July 2016

Gyosei Art Trail

Commemorating the legacy of Gyosei International School UK

The Japanese co-educational boarding school and playing fields closed in 2002 and the site at Willen Park South was redeveloped as Lovat Fields Village and Barratt Homes Gyosei housing scheme.

Developer funding paid for eight artworks in Phase 1, which are related to the themes of; Japanese Connections, Canal History, Fish, Fowl, Insects and Invertebrates.

The trail is located on both sides of the Grand Union Canal from H3 Monks Way to H5 Portway and is accessible from the local redway network.



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www.great-linford.gov.uk

The project was created by Great Linford Parish Council supported by: Public Arts Trust MK, Canal & River Trust, The Parks Trust and Milton Keynes Council.

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Melanie Watts



Graduating in 1993 with a BA (Hons) degree in textiles, Melanie was drawn to Mosaic after seeing Gaudi's mosaics and architectural masterpiece in Barcelona and in Morocco where the vibrant Alhambra tiles inspired her to start pursuing ways to enhance walls and floors. Inspired, she started creating mosaic from her Milton Keynes studio; commissions and books of her mosaic quickly followed.

For Melanie, mosaic is about re-assembling pieces: creating a thing of beauty out of broken fragments. She pays attention to detail and colour and takes inspiration from many artists from the past and present as well as the decorative arts, in particular Art Nouveau. Her preference is to create work that resonates with her spirit, which excites her soul, and lifts her up.

In 2014, Melanie was chosen from thousands of applicants to represent Milton Keynes and the UK with 80 international artists for a mosaic project for the Town Hall in Santiago, Chile.

Autumn Splendour

Melanie has created a stunning mosaic in glass: a beautiful white barn owl is the focal point, briefly swooping into the foliage of trees in Great Linford to capture its prey. Each individually cut piece of glass brings the piece together, using soft and delicate colours to capture the delicate autumnal light, ranging from golds to yellows to vibrant reds and oranges seen on a colourful autumn day.

Local residents encouraged Melanie to bring attention to endangered species in the UK as well as depicting a well-loved species within the mosaic. For this piece of original art work Melanie created drawings based on her own photographs of forestry along the canal at Great Linford.



Melanie with her mosaic Mosque commission.

Autumn Splendour

Andrew Kay

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Based in Cumbria, Andrew Kay is an award-winning sculptor whose work can be seen throughout the world. From his Beckside studio, set in the wild moorland of his native county, Andrew creates sculpture that attracts widespread acclaim, his work being commissioned by both public estates and private collectors. Drawing from the natural world for inspiration, the life-size sculptures capture the powerful anatomy and essence of wild beasts using deceptively simple form and structure.





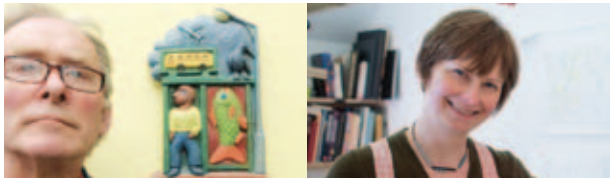
Life-sized Shire horse in steel

For the Gyosei Art Trail, Andrew has created a powerful Shire Horse whose steady toil propelled the barges of yesteryear along the towpaths of the Grand Union canal. Andrew says he has tried to capture the huge strength and solidity of a Shire, while also suggesting the animal's calm, resolute approach to the task in hand.

Shire horse

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Jeremy Turner



Graduating as a sculptor in 1970, Jeremy started his woodcarving business in 1985. Since then, alongside his carved woodware which he supplies to craft shops and sells at craft fairs, he has produced many public art commissions, such as relief panels and signage for schools, hospitals and care homes, and sculptural signs for villages and towns. Beside his workshop practice he has delivered projects with schools and adult groups and currently teaches at Queens Park Art Centre, Aylesbury.

With relief carving he can unite picture making with the physical deliberateness of carving and combine colour with the crisp use of light and shadow. The labour of it demands that concise drawing translates into images that are efficiently carvable.

Three post bench

The Three Post Bench Jeremy has made derives its design from the sculptural benches Jeremy made for Woburn Safari Park. The oak posts and the head rail that top them are vehicles for robustly carved relief images that all make reference to the wildlife of the canal.



▲ *Four Post Bench made by Jeremy for Woburn Safari Park.*

Included in the carving are:

Coarse fish commonly found in the canal.

Familiar water birds: coot, moorhens, ducks, geese and swans.

Looking deeper, you can find not only water beetles and snails but all the micro life too: the insect larvae, diatoms, floral algae, hydra and amoebae.

Finally, Jeremy has selected forms that are most visually interesting and achievable as arresting carved images of flying insects that emerge from the water and the birds and bats that feed on them.

Ultimately Jeremy invites visitors to rest, relax and contemplate using carved Japanese characters.

Laura Boswell

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Laura Boswell is an artist printmaker with a business background. She received her degree in visual art and art history from The University of Wales, Aberystwyth. She then pursued a career in the photographic industry.

In 2005 Laura returned to printmaking and almost immediately started work on two public art projects for her local council. Following the successful delivery of twin street-length enamel murals for Aylesbury in 2009, she undertook an international print residency in Japan to train with Japanese masters in traditional Japanese woodblock printing. In 2013 she returned to Japan for a further residency and in 2014 led a delegation from Oxford Brookes University at the Tokyo International Print Conference.

In addition to her printmaking and public art commissions, she exhibits and teaches regularly and writes a monthly column for Artist and Illustrator's Magazine. Her prints feature in national collections including the House of Lords and the Library of Wales.

Local birds and plants

Laura's seven enamel panels presenting local birds using a Japanese aesthetic, combine her training in Japanese woodblock and her experience of Japanese art with the practicality of vitreous enamelling. The panels are inspired by birds and plants that visitors to the canal are likely to see around them throughout the year.



Laura has combined her imagery with Japanese short poems to bring together both local and Japanese ideas about seasonality and local wildlife, celebrating both the Japanese theme of the Gyosei Art Trail and the richness of the canal environment.

5 What lies beneath

6 Dragonfly

7 Insects and Invertebrates

Rob Griffiths



Rob Griffiths lives in the Forest of Dean. His sculptures are influenced by his love of the forest and the wildlife that surrounds him. All the timber used for his sculptures is sustainably sourced locally. Rob has had commissions from councils, schools, parks and private individuals – all specifically designed to be in harmony with the surroundings.



What lies beneath

Rob's inspiration for this sculpture, "What lies beneath" using Forest of Dean oak, came from his interest in canals and the creatures that live beneath. It takes the form of a bench with relief carvings illustrating the food chain in the canal and a giant frog sitting peacefully unaware of all that lies beneath.

Ptolemy Elrington



Ptolemy studied art and design at Bradford and Ilkley Community College. He travelled extensively and worked on theatre set, stage design and large scale community sculpture projects.

Ptolemy creates sculpture of natural forms from recovered materials including shopping trolleys, scrap and car wheel trims, which he re-shapes into a variety of life forms. He has exhibited in Scotland, London, Brighton, Rutland, Salisbury, Barcelona and Athens.

Dragonfly

Ptolemy has used the project theme– Insects and Invertebrates, to transform redundant and abandoned materials into the light and delicate form of a dragonfly, a symbol of courage, strength and happiness in Japan. Mounted on a pole, it will be viewed against the sky, with its filigree wings in flight soaring over the canal.



Linda Johns



Linda is inspired by how we experience our world and what science (particularly quantum physics) can tell us about it. Much of her work explores energy rather than solidity. Making sculpture using metal rods, fine wires, and natural materials, she places these seemingly delicate structures in forests and other natural environments. The sculptures are glimpsed from the corner of your eye, there or not there, as you pass by, seeing them from different angles. Their interaction with light, weather and their surroundings, which some will see and others pass by, has also led her to consider what inspires myth.

When she first began making these ephemeral sculptures, Linda looked for a way to create forms strong enough to hold their shape but using the minimum of material. Observing spiders weaving their webs, she realised this was exactly what she was looking for.



Arachne weaves

Seeing the twinned trunks of the tree where the sculpture can be found and thinking about the theme of Insects and Invertebrates, inspired Linda to look again at spider webs. In recreating these amazing structures for the Gyosei Art Trail, she has used the brace line between the tree trunks as a structural point for the two webs, just as a spider would take advantage of what it finds to weave its web across.

The title 'Arachne weaves' refers to the myth of a mortal who was turned into a spider for daring to say her skill at weaving was greater than Athena's. Linda hopes her sculpture will encourage visitors to look again at spiders, the beauty they create, perhaps story-telling a new myth of the spider which spins stainless steel webs.

Linda Johns: Photograph: Tanya Hames

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Commemorative plaque

Justin Tunley



Justin trained as an Industrial Designer at Teesside Polytechnic and The Royal College of Art, before cutting his teeth working with various professions and trades on external hard-works and special features, often within Public Open Space. Today his principal interest is in the intersections between manufacture, landscape, building and art, often using Computer Aided Design as a tool to this end.



Commemorative plaque over Gyosei Foundation Stone

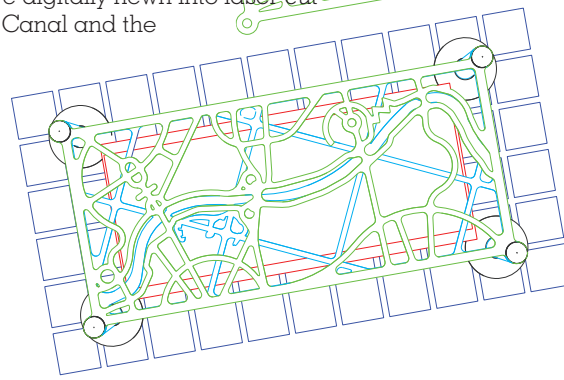
Overlooking the site of the former Gyosei International School UK, Justin's sculpture maps the Gyosei Art Trail along the Grand Union Canal using small discs to show other art works.

The work also forms a framework for the school's original 1987 foundation stone.

Several layers of stainless steel are digitally hewn into laser cut fretworks - the first represents the Canal and the positions of other art works.

Sitting above it, a second plaque shows surrounding footpaths in stylised form. Nestled between them, a smaller photo-etched panel tells the site's story from the elevated vantage point.

Stainless Steel by Twin Engineering, Bletchley. Photo-etching by Pristine Engraving, Bewdley.



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