




# Autumn eNewsletter 2010

# Opening remarks...


Well here we are in challenging times, so I'm introducing some cultural uplift in the form of my 2010 version of Keats' lovely poem 'To Autumn'.



Season of mists and massive spending cuts,  
Close bosom-friend of the coalition,  
Conspiring with them how to strip and slash  
The fruit of years of work that have been done;  
To blight the spirits of the cursed culture folk  
And fill all hearts with sadness to the core,  
To slim the purse and plump the overdraft  
With missing pounds; to set fretting more  
And still more, those who follow on  
Until they think good times will never come,  
For richer times may well have made them soft.

Actually that's not very uplifting is it, but if it sends some of you to check out the original, then my time has not been wasted.

Continuing on a poetry note, I was sorry to hear that Pete Morgan died recently – he was a very perceptive, original and entertaining writer who lived in Robin Hood's Bay (where I live) for many years. He celebrated his 70th birthday last year at York University with Ian McMillan, Carol Ann Duffy and Martin Carthy, an event I attended and greatly enjoyed – do check out his work.



Anyway, back to TVA's work – we're all very busy delivering varied projects and making exciting things happen. The TVA staff will update readers on all of that elsewhere in the newsletter; this really has been a period of good projects, I think, with Green TV (sculpture, visual arts, photography and digital arts, and wildlife partners, and schools), stART (visual arts, photography and disengaged young people), Getting It (writing, drama, photography and young parents), Moving On (visual arts and young people leaving care), Big Sky Arts (music making with adults with learning difficulties), Musicmix (music with young people from diverse backgrounds), Refugee arts (varied activities with newly arrived people), and a host of smaller projects including a glass mural for Redcar Youth Centre and Gardeners' Question Time for Viewley Hill Primary School – more later on from all of these.



# Opening remarks...

During this time of vibrant activity, I've also spent a lot of time at my computer, reviewing and updating our policies and all the small print on our pro forma contracts – it's a tiresome job and somebody's got to do it. Anyway, for those readers who like that sort of thing, our 'public-facing' policies are all now available on the website – making it easier for freelancers, associates and partners to access them.

As to the future - none of us can imagine that there will be easy times ahead in the arts, and I take none of it lightly, but the sector is known for – is defined by – its creativity, its resilience and its ability to adapt to challenge, so onward, comrades, to the season of mists and (possibly diminishing) harvests.




**Rowena Sommerville**  
Director, TVA





# Professional development notes



**Professional development is something we take seriously at TVA, and all of us here, like most people, have on occasion experienced CPD that was helpful, perhaps even inspirational!**

The Green TV project has a programme of CPD sessions for participant teachers, artists and wildlife personnel. The first session was delivered at RSPB Saltholme, on a blisteringly hot, bright day, and was an introduction to environmental art and the main movements within it, delivered by former TVA Director, Rosi Lister. It was great to see Rosi again, and her short lecture was informative and enjoyable, and like the best training, made you want to look and learn more afterwards.

Jane Gray, TVA Education Officer, has been awarded a bursary for professional development by Creative Partnerships, for Creative Agents working in schools. Jane is using the bursary to attend a series of seminars over an intensive weekend in London, sponsored by the Times Educational Supplement and various other educational bodies, which will explore educational, emotional and social aspects of teaching children with special needs.

I am delighted to have gained a place on the Cultural Leadership Programme Advance – Diversity in Cultural Practice course, led by Dr Nima Poovaya Smith and Baroness Lola Young, with group sessions taking place predominantly in London and Leeds. I will meet the whole group (19 of us) in September, which should prove interesting and stimulating. Taking part in something like this is a fantastic opportunity – to widen networks, to explore and debate ideas and practice, and above all to think and reflect.



# Professional development notes

Without the space for personal review and reflection, leadership in the cultural sector will suffer and worsen just as personal artistic practice would – I hope these sorts of initiatives do not become soft targets in straitened times.



**Rowena Sommerville**  
Director, TVA



# notes



# Education

**Given the current climate, one can't help but utter the words funding and cuts in the same sentence; but not wanting to over-politicise my little section of the newsletter or indeed, to make it too heavy, I have just a few comments to make on why the arts matter.**

As some of you know, my background is in theatre – all behind the scenes, but where I definitely began learning my craft of project management, and, more importantly, participative arts. Since being at Tees Valley Arts, my understanding of how powerful the arts can be, and how the arts can be used has widened enormously, and the social, emotional and financial benefits it can bring to individuals, communities and society as a whole. As we know so well, it's not just about pretty pictures; the arts really can transform lives. Here are just a couple of examples of this in action with recent projects:

**Getting It** – Creative Writing & Drama with teenage mums and mums-to-be:

3 out of the group are applying to go to college, and they've all said that they wouldn't have done this without the project.

All the group have developed their literacy skills: writing their own poems and creative work, and reading it out for the DVD recording.

**Moving On** – Visual Arts with young people in the process of leaving care:

Congratulations to all the young people in the group – they all successfully achieved their Bronze Arts Award, giving them a Level 1 qualification, with praise from moderator Ken Gouge:

**All files were well presented and the candidates had completed all sections of the bronze award to a high standard. The adviser had provided an excellent range of artistic opportunities for the candidates who spoke very well of their experience.**





# Education



**It's given me a new experience – I've tried new things that I'd never have done before.**

(Participant)

One young person is applying for an art & design course, one is participating in a further arts course over the summer, whilst another is joining the army – all progressions, all positive.

For young people who have faced difficulties, and often complex and chaotic lives, and who, without positive interventions are statistically at a higher risk of poor life outcomes (sorry, I could go on forever here!), the arts offer a chance: to develop, to succeed, to feel valued and to play a positive and contributing part in society. Funding...cuts...

## **On a lighter note!**

### **Big Sky Arts**

The CD is (nearly) finished and whilst the project is taking an extended summer break, we'll be getting back into gear in November for more music-making in Hartlepool – look out for performances near you.

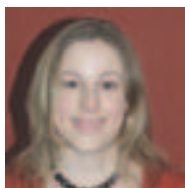
Over in Redcar, the wonderful artwork created by artist Rachel Gretton and young people at Rye Hills School and those who attend the Youth Centre, has been installed and looks fantastic.

We recently had an assessment visit from Comic Relief for our application to work with Barnardo's and young people who access their services, to participate in a range of arts activities and work towards their Bronze Arts Awards. Thanks to Wendy Shepherd at Barnardo's and Board Member Cllr Susan Carter for their time put into this. We'll get a decision late September, so fingers crossed.

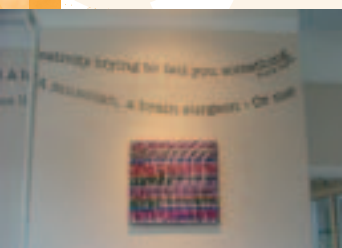
And finally:

I've started seeing Heads and teachers at Arts Specialist Status Schools to develop a Tees Valley-wide project for 2011/ 12 and we're busy looking at future work with Looked After Children and Leaving Care Teams.

**Keep calm and carry on.**



**Jane Gray**  
Education Officer





# Heritage & Environment



**Moths and multi-coloured frogs with children's heads; Prince Charles; giant pollen grains; reflective dragonflies; the Queen and a rabbit; wickerman-esque living willow scarecrow – just some of the things that I have been dealing with over the last few months .... and who says a life in the arts is anything approaching normal??**

The most obvious place for me to start would be the Green TV project as it seems to occupy the majority of my time, but I think I will round up the other things I've been doing.

The living willow scarecrow and the Queen and a rabbit are all part of the Hemlington Groundbreakers project Rowena and I have been involved in. TVA became the artists on a Creative Partnerships project with a Year 5 class at Viewley Hill Primary School, Hemlington. They were in the process of transforming a corner of their playing field into an allotment style garden, and wanted some additional creativity and environmental sculpturalness. I worked with the children to create a life sized scarecrow made from living willow (now with very green horn like growth from his head) and a 'fedge' and half 'wigloo' (as they are known in willow weaving circles!) – a fence/ hedge and half dome structure all from willow that is now happily growing away.

Prince Charles also visited the area around the same time, so a handful of the kids were chosen to demonstrate their skills for him – which was great for them, even if they didn't realise they were talking to HRH after he had spoken to them – kids these days eh?

Now the Queen is nothing to do with the Prince, so to speak, but was one of many characters in a small performance the class put on as a part of the same project.





# Heritage & Environment



Rowena came up with a very amusing idea of having Gardeners Question Time, but in this case, the panel (the Queen, a 'skater' boy, a rabbit, a scarecrow and a snail) were completely useless in their response to questions posed to them (Q: why are butterflies important? The Queen: "One does not mind butterflies as they are beautiful, but not as beautiful as one") and a very useful and informative audience made up of vegetables, worms, butterflies and flowers answered the questions properly. My role in all of this was to help make the costumes; huge fluffy rabbit ears and cardboard parsnip suits just to name a couple. It certainly makes a change from an HLF progress report I can tell you!



Green TV! It has been all go with that, and I can't quite believe that we are about a sixth of the way through already! The first set of education residencies in five schools is now finished, and the hard working and very creative artists working on the project are about to commence their residencies on their respective sites over the school summer holiday. The work the children from the schools have produced under the guidance of Adrian, Kev, Lindsay, Paul and Tony has been of exceptional quality and hugely creative (and somewhat bizarre as well). Some kids have been using 'gimp' (that is not a typo but a legitimate and superb image manipulation software package) to create their own weird and wonderful creature with their own head on it; creating their own animation using only natural objects; beautiful watercolour painting of butterflies; taking photographs the professionals would be over the moon to call their own and making sculpture from oasis and grass!

Seeing how much the children are loving what they are doing and how enthusiastic they are about their creations (which is all based on our beautiful local natural environment) I feel a little warm and fuzzy inside as I also know how much they are learning about nature while enjoying themselves – what a cracking job I have! I only wish I could employ myself as an artist on the project and have even more enjoyment, but unfortunately I can't.



As mentioned, the artists will be out on site during the summer holiday running a range of fantastic arts and environmental workshops for everyone to enjoy (all ages, all welcome, all free), so check out [www.teesvalleyarts.org.uk/greentv.html](http://www.teesvalleyarts.org.uk/greentv.html) for when and where, and I bet you will surprise yourself with what you might produce and indirectly learn about the natural heritage of the Tees Valley.

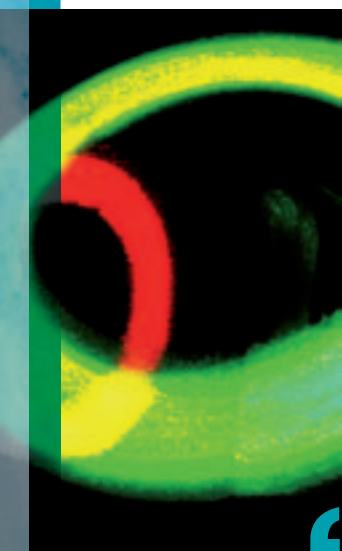
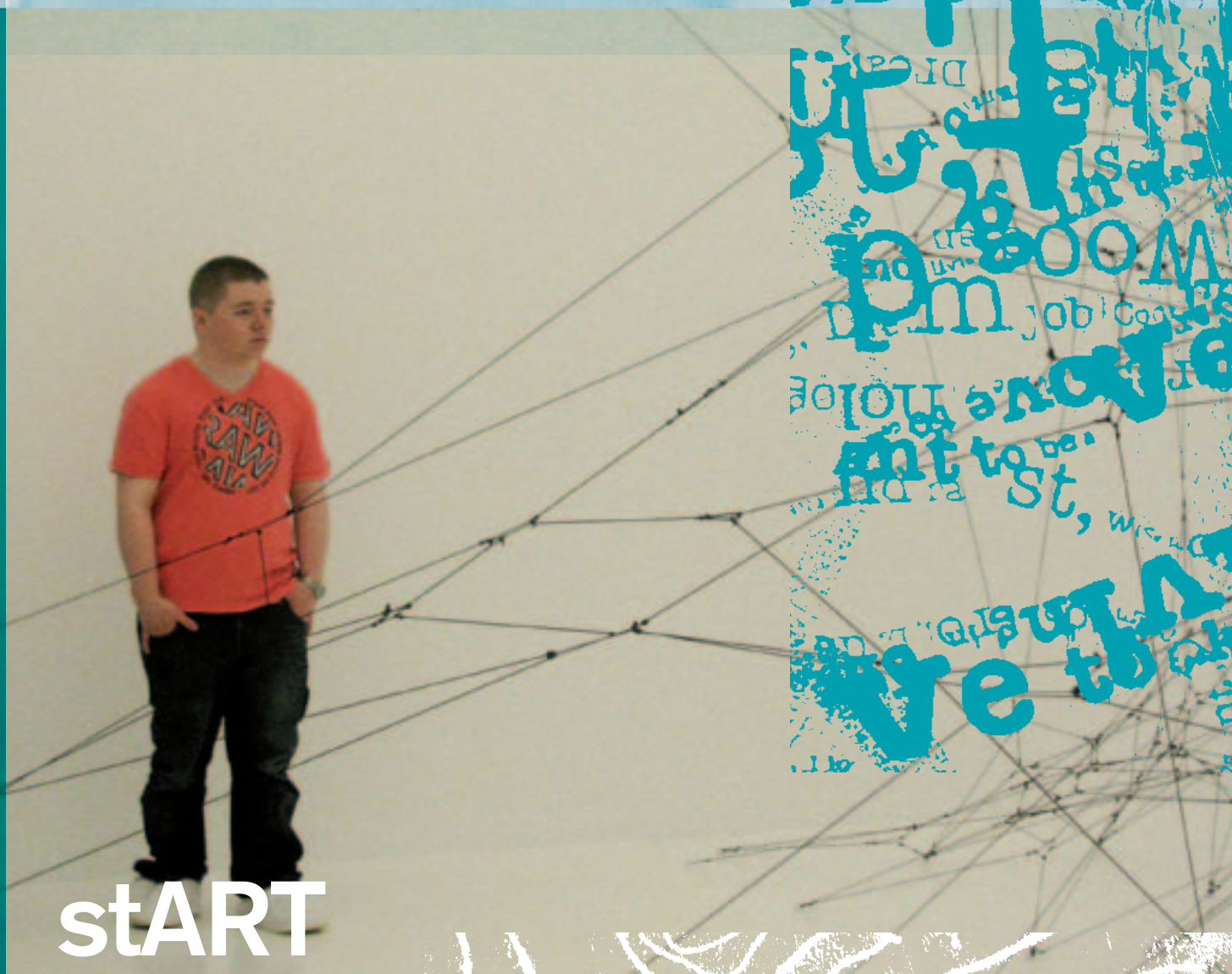
Green TV has also had its first CPD (Continuous Professional Development) training session where most of the teachers, artists and wildlife officers (and TVA staff as well) received a fantastic introduction to environmental art by Rosi Lister.

My immediate future is looking very green indeed with so much more of this great project to organise and implement, and also hopefully a variety of other interesting and unlikely activities to engage in.



**Joe Dunne**  
Heritage & Environment Officer





### Once again, the stART project has yielded top notch results!

The six young people from cohort one who were submitted for the Bronze Arts Award successfully achieved it, so huge congratulations to them.

As ever, the moderator was impressed with the young people's work and the practitioner's delivery of the course.

As many of you who run the award with young people know, one element is visiting a cultural venue and reviewing what you've seen. We've had a number of excellent visits in the past; BALTIC, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Lazarides Gallery, mima, and often stopping off at the wonderful Angel of the North on trips back from Newcastle/Gateshead. Visits often elicit mixed responses (and so they should!), and generate interesting debate and discussion around art – which is an extremely valuable part of the award, encouraging reflection, thinking and conveying thought-through opinions.

Regarding John Cage's "Cage Mix" exhibition at BALTIC, Kelly Clapp thought:

**It was different to usual artwork; it wasn't drawn or painted but used typeface instead. It must have taken a long time to put together.**

Animations on show at Lazarides, one of which depicted life in the Favela's of Rio de Janeiro, captured the young people's imagination, and "brought insight into life in Rio" – Lee Rogers.



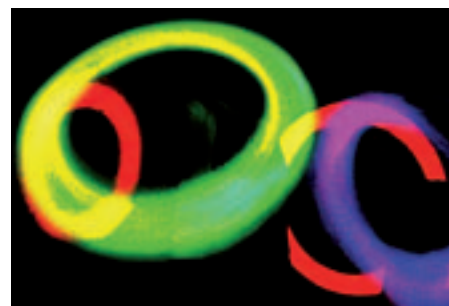
# stART

These visits offer the young people the opportunity to see things outside of their normal, everyday experiences, and so even if they don't always like or connect with the work, it's a positive experience; widening horizons and enjoying cultural entitlement. A number of the venues are Arts Award Welcome, which demonstrates that they support young people who are visiting as part of the award – so if you're an arts or cultural venue or organisation, check out [www.artsaward.org.uk](http://www.artsaward.org.uk) for details on how to register.

We're half-way through cohort 2 now, so there'll be another moderation in a few weeks time – keep it coming! Participants on cohort 2 have been Kelly Clapp, Heather Heseltine, Robert Pattison, Lee Rogers and Ross Sheeky.



**Tim Coyte**  
Projects Officer



# MOSAIC LIVE

stART worker Jamie Wisdom recently held an exhibition of his own at the ARC in Stockton.

**A digital mosaic of over 38,000 tiles were installed onto a wall of the ARC, Stockton's arts centre, by Graphic Designer & Artist, Jamie.**

The work featured small sections of the Middlesbrough Music Live Brochure, and depicted a burning Middlesbrough townscape.

Having worked with Marty Collantine [Ten Feet Tall] to create this year's Middlesbrough Music Live brochure, Jamie decided to cut this brochure up and build a large mosaic with the pieces – all 38,416 of them.

Early in 2010, Jamie was asked by Dave Allinson (curator of the ARC's visual arts exhibitions) if he wanted to display some work in the ARC. Jamie, being a Stockton lad, jumped at the chance and started to generate some ideas for this exhibition.

**I wanted to exhibit some graphic design in the ARC, as graphics are often seen as commercial, and therefore not thought of as art.**

As well as working on the stART project, Jamie is currently running a design business and studying for a degree in Graphic Design, at Cleveland College of Art and Design, and felt that it was important to show this medium off in a different light, so he built the large piece entitled 'Mosaic Live'.

The work was designed to look good close-up, as well as from afar, and when photographed, the main image becomes even clearer.

This was done as a homage to Gábor Dénes, whose birthday was 5 June – the same day the installation took place. [Gábor Dénes' discovery of holograms was an unexpected result of research into improving electron microscopes, hence the close up & optical illusion aspects of Jamie's artwork].

There were 196 separate sheets of A4 card which have been placed and secured within millimetre precision. Each of these A4s contained another 196 smaller digital mosaic tiles, which all made up the 8.5 metre piece.

Jamie has been asked to return to the ARC for another exhibition later in the year, and plans are being made for this further show to be in collaboration with lecturers and students from his course at CCAD.

To see some more of the graphic work Jamie creates, go to his website:

[www.jamiewisdom.com](http://www.jamiewisdom.com)





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:



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