

# CASE STUDY

## Age Concern Newcastle

[Newcastle upon Tyne] 2005 & 2006

An arts programme for older people living in the Newcastle area and exploring access, inclusion and advocacy issues in the context of working with older people, in partnership with Age Concern Newcastle. The project aimed to address issues of access by using new technology and to widen participation in the project to older people who may be excluded by being housebound.

During 2005, writer Mary Lowe worked with three groups of older people across the city; engaging them in a series of creative writing activities to nurture and develop well-being through creativity.

Each group participated in one session per week. During the sessions, Mary would encourage the group to develop a story based on a childhood recollection. Participants would either write the stories down themselves or Mary would take notes on their behalf. As the project progressed, Mary was joined by illustrator Emma Holliday who would work with participants to recreate their memories as illustrations.

Mary used these stories to create a children's book, *The Magic Patchwork* which traces the journey of Jordie Jobson who, with a little help from his nanna and her magic patchwork quilt, takes us on an exploration of Tyneside's colourful past.

Participants actively engaged with the work and made significant contributions and the programme achieved its aims of increasing self-confidence and self-esteem and teaching new skills, leading to an improved sense of well-being.

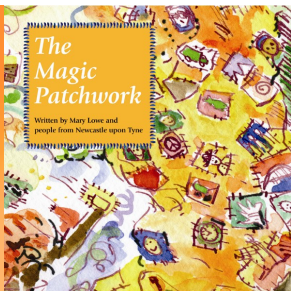
*"I'd forgotten lots of things and I thought who would be interested anyway? - and did you know, it's going into a book, to be published. How about that!"*

Project Participant

*"I've done quite a lot of older people's work ... but I'm actually surprised at how much I've learnt from them."*

Mary Lowe

Funded by Arts Council England North East, the Barclays Community Programme and Newcastle City Council.



Front cover of *The Magic Patchwork*  
Illustrations: Emma Holliday  
Design: Leanne Bell



At the book launch. Photo: Peter Benn

PIONEERING COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH THE ARTS