



Autumn eNewsletter 2012

Opening remarks...

This is an eventful time for TVA - as always, we have all sorts of projects going on with all sorts of participants and partners, all sorts of potential projects cooking up with all sorts of potential partners, and altogether too much use of the percussive 'p'....

Colleagues will talk about projects in delivery in their own pieces, but just to say we are delighted and excited to be about to begin working on: 'Journeys', a drama project with young people working with local star playwright Ishy Din, project funded through Grants for the Arts; and 'Musicmix 2' creating music with young people of diverse origin, creatively led by Maurice Dezou, project funded by Youth Music; and Maurice is also about to begin another stint as our specialist Refugee Arts Worker, thanks to funding from the Northern Rock Foundation.

We're thrilled to welcome Steph McGovern as our second official Patron; local girl Steph is pictured left at one of the events celebrating the Green TV project – see under Joe's Heritage and Environment pages – and will be familiar to many readers from her presentations on BBC Breakfast, where she brings sunshine to a rather gloomy subject – economics.

Steph's arrival has coincided with our 30th birthday – and I have to say that surviving as a participative arts organisation in Teesside for thirty years is a huge achievement – very well done us! Birthday celebration plans are not confirmed as yet, but newsletter readers, friends and colleagues will receive an update/ invitation in due course.

Such longevity is absolutely worthy of celebration and we do wish ourselves many happy returns – as it must be said that while times have never been easy, I feel that TVA currently faces its biggest ever funding/ survival challenge. Core support previously received from the local authorities and the Arts Council has withered on the vine, and competition for tenders and grants is tougher than ever before. One major grant funder told us recently that applications to its funds have trebled over the last year. And just to say, that while the Olympics was undeniably fab (and well done, Danny Boyle!), Team GB's medal success was frequently attributed to the increase in support funding given to emerging sportsmen and women over the last few years – now if only that approach could be taken to emerging artists and struggling arts organisations.....

Having said all of which I have personally been very fortunate this year in gaining a place on the Swallows Partnership Cultural Leadership Programme June 2012, my report on which follows.....

Swallows Partnership Cultural Leadership Programme June 2012

*'Give me hope, Joanna, can't you see that the tide is turning?
Oh don't make me wait till the morning come'* – Eddy Grant

The Swallows Partnership is an international partnership, based in the arts and culture, between the North East of England and the Eastern Cape of South Africa. The partnership exists to 'create an extraordinary and complex cultural chemistry across the globe' and is run through two linked but independent foundations – Swallows Foundation UK, based in Newcastle upon Tyne, and Isiseko Senkonjane SA, based in Port Elizabeth. The Swallows Partnership was originally set up by Peter Stark, who has worked in culture at very high levels in both those settings.



BBC Economics presenter Steph McGovern with a pupil of Abingdon Primary School, June 2012

Opening remarks...



Children at Keiskamma playing Mozart:
Jude Thomas



Earlier this year SFUK advertised the opportunity for senior and emerging cultural leaders based in the North East of England and Scotland to apply to take part in their cultural leadership and management programme – a two week programme of travel, lectures, introductions, meetings, tours, visits and seminars around Johannesburg and the Eastern Cape, culminating in two days at the Grahamstown National Festival of the Arts, and I applied, successfully, for a place.

I had never been to any part of Africa before, and viewed South Africa with a mix of distaste, fear, and admiration, based on my distant understanding over years of the varying situations in that very complicated country, with certain stand out memorable events – vile atrocities, heroic acts and hugely moving beautiful collective moments all of which I had either read about in the papers or seen on TV. In preparation I duly read some of the reportage/ comment/ analysis of Ryszard Kapuscinski, and – somewhat more easily digested – the thrillers of Deon Meyer, who writes excellent police procedurals set in the new ‘integrated’ South Africa; both writers were enlightening.

The two week Swallows programme was one of the most intense periods of my professional life, and thinking back from the distance of – can it be – just two months, I am overwhelmed by a torrent of images, incidents, sensations, conversations – the discomfort of the travel; the plainness of Johannesburg; the beauty of the landscape; the ugliness of the history; the whiteness of the white towns; the shabbiness of the black townships; the absolute dirt poor poverty of some areas; being moved to tears in the Apartheid Museum; the majesty of the vision of Constitution Hill; the people – of all backgrounds - we met who are truly nobly trying to build a new future; the people we met who, truly ignobly, didn’t seem to want that; visiting Steve Biko’s grave; the complexity of all the issues, everywhere and all the time; buying a wall hanging at the Keiskamma Art Project and meeting the woman who had sewn it; the children at Keiskamma playing some Mozart for us; the Red Location Museum and the Red Location township (the poorest place I have ever seen); the constant richness and stimulation of the debate and conversation of the group; singing on the bus; drinking wine and talking; having cold feet – real rather than metaphorical (night temperatures were surprisingly low); the many beggars and refugees; the (several) friendly black women who commented favourably on my hair; seeing wild elephants; paddling in the Indian Ocean!

The programme was set up and led by Peter Stark, whose grasp of the history of the organisations, people, places etc is immense; Peter was able to introduce us to cultural leaders ranging from the Chief Executive of the SA Arts Council, to regional regeneration managers, to workers on the ground, and to brief us fully about the many issues they all face. His mantra about the emerging South Africa, particularly the emerging black leadership, was ‘it is impossible, but it must be done’ and that conflicted pairing of impossibility and necessity was exemplified just about everywhere we went.

For the first week we had two black drivers who both had interests in cultural activity – for one linked to his Zulu ancestry, for the other around jazz – and were joined by Zuko Pokwana, a prince from the Xhosa people, who balances traditional leadership with cultural activism. For the second week we were driven by Gcobani Poltini from Swallows SA and Toto Sonjica, who works for Port Elizabeth Opera House. All of these individuals were not only ‘drivers’ but very much part of the group, sharing their realities with us, listening to ours, exploring thoughts and reactions, debating, arguing, drinking, laughing.



Elephants at Addo National Park,
Eastern Cape: Jude Thomas

Opening remarks...



Culturally regenerated area of Johannesburg: Jude Thomas



The Swallows 2012 group, less Peter Stark and Jude Thomas, who took the picture: Jude Thomas

The area of Johannesburg where we stayed for the first three nights seemed – as far as we could tell – to be quite wealthy but also quite ‘groovy’ for want of a better word; there was a nice bar at the end of the street where black and white groups both sat and chatted in a relaxed way – though not many groups appeared to be mixed, and we generally didn’t see many mixed couples. In the Eastern Cape there was much less sense of inter-racial mixing, and we had one very memorable incident in which a swastika was drawn in the mud splatter on the side of one of our minibuses – this happened in a remote beauty spot (aptly called the Valley of Desolation), could only have been done by one of the handful of white, middle-aged, middle class Afrikaner tourists who also visited while we were there, and we have to attribute it to the fact that we were a racially mixed group. Those of us visiting from the UK were very shocked, our black South African companions much less so.

What was evident throughout is that there is still very little shared social meeting space for black, white and other racial groups in South Africa. Certainly in the rural areas the housing for whites and the housing for blacks could be on a different planet; and wherever there is wealth there is – not surprisingly – anxiety, fear of crime, armed response security patrols, electronic gates and lots of really big dogs. Soweto, Johannesburg’s legendary township and now home to about half a million people, has posh edges where middle class black people have settled, rather than moving in to Johannesburg itself.

So, what did I get out of it professionally? I had a brilliant, stimulating, intense, uncomfortable and enjoyable time; my brain is still seething with thoughts and arguments. I have met new colleagues from South Africa, the North East of England and from Scotland, and have recharged pre-existing professional relationships. I have seen stark instances of cultural tropes with which I am sadly familiar – for instance big capital spend on cultural buildings, followed by little or no revenue spend on content or community engagement, allied to an under-prepared and under-resourced leadership – ‘it is impossible but it must be done’. I have debated ‘the way forward’ for culture in a recession, in challenging times, when other needs must take priority, when culture must serve other masters, when cultural products alienate the people and/or the politicians etc and I’ve had that debate with well informed, combative, sharp minds. And I paddled in the Indian Ocean.....

I never felt at ease in South Africa, so would I want to go back? Well, I’m already working on it....

I’m truly grateful for this opportunity, it was a wholly memorable trip, and among the potential project partners I mentioned at the beginning of my opening remarks, I am now happy to include Swallows Foundations UK and SA, as we have plans.....



Rowena Sommerville
Director, TVA

Inclusion



Acoustic WorldFest 2012

Funding has restricted our WorldFest activity in 2012, but we managed to have a very enjoyable event in the Middlesbrough Town Hall Crypt Bar, featuring a variety of talented young local performers, Yorkshire's goddesses of acappella Henwen, and Roots Melody – featuring musicians from the UK and from France (including Pablo U-wa) and led by Maurice Dezou.

It was a really enjoyable night with great dancing, ably led by Denise Sauron. We're keeping the flame alive! Lovely photos by Kev Howard, as per usual.



Maurice Dezou

Refugee Arts Worker and Filmmaker





Education



No matter how long you've been working with young people, and how much you know and believe that participating in the arts can benefit young people, hearing it from them is just wonderful. I popped in to one of the Moving On sessions recently, where artist Adrian Moule was doing collagraphs with the group; **"I didn't even want to do it at first, but now I'm really proud of what I've done"**. No need to add any more to that really.

Project News

Moving On (working with young people in the care of all five local authorities)

We had our largest single Arts Award moderation at the end of August for Moving On, and I'm delighted to say that thirty young people achieved Bronze. We'll be celebrating towards the end of September at myplace in Middlesbrough; exhibiting & screening the work created and presenting the Arts Award certificates. Not all the young people who took part in the project did their Arts Awards (forty eight young people in total), so congratulations to them too for participating and creating some great work. Thanks to all the artists and the support workers from the care teams who made it a success - we'll be starting to look at Year 2 shortly, so I'm pleased to say that Moving On continues.



Education



Risky Biz (in partnership with Barnardo's)

We delayed our celebration event slightly, so will be enjoying the work of this year's first Risky Biz group towards the end of September at mima, which should be interesting for the group who are currently taking part in the project.! Five young people successfully gained Bronze Arts Award, and all the young people worked hard to create some fantastic work.

MusicMix

(working with newly arrived and/or young people from diverse backgrounds)

We're gearing up for activity to begin on MusicMix this autumn, so we'll be hearing wonderful sounds sometime soon.

Arts Award

All our support surgery dates for Advisers are now up on the TVA and Arts Award websites – so if you're a trained adviser, it would be great to see you. We'll also be busy with other elements of Arts Award support, and I'm currently working with some schools, supporting them to embed AA into the curriculum. With more AA adviser training dates coming up, and projects with young people working towards Arts Award at TVA, the rest of 2012 is going to be pretty busy on the Arts Award front!

Artsmark

It's time to begin preparations if your school, PRU or FE College is thinking of applying for Artsmark. As I mentioned in the last newsletter, Trinity College London are the new provider for Artsmark, and there has been a transition period over the summer. Go to www.artsmark.org.uk for more information and updates.



Jane Gray
Education Officer





Heritage & Environment



I'll start this with some personal news, and it doesn't come any bigger than this. My amazing wife gave birth to two gorgeous little boys at the end of August! Alfie Joseph and Thomas Arthur were born by caesarean section weighing 5lb 10 and 7lb 1 respectively. Both mother and the boys are doing really well, and I am one seriously happy and proud dad!

So that's it, the Green TV project has finished, but if I have done my job well, the legacy will live on. The final celebration events in early July went fantastically well and were extremely well received (see quotes below), and I am so grateful to everyone that helped make them the fun and interesting events they were. The talks by Simon King, David Lindo, Kane Cunningham and Trai Anfield were superb, and I must admit, it felt slightly uncomfortable yet extremely humbling to hear such kind and positive words said about you and the work you have been doing by people you have held in such high regard for so long – this job continues to be unconventional and keep me on my toes!

So on to other news. Unfortunately we found out that our application to the HLF for a project working to raise the profile of and creatively interpret the trackbed of the world's first passenger railway line from Stockton to Darlington was unsuccessful. TVA and the other partners are still extremely keen to see this project (titled DARLocomotion – good name eh?) happen, and so are revising it for a follow up application to the HLF.

I have been very busy developing other projects and partnerships, with applications and proposals either under review or soon to be submitted, and so more news will follow.

The Evergreen Project (at the Acute Eating Disorder Centre) is going well. The book of the young people's creative writing and artwork has been printed and looks fantastic, and I am now working with them to creatively 'spruce up' a courtyard at the centre – more info and images to follow.



Heritage & Environment



"It is so important to get out there into green spaces to explore, get muddy, get thorns in your hands and grass in your hair, and to realise you can do this almost anywhere. And that is what is superb about Green TV – it graphically illustrates, even in what are relatively challenging circumstances, that you can engage humanity at every stage in the real world – that is really, really thrilling. I applaud it. Green TV is a tremendous initiative and I only hope it is echoed across the nation and through all of our learning facilities."

Simon King, speaking at the Green TV Celebration Event, 6th July 2012

"Green TV is a hugely important, ambitious and forward looking project, bringing together natural heritage through creativity which is major achievement and something to be proud of."

Trai Anfield, HLF Committee Member, speaking at the Green TV Celebration Event, 6th July 2012

"What a wonderful day, and so very well organised, informative, visual and immensely enjoyable. Guest speakers were infectious with their enthusiasm and Joe did an amazing job as front man!"

Cheryl Baines, artist

"I thought I would drop you a note to let you know how much I enjoyed the event. Simon King was very passionate. I liked his nature deficit disorder analogy and how he described the journey of engaging with the environment, falling in love with it, and then conserving it. You have helped people onto this journey."

Richard Anderson, Chairman of TVA Board of Directors



Joe Dunne

Heritage & Environment Officer

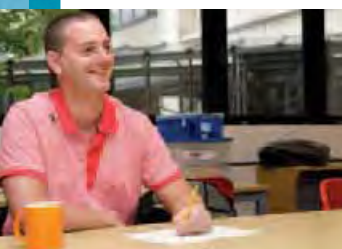




Youth & Community



I am writing this article in early August, I'm about to go on leave and am therefore frantically trying to meet deadlines etc. before I disappear into the world of Tim (person) as opposed to Tim (worker). I am also writing this article through a haze of hideous hayfever symptoms; yes I manage to get hayfever when it rains for the entire summer. As a result of these conditions I expect that this article may seem slightly bonkers! Sorry – but (sneeze) hard luck!



Let's stART (haha) with the bad news! The future of stART – our very successful intervention with young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training is still uncertain. Youth Contract bids from Middlesbrough, Stockton and Redcar & Cleveland which included TVA as a potential delivery partner were unsuccessful. This is very disappointing especially when stART's success has drawn national media attention (Children & Young People Now good practice Case Study January 2012, Arts Award Brochure cover 2011). There is still potential funding for stART as TVA has been accepted as a "delivery partner" for the Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU) bid to the DWP Innovation Fund; I reported this in the last newsletter article; TVU have now completed the second stage of the application and we should hear from them in September...we live in hope! This leads me (seamlessly) to write about another of my projects.

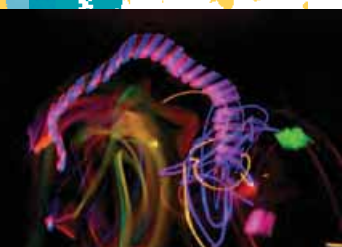


"Hope Springs" is a multi-media arts project working with partners Hope North East (HNE). HNE supports people attempting to achieve and maintain recovery from addiction. In my last article the project had just begun, since then service users have made great progress, taking a very active part in; percussion, printmaking, mandala, experimental photography and creative writing workshops. The creative process and the meditative aspect to these activities has clearly been of benefit to participants. When artist Adrian Moule led participants in the creation of a giant mandala made from grains, beans, pulses, spices etc there was a palpable sense of peace and reflectivity and a real sense of achievement from all.

Youth & Community



The process of “making the mandala” was documented by photographer Kev Howard as was the mandala – making a temporal artwork more permanent. Kev’s experimental photography workshops were well received, the concept of orchestrating and photographing the movement of glowsticks in a blacked-out room sparked the imagination of participants who were buzzing with ideas of how to create abstract swirls and patterns of coloured light. Service users at HNE are certainly getting used to the idea of experimentation with the creative process and have the confidence to try out new ideas whilst supporting each other to achieve them...result! Through this process some superb artwork has been created; this will be printed, framed and displayed in the HNE building.



Writers Andy Willoughby & Bob Beagrie are using the artwork and rhythms created in previous workshops as a stimulus for conjuring words, phrases, descriptions and (eventually) paragraphs. It is this experimental approach that will form the basis for the next stage of the project.

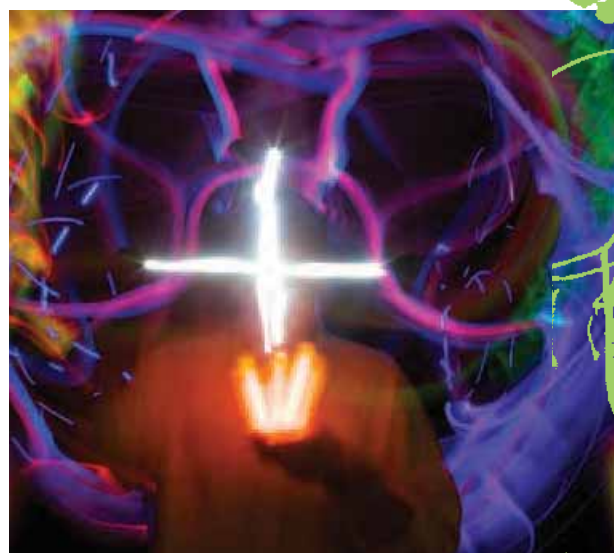
On 20th September HNE are hosting an Open Day as part of Middlesbrough recovery week. Hope Springs will support this event with an exhibition of framed artwork created by service users, text responding to the artwork will also be displayed with the prints. Plans are being developed for a multi-media performance to go along with the exhibition, this may involve images of artwork being projected onto performers, utilising tableaux and other physical theatre techniques along with poetry readings all of which may be interspersed with or include percussive music...this is a work in development! I’m looking forward to the next stage of this exciting project.

I am (at the time of writing) in the early stages of a new project: Journeys. Journeys will support the development, creation and staging of a short, youth-based drama piece, exploring modern, diverse identities in the economically and spiritually tough sub-region of Teesside, led by Middlesbrough-based playwright Ishy Din. Meetings with Ishy have been very positive, he has a strong desire to work with young people in Middlesbrough who he feels have a particularly tough time and so there is a real sense of purpose in initiating this project. I look forward to writing about Journeys in my next article, when (hopefully) I won’t be sneezing, itching and watery eyed with hayfever!



Tim Coyte

Projects Officer: Youth & Community



Thirty years

For my contribution to this newsletter we are not having the usual trip down memory lane. I have managed to track down some names from the past (and present) who have kindly given us their birthday greetings. Many thanks to those who have contributed and apologies to those I haven't contacted for one reason or another (usually old email address contacts!). It has been great to hear back from some people who were old colleagues and even people who were connected with Cleveland Arts before my time from its inception back in 1982.

Simon Smith, Communications Officer

Happy birthday to Tees Valley Arts and its wonderful and dedicated team. 30 years of reaching out, engaging, and improving the life chances of people in the Tees Valley;

In an increasingly challenging environment Tees Valley Arts continue to deliver creative entrepreneurship and high quality artistic solutions to Teessiders where traditional methods of engagement or support are not working. This takes considerable passion, skill and dedication from Rowena and her team and for which I am very proud.

Richard Anderson, Head of Risk and Compliance, Gentoo Genie Ltd; current Chair of the TVA Board

Over the last 30 years Tees Valley Arts have played a major role in the development of the sub region's artistic communities, offering professional training and development opportunities to local artists, inspiring young people in both formal and informal educational settings, often giving excluded people valuable platforms to voice their concerns and express their experiences around contemporary social issues, as well as playing a vital role in the development of public art across Teesside. Tees Valley Arts have certainly played an important role in my own creative development and I am grateful for their continued support.

Bob Beagrie, writer and community artist, senior lecturer and co-Director of EK Zuban; Cleveland Arts Literature Development Worker 1998-2003

Sometimes when you are fighting hard for something you passionately believe in you can temporarily lose sight of what it's all for, but then you see the smiling faces of children when they have a sense of achievement, or you hear them talking about their involvement, their expression of new feelings and skills, and you realise how vital the work of Tees Valley Arts is.

The real achievement is that similar things brought about by TVA are happening in all the corners of the Tees Valley; Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar, and Stockton.


How can you begin to measure the real influence on generations of people over the last 30 years in promoting; inclusion, involvement, and achievement. Visit Saltholme Nature Reserve surrounded by smoking Castles of Industry, and see how art through the Green TV Project has become integral to promoting and involving children in that environment.

All the TVA projects reinforce why after 30 years it is essential that Tees Valley Arts continues to be a vital part of the areas cultural landscape, especially during the current climate of cut backs!

Art, culture, and sport are the perfect routes to a better life for all.

Tony Campbell, Director, Creative Glass; Cleveland Arts/ TVA Board member since 2002, Chair 2005-12

Thirty years



I am delighted to be able to send my congratulations and very best wishes to Tees Valley Arts on its 30th anniversary. As the first Director of its predecessor, Cleveland Arts, I have so many happy memories of those early days as the newly formed arts agency promoted the visual and performing arts and supported community and ethnic arts across the county. Music and drama were my particular passions and the successful Cleveland Music Festivals, library and art gallery concerts, which included participation by many distinguished national and international artists performing with Cleveland performers, remain with me as joyful memories of my time in the county. It was Cleveland Arts's organisation of Cleveland Youth Opera's first full scale opera in 1986 which led me to found British Youth Opera, now a major training company for leading young singers many of whom have gone on to star in the world's finest opera houses. It celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. I have watched with great interest and pleasure the influence and impact which Tees Valley Arts has had on its area and I am honoured to have been associated with its predecessor. I wish Tees Valley Arts every possible continued success in the future."

Denis Coe, Director of Cleveland Arts 1983-1989

Congratulations to Tees Valley Arts on your 30th birthday.

It is over 20 years since I was privileged to serve the then Cleveland Arts as the Vice chair thus it is a great delight that I am able to celebrate 30 years of its continuity through Tees Valley Arts.

Throughout its 30 years existence it has been well served by all who have been associated with it. It has made a valuable contribution to the Arts within Teesside and has demonstrated through a genuine coming together of the community what can be done by staying focused.

Take heart from the success of 30 years for a continuing service to the Arts in the Tees Valley

Brian B Coldwell OBE, Chair, Cleveland College of Art and Design; Cleveland Arts Board Vice Chair 1987-2000

To have survived for thirty years is an impressive enough achievement for any arts organisation. Many bigger, glitzier and better-funded organisations have disappeared in this time. But when you consider the important work that Cleveland Arts/Tees Valley Arts has done to bring together professional and amateur artists, audiences and communities in an area like Teesside, the record is all the more remarkable. I wish TVA all the best for the next thirty years.

Andy Croft, writer; Cleveland Arts Board Member 1990-1998

Congratulations to Tees Valley Arts on its 30th birthday and on the many creative experiences and events it has inspired during that time.

I joined Tees Valley Arts to work on the Articulate Project in 2000, progressed to Programme Manager for Social Inclusion in 2001, where we were able to build on a strong record of delivering inclusive and empowering projects with people with a disability. During my time as Director, 2003 to 2005, staff and trustees worked together to re-brand the organisation, changing the name from Cleveland Arts to Tees Valley Arts to better reflect and signal the organisations positioning. I am delighted that Tees Valley Arts is still going strong and wish you all the very best for the future.

Lesley Featherstone, Director of Creativity Works, Somerset; Tees Valley Arts 2000-2005

Thirty years

Congratulations Tees Valley Arts on your 30th birthday. I can only imagine that these are not the easiest times for a voluntary organisation that works so discretely to facilitate such positive and valuable arts activity. I hope that the unique opportunity that TVA provides for the area, for attracting funding and enabling collaboration and development through arts projects continues to be recognised. Much of TVA's good work has been within communities, and so has a naturally lower profile than flagship centres, for example. I expect that this goes in cycles, I remember that (the then Cleveland Arts) had very little money at the time I was employed, but that we were soon able to attract huge amounts of funding and good will for some wonderful projects, through Health Action Zones, Neighbourhood Renewal and Youth Action programmes, aside from the work we did within schools and Public Art, as the government at the time sought to empower communities and redress inequalities at grass roots. It was an exciting time, and I certainly enjoyed a fantastic learning experience and made some great friends and associations during my time at TVA. So thanks for that!

Luke Harding, The Waiting Room restaurant; Programme Manager, Cleveland Arts 1998-2001

Happy 30th birthday, Tees Valley Arts! Congratulations, and thanks for all the fun and achievements!

For me, highlights were lots of firsts: the Women's Comedy project; the first subregional Arts Council-funded Arts & Disability Agency; the first Disability Arts Festival; the Arts & Health Trust; the Literature Development programme (giving Mark Robinson his first job in the Arts!). And gaining lots of grants! What I loved was the freedom to be ingenious and to take risks, enabling more people to express themselves creatively, and to have a voice.

Good luck in the future!

Linda Innes, Arts Equality Officer, Cleveland Arts 1991-1998

I would like to congratulate Cleveland Arts on their 30th Anniversary. During my employment with them as Senior Administrator I was privileged to see first hand the invaluable support and contribution they made to both local artists and the Community. For me the highlight was working with children seeing their faces and watching them develop and learn through art. Best Wishes for the future and to a further successful and creative 30 years.

Denise Kelly (formerly Gilgallon), Campaigns Manager, Dogs Trust; Senior Administrator, Cleveland Arts 1989-1999

Thirty years

It would not be a rash claim to say Cleveland Arts changed my life! The chance to establish the Public Arts Unit brought me to the Tees Valley for the first time, and I'm still here. Sharing my enthusiasm for sculpture and craft with architects and property developers was almost as good as being paid to make art. Whether combining jeweller Jenni Neal with blacksmith Peat Oberon for a Coulby Newham railing commission, or pairing farmer Lewis Staley with sculptor Richard Wentworth for the installation of his wonderful Teesdale Parish Boundary Markers, it was a joy. Cleveland Arts earned a positive reputation, and left a mark in every sense. I was thrilled to succeed Alastair Snow as Director and to carve out a place for the organisation through the local government change of '96. I learnt a great deal from board members like Lesley Oates, Brian Coldwell, and Neil Etherington, and formed friendships that are strong today with colleagues like Simon Smith, Mark Robinson, and Andy Croft. Cities and towns need agencies like Tees Valley Arts to excite and challenge, to colonise new territory and create circumstances in which new ideas and new communities can take root. I wish TVA a happy 30th, with best wishes for the next 30.

**Reuben Kench, Head of Culture and Leisure, Stockton on Tees Borough Council;
Cleveland Arts Public Arts Officer 1991-1993, Director 1993-1997**

Happy birthday, TVA ! Thanks for all the countless community events you organised across Teesside that encouraged people of all backgrounds to get involved in art and by so doing, broke down barriers. Art for All!
**Bob Kerr, Middlesbrough Councillor; Cleveland Arts/ TVA Board Member 1994-2009,
Chair 2002-2005**

In the blink of an eye 30 years have flown by.
It is hard today to imagine what 1982 felt like then.
Distant voices, distant memories, distant dreams.
Over the course of the past three decades so many good and bad things have happened.
Most we could never have foreseen.

But some things are constant, such as the power of the arts to change our perceptions of the surrounding world for the greater good, to hold and bond communities together and to give a voice to many. Happy birthday Tees Valley Arts, long may you sing.

**Roger Lewis, Group Chief Executive, Welsh Rugby Union and Millennium Stadium;
Cleveland Arts Board Member 1982-1984**

(Roger Lewis was a founding Board Member of Cleveland Arts. He left the North East in 1984, and subsequently held the positions of Head of Music at Radio 1, a Managing Director of EMI Records, President of the Decca Record Company, Managing Director of Classic FM, and Managing Director of ITV Wales. He is currently the Group Chief Executive of the Welsh Rugby Union and Millennium Stadium.)

Thirty years old is a great age to be. It's the age you stop being quite so worried about what other people think and become you're own person. So TVA has embraced the challenges of independence and is going forward; doing what is right for the organisation and for the folk of the Tees Valley. I enjoyed three years as Director at TVA and made many friends and associates, many of which I still keep in touch with today. Memories that jump to mind would be the completion of E:volve the Science and Arts project funded through ERDF that forged partnerships between the arts, schools and science sectors and Gallery TSI which grew from another great partnership with Middlesbrough Council. Both initiatives leave great legacies behind in the Tees Valley. Happy Birthday TVA!

Rosi Lister, Regional Director Churches Conservation Trust; TVA Director 2005-2008

Thirty years

Very many congratulations on 30 years at Tees Valley Arts, and here's to 30 years more! When I joined Cleveland Arts in 1983 the two staff were a performing arts and a visual arts officer. It was my first arts admin job, and arts development was a new way of working, so I learned by the seat of my pants! Highlights include bringing national sculptors, including David Mach, to the Cleveland Gallery for Sculpture: New Directions, a horse drawn tour by Horse and Bamboo Theatre which led to a later three month residency in Wolviston, and securing Urban Aid funding for an Ethnic Arts Worker at Cleveland Arts.

Joanna Morland, Cleveland Arts Visual Arts Officer, 1983-1986

I would like to send my congratulations and good wishes to the staff, past and present, of Tees Valley Arts, for their hard work and important contribution in enhancing and encouraging the arts in the area over 3 decades. Their creativity and ideas have resulted in interesting experiences for a wide range of communities and individuals and I wish them success and the opportunity to grow and develop in the future.

Lesley Oates, Cleveland Arts Board Member 1982-2004; Chair 1985-1999

Happy 30th Birthday Tees Valley Arts! Having worked with TVA right from the beginning of my career as a freelance designer until the present day, I can honestly say that the organisation does a multitude of fantastic and inspiring things! The projects I have been involved in for the past 6 years have shown the passion that Tees Valley Arts has for creativity, learning and the arts sector on the whole. It reaches people far and wide in a positive and engaging way. What a lovely organisation to work for...and a lovely bunch of people to work with! Long may it continue! Three cheers for Tees Valley Arts on its thirtieth birthday!


Nicola Parkin, Artist

Tees Valley Arts holds a very special place for me, on my journey through the field of arts and engagement. The communities of Teesside and its local arts practitioners combine to create a unique platform from which to push the boundaries of what makes art relevant to all. As former Education Programme Manager, I valued the freedom to respond to the needs of participants, artists and community partners; this was reflected in our ground breaking work with North East Process Industry Cluster (NEPIC) the vast chemical industries network based in Teesside. This partnership was encapsulated in the Evolve Programme which reached thousands of pupils and teachers. It united science and art through the laughter and creativity we discovered in cross curricular dance, drama and creative writing. We raised aspiration for all involved whilst embedding new skills in education nationally.

In my current role as Head of Learning at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, I recognise the value of my time with Tees Valley Arts and the experiences which continue to inform my work. My sincere thanks and good wishes for the future go to this exceptional arts organisation, long may you continue...

Janette Pratt, Head of Learning, Yorkshire Sculpture Park; Education Programme Manager, Cleveland Arts/Tees Valley Arts 2003-2007

Thirty years



I worked for Cleveland Arts from 1993 to 1999, and it was a fantastic place to learn the skills of arts development: from the great team of people that worked there, from the board, from our partners and audiences, and from artists. The ground-breaking projects we made together still benefit people today. I still see public art we commissioned back then, from Stockton High Street to Berwick Hills and the cliffs at Saltburn. I see the legacy of the Equality Arts work in the way diversity is now embraced far more commonly. Mudfog Press, which I co-founded, and typeset the first booklets, still flourishes promoting local authors. Some of the writers I worked with as LDW (Literature Development Worker), like Bob Beagrie and Maureen Almond have rightly gone to establish national reputations. We created an arts education function that broke new ground in putting artists into schools, long before national thinking caught up. I always felt we were working on democratising the arts in Teesside, and I'm glad to see those efforts continuing today. Best wishes to everyone there – a luta continua!

Mark Robinson, Thinking Practice; Literature Officer, Cleveland Arts 1993-1997, Director 1997-1999

I am delighted that Tees Valley Arts is celebrating its 30th anniversary and thank you for asking me to be a part of it. As Director of what was then known as Cleveland Arts at the turn of the Millennium, I have very fond memories of my time with the organisation. I was particularly proud of the work in Arts Equality and Literature and know that it made a great difference to the people we worked with. Our work in Public Art was outstanding, and I enjoyed hugely working alongside Judith Winter as she introduced brilliant artists to uncover the reality of Teesside, and engage with the people of the area. I was also enormously proud of our work with schools as they prepared to take their artistic contribution to the Millennium Dome as part of the invitation to spend a day at the Dome during the year 2000.

For me, the organisation plays a vital a unique role in connecting artists with people. My abiding memory is of poet Maureen Almond working with a group of women in Stockton, supporting them to use computers by inspiring them through poetry to share their thoughts, hopes and dreams. The project resulted in a published collection of powerful and moving poems, and women who had both gained a new voice, a new skill and new friends. I will never forget it. The inspiring power of art to change lives, in tiny ways, every day. What could we achieve if we really brought great art to everyone?

Since leaving the organisation, I have worked at the Arts Council both in the South East and at the Head office. I am now the national Director of Strategy, and I look back on my time at Cleveland Arts as a vitally important part of my career. I wish you all the best with your 30th, and hope the organisation continues to thrive for the next 30!

Richard Russell, Director of Strategy, Arts Council England; Director, Cleveland Arts 1999-2000

Thirty years

Cleveland Arts employed me as a Development Worker on the Articulate project in September 2000, and I loved the three years I spent in that role. The job enabled me to set up a number of projects producing high quality work with disabled people and gave me the opportunity to work with some fantastic artists and organisations, including Touchdown Dance and Mind the Gap Theatre Company. My work was never particularly subtle, I ran projects entitled Get a Life and of course, Shoot Your Mouth Off. I had many high points at tva, but probably my proudest moment was the premiere of SYMO's short black comedy film Killer Cure, see it at www.symofilms.com.

Karen Sheader, Articulate Development Worker, Cleveland Arts 2000-2003

Happy anniversary and to recall an arts development programme across Cleveland with local authorities in Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Langbaugh and Stockton with Cleveland County Council, the Teesside Development Corporation and Northern Arts; not least by artist Kate Noakes at Middlesbrough Football Club; musician Mohammed Sarwar; Riverscape with artists Vivan Sundaram, Takashi Ikezawa, Hanna Luczak and Graham Crowley from India, Japan, Poland and the UK; Phoenix Dance Company; Graeae Theatre; Write Around; the Teesside Arts Awards; and to promote especially arts equality, literature development, visual art, art and design in the public realm. Every future success.

Alastair Snow, Director, Cleveland Arts 1989-93



TVA can work with you to plan a programme of creative activities, work up a budget, write funding applications, find suitable artists, and then manage the project both artistically and administratively. If you have an idea that you would like to discuss, please contact us:



c/o Tees Valley Arts,

Melrose House, Melrose Street, Middlesbrough TS1 2HZ

T: 01642 264 651 F: 01642 264 955

E: info@teesvalleyarts.org.uk W: www.teesvalleyarts.org.uk

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