

# Arts & crafts in

You might be a busy mum, but having a creative outlet can be rewarding and take your mind off dirty nappies and toddler tantrums. **Simone Castello** explores the local “crafty” scene

**YOU might not realise it, but there are many creative people who live in E17.**

For a few years, I have been attending meetings of our very own Arts Club, which has an annual show and also supports the E17 Arts Trail.

Having a child has made a big impact on my life as my “me time” is more precious and it’s hard to get things done with a babe in arms.

However, as my mind is off work, I’ve been considering how to market my “crafty” skills. I’ve been told that it’s no good to sell my wares on eBay (punters are not prepared to pay more than 50p) and found a true gem, etsy, a site where handmade things are sought after (see *Sites for Sore Eyes* for my websites).

And while looking for creative outlets, I found out that there are various craft groups in the area. One of the most prolific is E17 Designers. They hold markets on a regular basis and I went to the one held at the Grove Cafe.

It was a busy market: as well as hand-made bags, children's clothes, accessories and toys, there were art works for sale. And to cap it all, there were also some complementary health therapies to try out and delicious things to eat! I contacted this group and our egroup and I



Above and overleaf: the market organised in July by E17 Designers

collected a few stories. Read on for some inspiration!

## **Bags & greeting cards**

‘I’m Ali, mum to Evan (five) and Ana (three). I started making cards and bags for craft fairs in March 2006.

I did a lot of nursery and school fairs last year, but this year I’m concentrating on making to order, supplying a couple of shops and doing the E17 Designers’ markets.

I started off working evenings only and the occasional weekend, but now if I rush home when Ana is in pre-school, I can get about one and three quarter hours in if I ignore everything else

in the house! And as she’s at a pre-school with a lunch club, I get a whole ‘day’ once a week, which is a treat.

The “business” (although it feels a bit premature to call it that) is ready to be bigger than it is, but until Ana is at school, I don’t feel ready to grow it too much.

However, I’m enjoying learning lots about it. I also teach art and do workshops. You can email me at [alisonreader@hotmail.com](mailto:alisonreader@hotmail.com).’

## **Felt creations**

‘My name is Deborah. I’m not a mum yet, but very crafty! I truly believe in our mission and in the E17 Designers’

# Walthamstow

group bringing arts and craft to its spiritual home!

William Morris seemed to believe Walthamstow is the place and so do I! Visit my site at [www.munano.co.uk](http://www.munano.co.uk).

## Silver jewellery

'My name is Jimena Pardo. I'm a single parent with an eight-year-old son, Salvador. I started making jewellery in Mexico, where it was a way of life that gave you freedom



to earn a living and have time for your family.

When my relationship with my son's father broke down, I headed back to England. Here I tried setting up my own shop, but this lasted for eight months, until I decided to focus on teaching.

I began running silver workshops at George Mitchell School and then at Redbridge College. This gave me confidence to do a PGCE in Art. As

I search for the right job, I'm returning to the craft that took me on this journey of making things, teaching and love... silver jewellery.'

## Cakes & biscuits

'I'm Sheelagh Callaghan, mum to Alex (8 months). I'm a Home Economist with a passion for natural foods.

I love to bake. My cakes and biscuits are handmade to order for parties, celebrations (or as a treat), using only natural ingredients: organic flours, butter, unrefined sugars and organic, free-range eggs.

My top five are carrot cake, lemon sponge, banana & walnut loaf, spiced apple tea loaf and biscotti - perfect for dunking! Call 07940 092 337.or email [sheelagh@discoverfood.co.uk](mailto:sheelagh@discoverfood.co.uk).

## Casts

'I'm Sarah Hardy. My son, Jack, is nearly two and I'm pregnant with "Jill", due in February. Since having Jack, I have started a small business making life casts of babies' hands and feet (visit [www.forestcastings.co.uk](http://www.forestcastings.co.uk)).

I also make props for the odd TV show - the last job was blood-splattered photos for crime scenes!

I love drawing almost anything, but, most recently dead



insects, which I included in the E17 Arts Trail.

## Sewing & knitting

'I'm Janet Cushing and I have two children: Laura (five) and Thomas (two). I knit and stitch clothing and accessories for younger children.

I enjoy playing with yarn and fabric, and most of my pieces are one-off.

I love colour, texture and pattern and take my style inspiration from classics of the 1950s backwards.

I sell through the Highams Park Evening Markets and through the E17 Designers Market. I also take commissions. My email is [janet.cushing1@btinternet.com](mailto:janet.cushing1@btinternet.com).

\* Are you setting up your own business? Email your story at [simonecastello@hotmail.com](mailto:simonecastello@hotmail.com).

## Arts & crafts sites for sore eyes

**Craftspeople's sites:** [www.e17designers.blogspot.com](http://www.e17designers.blogspot.com) (for information on markets) [www.london-cheapskate.blogspot.com](http://www.london-cheapskate.blogspot.com) and [www.londoncheapskate.etsy.com](http://www.londoncheapskate.etsy.com)  
[www.munano.co.uk](http://www.munano.co.uk)  
[www.forestcastings.co.uk](http://www.forestcastings.co.uk)

**E17 Arts Trail:** [www.e17arttrail.co.uk](http://www.e17arttrail.co.uk)

**E17 crafts shop:** [www.handweaversstudio.co.uk](http://www.handweaversstudio.co.uk)

**Etsy:** [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com)

**Walthamstow Arts Club:** [www.artsclub.org.uk](http://www.artsclub.org.uk)