



A Contemporary Art event in
Hanley Park, Stoke on Trent
Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 June 2010



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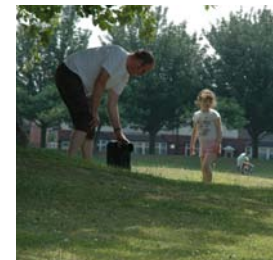
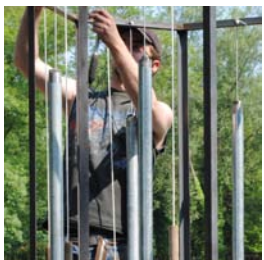
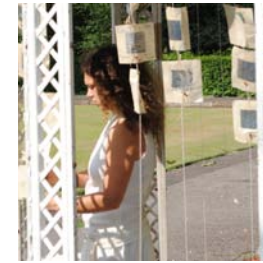
City parks have, until recently, been taken for granted as being part of the everyday fabric of an urban environment. It is only in these times of austerity, as councils look to make savings and suggest selling off these assets, that we perhaps really start to notice them. When you stop and consider the idea of the park it becomes a seemingly unlikely thing to exist in the midst of an environment in which traffic, the flow of people and so much else is controlled. Surfaces on which we walk are paved or tarmaced, to aid cleansing, safety, the dispersal of rainwater, and showing us the correct route to travel. Why then would anyone consider introducing grass, trees, planted beds of flowers and shrubs into this environment? The answer is of course obvious; as humans we need this space, space to wander, run about, talk, read, or just sit and step back from the pace of everyday life. The city park is, to coin a cliché, an oasis of calm where nature can express itself. Of course the parks that appear in our towns and cities are, in only a small way, natural. Whether they are the sprawling green heart of a metropolis, such as Central Park, New York, or a lawn with a couple of benches no bigger than a tennis-court, the fundamental elements have all been carefully designed and planned.

Common Ground, the project which this book documents, took place in just such a space. Hanley Park sits within the amalgamation of several towns and villages now known as the city of Stoke-on-Trent, and colloquially as the Potteries. Built at the turn of the nineteenth century, Hanley Park is in the tradition of so many other city parks. It is the result of the philanthropic efforts of notables and worthies from government, industry and social organisations wishing to provide an amenity for the people who provide their workforce and electorate. The park itself is a hidden jewel that has become tarnished and blackened with age.

Behind cast iron railings, a passer-by might not guess at what is contained within; fine old trees from distant countries, ornate bridges and stairways made from the stuff that made the Potteries famous, bowling greens, and boating lake. Between the borders of multicoloured annuals and low shrubs of various kinds, are inviting areas of grass neatly trimmed, inviting people to sit and think or just soak up the sun.

Behind cast iron railings, fine old trees reaching their maturity, cast shadows across the paths leading from the dilapidated concrete toilet block. Scaffold surrounds the bridge and the abandoned and vandalised Pavilion. The bowling green is rough with the course grass but has found different uses. Areas of the park are secluded, making a visitor feel uneasy when passing through, a no go area, especially at night.

Common Ground was an artistic endeavour developed out of a process of consultation that took place within the communities adjacent to the park. The intention was to make art the starting point for a transformation of the park. Artists were invited to submit proposals for re-imaginings of areas in the park less frequented or overlooked. The two days in which Common Ground took place were the starting point for a second process of consultation with residents and park users, the park being the focus, to discover what they felt about the park, whether they felt safe when using it, and enabling them to suggest their own ideas about what could happen in the future. The works of art provided a means to get people talking about this priceless resource and to highlight the assets that already exist.



In conversation

Artist and fellow AirSpace member Katie Shipley looks back on the project with Common Ground organiser, Anna Francis.

KS How did the project get started?

AF The project originally came from being involved in Quality Streets, a community project which provided community members with creative consultation tools training, and basically turned the community members into a research team. They then carried out the consultation with the local community to find out the issues and concerns that people living and working in a place might have.

Hanley park was in the middle of the Quality Streets research area and it became clear that although people really loved the park, they didn't always feel safe there and were looking for more community activity and events to happen there. The idea for Common Ground came from these findings. Funding was applied for and at that point I was offered a budget of £5,000 to organise an art event for the park.

KS And so once you were offered the chance to do something, how did you go about arriving at a fully formed project?

AF Well, from the point the offer was made we were told that the event had to happen in 6 weeks. I thought, blimey, how are we going to get this to happen? and so I went to the studio artists at AirSpace, of which I am one, and put forward a proposal that the 2010 studio artists' show could form the basis of what would become Common Ground. Generally our work is gallery-based and so to make new work in response to Hanley Park would present us, as artists, with the challenge of working site-specifically in the public realm.

KS How did the name Common Ground come about?

AF At this point the event didn't have a name but, pretty quickly, actually in that first meeting. After bandying around a few suggestions I think that actually you came up with Common Ground, which the group settled on as it seemed to fit as a description of our target area, Hanley Park, and also refer to the conversations started with the public about what we want to see happening in the park. It just felt like a really good name for the project.

Also in that first meeting we talked about whether or not we would open out the opportunity to other artists as well. We decided that as a group of studio artists that it would be great to see what ideas other artists might have in responding to the same brief, and it would strengthen the program we would put together. So we put out the call to artists to get involved.

KS You mentioned that you were given £5,000 to make the project happen?

AF Yes, and while it was great to have some funding, £5,000 doesn't actually go that far really, especially as we were quite ambitious about what we wanted to achieve. We knew we wanted it to be a two day event, and bearing in mind the size of Hanley Park, for there to be about twenty projects in total. We thought that we could budget for about £100 per commission which isn't an awful lot, but as our studio exhibitions are normally self-funded, we were happy with that.

KS It seemed to me that with the short time frame in terms of turnaround that from early on the project felt like a case-study presenting a vision for Hanley Park. The idea of producing this companion publication seems to act, not only as the project's lasting document, but also as a reference point as to how possible it is to produce such an event.

AF Yeah, definitely and from an artist's point of view the idea of legacy is important. It's great to have your work in a publication and actually I think that makes the project even more worthwhile, you may not always get an enormous fee, but you also have this publication which hopefully will hang around for a while. I think as artists it is important to weigh up what else an opportunity might offer besides money; experience or development of your practice concerns for example. What we wanted to do with the publication was to create almost another space for the artworks to exist. The work would be in the park for two days but also we wanted the publication to be an artwork itself. So, all of the artists have a page, which is another space to exhibit in. We wanted to include some evaluation materials from the event as well, because a lot of people came to the event, and a lot of people really got involved, and loved it. We did a very good job, actually, I think, of collecting evidence of the sorts of people who came and enjoyed being in the park; from local councillors, a mayor came, lots of community members to local people, dog walkers, and of course the arts community. But also, we wanted it to be something that would be a document of the park, itself, as it is today. We hoped that as the park is the focus of a heritage lottery bid which hopes to see a lot of the fantastic features in the park renovated and conserved, that it might inform future developments for the park. Hopefully if we can get the right people to see this, and see what we achieved with actually quite a small amount of funding, and how much enjoyment the public got from it, and set out here some of the other things that people want to see happening in the park, we're hoping that those things might feed into any plans for a bid, so that is our secondary hope for the publication.

KS Before we get onto the subject of legacy, can we go back to looking at the artists, and specifically, how they were asked to respond to the project?

AF With the brief, we really wanted people to think site-specifically about the physical reality of the park as a public space, but also to think about the history of the park. But there were also findings that had come out of Quality Streets to work with. And so, for instance, Nickie Brown's piece is a direct response to some findings that came out of those consultations which highlighted the problem of graffiti and vandalism in the park.

KS Can you talk about how you found the process of negotiating the project with the people in charge of the park?

AF The park's beautiful and I was aware that it takes a lot of hard work to keep it beautiful and that I wanted the project to be sympathetic to the park. It was important to meet with Rob, the park-keeper to explain our project to him and assure him that we wouldn't damage the space in any way. Rob was fantastic to work with; I think he could see that we had a lot of respect for him and his team and the space. We talked through all the proposals with him, which worked well, and actually became a bit of a collaboration – he made suggestions as to where some of the artworks would be best sited. It was great to work with someone who had a positive attitude to what we were doing, who could help where we needed it and who by the end was really interested in what we were trying to achieve there. So, yeah, a really massive thanks to Rob and his team because he could have just seen it as yet another thing an already overtasked workforce had to contend with, but actually he was really open, and a fantastic bloke to work with.

KS I think it would be fair to describe the content of Common Ground as varied. Can you summarise what happened over the weekend?

AF Well, in total, we had 18 artists separately responding to Hanley Park and installing a real mix of ephemeral, political, sculptural and performative works, some of which engaged and interacted with the public and some which were flights of fancy for the public to enjoy. We had an information point

located by the bandstand where we had maps of the park locating the artworks. The maps worked really well as people were orientated around the park in a different way than they would usually walk and some people said that they'd never been to particular areas of the park before, you know, so I think that was really, really positive.

KS All of the artists wore branded Common Ground T-shirts. What was the thinking behind this?

AF One of the key concerns for us that we recognised was that, usually, as artists, we operate in a gallery setting when we're showing work, we're very much gallery-based as a group. In that gallery setting, the public is coming to you and they're expecting to engage with artwork. When you're working in the public realm it's a completely different kettle of fish. You're in public space and people there might not necessarily have come to see what you're doing so there need to be points of contact for the public to find out what's going on. We were really keen on being quite visible so that people could quickly identify the brand – the Common Ground logo which was everywhere – on t-shirts, banners, it was on postcards, the logo was repeated around the park – we wanted people to be able to identify quickly that here is someone I can ask for information about the art works and what's going on.

We were very lucky with the volunteers that we had over the weekend. They helped with installation of the works, talking with the public and also the evaluation side of things. We wanted this to be an extension to the research that was done for Quality Streets – they helped to gather further information about what people wanted to see happening in the park in the future – using the art works as a departure point for conversation.

KS So from this evaluation, you got a fairly immediate idea of how people felt about the project? What was the tone of the response?

AF People really loved it. Some of the people who came along on the Saturday came back on the Sunday hoping that there'd be another brass band and there might be other things happening. I think the project did an amazing job of re-activating a park which has been neglected for too long really. I think, on the whole, the reactions were really positive. There was an elderly couple that came on the Saturday, they had an ice-cream and commented on how they hadn't seen a brass band here for such a long time, and how much they enjoyed it, which was great. That was just one positive response in hundreds. I think that the variety of the work meant there was something there for everyone - kids really enjoyed playing with the musical sculpture, and with Kate Lynch's Green Man workshop piece.

KS It was interesting to look at the feedback and notice that we didn't get that kind of typical response of "this is a waste of money" – generally it was quite positive and given that a lot of the people that saw the work were people that weren't coming to see the work, they were just general members of the public, there was a real positive atmosphere. I know, for me, as one of the artists and one of the volunteers I left the event feeling like it had been a great weekend.

AF I think that's something artists get a lot (from the public), you know, "what's the point" but, I think you're absolutely right, it was almost unanimous. I mean if I hadn't seen the evaluation material being done by such a broad range of people I might be a bit suspicious about the level of positivity. Of course, it wasn't all positive, and it will never be possible to please all of the people all of the time, but on the whole, people were happy to see our project.

KS For me, involvement in the project was great as I, and I think Kate Lynch, and Carl Gent procured further commissions off the back of our projects. What, in your opinion was the benefit of Common Ground for the artists?

AF Well, we got the opportunity to show work, which is all too rare for artists. In particular, several of those involved had never experienced working in the public realm before, so this proved to be a valuable opportunity. But more than that, I think the artists have had a fantastic experience – they've had the chance to have their work seen by a wider variety of people than we usually get our work to be seen by and the chance to talk to the public – an interested engaged public, about art. That was just really positive. And to remember it all, is a place in the Common Ground publication which we hope can have a lasting effect.

KS It became clear through the course of the weekend that the Pavilion was a main focus for people, who really wanted to see something positive happening to that building.

AF Actually, the Pavilion was one of the main topics to come out of Quality Streets. And it was reiterated constantly throughout the weekend. I think it was quite pertinent, really, that we chose to place our information point next to the bandstand, which looked alive, with its bunting and flower baskets, re-populated with the brass band – a celebration. The backdrop, in stark contrast, was the Pavilion which should be this beautiful hub of a building where fantastic community events should be taking place but it is boarded up and there's nothing happening – a fine building, just being wasted. I think that was great as it really got people talking about what should be done with it.

Of course, as artists, we think Common Ground could be a template for an Art Park. We feel that Thomas Mawson's original vision saw it as a creative space. We were, thinking along the lines of a mini Yorkshire Sculpture Park. We feel that the City's got a lot of fantastic artworks left over from the 1986 Garden Festival – why not site them in Hanley Park and make a great kind of gateway from the train station to the City Centre? There'd be a reason to walk through the Park to see all of this great sculptural work and perhaps the Pavilion could be a cafe and gallery – a place to visit and see cultural work from across the city and beyond – I think that's what we'd like to see happen, and I really believe that Common Ground showed that it is something that the public would enjoy too.

KS So, I'd say we've covered most things, is there anything else you'd like to say to conclude?

AF On a personal note, it was really moving for me to see the beautiful bandstand, and seeing all sorts of people sat around on a sunny afternoon with a choc-ice listening to a great brass band; people of all ages and all walks of life. Very positive. I'm really proud to see what we, a group of artists, produced with a little bit of energy from people and I think, I just really want to stress that really it was all done from beginning to end in 6 weeks for £5000 and that includes this publication! I feel quite strongly that over the past decade there has been so much money wasted on so-called art projects – giving art a bad name in the city. Common Ground was amazing value for money and touched so many people in such a positive way that it should become a template for how to consult creatively. We got invaluable information from the public about the Park and what they want to see happening in the Park, and for me, when people talk about creative consultation techniques, I don't always think the methods are creative. I think Common Ground was real creative consultation. Put something there as a proper vision for the public to respond to and they'll tell you if this is the sort of thing they want to see, and what else they want to see – it activates imaginations, and fantastic ideas come out as a result. That was one of the amazing things. But more than anything, I think the artists worked really hard, with real generosity and very little money and most of the artists spent more than the hundred quid they were commissioned on materials alone – altogether they created some fantastic, really high quality art work for a weekend in June, in Hanley Park, and that, for me, is something to be very proud of.



David Bethell

Digging

A Plough
 A Seed Drill
 A Roller
 One Day

An Ode to Bones,
 An Ode to Homes
 An Ode to Fields
 An Ode to Birds
 That drown the moans
 Of that working Sod



Andrew Branscombe

Park Life

When I started to make this work the intention was to make a piece that could be interacted with by members of the public. The chosen site informed the geometry of the framework and the materials that were to be used. As well as being resilient, the almost exclusive use of steel in the fabrication of the work referenced the Shelton Bar steelworks as an historical pointer and alternative to the ceramic references elsewhere in the park. As a musical instrument, I intended the work to have a similar impact to a church bell or call to prayer; a means of drawing attention to the area. The title's reference to the song 'Park Life' by Blur came from the set of notes that accompany the lyrics "all the people, so many people", which were transposed to the steel tubes. This refrain became a call sign, if you were aware of the order, to play the notes; provision which I intentionally left unclear. Users of the work were instead able to improvise and create their own harmonies and patterns, reflecting I felt, the freedom that park life gives to people. My intentional use of galvanised steel tubes links to the areas of the park especially the canal bridge, where scaffolding is in use. The scaffolding has the contrasting effect of both suggesting repair and renewal, and dilapidation where it takes on the role of supporting a structure which is in the process of collapse.



Michael Branthwaite

Aphrodite of Balloons consisted of a sculptural intervention placed in a dynamic and engaging location within the park. As well as being conceived as an intriguing object in its own right it was envisaged the work could provoke thoughts of the park's heritage as a quality venue worthy of merit as well as speculating on its possible future through provoking thoughts and responses.



Nickie Brown

Nickie Brown's signs aimed to directly address the public; testing reactions and responses to requests and orders. Acting as a decoy to draw anti-social behaviour away from the other artworks, and testing some public perceptions about the park as a dangerous or problematic space.

Bernard Charnley

Politicians Find Answers In Common Ground

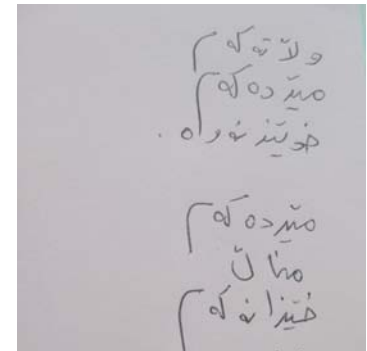
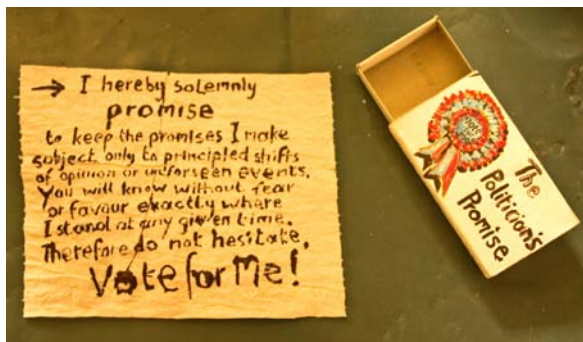
Acrylic and Foam Board 2010

The work was inspired by the latest expose of our politicians' lifestyle. It is a symbolically violent and forced re-education with comic undertones. Five figures are planted head first and able to swivel with the wind. They are arranged in a circle around the flowering of roses. Each 'politician' features a revelatory sound bite as a result of this return to their roots. A linked piece, showcasing a promise about future conduct, was completed as part of a geocache 'treasure' find. This intervention in a public space is an extension of the studio based practice of the artist with a focus on identity and the iconic.



The Politician's Promise

Geocache
Acrylic, card and luxury toilet paper
2010



Celine Siani Djiakoua

What do you love? is an ongoing interactive piece where, from the inside, the viewers can answer a couple of questions : what are the most important person/place/object/date in your life and what do you love. From the outside, they can read what previous participants wrote.

The Hanley Park was the fifth site where this growing piece was shown. It is quite popular and so far, more than 200 papers have been collected.

People are invited to write in their own language and another part of this project is the translation of every single text in as many languages as possible. In the future, the piece will also travel to other countries.



Benjamin Faga

I explored how clues of an animal's presence can evoke imagined events in a space where these creatures are unlikely to co-inhabit.

Until recently, it has been over 350 years since England has had a pack of wolves living within its borders. Contemporary technologies have made it possible to import wolves into the country to once again live an English lifestyle. How do current English residents welcome these immigrant wolves? What happens if these wolves find a home in an urban environment?

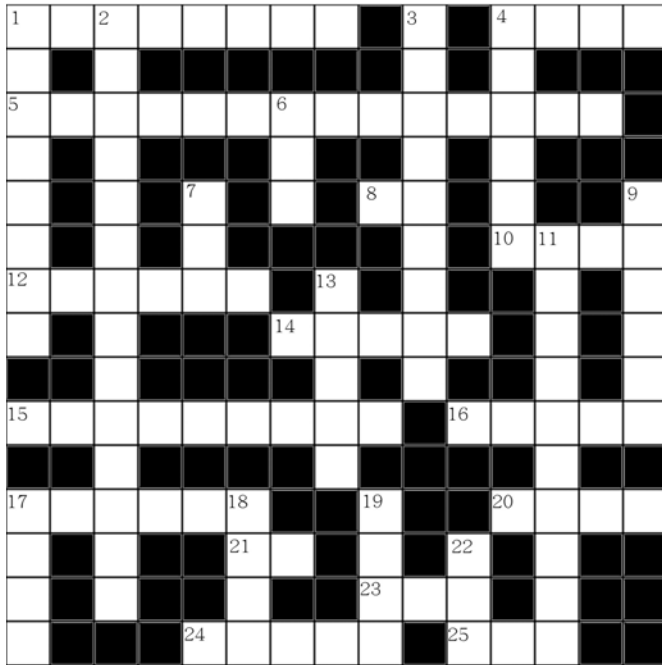
Through a series of performances, and installations I brought animal life from all over the world into Hanley Park.

How could a series of performances, and installations bring animals from AROUND the WORLD into Hanley Park? Well, the animals only existed in the minds of curious visitors. Through creating animal tracks and signs of an animal's recent visit, I explored how subtle hints within one's environment can activate one's imagination.



Anna Francis

Anna Francis excavated the Park's halcyon days, connecting to the history of a once great city park by repopulating the bandstand. A local band, Audley Brass played out the afternoon to an accompaniment of choc ices, bunting and flowers. The bandstand was once again a focal point for conversation, entertainment and contemplation.



- Across.
- One of the four major factors controlling population of a species. Death, birth, immigration and ____ on. (8)
 - The ____ Measures, geological feature lying beneath North Staffordshire. (4)
 - Major predator-prey equation in population dynamics. (5-8)
 - Abbreviated constellation that plays host to Stephan's Quintet. (2)
 - ____ 319 possesses a Seyfert Type II nucleus. (4)
 - National location of Stoke-on-Trent ____ d. (6)
 - Anti-____, see 3. down. (5)
 - Disease endemic to poorly ventilated coalmines. (9)
 - See 6 down.
 - Prefix alluding to humanity, i.e. combustion of coal is the main contributor to ____-pomorphic increase in CO₂. (6)
 - One of the original Potteries - ____ ton. (4)
 - Secondary constituent of coal, abbreviated. (2)
 - New General Catalogue used to describe well-known astronomical objects. (3)
 - The town that gave the city its name. (5)
 - See 2 down.

- Down.
- Currently twinned with Stoke-on-Trent. _____, Germany. (8)
 - (and 25 across) NGC 7318b's decent into the centre of Stephan's Quintet's gravitational well is causing a shock wave heating a substance up to millions of degrees. What is the substance? (5-8, 3)
 - ____ shift: at least two different strains of a virus combining to form a new subtype. (9)
 - (and 16 across) ____ Fortier. United Strength is Stronger. (3, 5)
 - Unit of astronomical distance. (3)
 - NG ____: the only member of Stephan's Quintet optically but not physically associated. (6)
 - (and 19 down) The theorized area of narrow habitability present within any star system that can support life. (10, 4)
 - Author of the Paradox as to why extra-terrestrial life has not yet contacted Earth. (5)
 - Road between Stoke-on-Trent and Nantwich. (4)
 - Theorized cloud of matter in extremely far orbit around the Sun, possible origin of cometary bodies. (4)
 - See 11 down.
 - Alternative designation for four of Stephan's Quintet. ____ 92. (3)

Carl Gent

At Common Ground I travelled around Hanley Park with my Celestial Campaign Wagon, a mobile structure from which I consulted the public about my drive to twin Stoke-on-Trent with the galaxy cluster Stephan's Quintet. During the weekend I gauged people's varying reactions to the idea, handed out crosswords based around the ideas surrounding the potential twinning and collecting signatures of support for the drive. Sign the online petition at www.carlgent.com/petition.



Brian Holdcroft



Kate Lynch

Did you spot The Green Man at Common Ground?

On the weekend of 26th and 27th June 2010 multiple sightings of the elusive and enigmatic 'Green Man' creature were recorded in Hanley Park, amongst the activity of the Common Ground event. The Green Man of Hanley Park is thought to be an ancient inhabitant of the area that has witnessed the current park site and the previous landscape.



Chris Parkes

Chris Parkes created a series of sculptural objects that reference the furry and feathered inhabitants of the Park.



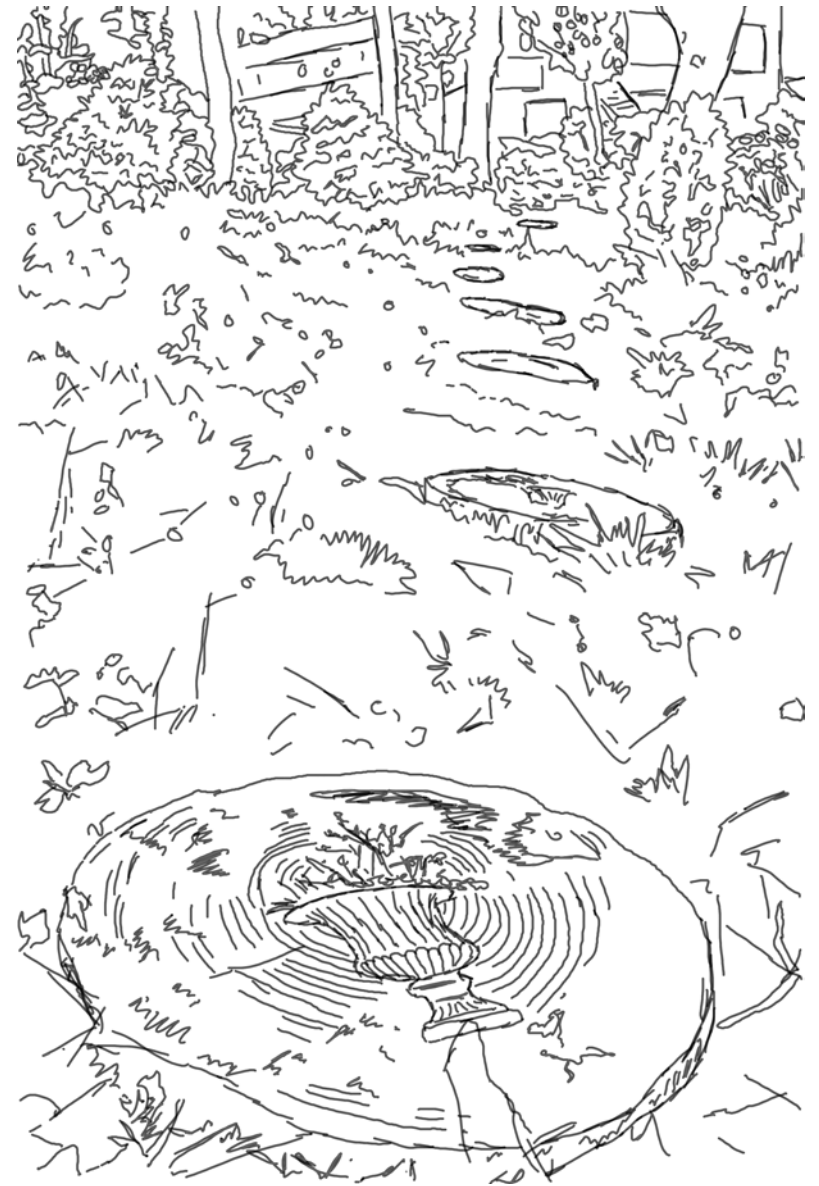
Stuart Porter

Monument saw Stuart Porter drawing attention to features of the park that are more usually overlooked.



Phil Rawle

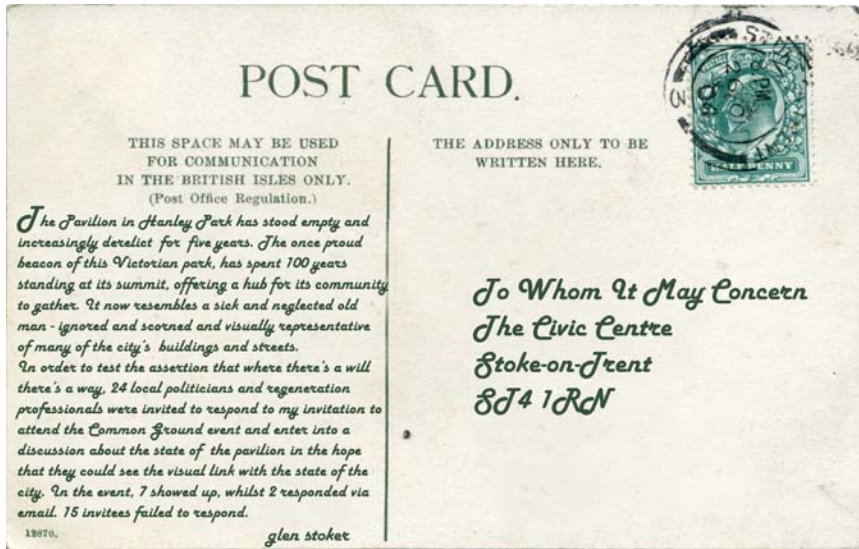
Timelines marked the outline of a tree's shadow as it moved over grass and paths, on the hour every hour between 9.00 am and 3.00pm. Each outline formed a record that overlapped with the next, creating a tracery of time that was interacted with by footsteps, bicycles and wind. The shadows neatly fitting these outlines during the following days.



Katie Shipley

Retracing Your Steps

Do you remember?
Retracing your steps in the park?
I'll never forget



Glen Stoker
Where There's a Will There's a Way or Who Cares Wins 2010



Marc Tittensor

Marc Tittensor's stick men delighted and amused the visitors to the park, drawing attention to the park as a destination for play and relaxation.



S.A.F.E.

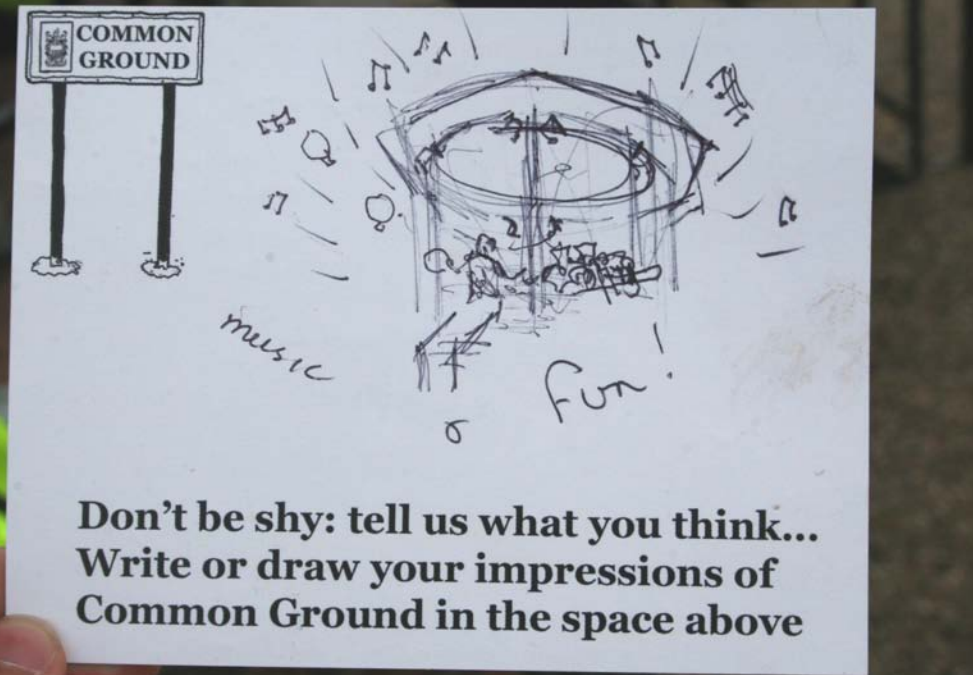
S.A.F.E. came along and built an Angling enclosure around the lake, which provided opportunities for local people to try a bit of fishing. The young members of S.A.F.E. also got involved in the art projects and helped out by litter picking too.

Stoke Angling For Everyone is a voluntary organisation which promotes the benefits of the sport of angling.



Hanley Park Heroes

Hidden around the park during the weekend were a series of portraits of key figures in the Park's history, people like Thomas Mawson, the Park's designer and George Howson, the Pottery Factory Owner who donated the Bandstand.



Evaluation

Common Ground took place on a sunny weekend in June 2010, in a Stoke-on-Trent public park. Due to the public nature of the event, it is difficult to measure exactly how many of the people in the park over the weekend were drawn there by the event and how many were there by coincidence. Additionally, due to the multiple entrance and exit points of the park it would be impossible to track exactly how many people entered the park during the course of the event in comparison to a normal weekend. The best we could do was make a commitment to speak to as many members of the public as we could during the weekend. With this in mind our team of volunteers and artists were armed at all times with information maps and evaluation postcards.

Other tactics were employed to gain feedback. There was an information point where the public could pick up info and give their thoughts; and a children's map was created for similar purposes. During the brass band concert on the Saturday afternoon, artist Anna Francis became 'The Usherette' giving out choc ices in exchange for feedback. Some might say that the sweet treat could be viewed as bribery, or could skew the findings. We prefer to think that as evaluation serves our purposes (and not necessarily the audience's) it is a good incentive to provide something in exchange for their valuable thoughts.

Over the weekend we managed to speak to hundreds of people, and gathered feedback forms from 108 people. This told us that of the people we spoke to, when asked "why they visited the park that day";

- 58%** said the Common Ground Event.
- 14%** said to generally visit the park.
- 12%** said to use the park facilities.
- 9%** said the weather.
- 6%** chose not to answer this question.

This tells us that we certainly had an impact on visitor numbers to the park, compared to a normal day.

- When asked what do you like about the park, the most common answers were;
- 46%** said they liked the environment and surroundings.
 - 19%** said they liked the facilities.
 - 13%** said they liked the design of the park.

- When asked what don't you like about the park the most common answers were;
- 16%** said they did not like the litter.
 - 16%** said they did not like the lack of facilities.
 - 15%** said they did not like the neglected buildings in the park.

Other responses stated that people did not like: the general neglect of the park and the lack of security in the park.

- When asked "did you enjoy common ground?"
- 89%** said Yes they enjoyed the event.
 - 11%** were neutral.
- Nobody said that they did not enjoy the event.

- When asked "would you like to see more events in the park like this?"
- 90%** said that Yes they would like to see more events like this.
 - 1%** said no they would not like to see more events like this.
 - 9%** were neutral on this point.

Overall the connections made with the public over the weekend told us that people love the park, and love to see events happening there. There were recurring concerns in regard to the general neglect of the park's buildings, and many people felt that these buildings could be regenerated and become true community assets.

We were very pleased with the almost resoundingly positive response that the public had to the Common Ground Event, and the feedback was that people would love to see more events like this taking place. Our hope is that commissioners and members of the Council notice the way that the Park was truly activated, and became a truly vibrant community space over the weekend of Common Ground; a reason to be cheerful.

Quality Streets

During Summer and Winter of 2009-2010 a team of local residents and workers carried out a consultation project called Quality Streets.

The project was funded by a group of organisations: Staffordshire University, The City Council, Stoke-on-Trent Safer City Partnership, The Police and Renew.

The community research team involved people in giving their views on the neighbourhood, and in developing an action plan in response.

The research team were interested in finding out what people like and don't like about living and working in the area surrounding Haney Park, to lead to targeted change in the area.

Local people had training to join the team.

As a result of the findings from the research project the Common Ground project was funded.

To hear more about the Quality Streets research, please contact Penny Vincent in the Creative Communities Unit, Staffordshire University
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Thanks

Photographs Special thanks to Ben Harding and Tony Jones and extra thanks to all of the artists, volunteers and visitors to the park for the images used in this book.

Video Thanks so much to Behjat Omer Abdulla for the beautiful film.

Volunteers A massive thanks to our fantastic team of volunteers, without whom the project just would not have happened: Andrew Flint, Carly Fletcher, Daniel Britnell, Jane Howie, Jason Brindley, Rob Bramley and Stacey Booth. You Rock!

Design Phil Rawle | Wren Park

A big hug for Penny Vincent for her help, support and advice throughout the process.

Sponsors

Many thanks to our funders and supporters:

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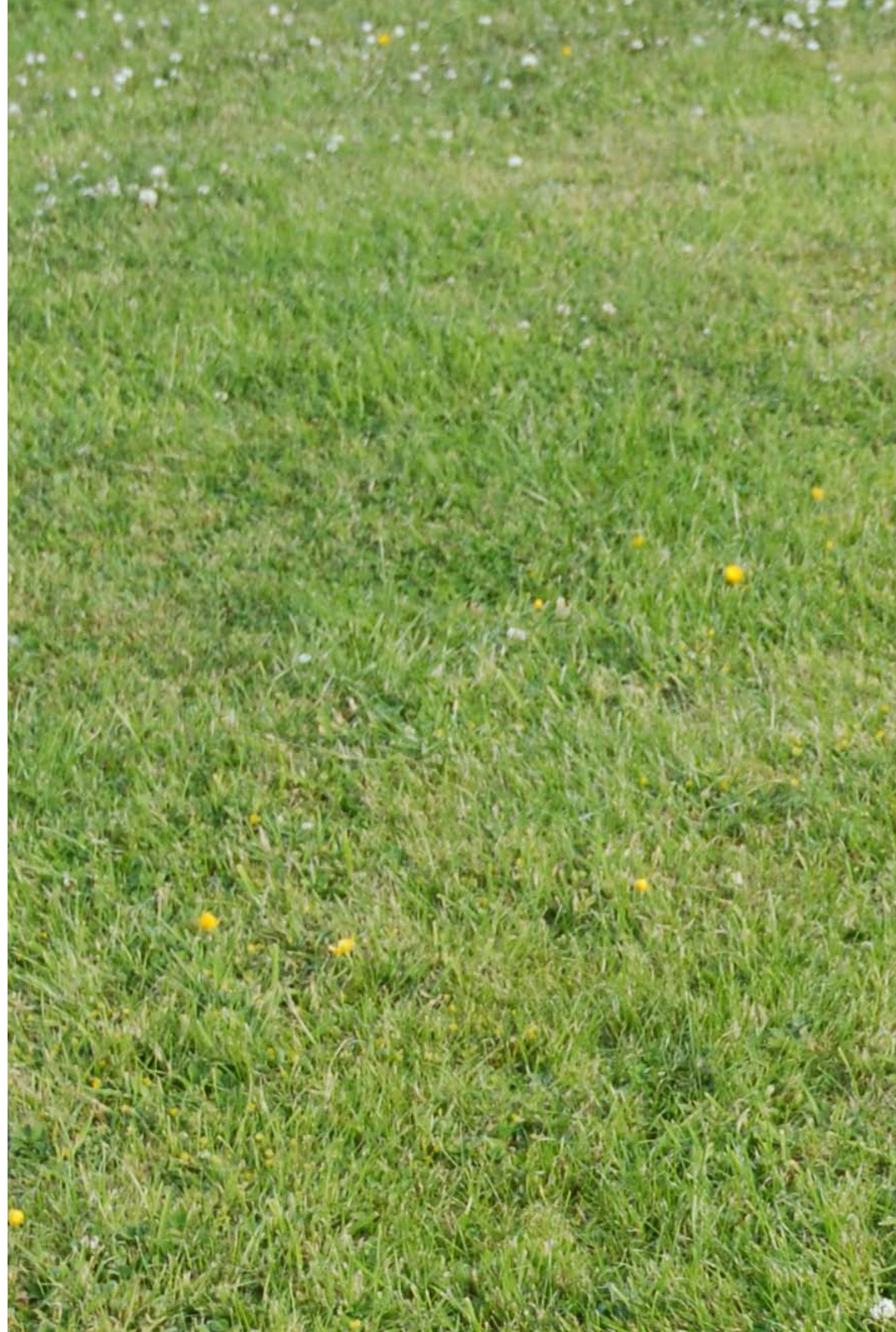


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and of course the marvellous AirSpace Gallery Team

And last but not least, a special mention for the amazing Parkkeeper Rob and his team, whose support and advice was invaluable.





Common Ground was a weekend long arts event in Hanley Park, Stoke-on-Trent, organised by AirSpace Gallery Studio Artists. The project invited the public to discover art works hidden and placed in the city park. The art works responded to the historical and physical reality of the site, and set out possible future visions for a public park in need of activation.

Common Ground was commissioned in response to a public consultation project, Quality Streets, where the public expressed a desire to see activities and events taking place within the park. As a group of artists we saw Common Ground as a proposition for what could be done with this once great park. For one weekend in June 2010 the space became a sculpture park and saw a surge in visitor numbers as a result. The park's prime location offers opportunity to transform it into a gateway from the railway station to the city centre, for those that have the imagination to develop it in such a way that it becomes a destination, or a beautiful and delightful walkway to the shops.