



**tva autumn
newsletter**

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hello

and welcome to Autumn 2015 TVA newsletter!

So, who better to quote from than Shakespeare? Here is a quatrain from Sonnet 73, one of my favourite poems of all time:

That time of year thou may'st in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

He is so clever! (I am aware that a few other people have noticed this.) The way he references and elides the notions of living trees, leafy branches, wood made into choir stalls, singing birds, singing choirs, and then empty choir stalls and empty branches with no choirs or birds, and a lingering echo of song...ah me, we must marvel at his skill (even given that he was 36 when he wrote this, so possibly a trifle gloomy).

Well, moving on from Autumnal sorrows and the cleverness of Shakespeare, and fixing the attention back on to Tees Valley Arts, greetings from us to our readers. TVA continues to enjoy the new offices, and to keep working as hard as ever, making wonderful things happen (even if in small and unheralded ways) across the Tees Valley, and helping all sorts of people enjoy, learn and grow through the arts – as is their cultural entitlement, I would maintain.



From left to right: Sharon Paterson, David Budd, (me), Reuben Kench, Ada Burns, Graham Henderson, Pat Chapman, Jonathan Blackie, Margie Stewart-Pierce, Michael Lavery, Neil Kenley



The big news locally is, of course, that 'the Tees Valley' has announced a combined intention to bid for UK City of Culture 2025, using the birth of passenger railways as its big 'hook'. People who know me will know that in general I am not very good at spouting the corporate line or swallowing received opinions, so in this instance, when I say that I think this is a really good thing, you can believe that I am genuinely of that opinion. I think it is fantastic!

I understand that the submission for CoC 2025 has to be made in 2021, and for that submission to be in any way credible, there will need to be all sorts of work done and actions taken. There will need to be a focus on 'arts and culture' across the Tees Valley, in a way that we haven't had before; there will need to be consideration of audience and participant engagement at a depth and breadth that we haven't previously seen (I hope and believe); there will need to be combined and collaborative actions at a scale that we aren't used to; and – surely – there will be increased opportunities for artists and arts organisations to contribute to and be valued by the residents of the Tees Valley.

Even if the eventual bid should be unsuccessful - say it isn't so (incidentally, a rather good number by Hall and Oates, for whom I have a weakness) - the build up to it, the creation of a credible application, must be beneficial to the arts and culture in Tees Valley. So, that may be the party line, but this time I'm genuinely all for it.

TVA projects, developments and partnerships continue as always, and more information on those can be found elsewhere in the newsletter and on our website www.teesvalleyarts.org.uk

Our big event news is that we have booked legendary performance poet Benjamin Zephaniah, and Dennis Bovell and his Dub Band, to perform together at Teesside University on Saturday October 24th, doors open 7.30pm, as part of the University's celebrations of Black History Month – don't say that we're not good to you, 'it's the Method of Modern Love' – H and O (sorry).



Rowena Sommerville

Rowena Sommerville
Director, TVA

refugee arts

I'm delighted to say that we are now running the third Musicmix project – working with young people of diverse origin, helping them learn about and enhance their own musical skills and talents. As always, the young people are enthusiastic to be part of Musicmix, which offers them a great learning opportunity in a relaxed and enjoyable way, so that it is centred on their own tastes and types of music. Musicmix also offers them the chance to meet up with some music industry professionals, so they learn more about the process of music-making – and we're very proud of Shamiso Gundu, a Musicmix participant, who is now studying Music Technology at college.

We've been able to set up a new studio at the new TVA premises, thanks to Peter for his help, and our grant from the Youth Music Foundation has allowed us to continue to contract Gabriel Mulangu as Assistant Music leader – I admire his skills and his patience!

Our grant from Northern Rock Foundation for the Refugee Arts Worker role has now entered its final year, so I'm down to two days a week on that – never enough! I look back with real pride at what's been achieved over the years, and at the range and variety of people that I've met, and I hope that I've helped on their way. I am always struck by the fact that the need for help and support never diminishes, but the services available do seem to lessen – it's a worry for the future.

Finally – on an exciting and uplifting note – I am so pleased to say that I have been able to help Teesside University celebrate Black History Month with the very legendary pairing of Dennis Bovell and his Dub band, with poet and performer extraordinaire, Benjamin Zephaniah!!!

The Words n Dub event will be on Saturday October 24th in the Terrace Bar in the TU Students' Union Building, doors open 7.30pm. This fantastic event will open with some mass drumming at 8pm – so get there on time – and will be FREE, so do turn up early to get in.

Yes yes – Dennis Bovell and Benjamin Zephaniah and it's free – you read it here!!!



Maurice Dezou
Refugees Officer, TVA



projects

Birds, Badge-making and Bottle tops...

"I spy with my little eye, something beginning with B!" This summer seems to have been all things B related. I am currently working with INCA (Industry Nature Conservation Association) to create a project to re-introduce the Little Tern **Bird** to the natural coastlines in Crimdon and Redcar. The project will work across (and link up) two primary schools in Spring 2016 and look at ideas surrounding welcoming – INCA welcome and encourage the Little Tern by putting out dummy birds and by playing recordings of its cry; we want children and parents to learn about this and also to think creatively about what sights and sounds make them feel welcome somewhere. This is all intended to help communities understand how they can welcome the LT, and what not to do – like walking your dog too near its nests (the bird makes its nest on the open shore – you just can't help some people). Never did I think my drama degree would lead me to write a funding application about a bird... it's a varied life!

As part of our community engagements for River Tees Rediscovered, we went along and took part in IncludFEST at South Park, Darlington. Tin Arts (Durham based inclusive dance and arts organisation) ran the event as a day for children and young people with and without disability to come together and enjoy a range of arts activities and live performance. We were there making River Tees inspired **Badges!** I have yet to make one!

We are delighted to welcome Adam Bligh, visual artist to TVA on our collaboration with the Canals and Rivers Trust at the Barrage for the River Tees Rediscovered Landscape Partnership. On August 22nd, Adam will be stationed at the Tees Barrage for the Open Day where he will create a **Bottle** Top Mural that is to be exhibited at their site. We must thank Percy, One Planet Middlesbrough and Marks and Spencer for contributing to the bottle top collection!

Over the summer I also took part in a **Business** event at Macmillan Academy, run by our patron Steph McGovern. After a "speed dating" style info session where young people could find out about different organisations, we held mock interviews. I think I was more nervous than the kids! I met some fantastic young people with bold aspirations for their futures and was super impressed at their energy, focus and passion. Watch out Teesside...

And so we enter the autumn months in the lead up to winter... See you then!



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



adults

Summer comes and goes all too quickly and it seems this year has flown by. I've been with the organisation over a year now, and am starting to feel very much part of the furniture, as I continue to get to grips with everything Tees Valley Arts. The role has enabled me to work with a diverse range of people, from the groups of vulnerably housed adults to the women living on the Thorntree estate I have had the pleasure of working with on a weekly basis with the funding we received from the Health Lottery, through their Healthimprove fund.

The Thorntree Roses group have gone from strength to strength over the last few months, most recently having an exhibition of their work at the Thorntree Hub, attended by the new Middlesbrough Mayor, Dave Budd. The event really brought home how much they have achieved during their taster workshops and then ten weeks of photography, writing and printmaking but mostly working with Stockton-on-Tees based glass artist Judith Gill, of Wild Roses Glass (a very apt name, in the circumstances, and another of those to come, which I will explain in a moment).

Through the weeks, Judith was able to take the ladies through all aspects of glass art, including glass painting, fused glass using confetti glass, and frit, through to jewellery making. Their work was dictated by the group, with choices on activity and genre chosen through their discussions. The photography, printmaking and creative writing sessions informed the final pieces, which produced a coming together of these art-forms within the glass.

There have been some fantastic developments through our work with the group too, away from the creative work they have produced. We've recruited Thorntree School Mum Emma who didn't know any of the group members previously, but has continued to attend the group right up to the birth of her baby, the lovely Rosie. (Not, we're told named after the group, but the other example of an apt name connection) She managed the session on the Tuesday before Rosie's birth two days later, and within 5 days had her new babe to show us all at the group, our new 'Thorntree Rosie'! A week later Emma was back taking part in sessions.

Visits to both the National Glass Centre and Creative Glass (fortuitously owned by TVA board member Tony) gave the women a complete understanding of how glass is made from a 'back-stage' visit at The National Glass Centre where they saw students using huge kilns to blow glass, to the work Tony showed us at Creative Glass which is installed in fabulous houses and prestige shops and hotels and the UK and beyond. The processes and equipment used were quite an eye-opener.

Through these experiences, and training we've been able to give them here at TVA, the group are now planning their own trip to Sunderland to take part in making blown glass baubles nearer Christmas time, with the group taking on the task of organising the trip and sorting funding to make it happen.

They are about to begin their next sessions, too which will involve a trip to the National Quilt Centre in York and work with textile artists Jane Riley and Sarah Oatley, artists in residence at Bobbin Shed 21 at Darlington's Lingfield Point, and both very much involved with hugely popular upcoming sustainability event, the 'Festival of Thrift' at the same site. We're all excited about what the next few weeks will bring...



Miki Rogers
Adults Officer, TVA

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

Photograph: Thorntree Roses Group



washed out

A true British Summer, no? The drizzle, the monsoon rains and the spectacular storms have seemed less oppressive to me now I'm able to glance up from my desk, in a moment of reflection, and watch the majestic weather patterns move across a panoramic view, seeing the sun lighting up some distance spot on the horizon and promise relief from the dark rain clouds that are ominously hanging overhead...

Summer seems to have never truly arrived here in Middlesbrough this year, apart from the odd, spectacular day; however, this has been something of a blessing here at TVA Towers as when it rains I like to organise.

So for weeks now I've been ploughing through box after box and though as I sit here and write this I feel like I'm still surrounded by boxes, in reality there are substantially fewer than even a couple of weeks ago...

I've not however been alone in my endeavour and my small mound of boxes was nothing in comparison to the mountain that was TVA's paper archive. We were fortunate enough this year to be aided by history student Beth Parsler who worked for us as an intern, funded by Teesside University, and who tirelessly, with the support of Ruth Hobbins and her team at Teesside Archives, worked to catalogue and make our archive accessible.

We've also been working with Middlesbrough College to craft a work experience programme that will provide their students with the opportunity to experience working behind the scenes in the arts; and also capitalising on our relationship with patron Steph McGovern, who is a governor of Macmillan Academy, by offering individual placements to their students following Ree's attendance at a business development day.

We've also been glad to welcome Eleanor and Miguel, mima's new curators, who have been leading on the exciting and ground-breaking localism show that is due to open in early October. As part of our contribution to this programme we're glad to welcome new volunteer Emma Bennett, from Gilkes Street Artists, who is going to be working with us, through the exhibition, to document our contribution to public art.

To keep in touch with what's happening here at TVA through our website; on twitter [@teesvalleyarts](https://twitter.com/teesvalleyarts); on Facebook facebook.com/teesvalleyarts; instagram: instagram.com/teesvalleyarts; as well as on Google+ plus.google.com/+TeesvalleyartsOrgUk; and not forgetting [vimeo: vimeo.com/teesvalleyarts](https://vimeo.com/teesvalleyarts).

Or if you are interested in volunteering at TVA then please drop me an email at office@teesvalleyarts.org.uk or see our opportunities here: www.teesvalleyarts.org.uk/get-involved/



Peter Neal
Office Co-ordinator, TVA



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