

**Arts Award Silver Case Study**

Tom

**Centre**

Skimstone, Newcastle upon Tyne

After spending two years in hospital, Tom found a new focus for his musical ability through completing his Silver Arts Award. He is now working on his Gold Award.

**Arts Challenge**

Tom's arts challenge was to compose a soundtrack for 'Silverwing', a short film commissioned by the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust centre in Washington (near to Newcastle Upon Tyne). He worked closely with Carlene, another Silver Arts Award participant, who was focusing on visuals for the film, and was guided by professional artists from Skimstone.

The film was shown at the wetlands centre for four weeks and received excellent feedback from those who saw it.

**Arts Leadership Project**

The process of creating the soundtrack involved a jamming session with other young artists, a workshop that Tom helped to lead. For one part of the soundtrack, Soul Bird, Tom used a set of chords as a basis for the session, and helped participants to improvise words and melodies around them. The music created was used as part of the soundtrack for 'Silverwing'.

**Funding**

The project received funding from the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Thomas Bewick School, Awards for All, Community Foundation, Arts Award Access Fund.

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**Impact**

For Tom, the process has been tough, but worthwhile. He says, 'I found coming back to Skimstone after being in hospital for two years and starting all over again and being in a new group really daunting, very challenging. Everyone's been so welcoming and friendly. I'm still quite a long way from my normal self'

As well as improving his composing skills, Tom learned more about other artforms, and developed his ability to communicate, delegate and organise. He found that the collaboration with another Silver Arts Award participant was a mutually beneficial experience, where each could learn from the other. He says, 'you get inspired by other people's work, like Carlene's photography – yes, I want to do something like that but with music. Even though the mediums are different we can still collaborate together'.

Tom has found that talking about his Arts Award experiences can be a useful way to relate to others: 'I get asked..what are you doing at the moment? I can say - working towards my Gold [Arts Award] – they say – oh what's that? If you're not at college or doing a job it's difficult to talk about anything...'

**Comments**

'I've surprised myself that I've written and performed a four page piece as part of my Gold Award as I'm normally distracted and nervous but I've had the confidence to do this'.

'Life is normally just getting through the routine of visits from (hospital) specialists but I can practice my pieces and compose more work and have a reason to go and see other things'.

'What I like about the Arts Award is you work towards to your own rules and work as flexibly as possible, like – my idea is to do this and I can take complete control'.

...all comments from Tom, Gold Arts Award participant

**Next steps**

Tom is now working on his Gold Award with Skimstone which will involve developing compositions around the theme of colour culminating in a public performance of his work. He has already received interest from a teacher at Thomas Bewick School who has asked Tom's permission to use his music in his teaching.