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Having A Blast by Kate Taylor

OK so I'm rubbish. I've only got round to writing up my experiences of Uncle Roy All Around You on the day it finishes. And it totally rocked!

I played first as an online player on the volunteer testing day, then as a street player and online player again on press day. If I'd have had time I would have gone out again as a street player (I know two people who have loved it so much they've tried it twice), and I have had to take the website off my browser favourites list or I would have been on it every nite. OK so I was rubbish. As an online player I couldn't get any street players to successfully find pictures that had been left for me round Manchester. I got the horses to the river but I just couldn't make 'em drink. The first player I tried to help thought that I was watching her on a webcam, and told me I was a pervert pissing about. And that was Sarah P, my Cornerhouse co-worker.

The learning curve of exactly what language to use in your messages to street players was interesting, as you quickly have to adjust to very simple clues, and be gently persuasive to a person who is at best mildly disoriented and at worst having paranoid delusions. But when they do trust you it could still be difficult to help them. At one point I misread a clue from Uncle Roy and had a player rifling through the fridges at a deli, and encouraging its staff to join her hunt. The same player then proceeded to climb on top of a phonebox looking for clues while there was a man in it making a call!

OK so I was really rubbish. I didn't get anyone successfully into Uncle Roy's office either. And as a street player, even tho' I already knew the location of Uncle Roy's office from my online jaunts I couldn't physically find it on the streets of Manchester - which was really dim - so no great payoff for me.

Overall I found the experience of playing very frustrating and equally fun. It was an energising process and after playing I had a great meal discussing it, with everyone who had taken part really enthusiastic and animated. I liked being an online player best as I felt I was making progress and adapting as I went. As a street player I found Uncle Roy's clues way too cryptic, and rather than seeing the city in a new light I thought it had the reverse effect in that I didn't see the city at all, I was too busy throwing myself in what I thought was the right direction and trying to avoid being run over.

A more magical review can be found [here](#), the 'preparing for' blog has been added to arts magnet (link on the right) and [Matt Locke's essay](#) on trust is a good reference too. I believe the next stop for Uncle Roy is West Bromich, so if you've missed it in Manchester, I strongly recommend you catch it there.