

Creating Places

Exploring the cultural heritage
of High Wycombe

Creating Places

Exploring the cultural heritage
of High Wycombe

A collaborative art project researched and developed by artist Lucy Ryan
and produced as part of the Public Art Strategy for Wycombe Marsh.

With thanks to the pupils and teachers
of Marsh Infant and Nursery School

Commissioned by
Futurecity and St James Homes

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

Little Gidding
(No. 4 of ‘Four Quartets’)
T.S. Eliot

T.S. Eliot taught at the Royal Grammar
School, High Wycombe at the beginning
of the twentieth century.

Introduction: Creating places

Successful urban places embed the unique heritage and culture of an area at their heart. It is these rewarding, intriguing and inspiring aspects of our surroundings which enable us to thrive, and truly engage with the environment and history of the place in which we live. A vibrant cultural life strengthens our connection to community and has the potential to enliven the public realm, creating opportunities for activity and engagement.

Gaining an understanding of our past and the environment in which we live is a process which happens over time. It can begin at an early age and allows us as individuals to value where we come from and build upon the past as our communities continue to grow into the future. The Wycombe Marsh community of High Wycombe is a diverse and growing community and is fortunate enough to be surrounded by a wealth of rich history and ecology. It is this heritage, which St James Homes hopes to draw into the new Wycombe Marsh development, a process in which Futurecity has been invited to collaborate.

Futurecity have developed a Public Art Strategy on behalf of St James Homes for the Wycombe Marsh development which links together the industrial heritage and ecology of High Wycombe and aims to embed them at the heart of the scheme. The strategy aspires to explore this local culture and heritage, through art, design and local involvement, in order to enhance life in and around the new development as well as creating opportunity for cultural activities to take place within the community.

In order to commence this process, Futurecity and St James Homes worked with local artist and creative education provider Lucy Ryan, along with Wycombe District Council, to develop a series of workshops with local Marsh Infant and Nursery School. The workshops were created in order to provide the opportunity for Key Stage 1 children (5-7 year olds) to use creative means in order to explore and better understand the area in which they live. Futurecity's engagement programmes aim to use creative processes in order to connect and engage different groups of people, organisations, sectors or communities, with new ideas and concepts. Our aim is that the community will invest time and emotion into a creative project or artwork and take ownership of the overall public arts programme.

Our approach is to embed public art projects within the fabric and life of a new development. The Wycombe Marsh creative workshops with Marsh School were designed to allow the children to explore the local ecology, the history of the mills industry and the wood and furniture industry, in order to generate artwork, poetry and ideas as a result of these visits. This material has been compiled here and will contribute to the process of developing the final artwork and wayfinding to be embedded into the public realm of the Wycombe Marsh development.

Both Futurecity and St James Homes are committed to working closely with the community of Wycombe Marsh in order to make the new development an inspiring place to live that successfully connects to the existing community.

Futurecity & St James Homes Group Ltd
March 2011



Exploring High Wycombe

The public art proposal for the Wycombe Marsh development encompasses a series of embedded public art projects in specific locations around the site. The projects work to a placemaking strategy to enliven, educate and energise the public realm. The embedded public art projects will contribute to the identity of key areas through an exploration of the area's history and ecology.

During January and February 2011, artist Lucy Ryan ran a series of visits and workshops with Marsh Infant and Nursery School Key Stage 1 pupils. Each group of children concentrated on exploring a different part of High Wycombe covering ecology, the history of the mills industry and finally the wood and furniture industry. Each group of children were taken on a visit to either the river Wye, Pann Mill or Wycombe Museum. Following this Lucy Ryan ran a workshop with each group, which explored these visits through creative means, developing stories, poems, lace collage, printing, drawing and furniture making.

The concepts for the final artwork and wayfinding will evolve from this material generated by the children in response to their visits. A graphic artist will be appointed to develop artwork and an identity for

Wycombe Marsh which draws on these images, ideas and text. This will include a public art and architecture project on the façade of a key building within the High Wycombe development. In addition, the ideas generated as a part of the creative workshops will be used to develop concepts for wayfinding and navigation. The outcome of the workshops forms a key part of the brief for the art commission, thereby incorporating the community's ideas and vision into the very heart of the Wycombe Marsh development.

Lucy Ryan developed a series of imaginative and inclusive workshops for the children of Marsh school, which linked into their curriculum as well as drawing in the wider concerns of environment, art and sustainability. The workshops engaged the children of Marsh School in discussion and creativity around the character of the area and what it can contribute to community and place.

We would like to extend our thanks to Wycombe District Council, the staff and volunteers at Wycombe Museum, The High Wycombe Society and SWOP (historical photographic archive), who all kindly supported the development and delivery of creative education workshops.

Right: Portrait of a group of pupils
outside a lace school in Stokenchurch.
1860

Below: Wycombe Marsh class with
Lucy Ryan (far left) and teacher
Xxxxxx Xxxxxx (right).



When asked to do a series of workshops at Marsh School in High Wycombe for St James and Futurecity, my initial approach was to investigate how the children could gain as much as possible from their engagement with the programme. I wanted them to learn about the place in which they lived and be shown how they could utilise, be part of and keep the heritage of High Wycombe alive.

The ecology of High Wycombe has played a significant role in the development of the town's industry and cultural heritage and it was important to make this connection in the workshop and visit proposals developed for the children. The chalk beds on which High Wycombe sits, have enabled water to rise through the ground allowing the river Wye to flourish. The River Wye was put to good use as the power source for over 30 mills, whilst the beech woods which established themselves in the chalky ground formed a wonderful resource for furniture making and watercress farming.

Furniture has played a significant role in the industry of High Wycombe, the Windsor chair design being a well-known example. Consequently it was the chair industry, which became the starting point for the development of the workshops. Looking at industry in High Wycombe we also discovered a plethora of small Lace Schools all around the area where children as young as those in Marsh School

High Wycombe: our heritage, our town

had worked. Bucks Point is a lace technique unique to Buckinghamshire and lace became our second workshop topic with the water mills making the third.

Each child was armed with a camera, sketchpad and a questionnaire and set off on outings to see what could be discovered about the cultural heritage of High Wycombe through examining these topics. Wycombe Museum provided an excellent resource for the children to learn about the tradition of chair and lace making, whilst Pann Mill proved to be the only surviving functioning Mill in the area and therefore the obvious choice for the third visit. The staff and volunteers of Wycombe Museum were incredibly helpful. Their knowledge and enthusiasm was wonderfully engaging for the children giving them a thorough understanding of chair making and a passion for the subject.

Following the visits to Wycombe Museum and Pann Mill, the children took part in a series of workshops. The Chair making workshop entailed using the drawings from the museum trip and working on poems about the function and design of chairs. The next activity was an adapted game of musical chairs in which we explored all the different languages spoken at the school by writing words which mean hello, welcome and family on a selected number of school chairs.

The school is multicultural and High Wycombe has attracted many different nationalities over the decades due to trade and industry. St James' new development will also house many different nationalities and therefore it was important to represent this diversity through the universality of chairs. This exercise could potentially be a starting point for the way finding strategy being implemented. The final activity in the day-long workshop was making and decorating actual life size chairs from heavy duty cardboard. The cardboard was donated by various retail outlets in the surrounding area.

For the lacemaking workshop the children drew the patterns of old lace they had seen at the museum. They spent time drawing the lace pillows and bobbins, which the volunteers had shown them at the museum and wrote descriptive words about lace. The children also made prints using pieces of lace, stuck to cardboard before making and printing their very own collagraphs. This workshop culminated in life size collage of a traditionally dressed lace worker.

Our Mill workshop focused on documenting the journey to Pann Mill, across the Rye, along the dyke and finally the function and workings of The Mill. Pann Mill is only opened on special days but The Wycombe Society kindly opened and set the wheels in motion especially for the

children of Marsh School. This group worked in groups of 3 or 4 layering up a large collage, it was an enchanting artwork very indicative of their experience.

Since the workshops, the children have continued to engaged with the past and present culture of High Wycombe. Several of the children have since visited the Wycombe Museum with their families and Rebecca Morrison, headmistress of Marsh School commented on how the whole school has loved learning more about the area in which they live.

Lucy Ryan
March 2011

Exploring WOOD



Incit, con etur aceped maximuscia volupta tenihil magniat emporeptur sit reiur, tem re viduci rectem seque consequé lab incitiis derciis sercipis ut rem rescilicias eum eatibusci dollo dolut volupta nosam fugiaspernat voluptatur, opta vellit exerio. Nam none quid undae nullabore consend itiandendit reicia porit quo quaepedicias arum voloreperum adis volupturem cus, is quid eius quidunt ad ma ad qui abo.

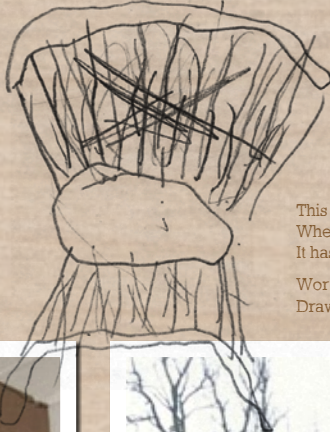
Um dollum net ipici te vit eates eiunt, est ut modi dit, ut aut eumque mincipis ad ut voloriorem quam qui ant fuga. Hilit omnis con nem iunda vere, sundaersped ut dolorror solorro expéro enihil eat ipsam et hil id magni saepudanti conectem dolutempossi archil eium sit, ut perspiet quatiús diorerios sum ute nonsequ ibusae elenihic temporum verrumet faccupa pa vereruptata voluptus audist, ut re offic to tem recto bea eiciae porrovid moloratur rerum et hilia dolore latas imus il exerempore, et verovita as si tem eum quiassi ncipsap erecerum autatquidunt occupatis antemperiam non rem faceped ma ni voluptatae.

Fugit et faccus in plamet int ipsusda nditae ipienis nulparita perro qui doluptat as autem fugitiaé volupta tinctem qui aut prorpor uptatem oditam, sandige nderiasi utem non nam, verume doluptiate plibus dolore pa conem quae quas explit esti rem hicil magnatis sit et, voloria cus deruptas delesimi, vero blaut ea vent, con reptatur rem eossimp edicia sum apictum rem et et aut idero corae sent praest mod et voluptas rectinis nonseque quam, optae provitate vera explit idipsundiam, nis solorem et quas sinciam, nessum et molupta tiores est porumqui assitisciis rem quis aris iniscillora cone verspel ignimpernam, as vellab imusa volorro mi, nis ex erero venducipide eos magnisqui dolor asperit et ommo ex expla voluptat litis sit fugiae dolenimi, quis reicipsunti dolupta cus.

Tur mod quo voloreiur, nos ate il in ped que sit omniend ipsunt excerio sandae sinum, ipsum sam audaeped quo ea quost venestiur militi derspic torrovit eicaect endant aut ut res doluptatur, conse ventectem sectibusanti qui tes evernatur? Ugias atur sunt provitatis uta voluptatur? Quias et facca-tur? Que con consequis erores debit venis quatia non net labor atempos et dolent harum nihilluptas et facercilibus archit odi comnim nullit asit labo. Arci omnissit ilitas ilita duntem aris que aut od maximin nat.

Chairs are to sit on and read.
Have you got a chair at home?
A chair to sit on.
I have a chair at home.
Read books and sit on a chair.
Sit on a comfy chair.

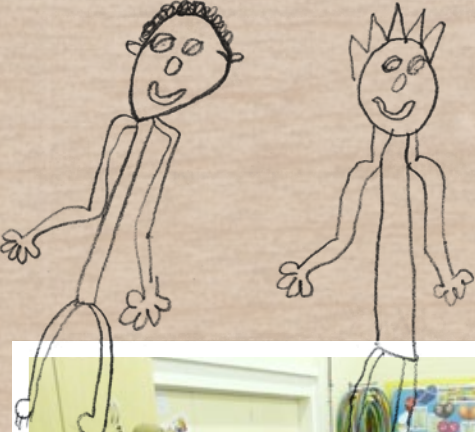
Anisa



This is a Windsor Chair.
When you turn it over it goes upside-down.
It has H-stretchers and it has four legs.

Words: Lemar Campbell
Drawing: Chloe

Incit, con etur aceped maximuscia volupta tenihil
magniat emporeptur sit reiur, tem re viduci
rectem seque consequelab incitiis derciis ser
cipis ut rem rescilicias eum eatibusci dolo dolut
volupta nosam fugiaspernat voluptatur, opta vellit
exerio. Nam none quid undae nullabore consend
itiandendit reicia porit quo quaepecidias arum
voloreperum adis volupturem cus, is quid eius
quidunt ad ma ad qui abo.



The chair is made of wood. It's called a
scroll back chair. It should be made of wood
but we are going to make it with cardboard.
There are Windsor chairs and chairs that
have two sides.

Words & drawing: Robyn

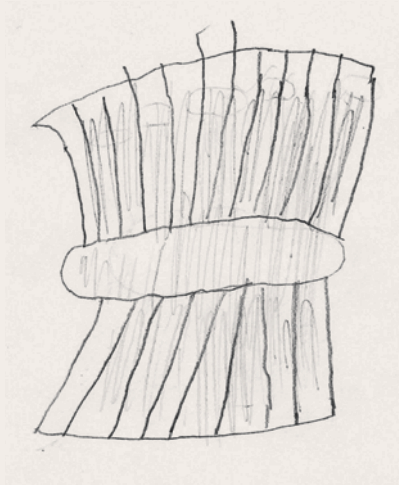


View of a craftsman at work in
a brick-built factory, shaping an
intricate chair-back held in a vice.
Location unknown. Circa 1950.



Chairs are different.
Have you got one?
And everyone can have a chair.
I have got a chair at home.
R is for a rain chair.
Some people have chairs.

Laila Allam



This is a garden chair. When it is rainy you can turn it around and you won't get wet bottoms and both sides are the same. It's made of wood and the colour is dark brown.

Words & drawing: Laura

Chair is for sitting down.
Have you got a chair?
Antique teacher's chair is for sitting down.
I sit on a chair when I am drinking.
Relax and read.
Sitting on a comfy chair.

Samir



This is a potty chair and it is made out of wood. The chair colour is yellow and purple. We could put glitter and paint the colour in peach and dark brown. It is sparkly and lovely and special and shiny.

Words & drawing: Anisa Tariq

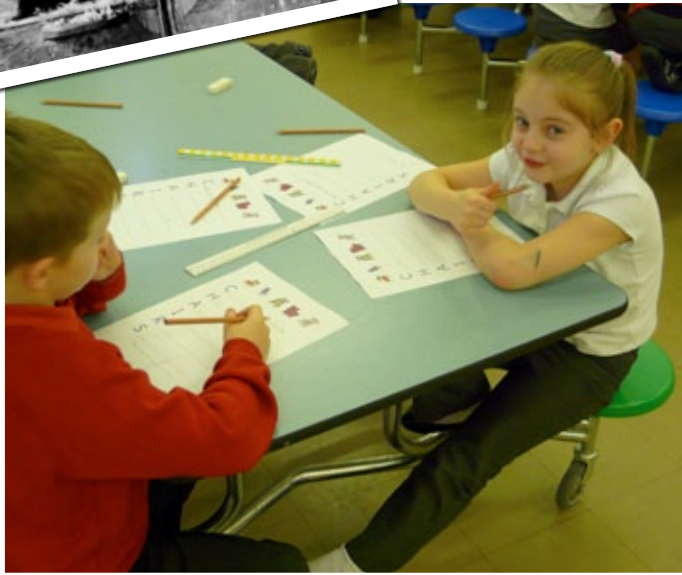
Chairs are comfy and relaxing.
High chairs are not for babies to sit on in case they fall.
And I think everyone should have one.
In chairs they are not hollow.
Roman chairs are old to us.
Seat usually means chair.

Ebotifo

Inciit, con etur aceped maximuscia volupta tenihil magniat emporeptur sit reitur, tem re viduci rectem seque consequue lab inctiis derciis ser cipis ut rem rescilicias eum eatibusci dollo dolut volupta nosam fugiaspernat voluptatur, opta vellit exerio. Nam none quid undae nullabore consend itiandendit reicia porit quo quaepecicias arum voloreperum adis volupturem cus, is quid eius quidunt ad ma ad qui abo.



A view of a chair-maker (possibly H. Tranter, or O.Towerton) making chair legs/stretchers on a pole lathe at Stokenchurch. c 1905

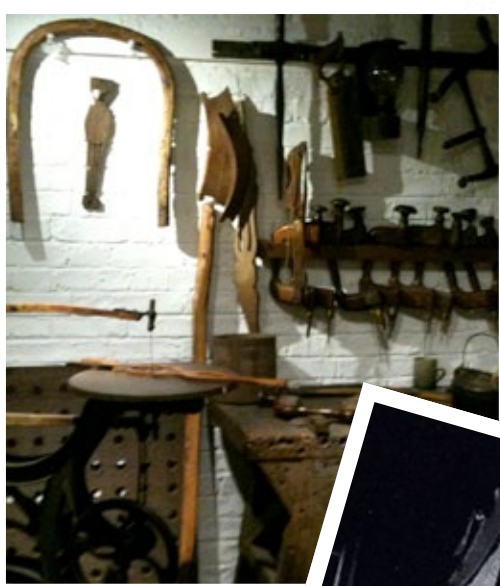


Betget how ogyice chair.



The chair is wood and the colour is brown and the chair is made of wood. The chair is for sitting on.

Words: Sami
Drawing: Samir Aslam



The chair has a plate to put your food. The chairs colour is pink. The chair can make ice cream. The ice cream is brown the flavour is chocolate. The chair is so good you cannot stop eating the ice cream.

Words & drawing: Hifsa

Exploring LACE

Incit, con etur aceped maximuscia volupta tenihil magniat emporeptur sit reiur, tem re viduci rectem seque consequ lab incitiis derciis sercipis ut rem rescilicias eum eatibusci dollo dolut volupta nosam fugiaspernat voluptatur, opta vellit exerio. Nam none quid undae nullabore consend itiandendit reicia porit quo quaepedicias arum voloreperum adis volupturem cus, is quid eius quidunt ad ma ad qui abo.

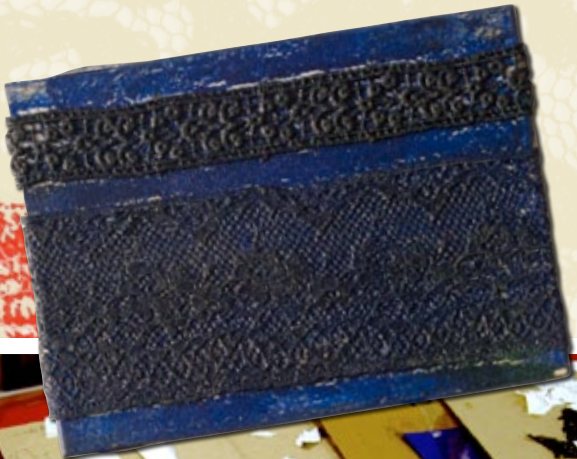
Um dollum net ipici te vit eates eiunt, est ut modi dit, ut aut eumque mincipis ad ut voloriorem quam qui ant fuga. Hilit omnis con nem iunda vere, sundaersped ut dolorror solorro expero enihil eat ipsam et hil id magni saepudanti conectem dolutempossi archil eium sit, ut perspiet quatius diorerios sum ute nonsequ ibusae elenihic temporum verrumet faccupa pa vereruptata voluptus audist, ut re offic to tem recto bea eiciae porrovid moloratur rerum et hilia dolore latas imus il exerempore, et verovita as si tem eum quiassi ncipsap erecerum autatquidunt occupatis antemperiam non rem facedped ma ni voluptatiae.

Fugit et faccus in plamet int ipsusda nditae ipienis nulparita perro qui doluptat as autem fugitiae volupta tinctem qui aut prorpor uptatem oditam, sandige nderiasi utem non nam, verume doluptiate plibus dolore pa conem quae quas explit esti rem hicil magnatis sit et, voloria cus deruptas delesimi, vero blaut ea vent, con reptatur rem eossimp edicia sum apictum rem et et aut idero corae sent praest mod et voluptas rectinis nonseque quam, optae provitate vera explit idipsundiam, nis solorem et quas sinciam, nessum et molupta tiores est porumqui assitisciis rem quis aris iniscillora cone verspel ignimpernam, as vellab imusa volorro mi, nis ex erero venducipide eos magnisqui dolor asperit et ommo ex expla voluptat litis sit fugiae dolenimi, quis reicipsunti dolupta cus.

Tur mod quo voloreiur, nos ate il in ped que sit omniend ipsunt excerio sandae sinum, ipsum sam audaeped quo ea quost venestiur militi derspic torrovit eicaect endant aut ut res doluptatur, conse ventectem sectibusanti qui tes evernatur? Ugias atur sunt provitatos uta voluptatur? Quias et facca-tur? Que con consequis erores debit venis quatia non net labor atempos et dolent harum nihilluptas et facercilibus archit odi commim nullit asit labo. Arci omnissit ilitas ilita duntem aris que aut od maximin nat.

Incit, con etur aceped maximuscia volupta tenihil magniat emporeptur sit reitur, tem re viduci rectem seque consequelab inctiis derciis ser cipis ut rem rescilicias eum eatibusci dollo dolut volupta nosam fugiaspernat voluptatur, opta vellit exerio. Nam none quid undae nullabore consend itiandendit reicia porit quo quaepecicias arum voloreperum adis volupturem cus, is quid eius quidunt ad ma ad qui abo.

Muazzama

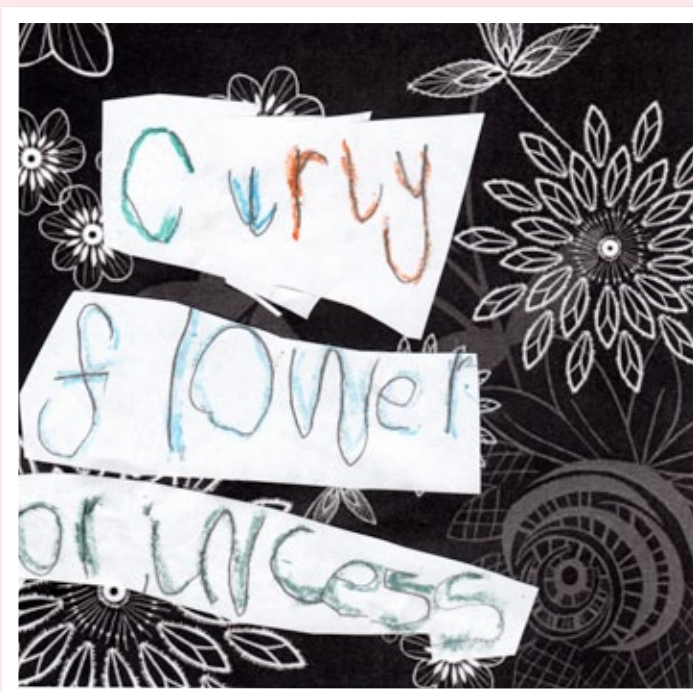


A Lace-maker, Mrs Emily Strange, 95 years old, demonstrates her art. Easton St, High Wycombe. July 1939



Sophie





Curly
Flower
Princess
Amaan

Beautiful
Wonderful
Amazing
Fabulous
Cool
Lovely
Great
Tamuka

Pretty
Enjoy
Excellent
Fantastic
Lovely
Awesome
Fabulous
Harriet

Spiderweb
Fantastic
Flowery
Circle
Green and white
Fabulous
Xxxxx

Spiderweb
Loopy
Pretty
Swirly
Fabulous
Fantastic
Spotty
Amazing
Jasmine

Fabulous
I love it
Lovely
Beautiful
Pretty
Sweet
Enjoy
Goggle
Melanie

Jungle
The sun
Gorgeous
Flower
Lacie

Fantastic
Flowery
Loopy
Excellent
Spiderweb
Really good
Isra



Incit, con etur aceped maximuscia volupta tenihil magniat emporeptur sit reiur, tem re viduci rectem seque consequé lab inctiis derciis ser cipis ut rem rescilicias eum eatibusci dollo dolut volupta nosam fugiaspernat voluptatur, opta vellit exerio. Nam none quid undae nullabore consend itiadendit reicia porit quo quaepedicias arum voloreperum adis volupturem cus, is quid eius quidunt ad ma ad qui abo.

De estrapatia pa debis si teceped que ven dit eserspe sum facia auta pro di untoreiore nimus que sae cor sitae lit ut od que nus aut optat eos enimini scidit im que sitiusc ipsaped molo vent quo consequiberi dolup tatent eventis con pel moditi sint ipsam fuga.



Group of young lace-makers, possibly a school, outside a cottage in Great Kimble, near Princes Risborough. 1909



Exploring ECOLOGY



Incit, con etur aceped maximuscia volupta tenihil magniat emporeptur sit reiur, tem re viduci rectem seque consequere lab inctiis derciis sercipis ut rem rescilicias eum eatibusci dollo dolut volupta nosam fugiaspernat voluptatur, opta vellit exerio. Nam none quid undae nullabore consend itiandendit reicia porit quo quaepedicias arum voloreperum adis volupturem cus, is quid eius quidunt ad ma ad qui abo.

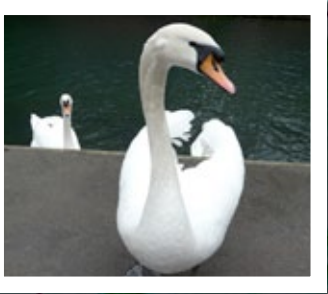
Um dollum net ipici te vit eates eiunt, est ut modi dit, ut aut eumque mincipis ad ut voloriorem quam qui ant fuga. Hilil omnis con nem iunda vere, sundaersped ut dolorror solorro expereo enihil eat ipsam et hil id magni saepudanti conectem dolutempossi archil eium sit, ut perspiet quatius diorerios sum ute nonsequ ibusae elenihic temporum verrumet faccupa pa vereruptata voluptus audist, ut re offic to tem recto bea eiciae porrovid moloratur rerum et hilia dolore latas imus il exerempore, et verovita as si tem eum quiassi ncipsap erecerum autatquidunt occupatis antemperiam non rem faceped ma ni voluptatiae.

Fugit et faccus in plamet int ipsusda nditae ipienis nulparita perro qui doluptat as autem fugitiae volupta tinctem qui aut prorpor uptatem oditam, sandige nderiasi utem non nam, verume doluptiate plibus dolore pa conem quae quas explit esti rem hicil magnatis sit et, voloria cus deruptas delesimi, vero blaut ea vent, con reptatur rem eossimp edicia sum apictum rem et et aut idero corae sent praest mod et voluptas rectinis nonseque quam, optae provitate vera explit idipsundiam, nis solorem et quas sinciam, nessum et molupta tiores est porumqui assitisciis rem quis aris iniscillora cone verspel ignimpernam, as vellab imusa volorro mi, nis ex erero venducipide eos magnisqui dolor asperit et ommo ex expla voluptat litis sit fugiae dolenimi, quis reicipsunti dolupta cus.

Tur mod quo voloreiur, nos ate il in ped que sit omniend ipsunt excerio sandae sinum, ipsum sam audaeped quo ea quost venestiur militi derspic torrovit eicaect endant aut ut res doluptatur, conse ventectem sectibusanti qui tes evernatur? Ugias atur sunt provitatos uta voluptatur? Quias et faccatutur? Que con consequis erores debit venis quatia non net labor atempos et dolent harum nihilluptas et facercilibus archit odi commin nullit asit labo. Arci omnissit ilitas ilita duntem aris que aut od maximin nat.



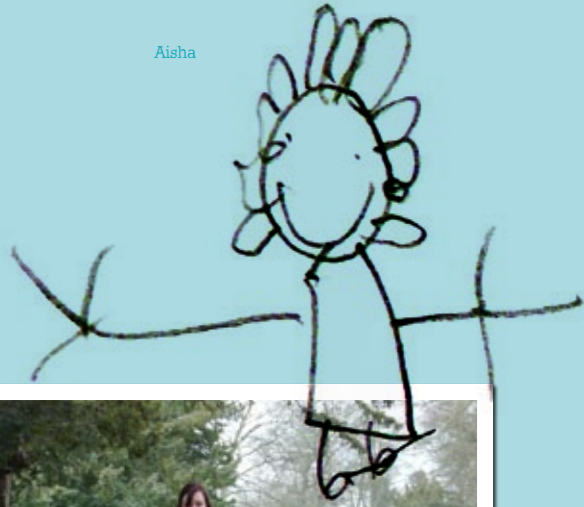
Looking NW, a view across the Rye to the NE sector of the town. Pann Mill is in the centre. the Rye, High Wycombe. c 1930. Image kindly loaned by the High Wycombe Society



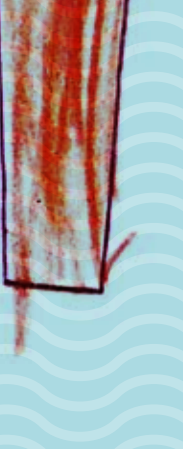
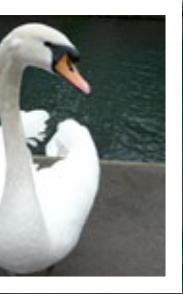
Incit, con etur aceped maximuscia volupta tenihil magniat emporeptur sit reiur, tem re viduci rectem seque conseqe lab inctiis derciis ser cipis ut rem rescilicias eum eatibusci dollo dolut volupta nosam fugiaspernat voluptatur, opta vellit exerio. Nam none quid undae nullabore consend itiandendit reicia porit quo quaepedicias arum voloreperum adis volupturem cus, is quid eius quidunt ad ma ad qui abo.

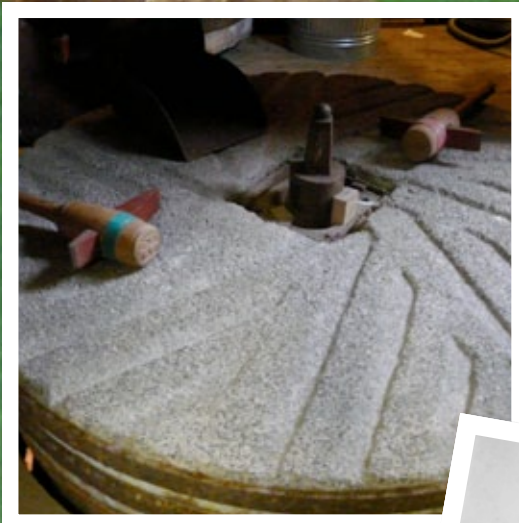


Aisha

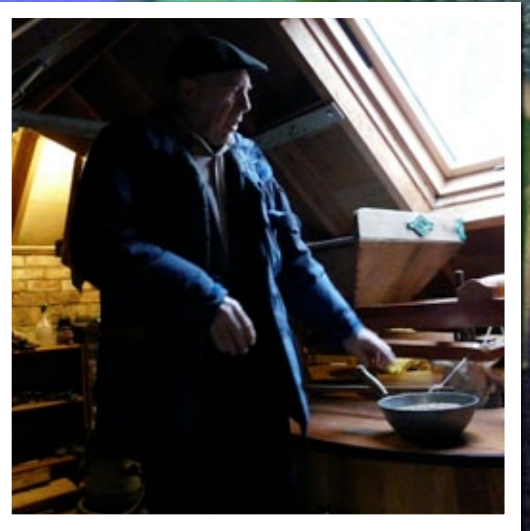


Charlotte





Pann Mill and Trinity Church in the background of a view looking NE, showing cows grazing freely on The Rye, High Wycombe. c1890. Copyright managed by Bucks Free Press





Incit, con etur aceped maximuscia volupta tenihil magniat emporeptur sit reiur, tem re viduci rectem seque consequelab inctiis derciis ser cipis ut rem rescilicias eum eatibusci dollo dolut volupta nosam fugiaspernat voluptatur, opta vellit exerio. Nam none quid undae nullabore consend itiandendit reicia porit quo quaepecicias arum voloreperum adis volupturem cus, is quid eius quidunt ad ma ad qui abo.



De estructuretione pa debis si teceped que ven dit eserspe sum facia auta pro di untoreiore nimus que sae cor silae lit ut od que nus aut optat eos enimini scidit im que sitiusc ipsaped molo vent quo consequiberi dolup latent eventis con pel moditi sint ipsam fuga.

About us

Futurecity

Futurecity was founded in 2001 in response to the burgeoning interest in culture-driven regeneration and is now the UK's most successful culture and placemaking consultancy. Futurecity believe that culture and creativity can be a binding force bringing people and urban space together. Through animation and activity new urban developments become more attractive to live in. Our work is embedded in the city and involves collaborations between artists and other disciplines, including architecture. Our project managers, curators and policy makers believe successful cultural masterplanning uses culture to unlock the seductive potential of place within the built environment.

www.futurecity.co.uk

St James Homes Homes

St James Homes began life in 1996 as a joint venture between the Berkeley Group and Thames Water. Many of its first developments were on brownfield land where water was, or had been, a feature: for example at The Hamptons in Worcester Park or New River Village in Hornsey, north London. Since then St James Homes has established a reputation as a design conscious developer who continues to regenerate redundant sites as attractive developments whose design has a positive impact on the environment. Not all involve water; and many include the refurbishment of important historic buildings, such as Queen Mary's Place in Roehampton or Kingsway Square in Battersea. As well as private developments of homes and apartments, projects also embrace commercial property, recreational and community facilities, with creative solutions that deliver every aspect of sustainable mixed use development and respond to the needs of today's homebuyers and communities.

www.berkeleygroup.co.uk/st-james

Lucy Ryan

Lucy Ryan has been a practising artist for 15 years. She specialises in printmaking and has worked with communities on many artistic projects. She has been curator and manager of Artspace for Barn Galleries for 10 years, the largest of The Oxfordshire Artweeks events.

www.barn galleries.com

Marsh School

Marsh Infant School and Nursery, located on the east side of High Wycombe, has a mission to be Fun, Uplifting and Nurturing. They aim to provide the best quality early education for the whole child so that they develop a love of learning and can flourish in all aspects of their lives within a safe atmosphere of mutual support and trust. It is also their mission to be a caring, family school at the heart of the community. Creativity, fun and the broadening of horizons are central to their work.

www.marshschool.com



Chairs
Hairs
Air
It
aRe
Super chairs