Radical Routes

EDITION #3 SUMMER

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

YOUR MAGAZINE COMMEMORATING MAYFLOWER 400

04 WHERE LAND MEETS SEA

08 ETCHED IN TIME

BY LAND & SEA

Artists Rachel Carter & Carrie Reichardt in conversation

YOU CAN'T SPELL 'TRANSFORM' WITHOUT BACKWARDS 'ART'

THOM SEDDON

"Drag was this wonderful world I could escape into."

BIKE ON A DYKE

CHRIS LEWIS-JONES

Further adventures of a Flaneur in the Fens

12 SEEING THE WORLD FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE

GROWING UP IN THE FENS

19 WAMPANOAG PERSPECTIVE PROJECT

CREATING A LASTING LEGACY

21 WISH YOU WERE HERE

THE ELDER TREE CREATIVE WRITING PROJECT

29 DOGGERLAND RISING

A POEM ABOUT LOST LANDS AND COASTAL COMMUNITIES

CONTENTS

WHERE LAND MEETS SEA 4

Reflections on a creative life on the Lincolnshire coast.

COVER STORY /
BIKE ON A DYKE 6

Further adventures of a Flaneur in the Fens.

ETCHED IN TIME 8

A series of eight artworks celebrating Boston's heritage.

COVER STORY /
YOU CAN'T SPELL 'TRANSFORM' WITHOUT BACKWARDS 'ART' 10

Drag was this wonderful world I could escape into.

SEEING THE WORLD FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE 12

If you've grown up in the Fens, 'fitting in' is a matter of perspective, and love is what people do, not what they say.

COVER STORY /
BY LAND AND SEA 15

In conversation with artists Rachel Carter and Carrie Reichardt about life, activism, and the healing power of art.

PILGRIM ROUTES 16

A journey through local Pilgrim places & histories.

WAMPANOAG PERSPECTIVE PROJECT 19

Sharing in a cultural exchange and creating new connections and understanding.

WISH YOU WERE HERE 21

Great new writing from older people celebrating their Lincolnshire lives.

SEA SHANTIES 25

Listen to, and learn about, sea shanties, which are all the rage now but have always been a very human response to hardship.

A VIKING LEGACY 27

Weaving isn't something that we traditionally associate with the raiders from the north, but the Lucet reminds us of shared cultures and lives.

DOGGERLAND RISING 29

A story of stone-age coastal communities, lost lands, rising waters, and a forgotten connection to Europe.

SPIRIT OF MAYFLOWER 33

Featuring the poetry and sounds of Lippy Women.

© Transported Art 2021, All Rights Reserved

EDITOR'S LETTER

It is a pleasure to welcome you back to Radical Routes.

When the partners, Transported, West Lindsey District Council, and Landing, commissioned the magazine, the ideas were to commemorate the Mayflower journey, reveal the ties that this region has with the Pilgrims, and to look at the story through the lens of contemporary society and its issues.

In the first edition we took the idea of 'journeys' and what they mean to people seeking safety, security, or freedom. We then stretched that theme in the next edition to include other types of journeys — personal ones of self-discovery, those undertaken in our minds, or those made purely for fun. In this, our latest edition, we've chosen to stay at home, in the places where land and sea meet.

There is a weird in these places – a liminality, as things change while somehow remaining the same. These are flatlands and big skies, waters and dykes, places that no longer exist, places altered by people, and people altered by places. We'll explore the relationships they have with land and sea, what they love or hate, what inspires them, or otherwise, and how these ideas have found their way from the everyday into the art produced and celebrated by the Pilgrim Roots Partnership.

Novelist Rebecca Mascull reflects on the artistic inspiration she gains from coastal life in Cleethorpes. Leanne Moden, former Fenlands' poet laureate, speaks of a father's love found in the little things done, and not the big things said. Artist-flaneur, Chris Lewis-Jones, rolls across the landscape on his bike and through lives 'lived, increasingly on the edge' not north or south, a space somewhere in between.

We listen to all sorts of artists finding transformative power in their art. Thom Seddon, aka 'Nana Arthole', talks about how Drag arrived in a time of need. Sculptor Rachel Carter, and visual artist Carrie Reichardt, find they have so much in common during their filmed conversation. In 'Wish you Were Here,' a community project for older people in Boston, locals write about where they live.

We gaze out to sea at the lost Doggerland rising from the waves to join us once more, in our mind's eye at least, to Europe. Then we'll sail away with Dan Peddler singing sea shanties as we go, and whiling away the long hours braiding useful but decorative items with a Viking Lucet.

Amongst all of this we haven't forgotten where we started – the Mayflower story. Anna Scott builds on her previous historical articles to introduce a new book that connects the Pilgrim story to the Midlands. Isabelle Richards and Darius Coombs view those journeys from the First People's perspective with plans to build a Wetu in Bassetlaw. While the 'Lippy Women' of Doncaster bring back the spirit of the Mayflower women.

Oh. And you'll also find some amazing graphics celebrating Boston's heritage in 'Etched in Time', and there's cryptic commentary in 'More Than A/Part,' from a town emerging from lockdown to breathe again.

Henderson Mullin is the Chief Executive of Writing East Midlands. You can contact him for comments or queries at henderson@writingeastmidlands.co.uk

Find out more:

www.pilgrimroots.co.uk

www.transportedart.com

www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/my-council/council-news/mayflower-400-programme-sets-sail

www.discovergainsborough.com/pilgrim-roots

MORE THAN A/PART

ELECTRIC EGG

TRANSPORTED

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

CREATIVE PEOPLE AND PLACES

MORE THAN A/PART

More than a-part is a portrait of Boston in, and emerging from, lockdown during the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic. Boston residents were invited to share their stories and to think about the question: what or who are we thankful for?



WHERE LAND MEETS SEA

BY REBECCA MASCULL

And something strikes me: standing on that beach, looking at where land meets sea, then gazing out to the horizon, where sea meets sky… beaches are all about change…

I came to Lincolnshire for a long-gone relationship, intending to stay a couple of years and then move on. That was in 1996 and I'm still here! Twenty-five years is half my life, and I could never have predicted that would be spent living in this part of the world.

I'm a southerner really, having lived in the Cotswolds, Kent, Devon and Bristol over the years. I've lived in Grimsby for nearly twenty of those twenty-five years, and I've still largely kept my southerner's accent, so much so that I'm still sometimes called 'posh' by Grimbarians. The first position I always take on Grimsby is defensive. I find there seems to be what I'd say is an irrational criticism of Grimsby by people who've never been here. Maybe it's the word 'Grim' (which is actually the name of a Viking Prince), I'm not sure. But the question has often come from southerners: why? Why do you live there?

Firstly, some of the best people I've ever met in my life were born and brought up in Grimsby (such as my own daughter!) Secondly, there are parts of Grimsby and Cleethorpes which are as pretty as most towns in the UK – Weelsby Woods (a large expanse of woodland in the centre of town); the streets of tall Victorian houses around People's Park; Sea View Street in Cleethorpes with its trendy little shops and cafes and the wide, flat beach at Cleethorpes. Yes, of course there are some parts of town I wouldn't want to spend much time in, like most towns or cities anywhere in the world. And it's undeniable that the town centres hereabouts could do with a hell of a lot of investment. But I have been happy here and I know for a fact that most people I know here are Grimbarians born and bred, and they might have gone away at points, but they've come back and settled here and raised their kids here. That doesn't happen by chance.

I must say that whatever you might think about living in Grimsby or Cleethorpes, the beach is its most wonderful feature. The thing about Lincolnshire is flatness. Sometimes, driving around the countryside in these parts can be a little dull, compared to the more dramatic parts of the UK (apart from the wonderfully curvy Wolds around here, of course). However, down at the coast, this flatness comes into its own. The beach seems to last forever, the Humber estuary stretching away to the horizon also seeming endless. Larkin talked brilliantly about this in his poem Here:

Here silence stands

Like heat. Here leaves unnoticed thicken,

Hidden weeds flower, neglected waters quicken,

Luminously-peopled air ascends;

And past the poppies bluish neutral distance

Ends the land suddenly beyond a beach

Of shapes and shingle. Here is unfenced existence:

Facing the sun, untalkative, out of reach.

It is the perfect description of this strange, flat land. There is something epic in its unending vistas and huge Lincolnshire skies. It's the perfect place for contemplation, for escape. During the lockdown, once we were allowed to drive again, the beach was our place of prime escape from the house. It wasn't only about getting out of the house; it was about space and bigness and air and endlessness. We needed it. (It's also the perfect place for a first date, I've discovered; everyone likes a stroll by the sea and walking side by side means you don't have to awkwardly stare at each other, like in a bar or restaurant!)

I love the beach so much and felt so defensive about the largely unknown and unappreciated beauty of this part of the world that I set one of my novels here. My third novel, The Wild Air, is the story of an aviatrix in the early days of flight, the years leading up to the Great War. I visited the Grimsby Library archives and saw the hordes of Victorian tourists that piled off the trains at Cleethorpes railway station straight onto the beach, old photos testament to the sea of hats that bobbed along the promenade and pier. I went to the beach often and watched the birdlife swooping and pottering, and I paddled in the lapping waves, just as my main characters Della and Dudley flew kites on the flat sands as children, Della eventually landing her plane on the beach itself.

Standing on the beach, you can see the weather coming from miles away. As I described it in the novel: "One day in April the weather was like the end of the world: ice, fog, glimpses of the translucent sun, rain, hail and snowflakes sweeping across the estuary, closed by an apricot-jam sunset."

The Wild Air was really my love song to Cleethorpes and its sibling town Grimsby. I wanted people who'd never been here to read about it and change this oddly negative connotation it seems to have unfairly garnered over the years. If you don't believe me, take a drive up to the carpark next to Thorpe Park and walk onto the top end of the beach, up by the caravans, the kite surfers and the dog walkers, away from the amusements and slotties further down. I defy you not to feel your mind expand as you step out on those flat, flat sands and look up at the big, big skies. A somewhat ordinary beauty perhaps, but a beauty all the same and I'm grateful for it.

And something strikes me: standing on that beach, looking at where land meets sea, then gazing out to the horizon, where sea meets sky...beaches are all about change, about liminal spaces where transition occurs to a new state. I remember writing that description of the weather at Cleethorpes based on a day when I was on the beach with my daughter when she was very little and we saw a hailstorm coming from miles away and thought we had plenty of time, but it came so swiftly and we were caught in the storm and had to run to the car, sopping wet, pelted by hail. And it occurs to me that writing reminds me of this: how the subconscious holds all the ideas in a big sky, and they come to you unexpectedly, sometimes swiftly, sometimes slowly, but always driven by forces beyond your control. You may think you're in charge of your narrative when you write, but it's your subconscious that is the wind that blows the clouds in your direction. Standing on the smooth, vast beach-sea-skyscape of the Lincolnshire coast allows your mind to expand into it and brings you closer to that truth, I feel.



Rebecca Mascull is an author of historical novels. She has worked in education, has a Masters in Writing and lives by the sea in the east of England. She is also a Fellow of the Royal Literary Fund, based at the University of Lincoln. She also writes saga fiction under the pen-name of Mollie Walton. The Ironbridge Saga series is set in the dangerous worlds of the iron industry, the brickyards of the 1850s, and the coalmines and servants' quarters of the 1870s. Mollie's next trilogy will be set in WW2 North Yorkshire and the first book of this will be out in March 2022.

rebeccamascull.co.uk

molliewalton.co.uk

BIKE ON A DYKE

BY CHRIS LEWIS-JONES

The sky. It may be something of a cliché, but it is this, more than anything else, that I notice. Instead of shop windows, cranes, and construction scaffolding, I see blue skies, grey skies, and clouds. And it is the clouds that really demand my attention. Towering plumes of cumulonimbus, streaks and splashes of cirrus, cotton buds of cirrocumulus…fluffy and white, menacingly dark, or shot through with shafts of sunlight, when I'm heading west, late in the afternoon, and it feels as though I'm cycling through the Fens skies.

The other things I notice, as I deliver my (Drawing on the Domestic) art activity boxes to the residents of Boston and South Holland, are the accents, the relentless flatness of the landscape and, closely related to this, the extent to which I need to keep cycling to avoid falling over.

Fenland speech seems to be shaped by the land from which it springs. The mouth opens more widely here. Like the way of life, the speech is slower. Words linger for longer. Vowels are elongated, given more form, more notes. 'Now' for instance, is no longer a monosyllable. It has an emphatic beginning, a middle and an end, with a distinct 'y' sound appearing just over halfway through. In disyllabic words, the first syllable expands whilst the final syllable contracts, sometimes almost disappearing, especially in words ending in 'ing'. 'Nothing' is almost 'north'n', whilst 'finding' is almost 'foiyend'n'.

As I was walking along a street in Holbeach, dressed in my Drawing on the Domestic livery, pizza delivery bag slung over my shoulder, a man called out 'Are you a biker?' I assumed he'd noticed me cycling around the town on my characterful little bike but, just in time to answer his question, I realized he was saying 'baker' (not 'biker') in a fenland accent. I suppose he made this not unreasonable assumption because I was dressed all in white, with a little white cap on my head.

I relish the way that accents, like the crops in the field or the pitch of a roof, change as we cross the country. When we are hermetically sealed in our cars, we forget this, which is why we are dumbfounded on encountering unfamiliar pronunciation at the end of a journey. This happens less when cycling. Cyclists really are in, rather than merely passing through, the landscape.

I find that people are far more likely to engage me in conversation when I am wearing a costume of some sort, and I always enjoy this. As I was delivering art activities to St Mary's Church, again, in Holbeach, a man called out 'are you goin' fish'n'?' What took me by surprise wasn't so much his accent, as his assumption that my pizza delivery bag, which, to me, looks like nothing other than a pizza delivery bag, was an angler's bag. I concluded from this that Deliveroo and Uber Eats couriers are a less common sight here than anglers. This may not be a profound observation, but signifiers of difference are always interesting, to a flaneur anyway!

The influence of lowland Scots in the area around Corby in Northamptonshire is clearly discernible. The influence of the Caribbean on urban London English is similarly apparent. However, the influence of Slavic pronunciation on Fenland speech remains to be seen. It might be happening already, in the playgrounds of Spalding, Boston and elsewhere, but I've yet to hear it. Whatever its effect, it will, surely, enhance the richness of the local English and inform the narratives through which we come to understand who we are, where we are, and where we are from.

In my hometown, cycling anywhere north of the Trent entails a mixture of up-hill exertion and downhill exhilaration. It may appear counterintuitive, but cycling in these flat lands feels more like hard work than undulating across Nottingham. Here, if you stop pedalling, you stop moving. I can't help but see this as metaphor, illustrating the extent to which the landscape itself requires constant effort for the land to remain terra firma - pumping and diverting water from what would otherwise be the North Sea. This effort is evidenced by the dykes, sluices, locks, and drains that are the defining characteristics of this man-made region. As Greg Russell sings on Danny Peddler's 'Water Makes this Land' (on Field and Dyke, an album inspired by the tales of South Holland folk): 'water made this land somehow; water makes the land still now'.

Having been raised in the shadow of A. E. Houseman's 'blue remembered hills' (Malvern, Clee and the Cotswold) and having lived most of my adult life within striking distance of the Peak District, I was initially sceptical about the attractions of the Fens, equating flatness with dullness.



At least it's near the sea, I mused. However, I was frequently disappointed by the absence of the coast, or anything hinting at its proximity. Getting to the coast between King's Lynn and Skegness is problematic. There are no resorts, other than Skeggy, and there are no coast roads. If you can be bothered to navigate your way through the C class roads and tracks that eventually end at the Wash, you are still likely to be a mile or two away from the wet stuff, twinkling mockingly in the distance across acres of pink mud. Sometimes I have glimpsed what appeared to be estuarine lakes, or tidal inlets, which turned out to be lakes not of water, but of vast sheets of mulching plastic!

I have come to appreciate the drama of these flatlands and have grown genuinely fond of the area. When you do make it beyond the C class roads, to those endless acres of pink mud, surrounded by the resident avian choir: crying, laughing, screaming, and keening...it is indeed a wonderful experience...a place in which to relish solitude.

As I cycle past enormous fields, beneath enormous skies, I find myself ruminating on the liminality of it all...the Fens, the coast, the accent, the economy...especially in the face of climate emergency and a global pandemic. Economic precarity had already penetrated deep into these isolated communities, so the effect of Covid and its accompanying lockdowns has impacted hugely on their way of life. A life lived, increasingly, on the edge: physically, socially, and economically.

According to the state, Lincolnshire is now part of the East Midlands. I'm inclined to agree with locals who reject the idea that the area in which they live, or anywhere else with a coastline, could be part of the midlands. So, where does that leave the Lincolnshire Fens? The 'local' tv news is broadcast from Hull, Nottingham, or Norwich...hardly local! Is the area part of the East Midlands, greater Yorkshire, or greater East Anglia? I feel it occupies a liminal space, not only between the land and the sea, but between the greater north and the greater south. It is neither one nor the other, but, depending on your terms of reference, could be either.

It used to be joined to the continent by Doggerland. Mesolithic families walked over Doggerland, from the Fens to Europe, as far as the Pyrenees and back. We know this because of the artefacts they brought back with them. As the oceans rose, the area was, once again, submerged, and Britain became, for the first time, separate from the continent of Europe. To many in this part of the world, that was, and is once more, a good thing. As the oceans receded, patches of rich loamy land began to emerge and were settled. Neolithic potters, iron age shepherds, Celts, and Romans, Saxons, and Danes...attracted to the fertile land with access to the sea, left their place names and their routes for us to inherit and to enjoy.

Saxon outlaws sought sanctuary in the Fens' reeded islands from genocidal Norman overlords. As relative peace returned, merchants from the Hanseatic ports, across the North Sea and the Baltic, began to arrive, first as traders, then as settlers. Dutch migrants brought their engineering skills and their gable-ends. As more of the land was drained, immigrants from elsewhere in England and, more recently, from Eastern Europe, came to work it.

Cycling past teams of workers, probably Eastern European, labouring in the vast fields, I am overtaken by others driving lorries to continental Europe packed with produce processed in local factories. If I pop into a corner shop, it is likely to be run by (and not just for) Poles, Russians, Latvians, or Ukrainians, perhaps Kurds, Cantonese, or Punjabis. I appreciate this web of commerce and culture as I pass kitsch cafes selling instant coffee in plastic cups, artfully arranged KitKats in decorative baskets and cellophane-wrapped rubber sandwiches...with union flags fluttering from the plywood windmills and portals of tanks (yes, tanks) that decorate their forecourts. I pass clusters of bungalows with chocolate-brown bricks and white plastic windows, in villages that are a thousand years old or more, with only churches and street patterns to remind us of their ancient heritage. Villages in which the villagers have forgotten how to sing or dance the songs and dances of their ancestors. I feel the poignancy of the liminality of it all: the land, the sea, the land again...the Celts, Romans, English, Danes, Normans, Poles, Russians, Bulgarians, Kurds...

With its universities, societies and centres of culture and governance, the city tends to think it has all the answers, but here, in the windswept Fens of eastern England, the mutability of the landscape and the cultures that shape and are shaped by it, reminds us that life itself is lived in a state of flux. The past is a fiction, the future a dream. Nothing is fixed. Not the coastline, not the accent, not the land, not the economy, not the climate. Change is inevitable, flux is positive. Without flux, there would be no diversity, no progress, and, more to the point, no Fens.

Chris Lewis-Jones is a fine artist, educator, performer and lecturer based at Primary, one of the most exciting artist-run spaces in the UK.

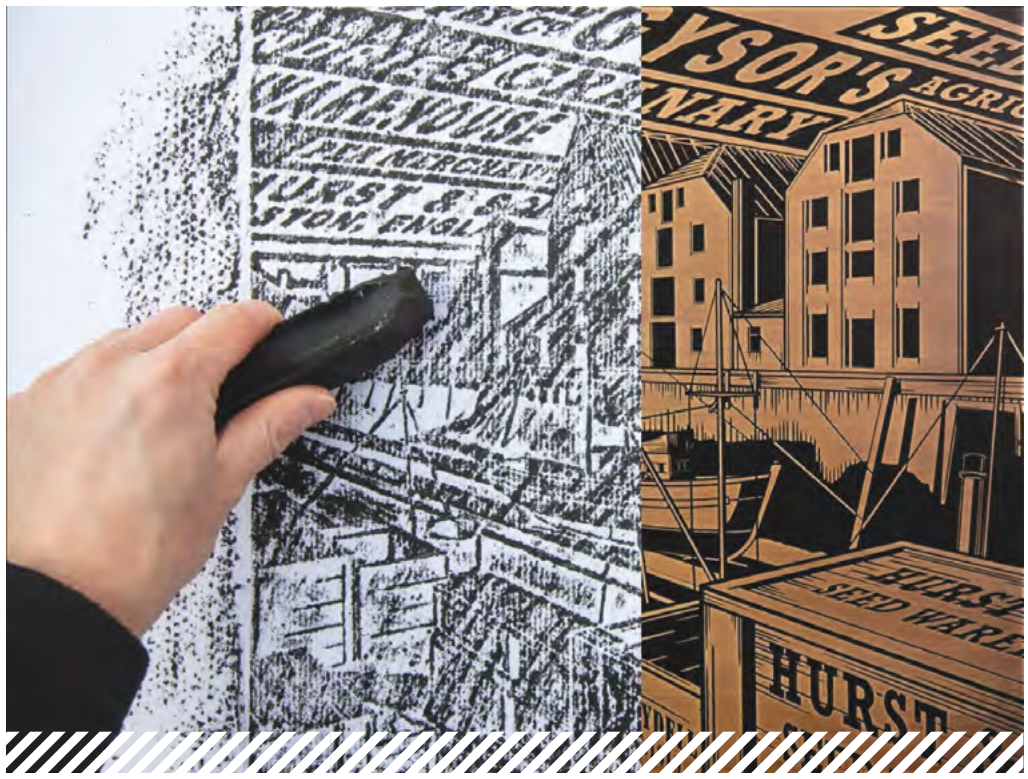
He is an Associate Artist at Nottingham Contemporary, specializing in working with people with dementia, a Lead Tutor in Craft Art & Design for the WEA across the East Midlands, a visiting lecturer at various universities, co-artistic director of Dog's Daughter, and Artistic Director of Nu-Urban Gardeners, a live art and creative landscape project, also based at Primary.

chrislewis-jones.co.uk









The Etched in Time arts trail was developed as part of the Experience Boston project. Working with Creative People and Places project, Transported and Boston Borough Council, Electric Egg have created 8 permanent artworks which celebrate Boston's heritage. The artworks respond to the themes of Travel, Trade and Influence.

ETCHED IN TIME

BY ELECTRIC EGG

The artworks are etched brass with a black inlay and bronzed finish. The choice of medium is inspired by the monumental brasses found in churches across the United Kingdom, particularly in areas like Lincolnshire which, because of their proximity to the coast, benefited from the ease of importing the latten metal needed for their creation. We hope that residents and visitors to Boston will take away their own version of the artwork through rubbings, thus reviving a once popular pastime and encouraging people to create their own interpretation of the artworks. The artworks were hand drawn digitally and are designed to weather with time and become an established part of the street landscape with the patina of the brass evolving.

1. SLEEPER SERVICE (AND OTHER RAILWAY STORIES)

Mounted on the wall near the ticket office entrance.

Reflecting the importance of the railways in Boston's history, the design is inspired by vintage railway posters and features visual references to over 150 years of railway history in Boston. Look out for references to Hall Hills Sleeper Depot, the swing bridge across the River Witham and the locomotive with a local connection, Mayflower.

2. WONDERFUL THINGS

Paving bordering the Market Place, nr. Ingram monument railings.

In 1922, Howard Carter opened the seal on Tutankamun's Tomb. When asked what he saw, he said, in awe, 'Wonderful Things'. At Carter's side that day was Boston man Arthur Callender, one of many Bostonians who've made an impact on the wider world. See if you can spot nods to Herbert Ingram, Jean Ingelow, the Pilgrims and more...

3. MARKET DAYS

Circular raised seating plinth, east side of Market Place.

Markets have always brought life to Boston. From the fairs of sheep driven in from far and wide to the produce of the sea and the land. Markets and trading is how Bostonians have interacted with the world. The artwork is aligned with the points of the compass and around the edge of the work are wayfinders pointing to important locations both home and abroad that have played an important role in Boston's trading history.

4. KNOTTED TO HANSA

Paving on the eastern side of South St. at Custom House Quay.

Boston was a significant port of the Hanseatic league, a trading bloc of nations across Northern and Eastern Europe. In the late medieval period, Boston was alive with sailors and merchants who came to trade their wares. In this etching we see Cog boats & the produce they traded. Various sailing knots can be seen, representing the coming together of cultures & peoples, an intrinsic part of Boston's history.

5. GYSOR'S GRANARY

Pavement nr. the bus stop outside Greyfriars Surgery on the eastern side of South Street.

The banks of the Witham were once lined with warehouses and granaries. Gysor's Hall in South Sq. survives today as flats but was built in 1810 as a seed warehouse by William Fydell - just opposite Fydell House. The warehouse was built on the site of the medieval Gysor's Hall after which it is named and some stonework from the hall is said to have been used in the building.





6. PUMP SQUARE PERAMBULATION
Pavement nr. the pump on the north side of Pump Square.

Pump Sq. features on Hall's 1741 map of Boston, close to Boston's Barditch. Beneath the square are the remains of two vaulted rooms, said to be prison cells where, legend has it, prisoners were forced to pump water for the town's inhabitants. This pump was Boston's only public water pump, giving the square its name. The etching serves as a visual map of the square referencing businesses, inns, schools to name a few.

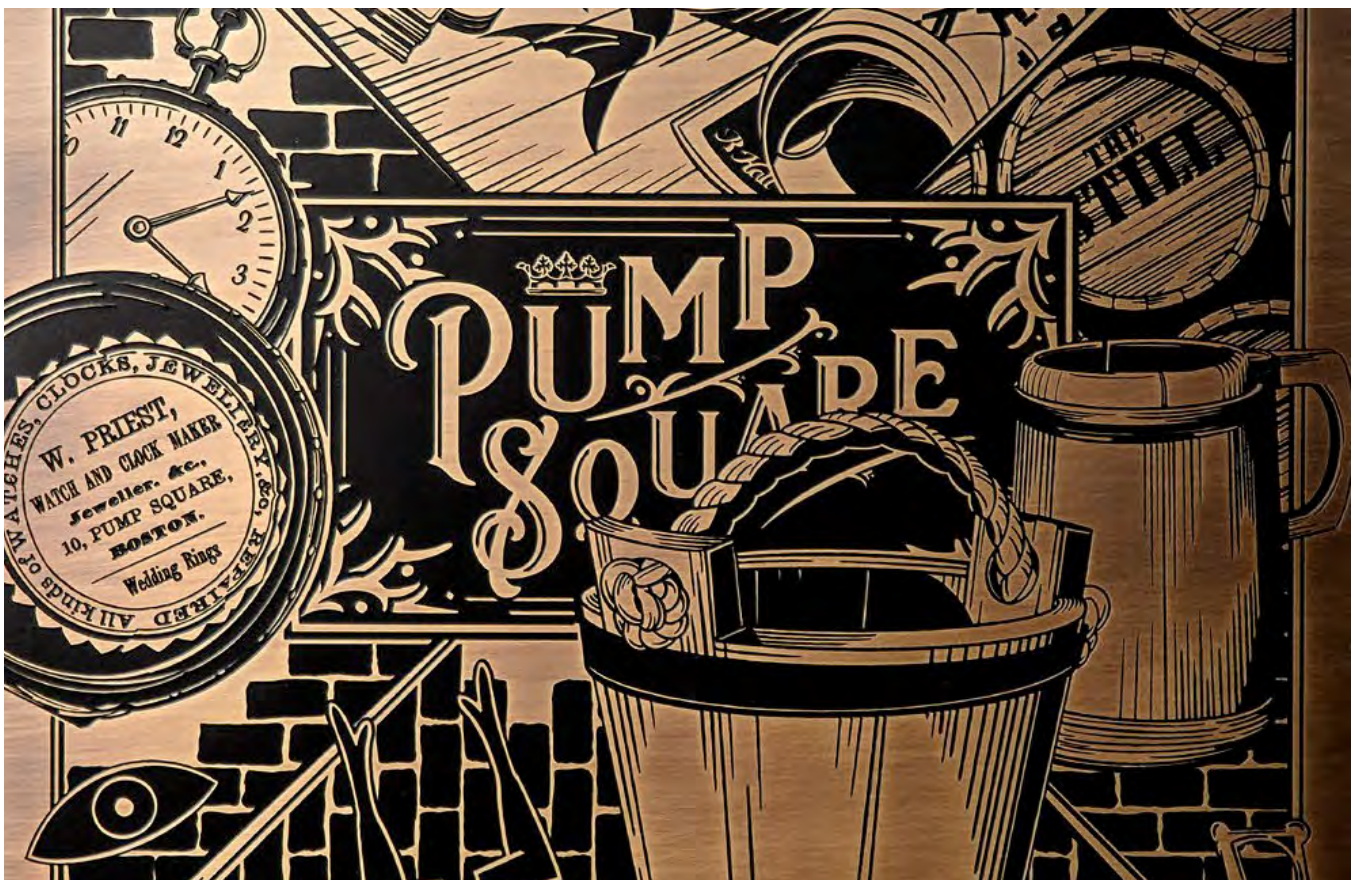
7. WALTER PESCOD
Paving near the entrance to Pescod Hall.

This brass commemorates Walter Pescod (d.1398), a member of the notable Pescod merchant family. On his memorial in St.Botolph's Church, his clothing is adorned with peapods, a play on his family name meaning a trader in peas and also, more, literally as a container or pod of peas. The shears represent the wool trade in which they and many others in Boston traded. They also traded in herring - represented here in skeletal form.

8. WELL-BRED
Pavement near the seating on the corner of Park Gate and Wide Bargate.

Much of the historic prosperity of Boston can be attributed to the wool trade and the export of fleeces to Europe from the port of Boston. Boston also hosted huge sheep markets, where the bargate area of the town would be packed with sheep of various breeds. Chiefly among them was the Lincoln Longwool, whose fleece was highly regarded by textiles merchants and weavers.

"Boston traded grain, wool and fleece, and sea salt produced on the Lincolnshire coast, amongst other things.











The Etched in Time arts trail was developed as part of the Experience Boston project. Funded by Boston Town Deal Accelerator Funding from MHCLG. Etched in Time artworks by Electric Egg, commissioned by Transported for Boston Borough Council and installation by Jamie Hawker of JRH Services.

Electric Egg: electricegg.co.uk
Transported: transportedart.com
Boston Borough Council: mybostonuk.com
Visit Boston UK: visitbostonuk.com

YOU CAN'T SPELL 'TRANSFORM' WITHOUT BACKWARDS 'ART'

BY THOM SEDDON

I don't believe it is a coincidence that I started dabbling in drag when I needed it… Drag was this wonderful world I could escape into. A night off from being who I normally was.



On Tuesday mornings, as I pick grainy sleep from my eyes, I wonder who I might become by the afternoon. Occasionally, I've decided the night before, or even a few days prior. If I'm lucky, there's a vague notion jotted hastily in a notebook, left on the desk for me to find. Or maybe a half-decent suggestion was dropped into my DMs. That having been said, there are some Tuesdays when I'm still clueless about my approaching shapeshift even by lunchtime.

This is a weekly arrangement that I've kept with myself since the end of 2019, when I boldly decided that because Tuesdays are rubbish (and I won't be taking questions, this is simply a fact), I'd make them a space for transformative creation. It sounds rather grand but what that essentially means is somewhere between breakfast and bedtime, I paint, style, blag, sulk, do whatever it takes, to create and document a piece of art for which I am the canvas.

Surprisingly, it can be the 'clueless' instances which make the conjuring more thrilling, when I'll blindly open the makeup box and rummage through the cupboards to see what's in stock to play with. That's when the metamorphosis is akin to an artsy-fartsy improv piece, limited only by my imagination, well and what I've got in my bank account as materials don't always come cheap.

As well as occurring every Tuesday without fail, my other rule for a transformation is that I can't admit defeat; even if halfway through construction what I'd envisioned, and how it's turning out, are not twins or sisters or even in the slightest bit related in appearance. When concepts don't pan out, or the improv is a few 'yes and…' short of a fully realised scene, I push through regardless to see where the vision (or lack thereof) lands.

Whether it's been meticulously planned or I'm just winging it, I somehow keep showing up each week and remain motivated by the process. The end results of these visual transformations vary from twisted, to tongue-in-cheek, to just plain stupid. They then get posted online for anyone to gawp at. No excuses.

Perhaps I should explain what compels me to do this.

In essence, I suppose I'm someone who gets easily bored of their reflection. Even outside of my work, I change aspects of my image frequently – I'm no stranger to a tattoo gun or a bottle of obnoxiously bright hair dye, for example. So, while a smattering of people has commended my efforts from time to time, considering it from the outside as a stressful endeavour, I find a day dedicated to disguise takes the edge off having corporeal form.







The origin of the 'Arthole Tuesday' project as I call it, stems from my work as a drag artist. Since 2013, I've been portraying a ridiculous, rancid, and beautiful creature of the night known as Nana Arthole. However, much like a wig galvanised in hairspray, she can be rigidly set in her ways. Though I love her dearly and appreciate how she helps pay the bills, at some point in our relationship I found myself interested in pushing the boundaries of makeup and costuming. I was curious of the realms awaiting me beyond this bearded drag babe. How else could I present the flesh prison my spirit is bound to? Who else might be in here with us? A statue with skin that is made of slime? Maybe. What about a comic book character whose face is half-hot, half-cold? Sure.

I without doubt sound as if I'm just mucking about, but I actually take this process relatively seriously. No, I promise! This endeavour is a passion project – a creative challenge to myself and an extension of my existing repertoire as an artist and entertainer!

And as is so often the cliché with these things – rest assured I'm cringing as I type this – it has become so much more than that... (Urgh. I'm sorry.) I've always found transforming myself to be therapeutic. It's meditative, explorative, and incredibly liberating to watch your regular ol' self-disappearing in the mirror and something fabulous emerge. Hand on heart, and heart on sleeve, I don't believe it is a coincidence either that I started dabbling in drag when I needed it. In 2013, I was struggling with the death of a loved one, hated my day job, had no idea where life was going. I mean, the list goes on, but 'desperately lost' is the simplest way to summarise it. Drag was this wonderful world I could escape into. A night off from being who I normally was. Nana could find joy and bring smiles to faces when Thom just needed a break. You wouldn't believe what a change came over me from gluing down my natural eyebrows to draw new ones on my forehead, popping on some plastic hair, a pair of ridiculous shoes, and overlining my lips. It's a feeling that pulled me through the darkest of times, and still continues to do so.

Then I started 'Arthole Tuesdays' in 2020 with no idea how much I'd come to rely on these transformations either. A mere four weeks in, early February, I vividly remember hot-gluing silk rose petals onto a dust mask, while contemplating how many people I'd seen wearing face coverings around the city centre. By April, 'Arthole Tuesday' became a handy marker to remind myself where the hell in the week I was as the pandemic days blurred together. It allowed me to continue connecting with others in the digital realms too, since all my regular live shows and scheduled bookings had to be cancelled until further notice. I found it wasn't just me who needed the routine. For many, I was their bizarre cuckoo clock, to entertain them on a weekly basis with whatever look I had cobbled together, and remind them of the day.

I accepted this role happily because as a drag artist, I think it's not only your responsibility to entertain but also be at the forefront of carving out space for the queer community, whether that be a Sunday Funday, a monthly club night, or an annual party to celebrate Pride. Much like this transformation of the self, you enable the transformation of a place, creating an ephemeral atmosphere to welcome others into, so they might find solace from the outside (dare I say 'heteronormative') world. To be visible. Unrestricted. Free. I can't speak for every city or experience, but in my opinion these places are all the more magical for how preciously fleeting they are. There's something bittersweetly special about putting on a show that won't be there tomorrow. Come the wee hours of the morning, it's gone, until next time, when the community can unify once more.

For now, the space I continue to carve out and into which I invite other weirdos, remains Arthole Tuesday, and I can't see myself stopping it anytime soon. There's something integral about it that I need. It's my ritual where fantasy meets reality, where my creative drive is guaranteed an outlet.

And fine, I admit it. It's a lot of fun.

Thom Seddon is an all-round creative type based in Nottingham, where he lives with his husband, their two cats, and watches far too much Judge Judy.

By day he is mostly a writer working in fiction, script and poetry, and by night also works as a drag artist (the infamous Nana Arthole).

He has published two collections to date, The Smart Mouthed Victim and Death is Awful for the Living, each featuring poetic content that is both social commentary and personal confession. His third collection, Choose Your Own Mediocre was released through Big White Shed.

You can see more of his work at artholethom.com



Leanne Moden is a poet and performer, originally from Wisbech. In 2013, she was Fenland Poet Laureate, and she established the Fen Speak writers' community, which continues to run to this day. Here, Leanne talks about growing up in the Fens, her teenage frustrations with rural life, and the realisation that fitting in is sometimes just a matter of perspective.

SEEING THE WORLD FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE

BY LEANNE MODEN

All my family are from the Fens. We've lived in and around Wisbech for centuries. I once paid for one of those 'find your ancestors' searches on the internet, only to discover that the Moden clan have been stationed in roughly the same spot for at least three hundred years.

Sometimes it's hard to notice change when it's happening right in front of you, and the Fens change so slowly, it can sometimes feel like a place stuck in time. A place that never changes.

As a teenager, I found this slow pace of life unbearably frustrating. No cinema, no sixth form college, no buses on a Sunday. Everything fun seemed to be happening elsewhere. Even the land itself was flat and featureless.

My dad is an intensely practical man. He does all the DIY around the house, spends his free time browsing the Screw Fix catalogue, and loves nothing better than mending cars on the weekends. He's lived in the Fens his whole life, and he worked for the same company for almost forty-five years. He's also not one for overt displays of affection.

When I was sixteen, I started working at Boots in Wisbech on Saturday mornings. My dad would always get me up at 7am, sit with me as I ate breakfast while the rest of the family were still asleep, and drive me into town to start my shift. He even made me a packed lunch – Red Leicester on sliced white bread, a packet of crisps and orange squash in recycled pop bottle.

I didn't appreciate it at the time, but that quiet support was his way of showing me that he loved me. He didn't necessarily say the words very often, but he would do anything for me.

This attitude – that love is something you do rather than something you say, that you should always work hard and never expect too much in return – permeated my adolescence. It's a common attitude among rural working-class communities in the Fens. That you must support the things you love quietly, with actions rather than words. I suppose it's an attitude that comes from a sense of geographical and social isolation; you learn how to look after your own, live quietly and stay put.

But I didn't want to stay put or live quietly. I wanted to get out there and find my place in the world. And I was convinced I would never quite belong where I had grown up.

I left the Fens as soon as I could. First, to college in a neighbouring town, then to university near London. I wanted to be close to the bright lights of a big city, and I really thrived in a new environment. I met new people from all different corners of the UK, and I discovered poetry, and a community of writers who inspired me. I learnt new things, went on adventures, and even had my first ever taste of curry! I was reckless and free-spirited, and I finally felt like I was finding my place in the world.



PHOTO CREDIT: ANDREW LEE

"Fitting in is sometimes just a matter of perspective"

But I also missed the Fens terribly. I missed the freedom of those big skies. I missed being able to see the stars. I missed knowing my neighbours by name, and I even missed the endless flatness of the Fenland landscape. But most of all, I missed my family.

Post-university, my confidence began to falter. By this time, I'd decided to become a writer, and I wasn't sure there would be any opportunities available to me back home. Then, just as suddenly as I had left, I found myself back in the Fens.

Returning after three years away filled me with mixed emotions, and I was particularly worried that I wouldn't be able to find the same sense of camaraderie that I'd had down in London. After all, no one I knew in Wisbech wrote poetry.

Of course, I couldn't have been more wrong on that one. There was – and still is – a huge community of writers working in the Fens, and once I'd found one of them, they introduced me to another, who introduced me to another, and a whole new world opened up for me! I found local open mic nights and enter competitions, started making friends and meeting new people, all while building up my own skills.

But my dad continued to be my biggest champion, always asking after my writing, always taking an interest in what I was doing. It was his way of telling me he was proud of me. Because people like us don't often become writers.

Then, in 2013, I won the Fenland Poet Laureate competition, a prize that brought together my past and my present, and allowed me to write and create opportunities for other writers across the Fens. I spent my year in the role making stuff happen – setting up competitions and projects, starting events and encouraging young writers to dream big. Because here we show our love through our actions, rather than our words.

In 2013, it felt like the whole world had changed, and the place I had resisted for so long became one of acceptance, opportunity and belonging. But really – although the Fens have changed in the thirty years I've known them – the thing that's changed the most over that time period is me.

After all, sometimes, you have to go away to come back again. Sometimes, you have to step outside your comfort zone to discover what really matters. And sometimes, finding your place in the world is all just a matter of perspective.

Perspective is one of the poems that Leanne wrote during her tenure as Fenland Poet Laureate. Revisiting the poem in 2021 gave Leanne the inspiration to the write this article for Radical Routes. Here is some of her work:

PERSPECTIVE

Here, there is clarity. A raw, persistent
truth – a cold disparity – hidden beneath
these tessellating fields. Fields stitched
by ditches to a muddy canvas. An after-

thought, a lost and lonely landmass.
Marshes marred by the harshness of
weather-worn trees. Each movement
of their aching limbs born of necessity.

The seasickness, which rises when
tracing that unaltered horizon, will
never fade. It is the price we pay to
come and stare into the eyes of gods,

to see the stars scratched and scattered
across unending skies and be reminded
just how much it mattered. The paling
moonlight dies, submerged and sinking,

but never fully sunk. No dampened way
of thinking, drunk on every part of these
wild and weary, sun-smeared fens. I'll walk
each straightened plough line, now as then.

SIREN SONG

A Terzanelle

The clamouring of rooks among the trees
reminds me of the sirens on the shore,
whose raucous songs were blatant augury,

of omens too pernicious to ignore.
The scream of sirens on the motorway
remind me of the sirens on the shore:

a devastating ending to the day.
Those birds will seek the car-crash carrion.
The scream of sirens on the motorway –

a call as bright and clear as clarion –
inviting us to seek our own demise.
Those birds will seek the car-crash carrion:

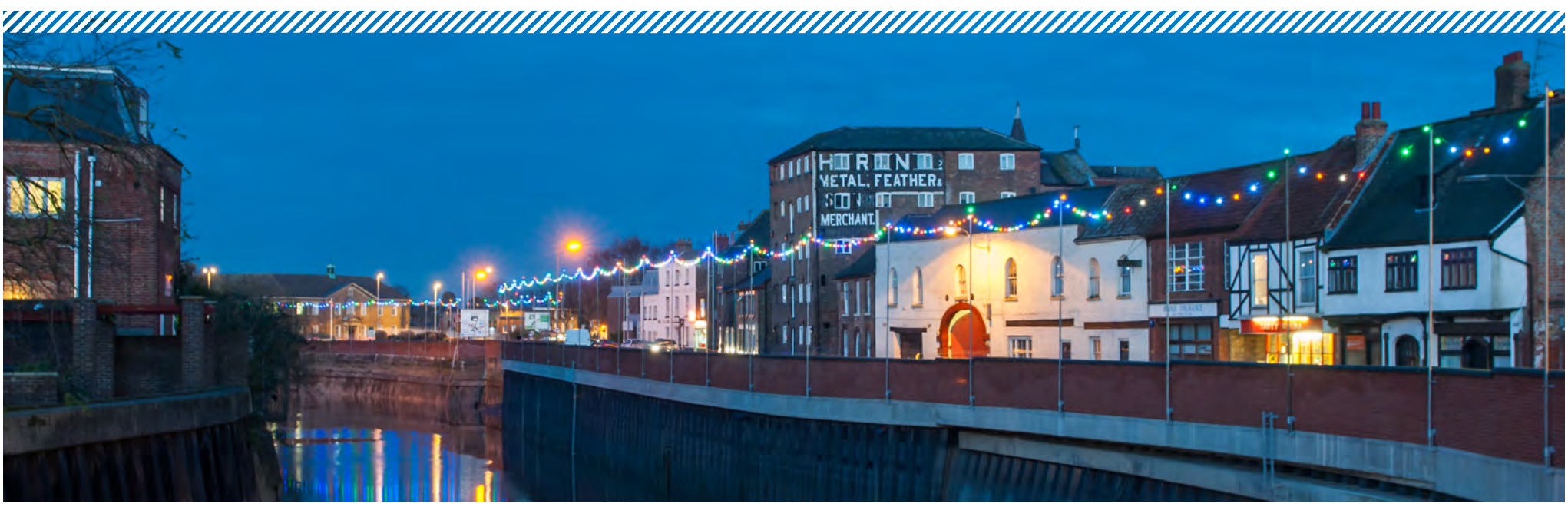
like Erysichthon, nothing satisfies
the calling void. Obsession quantified,
inviting us to seek our own demise.

The war inside my head is amplified;
the clamouring of rooks among the trees.
The calling void, obsession quantified,
whose raucous songs are blatant augury.





PHOTO CREDIT: ANDREW LEE









Listen Here to Pilgrim Woman sculptor Rachel Carter and internationally renowned craft-activist and public artist, Carrie Reichardt, talk to each other about what they have in common as artists and people despite their different backgrounds, their belief in therapeutic effects of making, and their art commissions in Boston.

BY LAND AND SEA

IN CONVERSATION WITH ARTISTS RACHEL CARTER & CARRIE REICHARDT

In this, and previous editions of Radical Routes, Rachel has spoken of her creative and physical journeys in the making of 'Pilgrim Woman,' a sculpture based on the stories of the separatist families arrested and held in Boston jail in the early 17th century.

Rachel co-creates the work with women across Lincolnshire, from settled and recently arrived communities, using the ancient method of weaving on a Lucet (see that article on page 27). Hand weaving and stitching is combined with the latest digital technology of photogrammetry to create a 3D print for casting in bronze with the traditional lost wax method.

Carrie is one of three innovative artists commissioned to create 'The Boston Buoys,' six stunning new artworks, by customising historic navigation buoys, re-designed to showcase Boston's rich heritage and maritime connections.

'The Boston Buoys' artworks aim to enhance pride in the town and attract visitors. The four-metre steel buoys, which previously aided navigation in The Wash, are imposing objects, and come in fascinating shapes and styles. Carrie, who has made work for the Victoria and Albert Museum in London amongst other commissions, has created distinctive mosaics for buoys placed in Central Park, and at St Botolph's Footbridge. The buoy located in Central Park is in a garden landscaped by award-winning artist and garden designer Jeni Cairns and a brilliant volunteer team.

Do listen in on this brilliant conversation between two artists about their lives, their work, and inspirations, and about how much two people, who have never met before, can have so much in common.

Keep up to date here on the Transported website.

www.transportedart.com/projects/current-projects/boston-buoys

or follow the Buoy's own Facebook page www.facebook.com/BostonBuoys/

Transported is leading the project, in partnership with Boston Borough Council, Boston Big Local, Boston in Bloom and the Environment Agency Boston Barrier Scheme.



PILGRIM ROUTES

BY ANNA SCOTT & STEVEN HATTON

A journey through the pilgrim landscape. A new gazetteer and guide is available for local Pilgrims' heritage sites.

The traces left by the people known as the Pilgrims in Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire are fleeting but often intriguing. Many people have heard of the Mayflower and her voyage four hundred years ago, but fewer know about the places they came from and travelled through on their many journeys before they ever set foot upon that ship. A new book explores many of the places connected to the Pilgrims' story in the Midlands, alongside a short history of their lives from England through to Holland and then on to America in 1620.

Written by historian Dr Anna Scott and featuring photography by Steven Hatton, the story is woven through connections between people and places in the region with wider events taking place in England, Europe, and America at that time. The Pilgrim story has been told before and from many angles. This book takes a fresh perspective, acting as a guide that allows both those familiar and new to the story to retrace the Pilgrims' journey in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire and bring these historic locations and buildings to life with fresh insight and new photography.

Visitors interested in following the routes the Pilgrims took can use the guide to explore the region, on a trail which takes you from the rural villages of North Nottinghamshire through to Boston on the south Lincolnshire coast, and then north again to Gainsborough and Immingham. Many of the sites feature commemorations to the story's leading figures, some of which were erected over a century ago.



Before they became known as Pilgrims, these were religious separatists who chose to break away from the established church. Today, you can visit the churches they attended, where they worshipped and baptised their children, before they rejected these places and fled their homes, often inspired by men they had heard preach at those churches.

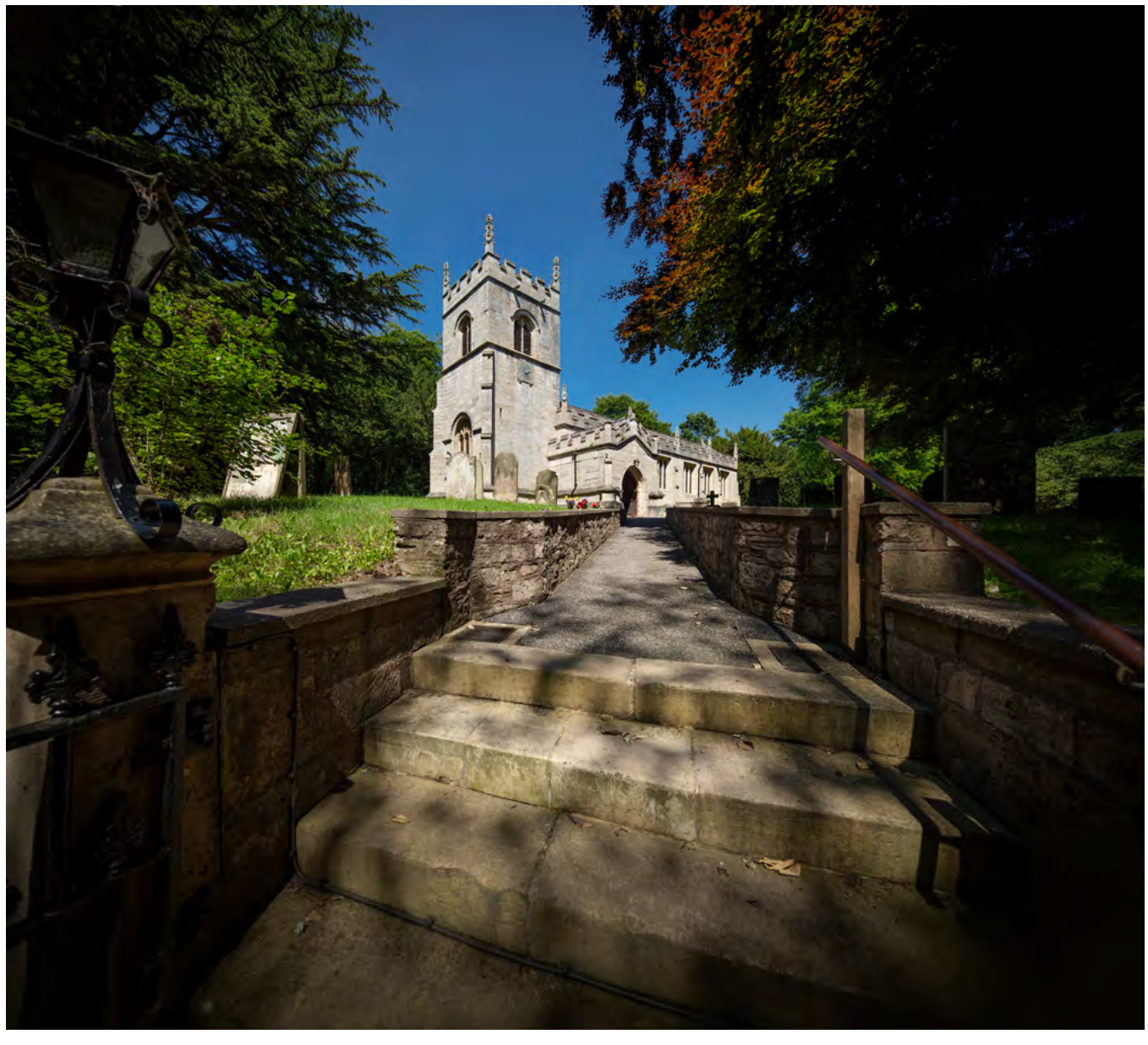
Fear of persecution and an ongoing search for religious tolerance drew them to Amsterdam and the promise of a better life. After living in Holland for some years and realising life there was also less than ideal, some of them moved on again, hoping to find better lives in America. They started one of the earliest English colonies and their story became mythologised. They became symbols of a new American national identity which overlooked the role of the Native Americans in their survival and the impact the Pilgrims and other colonists would have on indigenous peoples.

While the physical footprints left behind by the Pilgrims are fleeting, the power of their story can be felt in what is, at times, a dramatic saga of hope, faith, and determination, connected to places you may already know well. It is also a story which has become heavily mythologised, simplified, and sometimes just completely forgotten, and this guide attempts to go some way towards addressing that.











The book was produced as part of West Lindsey District Council's Mayflower 400 programme for the 2020 anniversary with funding from Arts Council England. To find out more about the book and how to obtain a copy visit the Discover Gainsborough website at www.discovergainsborough.com

If you are interested in finding out more about sites connected to the story throughout England, you can also download the Mayflower 400 app for Android or iPhone to follow the national digital trail.


GRATEFUL FOR...
I LOVE
BAKE
Baking
Baking
Baking
Baking
MORE THAN A/PART
More than a-part is a portrait of Boston in, and emerging from, lockdown during the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic. Boston residents were invited to share their stories and to think about the question: what or who are we thankful for?


11
I LIVE ALONE BUT I'M A VERY SOCIABLE PERSON
I'M GLAD I HAD KNOWLEDGE IN TECH
THE MOST ZOOMS I EVER DID IN ONE DAY
THE FACT I KNEW A LOT ABOUT TEAMS, FACEBOOK, ZOOM AND SKYPE.... REALLY HELPED.
MORE THAN A/PART
More than a-part is a portrait of Boston in, and emerging from, lockdown during the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic. Boston residents were invited to share their stories and to think about the question: what or who are we thankful for?



Wetu is the Wampanoag word for house and for centuries has been a traditional home central to the native people's life and culture.

WAMPANOAG PERSPECTIVE PROJECT

BY ISABELLE RICHARDS

Those who visit the Plimoth Patuxet living history museum in Plymouth, Massachusetts, today will see a number of different kinds of homes. They include a mat-covered wetu and a longer, bark-covered house or nush wetu, meaning a house with three fire pits inside.

Members of the Wampanoag Nation are planning to visit North Nottinghamshire this September as part of the Mayflower 400 commemorations. The newly constructed wetu will then go on display in the grounds of Bassetlaw Museum - close to the original homes of Mayflower passengers such as William Bradford, Susanna White-Winslow and the Brewster family.

Organisers are also hoping to hold a conference on acceptance and the Wampanoag perspective during September.

Darius Coombs is Director of Wampanoag and Eastern Woodlands Research and Interpretive Training at Plimoth Patuxet. He is also one of the designers of a specially commissioned wetu that will travel to the UK later this year.

Here, Darius explains more about designing the wetu and its huge cultural significance to the Wampanoag people.

A wetu is a traditional Wampanoag house which might hold six to eight people. The house you're going to see in England this year, hopefully, will be 16ft long, 14ft wide and 10ft high. You want it to be at least 10ft high because it draws fire nicely, and in the middle, you have a smoke hole which allows smoke to go out.

How do you build a wetu?

The frame is made out of white cedar; you put one pole one side, pack it with stone first and make your arch. Then you put another pole on the other side, then take the ropes and pull them together to form a perfect arch. As they're dome-shaped houses, you start high in the middle and have them slightly going down on both sides.

Then, once your arches are all done, you have to put rings around the houses - a pole that bends around the house going horizontally and ties all the arches together. You tie your frame together with hickory bark and spruce root, and then go out to get the bark, which is fresh and will move exactly the way you want it. Then, you have an exterior frame which goes on the outside which holds all that bark together.

The wetu and its lasting legacy

The wetu that is being created for Bassetlaw Museum in England is of huge cultural significance. We don't just want to build it and leave it - there has to be some information, literature there that people can learn from. It's important that we show our culture in England so that people will know about our people, that we're still here and we're not going anywhere.

After the project, the wetu in the garden will be used by Bassetlaw Museum visitors as an outdoor learning and exhibition space. This will complement the Pilgrims Gallery which was created as part of the Pilgrim Roots project and Mayflower 400, which features contemporary interpretation and a replica Brewster' study space.



The view from England

Isabelle Richards, Heritage Engagement Officer at Bassetlaw Museum, adds: "The idea of the wetu project is bring over some representatives of the Wampanoag Nation to the UK.

Here, they will share some building skills, traditional craft skills and their stories, culture and heritage with local people in Bassetlaw - particularly the local school groups we're hoping to bring to have some sessions and to see the wetu being built.

The Wampanoag were really involved with the interpretation of the Pilgrims Gallery from the start. We were very keen not to put words in their mouths, so they approved all the interpretation about the native way of life within the gallery.

So, there was a really strong working relationship there already, and there was this idea that we could share our culture in this way, comparing perhaps the traditional Nottinghamshire mud-and-stud building techniques with the wetu architecture, and the native skills from both regions."

Excitement is building as preparations are made for the week long project activity 20th-26th of September. As the programme is finalised, announcements will be shared on the Pilgrim Roots website: www.pilgrimroots.co.uk

Isabelle Richards has an MA in Cultural Heritage Management and is the Heritage Engagement Officer for the Pilgrim Roots project.

> *"There was this idea that we could share our culture in this way*





The Elder Tree project is a three-year, region wide residency programme, empowering people aged 55 and over to experience writing creatively - many for the first time.

The project is part of the Celebrating Age initiative, funded by Arts Council England and the Baring Foundation, and managed by Writing East Midlands. The Wish You Were Here residency was based in Boston, led by artist François Matarasso and writer Sonya Hundal, and supported by local arts organisation Transported.

The Wish You Were Here group met weekly over Zoom to write work based on the town of Boston, and their individual experiences of living in this part of Lincolnshire. The resulting pieces, some sampled here, paint a beautiful picture of a multi-faceted and dynamic place, full of wonderful stories.



WISH YOU WERE HERE

EDITED BY FRANÇOIS MATARASSO
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROSIE REZIA

WELCOME TO LINCOLNSHIRE

BY TESS SANDERSON

We were loaded down. Two cars, Two small lorries, a roof rack.

Possessions boxed, wrapped, bagged, even in black rubbish sacks

Piled high on the back seat, the passenger seat and in the foot well

The cats in their carriers, seat-belted in, even the stuff we wanted to sell.

'Welcome to Lincolnshire' the sign declared, as my tyres hit bumps in the road;

I felt every box and ornament, rise and fall in my delicate load.

Arriving two hours late, tempers were frazzled, look was bedraggled,

No kettle or tea bags, bleach spilt all over the sheets: not neat.

The key wouldn't turn in the lock, it took brute force to open the door:

Flowery, grubby net curtains, lying sadly to welcome us on the floor.

The bungalow was a wreck, peeling paint, a damp smell lingered in the air

A pink tiled bathroom, a pink bath, even a pink toilet – the lino was in despair.

Windows that needed replacing, a garden that was messy and overrun,

A crooked, broken greenhouse, the weeds so tall they blocked out the sun.

We had to find somewhere quickly, and this was all that was free—

Free as in vacant, the rent was six months in advance — and costly.

But we had arrived, sat back and took six weeks to unpack our worldly goods,

The books, the ornaments, curtains up, the furniture made from pine wood.

We ventured around town and beyond, exploring new places to make our own.

We struck up new friendships, feeling that gently, seeds were being sown

Then as we settled in, getting comfortable, thinking we would stay awhile,

It arrived through the letterbox on the wall, the news that would destroy it all:

The letter said 'You get packing up once more, you are required to quit.

We are selling up the house here and you two are no longer the right fit.'

Somewhat deflated and down hearted.

We had arrived... and then—departed.

And so, we moved, again and again, four times more in as many years,

But we knew this was where we belonged, so we set aside our fears.

Staying well within the Lincolnshire boundary, we looked for stable roots;

We found this corner bungalow, and for now, have hung up our travelling boots.





GLASS HOUSES

BY SONYA HUNDAL

'We don't call them greenhouses. A greenhouse is what you have in a garden. These are commercial glasshouses. We can't just pull them down. They're on land we still want for cultivation.'.

Ian knows the cycle of propagation intimately. He coaxes viable plants from seed and he sets up new trials for experimental varieties. He carries in his imagination the processes of cultivation: observing, inspecting, recording for each crop. He sets the novices to cleaning the seed trays and to monitoring temperature and humidity. With experience, they progress to scheduling the seed drills and the rotations to field.

The glasshouses are all being thrown out. There is no money in them. Seed plants are to be raised in featureless monoculture polytunnels. No more refuge for multi-hued sweetcorn, yellow courgettes and purple potatoes. No allowances for self-germinating cucumbers and tomatoes from the spent compost or for the graceful fungi, leaning in to the warm panes. Ian has a hessian bag for unexpected bounty and many of the workers have taken the trial crops home with the nominal requirement of recording their texture, taste and keeping qualities.

Pliers have been used to snap the frames so the glass can be removed. It's laid on pallets sheathed with thick black plastic. After the panes have been stacked and wrapped, a small digger manoeuvres along the pathways and starts to crush the steel. Two hard-hatted men angle-grind the accidental sculptures into lengths and throw them into a skip.

Ian looks weary as he surveys the site and completes the forms. He discusses when the plot can be dressed with fertiliser. The slabs will be lifted, the water pipes and hoses disconnected, the ground picked over by a team of contractors for stray metal, plastic and glass, before the ground is ploughed and readied for brassicas. The quiet order of the glass-houses, misted when frost curled the growth outside, has been erased, replaced by uniform kale that will be picked and pre-washed for the supermarkets.

Pads is short for paddocks. It is a stretch of fields with a narrow footpath along the dyke and a useful short cut through the village. There used to be glass-houses next to the pads. Glasshouses with courgettes, sweetcorn and onions in trays along the floor, from seedlings to bunched crowns of lush leaves. Booted workers in green overalls sprayed and rotated the trays, the sounds of their cultivation muted by the glass.

WHAT COLOUR IS THE WIND

BY BRIAN SKINNER

It was nice of Sam, you know, to take me to the coast. I mean he didn't have to. I was sorry he's one of those drivers who never speak until they have parked up, but he is deaf and that does limit conversation when driving, especially when his only passenger is blind. Despite that I wasn't lonely.

I like to have a window open—not much you understand, but enough so that I can hear what is going on outside the confines of the car. Sam, he doesn't mind at all, as long as it's not too draughty.

The traffic is really noisy in town, what with all the different types of engine. Mind you, some are quiet and I can imagine that type of car being driven by elderly—sorry, more mature people. The ones that rev up all the time or the motor bikes that roar past us, well they're the youngsters of the world, always rushing from place to place, doing what they now consider to be important but will probably mean little of nothing to them in a few years' time. Then there are the other noisy cars, the ones with dodgy engines and faulty exhausts. Apart from their very distinctive sounds, there is also the pungent aroma of carbon dioxide fumes. Or is it monoxide? I can never re-member.

We were stationary for a while, at a crossing. I know that because I could hear the bleeping sound that is made when the lights are go for pedestrians. I could also hear the people walking. Some were shufflers, some were confident striders and at least one had metal studs on the soles. They sounded like my brother used to sound. He was a soldier.

We passed a coal lorry. You can always tell coal. It has a very distinctive smell, sort of soft and dusty, unlike petrol which smells sharp and clean.

Slowly we passed out of town and into the countryside, although maybe countryside is the wrong word to use when you're speeding along a main road full of other vehicles all rushing to get past you. We got stuck in the inevitable traffic jam and came to a halt. The fumes were really bad and I had to shut the window until we were on the move again. This may sound strange to you but I often wonder what a traffic jam looks like.

Sam doesn't like too much traffic, thank goodness. He told me once that he never felt in control when everyone else was flying about, so I wasn't surprised when we turned off and went by what he called 'the back roads.' We were going a lot slower now but I could hear the mournful sound of cows and the sharp complaining voices of sheep. I thought I heard a chicken too but it was rather distant so I might have been mistaken.

We followed a tractor towing a trailer full of manure. No chance of me being wrong there. I didn't close the window this time though. It's a proper countryside smell is manure. We waited at a level crossing until a small train went roaring through, hooter blowing. They're all diesel now of course and they don't sound very interesting to me. When I was a child, they were steam engines with high-pitched whistles. Even though I never saw one, I could feel the power by the sounds they made.

The journey via the back roads was very interesting. I could feel the sun, hot on my face as it shone down through the windscreen. Sam must have felt it too because I could hear him opening the sunroof. It didn't make that much difference really because the draft was angled towards the rear seats but the rushing sound seemed to make it cooler. He'd also opened the window on his side and every time a vehicle came the other way there was a 'whoosh' as it passed us. I knew we were approaching the sea be-fore Sam. The bird song changed for one thing and I could smell the salty tang of the sea on the breeze.

When we had parked up Sam helped me out of the car and linking arms we strolled down to the beach. The tide was in and the waves crashed on the shore. I heard the water run up the beach laughing and then seeming to hiss in annoyance as it was pulled back again.

'Tell me what the sea sounds like, Tony,' Sam asked. But how do you describe sound to a deaf man? 'You tell me what colour the wind is first,' I re-plied. We both laughed and walked on, each of us happy with what we knew.



TALES OF A SALT MARSH

BY JANE KAY

They manage it and manage it well, but this land is mine. My heritage. Don't tell me that I cannot be-cause I can. Your signs and words of warning are meaningless to me.

The sun rises through a sky that stretches into the universe. The forever silence is pierced by the haunting call of a lapwing. Hoof marks indent black tarry mud below a thin brown layer of sediment. Tiny spidery crabs scuttle across silt to scoop out muddy hidey-holes. Their beady eyes stare back into mine: what they see is beyond me. Water swirls serenely at the bottom of the creek, warmed by the sun. The scent of the sea drifts across flat marshland, stirring a meadow of purple sea lavender and purslane. Seagrasses whip and whisper to a soaring egret. It is hot, and the samphire grows tall and succulent, ready for gathering. No pulling; just snip, snip with scissors. Handfuls of salty deliciousness.

Be quiet and listen carefully. Wish you were here? You could scratch out cockles for supper. They lie in bed beneath the sandy surface of the distant mudflat. Seafood and samphire; an ocean-fresh feast.

I can guide you. Come, but stay alert, for this place will claim you, heart and soul. The tide is ebbing and we must set off; it is a long and treacherous undertaking.

Step cautiously: there are no paths. Snaking creeks suck feet into knee-deep mud, and broken shells will cut your toes. Keep your eyes on the horizon and forge ahead. Time is precious. Slip into the water and swim if you dare. Hear the skylark? There is much to enjoy but don't tarry long; we have a way to go.

Do you see the golden sandbank drying in the sun? We are almost there. Reach out and touch the distant land as it floats on the rim of the sea. What an adventure—and it is not finished yet. Abide with me a while and savour the view.

The bones of my vessel lie submerged in the sand, its ribs nipped and nibbled by passing travellers. I dig as I always dig. My fingers are slight but I can try, as I always try. Time means nothing here. I have forgotten you exist.

Water rises soundlessly. The glassy sandbar shimmers as the sea licks the carcass of my boat. There are no pounding waves of warning. Clawed sand melts back into itself. Creeks fill and water swirls, and sucks, and cools. No swimming now. Keep moving. Keep moving for the tide will not wait. Slip and slither, grasp and pull, but don't stop until you feel your feet upon dry earth. This wild and beautiful space yearns for you.

Your hunger is sated by the fruits this land gives freely, and there is sufficient for us all. Sleep deeply and dream. You have been blessed to share your tale with those who dare to travel this path

My journey is eternal and I need no rest. This is where I spend my days. I know the turning of the tide and the waxing of the moon, and I navigate my vessel by the stars.

This writing, along with wonderful illustrations by Rosie Rezia, will be published as a paperback anthology, which will be available in the autumn.

Make sure you sign up for the Writing East Midlands newsletter at www.writingeastmidlands.co.uk, to find out more about this project and to get the full anthology.


THAT'S WHAT'S MAKING ME MAD,
THAT I CAN'T GO SWIMMING!
I'D GO 3 TIMES A WEEK!
MORE THAN A/PART
More than a-part is a portrait of Boston in, and emerging from, lockdown during the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic. Boston residents were invited to share their stories and to think about the question: what or who are we thankful for?
GRATEFUL FOR...
I LOVE
youtube
SCREEN TIME
FILMS
I PLAY ROBLOX
TELEVISION
MORE THAN A/PART
More than a-part is a portrait of Boston in, and emerging from, lockdown during the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic. Boston residents were invited to share their stories and to think about the question: what or who are we thankful for?

SEA SHANTIES

A HUMAN RESPONSE TO HARDSHIP

BY DANNY PEDLER

Lincolnshire is a coastal county. Here the land and sea are neighbours in conflict; the tempestuous sea crashing into the coasts, threatening costly tantrums. South Lincolnshire has a more nuanced relationship with its noisy neighbour; miles of muddy marsh, beyond the flood barriers, where we can see a melding of clay and water in a hard-won stalemate. The yearly flooding of fields is no more after the water drained away enabling the land, scarred by the ditches and dykes, to be cultivated.

For hundreds of years, this part of the world has had contact with different cultures. Port towns such as Boston and Spalding have a long connection to sea travel and trade. One of the most well-known stories is the association of people from the area with The Mayflower story and the founding of Boston, Massachusetts in 1630. This example of early travel to North America established a route from across the Atlantic and opened the world up to international nautical trade. It took six weeks for a ship in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to cross the Atlantic, meaning that the people on ships spent much of their lives at sea. Crews were left isolated on such travels; it is no wonder then that a sub-culture, and sub-genre of folk music, emerged on merchant, war, and whaling ships.

A sea shanty is a form of song that was, and still is, accessible to all. Created centuries ago, by diverse crews made up of misfits and conscripts, shanties offer a simple format to bring people together. It is a heavily structured form with multiple refrains which are joined by all singers.

This type of song lends itself to the passing of the melody to multiple voices each adding lines of their own. Anyone can either join in, or take the lead with shanty singing. Their simplicity and inclusive nature give us an idea of why they became so popular recently during the isolation of the coronavirus pandemic, when people were forced to engage in different, remote interactions to socialise with each other.

Why were Shanties sung?

They were sung to unite crews, to entertain them, and to conduct their work. Through the analysis of their lyrics, we gain an insight into sailors' lives: their hopes, fears, and desires are clear to see.

Hauling shanties are work songs designed to keep the sailors in time while they performed repetitive tasks, such as hauling on ropes to lift sails. A short drag (or short haul) shanty is one variant of many different types of hauling shanties and would accompany the unfurling or shortening of sails requiring short bursts of energy.

The shanty man would sing the first and third lines, while the repeated refrain on lines two and four that remains the same throughout the entire song, would be sung by the whole crew.

The short drag shanties are simple songs which nevertheless give us an insight on how people lived on ships, what they missed, and what was important to them. These are some verses from a short drag shanty, **Haul Away.**



When I was just a little lad or so my mummy told me
Away haul away, we'll haul away Joe
That if I didn't kiss the girls my lips would go all mouldy
Away haul away, we'll haul away Joe

[Chorus]
Away! Ho! Haul away, we'll haul away together
Away haul away, we'll haul away Joe
Away! Ho! Haul away, we'll hope for better weather
Away haul away, we'll haul away Joe

Well now can't you see the black clouds a-gatherin?
Away Haul away, we'll haul away Joe
Well now can't you see the storm clouds a-rising?
Away haul away, we'll haul away Joe

Women were not allowed on ships, sometimes for superstitious reasons, but mostly because of the expense. This theme is present in most sea shanties as the crew desires for female company once again. Sail ships were often at the mercy of the seas, the hope for good weather would have been an acute one.

The Longest Johns - Haul Away Joe - YouTube (2018)

Fo'c'sle songs

Forecastle (shortened to fo'c'sle) songs were sung by crews at the end of voyages which often told of the adventures and hardships sailors faced to entertain those who they met on land. In this example, the hard conditions on ships are revealed. This contrasts with the refrains and chorus which lament the leaving of the ship.



I thought I heard the old man say
Leave her Johnny, leave her
Tomorrow you will get your pay
And it's time for us to leave her

[Chorus]
Leave her Johnny, leave her
Oh, leave her Johnny, leave her
The voyage is done, and the winds don't blow
And it's time for us to leave her

It was rotten meat and weevilly bread
Leave her Johnny, leave her
'You'll eat or starve', the old man said
And it's time to leave her

Seán Dagher - Leave Her Johnny - YouTube (2020)

Many other shanty forms exist songs for pumping water from the bilges of the ship, songs for turning the capstan to raise the anchor, and songs to unite and motivate sailors during the hardships of whaling in the pacific. The New Zealand shanty The Wellerman was the focus of much international collaboration during the 2020-21 coronavirus lockdowns. The popular reaction and collaboration on the song ushered in an international enthusiasm in sea shanties and allowed musical interactions even in the most distanced of times. It proves that song is a fundamentally human requirement, and proof that folk music can be as relevant today as it ever was.

The Longest Johns - Wellerman - YouTube (2018)

The Wellerman (Sea Shanty)
- From TikTok to Epic Remix - YouTube (2021

"Shanties offer a simple format to bring people together



Danny Pedler is a historian and musician. Best known for his work in the folk duo Pedler // Russell, their album 'Field and Dyke' incorporates oral history interviews from people from South Holland, Lincolnshire, into the music, written to the rhythms of machines from local factories. This album and accompanying book 'Field and Dyke: A History of South Holland', are available to buy on the Pedler // Russell website.

pedlerrussell.com



There is a meditative quality about creating art and crafts in which you can lose yourself, be transported to another time or place.

A VIKING LEGACY

BY RACHEL CARTER

Loop, turn, pull. Loop, turn, pull.

The motion of the hands and cord working together to create a woven braid.

Loop, turn, pull.

A loop of thread is lifted over the tine of the Lucet by pinching it gently between my fingers and teasing it upwards.

Loop, turn, pull.

The left hand twists the Lucet around to show another face tightening the thread as it turns.

Loop, turn, pull.

The final teasing of the thread pulling it just that bit tighter to close the braid and start again.

There is a meditative quality about creating art and crafts in which you can lose yourself, be transported to another time or place. Sometimes, the only thing that matters is the tension of the thread, the movement of one's hands as they work in unison and the resulting woven braid that emerges from the Lucet, perfectly square with each side showing all the delicate twists and turns. Sometimes I feel my hands can work on their own, they develop a muscle memory, and instinctively know how much tension to place on the thread, when to turn, and when to pull.

I have always been fascinated by how things work and by things left behind. As a child I remember collecting broken bits of pottery discovered by digging in the garden. I would wash and study each shard. Who did this belong to? What was this used for? Sometimes it was the geometry that I found interesting, or floral motive. I think as an adult I have transferred this fascination to weaving.

When you think of weaving you often imagine a large loom with multiple threads, bobbins, and shuttles, but not all weaving is so large or mechanical. What fascinates me are the patterns and textures that can be created through a more intimate style, the places that the process takes our imagination, and the connection that each knot, hitch, or half-hitch makes with the past.

When I create macrame I think of the sailors of old spending endless months at sea, perhaps knotting something useful for their voyage, or the ancient warriors in far Eastern shores who made knotted ornamentation as far back as the 9th century BC. When I use crochet, I think of my Mum's patience as she showed me how to keep the wool's tension by wrapping it around my fingers, and the seemingly impossible task of adding a metal tool into the tangle. Nowadays, I use crochet a lot in my artistic practice, but I have substituted the wool with wax to lay the foundations of many bronze sculptures.

Sometime ago, maybe six or seven years, I took my family on a day out to one of those big National Trust places. There was a living craft exhibition laid out in their Tudor barn. The lofty space was filled with stalls and people showcasing their skills and specialist knowledge of their chosen crafts. It was here that I first encountered the Lucet and the square braid it creates. It is a small handheld item, often made from wood, that resembles an extra-large chip fork.



The handle sits within the palm and two tines or prongs protrude. Thread is wrapped around the prongs in a figure of eight motion then the lower cord on the right-hand prong is lifted, up and over, the prong leaving behind just a single thread. The hand turns the Lucet clockwise and the thread moves into the central space between the two prongs. With every loop, turn and pull the square braid develops in the central space.

Tudor Britons fastened their Kirtles with Lucet braids while Victorian ladies found making the braids to be a pleasant pastime. Watching this lady dressed in Tudor clothing demonstrating the Lucet had me hooked and I purchased a Lucet and an instructional leaflet.

For a few months I experimented with it and loved the squareness of the braid and simplicity of the weaving, but then like so many crafts it ended up in the drawer where it sat for several years. It was not until I began my four-year long project into the Separatists and The Mayflower traveller's which involved examining the Tudor clothing that the ladies wore, that the Lucet came out of the drawer. I could see a sculpture that would be perfect for the Lucet braid, two female figures bound together.





To create the binds, I need to find a method to cast the Lucet braids in bronze, but getting to that stage involves experimentation, which I love. I ordered a range of different threads both natural and manmade, some waxed and some not. A waxed thread can help the thread combust in the lost wax technique of casting where the original is encased in plaster then heated to melt or burn away the original work. This leaves behind an impression in the plaster that can be filled with molten metal.

Working through my variety of threads I found that the manmade fibres slipped and moved better on the Lucet prongs, but the natural fibres pulled tightly together making a neater braid. Charting all these results in my making diary, I have sent a matching set of experiments to the foundry where they will be attempting to impregnate them with either a wax or a resin to harden and cast them. I cannot wait to find out the results and see if it is possible to cast Lucet braids.

Over the summer months I will be making up over a hundred weaving kits that contain many skeins of colourful threads and a wooden Lucet. It is my hope that the women and communities living around Boston, Lincolnshire that receive these kits will weave a section of braid to donate to the sculpture project. The community weaving will create a long length of braid that will surround the Pilgrim's binding them together in their quest for religious freedom and tolerance.

The sculpture will be completed by the winter of 2021 and unveiled in an exhibition at The Collection Museum, Lincoln at the end of November in time for the Illuminate festival and the American Thanksgiving or Day of Mourning.

Many people believe the Lucet was introduced to England by the Vikings. Imagine any piece of clothing that needed to be fastened, or tools and implements, hung from belts by a length of strong yet slightly elastic cord, and you have the Lucet braid. The Viking goddess Frigga is often honoured in Viking mythology, and the great stories, such as in The Poetic and Prose Eddas or the Heimskringla. She is said to weave clouds, mists, and fog, with her spindle, and events into a future that the fates have decided. I like to think of this as I work, and smile.

Interestingly Frigga's holy day, 'Mother's Night,' was absorbed into Christmas Eve, also the eve of the Winter Solstice. Mother's Night was auspicious for oracles to be sought and portents cast, as Frigga sat at her spindle, weaving the destinies of people and gods alike.

Rachel Carter is a sculptor based on the border of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, working with ancient technologies combined with the latest technologies. You can view her sculptures Pilgrim Woman Gainsborough on the water's edge near the Old Hall and Pilgrim Woman Doncaster sculpture at the DANUM gallery from August 2021.

Rachel has two exhibitions this year: Beyond the Mayflower 1620-2020, 23rd Sept 2021 - 16th Jan 2022, Weston Gallery, University of Nottingham and Pilgrim Woman & Paraphernalia, 15th Nov 2021 - 2nd Jan 2022, Courtyard Gallery, The Collection, Lincoln.

DOGGERLAND RISING

BY JUSTINA HART

Imagine you could walk from East Anglia to Holland. It sounds fantastical but would once have been possible. For thousands of years stone-age ancestors lived in a vast forested plain called Doggerland, which joined England's east coast to continental Europe.



Owing to natural climate change, this prehistoric land was gradually swallowed by the North Sea. All that can be seen of Doggerland now are trunks of petrified trees on England's east coast and artefacts like antler harpoons that fishermen sometimes dredge up.

Doggerland would once have been a very green and pleasant land. It boasted plentiful animals, fish, plants, and trees, which provided food – from woolly mammoths to oysters, or hazelnuts – with temperatures slightly higher than in Britain today. But due to a warming climate and rising seas, it slowly became a series of islands with tidal estuaries. By around 9,000 years ago in the Mesolithic period (middle stone age) just one island had its head above water. Finally, a huge tsunami caused by an under-sea landslide off the coast of what is now Norway, wiped this out.

I wrote Doggerland Rising to show that far from being a new challenge, people have been adapting to – and surviving – the tough realities of climate change for millennia. By setting my poem at the last possible point people would have been able to survive in Doggerland and escape, this relates to the current global situation, where we are experiencing rapid climate change in our own lifetimes. In Doggerland, dry deciduous woodland was slowly replaced by species of willow and alder swamps, and the water table became more brackish. Eventually, much of the land became inhospitable salt marsh – like the Fens could be again if sea levels rose.

Our Mesolithic ancestors adapted, canoeing in dugouts through shallow, tidal waters. But in the final 100 years, the changes speeded up. A latter-day Doggerland grandmother would have been able to tell her grandchildren that when she was young, she used to live in a village that's now underwater. Like people today fleeing climate emergencies, the Doggerlanders would have migrated away for many years. The poem focuses on one small die-hard tribe who are preparing to abandon their homeland for good. I set out to ask and answer a series of questions: were these Mesolithic people more accepting of their changing climate and the need to adapt? Might they have things to teach us? What would they whisper to us down the centuries if they could?



Obviously, there are no written records from 9,000 years ago, so these were imaginative conversations. I based them on a series of background interviews I conducted with Durham University climate scientists. One day in my notebook a character emerged saying 'Follow me!'. At first, this man aged 25 to 30 was a guide then he made his way into the poem – it felt exciting channelling a stone-age character, as if I had brought someone back from the dead. He is the character we meet in section I, and follow in II as he goes fishing. The poem invites readers to make direct contact with these ancients – the parting of the North Sea's skin in section I suggests modern fishing and boreholes. We hold the man's hand, and we jump into his canoe with him! Section II ends with him visiting his ancestral islands, now underwater except at very low tide. Section III shows a woman waiting at home for her husband to return. In IV the ancestors tell how their burial grounds were submerged, and V shows the flurry of activity as the tribe gets ready to depart.

Like the Doggerlanders adapting by degrees to a more saline environment, I had to navigate the poem by degrees. It felt a bit like walking a tightrope over my imaginative North Sea and I feared falling in. First, I was a quarter of the way across, then a half, then three-quarters. The sections emerged from deep down, as if from my own internal sea. Coming from the land-locked West Midlands it is mystifying that I'm repeatedly drawn to writing about sea themes. Perhaps as Britons we're all thalassophiles (sea lovers) because we are islanders. Or maybe there is a bit in everyone's DNA that remembers those first creatures who crawled out of the sea onto land.

Just lately I've been researching people who, like me, were born en caul (in the amniotic sac) – folklore says they won't drown, and they make good sailors. Whatever the reason, I penned the poem aboard the Victorian narrowboat I live on in a Staffordshire marina, popping out for a gander at ducks rather than sea birds (although we now have a resident cormorant).

Doggerland Rising charts terrible loss, but both the poem and the tribe turn to face the future. As they walk away in VI, they leave footprints. Real, preserved footprints from Mesolithic people have been found on beaches on the east coast of England in places like Druridge Bay, Northumberland. They are revealed by coastal erosion and wiped out by the tide in a day. If you're quick, you could literally put one of your own feet into a 9,000-year-old footprint. Yes, these Mesolithic ancestors suffered an environmental tragedy, but the evidence suggests they knew how to move on. I hope my poem inspires people to feel more optimistic that we can too.

"We take mostly our footsteps which turn away from salt hoping for forest."



DOGGERLAND RISING

I

Float above the North Sea,
part its thick skin, peer through.

On the bed: flint blades, ancient seeds,
rotted wood carved as a hull.

Imagine voices. Listen for voices.
Laughter, shouts. A splash!

A man hallooing as if to himself
paddles through shallow waters.

He looks ahead, squinting;
he can almost see you, you him.

You dabble your hand in wavelets,
clink the cockles piled in his boat
dip fingers in his brain, pull him alive.

II

I feel relief at running my canoe
through this springy marsh and salt mud
away from the stink, down to the creek,
kids squawking-flapping like water fowl
after me – they're snatched up by women
in case they sink, sorry piglets in a bog.
My boots too, wet-black with it. The boat
starts to sluice the brown, slipping now
as I dig oars into all the gristle of earth:
mud, riverbed, stones; grinding my arms
until my heart thuds in my ears and the oak
bottom bump-bumps and I'm flowing,
flying through hide-coloured reeds
once red and gold, which part and close,
past crisping bladderwrack stretched on
scurvy-grass like curing strings of meat.
Here I come: pushed from the river's veins
into blue – blue is my dwelling place –
the sea's body slows me, to breathe ...

... Out here in my home, I can breathe.
My heart's soon filled with salmon,
sturgeon, shad – I ripple their silver dying
through my hands, blessing the ease.
The sky's still high when the moon rises
to stand in its bone tunic facing the sun.
The wind gets up feathering the water
and the tide magics away its blue cloak
revealing mud underthings. In my boat
dead fish eye the light and wink saying
This is where the old world begins ...
I paddle over its crumbled black ribs
to ancestral islands that rise like ghosts,
fringed with bright grass that hurts
my eyes even in mist. Arms reach out
bubbled in slime, dead men tall as hazel, ash.
Tying my bark, I wade in mudflats
up to my knees, bow to unhook my blood-
stone pendant. Leave it at their keening feet.

III

Give me back my husband, sea.
I wait at the water's edge,
dotting dusk with my fears
that turn into biting gnats.
At home, the children lie like half-moons
drowsing toward sleep.
Flower heads are closing,
trees' leaves furling,
birds' wings folding –
all curl round their own thoughts,
protecting themselves
with their inwardness.

Only my man scours the sea
that bites and swallows islands,
that's rumoured to eat stars
and takes tired sailors,
shakes them around like baby seals.
He's nursing harpoons,
as if he could kill the ocean
like a mammoth in the stories.
Or he's burying himself in sea,
sucking its wets, or pissing in it
to drown his sorrows,
or he's drowning.

The water's more dangerous now.
There are new channels.
The shallows shelve steeply
into the deep north
where evil spirits hide.
My husband's wedded more to sea
than me: even in our house
he has that faraway look;
in bed, his sweat and tears
are saltier than others' –
I taste salt water running
freely from his pores.

Am I wrong to want to turn him inland,
to enfold him and hug him in my own fluids?

IV

We are the forebears buried on land
who lie underwater. When the current
sways, our bones jump up and clatter
to attract shadows on the surface –
seagulls, cormorants – the black
thrust of a log boat seeking us.

Yet once we were kings who strolled through
plains rich as paradise to the uplands beyond.

Dugouts have ears but can't hear
sounds chambered by this vast silence.
At low tide the sea-shaman reveals us
and we gulp air like land creatures again
before it drowns us once more, piling on
water heavy as a mountain of ash.



Yet once we were kings who strolled through
plains rich as paradise to the uplands beyond.

Over time, sand falls on us like water,
and clay deposits, gravel, tiny sea animals.
Waves jiggle us apart from each other,
from the deer and boar we've burnt.
We're squashed till our bones are as flat
as our swallowed islands once were.

Yet once we were kings who strolled through
plains rich as paradise to the uplands beyond.

Till our flint axes and postholes
are interred with us in silt-mounds;
till even the glister of shale dims
and our voices, stoppered with mud,
fail. No one knows we are here.
We're the sea's dreams, its rest, its bed.

Yet once we were kings who strolled through
plains rich as paradise to the uplands beyond,
who walked across this sea.

V

(In various voices – the whole tribe speaks)

Peel the skins off houses. Throw the struts in a heap.
Who has the flints, the scrapers, the bone needles?

That was a feast of feasts. I've got ash on my face.
He's turned sour now we've chopped and burnt the boats.

O my head. Those mushrooms. We danced for hours.
Is the fire out? Fetch more water. Kick over sand.

I loved the stories – how we climbed out of the sea,
lost our tails. But it's swollen with telling us to leave.

The other day the waves took a whole family
while the sky swirled with violent pinks, blues, greens.

Are those two staying? The sea is all they know.
They're half-lame, blind. Stubborn, won't leave their dead.

You're shrieking like hens with a fox on the loose.
Stop it or I'll bang your heads! Hold those babies safe.

Haven't we always moved? Yes. No. Not like this.
The weather's right for it. It's a sign we're still blessed.

VI

As we go, the charred remains of our laughter
stir, test the air then settle on charcoal scatters
or on marsh mallows and sea poppies
or on the roofs of bogs or on toppled pines
whose root balls spear the earth,
or are buffeted out over sea. We leave little else:
mollusc middens, hazelnut shells, scraps of animals
and of human animals.

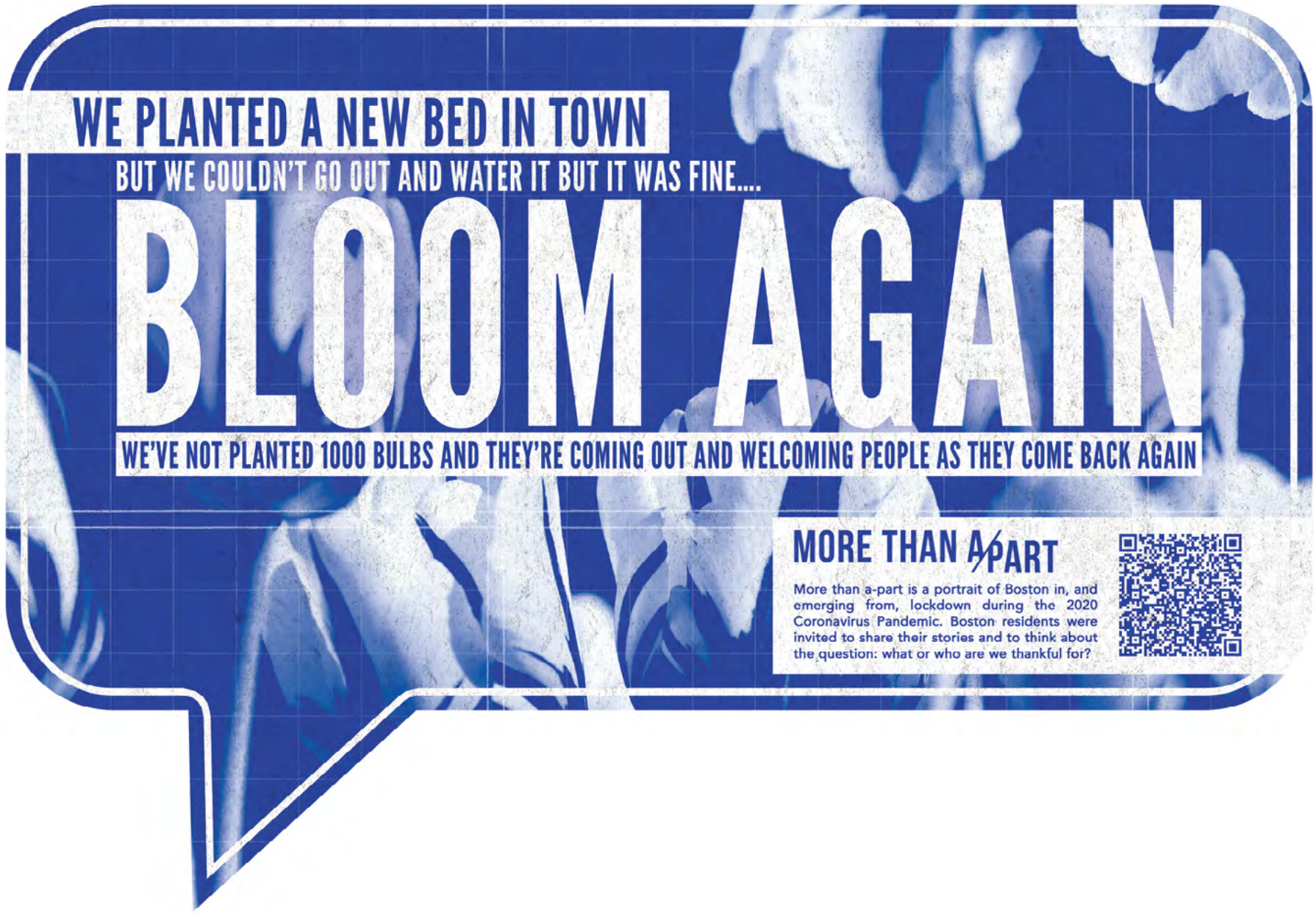
We take mostly our footsteps
which turn away from salt hoping for forest.
We're so few you could mistake us for a bunch of deer,
so sun-struck you could believe our bones see-through.
Watch our last steps imprint firmly, as if they know
how rare they're to be.

Fit your own feet in.

Justina Hart is an award-winning poet, novelist, non-fiction writer and performer. Doggerland Rising was commissioned by Weatherfronts (TippingPoint, Free Word and Durham University). Justina received an Artists' International Development Fund Award to present the poem and its research in Australia, and it won first prize in the 2020 Second Light long poem competition. Her renovated 1840s former coal-pulling narrowboat was among the first electric boats on the English waterways.

https://justinahart.com/


BIKE RIDES
GRATEFUL FOR...
BIKE RIDES
MORE THAN APART
More than a-part is a portrait of Boston in, and emerging from, lockdown during the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic. Boston residents were invited to share their stories and to think about the question: what or who are we thankful for?


WE PLANTED A NEW BED IN TOWN
BUT WE COULDN'T GO OUT AND WATER IT BUT IT WAS FINE....
BLOOM AGAIN
WE'VE NOT PLANTED 1000 BULBS AND THEY'RE COMING OUT AND WELCOMING PEOPLE AS THEY COME BACK AGAIN
MORE THAN APART
More than a-part is a portrait of Boston in, and emerging from, lockdown during the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic. Boston residents were invited to share their stories and to think about the question: what or who are we thankful for?

SPIRIT OF MAYFLOWER PODCAST

FEATURING THE POETRY & SOUNDS OF LIPPY WOMEN

BY RACHEL CARTER

Prior to the national lockdown of 2020. I had bookings to perform a series of diary readings sharing my adventures crossing the Atlantic as part of my Spirit of Mayflower project. I had pre-recorded my father reading excerpts of William Bradford's 1620 account on the Mayflower in to provide a voice from 400 years ago. Then Covid happened and the workshops and readings were cancelled overnight.

I still needed to find ways to continue delivering projects, despite the isolation, and after talking with my fantastic business advisor Debbie DoooDah, the idea of a podcast was born - I would record myself reading from the diary I had written whilst aboard the freight ship and my travels around New England. The fantastic songwriting duo Highcliffe Music offered to help with the creative breaks in the form of imagined letters written from the perspective of pilgrim Mary Brewster and songs performed by both Wyn and Ella. Wyn also provided the voice of pilgrim William Bradford.

The Spirit of Mayflower podcast was born, more episodes were added, and special guests interviewed. By the end of 2020 we had recorded 17 episodes and had more listeners than the seating capacity of the original cancelled tour.

As part of the new Pilgrim Woman Boston project, series two of the podcast was launched this year with lots of fantastic guests lined up and a new creative partnership with members from Read 2 Write, a Doncaster-based poetry appreciation group, conceived, mentored, and chaired by poet Ian Parks. The ethos of the group is to study and discuss individual poets and poems with the aim of encouraging and improving the writing of group members. It is a testament to its success that there are many among the regulars who have had poems accepted for anthologies and several who have had their first collections published. Read 2 Write welcomes participants at all levels, from those who are curious about poetry but with no previous experience, to regular writers who wish to expand their knowledge and technique.

Read 2 Write transferred its activities on-line during the Covid pandemic and the women in the group have emerged as Lippy Women staging their own performances such as that to celebrate this year's International Women's Day. That is not to say the group's female poets are overly contentious or competitive against their counterpart Gobby Blokes, but the space for female lips – be they tell tale lips or any other kind – offers a different perspective and has built confidences, inspired, and entertained. "Unleash the lip" is what Ian Parks exhorted them to do, and in both actual and virtual events they have set the bar high. We are the Lippy Women anthem is likely to be the opening poem at more events in Doncaster and further afield and the women are delighted to be part of The Spirit of The Mayflower project.
If you have not discovered the podcast then listen and subscribe on Spotify, just search for Spirit of Mayflower, or head to http://www.rachelcarter.co.uk and click podcast where you will find all episodes in full.

XX ROCKS

BY CLAIRE CROSSDALE

Ask the stinking sweet ship how she avoided sinking Ask the Harpies Gorgons Charybdis
Ask The Sea The Sea The Sea

Ask the pisspot-tossers the blood-moppers the cradle-rockers the bruise-soothers the breast-feeders
the always-on-the-movers Ask The Sea The Sea The Sea
Ask Mary mom-to-be Allerton Ask the Shrouders of Mary's Baby
Ask Constance Hopkins of midwifing her mum
Ask how Dorothy Bradford of Austerfield fell overboard in Cape Cod harbor Ask how Eleanor
Billington's humanity was undermined by her profanity Ask the bitch English Spaniel
Ask the bitch slobbery Mastiff Ask the breeding vermin

Ask The Sea The Sea The Sea
Ask Amelia Earhart Marilyn Monroe Julia Child Katherine Hepburn Grandma Moses or Scrooby
Do-daughter Fear Brewster
Ask Julia Roberts Ellen de Generes Jodie Foster or other Greats
The Mothers asked not what they could do for their country They did not need to ask
Blessed were The Pilgrim Mothers and all who sailed
on The Mayflower.

LISTEN



WITH THANKS TO

TRANSPORTED

West Lindsey DISTRICT COUNCIL

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

BOSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

LOTTERY FUNDED Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

1620—2020 Mayflower 400™ FOUNDING PARTNER

Pilgrim Roots

WRITING EAST MIDLANDS

Nottinghamshire County Council
delivered by
Inspire
Culture | Learning | Libraries

Transported Art, University of Lincoln
Brayford Pool, Lincoln, LN6 7TS, UK

© Transported Art 2021, All Rights Reserved