

# tva winter newsletter



macmillan academy  
image: mark jobe

# Happy Christmas

**Cool Yule, season's greetings, and a good New Year to one and all!**

I'm going to begin with a short poem by Oliver Herford, an early twentieth century American poet:

*I heard a bird sing  
In the dark of December  
A magical thing  
And sweet to remember*

*'We are nearer to Spring  
Than we were in September,'  
I heard a bird sing  
In the dark of December.*

It's a very simple poem, but nice, I think, and encouraging. Herford was also a bit of a humorist, for example he said, 'the Irish gave the bagpipes to the Scots as a joke, but the Scots haven't seen the joke yet' – ah well, please yourselves.

Here at TVA we continue to be as busy as ever; besides project news that my colleagues will outline, including our great events for Black History Month, we have also been busy developing partnerships and bids for the future, wrapping up some great projects – like our work with young people in care, with young people at risk of exploitation and with young people of diverse backgrounds – while endeavouring to make new things happen.

We have been successful with two bids recently – Northern Rock Foundation (how much will we miss them?) have extended our Wider World project, working with people newly arrived in the UK, and the People's Health Trust have awarded us a grant to work with women on the Thorntree Estate in Middlesbrough. Also, we have been selected as the arts partner for the River Tees Rediscovered Landscape Partnership, led by Groundwork NE – this is a five year programme aiming to re-engage people with the River Tees, so there will be lots of scope for imaginative community interaction.

In December TVA will be welcoming three new members to our Board of Trustees – Michael Lavery, Josh Mason and Craig West. Michael is Asst Chief Executive of Teesside University, Josh is a Redcar and Cleveland Councillor and is Liberal Democrat parliamentary candidate for that constituency, and Craig is Head of Classical Music at Sage Gateshead. Between them they bring a wealth of interest and expertise, and I am sure they will each be a great and positive addition to the Board, helping us make great new partnerships.

Another matter taking TVA time and energy is our current search for new premises – where to begin on this one? There are some very nice premises out there, and there are some very unappealing ones, and the difference between them is sometimes a lot of money and sometimes surprisingly little. TVA has been in Melrose House in Middlesbrough ever since I joined the organisation (1999 I think), so it has felt like home to me, but now it seems that it's time for fresh woods and pastures new. We'll keep you posted.

See you in 2015, everyone, and have a good one!



**Rowena Sommerville**  
Director, TVA

Rowena Sommerville



black history month conference // image: Kev Howard

# refugee arts

I continue to be busy meeting and supporting various creative, interesting and challenging people and groups, from across the wider world.

The big stuff for me in this quarter has been the Black History Month events during October – thanks to Northern Rock Foundation, Platforma, Waka Waka North East and to our hosts, Teesside University.

In the afternoon we had an artists' mini-conference, bringing people and organisations together from across the whole North East, then some participants made a collective mandala, led by Adrian Moule, and then we had a night of absolutely great music.

The Newcastle-based Crossings Band, which includes people from many different backgrounds, got us off to a great start. Then Shurooq Abu Alnas and her musicians performed – bringing in a crowd of Sudanese people now living in Teesside. Shurooq, whose name means Sunrise, is keen to bring the disparate groups of the Sudanese community together, including those from the North and those from the South.

Then, Dennis Bovell – now a frequent visitor to Teesside – delivered a great set. Dennis loves playing here, and is keen to promote the knowledge and enjoyment of reggae wherever he can, as he says that reggae has made such a contribution to world popular music, with its influence reaching well beyond what we easily recognise. He went on from Middlesbrough to play in Norway – it's music of the world!

Last up was the fabulous Kanda Bongo Man and his Soukous band, featuring Voodoo King, Nickens Nkoso. There was such enjoyment and happiness on stage and between the band and the audience, and Kanda says he feels really at home in Teesside.

It was a great night, thanks to our supporters, to the musicians and to the audience – and to Kev Howard who took great photos, as always.



**Maurice Dezou**  
Refugees Officer, TVA

*some more photos from our black history month event in october by kev howard*





black history month event  
image: Kev Howard

# projects

What a busy couple of months we have had here at TVA. **Moving On**, a project that worked with young people in care of the Borough Councils, finished with a bang with a fantastic celebration event, hosted by Middlesbrough myplace. All of the young people's work was exhibited and showcased, including the short music video created by the Redcar and Cleveland cohort alongside various artists, and wonderful artworks by Middlesbrough, Stockton and Hartlepool. We also produced some professional business cards for the young people to keep, complete with their artwork on, with the help of our friends at MOO.COM.

I have just returned from a trip to London's BFI Southbank where our animated film 'Nightmare on Flood St' was screened as part of the Kids for Kids UK Festival. The film was commissioned through our partnership with **One Planet Middlesbrough**, funded by the Big Lottery. The cinema screen at the BFI was packed full of other talented schools, teachers, young people, artists and filmmakers. I was alone in representing our film, so let out a lonely yet excited cheer for our film! Safe to say, the rest of the audience cheered me in my solitude! It was a fantastic event, and such an honour to be shortlisted for an award. Our congratulations go out to all the well-deserved winners! We have also been screened at Hollywood Shorts festival on Hollywood Boulevard (!) and have been nominated for the Digital Media award at the PoSBO Awards in association with Youth Focus North East. We will be attending the Awards Ceremony at the Baltic in December. A big thank you to digital animator Mark Jobe who has made all this possible, and to the Year 8 Pupils at Macmillan Academy that worked on the film earlier this year.

**stART 2014** is nearly at an end. This year we have had a group of NEET young people in Stockton completing the Bronze Arts Award and learning through visual arts; sculpture and digital animation. Our thanks to Robin Vickers and Fran Hammill for leading the group through this process, and a big thank you to the Georgian Theatre, Stockton for playing host to these weekly sessions. (P.S. Check out their Christmas gig line up!)

We have just completed another school residency with The Avenue Primary in Nunthorpe with Drama Practitioner Helena Fox and writer Niel Bushnell. This is another of our projects partnered with **One Planet Middlesbrough**, funded by the Big Lottery. With help from the professionals, the year 5 pupils have devised a script all around the subject of Standby Energy, nicknamed 'Vampire Energy', called 'Giants in the Walls'. The group have learnt many useful dramatic processes such as multi role, devising shadow puppetry, script writing, prop making, and character development! We must say a warm welcome to filmmaker Andy Berriman, who has joined TVA on this project to create a short documentary about the process behind the drama performance. Keep a look out for this on our website shortly! Also, a big thank you to Adrian Moule for creating the wonderful props and shadow puppetry screen!

Looking forward into 2015, we will be looking for funding for a new **Risky Biz** project with Barardos SECOS (Sexually Exploited Children on the Streets), plus some more projects partnered with One Planet Middlesbrough and who knows, maybe some more Awards Ceremonies..?



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, looped 'R' followed by a horizontal line and a small dot.

**Ree Collins**  
Projects Officer, TVA



moving on celebration event  
image: Kev Howard

# adults

I have to start with great news from my corner of the office, as we can now officially say we have been successful in our bid for Health Improve funding from The Health Lottery.

What this means is that we can begin a two year creative project involving existing groups on the Thorntree Estate in Middlesbrough. As well as bringing these groups together, the project will be a means of encouraging otherwise potentially isolated women to become part of something fun and imaginative, while learning a whole range of new skills, both technical and logistical. The existing groups will be the lynchpins of all this activity.

The '**Thorntree Roses**' will have a range of creative experiences to try, will be visiting cultural destinations and potentially getting involved with other projects and organisations, such as River Tees Rediscovered and mima gallery. The group will be supported throughout the process at every stage, from choosing activities to searching for funding, resulting in their becoming truly 'tooled-up' with the skills they require to research, fund and run their own larger scale projects on the estate in the future.

Through much support from all of my colleagues, particularly Rowena, who has hand-held me through this first big-ish bid, this successful application has made me really proud. Consequently it has spurred me on with my other activity, mainly the 'Inner Space' Big Lottery bid I am working on, aiming to benefit vulnerably housed people in the area.

I am progressing, slowly and carefully, towards the point of having a completed application, and will be meeting all those involved, from the charities and probation service, later in the month. We're hoping to get this funding bid completed and off to the Big Lottery early in the New Year.

One of the organisations I have met recently is Streetwise Theatre, who provided an excellent training session at The Stages Academy on funding and creative practice when working with homeless people. Their expertise and simple but effective ways of engaging those who are often at the most difficult edges of society, filled me with inspiration for the project I am working on. We hope to continue our relationship with them and to work together further down the line.

On top of this I am working through the procedures, policies and new information about the Disclosure and Barring Service (oh joy!) with Peter, so that they are all up to date. Let's say there's only so much excitement you can take.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miki Rogers'.

**Miki Rogers**  
Adults Officer, TVA



artwork by Adrian Moule for Black History Month // image: Kev Howard

# all change

So it's been a busy couple of months here at TVA Towers, particularly as we begin the preparations for possibly leaving our 'largely' grace and favour home of at least the last decade - Melrose House - for pastures new. Though negotiations on a final selection are still ongoing, the search, organised with sterling efficiency by Julie Marsden at Middlesbrough Council, has taken us across the borough and shown us some very interesting opportunities indeed but you'll have to wait until the next newsletter for the results!

Staying in the same place for 15+ years means you accumulate an awful lot of stuff - furniture, equipment, files, etc... not all of which we are going to be able to take with us to our future, inevitably more compact home, so in-line with our charitable status we've decided to give some of it away to suitable organisations and individuals, with only a small administrative charge of up to £20; to make things easier to advertise we've setup a Facebook Group which you can apply to join here: [facebook.com/groups/TVAFaces](https://www.facebook.com/groups/TVAFaces).

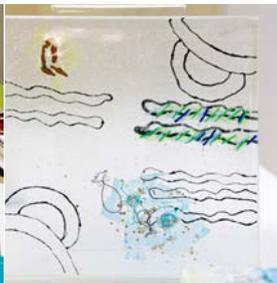
As Rowena will attest, I'm obsessed by the move, and fortunately (for all of us I'm sure) TVA has managed to make some new friends: Alice, a recent contemporary theatre practice graduate (1st Class, Salford) and Dean, a graduate of our Moving On programme and present undergraduate at Teesside studying Music Technology, have both started to volunteer with TVA on a regular basis over the past few months and have been providing me with valuable support. If you'd like to lend a hand please get in touch after Christmas.

Finally you can continue to stay up-to-date with what's happening here at TVA through our website [www.teesvalleyarts.org.uk](http://www.teesvalleyarts.org.uk); on twitter [@teesvalleyarts](https://twitter.com/teesvalleyarts); on Facebook [facebook.com/teesvalleyarts](https://www.facebook.com/teesvalleyarts); as well as on Google+ [plus.google.com/+TeesvalleyartsOrgUK](https://plus.google.com/+TeesvalleyartsOrgUK); and not forgetting [vimeo: vimeo.com/teesvalleyarts](https://www.vimeo.com/teesvalleyarts). Or if you'd like us to keep you updated please sign up to our cultural email out service for news from us and organisations across the Tees Valley at [www.teesvalleyarts.org.uk/cultural-emails/](http://www.teesvalleyarts.org.uk/cultural-emails/)



**Peter Neal**  
Office Co-ordinator, TVA

*Some artworks produced by the participants of Moving On and exhibited at their celebration:*





artwork by Vicky Holbrough for Moving On // image: Kev Howard



Tees Valley Arts can work with you to plan and setup a programme of creative activities, find a suitable artist, help to frame a budget and secure funding, and then manage the project, both artistically and administratively. If you have an idea you would like to discuss, please contact us at:



**Tees Valley Arts**

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