

Cultural Mapping Project: Green Routes fact sheet

Chime Lines

Bowmar's Lane, Riverside, Leicester

Installation: March 2003

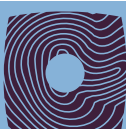


Artist

Samantha Haynes

Biographies

Samantha (Sam) Haynes trained as an artist and then undertook further studies in 'art in architecture'. She has worked extensively within communities and in education environments as a public artist, and led research projects with a focus on disability arts and arts practice. In the mid-1990s she was a founding member of the Shed Eleven Nottingham Artists' Group and Public Art co-ordinator of the Now Festival. She is an instructor in karate and holds a TY-GA Karate International Third Dan Black Belt. Sam's work, which can be seen around England, is site-specific, often interactive, and created through collaborative practice.



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Statement

“Chime Lines seeks to link, and to some extent commemorate, a disappearing past with the direct experience of today's waterway user.”

Samantha Haynes

Project Brief

For artists to create site-specific, distinctive, interpretative artworks that are located or integrated at strategic points along the Riverside. Artworks should contribute to the aim of developing a Riverside journey which reveals, celebrates, and offers citizens and visitors the opportunity to experience Riverside in a new way. Artworks should enhance and promote the uniqueness of the location and the ecological and heritage aspects of the area. Artists were able to choose a site from those designated by the commissioners as prime locations for artists' interventions, and to demonstrate a commitment to community engagement in their submission proposals. Community engagement is integral to the **Cultural Mapping** public art programme, ranging from consultation to participation, in varying degrees of the artworks' creation, and interaction with the sited artworks.

Community Involvement

The local community participated in multiple ways in the development of **Chime Lines**. The artist utilised and encouraged participants to explore a wide range of arts processes, including poetry, storytelling and reminiscence ('tales from the Riverside'), music, printmaking and mark-making, exploring different scales and techniques. Local school children and youth groups participated in music and design workshops and some of their texts and images contributed to the resultant artwork. The selected patterns, imagery and unique stories are etched into the surface of the **Chime Lines**, and have both local and international references, demonstrating the diversity of the community. The artist set up a working studio space as an artist-in-residence at the Fosse Art Centre, and collaborated with a musician from De Montfort University, to explore and experiment with different rhythms and sounds that are made when beating implements on brass and steel plates of various lengths and thicknesses. The residency provided the opportunity for the public to make comments, to meet the artist in a creative context, working on a life size proto type and scale model, seeing the project develop and change over a period of time.

Purpose/Function

The **Chime Lines** artwork contributes to making a bland stretch of the canal towpath livelier and visually interesting. Passers-by can interact directly with the **Chime Lines** panels, creating sounds by moving, walking or cycling over the panels; they can enjoy the different textures, and read the texts and tales that are both inspired by and derived from the tales of the riverside, past and present.



Site/Location

Located along the central part of Riverside, one of a number of long narrow stretches of canal (perceived by some as inhospitable), about two kilometres north from the city centre. This stretch of the Grand Union Canal and the mostly tarmac canal towpath is adjacent to Bowmar's Lane, between Frog Island and St Margaret's Way, not far from Abbey Park. Nearby is Slater Street School and (until recently) the Planet Works recycling centre. There are numerous industrial buildings of Victorian red brick construction, former textile mills and boot & shoe factories. The whole area is part of the Frog Island regeneration plans.

Special Features/Points of Interest

- A series of four interrelated rectangular panels 4.0m long x 0.75m wide embedded into and along the Grand Union Canal towpath.
- The four individual paving sections consist of brass panels of various widths, 20cm to 40cm, engraved with text and images.
- These brass panels are supported by a steel frame which is sunk into the ground, allowing each panel to tilt backwards and forwards slightly when cycled or walked across, creating a sound and rhythm.
- Movement is so slight that it is not physically apparent to the user or onlooker.
- The different plates have different pitches so that a musical effect is produced.
- The artist collaborated with a structural engineer (Price & Myers Consulting Engineers) to work up the construction drawings, and a musician (Simon Atkinson, De Montfort University) to explore different sounds to use in the installation. **Chime Lines** was fabricated off-site by specialists (Weldametal Services, Dunstable & Smiths Metal Centres, Biggleswade) and then assembled and 'fine tuned' by the artist on site.
- The text and images, created through artist-led community workshops, were etched by specialist engravers (Mercury Engraving, London) into the surface of the brass. This etching method is generally used to produce many copies of the same artistic image. The **Chime Lines** are almost like huge printing plates.



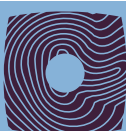
Possible Focus or Point of Engagement for Learning

- How many different sizes of plates are there in the **Chime Lines** panels? Have you tried to take a brass rubbing of any of the plates? Where else can you take brass rubbings along the riverside?
- How many languages can you find on the **Chime Lines** plates?
- How many continents are there? What types of instruments, music and rhythms exist in these different continents and countries? Try to identify instruments that are similar to **Chime Lines**, e.g. large keyboards, xylophones.
- What are the sounds, smells and tastes of the river/canal? Try using the river/canal as a starting point to create a new sculpture, poem or painting.
- What do you think of the sounds the **Chime Lines** make? How would you create these sounds using traditional musical instruments?
- If you were an artist, how might you engage different sectors / interest groups of the community in the development of an artwork? Do you think this is important and if so why? What actions and considerations would you take to engage the community in the design, development and after-care of a public artwork?
- So that all members of the community can use and enjoy the artwork, what access and health & safety issues had to be considered by the artist, the structural engineer, and environmental agencies?
- There are numerous specialist organisations that have a responsibility for the care and management of our waterways. Why do you think it is important to consult with these when designing and building an artwork like this?
- The artist worked with a musician, a structural engineer who designed the structural element of the project, and a number of other specialist fabricators who made different parts of the artwork. Which other types of projects are made through 'multidisciplinary' teams?
- What other clues are there in the immediate surroundings and generally along the canal side that tell you a story about the many social and geographic histories of the canal?
- Which other artists use sound in their work and why?

For More Information:

www.leicester.gov.uk/publicart

Toolkit author Jasia McArdle with input from Steve Cooke. Image © Steve Cooke 2005 for Public Art Leicester **Cultural Mapping** project.



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