

tva

the art of
changing lives



autumn
newsletter
2016

autumn's here

Welcome to the TVA 2016 Autumn newsletter!

I often start off my newsletter pieces with some poetry relevant to the season by a poet I admire, and this time is no different – except that the poet in question is not a famous bard, but a lad called Dylan (bardishly enough) who took part in a project (led by musicians Matthew Jones and Mark Owens, and writer Matt Abbott) we ran earlier this year. His rap is about Mischief Night in South Bank -

When the squares in the suits all sit inside
and hide in front of crap TV,
and the coppers park at Asda,
swapping roles with teachers after 3.
They ask what we're up to,
and the shoulders give a shrug.
They're sat there, poised, prepared to pounce,
and I've done nothing wrong ...
but I feel like a thug.

But it's Mischief Night, and Boro's buzzin';
the number swells to a baker's dozen,
the usual lads plus someone's cousin.
Mam's provide the missiles ...

As eggs rain down on passing cars,
an adrenaline surge beneath the stars;
neighbours chase you far too far;
and chests begin to tighten ...

But once a year you come alive;
laugh for hours on foreign streets,
scale a fence or duck and dive;
nothing else tastes quite as sweet.

When the streetlights swap with the sun,
it becomes our town,
and the cap on my head,
that becomes my crown,
on the concrete, following the fun;
it's ours when the streetlights swap with the sun.

No handshakes here, just backwards nods,
as older lads cruise by on wheels,
in GTIs, girls treat 'em like gods.
And you wonder if they save,
or scam and they steal.

at tva

The houses all blend together.
We do what we can to make the nights stand out.
For some of us the mischief follows us forever ...
for the Boro boys, that's what is all about!

How good is that? It really captures the feverish good times of youth, and shows what poetry can be forged out of ordinary places, and, of course, what extraordinary talents our young people may possess.

Here at TVA towers, our good news is that we have been successful with our application to the Arts Council Catalyst Evolve fund, which supports arts organisations to (try to) recruit funding support from philanthropic donors. For a community based, non-venue organisation like TVA this will surely be a challenge, but at least now we will be able to experiment with some new approaches.

Another notable project that we're involved in is the artistic improvement of the CF Fertilisers site at Portrack, where artist Adrian Moule is transforming some old concrete plinths into visions of rural peace and plenty – all at the behest of the firm itself, so well done them! Miki Rogers and I first visited the site a couple of months back, and we watched the (compulsory) safety video, which scared us so much that we were huddled together silently like the babes in the wood by the end. Really interesting to be working with them, though!

We've played host to James Beighton, formerly of MIMA, who is currently doing a PhD in Heritage Studies, and who, through his placement at TVA, has been researching the potential, issues and opportunities around/ created by developing a publicly accessible online resource to document public artworks in a given area – in this case, Tees Valley. The vision is of an online site a bit like Wikipedia, to which organisations and individuals could contribute, comment and/or research, and look at who did what/ commissioned what/ where/ where is it now/ does it still exist/ who said what about it, and who is saying what now..... Could be very interesting!

So, plenty going on, and plenty in development, as always. I hope you enjoy this newsletter; please also check out our lovely website, full of (current and historic) news, projects and information.



Rowena Sommerville

Rowena Sommerville
Director, TVA



THRIFT JACK PRESS
MANUFACTURED BY BLIGH AND SON.
2014 MIDDLESBROUGH



projects

Autumn creeps around the corner, but we're still enjoying the Summer weather as I write, and look forward to the second of this year's outings with the Thorntree Roses, this time to Whitby.

The group are just about to start an adventure in watercolour, both the using and making of, with local artist Andy Broderick, and our visit to the town will give them an opportunity to try out some watercolours while taking in the sea air and stunning views, hopefully before the weather starts to cool. The group is now a full 15 members strong, and they still manage to support and welcome each other, and me, each week. My work for Thorntree Roses has been entirely office based since the beginning of the school holidays, so it will be great to see them all again after our few weeks apart, and reflect on the work they did in the run up to their successful celebration and mini-show at mima in July.

As Summer ends, so does our work on River Tees Rediscovered. Since taking up the baton from previous Projects Co-ordinator Ree, the RTR projects have been my main focus; what a great and diverse experience it has been, working with communities across the Tees Valley on some truly wonderful activities, and, as always, endeavouring to inspire people to make great art, have fun and get involved in activities around and about the Tees.

Activity over the last couple of months has included another great drop-in workshop at the Tees Barrage, provided by artist Adam Bligh with his astounding 'Thrift-jack' printing machine - based on the idea of the original Gutenberg press, but thriftily made from a carjack and some recycled wood. Adam's 'Bottle Top' mural for the same project a year ago was on display, and still going strong, albeit with the help of some good glue to re-attach the (surprisingly few) plastic bottle tops which had become dislodged over time.

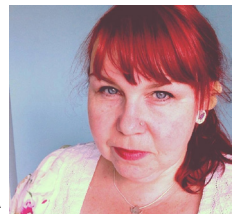
Further up the river, we've been working to finish installation of two subtle but visually stunning artworks at either end of South Park in Darlington. Artist Vicky Holbrough has worked with groups both young and old from the area, all of whom use the park regularly, to inspire a painterly bee themed mural now in place on the Geneva Road bridge, with another mural to be installed once final arrangements are in place. The second mural, which is destined for the environs of Snipe Pond, is designed to work around existing graffiti, which Vicky was made aware was important to the local young people, as it commemorates a friend who has died.

Our final residency brings us right back home, just over the Transporter, with a fabulous painting within an inspiring allotment project, and working with the primary school at Port Clarence. Wedged between industry and a wildlife reserve, it'll be interesting to see what emerges from our young artists and our resident artist on site.

It will be sad to finish what's been a great project to work on, but I look ahead to all the creativity Autumn might bring...



Miki Rogers
Projects Officer, TVA





backstage

May we meet again...

In my last entry for the newsletter I began with hello, and now, sadly, it is time to say goodbye.

The tasks at TVA have continued to offer variety, in one day I have been carrying out design based duties and then in another I have been able to experience something totally different. For example, I was able to witness coffee being made from scratch at a Eritrean coffee ceremony for The Coffee House at mima, it was quite surprising in how long the process took, but it offered a sense of how differently other communities and cultures live in comparison.

The TVA photo library (c40k photographs) has been sorted through, even though it was a massive task, it was beneficial in terms of my gaining transferable skills and also being able to see and learn further about the organisation and what activities have happened over the years at TVA. From this, the TVA website has had an influx of new content.

Most recently, for Musicmix, I have been able to create promotional materials for the Musicmix celebration event which is set to take place on Thursday 6th October. I have also been a part of working with the young people who attend Musicmix, helping them with their visual brands for various social media platforms. It has been an interesting experience working with the young people, hearing their ideas, and from that turning it all into visual identities that can help them get their content out there in a professional manner.

My experience at TVA has been a valuable and fulfilling one which has allowed me to make a positive contribution to the organisation on a number of levels, as well as being able to work with people from many walks of life. Not only that, I can use this positive experience to fuel future career opportunities. I would like to thank TVA for giving me a step onto the career ladder and here's to creatively moving forward...

Zoe Bishop
Creative Intern, TVA



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films

For what seems like an eternity, I have been very busy filmmaking for Tees Valley Arts.

I was contracted to shoot and edit a set of 3 films for the awfully nice team at TVA; Rowena, Peter, Miki and Maurice. This wonderful group of dedicated people work very hard bringing amazing artistic projects to people, who are often in very challenging situations and who can benefit greatly from working with other people with similar artistic interests and talents. These people get to work alongside professional artists. Net result: they meet and make friends with like-minded people they would otherwise be unlikely to meet. They gain skills, increase their self-confidence and self-esteem. And so often they become better able to make positive decisions about their futures.

Some of these people have come to the Tees Valley after escaping wars, as refugees, but others are locals with all sorts of difficult life situations. Some have to learn English and many have to learn about our society and the place where they now live. Being involved in the TVA projects helps with all of these things. Many then choose to go on to college or university to study all sorts of subjects, not just arts.

So, TVA needed some films to explain what the charity does, how important their work is for so many of those living in the area and how they benefit in so many ways from the arts projects provided. Finally, they needed to explain how all this helps the area as a whole.

TVA has a vast archive of photographs of projects and events they organised and put-on over more than 34 years. This is a treasure trove of a resource and many of these images are being used in the films. These films are based on nicely shot interviews, with photos and some video as cutaways/B roll.

I used my new Sony F57 camera to shoot the films and I am delighted with the results. This camera is superb and I love the quality of the pictures it produces and the artistic control it affords.

The project has evolved and so it took rather longer than I expected. However it was an opportunity to give a little back, and I am delighted I was able to help in this way. It was fascinating to see what this charity does and how important and effective it is.

I love the arts and I love the Tees Valley. So this proved to be a wonderful project for a wonderful cause and I hope the films will help Tees Valley Arts for many years to come so they can in turn help lots and lots more people.



Ian McCann
McCann Photography

Photograph credits:

Vicky Holbrough; River Tees Rediscovered INCLUDfest, Front cover
Vicky Holbrough; River Tees Rediscovered, Two Bridges South Park, Page 3
Adam Bligh; River Tees Rediscovered, Tees Barrage, Page 4
Zoe Bishop; Tees Valley Arts Promotional Films, Page 6
Peter Neal; River Tees Rediscovered, The Coffee House, Page 8
Vicky Holbrough; River Tees Rediscovered INCLUDfest, Back cover



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