

Tees Valley Arts can work with you to plan and set up 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:



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# Winter Newsletter 2006



# view very good view

We have a very good view of the city of Middlesbrough (or should I say town?) from our 'penthouse' head quarters in Melrose House. Over the past twelve months we have witnessed the changing urban skyline and pondered the state of Middlesbrough's desired metamorphosis. The people of Middlesbrough are waiting for change with varying levels of cynicism. The policy makers of Middlesbrough and the rest of the Tees Valley for that matter are working in earnest to achieve change, with a pretty consistent and substantial level of 'faith'. But we all know Rome wasn't built in a day...

Tees Valley Arts are committed to supporting the efforts of our local government colleagues and consider that our work is helpful by acting as both conduit and catalyst. 'Conduit' because we devise and implement engaging communication strategies, between potentially estranged sectors of the community. 'Catalyst' because we drive overarching strategic agendas into tangible and signifying actions and we achieve all of this through the variety of creative interventions you know we deliver.

In a recent internal marketing meeting, the TVA team unscrambled the uncertainties of the past, and clearly identified the TVA brand as one that embodies those adjectives that are synonymous with the North East: Gritty, unpretentious, uncompromising on quality, self assured and hard working. However, we also believe that as an organisation about to reach its silver jubilee, we have matured, and as a result we realise that our self confidence is anchored in the success of our partners. It is their recognition of the fundamental role Art and Creativity have to play in the lives of everyone, that secures our position at the table of policy making and assures our future.

We play a balancing act more and more often between the needs of artists when responding to the ever increasing demands of the sector, the needs of our partner organisations in terms of their priorities and 'tangible' results, and the need to maintain artistic integrity. But balance these things we must if we are to achieve the changes we want, and be able to sustain them.

As we look toward the grey cold months ahead of us, it is comforting to remember that what we are all striving for is within our grasp if we continue to pull together and keep our focus on the vibrant society we can see on our horizon. All of the activity reported upon in this issue of the TVA newsletter clearly demonstrates the progress being made, as every project outcome that you see represents months of partnership building... and so when I read my colleagues' articles I am impressed with what we are achieving - and I'm sure you will be too.



Rosi Lister

## TVA Director appointed to the board of Culture North East

Rosi Lister, Director of Tees Valley Arts has recently been appointed to the board of Culture North East (CNE), the regional body responsible for devising and driving the Cultural Strategy for the North East of England. Rosi is delighted with the invitation and commented; "I am really excited about this wonderful opportunity to make sure that the Tees Valley can benefit from being represented impartially at this regional Cultural forum. I am also keen to ensure that independent Cultural providers and particularly those from the voluntary sector are recognised as key delivery partners in the implementation of regional strategic agendas". Rosi takes up her appointment following her induction later in the month.

## The Finnish connection...

As reported in the last issue, I accompanied our resident Poets Bob (Beagrie) and Andy (Willoughby) to Tampere in the southern Lakeland district of Finland at the end of September where I was able to meet among others local poet Kalle Ninikangas who will be acting as our Finnish lead contact. The purpose of the trip was to gain support (and match funding) from the various Finnish Cultural Affairs teams for our TEXTLINES: EUROPA multidisciplinary cultural exchange project. Kalle was very helpful in arranging the necessary meetings and I am pleased to report that our project met with considerable enthusiasm and even a tentative funding agreement from the Tampere region Cultural Services Department. We are now developing our Culture 2007 application in detail and in readiness for the February 28th deadline. Rowena Sommerville will fly out to the Haag during December to develop a similar partnership arrangement with Dutch Cultural officials through our contacts with the artex publisher SUB.

Whilst in Finland I also met with the Director of the Finnish National Education agency for in-service training and development, OPEKA. Dr Liisa Lofmann subsequently invited TVA to become one of nine European partners who will deliver a pan European Cultural programme for Finnish linguistics teachers who are approaching retirement age. This is a very exciting opportunity that we look forward to delivering in partnership with regional Museums and Library Services.

Meanwhile... Bob and Andy hosted the Creative Partnerships funded Euro 'Poetry Slam' with participants from Tees Valley and the Dutch Haag on November 8th.

Rosi Lister



Kit Turner

Ruth Cleeves

Claire English

Jill Heslop



Scott Illingworth

## 5 Higher Apprentices in Arts Management arrive in Tees Valley

This autumn we have been lucky enough to welcome 5 new apprentices.. (nothing what so ever to do with Sir Alan Sugar!) Recruited from 140 applications received from as far afield as New York City. Jill Heslop (Glasgow), Ruth Cleeves (Tyne and Wear), Scott Illingworth (Newcastle), Kit Turner (Essex) and Claire English (Glasgow) have a pretty impressive CV between them and all have aspirations to become strategic cultural leaders. Recently completing their induction week with Matthew Burge (of Burge Surtees Associates) as their appointed project coordinator, the HAAM's will now begin their tailor made work experience schedules - each with his or her own individual slant.

These combined work placements will be complemented by visits to key cultural providers/venues and seminars by 'experts' on various topics including fundraising and strategic arts policy. The HAAM team are now based at TVA. The Tees Valley particularly, but also the rest of the North East is suffering a dearth of appropriately experienced cultural managers. It is with this in mind that the HAAM scheme was originally conceived and funded through the Tees Valley Investment Fund. TVA is delivering this scheme on behalf of the 5 Tees Valley Strategic Arts Officers.

For more information contact Matthew Burge, Project Coordinator, c/o Tees Valley Arts.

# Community Programme

This is my first newsletter update as (officially) Community Programme Manager, so greetings all. I don't need to get to know the office or the team, but that's just as well, as operating within crime, drugs and health is testing my memory of acronyms to the limit. I can also explain co-terminosity, which is possibly a bit sad...

Plans are underway for **WinterFest 07** - funding schemes will inevitably mean that it's all a bit of a mad dash towards the end. However we're sure it will be fab, and the dates for your diary are 23/24th March 07. We're hoping it will include workshops, fusion sessions and gala events.

I've been spending some time in prison (free at last) and mixing with a range of people variously involved in the criminal justice system (some voluntarily!). We're developing work in a variety of ways, all of which serve to reinforce our belief that there's nothing like creative activity when you're trying to 'get your head together'. One interesting and innovative project - **Best Dresses** - is for women substance abusers in Redcar, to work with a writer, visual artist and textile artist to build up scrapbooks in which they examine their attitudes to clothes, appearance, and all that jazz.

Also in Redcar, funding for arts activities with young people, to be managed and delivered by TVA, have been included in the recent Redcar and Cleveland Children and Young People's Services Treasury Bid, which is a great bit of partnership working between ourselves, the CYPS and the arts officer. We're also working together towards the establishment of a film and moving image hub there - **Redcarpet** (geddit?).



On a sadder note, Syndou, the Liberian refugee whose lovely poetry has been published by Mudfog and is garnering much praise, is currently in fear of detention and eventual deportation. This would be a tragic end to a noble struggle and seems against all notion of natural justice. I am at a loss to know how best to support him now.

It's a busy time, with lots of projects of different sizes in development with lots of different groups and agencies, each with their own language and aims and protocols and offering different opportunities and challenges. All very interesting!

# You Are Here Event, Liberty's in Town, Sunday October 1st

Liberty's in Town was packed on October 1st as a very diverse crowd celebrated together.

The evening began with a thunderous performance from Tees Valley World Drummers - a 15 piece drumming group containing people from the host community and many other countries, and led by Hilaire Agnama, originally from Togo.

This was followed by some Kurdish performers and a huge number of Kurdish dancers, demonstrating their pride in their identity and traditions. Then Maurice Dezou and Robert Maseko performed some traditional African hits.

The event closed with a fantastic performance from Kasai Masai - an African band who came all the way from London; the band includes Otis on guitar, whom some Teessiders will remember from his years here.

This band was perfect - a mix of sunny attitude, great crowd engagement, make-you-dance rhythms and excellent musicianship. The dance floor pulsated with people from Teesside, from the Kurdish community, from Spain, from Poland, and from a host of African countries (and that's just the people that I knew about), all smiling and boogying together. Kasai Masai are a must have for next year's WinterFest.

This event was put on by the Tees Valley Arts You Are Here project - working with refugees and people seeking asylum - and funded by the Home Office Purposeful Activities fund. Entrance was free, but there was a collection for the Mary Thompson Fund on the night.



Although many of those present have arrived in this country through grim and harrowing circumstances, the night ended with a joyful sense of people from all over the world enjoying themselves, having a great time together, to great music.



# Education

## Green Hearts



The rich natural heritage found within the Tees Valley - an area more traditionally associated with its chemical and steel industry, inspired the **Green Hearts Project**. The discovery of these 'green hearts' within the sub-region through cultural activities, will engender a greater sense of place and pride in the local area.

**Green Hearts** aims to develop and deliver a young peoples' (7yrs - 11yrs) engagement programme in association with Tees Valley Wildlife Trust that uses visual art, creative writing and music to interpret wildlife habitats in the Tees Valley. The material generated will be used to interpret a series of family guided walks and form the basis of a DVD resource for schools.

Working in five schools, one in each of the Tees Valley boroughs, teaching staff, pupils and artists will work in partnership with their local heritage site to discover their place in the world, their identity and so develop respect for themselves, other people and the local environment. The wildlife sites chosen are diverse, ranging from streams and meadow to woodland and marsh. Each forms a significant part of the landscape for the local community. This project will provide the opportunity to enhance that environment for wildlife and people.

"An excellent and inspiring day - can't wait to go back and try them!"  
"Wonderful day would have liked to have attended all three sessions!"

# FOR SCATS!

## Evolve

Year Two of the **Evolve** Programme was kick started with an INSET day at Arc Stockton on Friday 6th October. The event was a huge success with sixty teachers and PGCE students taking part in creative writing, drama and dance workshops that developed new approaches to teaching the national science curriculum with arts-based activities.

The day culminated with teachers demonstrating water cycle raps, animal classification dance routines, and a moving human model of the digestive system featuring the mouth, intestines, anus and all!

There was a great deal of positive feedback:

- "Great fun, lots of useful activities, I will definitely use"
- "An excellent and inspiring day - can't wait to go back and try them"
- "Wonderful day would have liked to have attended all three sessions"



Schools attending the INSET day were invited to apply for a residency where they can work more closely with artists to further develop cross-curricular teaching methods, embedding creative learning within their school. The response was overwhelming with 29 schools from all sectors applying for 18 subsidised residencies. We are developing further opportunities for those wishing to host a residency in the future.

The final editions of the **Evolve** teaching manuals are complete. **Evolve** artists have spent the summer developing creative writing, dance and drama teaching manuals which will support teachers during residencies and provide a lasting reference point for the future. Drawing upon the first year's experience of working with over 95 teachers and PGCE students and over 1,200 pupils, the set of manuals, with supporting DVD, provide a substantial contribution to educational resources.

## Evolve at the National Science Learning Centre

The National Science Learning Centre in York has invited **Evolve** to deliver the creative movement and science element to teachers from across the UK. The Course is 'Developing Teaching and Learning Approaches in the Primary Classroom' and is designed for teachers who do not have a science background - to provide them with the knowledge and understanding of science concepts and skills needed to teach primary science. It has been proposed that an **Evolve** course could feature next year at the National Science Learning Centre introducing all three artforms - watch this space for further developments!

Bloomin' Marvellous



Gallery TS1 has re-opened in the heart of Middlesbrough and aims to build on the success of its last two years of operation by offering consistently high quality products for purchase. Framed regional photographs; fresh flowers and floral design alongside soft furnishings and curios for Christmas are being created over the current Gallery term.

Funding has been obtained from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund by Middlesbrough Council's Cultural Services Team which means that the Gallery will now occupy its Corporation Road site for at least another two years.

Brought to Middlesbrough by Cultural Services from a Birmingham initiative that was based on an original idea from Chicago, the Middlesbrough Site is now seen as an integral part of the town's training and retail activity. Unemployed young people create high quality, sellable products under the guidance of professional artists and the delivery team from Twister Arts.

## Bloomin' Marvellous

Gallery TS1 is managed by Tees Valley Arts. Director, Rosi Lister says of the project

*"Over 80 young people have benefited from Gallery TS1 Programmes in 2005/06. Activities have included jewellery making, floristry, digital arts, felt making, craft work, fine art and photography. Over 400 commissions have been received and annual income targets were exceeded within one month of operation. Over 90% of those NEET young people engaged by Gallery TS1 have now gone on to further education employment or training."*

Juliet Farrar, Cultural Services Manager for Middlesbrough Council, said *"The huge success of GTS1 is testimony to the talents of young people in Middlesbrough. All too often we hear negative feedback about people under 25 in the centre of town, so it's a great opportunity to recognise positive contributions to Middlesbrough's cultural life. The work produced at GTS1 represents real achievement and at the same time gives people the opportunity to own a unique and affordable creation whilst supporting an important project."*

The project operates at 57 Corporation Road, Middlesbrough, Tuesday to Saturday and will reopen on Tuesday, December 12th for the run up to Christmas. Free coffee and the invitation to browse, see the artists at work or commission your own piece of art are all on offer!

PS Congratulations to Gallery TS1 Project Coordinator Mike McGrother and his wife Helen on the birth of their daughter, Rosie, on November 5th.



MINI PUPPETS AVAILABLE IN LOUNDS OF WEIRD & WONDERFUL SHAPES AND SIZES FROM GALLERY TS1 - 57 CORPORATION ROAD (OPPOSITE THE EMPIRE)

# Fish Supper



...because no one should slip through the net

### A celebration of the achievements and potential of the young people of Stockton on Tees

The culmination of an innovative youth project was showcased at Stockton's Arc at the end of September.

Fish Supper was an engaging, creative and educational project designed to take young people through a process that would allow them to learn skills and put them into practice as part of a large scale event, funded through the Connexions Kick Start Programme and run by Tees Valley Arts and Twister Arts.

24 young people from Stockton took part in a three week programme of training in the lead up to the event including Fishing and Cooking; Healthy Catering; Film and Photography; DJ'ing and MC'ing and technical event skills, (lighting, sound and staging). The young people had inspirational day trips including sea fishing, visiting the IMAX Theatre at the National Museum of Film & Photography in Bradford and the catering group visited Jamie Oliver's Fifteen restaurant in London.

As a result of Fish Supper, all but one of the young people secured a job, a job interview or a college place.

The project was celebrated at the Arc in Stockton on Friday 29th September and featured young people performing; award giving and The Wildcats of Kilkenny brought the whole thing together. Delicious food prepared and served by the 2 catering groups was provided and the technical theatre side of things was run by trainees. The backdrop for the whole evening was provided by images and film produced by the young people.