

**VICTORIA  
BATHS**

# **FANZINE CONVENTION**

**THE PAST, PRESENT  
& FUTURE  
OF FANZINES**

## **FILM SCREENING**

**"\$100 & A T-SHIRT"**  
**A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT  
ZINES IN THE  
NORTH WEST US**

**GUIDED**

*Tours*  
**OF  
THE  
BUILDING**

## **WORK SHOPS**

**MAKE  
YOUR  
OWN  
FANZINE**

**WITH VICTORIA  
BATHS' ARCHIVE,  
PLUS MORE TBA**

**GUEST**

**SPEAKERS**

**DAVE HASLAN  
PLUS MORE TBA**

**SATURDAY**

**14**

**MAY**

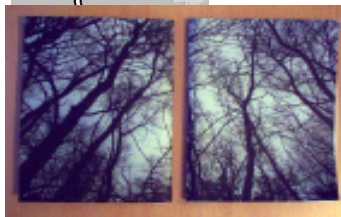
**10<sup>AM</sup>  
4<sup>PM</sup>**

**HATHERSAGE ROAD  
CHORLTON-ON-MEDLOCK  
MANCHESTER  
M13 0FE**



# 1

## Stallholders



### Twigs and Apples (Preston)

*Twigs and Apples* is a North West UK based zine collective, started in 2009. It operates as an open collective and, as such has a wide range of content, including art, writing, poetry, illustration, film and music reviews, sports writing, vegan recipes, photography, DIY and craft, philosophy and the odd rant. *Twigs and Apples* is fuelled by biscuits, tea and bicycle rides into the night.

<http://twigsandapples.webs.com>

<http://twigsandapples.blogspot.com>

### Pink Mince (London)

*Pink Mince* is a queer zine published in London, UK every couple of months or so by Dan Rhatigan. Its aim is "to delight, titillate, amuse, provoke, and inspire". That is to say: it features jokes and blokes, possibly with a point behind it all.

<http://pinkmince.com>



### Christa Harris/Camberwell Books (Manchester/London)

Christa Harris is a Manchester based book artist with work in several national archives including TATE Britain. At Victoria Baths she will present a stall showcasing work from a variety of friends and colleagues, including zines from Norwich based artist Sammy Merry (<http://incident88.blogspot.com>), and bookworks from the Camberwell Book Arts MA ([www.camberwell-bookarts.blogspot.com](http://www.camberwell-bookarts.blogspot.com)). She will be happy to answer any questions about book arts, book-making and small/self publishing and will be disseminating information on a variety of related topics including basic bookbinding, advice for small publishers, how to get an isbn etc.



### MUSEUMS PRESS (Manchester)

Launched in June 2009 MUSEUMS PRESS is a small independent publishing house based in Manchester. Its publications have included a range of formats and subjects from heavily compiled books, comics and poster packages to photocopied fanzines and individual artists' prints.

[www.museumspress.co.uk](http://www.museumspress.co.uk)

### Manchester Municipal Design Corporation & Ultimate Holding Company (Manchester)

The Manchester Municipal Design Corporation works through cross-disciplinary collaborations involving publications, provocations, events, exhibitions and interventions. It has published two issues of *Things Happen*, a fanzine about Manchester and Salford, and co-produced a map of the creative ecology of the



two cities with Laura Mansfield.

Ultimate Holding Company is a creative social engagement project, artists' collective and design studio. It has operated at the junction of visual art, design and socio-political activism since 2002. UHC's process-driven ethos seeks out co-production and public collaboration, looking to encourage new connections to the arts through social solidarity.

The MMDC now works within UHC at Hotspur House, and they are together establishing a Design Without Boundaries-esque creative space on the 4th Floor of the building. The third issue of *Things Happen*, due later in the year, will be a Hotspur Special, after a comic that may or may not have been printed here.

[www.uhc.org.uk](http://www.uhc.org.uk)

[www.mmdc.org.uk](http://www.mmdc.org.uk)

<http://thefourthfloor.tumblr.com>

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### Ultra Horse (Nottingham)

Ultra Horse zines is a Nottingham based zine conglomerate split between one crafty comic drawing girl and a lovably crude zine making boy. Their style could be described as the product you'd get if Viz was cut up with David Shrigley and served as a hot quesadilla from Taco Bell.

<http://ultrahorse.blogspot.com>

### OWT Creative (Manchester)

OWT Creative is a five-strong design collective based in Manchester. OWT focuses on producing a monthly zine showcasing work from themselves and other up and coming creative talent in the North West. Each zine has a set theme to which OWT invites young creatives to contribute a response to be it photography, illustration, graphics or creative writing, as long as it's imaginative. OWT recently produced issue #6 and are accepting contributions for issue #7, the theme of which is 'Science'.

[www.owtcreative.com](http://www.owtcreative.com)



### Threads and Letters (Manchester)

Rebecca Aimée Lanyon Willmott is a self publisher, poet, storyteller and textile artist. A love of storytelling and stitching inspired the publication *Threads and Letters*, uniting textiles and literature. Handcrafted on cotton paper, it has a traditional book theme, reflected in the Gothic fonts and framing. Its contents include: an article on the button collection at Platt Hall, Gallery of Costume, Manchester, embroidery as puppet illustration, activist textiles and patterned poetry. When at the fair, it comes with a button

bookmark and is bound with linen thread and printed on recycled paper.

<http://threadsandletters.blogspot.com>

### Sugar Paper (Manchester)

*Sugar Paper* is a bi-annual craft zine always featuring 20 things to make and do, from knitting to dressing like your favourite fictional character! The Sugar Paper Gang have two aims: to get everyone crafting and to make crafting BADASS!

<http://sugarpapergang.blogspot.com>







# 3

## Nude (nationwide)

*Nude* is an eclectic, independently-produced magazine covering all aspects of indie and retro culture, with a strong emphasis on the vibrant new crafting scene as well as numerous aspects of visual culture; comics, illustration, designer toys and street art and zines.

[www.nudemagazine.co.uk](http://www.nudemagazine.co.uk)



## Emily & Anne (Manchester/London)

Emily Howells and Anne Wilkins met at Kingston University where they both studied Illustration & Animation BA. After graduating they decided to work together, as it is a lot more fun than working by yourself. Their first film, *A Film about Poo* (2009), musically promotes the importance of washing your hands, and was made with long-term collaborator and musician Billy Payne. The film went on to show at fifty film festivals worldwide, winning seven awards including the audience's choice at New York International Children's Film Festival 2010, and the Golden Poo Award at London

International Animation Festival 2009. When they are not animating, the girls also draw illustrations, and have produced three zines to date — one about growing up, one about French dogs in hats and one about poo. Emily and Anne love drawing so much they often don't sleep, and have created work for clients such as the BFI, BBC Learning and Bolton Museum & Archives.

[www.emilyandanne.co.uk](http://www.emilyandanne.co.uk)

## Silent V (Norwich)

Currently on its fourth installment, Kyle Baddeley's *Silent V* is an absurdist comic saga set in a twisted cartoon world populated by mansize talking buzzards, scheming scientists, and malevolent teddy bears. Its madcap, non-linear structure often leaves the reader questioning the characters' motivations, whilst continually throwing up new plot tangents. Filled with sudden, unexpected violence and funny dialogue, *Silent V* is both dark and hilarious.

<http://gulagcomics.livejournal.com>

[www.webcomicsnation.com/bakesale](http://www.webcomicsnation.com/bakesale)



## Charlotte Fiona Percival and Born Restless (Sheffield/Manchester)

Charlotte is an eternal obsessive with her own enthusiasms and other people's.

[www.gnarlotte.wordpress.com](http://www.gnarlotte.wordpress.com)

*Born Restless* is Hayley, an eternal doodler, embroiderer and cut and paste-er. She is interested in mistakes and trying to copy or create creepy images that usually end up looking wonky and silly instead. Her hands won't stop.

[www.welovetolove.blogspot.com](http://www.welovetolove.blogspot.com)

[www.etsy.com/shop/bornrestless](http://www.etsy.com/shop/bornrestless)

## Vapid Kitten (Manchester)

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*Vapid Kitten* is published quarterly and is now up to its fourth edition. The 'zine is 'for the lazy feminist.' It's designed to be a platform for commentary on modern society for those of us with an opinion but no desire to protest about it. This is done through the often quirky contributions of various artists and writers around a different theme each issue. Themes so far include Feminism, Green, Craft, and digital vs analogue.

<http://vapidkittenblogs.blogspot.com>

## Love to Print (Birmingham)

Karoline Rennie is an illustrator who makes her own zines and small artists' books using screen printing or Japanese gocco printing combined with digital printing. She collaborates with other women illustrators to make limited edition zines, colouring books and postcard books featuring their work. She also sells her own handmade cards, mini prints and zines made by other women.



## Memo (Leeds)

Helen Entwisle is a freelance illustrator and screen printer currently based in Leeds. Her work includes hand drawn and screen printed illustration, self-published zines, hand printed stationery, limited edition prints, tote bags and accessories. She puts together a collaborative zine called *Ten Fingers*.

[www.hellomemo.com](http://www.hellomemo.com)

## The Hare Newspaper (Glossop)

The Hare Newspaper is an independent publication, released once a month and stocked in Manchester, Edinburgh, London, Cardiff and its birthplace, the sleepy Derbyshire town of Glossop.

Mr Hare and his woodland chums turn their attentions to a wide-range of topic, with sport, both international and domestic, politics, music and academia their main focuses. With 20 monthly issues under the belt and several spin-offs – such as Modern Spiv and The Hare Sports Mag – already in circulation, it is an exciting time to join the form.

The Hare is always looking to grow its production team and, in the process, further diversify its voice. If you would like to write/draw/distribute for The Hare, you need only contact the team at [theharenewspaper@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:theharenewspaper@hotmail.co.uk) or via the website and they will gladly consider your submission for inclusion.

[www.theharenewspaper.co.uk](http://www.theharenewspaper.co.uk)



## Salford Zine Library (Salford)



Salford Zine Library was formed in January 2010 and aims to showcase and share creative work in the self-published form. The archive is open to all to

contribute. You can visit the Library at Islington Mill, Salford.

<http://salfordzinelibrary.blogspot.com>



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## Interview with Joe Biel — director, *\$100 & A T-Shirt: A Documentary About Zines in the Northwest US*

**Tell us about yourself — who you are and what you do, and what Microcosm publishing is**

I've been reading, making, and self-publishing zines for about 18 years. More recently I've taken to editing and writing books and directing documentaries. I co-authored a book called *Make a Zine!* and have a new one called *Beyond Resistance and Community* about people who took the ethics and aesthetics of punk beyond music. I'm currently finishing a new documentary feature film called

*Aftermass* about the history of bicycle activism in Portland, where I live.

Microcosm Publishing is a distribution and publishing outfit based around the zine movement. We work hard to give these writers' voices more reach and a wider audience. The thing that people don't talk about much in publishing—especially in the digital age—is that it's easy to publish but it's harder to build an audience. Microcosm fills that gap.

**What is your involvement with zines and what interests you about them?**

Beyond the fantasy books, when I was in high school I thought reading was simply very boring. Aside from the Dr. Bronner's label, I stopped reading completely. Then in 1993 I went to a punk show at the Euclid Tavern and Jake Kelly sold me a copy of his zine *Summer* for \$1 and I was hooked. It was engaging and funny, spoke in a familiar tone and didn't pull any punches. I wrote to all of the other zines listed in it and haven't much looked back. I started publishing my own zine almost immediately and within a few years I founded Microcosm to do essentially what it does today.

**Could you tell us a bit about the zine scene in Portland at the time of this film and the zine symposium?**

When we were shooting *\$100* in 2003 it felt like the zine scene couldn't get any bigger in Portland. Any it would seem we were right. That might have been the biggest zine boom I've seen here. So in that sense our timing was perfect but that wasn't the reasoning — it felt like an exciting time. People were successfully expressive and not necessarily looking for something bigger or better. There's an awkward relationship with self-publishing certainly and there are certain people who would say they wanted bigger things, but I think if I was to generalize I would say that everyone in the film had something to say and that was ultimately what motivated them.

Nicole Georges, Eleanor Whitney, and I started the Zine Symposium in 2001 out of similar motivations — we wanted to showcase the emerging scene and attract people from across the country to Portland. By 2005 none of us were involved anymore and while there are some longtime organizers that still come and go, it's largely organized by a new group of people each year. And while the scene hasn't continued to grow steadily across ten years, the event and the scene still exist and people still come from across the country for it. And it's a difficult thing not to be nostalgic about and embrace the change that is largely inevitable.

**Why did you decide to make the film?**

The simplest reason is that I was teaching gifted and talented high school students and later classes at University of Oregon about zines and it really felt like a video would be the best educational tool for classroom use. I looked and looked for a functional video and came up dry over and over. So eventually I tried to organize other people to put together such a thing. I guess I didn't realize how big of a project a feature length documentary was because people kept asking to see my outlines, financial planning, and the standard presentation that you would use to solicit someone with your film.

The films I had been involved with had been no-budget, DIY, very collaborative, and still completed in a matter of a few months. I assumed this would be the same. But it was hard to keep people involved when there was a lot of work involved and most of it wasn't fun. Then the editor had a baby. A year later I was directing and editing and most of the other people had dropped off. By the end only one other person had been involved during the whole duration of production — Phil Sano. He had also been nice enough to provide all of the equipment, tapes, instructions, and ideas. On top of that I suspect he put in another hundred hours of free editing while I slept next to him.

University of Oregon stopped inviting me back and starting using the video instead. Did I win or fail?

**How did you decide who to interview and how to make the film?**

I was working as an idealist and literally tried to interview everyone who was making or had made zines in Portland. At one point Basil Shadid was doing the same thing in Seattle but those tapes were never sent

to the editing studio. We couldn't get everyone to agree to be interviewed — Jim Goad in particular I spent a lot of time trying to convince to talk to me but despite being at the center of the national media as a zine maker he felt no connection to any "zine community".

Basil was very interested in writing the documentary and so we had some pre-production meetings and hammered that out together. But he had to quit shortly after. It was helpful because even with over a hundred hours of footage that part seemed confusing and formidable.

**What sort of obstacles did you come across making the film (including how long it took!)?**

Our production timeline wasn't unusual for a documentary film — especially considering that everyone involved had full time jobs on top of doing the work. And we produced everything with no grants, financial loans, or funding. But we did have a lot of problems that were unique. I had an abscess on my foot through much of the interviewing process and was on antibiotics that prevented me from sleeping — and later turned out to be destroying my colon. We broke a lot of equipment — including the main camera and tripod. We didn't have any cars so we rode our bikes with all of the equipment to each shoot. I tried to schedule four interviews per week — two per day each on Tuesday and Thursday. I would work my normal job the other five days and then later on after the editor had to step down I spent 4 days per week in the editing studio — which was rented at \$10/day — a price that I couldn't appreciate enough at the time. Then the biggest obstacle was that I didn't have any experience editing anything near this size or an understanding of how to tell a clear story.

**Who was it aimed at? It seems like quite a comprehensive overview of zines that anyone could watch even if they didn't really have any prior knowledge on the subject.**

We operated on a somewhat utopian ideal—we knew people into zines would watch the movie so we tried to sink the hooks into a general audience. Did we succeed? I don't know. It seems so inherently nichey to me but as soon as it came out Library Journal reviewed it positively and that seemed to drive sales for a few years to libraries and schools.

**The film seems to have stood the test of time — it's structured in a way that still seems relevant now, broken down into clear sections like 'Who makes zines' and 'Why do people make zines'. If you remade the film now, would anything be different?**

Perhaps it's my age, but the interviews are only eight years old and so the world hasn't changed too drastically in that time.

However, in eight years, I have learned a lot about filmmaking. Dozens of people have said the documentary hooked them on zines. Well, it hooked me on filmmaking. I devour books on film and still watch at least a few documentaries each week — and that process started when I was doing research for *\$100*.

The biggest changes I would make are for watchability's sake. It would have been very different structurally. I would selectively do a closer focus on five of the better spoken characters and follow them around a bit more with some verite footage and a more revealing look at their lives. I would look at the biggest picture in ways other than interviewing and trying to include clips from everyone remotely involved. I would try to tell a story more intentionally through my research rather than following what clips I had and what people said articulately and with good-quality footage.

**Would you add a section on digital technology — webzines etc?**

I don't think so because I don't think that connects to the same social scene that the documentary looks at. I feel like that warrants its own documentary...that I have no interest in making.

**Do you think zines have become even more popular now, or have undergone a resurgence in the last few years?**

I don't think you can look at zines with the same booms and busts that you would look at a financial progress or something linear. I think there's a major shift that has been slowly evolving where the people attracted to the medium stick with it and those who simply want an audience, springboard, or have something to say will employ other methods that have the potential for mass-markets or elevation.

I think for those reasons it is harder and harder to find zines but I don't think there are less being produced. Microcosm publishes a journal about zines Xerography Debt that writes reviews of new zines. Shortly after we started publishing it there was concern about not enough zines being produced. Part of the motivation was to encourage more zines to be made and made-available for readers. The focus of Microcosm has long been to build a social movement. And one success we've had is to be able to show where and how zines are booming worldwide — but maybe not in the most obvious places that you would look.

**Do you think there is a future for zines and, if so, what do you think it will look like?**

I think zines will continue to move in the direction of hand-sewn bindings, screenprinted or blockprinted covers, and personal/textual things that couldn't be replicated in any other medium. I think zines are largely still recovering from an awkward flirtation with mainstream success in the '90s.

**\$100 and a T-Shirt can be seen in the Committee Room (upstairs) at 12pm.**

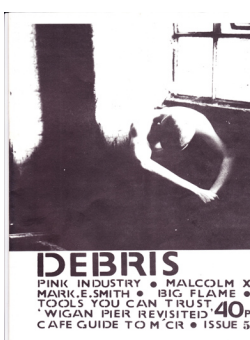


# 7

## TALK: “The DIY alternative; fanzines 1977-1990”

Former editor of ‘Debris’ fanzine Dave Haslam explores the story and the legacy of post-punk fanzines.

Dave Haslam is a writer, broadcaster and DJ who DJd at the Hacienda club in Manchester through the late 1980s and has since played worldwide. In the 1980s he founded ‘Debris’ fanzine; cooked cauliflower cheese for Morrissey; organised Manchester gigs for Sonic Youth; and presented a feature on Sylvia Plath for Tony Wilson’s ‘The Other Side of Midnight’ show on Granada. He has subsequently appeared on radio and TV on dozens of occasions and contributed to ‘NME’, ‘The Face’, ‘The Guardian’ and ‘The London Review of Books’. He has written three books, including ‘Manchester England’ (1999) – a groundbreaking biography of Manchester, with an emphasis on the story of the city’s popular culture. In March 2010 he spent twelve days in America DJing and delivering lectures on Joy Division in New York, Cleveland, and at the Middle Tennessee State University. He recently created the ‘Close Up’ series, onstage in-conversations with musicians, writers, artists and actors discussing their life and work (his guests have included novelist Jonathan Franzen, the artist Jeremy Deller and Terry Hall of the Specials).



*“The first Debris was December 1983, and it ended-up running to 19 issues; the last one in 1989. I wrote 90% of it and did 75% of the layout and design, but there were many valued co-conspirators, including Bob Dickinson, and Sue Ferguson. Bands interviewed included Sonic Youth, the Fall, Ut, and Neneh Cherry, writers interviewed included Hubert Selby Jr, Raymond Carver and Tony Harrison. The more unexpected things gave it real flavour though – interviews with 70 year old barbers, and the women who ran the local launderette, for example. In 1986 NME called it “the best fanzine in the world”. Remarkably.”*

**Dave Haslam will be speaking in the Committee Room (upstairs) at 1pm.**

[www.davehaslam.com](http://www.davehaslam.com)





## TALK

### Vapid Kitten: “Is digital publishing the future of zines?”

Our names are Betsy and Anna and we graduated with BA (hons) in Design and Art Direction from Manchester Metropolitan University in June 2010, full of dreams and hopes and desires to make lots of lovely work and the need to drink copious cups of tea.

Anna is still living in Manchester working hard on her MA, designing things, working on this, doing that being broke and working freelance thing. Betsy, meanwhile, moved back home t'Yorkshire, where she has been hanging out with her cats and pet chicken, trying to learn to knit, and making up excuses to get back to Manchester as much as possible. She's going travelling soon and will continue to be involved in VK, thanks to the invention of the internet, and praying her macbook doesn't die.

We are both drinking copious cups of tea.

And so, to Vapid Kitten, where did it come from? What does 'Vapid Kitten' mean? Did you say 'rapid'?

To answer those questions in order:



The concept of VK was born in a tutorial session at university, where Betsy desperately needed a new project in order not to fail her degree. Since she'd based her dissertation on women's magazines, and the love/hate relationship she has with them, it was suggested that she design her own magazine. The name 'Vapid Kitten' came in two parts.

The first was born, when trying to describe her exasperation with mainstream women's magazines; Betsy said, "...they're just nothing. I mean, it's all so...vapid".

While the second, was a conversation that Betsy had with a designer where he described her portfolio as a kitten, "... but its an ugly kitten, and so if someone has to choose between an ugly kitten and a cute kitten, they're always going to choose the cute one, aren't they?". She's still not entirely sure what he meant.

So that's how the name came about, a couple of spur of the moment comments and a desperate mind.

Oh, and no, we don't mean 'Rapid Kitten'. That would just be silly.

So that's brings us up to date with the history of VK. After graduation Anna suggested that the magazine be reborn, as a joint project, which you now hold in your hands (or if you are technological, you may be reading it on a screen of some sort).

If you like it, or if you hate it, or if you'd like to submit just drop us an email, or find our facebook page or blog.



**Vapid Kitten will be speaking in the Committee Room (upstairs) at 3pm.**



## SUNNY LOWRY

A long-distance swimmer and one of the first British women to swim the English Channel, Sunny Lowry's life long passion for the water contributed to the restoration of Victoria Baths.

When a seven-year-old Sunny Lowry began learning to swim in 1918, Great Britain was a restrictive society for women. The

Representation of the People Act

had been passed in February, finally allowing women the right to vote - if they were over the age of 30 and were householders.

Despite this, Sunny excelled as a swimmer at a time when pools were still segregated.

Sunny was born as Ethel in Longsight on 2 January 1911 the daughter of a fish wholesaler and second cousin of artist LS Lowry. Her swimming career began beneath the glazed brick and stained glass windows of Victoria Baths on Hathersage Road (then known as High Street), where her favourite changing booth was number 53 because it was the shortest dash to the showers. Later, Sunny began training at Levenshulme Baths and also became an accomplished diver. She swam long-distance on Lake Windermere and in the sea during family holidays to Rhos-on-Sea, north Wales.

Supported by her parents and six siblings, Sunny's talent and commitment to swimming flourished. Her father wrote in support of his daughter to the famed long-distance swimmer Jabez Wolffe. Out of 300 applicants, Sunny was chosen to train for a cross Channel swim. Jabez himself was an equally determined and talented swimmer, but also an unlucky one. Despite extensive preparation, all of his 22 attempts to swim the Channel ended in failure. A proud Glaswegian, Jabez was accompanied by a bagpiper on one occasion to help him keep pace while swimming. At Westgate on Sea in Kent, Sunny began her arduous training schedule under Jabez. "The first thing he said to me was if you say the water's cold you might as well go off home," she remembered in an interview with Radio 4's Women Hour in 2003. "So I used to go in and come out not feeling me ankles, and he used to give me a cup of coffee. I was shaking so he used to call it rocking coffee."



She ate a high protein diet, including around 40 eggs a week. After all those daily omelettes her weight increased to 14st 7lb, necessary to prepare her body for the cold sea water as it was estimated she would lose one pound for every hour spent in the water. Throughout her life, Sunny defied convention and - as she put it - followed her own star. She wore her own design of two-piece swimming costume, exposing her midriff and knees - scandalous in an era when women were expected to take to the water covered in heavy knits. On 29 August 1933, Sunny set off from Cap Gris Nez, France supported by Jabez and Captain Courtez in a tug boat. 15 hours and 41 minutes later she completed the gruelling challenge at St Margarets Bay, Dover. In doing so, she became the first British woman and seventh woman in the world to swim the Channel. 22-year-old Sunny swam through the night, fuelled only with cocoa, coffee and beef tea.

It was the third time lucky, as Sunny had made two previous attempts that were abandoned. On 19 August 1933 she tried the swim from England, but strong sea currents near the French coast forced her to stop. A second attempt on 23 July 1933 was unsuccessful due to poor weather.

It was an impressive time too, as American Gertrude Ederle - first woman to swim the channel - had managed 14 hours and 39 minutes on 23 August 1926. After her pioneering swim, Sunny returned home to the north west. She spent a fulfilling career teaching swimming and life-saving at Warrington Baths, along with her husband Bill. Together, they encouraged many people to get in the water and campaigned for life-saving skills to be included in the National Curriculum.

In 2003 she was inducted into the International Marathon Swimming Association's Hall of Fame, and awarded an MBE in 2005 for her services to swimming. She even advised comedian David Walliams before he successfully swam the Channel in 2006. After decades of dedicating her life to swimming, Sunny died at the age of 97 in Warrington Hospital on 21 February 2008. Today, those who knew her, including friends at Victoria Baths, fondly remember Sunny and continue her legacy through the building's restoration.

Words: Jacky Hall

Illustration: Andy Carter





# 11

## **Amy Pennington - A Whistlestop Tour of Letterpress**

Artist Amy Pennington is based at the From Space workshop on Chapel Street, Salford. Her work encompasses drawings, installations, film and print exploring "everyday life and subject matters and often things that I find interesting in Manchester". This includes an ongoing project about Belle Vue, which has involved undertaking research in the North West Film Archive, leading up to animations and 3D work. She enthused: "I just find it absolutely mad that there used to be a grand Victorian theme park in Manchester. I'm fascinated by how it developed, what it became and how it shut down – I think there's something really interesting in there, that something so grand and memorable is reduced to nothing now really – a greyhound track and a housing estate."

Since January, Amy's work has taken on a new dimension as she has spent one day a week as a printer's devil – the industry name for apprentice – at Incline Press in Oldham.

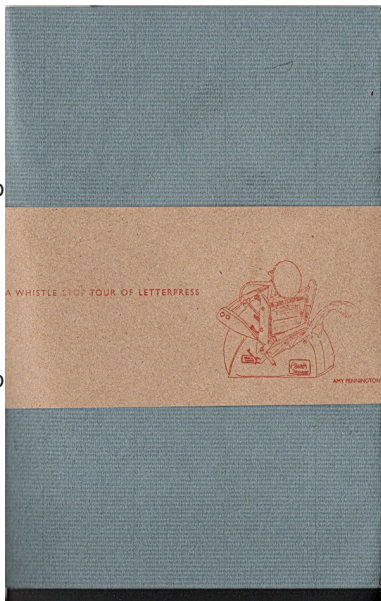
The apprenticeship came about as Amy applied to become a community researcher with the Library Theatre's Craftworks project, for which artists explored the part traditional crafts and Manchester's industrial heritage play in the modern city. The project culminated in two evenings of performances at the International Anthony Burgess Foundation last month, for which Amy produced a beautiful artists' book about the letterpress and traditional printing methods and allowed visitors to press their own band for the cover.

She explained: "Letterpress has always interested me. It's got a lovely quality to it. I like the way it embosses onto the paper sometimes. Inkjet just isn't as nice as having that ink right there in front of you. A lot of people pay to get their wedding invitations letterpress printed as it's the most important day of their lives and letterpress gives such a nice feel and finish."

She continued: "Nowadays technology is enabling letterpress to carry on. Type is becoming really rare and not the best quality – antiques dealers and people on ebay sell it for an absolute fortune."

The Craftworks project enabled Amy to meet different people working with traditional printing methods all over Greater Manchester. She explained: "I put the proposal in to Craftworks as it's a great opportunity to dedicate yourself to something, to have a purpose. I met so many amazing people and was so inspired by what they do and that they have managed to keep themselves going as letterpress practitioners. It's about people sharing their knowledge of it all. There's so much to know! It's really added something to my work. What I've got out of it is ongoing. I've made links and formed friendships."

She added: "It's really nice to learn an actual craft – to learn the terminology and a great opportunity for me to make something. At Incline I set up the polymer plate and do type setting and dising (putting away) type. When I've been there I feel like I've done a proper day's work!"



**Amy will be demonstrating the letterpress and letting visitors have a go, as well as selling copies of A Whistlestop Tour of Letterpress.**

[www.amypennington.co.uk](http://www.amypennington.co.uk)



## Deerly Beloved Bakery

**My kinda Calzone or stuffed bread  
creation recipe!**

### Bread

2 Tablespoons of dried yeast  
A good pinch of salt  
Half a teaspoon of sugar  
3 cups of plain flour  
Half a cup of olive oil  
Half a cup of warm not hot water

### Filling

Glug of olive oil  
1 Red onion sliced into half moons  
1 Red pepper sliced into half moons  
Pinch of salt  
Pinch of black pepper  
and a small handful of sage, chopped



In a bowl mix the yeast with the sugar, oil and warm water. This will activate the yeast. Then add the flour. Each bag of flour is different depending on age, crop and gluten content, so the dough mix maybe a little wet and sticky (add more flour) or too dry (add some more water). Give it a good mix with a wooden spoon and when it looks like it's coming together, remove any rings from your fingers and get your hands in! Flour your surface and start giving the dough a good knead. 5-10 mins should do.

Then grease your bowl and pop the dough back in the bowl and leave to rise. I left mine about 2 hours.

When it has doubled in size, pre-heat your oven to 180c. Then start frying your red pepper and onion in a pan with the olive oil, salt and pepper. When they are coloured add the sage and cook for a couple of minutes to release the oils from the herb leaves.

Line a baking tray with grease proof paper and pop the dough into the centre of the tray and spread it out with your fingers to form a large circle. Place the onion and pepper mixture into the middle of the dough and slowly turn the edges to the middle to encase the pepper mix inside the dough circle. Then when it is sealed, flip the whole thing over so the join is underneath the dough dome and so you are left with a smooth top. Place in the oven for around 30 minutes, but keep an eye on it!



Serve with salad or just as it is!

**Deerly Beloved Bakery is visiting  
all the way from Norwich to sell  
some delicious vegan food!**

<http://deerlybelovedbakery.blogspot.com>



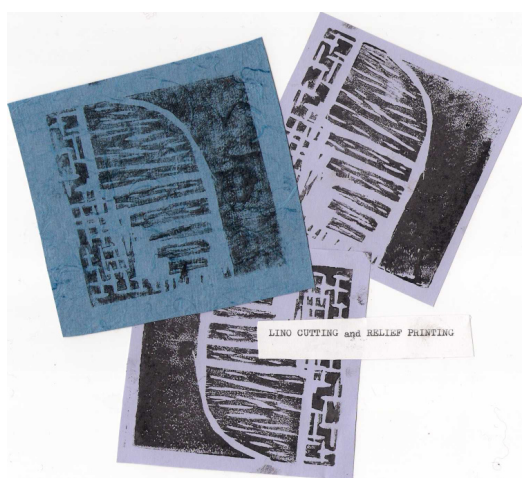


# 13

## Make your own

### Victoria Baths zine

**All you need are paper, scissors, pens and glue! There will be workshops in the former superintendent's flat (upstairs) to help you get started.**



### You could...

Write a review of the film, talks, your favourite fanzine, cake or one of the art performances happening in the building.

See if you can talk to one of the artists in the building (see p17-18).

Ask a fanzine stallholder why they started making fanzines.

Write about what you found out on a tour.

Write a diary of your visit and what you did.

See if you can find someone with their own memories of swimming at Victoria Baths — ask one of the volunteers to point you in the right direction!

Find out more about Sunny Lowry (see pages 9-10). Go and look at her

special stained glass window and see if you can find any volunteers who can remember her.

Design a plan of what the building could be used for in the future — what would you like to see happen here?



### Decorate your fanzine by...

Doing a crayon or pencil rubbing of your favourite tile.

Doing a linocut with Lauren Velvick.

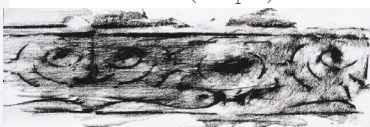
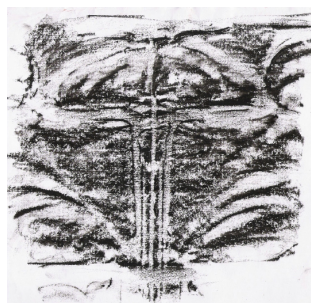
Drawing your favourite stained glass window

Having a go on Amy Pennington's letterpress (see p.11) and sticking your print on the front.

Doing some stained-glass inspired sewing with Rebecca from Threads and Letters fanzine.

Sticking in some photos or memories copied from the Victoria Baths archive.

Hardback binding your fanzine with book artist Christa Harris (see p.1).





## Victoria Baths archive

The Victoria Baths archive contains hundreds of donated memories, photos and artefacts from the building's history. Here are a few...

*"My mother, Elizabeth Woods, used to spend school holidays from 1906 onwards here at Victoria Baths with her Great Aunt Elizabeth (Lizzie Derbyshire) who lived in the flat. My mother was met at the station by pony and trap."*



*"We had a swimming gala every year and I was entered when I was about seven, 25 years breaststroke, under 12. I came last and was cheered and given a huge box of chocolates!"*

*"We girls used to sneak through the adjoining doors to take a peak at the boys – those who could not afford swimming costumes were loaned very small slips, that was very exciting for us. In our early teens we thought the members of the male polo team were Gods. What happy memories!"*

*"My mother and father often used to take me "Mixed Bathing" with them on Sunday mornings. As youngsters we used to go on "Clean Water Day" not the cheaper "Dirty Water Day" which followed."*



*"My main memory of Victoria Baths is sound. There was a constant background hum during the day, not unpleasant or intrusive, died down in the evening, accompanied by the crackling of pipes cooling. Coming home through the boys entrance the sound was of children's voices and applauding echoing around the swimming baths. I still like the chlorine smell."*

*"They used to get the hosepipes to hose the sides down and if you didn't get out when they told you they'd squirt you with a hosepipe."*

*"I was working for the BBC in Manchester in 1969 and was a member of their swimming club which shared a session every Thursday with John Laing Construction Club. It was one of those sessions that I met the man who 12 months later became my husband. This year we celebrate 38 years of marriage. It was definitely "in at the deep end!"*

*"One Saturday morning I was filmed by someone from Manchester University because I could swim a length of backcrawl with a cup of water balanced on my forehead without spilling anything. The filming took place in pool 1 in private, with the camera person in front of me filming the event."*

# Swimming in history: historic bathing opportunities in Manchester

Written by  
Natalie Bradbury

Illustrations by  
Daniel Fogarty

There are few types of exercise more pleasurable, relaxing and energising than swimming. Forget the modern Aquatics Centre, though: Manchester has historic swimming pools which can help you explore the stories of the city at the same time as getting fit. There are three baths in south Manchester that date back to times when the provision of public baths was not just for leisure, but part of a wider effort to improve public cleanliness and hygiene.

The illustrations take in some of the decorative architectural features across the three swimming pools featured in the article.

Local authorities across the country started to provide public pools and laundries for their citizens after the Public Baths and Wash Houses Act of 1846. Even well into the twentieth century, many people had no water in their houses, let alone an inside bathroom. In Manchester, a number of public swimming baths and wash houses were built in densely populated residential areas by the city's Baths and Wash Houses Committee to give people the chance to wash their clothes, have baths in privacy and enjoy the comfort of hot water. Although many are long demolished or have found new, non-watery uses such as the impressive but sadly defunct Harpurhey Baths in north Manchester (which are now part of Manchester College), a handful survive, some still functioning as swimming pools alongside offering facilities such as gyms and saunas.

The most famous and celebrated swimming baths is Manchester's splendid water palace Victoria Baths, which opened in 1906. Unfortunately, it ceased to open as a swimming baths in 1993 and the water was drained from the pools.

This guide covers Edwardian public swimming baths in which it is still possible to swim. Remember though – use them or lose them! The local community has been fighting to keep Levenshulme Baths open for years, with the most recent, successful campaign taking place in February after it was revealed that the council wanted to shut down the Baths as part of its spending cuts.



Carved from a yellowing stone the graphical motif occurs across the uppermost perimeter of the building. Sometimes rotating by 90° seemingly hovering atop of the red brick.



Withington Leisure Centre, Burton Road, Withington

Withington Baths is a bit like Victoria Baths on a smaller scale, and the most ornamental of the Edwardian pools which remain open. Simple floral motifs adorn the brickwork outside as well as the stained glass inside. Shields and drapes pattern the tiles on the staircase. The entrance hall is paved in black and white checks and the council's coat of arms is recreated in coloured glass above the wooden entrance doors. Light floods into the pool through a glass roof supported by a sloping wooden ceiling.

The design of Withington Baths, which was built in 1911, was overseen by Manchester's first city architect Henry Price. As well as, notably, Victoria Baths, Price was responsible for a number of other significant buildings around the city, including the pump house hydraulic power station – which provided water to mills, warehouses, the town hall clock and opera house in central Manchester (the pump house build-

ing is now part of the People's History Museum in Spinningfields) and Withington and Didsbury Libraries.

In 1914, Withington Baths became the first baths in Manchester to allow mixed bathing, and it also made no distinction between social classes – often, pools also separated ‘first class males’ from ‘second class males’. Nowadays, the facilities have been expanded to include a gym, and there’s also a sauna just off the side of the pool. Customers have the choice of using either modern changing complexes or old-fashioned style cubicles lining the side of the pool.



Levenshulme Swimming Pools, Barlow Road, Levenshulme

Levenshulme Public Baths and Washhouse opened in 1921. An early claim to fame is that, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, Sunny Lowry from nearby Longsight used it to train to swim the channel, becoming one of the first British women to do so in 1933.

Nowadays everyone enters through the same old-fashioned gates and wooden doors, but the exterior of the building still displays signs of the social hierarchy of the time, with lettering saying ‘Men’ and ‘Women’ marking where there would once have been separate entrances for the sexes. Inside, the segregation would have continued: Levenshulme Baths has two pools, one large pool which would have been reserved for men and a smaller pool for women.

Although it’s unprepossessing from the outside, inside the building’s most striking feature is a beautiful black and white chequered tiled floor in the entrance and hallways. The dramatic effect is heightened by walls tiled in white, cream, black and grey with various combinations of decorative stripes, bands, crosses and geometric patterns. Like Victoria Baths, Chorlton Baths and Withington Baths, the pools are lined with glazed brick – white with grass green bands – that glistens rainbow colours when it catches the light. Lines of cubicles face each other across the pools under a curved ceiling.



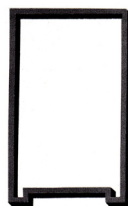
Chorlton Leisure Centre, Manchester Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy

Another Henry Price building, from 1929, which still featured separate entrances for men and women.

Although it has cubicles lining the pool side, Chorlton Baths is largely uninteresting on the inside, with a low flat ceiling and little in the way of decoration. The most interesting thing to see is a plaque erected at the time of opening by Manchester’s Baths and Washhouses Committee which lists the councillors present, including a Mr W Onions.



At Levenshulme Swimming Pools the functional features of the building – such as doorways and windows – are graced with a white stone. Sitting aside the two entrances (male and female) a circular motif – stands proud mirrored only in the oval windows towards the back of the building.



Creating a focal point in the otherwise plain sheets of stone that front the building the eye is drawn towards a set of simple frames. The raised frames make it possible to insert pictures, events, notices or otherwise.

For more information such as opening times visit  
[www.manchestersportandleisure.org/swimming-pools-manchester](http://www.manchestersportandleisure.org/swimming-pools-manchester).





## Recreational science: Antony Hall's Physical Oscillators

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, gentlemen found a new hobby: recreational science. Vicars built their own microscopes. Would-be astronomers went out into their gardens and gazed up at the stars. One man kept a diary in which he wrote detailed observations about the decay of a nut whilst another, a collector, fashioned a bespoke moss jacket lined with pockets for his specimens.

Artist Antony Hall is a like recreational scientist for the twenty first century, inspired by these gentlemen of a certain age and their ability to find “interest in obscure things that weren’t immediately exciting” whilst exploring new opportunities such as biohacking and nanotechnology. Often working with slides and Hele-shaw cells, he’s interested in “how many different experiments you can do in a slide”. He explains: “I always wanted to be a scientist when I was a kid – I had a sign on my bedroom saying ‘lab’, and I loved my microscope, but I wasn’t very good at school so was encouraged not to do science. I did art instead and turned it into my science practice.

“I started doing animal sculpture. Then I looked at the natural world and how things are formed and how animals and insects behave. This got me interested in biology and ecology and the conceptual art of the 1970s.”

Antony often works with living creatures such as fish and insects. ‘Pond Life’, for example, magnified and projected microorganisms. “I like the element of collaboration with other creatures – of caring and nurturing them and getting them to behave in a certain way by providing them with things that are suitable such as food and light.”

He is a founding member of the Manchester-based Owl Project, a collective that looks at how humans interact with technology, and hacks old technology and turns it into something new, often through sound performances. Part of his practice also involves interactive workshops under the name of Tabletop Experiments. Antony explained: “I’ve always liked my work to be quite fun, and it makes science accessible.” Sometimes this involves showing participants how to make creations, for example ‘brush-bots’ – robots made from batteries, brushes and motors which draw spirographs and patterns. He describes them as: “Little units that interact. They’ve all got their own characters – it’s as if they’re alive but they’re not. They dance around and back into each other. Some go round in circles and others go in straight lines.”

During Future Everything festival, Antony will be creating a “generative soundpiece” in the empty, disused gala pool in Victoria Baths, which members of the public will “walk in and compose”, experiencing invisible fields around motors via electromagnetic sensors akin to microphones that they will be encouraged to pick up and move around the space. Antony’s challenge was: “How can I represent movement and liquid in this space that is now just air? How do I represent volume?” He decided the answer was to “energise objects in a big space” by suspending different motors above the pool and adding electricity: “The more energy you put in to it the more chaotic it becomes. The motors affect each other and associate themselves with each other in subtle interactions.”

He elaborated: “I wanted to represent the surface. Visitors will walk into the pool and, instead of walking under water, walk under a layer of activity. When you’re beneath it you can hear it buzz above your head.” Inspiration for the installation was drawn from the natural world, in particular a type of beetle known as a whirligig that sits on the surface of the water and has split eyes so it can see above and below. Antony explains that: “Whirligig beetles swarm and “display” to each other. Sometimes they fight, and likewise it sounds really good when the motors clash.”

Antony’s interest in capturing movement will be continued with a large wave pendulum made of jam jars hanging in the entrance to the cafe that visitors will set off with their movement as they enter and leave – simulating the continuous motion of a wave.

**Physical Oscillators can be experienced in the gala pool on Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 May from 10am-4pm during Future Everything.**

# Yu-Chen Wang: The Splash and A Last Drop

When Yu-Chen Wang first walked into Victoria Baths she was overwhelmed by the space – its size, Edwardian grandeur and industrial-age history. Invited by Future Everything to produce a piece of work in the building, to coincide with the drawing to a close of her three month residency at the Chinese Arts Centre, she decided that, rather than try to fill or change the space she was working with (the former female pool, the smaller of two, now drained, pools that remain in the building), her work would focus on the way the audience experienced the building. She explains: “When I first went I was immediately in love with the space but I found myself very small. My own voice sounded very different. The space itself has already done a lot and there’s a lot going on in there so I’m getting people to experience the space differently rather than constructing a lot or displaying a big artwork.”



On the final day of Future Everything, visitors to the Baths will encounter Yu-Chen’s work in different spaces around the female pool as part of a sound and performance piece entitled ‘The Splash and A Last Drop’ which imagines the creation of a machine that produces a last drop of water in Victoria Baths then multiplies it so the water will never dry up again. The work will function as a “moving device”, playing with the transition between different parts of the building.

The story starts at the Chinese Arts Centre, where an actress playing Yu-Chen is filmed boarding a spaceship which transports her to Victoria Baths. Visitors to the Baths will catch-up with the story so far by viewing this video in the former female cloakroom that once served the female pool. A nearby room housing the aerotone – an early, yet still slightly futuristic looking, jacuzzi that, when it was installed at Victoria Baths in 1952, became the first such public facility in the country – will be transformed into an installation of Yu-Chen’s highly detailed drawings, which often focus on aspects of machines. When she saw the aerotone’s buttons and controls, Yu-Chen was struck by the feeling “it should be moving, going somewhere”. Yu-Chen’s interest in machines is closely connected to her approach to drawing: “Machines are very much about structure and structure is about creating something. Drawing for me is a concept – how bits fit and are connected to each other. It’s very much about movement. Machines have a performative element and quality and a human presence and spirit – I always imagine they will start moving and talking. And that’s how I would describe what drawing is – it’s not just about pencil and paper.” Likewise, ‘The Splash and A Last Drop’ itself will consist of a number of “components”: “There are lots of bits and pieces put together. The viewer can look at it as a whole or as individual works.”

Yu-Chen has been exploring the history of Victoria Baths through its archive, which includes photos, hundreds of memories donated by former users and artefacts relating to its past. Actors playing uniformed ticket officers will regale visitors with stories and hand out publications drawing on industrial heritage, which will act as a programme. The work will culminate with the Cavendish Singers from Didsbury singing a song entitled Songs of the Machine in the female pool, a 1910 poem about machines that start talking to humans that was later set to music by one of its members. Yu-Chen explains: “The space is so big it needs a group. A group of people gives power.” The performance will become a short film that will be screened in Manchester city centre in the days following Future Everything.

The work is a collaboration with writer Bob Dickinson, who Yu-Chen met through her residency, and six MA Media Lab students from Manchester Metropolitan University. She says: “I like to work with people who aren’t just artists. The idea goes to writers, film makers, actors, costume makers – it organically develops and becomes a collective idea. It creates different readings – the text levels, the costumes, the actors, the live performance – it is a different way of constructing narrative.”

**The Splash and A Last Drop can be experienced in the female pool and elsewhere in the building on Saturday 14 May during Future Everything.**



This fanzine was put together as a special souvenir edition from the Victoria Baths Fanzine Convention by *The Shrieking Violet*, a blog and free, semi-regular printed fanzine edited by Manchester-based writer (and swimming fan!) Natalie Bradbury. *The Shrieking Violet* is an alternative guide to Manchester that aims to introduce you to people and places you haven't come across or thought about before. *The Shrieking Violet* recommends making your own fun rather than being told what to do and believes that culture should focus on creating, not consuming. Copies are left in various locations around the city to be stumbled upon, hopefully inspiring adventures in those who find them. Each cover is designed by a different artist. The poster on the front of this edition was designed by Kate Prior. To get involved email [Natalie.rose.bradbury@googlemail.com](mailto:Natalie.rose.bradbury@googlemail.com) or visit *The Shrieking Violet* facebook group.

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