



Autumn eNewsletter 2011

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tees valley arts

Opening remarks...

Welcome to the Tees Valley Arts Autumn 2011 newsletter.

At the time of writing this, we are just about to enter August, which will obviously be blazing hot, with knockout blue skies and the air will be loud with the buzzing of pollen-laden bees, even on Borough Road. This is the time of Lammas or Lughnasa, the festival of the wheat harvest, and also used to be the time of year for handfastings, in certain societies. Handfastings were like trial marriage agreements that couples entered into for a year and a day (often jumping the broomstick), with the option to buy or deny at the end of the trial period. Now, how much grief might be avoided.....

Apparently at this time of year farmers and producers could also carry out rituals to deter the 'storm hags' from damaging their precious crops - that seems like a practice worth re-introducing for those of us at the sharp end of funding decisions!

TVA activity has continued as energetically as ever. Headlines include WorldFest 2011; Green TV (environmental learning through the arts across the Tees Valley), which has seen activity on site, in schools and in a pop-up shop; Risky Biz (partnership with Barnardo's SECOS project) which has begun work with the second cohort of young people; Crossing the Line (work with teenage parents in Hartlepool) has finished with a great event; we have been delivering mentoring to two creative freelancers from Redcar and Cleveland; the stART project (young people who are NEET in Middlesbrough) and Musicmix (young people from diverse backgrounds from Middlesbrough and Stockton) achieved their Bronze Arts Awards – the moderator said he would recommend TVA to become a 'national exemplar centre' because of our outstanding achievements with hard to reach groups – this of course would be added to the fact that the stART project features on the front cover of the current national Arts Award brochure – very well done us! More news on all of this inside the newsletter.

In September we are due to be visited by Mark Baring, trustee of the Baring Foundation, who fund our Refugee Arts Worker, so I look forward to talking to Mark about our work, and to hearing about the Foundation's activities. In September or October we're intending to put on a WorldFest Community Event featuring the very legendary Kanda Bongo Man – favourite of the late lamented John Peel and Charlie Gillett, and star of previous WorldFests.

Other entertainment news - Maurice Dezou (on drums) and I (singing) were filmed, at a very early hour, in a remote, deserted church in Northumberland, with Rosi Lister (previous TVA Director), for a BBC2 series – 'Britain at risk' – due for broadcast in Feb 2012.

Someone interesting that I've recently met is Ishy Din – Ishy is a local (born and bred) taxi driver with a sideline in nationally successful writing. Ishy's play, 'Snookered', is booked for a four week run at the Bush Theatre in Shepherd's Bush, London, next February, and has already premiered as part of the Propeller Festival of Theatre in 2010. The New Statesman reviewed it and said 'a subtle, complex, entertaining and truthful play about the inner lives of young British men who happen to be Muslims.' Now that's not what you expect to hear from taxi drivers, and I (am genuinely trying to) mean no offence by that.



Opening remarks...

Ischy said he began writing when he had a new kitchen fitted, and the various experiences of eccentric builders, discovering lost letters under the old units, and then trying to be a good citizen and get the old kitchen components correctly disposed of, led to a written anecdote which he sent to his brother. His brother said 'You know what, you can really tell a story' and that prompted Ischy to enter a Radio 5 Live competition, which resulted in a 15 minute radio play. After that, more competitions led to a short play being screened on BBC 1 and then yet another competition led to his meeting the Asian theatre company Tamasha, all of which in turn resulted in 'Snookered'.

Ischy grew up in Middlesbrough, mostly near where the Bottle of Notes is now, but his parents came to the UK from Kashmir, seeking work. His dad laboured on the MI for a time, so he can truly claim to have helped build this country. Ischy has no problem with identifying himself as British Asian, and he supports England at football, though Pakistan at cricket.

I very much hope that TVA can find a way to work with Ischy – such great local talent – and we're already talking about devising a project in which he could work with local young people from all backgrounds, helping them explore and celebrate all their identities and part identities. Meanwhile, maybe think twice about what you say in the back of a cab, you don't want to hear it on the radio or see it on the telly now, do you?



Rowena Sommerville
Director, TVA



Inclusion

I work for TVA as the Refugee Arts Worker and on other projects – Musicmix and Worldfest, and with funding for those latter two projects coming to an end, and given some events in the wider world, this is a time for me to do some reflecting and thinking.

Musicmix, funded by Youth Music (thanks to them), has finished with some great performances at the WorldFest Youth event and with three young people achieving their Bronze Arts Award and one, we hope at time of writing, about to achieve his Gold (well done, Umar)! Many young people have taken part in sessions, and we ended up with a group of about 10 who all created their own original music. One song on YouTube has received over 2400 hits – put in 'Music Mix Project' - and all the young people found that having the music-making sessions helped them focus and stay positive about life in general. I hope we will source further funding to build on this good activity, praised by Middlesbrough Mayor Ray Mallon. I can't leave Musicmix without a special note of thanks to our Music Leader Trainee, Gabriel Mulangu. Gabriel has spent many hours in the TVA music technology room, and has offered unfailing support to the participants, and all with a smile. We have nominated him to carry the Olympic Torch.

WorldFest 2011 was the third and final WorldFest to be funded by our grant from the Northern Rock Foundation (big thanks to them) and we've certainly dished up some great music over the years. I think we've proved there's a need and a welcome for diverse culture in the Tees Valley, and that this kind of programming can bring communities together and attract in people from outside the area. This kind of activity needs to be taken seriously – music knows no boundaries, and young people now need to know about the wider world. We will be looking for future funding to build on all that's happened, and to maintain creative friendships established with the likes of Kanda Bongo Man and Dennis Bovell.



Inclusion



The issues that refugees can face have recently come home to me in a very personal sense; following the election disturbances and the continuing unrest in my country of origin, Cote d'Ivoire, two of my brothers and their families have fled Abidjan, the main city, and are now living in horrible circumstances in tents in a vast refugee camp in neighbouring Ghana. Ivory Coast is one of the most modern and European-like countries in Africa, and many of these new refugees are people who are professionals like my brothers, and used to every mod con of city living.

I recently went out there to visit my relatives and to take them some things to try and improve how they are having to live. It was very distressing as you would imagine, but of course there were also the signs of the triumph of the human spirit, as you see in every disaster. A football team has been formed; the team has been competing against the sides in the Ghanaian Second Division, and won its last match 6-0! Now it is to play against teams in Division One. When you think about all the facilities, equipment and fitness aids that African footballers don't have, it is not surprising that the ones who make it to Europe are so tough.

Also in the camp I witnessed a ballet performed by a professional dance company, now all refugees, but continuing to practise and develop their art. This group was from Man, a region with great cultural richness, and their performance used traditional masks to explore their new situation. The dance troupe hopes to get out of their current harsh circumstance and travel the world one day.

Well, I have plenty to think about in life, and certainly my belief in the importance of culture and art to us all, has been reinforced.



Maurice Dezou
Refugee Arts Worker





Education

The heady, glamorous world of the arts has had me jetting off yet again to deliver Arts Award training, and Glasgow welcomed me with open arms! I'd never been before, and, just like our native Middlesbrough, it tends to get a rather unjustified bad press, and so it was an absolute joy for me to find myself amongst the glorious period buildings and the wonderful people at PEEK Project who'd booked me to run Bronze, Silver and Gold training. PEEK do lots of fantastic work in Scotland with children and young people predominantly from some of the most deprived areas of the city, and so, like our work at TVA, it really matters. It's great to know that they'll now be able to support those children and young people in achieving qualifications through the Arts Award – good luck and best wishes to all of them.

Back on home ground, June saw the premiere of 'Crossing the Line' at Hartlepool Art Gallery – the result of lots of hard work and creativity by our teenage mums in Hartlepool, supported by Bob Beagrie and Andy Willoughby. The group created a sensitive, honest and shocking DVD using creative writing, drama and photography around the theme of healthy and unhealthy relationships – you can see it on youtube – really well done to everyone involved. We're hopeful that this will be used as an educational tool in schools and youth groups across Hartlepool, and if you work with young people, we'd urge you to watch it.

I did thank most people involved in the last newsletter, so won't repeat thanks to everyone again, but must mention Kev Howard for photography and Ian Paine for filmmaking on this project.



Education



National opportunities/ initiatives

As you're all aware, TVA is a huge supporter of Arts Award with the 11 – 25's and so we're delighted that a Junior Arts Award is currently being piloted across the country for 7-11's:

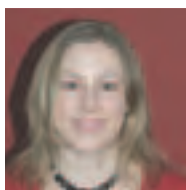
Arts Award Discover (designed with the 7-9 year old age range in mind) encourages children to make connections between the arts and their own lives: to discover the arts.

Arts Award Explore (designed with the 9-11 year old age range in mind) encourages children to find out about artists and arts organisations and develop their own arts experience: to explore the arts.

For more information and to sign up for updates go to www.artsaward.org.uk

Artsmark is back with a new-look and on-line application, with the Round 12 deadline being 12 January 2012. It's now open to primary, secondary and special schools, PRU's, FE colleges and Youth Justice settings. We're delighted to announce that TVA are the Artsmark Trainers for the Tees Valley and we'll be able to support those wishing to apply in a variety of ways from seminars to one-to-one surgeries, as well as being able to deliver high-quality arts provision. Please keep an eye on our website for details and updates or for further information about Artsmark go to www.artsmark.org.uk.

And finally - lots of things have been coming to a close recently and so I've got lots of end of project reports to write. The challenge of funding is ever-present, and sadly, a number of my recent applications have been turned down (so frustrating when you get to the final 25 of 293 applications but don't make the final 13!) So, it's really thanks to the wonderful people I'm privileged to work with who keep me going in really quite challenging times – the children and young people, artists, and everyone involved with TVA – all an inspiration, and all a reason to keep calm and carry on.



Jane Gray
Education Officer





Heritage & Environment



Isn't it funny the way that life works?- bear with me on this one and don't worry, I'm not going to go all heavy on you. When things seem to remain constant in one area, others change quite a lot - and it feels as though this has happened to me over the last few months. When things seem to carry on as normal here at TVA (some funding decisions aside) – with Green TV motoring on doing what it does, project and partnership development continuing, and the usual promising leads on projects either coming to fruition or not as fate dictates, well anyway, work has continued in its usual way, but personally things have changed a lot - my girlfriend and I have decided to get married!! So now I have another project to manage (our wedding), but I'm taking it calmly; if I compare it to a TVA project, it is a relatively small one with plenty of time (match-day is in February). I'm sure I won't come unstuck in my planning – at least I sincerely hope I don't!

Back to TVA.....

Not wanting to sound like a broken record, but Green TV continues and keeps me busy and is going really well. Project participants seem to be really enjoying themselves and are learning a lot about a whole array of things in interesting and extremely creative ways. Year Two artists (Sara Cooper, Adrian Moule, Bethan Maddocks, Dominic Nelson-Ashley and Vicky Holbrough) are working hard, producing great ideas for workshops and artworks, which is brilliant. New for me this year is Green TV working with secondary schools (Year One was all primary), which has gone extremely well. Bethan and Adrian worked with Bydales and Macmillan respectively, and the quality of the engagement and feedback was brilliant. Sara will be working with Gillbrook during the Autumn term, which I am sure will be equally successful – no pressure Sara!



Heritage & Environment



We had a very successful week in the We Are Open Pop Up Gallery in Middlesbrough, with each artist delivering free workshops in their art form to the general public. The space looked fantastic with images from last year on the walls and new work by participants and artists from this year – so well done and thank you to Cathrine, the Green TV volunteer for organising and curating the space – very good job. Nicky Peacock, who organises Pop Up Shops in Middlesbrough, said “the space looked amazing”.

I am now dutifully refreshed after a couple of weeks away (beautiful sun, sea, sand and sangria in Majorca and beautiful mountains and whisky in Scotland) and I’m looking forward to the final set of residencies for Green TV and getting other exciting projects off the ground – oh, and organising my personal project as well – like I would be able to forget!



Some comments from We Are Open Pop Gallery exhibition/workshops:

Loved it! Brilliant pictures – some pure skill, some skill and luck but all fantastic. I really enjoyed learning new ways of art and printing. Lovely people to work with and fab environment to work. Would love to come again!

Brilliant exhibition. People very informative – especially fond of the chalk insects on the front!

Very interesting set of activities for children, definitely not ‘typical’. Nice set up for show. Great pic of dragonfly.

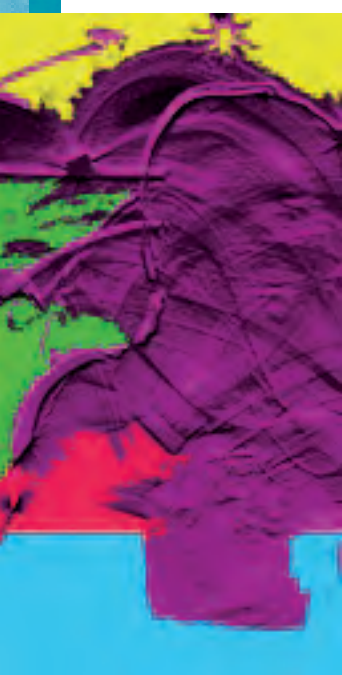


Joe Dunne
Heritage & Environment Officer





The stART Project



Another cohort of young people has completed the stART project and once more everyone completing the course achieved their Bronze Arts Award - this 100% pass rate has been maintained for the last 28 months: can I get a witness? StART has now held 9 Arts Award moderations, each of which has received high praise from Arts Award moderators and most recently has led to Tees Valley Arts being told we are to be recommended as a 'national exemplar centre of excellence for the Bronze Award', so how good is that!!!

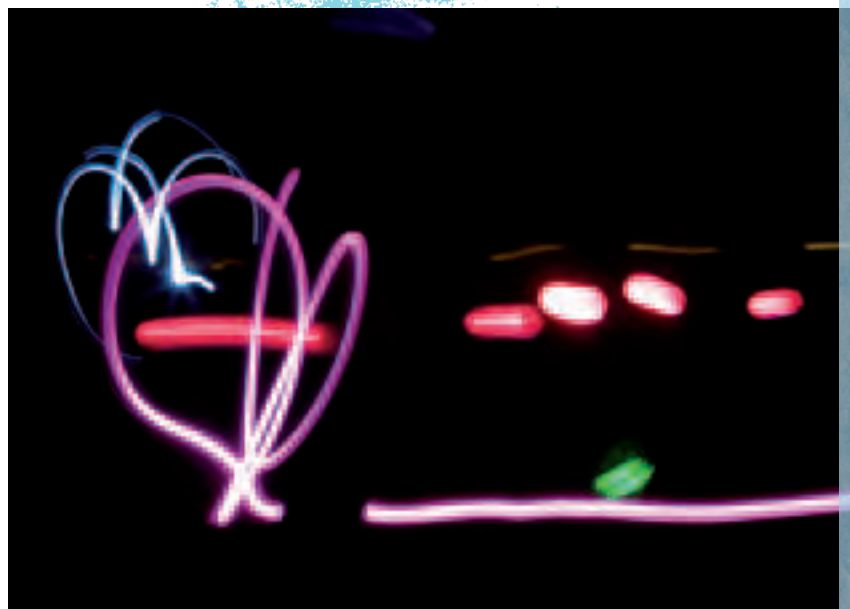
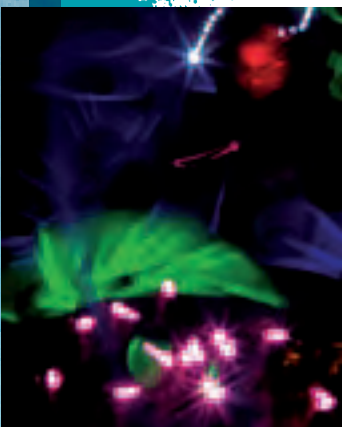
One of the great things about running stART is taking young people from deepest, darkest Middlesbrough to places they would never normally go, like a Yoko Ono exhibition at BALTIC or to see Jaume Plensa's work at Yorkshire Sculpture Park. You can almost see their perceptions expanding with the experience, and this is so exciting to be part of. A recent visit to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park has resulted in some very interesting responses; the experience has clearly inspired young people beyond the confines of interpreting art. Yorkshire Sculpture Park itself and the concept of a landscape full of sculptures made a strong impression, "it brings art to the people"; this is something they felt they wanted to share, "I would like to bring my daughter to Yorkshire Sculpture park for a day out, it's a good place for kids". Words chosen to sum up their visit were "beautiful", "peaceful" and "relaxing".

As usual the stART participants have taken part in a wide range of visual arts workshops, developing skills and gaining an insight into creative industries.

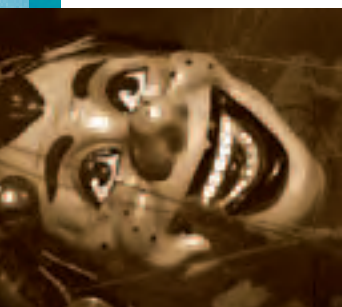
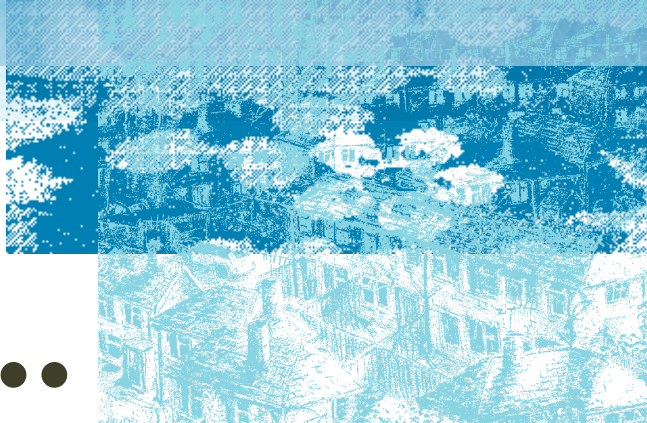


All of this creative stimulus has had a visible effect on participants:

We are busy trying to sort future funding for stART and hope to inspire more young people to dye their hair!



Simon Says...



As TVA moves toward its 30th anniversary in 2012 I thought it might be interesting to wallow in a bit of nostalgia and take a trip down memory lane to see what we have been up to over the years:-

5 Years ago: Some highlights from our Autumn 2006 newsletter included:-

After the success of 2005's macabre masterpiece - "[The Inheritance](#)" - pupils at Gillbrook Technical College created a new spine-tingling film - "[The Puppet](#)". Working with animator Andrew Liddell, students continued to explore the "[Eastern European Grotesque](#)" theme with an eight minute animated film that follows the murderous exploits of a sinister looking puppet. Check out both films on our Youtube channel at www.youtube.com/worldfest2009

North Road Primary School, Darlington and Ormesby Primary School worked with artists Bob Beagrie and Tim Coyte on the project 'Lifecycle' which combined music, technology and creative writing to explore issues related to the environment. The project came to a conclusion with a performance at Middlesbrough Town Hall. The short performance featured a pedal-powered PA system created especially for the project (now resident at Macmillan Academy), poetry recitals and song and dance.

Waveband - a fantastic performance of music and dance was given its world premiere at the Arc, Stockton. Waveband was an Arts Council funded project that linked young people from across the Tees Valley with professional artists to explore new ways of composing, creating and performing music in schools.

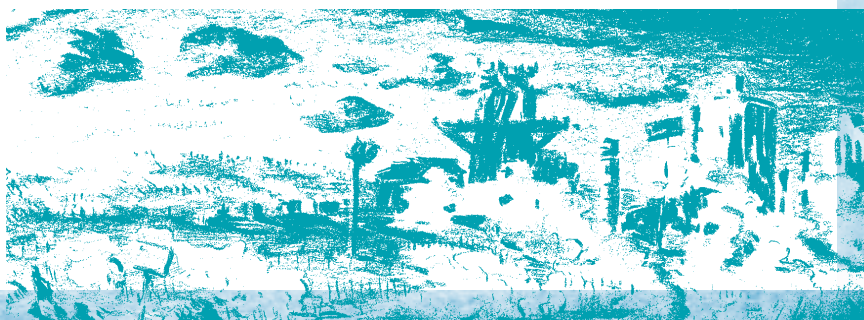
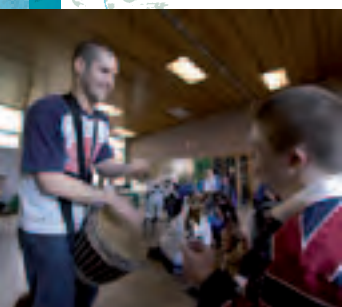
small world: Big Drums held a summer school project working with five special needs schools from across the Tees Valley. Two pupils from each of the five schools involved were invited to work with musicians to produce a piece of music which would be performed on the last day of the project. The children proceeded to write two pieces of music over the course of the week, which was documented by filmmaker and photographer Ian Paine.

10 years ago (Autumn 2001):

Reinhild Beuther, a German born artist had been appointed to create a sound-sculpture in response to the newly created adventure Summerhill Adventure Park in Hartlepool.

The Healing Arts programme at James Cook University Hospital in Middlesbrough: the highlight of the event was a performance of work-in-progress by the poet Kevin Cadwallander who had been commissioned to work with spinal injuries patients. Other commissioned artworks included Lee Brewster's floor design for the paediatric waiting room and glasswork by Laura Johnston for the Atrium.

Two films by Shoot Your Mouth Off were premiered in Hartlepool in October. "[Travelling](#)" and "[Bulldozer](#)" highlighted two of the key issues that face people with disabilities, prejudice and access, both physical and psychological.



Simon Says...



15 years ago (Autumn 1996):

The eighth Middlesbrough literary festival was being held and included readings by Irish poets Brendan Kennelly and Paula Meehan. Mrs Doubtfire author Anne Fine gave schoolchildren tips at Hemlington Library and Middlesbrough Football Club's Brazilian star Juninho launched the fourth collection of poems by Teesside children "[Boom Boom Bang!](#)"

The Northern Arts region was hosting the year of the Visual Arts and Cleveland Arts organised several commissions in Middlesbrough by acclaimed Scottish artist Adrian Wiszniewski including a neon and a window feature at The Multi Media Exchange, a seat and Mosaic at Brinewells Green, a neon at Middlesbrough Art Gallery and Flags for Pallister Park.

A Disability Arts Roadshow took place in October and included a week's residency by Graeae Theatre at The Lansdowne Centre, Middlesbrough, an exhibition by The Cleveland Disabled Photography Group at Cleveland Gallery, Middlesbrough and a cabaret night at Hartlepool Town Hall Theatre.

Soon to be Prime Minister, Tony Blair, unveiled a natural stone entrance feature by Saltburn artist Glenn Humphrey at a housing development in Spennymoor.

20 years ago (Autumn 1991):

The South Asian music project was running across Teesside schools with musician Mohammed Sarwar.

["LOOK"](#) the second Cleveland Visual Arts Festival ran throughout October featuring over 110 events including open studios, residencies, workshops and exhibitions. The Festival was opened by Professor Bryan Kneale, professor of drawing at the Royal College of Art.

The Marking the Ways project was a crafts-based initiative commissioning permanent work along the banks of the River Tees along the Teesdale Way path. Almost thirty pieces were installed in wood and stone by artists Antony Holloway, Vivien Mousdell and Vic Brailsford.

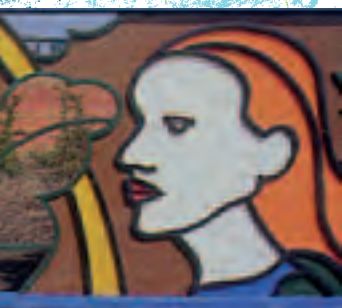
Graham Crowley had just been appointed as the first artist on the riverscape project which involved four drawing residencies by artists from the UK, Poland, India and Japan exploring the River Tees. It was good to see one of his works ["Chain Store"](#) on show in mima recently as part of their permanent collection exhibition.

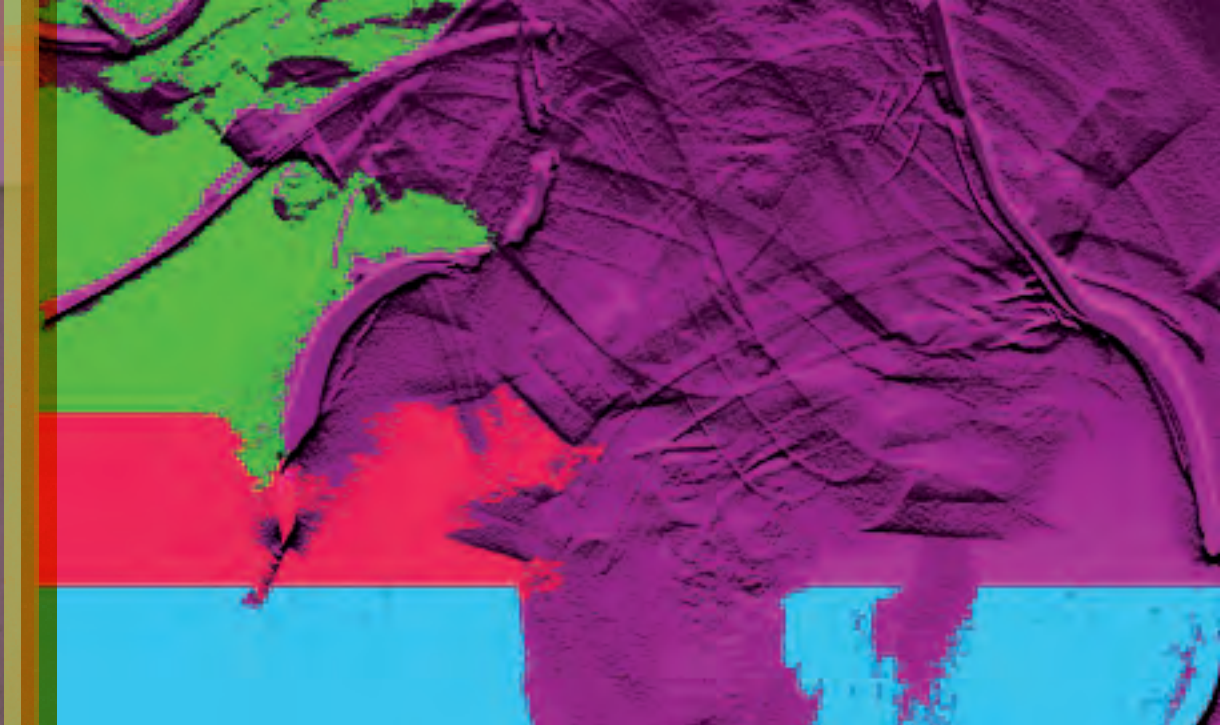
25 years ago (Autumn 1986):

Cleveland Arts had a role in persuading the National Youth Theatre to stage ["Nightshriek"](#) in London. ["Nightshriek"](#) was a musical version of Macbeth written by Redcar 22 year old Trisha Ward. I believe **our patron Mark Benton** was in its first staging at Billingham Forum. The London cast included 6 young actors from Teesside including Liz Carling who since found fame in the likes of Boon, Goodnight Sweetheart and Casualty. Also in the London cast was the future James Bond, Daniel Craig. Hope this has shaken and stirred a few memories for some people!

Simon Smith

Communications Officer





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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