

## Collaborative projects:

Mail Art and other collaborative development have helped to connect people who were on the TEA programme and has continued in many forms since then. Some of the projects are short and small and don't take long, some are longer and involve larger groups. The ideas come from within the group, these are usually announced on the Facebook page and (in the past) via email to all TEA participants. We have also used NSEAD's e-bulletin and web page and other online spaces to recruit to these projects.

Keeping a record of the images is a massive job and in some ways, an impossible one. The Facebook pages are an area for storing and sharing images, but the interface makes it difficult to track images if they have not been saved as "albums". The flickr page was set up to form a central point for storing and accessing images and to protect the privacy of the closed Facebook groups. Flickr accounts are not expensive and have unlimited storage. They also offer free accounts but the storage space is limited and that would not have supported the TEA project.

The flickr pages have been very popular and visited thousands of times. We know that some of our TEA educators have found these to be a valuable resource for the classroom.

The following pages describe some of the projects which have taken place within the TEA "community".

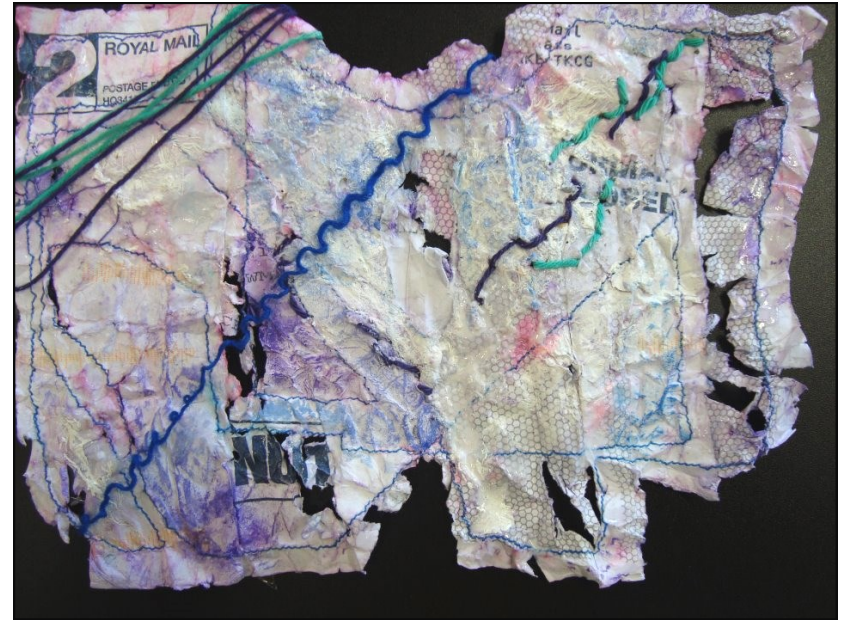


## Mail Art: The Envelope Project.

The very beginning of the TEA project, with a remit for social media connections, challenged me to create an online platform where participants would start to interact and find out about each other. It was also intended to be a creative space in which people could engage in some drawing activities during the long summer holiday. Although the Facebook page was central to this, emails, Twitter and LinkedIn were also used to link participants.

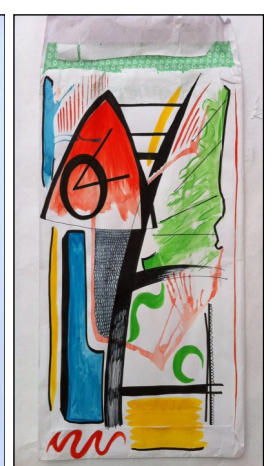
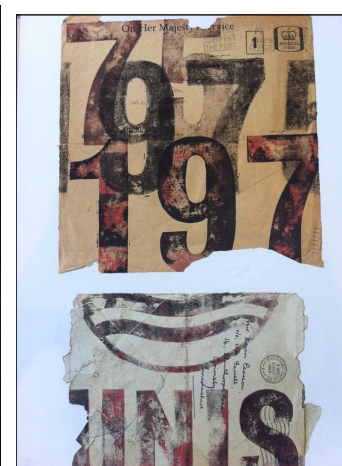
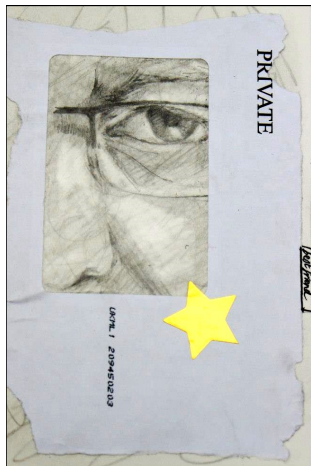
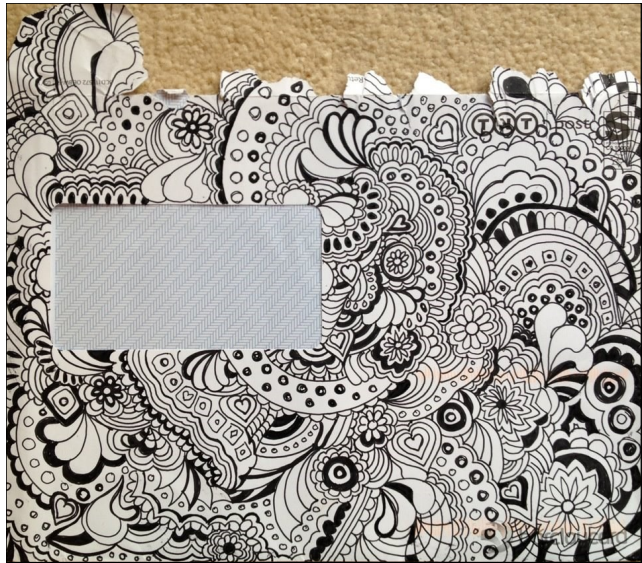
I did not want to burden people with something seen as “work”, so the simple challenge was to “Draw on the back of an envelope” and post up the results. This challenge was immediately responded to and became the beginning of a series of projects which we have called “Mail Art”. The envelope project itself was inspired by the summer of 2012, the events of that time are clearly reflected in the responses. People recorded their daily lives, their journeys short and long, national events, places, family, friends, thoughts, wishes and aspirations. They drew, printed, collaged, painted, tore, scrumpled, stitched, folded, deconstructed, re-constructed, overlapped, photographed, experimented and produced a diverse and visually exciting set of images.

The envelope project led to other collaborative which involved exchanges through the postal services. But, the original project itself was inspiring to many people, some of whom felt that they had not given themselves an opportunity to be creative for a long time. Some people took the envelope idea into themed work, a series of drawings, or into narratives. At the end of the summer, the work was used in many schools, as a starting point for student’s work. Schools also worked together in whole class envelope exchanges, one class starting off a set of envelope drawings, sending to another school who responded and then sent back.



## Mail Art:

The envelope project was shared, recorded and archived through both Facebook and flickr. It was intended as a summer project (six weeks) and lasted a little longer. It had no rules other than an envelope was to be used. It was added to, interspersed with, and enhanced by the other Mail Art projects. The flickr page is here: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/teacpd/sets/72157635254274127/>



## Mail Art:

Some participants decided to make their envelopes into books. Again, this was all shared online. They experimented with different ways of binding the books. Some of these were also made into movies and animations.



## Mail Art: The Russian Dolls

This was an idea from Karen Wicks who has been behind many of the mail art projects. An invitation to participate went out via the Facebook page and a number of names became the "chain". The instigator posts out small envelopes to each participant. These are Russian Doll images. In the envelope is a list of addresses to send your next image to. If the person who starts this wants to receive all the final dolls, then they would add their name at the end of the list. When you received your doll, you then designed a larger doll and sent that on, so that they got bigger as the chain progressed. If you post images online, make sure that you "hide" addresses if the page is accessible as an open one.



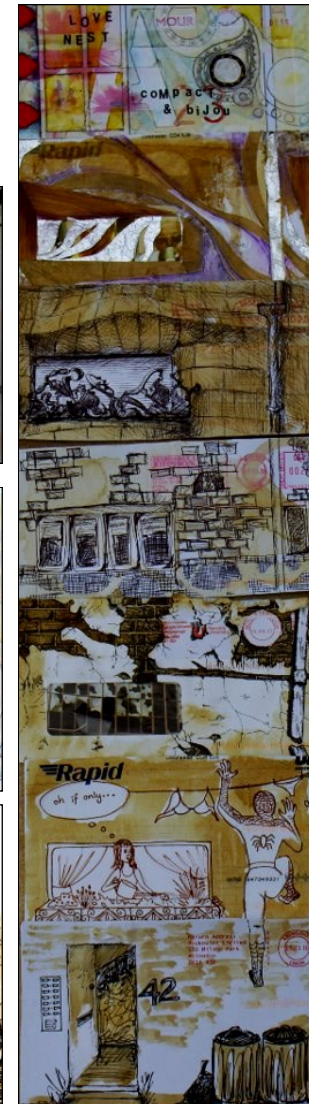
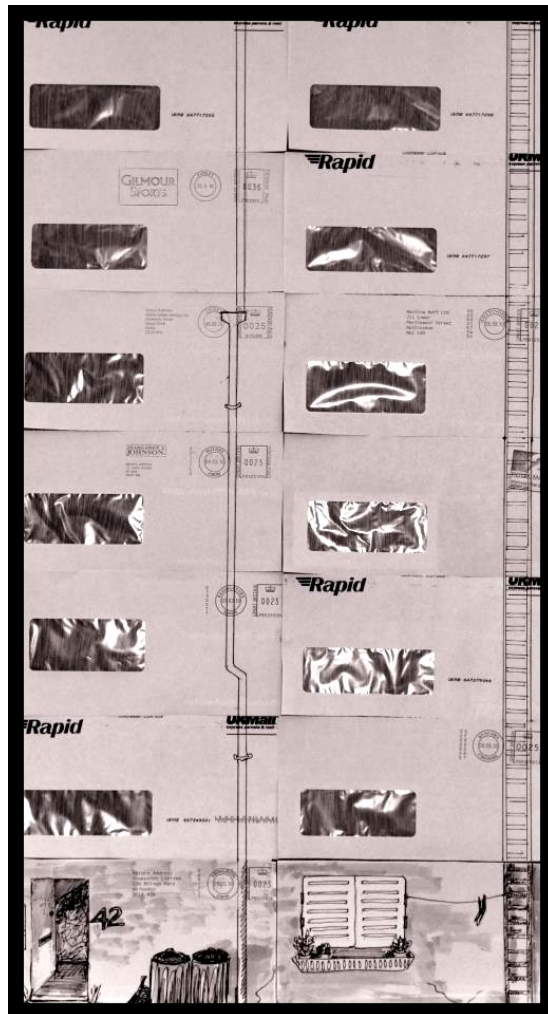
## Mail Art: Personal Ads/Lonely Hearts

You send a postcard to participants which has a personal ad/lonely hearts quote on it. The recipient then illustrates the advert. This can be done by sending to one person or can be done in a chain, where more than one participant is creating the drawing.



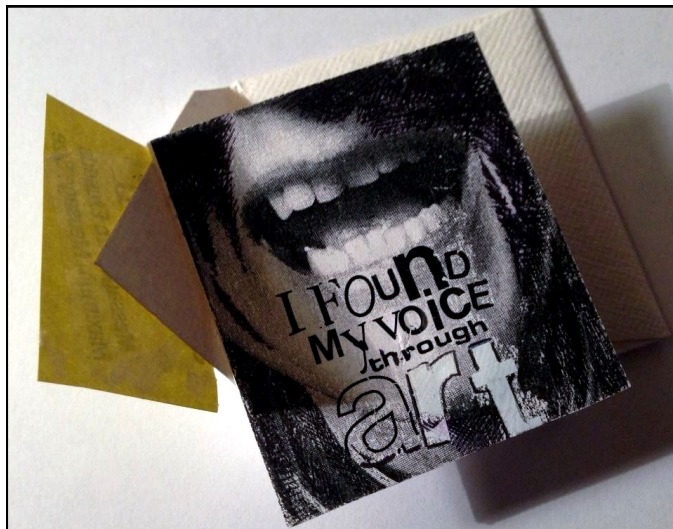
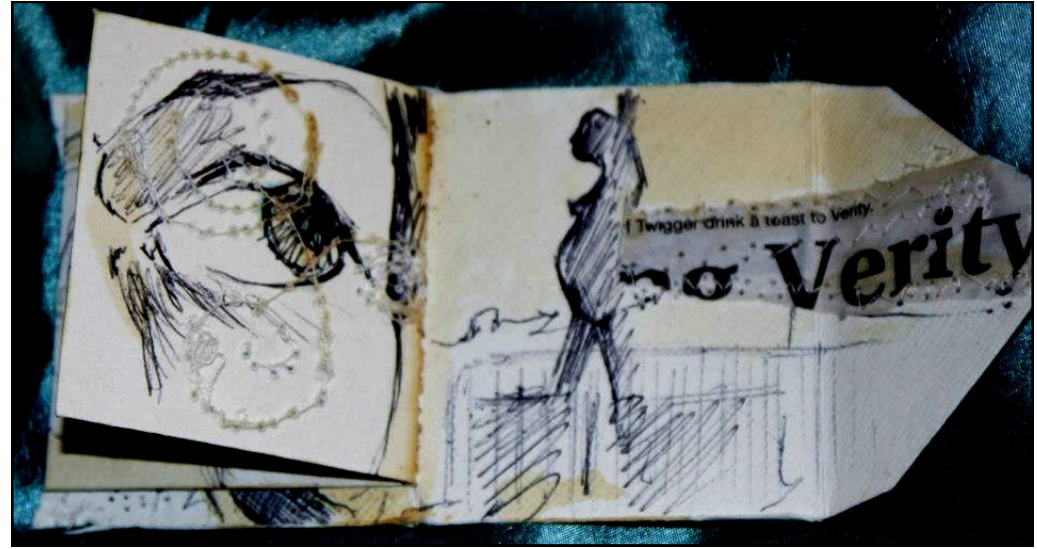
## Mail Art: The Tenement Building

A set of envelopes with transparent windows is prepared by creating a link between them, such as the drainpipe and the ladder seen in the illustration. Each envelope is sent to a participant who then draws their tenement window and sends them back to be compiled into a composite image. With this project, it's a good idea for people NOT to share what they are doing until all images are completed.



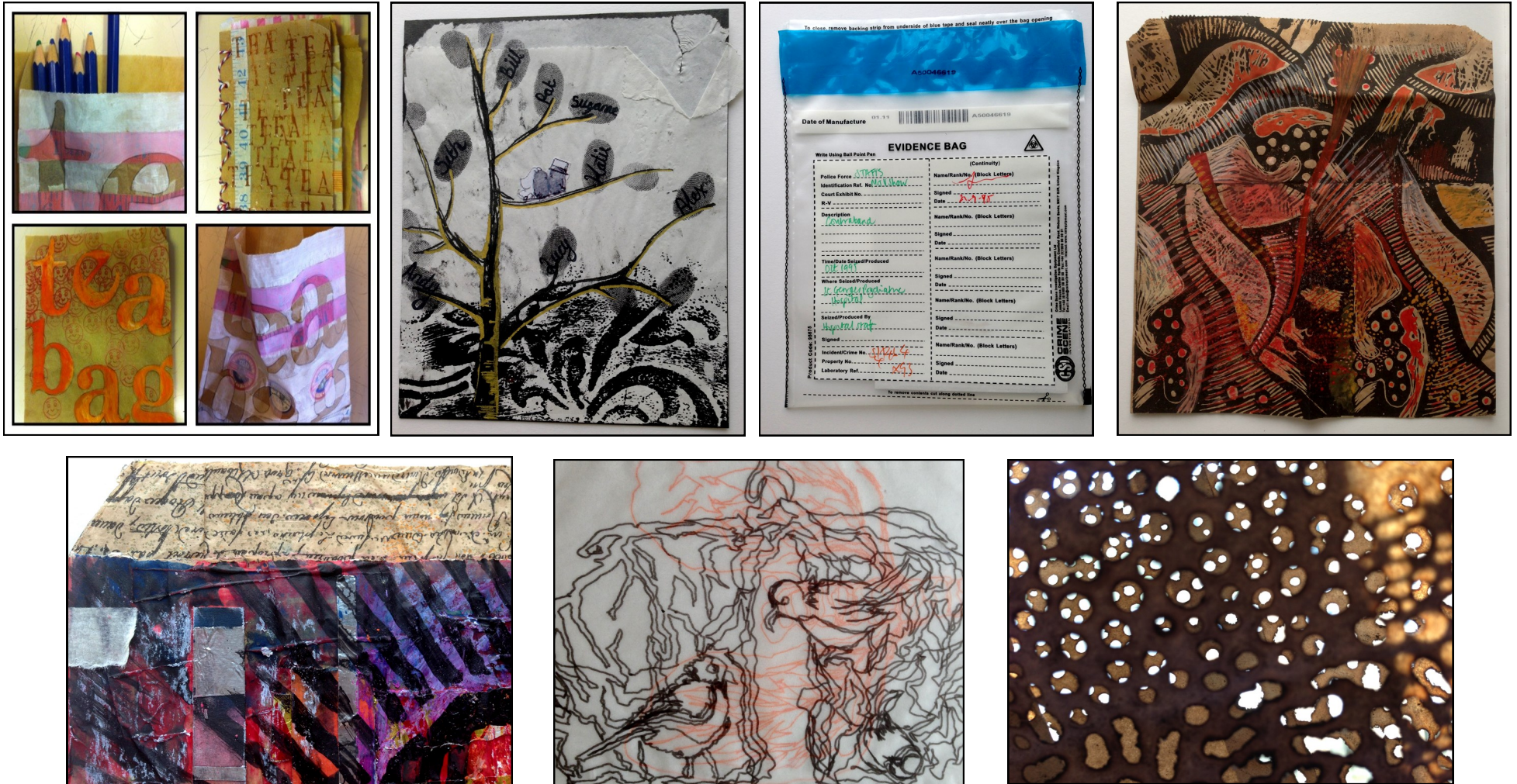
## Mail Art: The Mini Me project

Another postal challenge. This time, participants were sent a very small envelope which contained a blank card and invited to create a mini self portrait. These were then sent back to the organiser who compiled them into a set. Drawing on such a small scale was a challenge but an enjoyable one, especially with a theme of self portraiture.



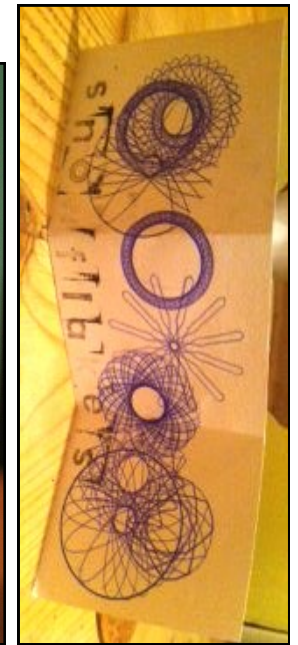
## Mail Art: the TEAbag Project

This project was organised by Georgia Naish. An email invitation was sent out and participants received, by post, a set of paper bags with instructions. These said "Here are your TEAbags. I have sent you a range of bags, but please feel free to add your own. When you are ready, post then back to me". The responses ranged from embroidered bags to storytelling "evidence" bags to animations. The range of work produced was diverse and creative and have inspired projects in schools based on the theme and using the TEA teachers as the artist to look at to start the project.



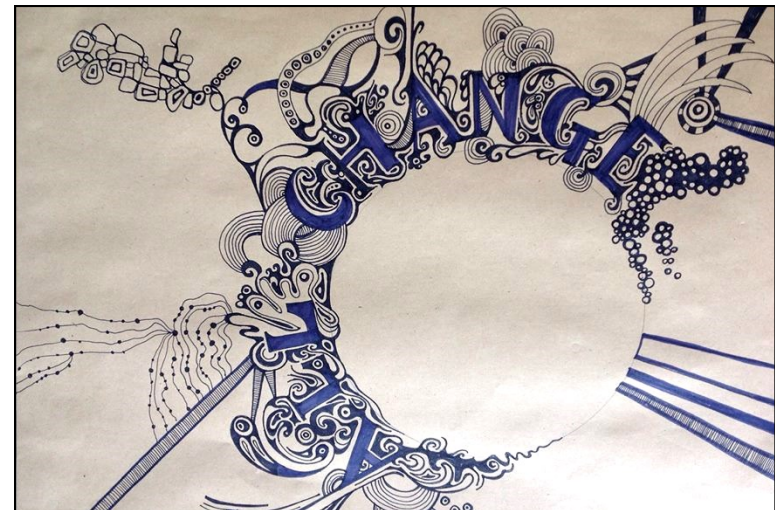
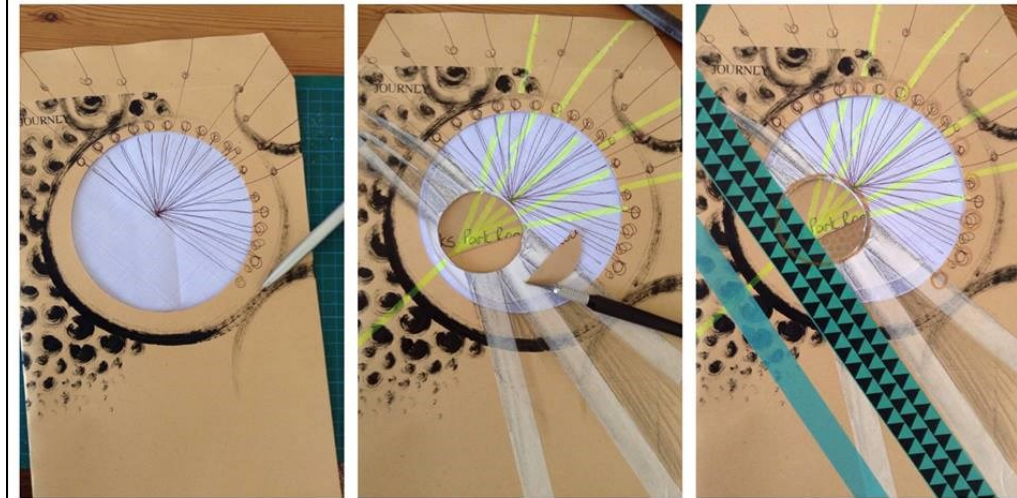
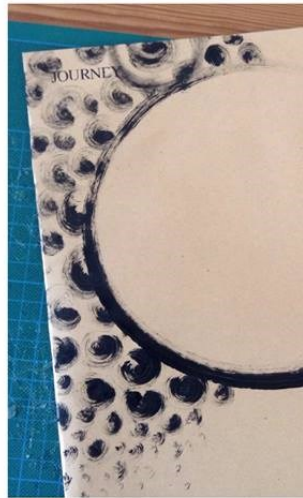
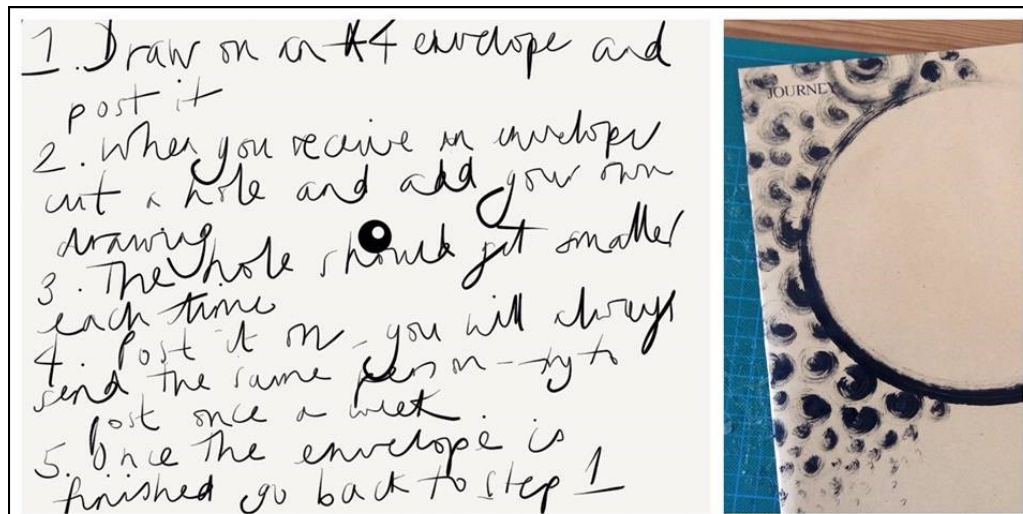
## Mail Art: The Christmas card project

TEA gave participants an opportunity to take part in face to face days with Susan Coles and Eileen Adams. These were held at three different geographical locations, Gateshead, Bristol and Birmingham. At the beginning of each day, I gave everyone a blank white envelope and asked them to draw, doodle and work on it throughout the day and to write their own address and leave space for a stamp. Apart from this, they didn't know what the envelope was for. At the end of the day, I asked them to swap envelopes with another person and then to make and send a Christmas card to them. Everyone would send a card and receive a card and images were shared online in the Facebook group and on the Flickr page. For those who didn't celebrate Christmas, the invite was just to send a card.



## Mail Art: The Circle and Envelope project

This project was launched in March 2014. Images will be shared on the **moreTEA** Facebook page. You sign up, are paired up with a partner. You send an envelope to them which you have drawn on. You receive an envelope and cut a hole in it (circle) and then add your drawing. The exchange continues and the hole will get smaller each time you exchange. When it can't get any smaller, you go back to step one.



## Mail Art: The Digital Circle

This project was launched in March 2014. Images will be shared on the **moreTEA** Facebook page.

Once you sign up you are allocated an email address and every week you send your digitally manipulated image to that person and receive one from your other partner who has been given your email address. You can manipulate in any way that you want, on a programme, or with an App. You can spend five minutes or you can spend five hours!

