CHAPTER 1 : HOW THE PROJECT CAME ABOUT

For the last four years things have been happening on the Rochdale Canal within the South Pennines: a project called “Canal Connections” now forms part of the Canal’s amazing history in its own right. Four years ago a group of people felt that the story of the canal was little told, the towpath was often more watery than the actual canal, the verges were strewn with that stuff no one likes to tread in and getting onto and off the canal was often quite difficult. They set out to cure some of this – not all, as that would take an awful lot of money - but they tried very hard to use the money they had to sort out problems in some of the most heavily used sections.

So who are “they” in this story?

The biggest key player is the community. Local historians, boaters, canal users, visitors and community volunteers (OWLs as they are known) have all helped enormously in setting out the vision for the canal, inputting with facts, figures and photos and giving up enormous amounts of time to make the project a success. Other key players are Pennine Prospects who has brought in LEADER funding from Europe, Calderdale Council and Rochdale Council who have delivered the towpath improvement works and the Canal & River Trust who looks after the Canal on a day to day basis.

Why did they do this project?

Lots of people feel very passionately about their local stretch of canal and this whole project came about because people in local groups such as the Linear Park Group and the Town Teams for Sowerby Bridge, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge and Todmorden, were asking for improvements to the Rochdale Canal. The wider community had also been asked many times, at events such as village fetes and festivals, or through specific consultation events in halls and libraries, what their priorities were for improving the canal. From these consultations the project’s steering group learnt that the most important things to focus on were;

i) Making conditions physically better for people visiting the canal – putting down new towpath surfacing and making some of the main town centre access points better in terms of steps and slopes.

ii) Trying to bring the whole canal story to life using different forms of interpretation to tell the story at different locations along the length of the canal

iii) Trying to use the canal in new ways, encouraging everyone to enjoy the canal and also to look after it themselves.
The project journey

The key: strong partnership working between the Councils, the Canal & River Trust, Pennine Prospects and the community has been the key to this project’s success.

The driver: the community has been the driver behind the project, with volunteers dedicating huge amounts of time to attend meetings, collect facts and figures, comment on designs, attend consultations and organise events.

The fuel: as a result of this strong partnership working, the group were successful in applying for funding for the project, and were able to use a variety of sources to do different parts of the project as follows;

Main sources;

South Pennines Leader – Leader funding is part of the Rural Development Programme for England which is jointly funded by Defra and the European Union and managed by Pennine Prospects. This was used for all parts of the project along the length of the canal because one of its categories for funding applications was “conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage”.

Sustrans Connect 2 – Connect 2 was a national lottery funded project delivering 79 sustainable transport schemes throughout the UK. This funding was used to fund towpath/cycleway improvements in Rochdale Borough Council area.

Local Transport Plan – The government provides funding to local transport authorities in England to help them develop their local transport services and improve and maintain their infrastructure. Both Rochdale Borough Council and Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council used some of their LTP funding allocations for canal towpath/cycleway improvements.

Canal & River Trust – In 2013, the government agreed a core grant to the Canal & River Trust for 15 years for maintenance and capital improvements to the waterways network. The Local Authorities (Calderdale, Rochdale, Oldham and Manchester) also contribute to the financial upkeep of the Rochdale Canal. The Canal & River Trust funding was used for washwall repairs and some towpath resurfacing.

Other sources;

A range of other small pots were used such as Awards for All, grants from the Environment Agency, funding from the Rochdale Canal Society. These were used to deliver activities, particularly parts of the annual Rochdale Canal Festival – now the year-long South Pennines Ring events programme.

Volunteer labour has and will continue to form an important part of the funding jigsaw. There is simply not enough funds available to upgrade the entire length of the Rochdale Canal towpath in the South Pennines and so the work of the dedicated volunteers is vital to secure ongoing improvements in many locations.

Different parts of the project have been managed and delivered by different organisations at different times, and this way of working will continue into the future. Canal Connections is a long-term vision for improving the Rochdale Canal – the partnership remains committed to continuing to try and find funding to improve the Canal as a heritage asset for the communities that live, work and travel along its length.
CHAPTER 2 : WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

Improving towpaths and access points.

The canal is used by a wide range of people – boaters, walkers, runners, anglers, cyclists and horses. It goes through town centres as well as through open stretches of beautiful countryside. It is a really important alternative, safer route away from the busy A646 for those going to work or school. It is a flat linear recreational walking route that connects a dense network of upland footpaths. It is also, for much of its length, part of the well used National Cycle Route 66 which runs from central Manchester to Spurn Head via Bradford, Leeds, York, Beverley, and Kingston upon Hull. In summary, it is a very important route.

Large parts of the towpath were, and still are, in a very poor state of repair and are waterlogged, rutted or crumbling into the canal. Access points are poor and difficult to use. The group therefore identified priority areas for improvements using the funding available to them and made decisions on which type of surfacing was appropriate in which locations to reflect the surroundings.

Some of the locations that have been improved to date are;

1) **Littleborough to Warland** – Rochdale was one of the 79 Sustrans Connect 2 schemes and it received funding in 2009 to create a high quality network of walking, cycling and family friendly routes which connect the townships of Rochdale, Heywood, Middleton and Littleborough and provide links to Oldham and Manchester.

The project manager Howard Gott, himself a keen cyclist, was acutely aware of roads becoming busier, more cars on the road and cycling becoming perilous, “I have two sons, both keen cyclists and when they were smaller I worried about them riding on the roads. I have always encouraged people to choose the quieter routes and the canal towpath is car-free so it should have been the perfect alternative, but the derelict state of the path meant lots of puddles, lots of mud and really slippery conditions, no pleasure to ride and certainly not an option for people on their way to school or work. It is high time the potential of the towpath was realised.”

Howard used the Leader funding to extend the Connect 2 towpath/cycleway improvement work out of the urban centres into the rural areas from Littleborough to Summit.

The project was delivered by Rochdale Council in 2009/10, funded by Local Transport Plan, Connect 2 and South Pennines Leader.

Completed work on the Rochdale Canal : Littleborough to Warland
ii) **Todmorden Town Centre** – the town centre stretch of the towpath between Lever Street and Fielden Wharf in Todmorden is a heavily used section of the Canal and in 2011 it was badly in need of repair. The canal was hidden away behind houses and commercial premises, and access between the canal and the town centre was difficult. Calderdale Council worked with local Town Team Todmorden Pride, Todmorden Town Council and local community groups to develop a project to open up the canal and encourage better use by everyone. A new walkway invites visitors towards the canal from the main road, and new views towards the canal lock area were created. Narrow steps were replaced by a DDA compliant ramp, and a new access point was installed to link the towpath to town centre footpath networks via the Oxford St car park. The towpath was resurfaced to give an attractive, hard-wearing, all-weather route suitable for pedestrians and cyclists. New planting beds and a well-used seating area complete the scheme.

The project was delivered by Calderdale Council in 2011, funded by the Local Transport Plan, LABGI, Todmorden Town Council, SITA Trust and the Big Lottery. Work was carried out by J Cooney Ltd of Rochdale.

“Before” shots;  

“After” shots:  

iii) **Hebden Bridge Town Centre** – The canal passes through the town’s Conservation area and this stretch incorporates Blackpit Aqueduct, an important heritage feature. This is one of the busiest sections of towpath on the Rochdale Canal, but was in particularly poor condition with muddy puddles making it difficult to use in wet conditions. Sensitive resurfacing treatment was required and Calderdale Council delivered a scheme in 2011, funded through LTP with a contribution from Hebden Royd Town Council, using high-quality materials in keeping with the historic canal setting. The Canal & River Trust continued the re-surfacing through to Station Road, along with washwall repair in 2013 (South Pennines Leader and CRT funds)
iv) **Mytholmroyd Town Centre** – The towpath through Mytholmroyd forms a well-used alternative walking and cycling route to the busy main road but again the surface required complete refurbishment to allow easy year-round use for all. The canal was particularly difficult to get on to in Mytholmroyd, with steep narrow steps and uneven paving restricting access by the less mobile, or people with bikes and buggies. In 2013 Calderdale Council worked with local town team Royd Regeneration to develop a project to improve the towpath from Redacre to Burnley Road, and provide better access points at the former White Lion pub, at Redacre bridge and at Broadbottom Lock. The work was carried out by local firm Jagger Construction Services Ltd under the supervision of Council engineers, and funded by South Pennines Leader.
Luddendenfoot – National Cycle Route 66 follows the towpath from Hollins Mill Lane outside Sowerby Bridge to Station Road in Luddendenfoot. The route had become degraded over the years, with the poor condition of the towpath surface discouraging use by all but the most enthusiastic off-road cyclists. The towpath was resurfaced in 2013 by Mel Green Construction Ltd of Elland under a project delivered by Calderdale Council and funded by LTP. Council engineers and designers collaborated closely with artist Joss Smith to design the setting for the art work which now forms a dramatic gateway to the canal towpath at Station Road. Construction of the new gateway area was carried out by the Council’s term contractor Amey. The planting that completes the scheme was carried out by young volunteers working on the Council’s Community Task Force initiative.
CHAPTER 3 : WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?
Bringing the canal story to life.

The canal story is fascinating. The Rochdale Canal was conceived in 1776 when a group of 48 eminent men from Rochdale raised £237 and commissioned James Brindley to conduct a survey of possible routes between Sowerby Bridge and Manchester. The Canal eventually opened in 1804 after ten years of construction to create the first navigable waterway across the Pennines between Yorkshire and Lancashire. Known as the “Everest” of canals, its dramatic construction over a watershed at 600ft using 92 locks was the catalyst for the industrial revolution in the South Pennines. The Canal became a living artery enabling the movement of power, wealth and influence throughout the Upper Calder Valley.

All along its length today there are still reminders of this amazing history from things as large as canalside mills, down to tiny grooves within lock-side stone caused by horse-rope movement. The challenge for the project was to expose and tell the immense story of the canal in a way that was interesting to all ages as well as reflecting and actually contributing to the history of the canal. Thus a series of artworks, poetry and information “totems” have been installed using cast iron and stone, materials closely connected to the area via its foundries and quarries, each revealing a different part of the story in a unique way as follows;

The Ribbon

Lock 39 at Summit – at Lock 39 a “ribbon” sculpture is laid into the ground, the ribbon idea symbolising the linear nature of the canal. The sculpture represents the unique close interweaving of the canal, the road and the railway in the valley bottom along the whole length of the canal. The words reflect how the opening of the canal changed the South Pennines forever and celebrates the pioneering progressive spirit of the age. The pattern for the ribbon was made and cast by Hargreaves Foundry in Halifax. The project was commissioned by Pennine Prospects in 2011, designed by Imagemakers and IS Group, cast by Hargreaves Foundry and funded by South Pennines Leader.

The Watershed

Summit Pound – halfway along Summit Pound there is a watershed sculpture that represents the point where the canal reaches its highest point in its climb over the South Pennines. The poem on the sculpture was created by Andrew McMillan and is called Liquid Equinox. Andrew was one of the South Pennines Poets in Residence in 2011 and describes his inspiration for the poem in the following way; “I was struck by the idea of equilibrium, or being on the exact centre of things; the notion that any water which falls at that point could run down in either direction – towards the Irish Sea or towards the North Sea. Such precise balance, it seems to me, is rare. I remembered that old myth, the one about being able to balance an egg on its end at the exact moment of the equinox. What if we could do the same with water? What if there was more than one possible direction?” The sculpture picks up the “ribbon” theme from the piece at Lock 39, including within it a strip that shows the times and distances for walkers, cyclists and boaters to the next town or village. The watershed sculpture was commissioned by Pennine Prospects in 2011, designed by Imagemakers and IS Group, cast by Hargreaves Foundry and funded by South Pennines Leader.
The Globe

**Todmorden** – In 2011 Calderdale Council undertook extensive improvements to Lever Street car park which lies right next to the canal in the town centre. They also improved the access onto the canal at this point. At the same time a globe sculpture was installed alongside an information “totem”. The two pieces together celebrate the story of the canal as a “worldwide waterway” with the cast iron globe sculpture visually tracing out the trade routes from Todmorden to the far reaches of Scandinavia, Russia, America and India. The pattern for the globe was made in Brighouse by Arthur Jackson & Co Ltd and the sculpture was cast in the local Hargreaves Foundry in Halifax. The totem takes this story further to explain how the canal became the M62 of its day, revolutionising travel times between Sowerby Bridge and Manchester by reducing them to a mere 28 hours! The QR code on the totem takes those hungry for more information to the [www.myrochdalecanal.org.uk](http://www.myrochdalecanal.org.uk) website where a detailed historical section is being developed. The totem once again picks up the “ribbon” theme including within it a strip that shows the times and distances for walkers, cyclists and boaters to the next town or village.

The sculpture and totem were commissioned by Pennine Prospects 2011, designed by Imagemakers and IS Group, cast by Hargreaves Foundry and funded by South Pennine Leader.

The Horse Bench

**Hebden Bridge** – Blackpit lock is a real hub of activity on the canal, being the main access from the town centre over to the children’s playground and Calder Holmes park. Here a playful horse bench has been installed to prompt visitors to think about the role of hardworking horses on the canal where they often walked in excess of 25 miles a day and worked for 17 hours. The sculptural bench was designed and crafted by artist Lucy Casson. Lucy was chosen after a nationwide competition by a panel of local representatives and canal experts. Lucy states “As soon as I saw black pit lock I wanted to create a seat for people to sit and watch the to-ing and fro-ing on the canal. I combined the technique of sand casting in iron, much used in the industrial revolution, and horses which were so integral to life on canals. These two horses are a homage to the working horses that have dragged, carried and pulled cargos across the Pennines through the ages. They stand holding up this bench and looking.”

The iron horses were cast in the local Hargreaves Foundry in Halifax. The information “totem” tells the reader about the life of these horses on the waterway, with a QR code linking to the [www.myrochdalecanal.org.uk](http://www.myrochdalecanal.org.uk) website for more detailed delving into canal history. The totem also tells the story of the building and restoration of the canal, celebrating the role of volunteers in the reopening of the waterway. The totem once again picks up the “ribbon” theme including within it a strip that shows the times and distances for walkers, cyclists and boaters to the next town or village.

The Horse bench was commissioned by Pennine Prospects 2012/13, designed by Lucy Casson and cast by Hargreaves Foundry. The totem was designed by Jane Revitt and Andy Plant and fabricated by IS Group. Both elements were funded by South Pennine Leader.
The Hawk

Mytholmroyd - After a nationwide competition, a panel of local representatives and canal experts chose sculptor Kenny Hunter to produce a new piece of canalside interpretation beside Broadbottom Lock in Mytholmroyd. Kenny designed a Hawk with its prey, perched on a tree stump and cast in iron at Hargreaves Foundry in Halifax. Kenny was inspired by the work of former Poet Laureate Ted Hughes who was born in Mytholmroyd and spent his formative childhood years in the fields and woods around the town. “Hawk Roosting” is one of Ted Hughes’s best-loved poems and describes very honestly the raw side of nature. The sculpture takes inspiration not only from the poem but also from the local place names, ‘Hawks Clough’ and “Red Acre Wood”. Kenny Hunter says ‘What ultimately made the subject of the Hawk irresistible to me was hearing a memory from Ted Hughes’ childhood friend Donald Crossley, on my visit to Mytholmroyd. He told me how he and Ted had seen a Hawk holding a bird in its claws in Red Acre Wood, when they were small boys, and this event directly informed the poem. I believe this work can simultaneously reveal the site’s industrial and natural heritage alongside honouring the work of Poet Laureate Ted Hughes.’

The eye of the hawk is at human eye level and the artist was keen for people to connect to the spirit of the bird, a strong theme of Hughes’ work. The overall height of the sculpture allows it to function from a distance as a signpost as people enter the village by car or foot and it also by marks the entrance on to the canal towpath. Jade Smith, one of the panel members said ‘It has been an honour to be involved in this project and see an artist develop an idea from first discussions through to the final artwork. This piece feels like it really belongs here’

The sculpture is made of cast iron which is extremely durable and self-protecting, and it also has strong associations with the Industrial Heritage of the Area. Mytholmroyd was home to ‘Pickles Foundry, opened in 1890, later to become Broadbent’s Foundry, which was described in the Hughes poem “Under the Worlds Wild Rims”. Accompanying this sculpture is an information “totem” designed by artists Jane Revitt and Andy Plant, which reveals the story of the industrial mills and foundries that used to be found in this now tranquil locality.

The Fender

Luddendenfoot – The access onto the canal at Station Road Bridge, Luddendenfoot has for a long time been in need of some tender loving care. With scrubby vegetation, tumbling walls, rusty railings and a general feeling of not being loved about it, there was a definite opportunity to design a special place here for the village of Luddendenfoot. Artist Joss Smith was commissioned to design and create the new space, working closely with designers and engineers from Calderdale Council. His sculpture is a large scale Fender Knot, as seen on canal boats, but his version is carved out of Kilkenny limestone. Beside this sit 3 polished limestone barges that function as benches. The whole arrangement echoes the shape of the historical wharf that once existed at Luddendenfoot.

The artist spent a considerable amount of time talking to local canal historians, researching the area and consulting members of the local community before deciding on his idea. He describes his inspiration as follows; “The physical character of the Calder valley made an impression on me, the steep surrounding hills and valleys and the flat plane of the Rochester canal within this. I felt the site at Luddendenfoot needed a sculpture that would be legible from every direction given the many angles, heights and distances of approach. The sphere composition is equal from every side and when you look at one side you can imagine the others and this gives the piece a presence. I wanted the sculpture to encompass the idea of weaving and landscape whilst maintaining a direct relationship to the canal. The sculpture was designed as one element of the space and the concept was that the barge benches and pool outline combine with the sculpture in a dialogue to create a poetry about the place which is not directly illustrative, that said the sculptures are literally a fender knot and barges which makes them accessible on different levels, it was important to me that the work could be enjoyed by very young people as well as being a viable modern sculptures.
The stone for the pieces is dark and reflective like the water of the canal creating the idea of the pieces being made from solidified canal water. The top of the knot sculpture is formed of interlocking rolling forms reminiscent of the surrounding landscape.

The treatment of the site attempts to create a sense of place which reflects something of the heritage of the area and the canal and I hope it will be a lasting addition to Luddendenfoot.

I have a long connection with Yorkshire and as a child the sense of industry and pioneering enterprise in the region made a great impression on me. I tried to instil the pieces for Luddendenfoot with something of this timeless grandeur.

The development at Luddendenfoot became quite ambitious due to the hard work of a large team of committed people, all the different elements on the site converged, and the space now is much improved from the overgrown waste ground that used to be there. The site has a sense of centre and place within Luddendenfoot, and the materials are all of a good quality and will blend into the site sympathetically as they weather and the planting becomes established.

The works for the site are highly site specific and are inspired by the site itself and its surroundings. I hope that this makes them appropriate and that they will be adopted by Luddendenfoot and be an enduring addition to the place.

The Canal Connections initiative appealed to me straight away and I enjoyed every aspect of my involvement with the project.”

As well as Joss’s work there is an information “totem” here, designed by artists Jane Revitt and Andy Plant, which celebrates the history of the canal boats and the bustling wharf that was once located at this point. The old photographs and historic map that are reproduced on the boards show just what this location looked like during the industrial revolution and the works on the towpath have now revealed the bases of the huge canal-side cranes that were located here.

Heather Hartwell, Secretary of Luddendenfoot Community Association said, “It has been a pleasure to be part of the process and see the energy, dedication and skill that Joss, Jane and Andy have put in. We are delighted to see thoughtful investment in our village and believe it will help us create a thriving heart for the village around the park, the Civic Institute and the other facilities on Station Road.”
Feature plaques

And everywhere in between – There are interesting features which tell historical tales all the way along the Canal. To point them all out would mean too much signage and clutter on the Canal and anyway, the game of discovery is a good one for those with keen eyesight and enquiring minds. However, some of the features are explained in a series of plaques along the Canal. Each of the plaques has a QR code which will link the reader with a smart phone straight through to a detailed page of information on the Rochdale Canal website.

Paul and Diana Monahan took charge of this element of the project and undertook to research much of the history that is given on the plaques and the website.

Paddle Gear

When the canal was abandoned, from 1952, the lower gates and their paddle gear were usually removed. The gate paddle gear now is a modified version of that used previously. Ground paddle gear at the lock heads was often left in place and these are used today. The only remaining original is at lock 37, controlling the feed of water towards Littleborough.
CHAPTER 4 : WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?
Using the Canal in New Ways

How OWLs have flown into the Story

Volunteer groups or individuals called ‘OWLs’ (Observer of waterway lengths) are people who have been recruited to help monitor and maintain lengths of the Canal. This initiative stemmed from a public meeting in September 2009 organised by the Upper Calder Valley Renaissance (UCVR). The meeting agreed to promote the idea of creating a Linear Park along the length of the canal, and the Linear Park group was formed. In 2010 - 2011, the Linear Park group started to think about the idea of local people adopting a stretch of canal. The first batch of volunteers were recruited and trained in late 2011-early 2012 to help cover the 25 ‘lengths’ of Canal through Calderdale that need monitoring within the project area.

A thriving network of ‘OWLs’ now patrol their length of canal at least once a week and report any issues to the Canal and River Trust, who are able to react swiftly to major problems. The serious leak resulting from a collapsed culvert in Mytholmroyd in November 2013 was reported by OWLs almost as soon as it happened. OWLs are encouraged to have a hands-on approach to adopting their Length, and many carry out regular tasks such as litter picking, pruning and weed control. OWLs are trained to look after any special plant communities on their Length, and to report interesting wildlife sightings, such as the Freshwater Mussel community that was only revealed by the de-watering of the canal following the Mytholmroyd leak.

Regular OWLs task days are arranged where volunteers can get together to carry out concentrated work on particular lengths, such as lock gate painting, vegetation clearance, puddle drainage and weeding.

The Adopt a Length initiative started in Calderdale but with the help of CRT volunteers is now spreading to other areas of the Rochdale Canal.

Festivals and other celebrations

The Rochdale Canal in Calderdale is a fantastic resource for engaging people in local heritage in many different ways. Annual Canal Festivals have been held in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 primarily to raise awareness of the Canal. In 2012 the festival featured over 50 free events with a 92-lock poetry trail and Olympic art to guided walks, outdoor theatre and bike rides. The Festival also featured a nine-day relay that ran the canal’s entire length; a slow race that occurs via bike, foot and horse-drawn boat. The potential of the Canal is clearly demonstrated by attendance figures. Over 9,700 people have attended these festivals and taken part in heritage, learning and volunteering events.

The Canal has also featured heavily in the Valley of Light and other seasonal festivals that have been held in the Calder Valley, including the most recent Todmorden Lamplighter Festival.
There is significant potential for expansion of the currently limited and sporadic activity programme. There are a number of events and activities promoted to increase usage and understanding of the Canal, but much more potential exists.

New Types of Uses for the Canal

Improving local perception of the Canal has helped inspire other people to look after and use the canal in different ways. In Todmorden for example, the Incredible Edible Green Route now runs along part of the improved town centre towpath and the canalsides have been used for planted of vegetables, herbs and fruit trees.

New connections with other projects

Wordstones is a new trail of stones along the Calder Valley, carved with words written by some of the area's most talented young writers. Pennine poet Simon Armitage has worked with Calderdale Young Writers to create this new literary trail to mark the anniversary of the London 2012 Olympics and to continue the legacy of ‘Stanza Stones’. Each stone carries words written by the young writers, bringing the creative inspiration that Simon helped them find at the top of the Pennines back down into their valley communities. The Wordstones have been unveiled, one by one, in Hebden Bridge, Halifax and Mytholmroyd over the Summer of 2013.

Wordstones has grown from Stanza Stones, part of imove’s regional programme for the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad. Together with Ilkley Literature Festival, imove commissioned Simon to write a series of poems to be carved by stone artist Pip Hall into rocks, walkways and stones along The Pennine Way between Marsden and Ilkley. While the stones were being carved Simon worked with groups of young writers from across Yorkshire, resulting in an anthology of new poems and a series of live performances in the run up to the Olympics.

The Stanza Stones Trail Guide and Anthology can be downloaded for free from imovearts.co.uk. For more information visit www.imovearts.co.uk
CHAPTER 5 : MAKING AND DOING

Experience of talking to school groups in particular has shown us that people are as fascinated by who made things, how things are made and how long they took to make, as they are by the finished product, so this section profiles the artists and fabricators that made the project possible.

The Artists

Lucy Casson: studied at Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts and at the Hereford College of Art. Her small cartoon-like figures have been fascinating an international public since the end of the eighties. The list of commissions the artist has received from public and private collectors is long, and even the Victoria & Albert Museum in London has one of her objects in its possession. Lucy’s work is inspired by observations of people and animals; their gestures and moods; scenarios and narratives. She collects the material for her sculptures on the streets around her studio in South London; she combines mysterious plastic objects, tin cans or other found object with printed sheet metal, wood and wire. She has translated her precise observations of totally banal everyday moments into her art objects which results in lively animated scenes: small incidental drama with a wonderfully humorous and authentic understanding of human attributes.


Joss Smith: born in Yorkshire, but now living in London. He has designed monumental works for highly sensitive sites such as the Historic Dane John Gardens in Canterbury. He has worked with a variety of public authorities throughout the United Kingdom (e.g. Canterbury City Council (Font & Silent Table), Colwyn Bay District Council (Veil), Skelmetsdale District Council (Gateway for Hope Island), and Crawley Borough Council (Golden Tree)).

Jane Revitt: A background in theatre, fine art and textiles influence the work she designs for public spaces. Temporary and permanent design schemes create objects and environments to inform, entertain and engage visitors with particular themes. Projects include a mechanical Moroccan cabinet for Expo 2000, lounges with talking furniture for the Royal Festival Hall in London and Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester, hospital waiting rooms with larger than life plant forms and a new colour scheme for 1960s tower blocks. For this commission, Jane was asked to design the content of the interpretation totems that have been installed alongside the sculptural pieces.

Andrew MacMillan: Andrew McMillan was born in Barnsley in 1988 and lived there until he crossed the Pennine divide to study English Literature at Lancaster University. His work has been published in journals such as ‘The London Magazine’, ‘The North’, ‘The Reader’ and ‘Pomegranate’. His debut pamphlet, ‘every salt advance’, was published by Red Squirrel Press in October 2009. A second pamphlet from Red Squirrel Press, ‘The Moon is a Supporting Player’, was published 2011. Andrew has been apprentice poet-in-residence for Ilkley Literature Festival, and works as a freelance writer and copywriter. He is inspired by the everyday, the unpoeitic, the mundane; he felt that his residency with the Watershed Landscape project provided a great chance to reconnect people with the landscape and explore the positive connections people can have with the South Pennine watershed. During his residency Andrew was supported by the Elmet Trust to spend two weeks living in Ted Hughes’ boyhood home in Mytholmroyd from which he has been able to explore the local landscape and become part of it himself. During his stay Andrew invited a motley crew of eight local poets from each side of the watershed to spend a day exploring the theme of landscape and borders, the resulting poems written in a single day were performed at ‘Crossing Borders’ in Hebden Bridge Library. He also worked with schools, writers groups and youth groups to help the story of the landscape come alive.
Cast Engineers : Hargreaves Foundry

Hargreaves Foundry in Halifax cast all the iron sculptures. They have been iron founders for over 100 years. The material for casting comes from recycled car brake discs. Hargreaves Foundry employs traditional sand casting techniques enhanced by modern materials and technology. There are four stages in production: Design, Pattern Making, Mould Making and Casting:

**Design:** converting ideas into solid metal requires a planned approach that takes into account the function of the object as well as its appearance. Designs can be done by engineering companies, architects or artists and all must take account of structural ability and supportive strength of the finished product.

**Pattern Making:** once a design has been approved and a manufacturing drawing produced a pattern can be made, normally in wood but sometimes using fibreglass or plastics. Patterns have to be exactly the shape of the finished item and precise in their dimensions as they are used to make the sand moulds. Any irregularity or mistake will be reproduced in the casting. Not only this but patterns must allow for shrinkage of the metal when it cools and also create channels or runners to allow the molten metal to flow into the mould and risers to allow for the escape of gases. It is complex and extremely skilled work.

**Mould Making:** the next stage is to make a mould in sand into which the molten iron can be poured. The pattern is packed into sand that has been mixed with clay or resin and when removed leaves the shape for the casting. Moulds are usually made in two parts and held in ‘boxes’ for the actual pouring. When the two halves of the mould are placed face to face, one on top of the other, a cavity is created into which the molten iron can be poured. In the case of very large castings these are created in moulds dug out of sand in the foundry floor. A critical factor in mould making is the runner system, a network of channels that allow the molten metal to run into the mould. There is great skill and expertise in this part of the process, if the molten iron does not run quickly enough it will solidify before it reaches the casting shape, if it runs too quickly or violently it could damage the mould and spoil the casting.

**Casting:** This is the final part of the process and the one most people associate with foundries. Melting and pouring iron at 1,350 degrees centigrade is a spectacular and potentially violent process. Safety is the highest priority in any foundry. First the furnace is carefully loaded to ensure the correct chemical characteristics for the prescribed grade of iron are achieved. The iron is then melted in the furnace and poured off to go into the awaiting moulds. Slag or foundry waste is put to one side for disposal. After the iron has cooled in the moulds it is broken out. All the excess iron from the process, the runners etc are cleaned off in a process known as fettling, which also includes grinding and shot blasting, to produce a finished casting. Any excess iron can then go back to be melted down again.

Car brakes discs waiting to be melted down at Hargreaves

Pattern making for the Watershed Sculpture

The Hebden Horse : mould making

Pouring the molten metal into the mould

The Mould Box
Sign Engineers : IS Group

Based in Flint, North Wales, IS Group have been manufacturing and installing bespoke signs since 1981, and it has become one of the leading signage companies in the UK. IS has experience in working with top UK interpretation designers, creating bespoke heritage signs. Their ethos is that creative heritage interpretation is about providing an environment that encourages visitors to attend and attract sufficient interest to ensure they will both stay and return, or even recommend others to visit. The level of interpretation must reflect the story of the landscape and both educate and inform visitors while influencing their behaviour. IS Group’s Director, After working on the Rochdale Canal project Jamie Trippier, Director of IS Group said “on behalf of myself and IS Group I would like to say that we have been delighted to be involved with such an interesting project. It has been a great pleasure for me personally to be involved and to see such unique signs and sculptures put into the ground. I have met some lovely people and hope that I will be able to work together in the future.”

IS Group offer bespoke heritage and interpretation signage using a wide range of materials including wood, metals and glass to suit any landscape and design. The signs on the Rochdale Canal have a steel frame with cast iron surround and the panels are made of vitreous enamel. Vitreous enamel is simply a thin layer of glass fused at high temperature on to the surface of a metal. It is made by melting naturally occurring minerals, such as sand, feldspar, borax, soda ash, and sodium fluoride at temperatures between 1200 °C and 1350 °C until all of the raw materials have dissolved. Other metallic mineral may be added to give specific properties or colour. The molten glass which is formed is either quenched into water or through water-cooled rollers. This rapid cooling prevents crystallisation and is said to be in a metastable state. This material is called “frit”. To make a usable enamel the frit will be ground in a rotating ball mill either to produce a water-based slurry or a powder. Clays are used in the water-based products to give a product which can be applied to the metal by spraying, dipping or painting by brush. At the milling stage, other minerals will be added to give the properties which are required of the final enamel. Colour is introduced by the use of metal compounds. The final glassy finish so typical of vitreous enamel is produced by firing in furnaces at temperatures up to 900 °C. As it cools, it fuses to give glass-coated metal. This ‘firing’ process gives vitreous enamel its unique combination of properties. The smooth glass-like surface is hard; it is scratch, chemical and fire resistant. It is easy to clean and hygienic. It all started 3500 years ago in Cyprus. Since 1500 BC, enamelling has been a wonderful, durable, attractive and reliable material.

The Contractors :

The project is grateful to all the contractors who worked on the towpath works, paving works and installation. These have included:

- CMBC Highways & Engineering services
- Amey LG Ltd (CMBC Term Contractor)
- Jagger Construction Services Ltd
- Mel Green Construction Ltd
- J Cooney Ltd
- May Gurney
- J&R Moran Ltd Civil Engineering Contractors
Consultants

Geoff Wood of Working pArts: Working pArts is a public art and public realm consultancy practice founded by Geoff Wood and specialising in the effective integration of art into the working lives of towns and cities. Established in 1997, the practice has built a strong track record offering art expertise, consultancy and commissioning services focussed on the contribution art can make to liveable communities.

They have a national reputation for developing strategic public art projects. They carry out detailed research into the place and its users and their aim is always to establish how the building, place or city works, understand its dynamics and determine how these affect users. This informs the way they introduce art into the architecture, constituent spaces and the surrounding context. They develop strategies through which artists can contribute to improving the vitality and functionality of place whilst adding value through the introduction of imagination and good ideas.

They have worked throughout the UK, including Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, Chesterfield, Knowsley, Liverpool, Poole, Salford, Stoke on Trent, Wolverhampton, Workington, the Thames Gateway, on the National Coalfields program, across Wales and within the South Pennines where they are based. Their ideas and skills are in devising public art programmes that are integral to the long term well being of a community and the strategic development of an area.

Their achievements include:
- Setting up and running complex art in architecture programmes.
- Developing mechanisms to involve local people in the creative processes of public art.
- Piloting artists as design team members on infrastructure projects.
- Using art as a legibility tool in towns and cities
- Pioneering artists’ lightworks to improve safety, orientation and image.
- Developing projects that encourage exploration of the rural and semi rural landscape
- They have been at the forefront of using art and artists to negotiate a humane coexistence between transport systems, highways and adjacent communities.
- They have a large database of artists and their work covering a wide range of media.

Staff and Community

The project is grateful to all the following staff and members of the community who worked hard to develop the overall vision with the community, ensure there was funding for the project, commission artists, bring in designers and contractors and generally work with everyone. The project would not have been possible without the enthusiasm, dedication and diplomacy of all these people;

Anne Holdsworth : Calderdale Council
Involved as project manager in all aspects of the project

Neil Paterson : Calderdale Council
Involved as project engineer in all aspects of the project

Ruth Hair : Pennine Prospects
Involved as funder in all aspects of the project

Jon Stopp : Canal and River Trust
Involved in communication and delivery

Claire Teague: Canal and River Trust
Involved in communication and delivery

Lucy Rogers : Canal and River Trust
Involved in communication and delivery

Darren Span : Canal and River Trust
Involved in regulatory supervision of works on the Canal

Geoff Wood : Working pArts
Commissioning consultant for all artworks

Philip Songhurst: Imagemakers
Designer of artworks in Warland and Todmorden

Paul Monahan : Local Historian
Responsible for historical accuracy and think tank member

Diana Monahan : Local Historian
Responsible for historical accuracy

Mike Clarke Milepost Research
Contributor to historical information

David Cant: Luddendenfoot representative
Member of artwork commissioning "think tank"

Jade Smith : Mytholmroyd representative
Member of artwork commissioning "think tank" and photographer

Sue Day : Horseboating Society
Contributor to panel on Horse Boating

Steve Morgan Photographer
Responsible for most of the imagery during the project
And we did so enjoy working on this project.... To see more of our photos go to http://www.flickr.com/photos/115246073@N04/

Dedication: we are indebted to Donald Crossley who gave us valuable support, information and insight into the life, work and boyhood tales of Ted Hughes. Sadly Donald passed away in January 2014. He will be much missed as he touched and inspired us all.

Picture: Kenny Hunter and Donald Crossley, 19th March 2013