

SPRING EGG in PARK



Undeterred by April showers, artist **Ildiko Wu Wei Nagy** (right) constructed this wonderful “Cosmic” egg structure – an organic willow sculpture representing Spring – while passers by stopped to lend a hand. Park artist **Sylla Parkyn** (third left) explained that this is the piece for the Spring section of ‘Handsworth Revolutions - Celebrating the Cycle of the Seasons in Handsworth Park’, There will be further, seasonal related arts crafts & activities throughout the year, & the project can be followed at www.avacurate.com/crafting.

CROSSING PETITION

“The most obvious resolution will be to have a signal-controlled crossing installed by the school.”

Father Bob Steven explains



Anyone who has tried to cross the Hamstead Road by St Mary’s School or by St Mary’s Church will know that it is a act of faith. The corner that obscures vision together with the speed of some vehicles that come down the hill makes this a particularly precarious place to want to get from one side of the road to the other.

When I moved to the area I asked questions about why there was no crossing and had been told that some measures were in place. Further investigation revealed that one single pole had been erected with a note stating that people should not park there. I am also aware that there has been some discussion about some traffic calming measures, but that would

be unsatisfactory. If, as is clearly the case, drivers refuse to comply with a 30 mph speed limit there is little hope that a 20 mph limit would be more successful. If, as is the case, double yellow lines are ignored, it would be futile to hope that any further parking instructions would be adhered to. There is, of course, a crossing patrol at the beginning and the end of the school day, but that is not available at the other times when parents, particularly of the most vulnerable nursery-age children are attempting to cross the road at the beginning and end of lunch.

I am fully convinced that the modern preoccupation that puts an individual at the centre of their own universe means that the lack any courtesy or consideration in driving and parking is not deliberate illegality or rudeness but a simple self-preoccupation that is not aware of the impact actions on anyone else. The most obvious resolution will be to have a signal-controlled crossing installed by the school. This would facilitate crossing of this hazardous road at any and all times of the day. This means that all children would have the ability to halt traffic when going to and from school. It means that the parents who use the St Mary’s Church Hall for either Parent & Toddler groups or for the dance lessons that have been in the Hall for more than a generation would have a safe means of getting from one side to the other. It means that elderly and vulnerable people who wish to get to their Parish Church, for either worship on a Sunday or for weddings or funerals, could attempt the crossing with confidence.

How glorious the world would be if we could assume good manners and a consideration of the safety of others without having to enforce it. Alas, even the faith of a Parish Priest doesn’t stretch that far. This is why it is so important that you and I together urge, cajole, encourage and nag our Councillors into supporting this. A petition has been presented to the Council (on which I have had no feedback as yet) and they will only act if they perceive that it is expedient for them to do so as a result of anything we can do to persuade them, and through them, the Highways Agency, that a crossing is the most elegant response to this problem: thereby using the law to facilitate a safer means of crossing the Hamstead Road.

Hello everyone I am Sergeant Nick Simpson and I am currently posted to supervise Lozells and East Handsworth Neighbourhood Team and have taken over from the previous Sergeant Kin Devi.



I have since been transferred from the investigations team at Steelhouse Lane and feel privileged to have taken up my new post at Handsworth Police Station from where I first started my career.

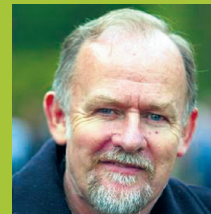
Posted to Thornhill Road Police Station in those days I was part of a fully operational unit working 24/7 when officers worked back to back shifts of earlies lates and nights it feels strange to be here without the numbers but I can’t wait to get back into serving the community. I like many of my colleagues started off on the beat and progressed through different disciplines, for me I had a desire to become a Detective and experienced many different teams on route ranging from Robbery to Burglary and vehicle crime. I remember the day I presented my application form to the then Detective Inspector who would either recommend or refuse support, it was a very anxious time I wanted to make my mark as a detective and this could have been make or break. I am pleased to report that I was supported and was successful at final interview and began looking forward to wearing a suit. I remained at Thornhill Road and enjoyed my time on CID and had learnt a great deal from colleagues and became involved with lots of protracted serious crime.

After a few years I felt I needed to push myself and to consider getting promoted, after successfully going through the exam process I was posted to a shift in Perry Barr, this was a great place to work from the community point of view who were passionate about their issues and I tried to work with them in finding solutions, after a couple of years I took over a new reassurance team again working from Perry Barr and became more proactive in executing warrants and targeting offenders ‘safer cleaner, greener’ was the motto at the time and was a great time in learning new lessons, unfortunately though this was short lived as I had torn my Achilles tendon during a foot chase and went off sick for 6 months. When I returned I took over the Soho Road Neighbourhood Team and then returned to Perry Barr supervising student officers before taking up post in performance management with our Senior Leadership Team and then moving back into the investigation arena before finally moving back to Neighbourhood Policing on LEH, I have 3 years’ service left to do and intend to stay in post, until then I will look forward to meeting with some of you over time.

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Above we have the Aronex Development at GRAND SQUARE due to open apartments in May with further phases planned, with a Community Room for use by non residents separate from the main living area.

Living in Style in Birchfield

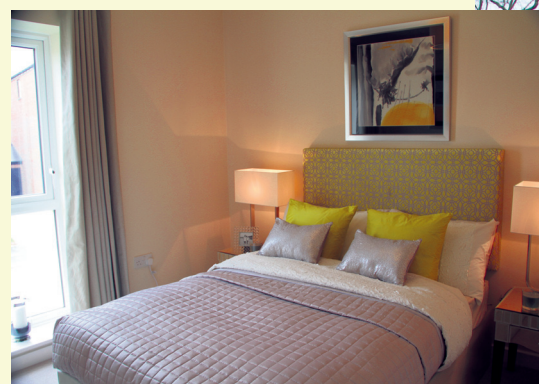
Below we see the Founders site next to part Private housing development by the delighted tenants and owners.

We hope that the new residents will activities in the future as they settle in to



Grand Square which is a part Social, Council, and is already occupied by

feel able to join in with Community this wonderful new development.



ART COMPETITION AT BIRCHFIELD HARRIERS

Birchfield Harriers, the UK's premier athletics club, was founded in 1877 at a meeting in the Methodist Sunday School in Wheeler Street, and early training sessions were based at the Calthorpe Arms pub at the bottom of Wood Lane. Since that time many famous names have been associated with the club (Peter Radford, Robbie Brightwell, Ian Stewart, Denise Lewis and Kelly Sotherton to name just a few), and athletes from Handsworth and neighbouring areas have formed its backbone.

Over the past 2 years the club has gained Heritage Lottery funding to research and record its history in more detail. The first phase resulted in a permanent exhibition about Birchfield's Olympic athletes which can be visited on the first floor of Alexander Stadium.

Now the second phase is currently looking at the athletes who took part in the First World War; as part of this, a prize of **£250** is being offered for the mural design which best captures the contributions/experiences of these individuals, whose special abilities often helped themselves and others to survive the trenches. The winning mural will be on permanent display at Alexander Stadium, where it will be seen by visitors from all over the world. Entries should be no larger than A3 in size and using any 2D media you wish; they should be e-mailed to

holly.birchfieldharriers@gmail.com

or dropped off at the club office at Alexander Stadium - no later than 7pm on 31st May.

Many of the athletes' stories can be found at <http://archive.birchfieldharriers.com/>

For any further information contact Holly O'Meara on 0121 344 4858.

Queries come in to the club from as far away as Australia - people wanting to know about, for example, a grandparent who was a member of Birchfield Harriers: when did they compete? In what event? how good were they? and what else is known about their lives?

The Lottery funded research has provided answers to some of these questions, and given unique insights into the relationship between ordinary life and being at war (this mirrors the accounts of present day club members, who talk about what being a Birchfield Harrier means for them - **click <https://vimeo.com/75622033> for more detail**

Letters and meeting notes show what it felt like to move from organising teams and celebrating performances to, just a few months later, trying to find out what had happened to people and hearing about casualties and deaths. Some came through: like Alfred Wilcox who won the Victoria Cross for exceptional bravery in the face of heavy odds, but at the cost of 6 machine gun bullets in his ankle and leg; Charlie Ray, the 220 yards champion, whose speed ensured a fuse got lit and lives got saved in an infantry assault; and Sid Burrell (pictured right) who made a point of having his Birchfield vest under his uniform because he wanted to be wearing it when he died. One who didn't survive was R.E.Knight, whose identity as a runner added poignancy to his friend's remembrance of him in verse:

TO R. E. K.
(IN MEMORIAM)

DEAR, rash, warm-hearted friend,
So careless of the end,
So worldly-foolish, so divinely-wise,
Who, caring not one jot
For place, gave all you'd got
To help your lesser fellow-men to rise.

Swift-footed, fleetest yet
Of heart. Swift to forget
The petty spite that life or men could show you
Your last long race is won,
But beyond the sound of gun
You laugh and help men onward—if I know you

Oh still you laugh, and walk,
And sing and frankly talk
(To angels) of the matters that amuse
In this bitter-sweet of life,
And we who keep its strife,
Take comfort in the thought how God has used
you.



Tom McCook,

who is featured in several of the Birchfield Harriers photos, died on 27th February. The fact that he appears so often reflects how far he was involved in everything which goes on at the club. Although originally from Inverness, he joined the club as an 800 metre runner when he moved to Birmingham as a young man, and he never left it. He was the kind of man who holds a community together: interested in everyone and their achievements, always around, always looking to see what needed doing and doing it, unfailingly friendly and supportive and sharing his enjoyment of life. He wrote regularly about athletics in both the local and national press, and received the highest accolade for services to athletics (the Ron Pickering Memorial Award).

He served as President at Birchfield for many years, and he is sorely missed by his family, his club, and the national athletics fraternity.



missed by his family, his club, and the



Pictured left are Harrier Colleagues with Tom McCook, (with his back to the screen) sharing Sporting Tales. From left to right are, Beryl Randle, Ruth Lockley (pouring milk), Stuart Paul, and Don Hitchman. On the far right of the right hand picture is Betty Downes.





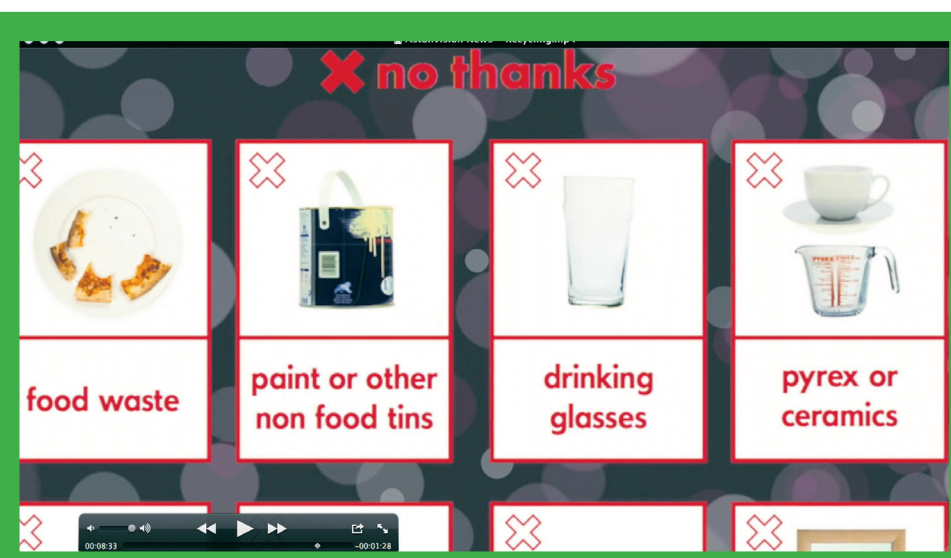
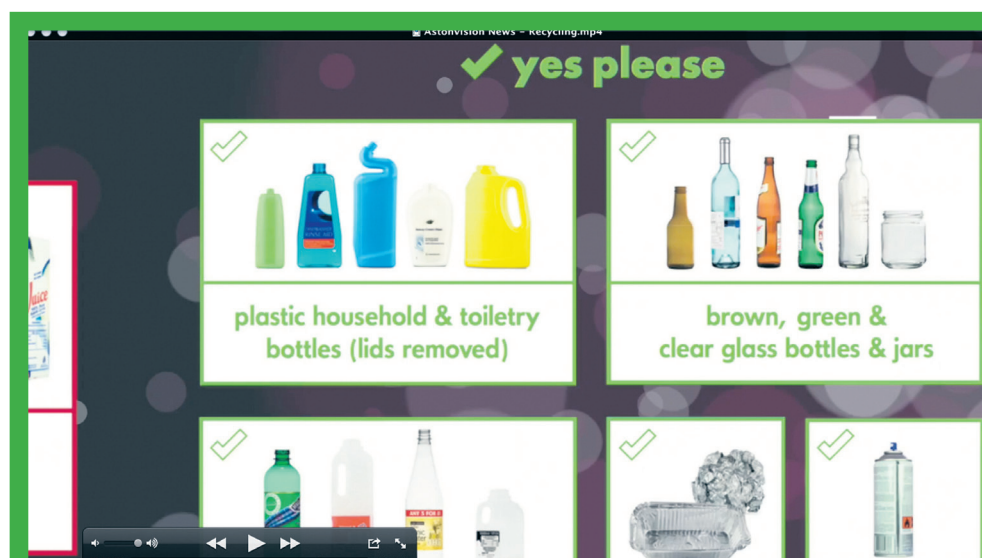
Westminster School pupils are to feature on the local TV channel, BIG CENTRE TV, based in Walsall, with Recycling. Here are shots from the the Young People's programme IN OUR Lee Martin, who regularly works with tant issues such as the Environmental field, says that Young People are very be sorted out in the Environment. Councillor Hendrina Quinnen had Clancey to be interviewed but he was Funding was made available through which helps small local groups promote



feature on the local TV channel, their rubbish video on Household video which will be shown as part of HOUSE in May. Local TV Producer schools to help them present impor- Problems that we face here in Birch- good at telling adults what needs to arranged for City Leader John not able to come at the last moment. the Veolia Envirogrant scheme Environmental issues.

You can watch the video on
https://youtu.be/97ejcv_P_fA

We speak to Hendrina who is the Councillor for Lozells & East Handsworth and ask some local residents how we can all get involved in keeping our streets clean and catch our handy guide to Household recycling



Birchfield Neighbourhood Forum

On these next 4 pages you will find more on our Consultations with you, photos and comment. Also extracts from the Community Action Plan as we take the next Steps Forward together.



BIRCHFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
PUBLIC MEETING 24TH JULY 2012



Helen Fairweather, left, who was responsible for overseeing the Birchfield Neighbourhood Forum's Community Plan project for the Community Development Foundation's Award, with chair, Jimoh Folarin, (centre) and a Forum committee member, Monica Walker.



Helen Fairweather listens to the views of a Birchfield Resident on the street during the Walk-About organised by the Forum.



Another long standing Birchfield Resident, Arnold of Westminster Road, offers his ideas for the Community Plan. Behind this fence on Grosvenor Road, is a piece of land belonging to the Council which has remained derelict for over 20 years. The Forum would like to see this piece of land dedicated to Community use as a site to build a Community Centre.

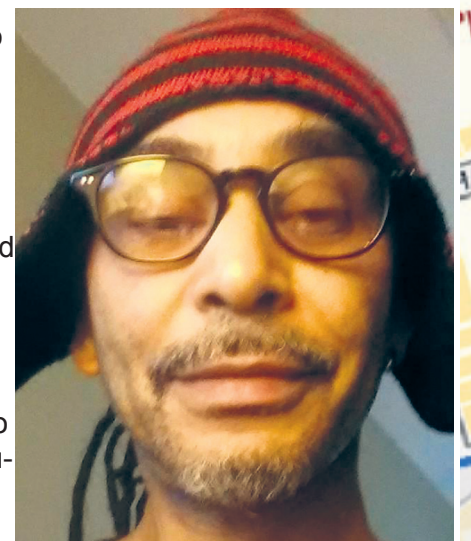
A Statement by the chairman, Mr Jimoh Folarin B N H Forum April 12 2016

I was a part of the Birchfield regeneration group started by local residents in 2010 when the tower blocks were being emptied and prepared for demolition. Some residents had some major concerns about the dust from the site and how the new design would fit in with the already growing community. I was a part of 2012 Birchfield neighbourhood forum, committee as a host organization and steering group for Big Local that had come to the neighbourhood with the intentions of helping local people and businesses to develop therefore improving the local economy, welfare and health of our community.

I still live and work in the community and have a business maintaining gardens, designing gardens and general horticulture. I hope to be doing more study in the field so that I can become a professional tree surgeon. I am a parent and a keen photographer who is interested in creating a sustainable, healthy environment where our children can enjoy life. Community development was and still is the main priority of our forum. We have had several consultation events in the neighbourhood and public meetings, discussions with reputable people in authority. Collective action is a proper and effective way of working for social, economic and political change.

Community work is a process that promotes collective action. By developing the sustainability of the community, we start by involving those who live, work in the area, who have common concerns mutual interests, those who do not have a voice, to develop their own leadership skills and qualities. As long as we have the people who are willing to give up their time and energy, to help others with disadvantages gain access to equal opportunities, resources and information. We will seek to create better links and unity with other groups, organizations within our locality.

As a member of Birchfield Neighbourhood forum, I had the opportunity to attend several Community development foundation courses and seminars that left me feeling empowered and confident, able to take on the problems that confront our organization in 2016. We also organized the family fun day/ community consultation event at Westminster School which had a good turnout. So now we have specific actions, with your comments in mind, to take our community forward.



At the Family Fun Day sponsored by CDF residents gave their feedback and ideas for the Community Action Plan.

Video Link at <https://youtu.be/h0aUixtJjNo>

contact us at 07799 695 797

Sabirul says, "it will be ideal for weekends, like Saturday & Sunday, children will have some local place where they can go to get involved in some activities, opportunities to know the local people, I think the family, as we live in the 21st century we must learn to share together, because I would respect like the person who wanted to come to the woman's or men's day I have no objection to that, I don't mind to have mixed"



"My names Rebecca Johnson, I would use it, there needs to more activity, more services available for the community. Should be for all ages, but it should target between 13-16 years, reason I say that is because when you get to stage of adolescence, you have a lot of hormones going on, and you need something to reign in to like control. I think for the adolescence, Mentoring workshops, based around like healthy eating, sexual awareness, all those kind of things. I would to take part in arts and crafts, spoken word poems, I like being really creative, and also about Business, Enterprise, Entrepreneurial. You have children and there is nothing for you, so if there is something to empower adults then I think they will access it."



Shakeel- "because you know the little ones, they need a community centre with a special place, for the about 10-15 olds, and then homework, paperwork, making shapes, colouring, hand prints, painting, is good for this age. You know mostly for the older youngster, you need a community centre..."



Tumi "I have 2 small kids and I've got a teenager, so I don't mind something for the older kid as well, maybe like an activity like today to keep them together, I think they will come, lots will like to go. Somewhere were they are used to like a primary school, I don't think I would go far, probably local, somewhere used to here like a school, like in the weekend especially in the holidays, I think a lot of people wouldn't object."



Baljit "its very important especially for diverse communities to be able to network, to find out what is available both socially and economically...having a social hub we could have a place to voice our opinion, and have a common area where people can come together and say what they would like to have, Where we are in 2016 we should definitely have something to do with the internet there, because that is the way forward, social media, but also I mean I believe in the basics, you should have places where people can learn about things, educations, things to do with health, health awareness, definitely employment....."



Mrs Clark has lived here 40 years, "My opinion on having a Community Centre is that it is a good idea, a very very good idea..... Don't know what they would offer us, anything we will take, cup of tea for a start, activities for the elders, sometimes you really want something to mess about with, seating in the house is no good, we need something, to make us alive, locally....."





Sharda-

-”my sons work as Play coordinators, so many times they say they see kids in the holidays hanging around on street corners, parks and stuff like that, whereas if they g had a CC where they could set up a place similiar to a Youth Club, where there is a certain limit for an hour or two, the kids could come, they are in the warmth, they have got snooker,activities to do, that deters them from getting up to no good, A lot of elderly people feel that they are left on their own, they’re at home, again a lot of Mothers are isolated, they can’t go out to work, they cannot do anything normal, so having a Community Club there, offering them services, I am sure is going to be taken up, definitely”.



Above and below are a few shots from the video made on the Community Family Fun day in the hall of Westminster Primary School. On the left hand page are the comments made by some residents about the need for a Community Hub.



Masarit says,
“Definitely would use it and would send my children there, because we have not got anything like that in this vicinity, especially for the kids because I think nowadays there is not a lot to do, Yes,parks don’t offer much as well so a Community Centre would be a platform for them to be involved, and maybe crafts activities, maybe some sports for the children, football or basket ball or tennis, takes them off the street, yes, brings the crime rate down as well, learning TV skills, interviews, searching for a job, things like that, or arts and crafts, anything like a community trip, The only organisation that I am aware of is the Big Local, the Neighbourhood Forum, we had play schemes funded by the Holte Cluster at Westminster Primary school, they used to charge £3.50 from 10-3pm, all my kids attended, because there was nothing here, they took them to swimming they took them to cinema, they did art and CRAFTS, we would love something like this here.”



Extracts from the Community Action Plan made in consultation with local residents

A cleaner environment

Litter, fly-tipping and dog fouling have been longstanding issues with domestic rubbish overflowing onto pavements and empty land becoming eyesores as rubbish and household items are dumped on it. BNF, Handsworth Helping Hands and Birchfield Big Local have all organised litter picks as a means of raising awareness and engaging residents in addressing this problem.

Space to call their own

There is a real lack of facilities in the neighbourhood. The local library has closed and so has the Citizens Advice Bureau. We have no common ground at the moment where people of different cultures and traditions can meet and engage in cohesive activities together and form connections. There are few after school amenities to engage children and teenagers after school and during holidays. Play facilities are inadequate as are places to play football and other outdoor games. Residents have stated a need for more play spaces on their doorsteps and places where parents could get together while their children played. They also suggested that activities for children should take into consideration madrasa times (Islamic after school club). The lack of facilities impacts on accessibility to local services. For example there are residents who want to join the Stepping Forward to get support with preparing CVs, confidence building and job search. However, due to limited space, and lack of volunteers, only 2-3 people can be helped at a time. The Secret Garden was formerly a derelict plot of land. With Big Local support, it has been transformed into a grassed play area with a play space and a basketball court. This is a good illustration of how a single initiative can tackle multiple issues – environmental and lack of facilities.

Better access to information

With the library and CAB moving out the neighbourhood, there are few places left from which information can be accessed. Whether residents' issues relate to hidden homelessness, housing repairs, problems with landlords, welfare benefits, fuel poverty, debt, noisy neighbours, mental health issues or employment local people need good access to information. Residents do not just want to go somewhere to pick up a leaflet. They want to be able to talk to someone and get practical advice. If specialist support is needed, they want to be signposted in the right direction. Currently information that does exist is fragmented across the neighbourhood. Bringing it together under one roof would be extremely beneficial to residents.

To have pride in the neighbourhood

There are a lot of people representing different faiths and backgrounds who care passionately about the neighbourhood. They like its multicultural nature and its family feeling. It has been described as 'a gateway to Birmingham' due to the popularity of the Birchfield Road as a route into the city centre. Nevertheless, these feel-good factors are undermined by -

- ☐ Prostitution
- ☐ Drug dealing
- ☐ People drinking in public space
- ☐ Lack of a sense of identity – the area is not seen as an area in its own right
- ☐ Low levels of volunteering and social action
- ☐ Perceptions that nobody (external to Birchfield) cares about the neighbourhood
- ☐ A transient community that does not consider Birchfield its home

Actions that residents believe would help the neighbourhood are to –

1. Identify a site for the community hub;
2. speed up work towards developing a community hub;
3. support the community to develop locally managed projects which would respond to needs identified and be delivered through the community hub;
4. strengthen relationships across faiths and cultures;
5. strengthen the relationship between Birchfield Big Local and the Forum;
6. empower the Forum to play an active role in developing a facility where residents can socialise and build networks.

Concept for a Community Hub

It would be located at an accessible site, providing full disability access. It would be managed by a local committee and deliver a range of valuable community services. In addition to this, it would provide facilities for use by the local community whether a more formal arrangement (e.g. letting space to community and voluntary organisations).

Ultimately it will be down to Birchfield Big Local to develop an evidence base of need and to support Big Local in goals in mind.



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the community hub. Our role as a neighbourhood forum is to help making this a reality. The implementation is designed with these



Birchfield Neighbourhood Forum is run by Volunteers.

Build the Forum, make it better, be part of the Change, we need your Talents, Skills and Commitment.

Join the Big Lunch on May 25 where we will have our AGM and become a member of the Committee.

Designs in the Sky

**A community Arts initiative by the
Perry Barr Arts Forum**

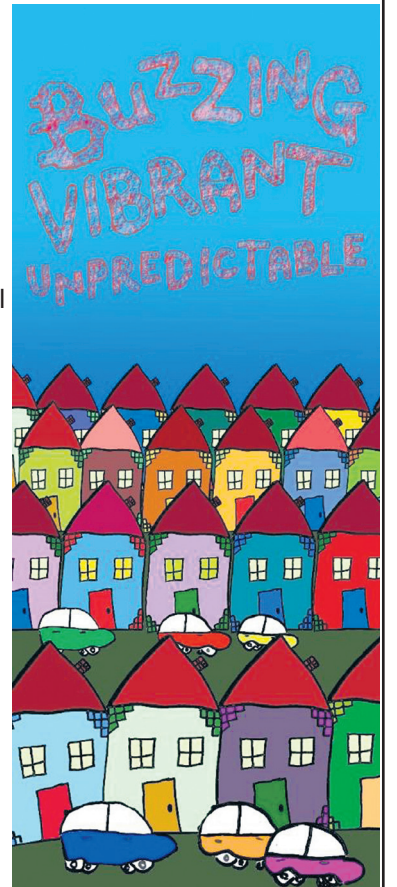
**Conceived and facilitated by artist
R.M. Sanchez-Camus**

**A new co-designed artwork
has come
to Witton in
the form of
community
street banners
representing
the area
and designed in
collaboration with
local people.**



individualisation of hyper-capitalism and consumer culture. Socially-engaged art practices invite the community to be producers and makers along side artists and share in the authorship of works. These works then serve to reclaim public space and invigorate community action.

Designs in the Sky is a project that sits within that framework. The proposal was to create banners that represent the neighbourhood, the good, the bad and the ugly. I worked with over 200 participants from a diverse range of nationalities and cultures, ranging from children to seniors. The stories that came up during the workshops revealed a group of dynamic and committed citizens who appreciate their neighbourhood and are invested in its culture. Each person designed their own banners, with symbols and text that were then merged with other designs into a singular piece. Some banners were created with groups and brought to a final stage in the workshops. Other banners are combinations of words and images from many people merged together. All in all it is clear to see that the feelings and thoughts around Witton and Aston as well reflected in the artworks produced.



It was such a pleasure to get to know the residents of the area, and to get to know Birmingham more. I was born in New York City to parents who had immigrated from Chile, in South America and now I have been over a decade living in the UK. The art critic Nicholas Bourriaud termed this new wandering in a globalised world the radicant, or someone who 'sets one's roots in motion'. Much how ivy grows, throwing roots as it comes into new territory, we call many places home and bring to those places an exchange of ideas and perspectives. This is what makes these banners so exciting, they represent so many different people but all with a common interest in being together.

**We will have our celebration on
Saturday 23rd April at 3pm at
Tesco, Aston Lane, Witton.**



**Pictured left, working at
their designs are local
workers and residents
from the Witton area.**

**Below a glimpse of the
material in the artist's
studio.**



Artists Filipe (left of table) with Artist Marcelo Camus (centre) helping workshop attendees to produce the Designs in the Sky Banners that will help make Witton more beautiful. The workshop was held at Birmingham Settlement, Aston.

WORKING WITH WESTMINSTER-*Bill Gurney explains-*

"Three years ago, Headteacher Maneer Samad decided needed improvement. Nothing is more important in the and to present one's ideas in a logical and entertain- I was just retiring after many years teaching English at interested in coaching a cohort of his pupils for LAM-Speaking Verse and Prose. This part-time work was a idea of teaching primary school kids, having never done gone on to develop a programme of Speaking and Lis-LAMDA exams in the Summer and a Public Speaking Every pupil in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 takes part in the Public tained speech on a topic chosen from a list of ten. The the owner and CEO of the famous firm, Everyman, who from London with a heavy bag of children's books, which he kindly donates as prizes for the winners and runners-up. As a result of these and many other go-ahead schemes and ideas in the school, the children are steadily developing in confidence and articulation, and even if some of this goes into hibernation at secondary school, with the onset of the famous teenage 'grunt' (!), it will surely bear fruit in later life in a multitude of beneficial ways."



Bill Gurney (left) with David Campbell

that the oracy skills of his **Westminster Primary School** pupils modern world than being able to speak clearly and attractively ing manner. King Edward VI, Aston, and Mr. Samad asked me if I would be DA (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art) exams in nice way of filling a gap for me, and I particularly enjoyed the it before. Their enthusiasm has been infectious and we have tening activities for each term: Debating in the Spring Term, Competition in the Winter. Speaking Competition, having to prepare and deliver a sus-Finals have been judged each year by Mr. David Campbell, publish beautiful editions of the classics. He comes all the way

Hello, my name is Maryam Islam and I'm going to talk about my experience of winning the speaking competition. I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the competition, it was a fantastic experience. At first, as my name was called, I felt incredibly nervous. It was daunting. I could feel my face turning a beetroot red. However, once I began to speak, my nerves slowly drifted away. Towards the end of my speech, I felt ecstatic that I had managed to speak in front of so many people. When it was time to announce the winners, my nerves started to creep back. I doubted whether I'd be the winner. Mr Guerny began to announce the runner ups first. Worrying that my name was not mentioned, I lost hope of my chances of winning. Then, all of a sudden, my name was announced. I was elated, a huge grin painted on my face! Although I was overjoyed, I couldn't help feeling a little unhappy because my mum wasn't there. Though, deep down, I knew she would be really proud.

Public Speaking review
I remember waking up at the start of the day I was feeling very nervous as I knew I was going to speak in front of lots of adults. All my friends were excited for me being in the final which gave me confidence. As my name was called, I took a deep breath, walked in front of everyone and delivered my speech. I felt happy when it was over. I thought it went well but was amazed when they called my name out as the winner. My parents, friends and teachers were proud of me. It was a great experience and feeling to win.
Saliha Mahmood



Left, another young Winner. Right, Judges Eye view of speakers
Below, finalists & Winners.



Faiths for Fun 2016

Be prepared ...fun ...challenge ...adventure

Dr. Peter Rookes & Mrs Jean Rookes, County International & County Faiths & Beliefs Advisors, and 304 (Muslim) Scout Group Mentors, report on this year's grand event:

David Bradnock MBE JP DL FBHI, County President Birmingham Scouts Association and HM Deputy Lieutenant for the West Midlands opened the event for the 106 children of 6 different faiths and none, aged 7-11 years, as they enjoyed the 8th annual Faiths for Fun held at Hamstead Hall Academy on Sunday 13th March. The event is jointly organised by the Birmingham Council of Faiths and Birmingham Scouts, and British Muslim TV, (Sky Channel 860) was there to record the event.

After registration, the fun started with the parachute game, and then children, in multifaith teams, visited 7 bases to learn something about each faith through a fun activity, which included Hindu Yoga and Holi (festival of colour); Sikh music & chords; Baha'i unity songs and games; Christian treasures & temptations; Jewish synagogue craft; and Muslim inventions & traditions. The refreshment break was an opportunity for the youngsters to sit in informal friendship groups to chat and get to know each other better. Indoor campfire songs at the end was an opportunity for the children to let off steam before receiving their certificates and going home.

The great benefit of this event is not just bringing together so many children of different faiths and cultures, to make new friends and to learn something about each other's beliefs and traditions, but the opportunity for 50 adult helpers, also of different faiths and cultures, to work together. So many thanks are due to everyone who worked hard to make this event a success again, particularly to Hamstead Hall Academy who provide us with such good facilities for the event.

The 9th event will be held in March 2017, further details from pjrookes@gmail.com.



A round up of the various activities showing the support that the day had from Adult Helpers, Scouters, Parents, Children, and a Muslim TV Channel that came to film the event that was opened by the Dept Lieutenant for West Midlands, David Bradnock.



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