

tva

the art of
changing lives

summer
newsletter
2016

summertime

Welcome to the TVA 2016 Summer newsletter!

I recently attended the Tony Harrison gig at Teesside University, as part of the Tees Junction International Poetry Festival. It was a delight, and an emotional experience to be in the presence of this fine poet, a firebrand now become physically frail, but still burning within – so much emotion in the room, lovely. Looking through his collected works I came across the following, and in present circumstances (up the boro!) could not resist:

Tony Harrison 'Divisions – Part 1'

All aggro in tight clothes and skinhead crops
they think that like themselves I'm on the dole.
Once in the baths that mask of 'manhood' drops.
Their decorated skins lay bare a soul.

Teenage dole-wallah piss-up, then tattoos.
Brown Ale and boys' bravado numbs their fright –
MOTHER in ivy, blood reds and true blues
against that Northern skin so sunless white.

When next he sees United lose a match,
his bower on, his scarf tied round his wrist,
his rash NEWCASTLE RULES will start to scratch,
he'll aerosol the walls, then go get pissed...

So I hope the TRUE LOVE on your arm stays true,
the MOTHER on your chest stays loved, not hated.

But most I hope for jobs for all of you –
next year your tattooed team gets relegated!



at tva

Life at TVA towers remains as varied, interesting and challenging as ever: Miki Rogers and I visited the CF Fertilisers plant to talk about a potential art project (unexpected!) and were both terrified by the compulsory safety video for visitors – which, sadly, meant that our phones were off and we could not photograph ourselves in hard hats, goggles and coco-the-clown safety boots. Following that, Miki went off to visit a Roman Fort and I went back to the office where I received a call from the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden who are – apparently – looking to explore outreach work in Teesside. You never know what's coming at you...

And continuing in that vein, I had the pleasure of meeting Princess Anne at a Cranfield Trust NE networking event, on HMS Calliope, which, disappointingly, turned out to be not a ship. It was very interesting to meet HRH, who thanked me for coming!! And I heard myself gushing 'no, no, thank YOU', so I briefly abandoned my republican leanings.

Young people from our Musicmix project performed to an audience in the TP Café, downstairs at Royal Middlehaven House, and it was a fab event, the young singers and musicians should be very proud. Our special guest for the night was Don-E, singer, song-writer and producer for the Sugababes among others, and member of Grace Jones' touring band for ten years! It was a great night.

Another stand out moment for me was in a music project we have been delivering in Pathways School in South Bank, a special school for young people who are unlikely to thrive in mainstream education. One student worked with musicians and a poet to compose a fantastic song/ rap where he described the buzz he gets on Mischief Night – 'and the cap on my head becomes a crown' – how good is that?

Just starting up at time of writing is a project in which ceramicist Emily Hesse (New Linthorpe) is working with a group of people from Eritrea, using river clay to make a coffee set – as the coffee ceremony for them is as significant as the Japanese tea ceremony. This exciting project was mentioned by Sir Nicholas Serota in his recent BBC2 Artsnight programme, and the coffee set will go into the mima collection.

We have been updating and improving our website (thanks to intern Zoe Bishop), and have been going through archives to get stuff digitally recorded – and in the process came across 'The Millennium Poem' which TVA (as Cleveland Arts) seems to have commissioned in 1996. The poem's format was that poets wrote so many lines then handed on to a nominated next writer, building up to a thousand lines for the millennium. Well, sadly, that didn't quite work out, but we do have about 300 words, kicked off by Simon Armitage, so it's worth a read. You can find it on the website, with comment from Mark Robinson, so check it out!

I hope you enjoy this newsletter, there's more information about us and our projects on the website, and enjoy the summer – I know it's going to be glorious...



Rowena Sommerville

Rowena Sommerville
Director, TVA



projects

I should begin by saying hello, again! For those reading the previous newsletter, and seeing that I'd left TVA, I probably need to explain. I'm back, in a new role as Projects Officer; just as I was assimilating myself to life (mostly) away from the office, the views of the Transporter Bridge and the great coffee from downstairs at the TP coffee house.

On my return, I've jumped headlong into everything 'River Tees Rediscovered', taking up the baton of all the great work set out by Ree, my predecessor. What I've become really aware of, is the true breadth of work involved; a microcosm of the work we do as a whole at TVA, and quite amazing. Since April, I've had meetings from Redcar to Piercebridge and everywhere inbetween, on an allotment, in galleries and on a beach.

Working on RTR and other projects, I started one of my days recently at a Roman site clambering over the remains of the ancient settlement, and acquainting myself with the nosy cows in the neighbouring field. This was swiftly followed by a meeting on the old ICI site now owned by CF Fertilizers and the antithesis of my first visit of the day. The area always reminds me of the film 'Bladerunner' directed by Ridley Scott (who was incidentally at school with my Dad in Stockton in the early 1950s), a film inspired by the original ICI site.

The visit to the CFF site was unlike anything I have experienced. After some serious security checks, Rowena and I sat through the most terrifying video. We certainly wouldn't go near our phones, drive the wrong way or get out of our vehicle except in a designated area, through fear of certain imminent death! We were resplendent during the site visit in oversized hobnail boots, matched with hard hats and hi vis yellow vests... next stop Milan.

We had a visit around the site (from the safety of a car) and then discussed at length two huge pieces of concrete, some possible concrete cows and victorian dyeing processes. A far cry from the gentle amble alongside a field in Piercebridge but strangely connected, cows, meadows and all. The CFF project will be one worth looking out for.

Back to my regular Tuesdays, and we are 18 months into Thorntree Roses. The group goes from strength to strength. Our rose, Emma is settling into her own group which she runs for people from a local sheltered housing community. I visited Emma for a session, and am glad to see the group is really successful, with her enthusiasm rubbing off on all who join in.

We recently have attracted new, younger members of Thorntree Roses and are planning our activity for after the summer; to include some painting and a trip to Whitby Abbey. We'll finish this academic year; though with a show at mima; an exciting opportunity for the women to show the world what they've achieved and a chance to have pride in themselves, as they absolutely should. They're a great group who add to the diversity of my experience at TVA, in all of its forms, across the Tees Valley and with everyone imaginable. It's good to be back.



Miki Rogers
Projects Officer, TVA



New Linthorpe
★ THE COFFEE HOUSE ★





About the project

The Coffee House is a project involving Artist Emily Hesse working with newly arrived communities in Middlesbrough. They have created a traditional Eritrean Coffee Service made from clay that has been dug from the River Tees.

On the 23rd June 2016, the Coffee House held an event at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. The group, made up of people who are newly arrived to the area, artists and volunteers, used the made traditional Eritrean Coffee Service to serve coffee and tea in the mima garden.

Funded by:



backstage

Hello from the halfway point...

At the time of my entry in the last newsletter I had just begun my time with Tees Valley Arts as a Creative Intern. Now, near three months have flown past and naturally reflection is something that comes to the forefront.

In the last entry I wrote about TVA promotional materials involving the TVA brand, if you haven't noticed already the logo has undergone a little construction and come out the other side... with a different typeface and the addition of the TVA strapline 'the art of changing lives' to help better reflect the TVA brand!

In regards to the task of updating the TVA website, it is most certainly underway. Considering TVA has over 30 years worth of content to document as well as ongoing projects and programmes, you could say that it is quite a mammoth task but one that continues to provide mounds of learning and new experiences to add to my repertoire!

Recently, I had have the experience of participating in the Creative Bloom workshop session "Action Planning for Creative Businesses" held at Navigator North and led by Rachel Powell, I found the experience to be informative and allowed inner reflection on a career and life basis. It was interesting to hear other participants' thoughts, directional paths, and goals... further highlighting the concept of 'feel the fear and do it anyway' in whatever you are wanting to achieve in your own life.

In the time to come, I will be continuing to work upon a range of tasks including promotional materials, the website and various digital platforms as well as assisting in the finishing touches to the TVA promotional films.

With being in an arts organisation environment like TVA, it has allowed me to gain knowledge of what that actually entails, I think the notion of creating a positive impact in varying forms to people from many walks of life even when you are on a smaller scale, is something that continues to inspire me on a personal level, to not only get an insight of how that process happens and seeing the real difference that can come from it but also, the great thing is my role at TVA allows me to be a part of making an positive impact, no matter the scale.



Zoe Bishop
Creative Intern, TVA

at tva

I have recently begun a placement as a creative assistant at TVA for the next six weeks which I am thrilled about. I came across this opportunity through a summer placement scheme through Teesside University, where we applied for three possible roles. For myself, this was by far the best choice. Seeing the positive work that TVA does bringing communities together and improving lives was one of the factors that made this role stand out. This choice was further confirmed after meeting the lovely group of people involved in the organisation who are so friendly and encouraging.

The opportunity to learn new skills, both creative and otherwise, is something that I would have been foolish to pass up. This role allows me to increase my skills and knowledge within the creative industry, and is already showing me in my short time here already, that there is always something new to learn. My very first day for example, I learned the art of tweeting! - some say I should probably already have known at the age of 20.

As for myself, I have recently finished my second year of studying Product Design at Teesside University and am preparing for my third and final year. Within this area I have found particular points of focus that interest me such as: kitchen design, after working with the company, Nobia; concept design for TV and Movies; branding; and surprisingly, I really enjoy the research involved in projects. I love having the opportunity to create something new and to focus on a user's enjoyment of a design.

So far at TVA, I have worked with Wordpress; social media; archiving; and had the opportunity to observe the production of promotional videos for TVA. This has all provided me with more insight into how an organisation like TVA works. In the next few weeks, I look forward to having the chance to learn and observe more. I am incredibly happy that this was an opportunity that I made myself as I certainly have no regrets.



Lottie O'Hara
Teesside University Summer Placement



Photograph credits:

Shirley Wells; St Cuthbert's School Queen's 90th Birthday, Front cover

Shirley Wells; St Cuthbert's School Queen's 90th Birthday, Page 2

Miki Rogers; Pierce Bridge, Page 4

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