

Project Profile: Canal Connections

Client: Pennine Prospects

Value: Programme - £100k +

Research, Consultation, Strategy, Artist Commissioning and Project Delivery

Duration: June 2012 – Dec 2013

Project Aims



Oversee the development of artists' design proposals and the delivery of a programme of artists' public commissions as part of Canal Connections, the ongoing Interpretation Programme of the Rochdale Canal in the South Pennines. The completed project won the National Living Waterways award for Art and Interpretation in 2014.

Objectives

- Establishment of project working groups for each of the locations
- Location analysis and site selection
- Ongoing facilitation and administration of project working group
- Preparation of artistic briefs for each location
- Management of art and design proposals
- Liaison with partners and landscape design team at Calderdale Council
- Ongoing engagement with project working groups
- Management of artists' appointment procedures
- Presentation of final designs to Client Steering Group and Stakeholders
- Overseeing detailed design, fabrication and installation of the artworks
- Preparation and submission of planning applications
- Budget administration and monitoring
- Arrangement of launch event/unveiling ceremony
- Arrangement of evaluation meeting and feedback report

Outcomes

- A strong thematic approach responding to the needs of stakeholders but sensitive to each location
- Fully costed proposals that respond to the restrictions of the sites
- A project plan and artistic approach that increases appreciation and awareness of the canal
- Interpretation strategy designed and delivered
- Endorsement of the stakeholders through extensive consultation
- An extendable strategy for commissioning within the canal system
- Council Officer and Member endorsement for the strategy
- Setting precedents for the quality of artworks and relevance of process for the partner local authority, Calderdale
- Fully delivered program

Project Overview

The Rochdale Canal is an important leisure resource and amenity running through the South Pennines. This was the M62 of its day and revolutionised the carriage of goods. Suddenly packhorse trails and small payloads were superseded by the canal system that could carry many tons of grain, coal, wool or other goods.

The canal network is now used mainly for leisure and is a valuable wildlife habitat. The Canal Connections program aims to encourage greater use of the canals and the towpath and increase understanding of the social and industrial heritage of the system.

These commissions form part of the wider Canal Connections project, focusing on the heritage of the Rochdale Canal within Yorkshire as it dramatically climbs over the South Pennines. They help people learn about the cultural significance of the Rochdale Canal, and collectively the artworks and interpretation system promote understanding and appreciation of the Canal's place in the development of our communities and the canal-side settlements of today. The program provided opportunities for people to actively participate in the Canal's ongoing regeneration and harnessed the community's passion for our past and celebrate the rich heritage of the South Pennines.

The project tells the story of the development of the area's industrial and social heritage concentrating on:

Documenting the extraordinary engineering feat of building a canal over the South Pennines and the vision of those who conceived it;

Exploring how the carriage of goods opened up the area to rapid social change;

Revealing the lives of those who were employed both on the canal and in the industries that developed as a result of the trade that the canal brought;

Understanding the development of the unique heritage assets such as the Great Wall of Todmorden, Guillotine lock, Gauxholme viaduct and the deepest lock in the UK;

Celebrating the inspiring history of the restoration of the canal in the 1970s, capturing the stories of those who championed its restoration and still actively support further development of the Canal today.

Key locations for interpretative panels were chosen and designs created by Artists Jane Revitt and Andy Plant.

In addition a series of key 'town hubs' were identified and artists have been commissioned to create 3 dimensional interpretations of the canal culture and heritage.

At Todmorden a cast iron globe has been sited, tracing the trade routes to the rest of the world that were triggered by the coming of the canal to the town.

At Summit Pound, a 3 dimensional symbol of the Pennine Watershed has been cast in iron and the surface decorated with words from Andrew MacMillan's poem "Watershed".

At Lock 39, a five metre long iron casting has been sited, representing the linear and intertwining nature of the canal and the road and rail links that run alongside it. The piece tells a brief story of the canal in embossed lettering, explaining how the canal was the M62 of its day.

At Hebden Bridge, Lucy Casson has created a 'Horse Bench'. The bench has the unmistakable humour of Lucy's work and references the vernacular iconography of canal architecture and the use of horses across the canal linked industries.

At Broad Bottom Lock in Mytholmroyd, Kenny Hunter created the beautiful Hawk sculpture referring to Ted Hughes' poem 'Hawk Roosting'. This area is just where Hughes played as a boy and we introduced Kenny to Hughes' boyhood friend Donald Crossley. This helped inform and inspire the project.



At Luddendenfoot beside Boys Bridge, Joss Smith has transformed a piece of dense and impenetrable scrub into a charming and useful meeting place and seating area. From background research Joss was able to recreate an area that reflects the shape of the former canal pool. The new Kilkenny Limestone Sculpture was inspired by the woven fenders that each boat carries. Three barge shaped stone benches help populate the space.

Each of the above is accompanied by an artist designed interpretation monolith.





A Bustling Wharf

If you were standing here in 1850, you would have been at the edge of a busy canal wharf. Horse-drawn carts ferry their loads of cotton, wool, coal and other supplies to factories nearby. Stones are being lifted into boats by crane. Further along the canal, where mills are built by the water's edge, manufactured goods are being loaded into barges moored alongside.

The canal was the motorway of its day, playing a vital role in the development of industry here, after its completion in 1804. The wharf was the hub of Luddendenfoot and the surrounding area.



Luddendenfoot Wharf. © Pennine Horizons, Trevor Ellis Collection.

TEXTILE MANUFACTURING

In 1764, the first cotton spinning machinery was invented – the Spinning Jenny. In the coming years, textile manufacturing became increasingly mechanised, and spinning and weaving were no longer done in people's homes.

By 1850, some of the small family textile mills had expanded to become towering factories with a huge workforce. Luddendenfoot had been transformed from a small rural community to a thriving industrial centre.

TRADE AND THE CANAL

Large quantities of the raw materials needed for these growing businesses were brought by boat and finished goods could easily be delivered for sale, not only in the north of England but throughout the country and around the world.



Boy Mill. Photo courtesy of Halifax Antiquarian Society.

BOY MILL

Very little remains of this once enormous factory by the river.

The mill was damaged by fire several times and in 1850 it was completely rebuilt as a seven storey mill. At different points in its history it has produced cotton, wool, worsted and carpets.

Most of the buildings were demolished by the 1930s.



Ordnance Survey Map from 1850, courtesy of Alan Pottford.

INNS

These inns are marked at the crossroads of the 1850 map.



The Waterways Archive – Canal and River Trust.

The Anchor & Shuttle. The 1850 map depicts this inn next to the canal basin. The photo shows the back of the inn.

THE FOOT OF THE LUDD

The oldest name of the area was Luddingden, which is thought to mean: the valley (den) around the clearing (ing) of Ludd (person's name).

CARGO ON THE CANAL

Stone

Stone was transported by horse-drawn cart down the steep roads from Midgley to Luddendenfoot. There it was loaded onto canal boats. Some of the stone was used for building the railway, completed in 1841.



Stone Cart on Far Lane, Midgley, bringing stone from Wallon Edge Delph at Foster Clough. Photo courtesy of Peggy Horsfield.

Cotton

Cotton was brought from Manchester and Liverpool, the main trading centres for raw cotton and finished goods.

Wool

Wool was mainly brought from the Lincolnshire and Yorkshire Wolds.

Coal

Coal was delivered from the Lancashire and Yorkshire coalfields. Large quantities were needed to supply steam-powered manufacturing, iron foundries and homes.

BUFFALO HIDE

A small but essential import from America. This material was ideal for making pickers, mechanisms placed on both sides of power looms for propelling the shuttle back and forth.



© Pennine Horizons, Ralph Cross Collection.

The Red Lion. This photo was taken before 1875. After that the inn was known as The General Rawdon. It was knocked down and eventually became the Coach & Horses.



Find out more by visiting www.myrachdalecanal.org.uk

FULLING

In 1599, a map describes Boy Mill as a fulling mill. Fulling was a process for strengthening and felting woollen cloth. Originally it was done by workers treading cloth with their feet in a mixture of water and urine. Later the process was done by water-powered hammers.