



Winter Newsletter 2008/09



Opening remarks...

The TVA Autumn newsletter opened with Rosi Lister's concluding remarks, as she had her definitive last word; I'm going to open my remarks by greeting the closing of the year and wishing all our readers, partners and supporters -

A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR!

TVA will not be sending out Christmas cards this year, so we hereby wish everyone well, and look forward to all the mutual joys, challenges and achievements that 2009 will bring.

These opening remarks find me in position as Acting Executive Director, and very actively engaged with plans to shape and secure a more stable and sustainable future for the organisation. I would like to thank Arts Council England North East, especially Nicholas Baumfield; the Chief Executives and Heads of Culture of the five Boroughs of the Tees Valley; and the Board of TVA, especially the executive sub-committee - Tony Campbell (Chair), Gordon Bates, John Pendleton, Bob Kerr and Craig Monty - for all the effort, time and thought contributed over the last couple of months, and, I'm sure, for a few months to come.

I would also like to thank someone who doesn't get her own column in the newsletter, but without whom all our efforts would be hopelessly uninformed - and that's Andrea Williams, the TVA Finance Manager. Andrea is unflappable, whether tracking down 39 pence or 39 thousand pounds, and is unfailingly patient when talking me through yet another Excel spreadsheet. I sometimes feel like the little blue engine (I think it was) when looking at these monsters - 'I think I can, I think I can' - and do you know, with Andrea's help, I sometimes really think I can.

I also want to thank the rest of the TVA staff for their loyalty, energy, commitment and good humour through these challenging times, and to wish them a restful Christmas break.

See you all in 2009 - that will be the year of the Ox, characterised as tolerant and strong. Very little to add to that!

Rowena Sommerville
Acting Executive Director

I'm currently combining the roles of Acting Executive Director and Director of Programmes here at TVA, so my personal programme is rather a full one. Other staff members will be writing about our myriad projects, partnerships and plans, so in this bit I will just talk about those projects and initiatives I'm more directly responsible for.

ProgrammeNotes

We've been working with Marchday PLC, the (very enlightened) developers of the Lingfield Point site in Darlington, and I had the pleasure of attending the Mayor of Darlington's Ball as their guest. Those who know me and my usual footwear choices (sandals or biker boots), will appreciate my commitment to looking the part when I say that I bought high heeled shoes specially and wore them all night - feet on fire!

TVA has been supporting Su Reid (ex University of Teesside) in bringing together the Tees Valley Heads of Culture, and Heads/ Delegates of other appropriate bodies, to outline the shape and content of the next Tees Valley Cultural Strategy (2009-13). This has now got to a point where Su feels she has contributed all she can, and the final ownership and polish must revert to the Cultural Leads group. I think we can all agree that Su has shown great commitment, flexibility and tact, and has brought 'order out of chaos' - if I may make so bold! Well done, Su.

Another two Gallery TS1 residencies have taken place, commissioned by Middlesbrough Council Cultural Services, and were as successful and stimulating as always. 23 young people, previously disengaged, have completed their time with Gallery TS1 and will achieve their Bronze Arts Award - well done them, well done artists, well done Robin! Currently the Gallery TS1 premises (57, Corporation Road, Middlesbrough) are showcasing local artists selling lovely presents for Christmas, so be sure to call by.

The Parachute Project - creative activities with young asylum seekers and newly arrived people - is about to begin its programme again, co-ordinated by Adrian Moule. Adrian and I met with a group of young participants recently, and round the table were youngsters from Ghana, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Eritrea and Ethiopia - what amazing courage they have, and what distances they have to cover, in all senses.

We anticipate good times and good outcomes from their activities, some of which will be showcased at WorldFest 09. And talking of which.....excellent news, TVA has secured three years funding for the WorldFest programme from Northern Rock Foundation!! We are delighted (and grateful) to have achieved this, and have already been busy making plans for programming and events. For those who may receive diaries in their Christmas stockings - Nuit d'Afrique at the Arc will be Friday May 22nd, and the Gala Night will be Saturday May 23rd in Middlesbrough Town Hall.

Looks like I'd better practise walking in those high heels again.

Rowena Sommerville
Acting Executive Director

stART



Tees Valley Arts are delighted to be working in partnership with Visit Tees Valley and (we hope) Middlesbrough Connexions with The stART Project. The stART Project is part of the Cultural Volunteering Programme.

The stART Project will work with young people aged 17 to 19 categorised as Not in Education, Employment or Training, and will deliver a package of creative activities and learning. stART will take place in our lovely new art room, equipped and furnished with funds from the LSC, the Northern Rock Foundation, and the CVP.

Workshops with a professional visual artist will involve fun and accessible art based exercises that develop individual creative skills, building confidence and self-esteem. Other activities will include games and exercises that use an informal approach to encourage positive engagement and reflective thinking, whilst developing pre-employment skills such as teamwork, leadership and communication skills. Doing good by stealth!

All the young people will work as individuals and teams to achieve the Bronze Arts Award.

The award involves taking part in the arts, going to arts events, researching an arts hero or heroine and sharing skills with others. Participants' achievements are recorded in a diary, including records of art work they have seen and been part of, their personal reflections on the process and research material. Learners do not need high literacy skills, and can create their diaries through visual or recorded means.

TVA have found the Arts Award to be an excellent means for adding value to outreach and engagement projects that target young people. The award enables young people to crystallise skills and progress made during an arts project. Through the Arts Award process young people learn to think in a down to earth manner and to validate their thoughts and opinions building a sense of cultural entitlement.

Experience gained through running Gallery TS1 for Middlesbrough Council tells us that the young people get a lot out of this way of working, and use it as a tool of personal growth.

The award provides tangible "results" that record a young person's development, providing them with a platform to access further opportunities such as volunteering, training, employment or education. In many instances the Arts Award is the first piece of accredited work that a young person has achieved; in this case the award is an invaluable asset to the young person's CV whatever their future plans may be.

TVA is the Arts Award Agency for the south of the region; TVA has been fairly quiet on this front recently, but will be posting public arts award training days in spring. Anyone who is interested in Arts Award training should check the TVA and Arts Award websites.

Tim Coyte
Projects Officer

Heritage

The Heritage and Environment programme got some extremely good news over the summer - an application to the Ernest Cook Charitable Trust to cover some core cost of the programme was successful to the tune of £10,000. This is excellent news, and we are delighted that the trust is supporting the valuable and engaging work that I am developing and delivering.

Another strand to this programme that was mentioned in the summer newsletter was the development of Environmental Learning sessions for key stages 1 to 4. We have some nice new shiny leaflets detailing what to expect in the sessions and highlighting what elements of the national curriculum they support. These leaflets have been delivered to all schools in the Tees Valley, and hopefully a whole host of schools will be excited enough to request the delivery of them.

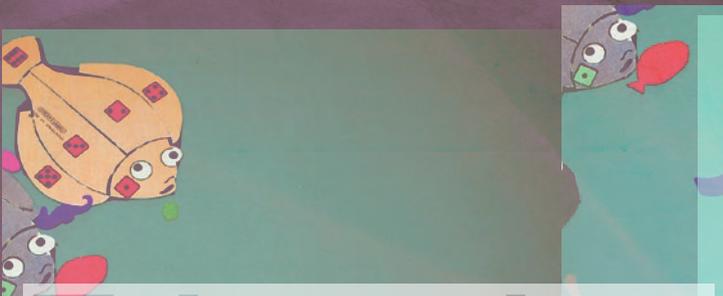
As mentioned in the previous newsletter, I have been managing the extremely exciting project of photographing the Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland coastline. At the time of the last newsletter, we had appointed a photographer (Paul White) and were constantly cursing the cloud and rain and praying for a cloudless day for Paul to get up in the plane and photograph the coast. Fortunately that day finally came on the 10th of September (better late than never), and the results are stunning. Paul then had the unenviable task of stitching the 220 or so images together to create a continuous image of the coast. Once again, the results are nothing short of spectacular – it certainly does have that WOW factor. Colin Horsley, who is the lead client/coordinating the project for the Coastal Arc Initiative, is thrilled with the results, and has been impressing people in the North East with the image. There are adventurous and exciting plans for the use of the image, satisfying a multitude of promotional and artistic purposes, and hopefully being a catalyst for exciting educational programmes. Plans are in their infancy, and nothing is confirmed to date. I am sure you will be made aware of the launch of this image, but if you are unable to make that, I am equally sure you will have the pleasure of viewing it, or sections of it somewhere across the Tees Valley.

Adding to the diversity of themes and projects that I have been involved in, I have taken charge of an exciting drama project working with service users from Cumberland Resource Centre. TVA have been commissioned by Middlesbrough Council Community Inclusion Service to manage the project that will require a performing artist/drama worker to work with the centre's existing theatre group (called IMPACT) to develop project ideas proposed by the service users. The aim of the project is a series of drama workshops working with adults with learning difficulties to explore, help co-ordinate and relay messages to other people on issues that are relevant to them. We are delighted to have recently appointed artist Cathie Sprague for the long project (26 weeks!), to commence in January. At the end of November, IMPACT performed 'The Journey' at Middlesbrough Theatre, and this project will build on that piece.

As always I am involved in a whole host of other projects with an array of interesting partners that are either awaiting applications to be finalised or decisions to be made on funding applications. One in particular is the Green TV project that aims to improve and increase access to the rich natural heritage the Tees Valley has to offer through a programme of educational artist residencies. This application is being re-written and re-submitted to the HLF.



Joe Dunne
Heritage Officer



Education

Project News

October saw the premiere of "...and we say nonsense" at Darlington Arts Centre. Since March, looked after young people from Darlington have been attending arts sessions on Saturday mornings working with artists from Scruff Productions Limited, a video production and community arts based company. Working with animation, creative writing, music and video the young people have completed a range of workshops and mastered many new skills in order to present their work.

"...and we say nonsense?" was screened to a specially invited audience of friends, carers and workers from across the authority and was supported by Darlington Borough Council.

Projects will be running over November and December in Hartlepool and Redcar: the Yr 8 science curriculum will be looked at through drama with actor Leslie Simpson at St Hild's, and Gifted and Talented students at St Benedict's will be working with textile artist Serena Partridge to create a piece for permanent exhibition within the school.

Funding

We're awaiting funding decisions from:

The Wellcome Trust, to run a project in partnership with Durham University, Queen's Campus and St Michael's School in Stockton looking at the neuroscientific relationship between drug misuse and mental health

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for a 'hothouse' project, bringing artists, teachers and scientists from Durham University, Queen's Campus together to explore ways of teaching KS3&4 science creatively, and tracking the progress of teachers & students

The BIG Lottery Young People's Fund 2, to run youth theatres for young parents, engaging teenage mums and dads (and young parents to-be)

Sadly, we weren't successful in getting Clore Duffield Foundation funding for a performing arts alternative provision project, so we continue to look for other avenues for this. We know the difference it could make to these young people who have become disengaged from education, and the knock-on effect that low attendance and exclusion can have on their lives, such as a higher risk of teenage pregnancy, substance misuse and youth offending. Effective alternative provision using the visual and performing arts can help to address disengagement, and is surely preferable to exclusion. So, if anyone has any ideas about where we might source funding from for this work, I'd love to hear from you!

Jane Gray
Education Officer



Higher Apprenticeships in Arts Management

Placements for the four Apprentices, Michael Edwards, Suzanne Hutton, Helen McBride and Nicola McIntosh, have been running successfully for 10 months.

Three Authorities have been able to provide additional paid employment for the Apprentices during the programme and a fourth has expressed an intention to raise funds to do so after the programme ends.

The calendar is now full for training, visits and seminars until the end of the programme, including an exit strategy and preparation for employment or freelance work.

The Apprentices have worked together to make a 45 minute presentation which they successfully gave to Arts Council England NE staff. Audience and Apprentices were extremely pleased with the whole event.

The programme of Skills Development visits and seminars has continued and the Apprentices have learnt about working with young people and about how partnership working brings strengths together; learnt about the process of raising funds for their projects; worked with a regional theatre development agency on tour at Edinburgh Fringe to help showcase talent internationally; and gained experience of working on a new outdoor festival in Hartlepool and an established one in Stockton.

Caroline Pearce
HAAM Co-ordinator

Lytton Street Railings



Following a competition organised through Tees Valley Arts, Adrian Moule was commissioned to design some railings for building firm TOPMAC's flat development on Lytton Street, Middlesbrough. The railings are in place, and proved so successful that the design was used again in an extended development.

Adrian's design was based on a decorative leaf motif swirling in the autumn winds of central Middlesbrough, and exploited the technologies of laser profiling. Adrian commented "This is a technique that I feel works well with drawing, and I have produced similar works at North Ormesby Health Village".

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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Design: www.proportionmarketing.co.uk

