

Libraries, Museums, Archives and Arts. Find Your Talent Activities since April 2009

The cultural offer for young people in Bolton is being developed through the creation of three geographical cultural partnerships (North, South and West). Within each partnership area we have established interdependent multi-disciplinary 'Cultural Change Teams' made up of teachers, staff and creative practitioners representing schools, Council Services, the wider local community, third sector and creative industries. They are now working in partnership to plan, deliver and evaluate a range of activity for years 2 and 3. Libraries, Museums, Archives and Arts play an active part in all three geographical partnerships and, in the past 6 months, have contributed in the following ways:

- *Summer Challenges* – these set children and young people the challenge to work as part of team to create a work of art in a week. The Museum was at the heart of two of the most successful (in terms of outcomes for young people) Summer Challenges. In "Threads through time" the children were challenged create the costumes, music and scenery for a fashion show exploring clothes of the past, present and future. The fashion show drew its inspiration from the museum's amazing textile and costume collections. The Museum was also responsible for the "Monster challenge" – the young people were challenged to create a fantastical creature of the future based on the Museum's Natural History collections. The Library supported two further challenges – "Arts Award in a week" and "A grand day out" where children got the chance to explore and discover Bolton's major cultural attractions.
- *Their Past Your Future*, which receives cash from the Big Lottery Fund, is an MLA programme which encourages exploration of the impact and ongoing legacy of 20th Century conflict on people and places in the UK and around the world. Bolton Libraries, Museums and Arts are using ten thousand pounds awarded by the MLA to work with St Mary's RC Primary and St Joseph's RC secondary school in Horwich. The project uses creative writing workshops, trips and intergenerational work to raise pupil's awareness and understanding of war, peace and remembrance. So far the work created by the schools has been fantastic. The project is due to end in March 2010.
- *Crime and punishment* is a project funded between Renaissance Hub Funding and Find Your Talent. Bolton Museum will be working in partnership with the Council's Entry to Employment (e2e) scheme to support and mentor young people at risk of becoming NEET to create an exhibition themed around crime and punishment. The group have taken on project team roles such as project manager, exhibition officer and collections assistant so that they are involved in the full experience of creating the exhibition. The group have free reign over what they create and are responsible for all content in the exhibition. The project began in Sept 09 and the first stage of it will be complete in March 2010 – we may extend the project after this date.

- The Museum's *Design for Life* project focuses on engaging young people in creative design through use of museums. It is funded jointly by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Children, Schools and Families, and overseen by the Victoria and Albert Museum. The Museum is working with two high schools –George Tomlinson and Westhoughton High – and families linked to the Bolton Family Intervention Centre (an Action for Children project). Participants will have the opportunity to work with a professional designer to design and produce jewellery that takes inspiration from the museum collections. The project runs in October and November.
- Arts Development is supporting the *Pixelate* young people's film project at Johnson Fold Youthopia with Lets Go Global, The Box and Bolton At Home. It will finish at the end of November and be followed by a Greater Manchester screening and Bolton screening in Jan/Feb (dates and venues tbc).
- The Arts-Development-team-supported *Rock It! collective* are starting their training in sound engineering, lighting, music leading, events management etc from 5th December and 7 young people have also started their Bronze Arts Awards.
- *UCORLA (Using Cultural Organisations to Raise Levels of Attainment)* has provided the Museum and Library service with the opportunity to strengthen links with schools and other cultural organisations. The project aims to encourage teachers to use cultural organisations in their planning rather than seeing them as an addition to their teaching. Each year libraries attend a networking day along with other cultural organisations and spend 5 minutes with each class teacher to discuss how our service can meet their project needs. We have worked closely with the museum to deliver joined up learning days which link in with school's projects and the curriculum. This has proved to be a great success so far and we look forward to working with other organisations. A training day on the national curriculum was delivered by Joanna Steele early on in the project which helped organisations to understand ways in which they could help to strengthen children's learning.
- *Early Years* – the Library service is working on a FYT-funded project to promote universal library membership for under-5s with a special FYT library membership card which will be given by health visitors at the 8 month check. This can be taken to their local library to activate. Publicity developed in association with Harvey Early Years Centre will explain what libraries have to offer under-5s to nurture a love of reading.
- *Mini Explorers* is a creative play and learning programme for families with pre-school children, which has been developed by the Family Learning Team from Bolton Community College in partnership with Bolton Library Service, Museum and Aquarium.
- A Formal Learning Manager from the Museum is working with Wendy Carson, Head of Alexandra Children's Centre on a FYT project called WAAG: Widening Access Accelerating Growth. The principal aim of this is to enhance the Museum's Early Years offer. They have also put in an application to the MLA Learning Links fund, a professional development programme for museum staff and educators including

those who work in Early Years settings. They are in the initial stages of planning this project.

- *The Bolton Council of Mosques Exhibition* was co-created by Bolton Museum and Archive Service and Bolton Council of Mosques Female Youth Group (Age 13-16 yrs). The group wanted to tell the story of Bolton's Mosque and to share a major part of their own lives with Museum visitors through the exhibition and dispel some myths associated with their community. The groups design ideas and content contribution made a significant impact on the look of the exhibition. The group wrote the text for the exhibition as well as loaning objects from friends and family members and interviewing members of the Muslim community in Bolton. There has been a very positive response to the exhibition from all of Bolton's communities and similar exhibitions with other faith and cultural groups will now be programmed into the exhibition schedule because of this.

Matthew Watson.
November 2009.