a desk where you'd find ordinary, everyday things like pencils, paints, modelling clay, books, mugs and a computer.

THE LENGTH - Morph stories need to be short and snappy, about a minute or so in length.

THE STORY - Writing a successful Morph story is quite difficult. We sometimes spend days on one short, minute-long storyline. A good way to start is to think of something you'd like to happen (eg Morph's vacuum cleaner goes out of control) or a general theme (eg football) and then build a story around that.

THE RULES - The logic of Morph's world is very loose. Things which don't usually move can come alive and objects can change in magical ways.

MORPHING OR CHANGING SHAPE - This is a special power that Morph has but Chas doesn't. Morph can change into anything he likes and go through solid things (like the desk top) but he doesn't usually change size, so he wouldn't turn into a huge monster, for example.

MAKING YOUR MORPH

You have already made a Morph puppet to star in your movie. Chas is made in exactly the same way but with white clay, and he's a tiny bit bigger. Check out the clip of Pete making Morph on Morph's YouTube channel if you need reminding of the steps.

MAKING MORPH'S WORLD

This couldn't be easier, there is no need to create an elaborate set - all you need is a desktop! Morph lives on an artist's desk so most of the props in his world are very easy to find like paint pots, pencils, mugs and cotton reels. Sometimes our prop department will use everyday items to make furniture and props for Morph, like this table which is an old gherkin lid on top of a cotton reel, and Morph's sofa which is made out of dish sponges glued on top of a tin pencil case.

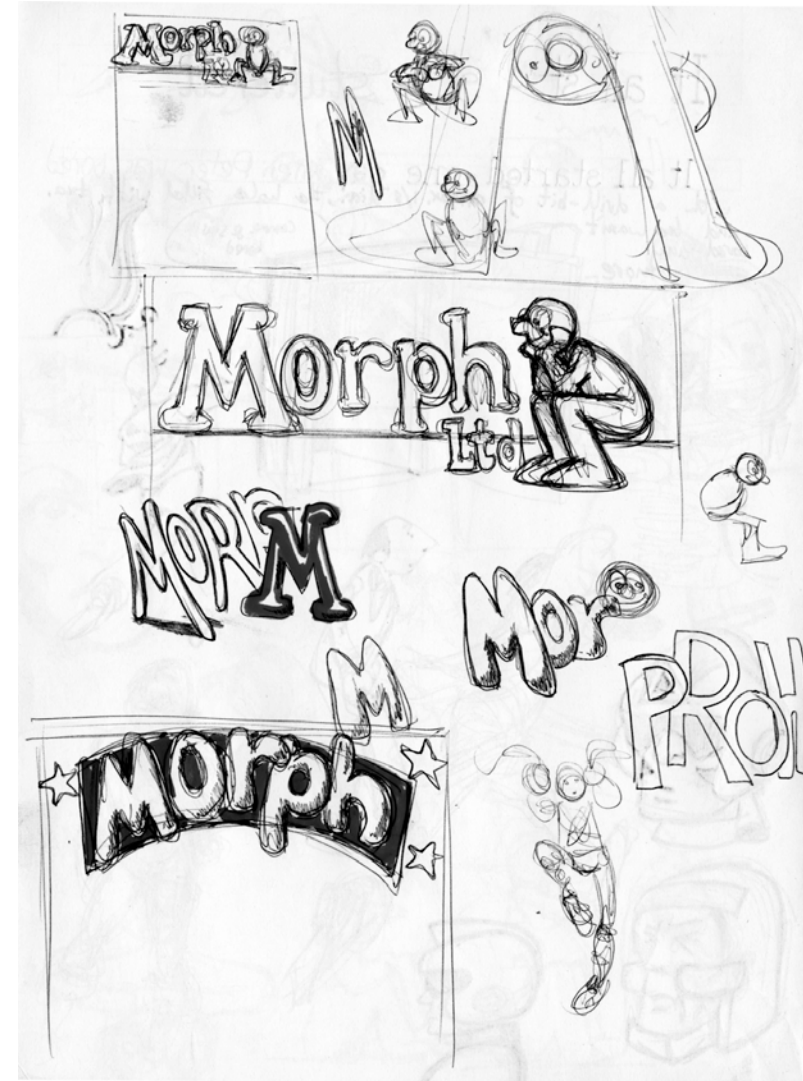



MAKE YOUR OWN MOVIES WITH ANIMATE IT! FREE App Store

WATCH MORPH ON YouTube /MORPHOFFICIAL

AMAZINGMORPH /AMAZINGMORPH.COM

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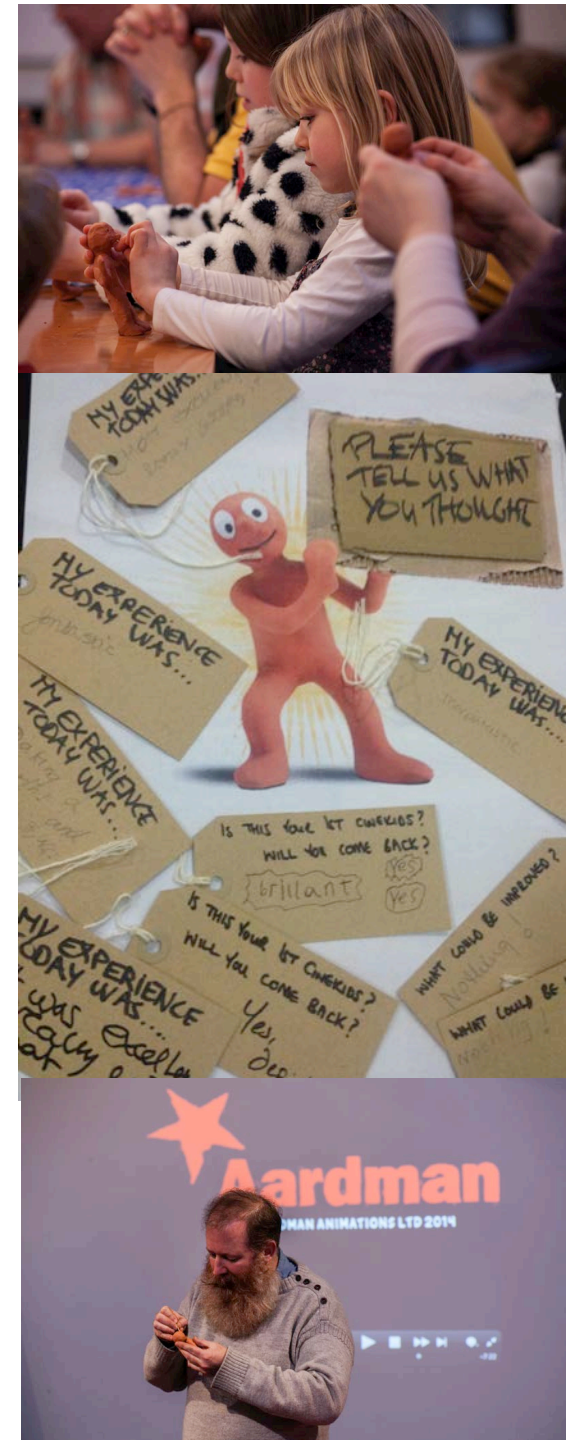
HOW WE COLLECTED EVIDENCE

Tell us what you thought” Morph board with labels for kids and labels for parents and a box to collect them.

Photographs (including work-in-progress and finished Morphs), - Box office data

KIDS: One Word to describe your experience?

PRACTITIONER: An audio interview of the Aardman model maker who is running the workshop What do you think worked well? What could we have done better? Why do you think it's important to have workshops like this one? Why does Aardman bring archive films such as the Morph back catalogue out via Youtube and be shown in educational contexts?





PARENTS/CARERS What could do better? How did you find out about the event? Have you ever been to a screening or event here before? Would you to come back?

OUTCOMES

Sold-out Workshop: 10 x kids and 7 x adults attracting a diverse group in terms of age and ethnicity.

Everyone involved learnt how to create a Morph out of clay and about the Morph history, characters and stories.

High levels of satisfaction from children and parents: attendees all enjoyed the experience using words such as *"Most excellent"*, *"fantastic"*, *"Morphotastic"* *"Really enjoyed it"* *"brilliant"*.

80% were attending this type of workshop for the first time and stated that they would come back.

The cross generational element was a success

There were no requests for doing anything different

This gave us the confidence to go on to run a similar workshop for Shaun The Sheep on a bigger scale (3 x workshops in a day all sold out.)

In October 2015, we are also collaborating with the BBC to run a similar Morph workshop: Make your own signing Morph for Deaf & Hard of Hearing participants as part of the BBC See Hear Weekend.

JIM PARKYN PERSPECTIVE

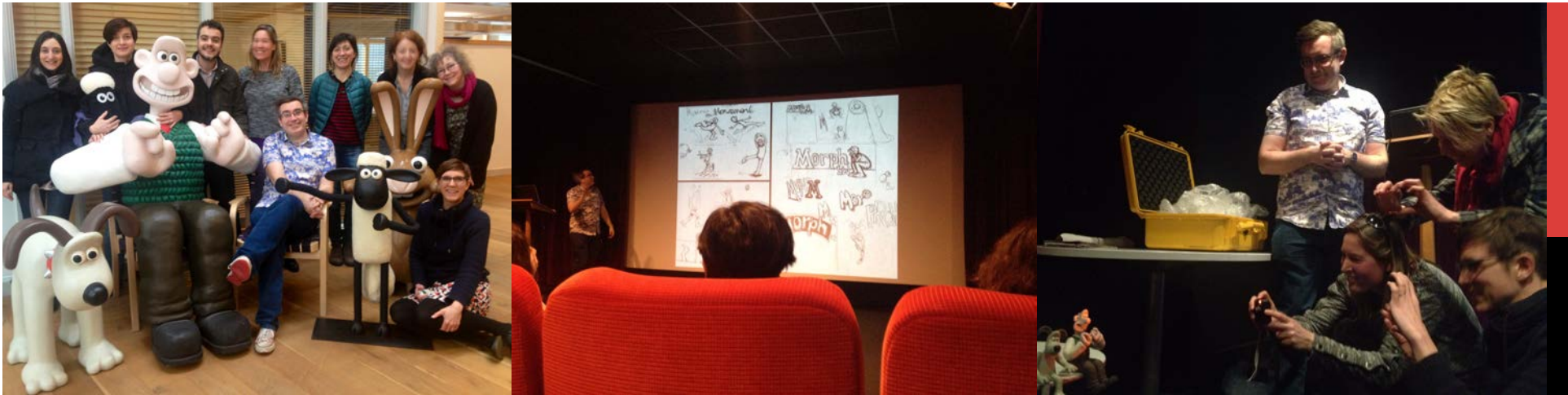
"I think today went really well. There was a really good group of people; some seeing Morph for the first time; some kind of growing up like me almost the same age as Morph so it was a really good mix of ages; we all came away with a Morph at the end of the day. I think there were some real budding model makers and animators out there, some really great Morphs, accessories and even Shauns; actually a really good standard.

The great thing with stop motion especially model a model making workshops like this is that it's for children from 5 to 95; it doesn't matter whether you're starting in the early years of your life or the latter days of your life; everybody can have a go at doing a bit of clay modelling and everybody can come away with something at the end of the day that they can take away that closely resembles what they saw on screen today.

That's the beauty of having the episodes playing while we're talking and making is that you can see the thing in front of you and what you're aiming at."

KEY LEARNING

- Making & Watching at the same time can work
- Partnership working was the key. The partnership with world renowned Aardman Animation and Slapstick festival was key in attracting participants and delivering an engaging and high quality and timely event led by a professional model maker.
- It was great to get participants have opportunities to continue developing their creative ideas (storyboard, Animate It! app) after the workshop.
- More time was good: a mistake with the timings (we ended up with an extra hour) proved useful in allowing more time for participants to complete their Morphs and start the storyboarding process as part of the workshop rather than at home. This also gave us a chance to pitch future workshops and ask for feedback
- More space or more events: the workshop sold very quickly. In future we will explore using a slightly larger space and/or organise a series of workshops as part of a day rather than a one off.



MORPH BEYOND BRISTOL:

Morph's Home Movies was made available to **ABCinema** partners by Aardman Animations on DCP and DVD for free for educational workshops. As well as running a Morph screening and workshop, we presented a special family event with Morph's creator Peter Lord selecting classic and new Morph clips and, exclusively, the final episode in the latest Morph series.

In addition to visiting the Aardman Animation Studios and meeting Aardman's Archivist Tom Vincent, partners were given access to various sketches of Storyboards as well as editable versions of the Storyboarding sheets produced by Aardman and access to free app Animate It!

The Morph films and workshops went on to be re-imagined for France (at Cinéma Jean Eustache, Pessac – Aquitaine in March, Rencontres de Gindou Cinéma in March and Cartoon de Toulouse for primary schools in September), Cinematek (Belgium) and were repurposed in Bristol for BBC SeeHear Weekender Oct 2015 with a focus on Deaf and hard-of-hearing children and their families.