

SITES OF MEANING

Marker Stones for the Millennium

REFLECTIONS ON SITES OF MEANING STONES

Site 0 – Village Stone

The Village Stone was an after thought - it was not originally planned for the project. But as *Sites of Meaning* came to an end the Parish Council, among others, suggested a central stone to act as a locator to the boundary stones.

The stone takes the form of a view finder, the first line of each inscription points roughly to its location on the parish boundary. The spiral motif suggests the growth and development of *Sites of Meaning*.

Charles Monkhouse

Site 1 – Roughwood Hollow

Some 20 or more years ago, a few years after moving to the Square House in Middleton, I read a little about the Bateman family. Soon after, my stepmother Barbara asked for quotations for her needlework samplers. I'd been struck by a line from Eugenie Bateman, "*in quietness and confidence shall be your strength*", which she used. It also suited the SoM site, being personal; connected with Middleton's most famous family; and of some relevance to the seat in the wall at the top of a steep footpath up from the dale. Also, Emma Youatt had secured that route as a public footpath. Later we found that Eugenie had found the line in the bible.

John Youatt

Site 2 – Roughwood Kerbs

Other Stones - Other Meanings was a great way for local school children to get involved in learning about and learning from their local environment. They were able to work alongside other members of the community, and a professional poetry writer and an archaeologist. The theme of "stones" helped the children to engage with real, tangible artefacts, which then allowed them to make sense of their significance both present and past. This project was part of a longer term link with the "Sites of Meaning" group, which benefits both current and former pupils, with sculptures and inscriptions that will hopefully be there for future generations to enjoy.

Chris Watts – Head Youlgrave Church of England Primary School

Site 3 Bradford Bridge

Some people were annoyed that we'd carved directly onto the old bridge. They felt it should have been sacrosanct. And it did look quite bold at first.

But now the lichen has grown again it seems as natural as the bridge itself! I love the way the moss is filling some of the letters. Perhaps all the lettering will be moss one day.

We had hoped to carve outcrops of stone further up the valley but the landowner was not keen. But the lichen would have spread again leaving the text and stone in a symbiotic relationship.

Charles Monkhouse

Site 4 – Sheep Dip (i)

It was the day of the England - Argentina world cup match in 2002. We just managed to scramble the kids together, make a sortie into the dale and get some text onto paper before the game to over. We never did find time to complete the poem, so we designed a format that would combine the disparate lines, together with other verse written by parishioners.

Charles Monkhouse

Site 4 – Sheep Dip (ii)

Having lived in the village for many years, I remember the procedure of dipping the sheep in those bygone days.

Ena Prime.

Site 5 – Over Rusden

Taken from the closing section of WH Auden's poem, *In Praise of Limestone*, these evocative and inspirational lines were intended for a particular location in Bradford Dale; a site where water can be heard emerging from the spring, running through a peaceful yet dramatic limestone landscape.

Unfortunately, permission to carve the inscription on existing stone was denied and a new position sought. The Sites of Meaning team, along with sculptor Peter Maris, agreed on a spot further along the dale, close to Smerrill Grange, high above the river but having views towards both water and an impressive limestone face.

The completed piece, comprising individual stones framed within a circle, give resonance and specificity to each word and the poem as a whole, encapsulating a very special part of the landscape.

Sallyann Carlin

Site 6

This extract is from a letter entitled 'Epistle to Lord Burlington', of the Devonshire Dynasty, Chatsworth, putting in the local context) from Alexander Pope.

Alexander Pope 1688 - 1744 was born in London. He suffered ill health most of his life and was mocked and tormented for his appearance as he was short with a hunched back. Despite this he was an extremely clever man with a wit and use of words to make him one of the greatest English Poets.

In his letter he talks about how we should study nature when we come to landscaping the countryside and in particular parkland. The planting of trees and woodlands should be

sympathetic and ' Consult the genius of the place (meaning what is special about the place)
That tells the waters to rise or fall' (simply which way does the gradient of the land fall).

Alexander Pope was also an architect, and he is not the only person who has recommended we look to nature for inspiration. Middleton footpaths have given me much pleasure and inspiration and hopefully these words will make us look a second time in a different context to appreciate what a really beautiful parish we have.

Robin Allan

Site 9

I spent the month of November 1993 trekking in the Khumbu region of the Himalaya of Nepal reaching the height of 18,200 feet and visiting the 1953 Everest base camp. It was an experience I will never, ever forget. For day after day I was walking through the most amazing and wonderful piece of nature on earth, mountains on a scale and beauty that it is almost difficult to comprehend. But it was not just the mountains that captivated me. Everywhere I went I was made welcome by local people, most of whom were poor with little in the way of possessions but rich in the warmth of their greetings and hospitality. Unforgettable. It was in the last day in the mountains before flying down to Kathmandu that I noticed in a little tea house at Lukla the quotation I recommended to Sites of Meaning.

It summed up perfectly what my month in the Himalaya had been about - to meet wonderful people of the Khumbu region, to see their magnificent mountains - and never to forget the memory of it all.

Alan Burgess

Site 10i

The old Roman road from Derby to Buxton runs parallel if not exactly along this old track. I like to imagine the long trudge through the dale by Roman soldiers as they marched first one way and then back again.

Charles Monkhouse

Site 10 ii

I was instantly attracted to the green lane where my piece stands, away from cars and in a beautiful valley. The quotation from Heraclitus is a lovely one and, as soon as I had the idea for how to set it out, I knew I had to go with it; it brings about such a pleasant and reflective train of thought.

It would have been nice to do the residency and get to know the place and the people better - but it would have been very difficult for me at the time so it's probably for the best. I was glad to be able to use Hoptonwood stone that is pretty local to the village and a good match for the stone in the walls at Longdale.

Jamie Vans

Site 11

Like poetry, a milestone is a formal and artificial device. It structures and informs our environment. I wanted to write a poem to be read three ways: on entering the parish, on leaving the parish and as a complete stone. Thus the device was complete.

It was an unrelenting challenge. No drafts, no corrected later editions. It had to be right first time. In that way some sort of immortality can be achieved. Literally a literal milestone.

David Fine

SITE 12 - Roman Road

The Roman Road linked the two Roman settlements in Derbyshire; Buxton (Aqua Arnemetiae) and Littlechester (Derventio) just outside Derby. Littlechester was an important fort and Buxton was important for its natural hot and cold water baths.

The stone draws attention to this long stretch of our parish boundary but is also a tribute to the Roman engineers and their straight roads. But we leave it to the classical scholar to interpret its cryptic meaning! Or you can guess!

Michael Colin

SITE 13 – Arbor Low

I used to come here quite often as a boy. One grandparent used to farm Upper Oldhams at Arbor Low while the other was the station master at Parsley Hay. In those times there used to be a small quarry at the site and every year a gypsy caravan would visit, parking in the quarry.

The lines from the poem seemed apt for this site. And reminded me about how the years have gone by.

Henry Brocklehurst

Site 14 - Cales Farm West

Emma Youatt is a founder member of SoM and was founder editor of The Bugle, the villages' newsletter (www.thebugle.org.uk). She got a message of goodwill from Professor Michael Dower, former national park officer, Peak District.

Included with it was a short poem by Michael based on the letters m.a.y. - the 3 villages – and b.u.g.l.e. As editor, Emma chose two lines of the poem for the site she had volunteered to sponsor. Charles Monkhouse designed the stone and the lettering.

Emma regrets that the stone is not easily accessible – perhaps one day a hand gate could replace the stile, as has been done elsewhere in the 'Gateways' project?

The full text of the poem is

*Why do these villages, Whose initials stand for May,
Have a newsletter called Bugle, and no-one has to pay?
Because they lie so Bright Under Green Limestone Edges,
with Queen Anne's lace and Cranesbill in their hedges,
and summer's rich with the smell of hay.*

Site 15

In the year 2000, the Parish Council and the Sites of Meaning team asked if Derbyshire Aggregates would adopt one of the sites, the squeezer stile near the works entrance, site 15. Our first reaction was, how much would this cost and what did it involve?!

The Company said yes and we, the Ladies who do accounts (but not lunch), decided it was a good idea all round. The papers we were sent were safely filed in a drawer. Two years later, John reminded us.

There was a last minute flurry of ideas within the accounts office. In accordance with the company management and resources plan (which encourages a culture of independence and creativity) we decided to dedicate an afternoon to the project. Amid fits of laughter and tears, and tea, we came up at last with various options for the inscription, which were duly short listed by The Committee.

The ideas for the words came from our knowledge of the quarry industry and of how The Rake was formed.

So they were submitted, including:- "*The rakes and spoils of man's hard toil / has 'scaped this land*"

A long time later John reappeared and persuaded us to collect **The Stone** from Michael Steele. It was finally embedded in front of the squeezer stile in March 2006 free of charge by Jamie Bristow.

Yvonne, Wendy and Carol. (Ladies who don't Lunch).

Site 16 – Long Rake

I really enjoyed this project. It was satisfying from all points of view. I also believe that those who participated enjoyed it too, (well, maybe not freezing in the snow on top of Gib Hill) if perhaps not quite as much as I did. Rarely does the opportunity to work so intensively and thoroughly with a school and community come about. If nothing else it is resource intensive. Other Stones - Other Meanings proves it is worth doing, and should be more the rule than the exception.

David Fine (written in his evaluation of Other Stones - Other Meanings)

Site 17 – Pen Close

To me these two lines are about looking after the countryside, the environment in general and our community, and handing it on, if possible, to the next generation in a better state.

It reminds us that we are very brief custodians of our earth which will exist for countless generations to come and that we should make the most of our very short time here.

A great philosophy for life.

John Warren