

OGGCAMP

Bigger, better and bolder

Les Pounder travels to Liverpool, to enjoy a geeky weekend with 400 friends.



OggCamp was born from the ashes of Lug Radio Live, which ended in 2009, and the event has gone on to become the most popular Linux and open source event in the United Kingdom.

OggCamp was created by the hosts of two major Linux podcasts: Linux Outlaws (Dan Lynch and Fabian Scherschel), and the Ubuntu UK podcast or UUPC as it's commonly called. (Alan Pope, Tony Whitmore, Laura Cowan and Mark Johnson).

Since their first event, on the top floor of a hotel in Wolverhampton, OggCamp has grown into a large gathering that welcomes over 400 people each year. Les Pounder has been a part of OggCamp since day one, originally as a plain ol' delegate, but since 2011 he's been 'The Chief' at OggCamp along side an incredibly dedicated team of inspiring volunteers. We'll hand over to him for his take on this year's event.

This year's OggCamp was, once again, held at Liverpool John Moores University, which provides the ample space and resources needed to put on such a big community gathering. OggCamp is typically an unconference, which as you may know, is a conference with no scheduled speakers. The delegates that turn up fill the schedule with talks on their favourite subjects or projects. But OggCamp is more than just the talks: in 2011

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the event introduced stalls, where LUGs, community groups and sponsors could show off their projects and ideas to delegates.

In 2013, this idea was expanded into an exhibition area, which mixed these established groups into one large space, and added new

elements to Oggcamp that reflect interests in the community and, in particular, the rise of maker culture.

In 2012, OggCamp contained a new area for makers and hackers called the Open Hardware Jam. This area was basically a Makerfaire inside of OggCamp. It provided space for people to show off their projects, which mostly featured 3D printers, Arduino-based devices, and the newly released Raspberry Pi. In 2013, the Open Hardware Jam made a return, and was joined to the main exhibition space, providing a great central hub, where delegates could meet for tech and coffee.

OggCamp always attracts a lot of people, and this was evident at the Friday night social, which was held at LEAF. Dan Lynch had organised for everyone to have a free drink, and an entire floor just for OggCamp delegates to mingle. It was interesting to see so many familiar faces, and a plethora of new faces, who've learned about



Photos by: Tony Hughes, Pete Stearn, NYBill

the event from the respective podcasts. The social elements are my favourite part of Oggcamp and lots of great ideas and knowledge is shared, as well as many fine ales.

The morning of the first day is a busy yet exciting time. With 450 eager attendees anxiously waiting to burst through the doors. It's all hands on deck to make sure that everyone is registered and given directions to the exhibition area. For this year's event, we used Eventbrite's Entry app, which allowed us to scan the delegates tickets, and quickly get them registered.

This year, there were lots of stalls showing off the many facets of open source technologies. LUGs from around the UK showed off their projects and rubbed shoulders with the likes of RagWorm (a community PCB printing group), ScraperWiki (a toolkit to use various languages to scrape web data from sites) and Thoughtworks (an ethical software development company). These stalls also mixed with the Open

Hardware Jam which included Cefn Hoile's Arduino compatible project, dubbed The Shrimp, and a rather impressive Arduino-powered crane system, called the *Minecraft* Crane. This crane moved *Minecraft* themed boxes, to build real life structures. I have to say that I was very impressed with this and it really embodied the best of maker culture.

Over the course of the two days, there are many talks, and the scope of them is always amazing. Highlights of this year included a battle between Ubuntu Touch and Firefox OS, FreakyClown's How to Rob a Bank and, of course, the live podcast recording. The passion and knowledge of the speakers is self-evident and their engagement with the delegates is commendable. I enjoyed the Ubuntu for Phones vs Firefox OS talk, as the two speakers, Alan Pope (an employee of Canonical) and James Hugman (a Mozilla employee) really knew their subject matter, and engaged with the delegates to provide a fun, informative talk on the two fledgling mobile operating systems.

The live podcast recording is always a delight and is skilfully choreographed by Tony Whitmore. In this year's recording, the team talked about Oggcamp being more than just the podcasts and the event being more about the community. Every year there are more members of the community joining the team of organisers, and it is was made clear during the podcast recording, that the organisers would like to see even more taking part in future Oggcamps, so now is your chance to join!

The Sunday of Oggcamp is always a more laid back day affair. The schedule is still packed with great talks, but the atmosphere is more relaxed, with delegates enjoying a coffee, swapping contact details and buying raffle tickets hoping to win a great prize.

This year's Oggcamp was a great success, with lots of awesome people making an awesome event. The organisers, crew and delegates should all be proud that this is *their* event. Why not join us next year for a great weekend of tech, talks and socialising. **LXF**