

ART VALLEY



Background

Newsletter Issue 01

Monday 20 April 2009

These newsletters are a chance for you to find out what is going on in the ART Valley project whether you live in the area or are interested in finding out about all the positive work that is going on. Different people will share their experiences with readers - perhaps it may be you writing one day! In forthcoming editions, we will be looking at more of the projects and giving some statistics on participation.



Young people worked with artist Jemma Egan, humorously transforming their images.

With thanks to our sponsors...



What a couple of months it has been! My name is Annie MacLean and I began on Jan 5, 2009 as the Arts Outreach Manager, working for both the Bluecoat and Liverpool Everyman Playhouse Theatres as part of an exciting new project in Alt Valley. The new partnership is formed between the arts organisations working with Alt Valley Neighbourhood Management Services, together with local social registered landlords Cobalt, LMH and LHT. I feel privileged to have such vast resources at my fingertips to really engage with the community and tackle the issues identified by the council and the local community.

For those of you who are not familiar with the Bluecoat, Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse theatres or Alt Valley, here's a small introduction. Alt Valley is one of the 5 Neighbourhood management areas that make up Liverpool. It consists of the wards Warbreck, Norris Green, County, Clubmoor, Croxteth and Fazakerley. The Bluecoat has worked across Alt Valley through Four Corners, a Liverpool Culture Company project that partnered up an arts organisation with one of the 5 areas in Liverpool. The Bluecoat is an arts centre, based in a grade one listed building right in the heart of Liverpool. It reopened in March 2008, after undergoing a major redevelopment that



'Pimp my handbag' workshop at the Bluecoat

dramatically improved access and saw the creation of a new wing that hosts an exhibition and performance space. The building also plays home to a collection of artists, creative organisations and shops, with a garden to sit in from the busy city and enjoy a cup of tea! The Everyman and Playhouse theatres joined forces in 1999. They offer the city and beyond the best quality theatre of local, national and international reputation with a far reaching education and outreach programme. Following the Four Corners project, these two world class arts organisations have joined forces to address issues in the Alt Valley area by working together with the local community and Alt Valley NMS through responsive creative projects.

 **Annie MacLean**

EVERYMAN
L I V E R P O O L
PLAYHOUSE

**with the
Bluecoat.**

The Journey so far...

These newsletters are a chance for you to find out what is going on through the ART Valley project, whether you live in the area, or are interested in finding out about all the positive work that is going on. Different people will share their experiences with readers, perhaps it will be you writing one day!

The ART Valley programme really kicked into action straight away, aided by the fabulous touring production of *Billy Wonderful* from the Everyman. You may have seen the show at the Alt Valley Skills Centre in Croxteth or Alsop High School in County, or when it went back to the Everyman. It was a fast-paced performance telling the tale of Billy Walters following his football fuelled dream. To accompany the performance, participants across Alt Valley took part in Billy-themed



Residents from Florence Court visited the Next Up Exhibition at The Bluecoat and worked with artist Jay Yung to make work in response to what they saw.

workshops that ranged from crying out football chants from the sidelines, to working with the



Young person taking part in Silky Skills session

famous Mr Silky Skills, teaching them seemingly impossible tricks with a football. The Alt Valley Skills Centre and Alsop High School were transformed into theatres for the evening, giving people the chance to enjoy great theatre on their doorstep. Another very exciting project which is underway is Sandman working with Rice Lane City Farm. A group of young people were invited to join me on a behind the scenes tour of the Everyman. They were given a fantastic insight into the theatre's



Moore's House creating their LION as part of PROUD week

unique history (which started out as a church, before becoming a theatre for those of you who don't know!). A special thank you goes to SPIKE theatre company and their Artistic Director, Glenn Noble, who took the time to answer all the questions the group had, before and after the performance of *The Sandman*! It really opened up the visitors' experience to what jobs are available in the arts, and that it doesn't just stop with the actors on the stage. After seeing the quite darkly surreal performance, the group were given the opportunity to work with the excellent Matt Rutter. I have since had the youth worker on the phone to me asking if they can permanently have Matt based at RLCF, as he has had such a positive effect on the young people there. The group are now working on their own short performance, where their stories will be told. For many, this has really opened up their horizons, with one young woman now considering taking up drama at college, something that she had previously thought was not for her. Watch this space to catch RLCF's responsive performance very soon.

ART Valley has also worked with both Clubmoor and Norris Green Youth Centres. Before Christmas,



Young people taking part in Purlesque knitting workshop.

Nook and Willow, an organisation based at the Bluecoat, who specialise in making one-off, handmade accessories and handbags visited both youth centres to run a 'taster' 1.5hr workshop in how to 'pimp your handbag'. This involves taking one old, unwanted handbag from

the back of your wardrobe and 'pimping it up' into a desirable fashion item that all your friends want. Following the success of the taster workshop, Claire Wilson from Nook and Willow visited both youth centres to run creative sessions. In Norris Green, they have continued with textile-based sessions with local business women and designer Donna.

To complement these sessions, Claire set the group the task to create a Mother's Day accessory created out of recycled materials. The chosen designs are now currently on sale in Landbaby, a contemporary craft and fashion shop based at the Bluecoat.

These projects were run in organisations where The Bluecoat and Everyman already have a relationship. In our short time here, we have made lots of new friends! For example, artist Jemma Egan visited the 506 Detached Youth Group to deliver a workshop, illustrating that art is not just about painting and drawing, but can be about

thinking creatively and perception. The luncheon group from Fazakerley Federation have made bingo bunting, and took a daytrip out to The Bluecoat, to see the artists' work and have a change of scenery for their weekly bingo session. One lady commented that it was great to get out and see something new, something that they may not otherwise get the opportunity to do.

There are lots of exciting projects happening, this is only a snippet of what has been going on so far. People all across Alt Valley have already shown great support for this innovative new project and smile at the prospects that it will bring. We have been part

of PROUD week in County and have been involved in discussions about the forthcoming Norris Green Carnival on Sat 23 May. We have held our Community Arts Forum, a partnership between ART Valley and Alt Valley Community Trust, where we invited people from across the sectors get together to see how we can work together and use the ART Valley programme to meet our shared aims.

We are making small steps in the right direction, but it is about working together, across the whole community to make a positive change, and get Alt Valley recognised for the hugely creative and engaged community that it is.



Annie MacLean



Cloud Cuckooland installation at the Playhouse.



Moore House's LION.

ART VALLEY

Forthcoming Events

Drawing Weekend

Sat 6 and Sun 7 June
10.00am – 6.00pm

at the Bluecoat

To coincide with End of the Line, the forthcoming drawing exhibition on show at the Bluecoat from 22 May – 19 July, every nook and cranny of the building will be filled with different approaches to drawing, with plenty of opportunities for you to make your own mark! There will be workshops, talks, demonstrations, a life drawing class, film animations, exhibitions and live drawing in our public spaces. See the Bluecoat's website for more details.

Norris Green Carnival

Sat 23 May
12.00pm – 4.00pm

Scargreen Playing Fields

To tie in with Four Corners 09, ART Valley will be delivering creative Scarecrow-making workshops as part of the Norris Green Unites Festival at Scargreen playing fields.

Four Corners

Wed 22 – Wed 29 July

at the Bluecoat

Young people from across Alt Valley will work with artists asking the question: 'What would you ward off or attract to the area?' The answers will be creatively transformed into unique scarecrows, using recycled materials. People from across the community will have the opportunity to get involved, resulting in a fabulous ART Valley Scarecrow trail during the summer and an exhibition at the Bluecoat during July.

To find out more information about the organisations involved, please visit the following websites:

The Bluecoat www.thebluecoat.org.uk

EVERYWORD Festival

Mon 29 June – Sat 4 July

Everyman Theatre

Following the huge success of last year, the Everyman's annual new writing festival is back with a week of readings, workshops and events open to anyone interested in new writing or developing writing skills. See the Everyman and Playhouse's website for more details.

Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse Theatres

www.everymanplayhouse.com

Alt Valley NMS www.liverpool.gov.uk

Cobalt Housing www.cobalthousing.org.uk

LMH www.liverpoolmutualhomes.org

LHT www.lht.co.uk

Alt Valley Community Trust www.communiversity.co.uk

To find out more information about the ART Valley programme, please contact Annie MacLean on annie.m@thebluecoat.org.uk

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