

TALKING SHOPS

a creative project to celebrate the role of local independent shops in the regeneration of pennine lancashire's towns

PENDLE, BURNLEY, HYND BURN, ROSSENDALE
www.lancashiretalkingshops.co.uk



ISBN 978-0-9559551-1-2
TALKING SHOP VOLUME 1

Pennine Lancashire

Project Overview



TALKING SHOP Pennine Lancashire

An Overview of the Whole Project

The facts:

- Between 1995 and 2000, the UK lost 20 per cent of some of its most vital institutions: corner shops, grocers, high street banks, post offices and pubs, amounting to a cumulative loss of over 30,000 local economic outlets.
- A further 28,000 outlets stood to be lost by 2005.
- Overall, on current trends, the number of local outlets will have dropped by nearly a third in the two decades to 2010.
- General stores are closing at the rate of one per day.
- Between 1997 and 2002 specialist stores like butchers, bakers and fishmongers shut at the rate of 50 per week.
- Between 1992 and 2002, Britain lost one third of its bank-branch network, leaving nearly 1000 communities across the UK with no access to a local bank.

(New Economic Foundation)

Talking Shop is an art and regeneration project managed by Mid Pennine Arts (MPA), Pennine Lancashire's strategic arts agency. MPA recognises the instrumental role shops and small businesses play in bringing local people together within the social hub of their neighbourhood. To help sustain and celebrate the role of the shopkeeper, this exciting and innovative art project has already raised the awareness that independent shops are the heart and soul of a community!

Talking Shop Foreword from Elevate

Creativity is at the heart of the Housing Market Renewal (HMR) programme. We are supporting the use of creative and imaginative techniques to engage local residents, young people and businesses to help build sustainable communities that will endure long into the future.

Working in partnership with the local authorities and organisations like Mid Pennine Arts means we can put visionary ideas into practice to improve neighbourhoods, enhance people's lives and create places where people want to live, work, visit and relax.

Talking Shop is a pioneering creative project, which has enabled Elevate to listen to and celebrate Pennine Lancashire's business community. We are committed to supporting this project as part of the delivery of the HMR programme.

Claire Tymon

Creative Community Engagement Manager, Elevate

Shopkeepers: where it all started...

Working closely with members of the Brierfield community in Pendle, a question was posed, 'How do we draw attention to the town, raise its profile and encourage people to spend their time and money here rather than anywhere else'?

Brierfield is a town with a busy, vibrant high street with lots of choice of things to buy. Similar towns across Pennine Lancashire have an array of small family-run retail businesses, the majority under pressure to compete with the invading presence of larger superstores and growing housing regeneration which brings new types of communities to the area.

Using photography and film as artistic tools to document and celebrate the diversity of the local, independent shops, Shopkeepers (the project title) explored how a decision to 'shop local' would support and save, not only the shops, but also the community.

“The more we talked to people the more we began to understand the importance of the emotional exchange that takes place between shopkeeper and customer, about the money that sustains community, concerning choice, buying great products, feeding families, keeping in touch with one another and knowing the name of the person you're speaking to.”

Shopkeepers was about culture, identity, and a nation of shopkeepers and the blurred future they face. Shopkeepers represented the thoughts and feelings of a community living in a time of economic uncertainty. During the weeks the project took place, 4 of the 16 shops had closed down but we have their stories and their photos to tell the story.

The overwhelming support for this pilot project created a solid foundation to build upon and Talking Shop was born...

Lucy Bergman

Filmmaker and Project Manager (Mid Pennine Arts til 2006)

Let's Talk Shop

Talking Shop is not just an art project; it is a creative tool to put local independent shops on the regeneration agenda!

The project aims to use the arts to research and promote the social and economic importance of small, local shops and businesses in selected neighbourhoods of Lancashire, and to creatively investigate the impacts of regeneration on those shops and businesses.

Engaging shopkeepers to participate creatively with professional artists, this publication meets this aim by celebrating the characters and stories and gives them a voice to help assist the need to support local retail. Each project became a unique creative model of support and engagement. Since 2005 we have visually documented a diverse range of local businesses and captured

not only the stories but also the current issues. Through exhibitions we have begun to share this information to the public and also develop new challenging partnerships with economic professionals to foster the pathways to further support. This document will continue to promote the value of independent shopkeepers and help start a new phase of creative engagement across Lancashire.

Talking Shop: Volume I brings together the Pennine Lancashire case studies and has been made possible through the work of local artist Anita Burrows who has drawn on the evaluation and academic theory as well as revisiting some of the early projects in Pendle.

Work is underway to celebrate and support the shops across Lancashire with the support and generosity of Lancashire County Council and Lancashire County Developments Limited.

Nick Hunt

Director of Mid Pennine Arts

“ The Talking Shop programme in Hyndburn was quite an ambitious project covering the Blackburn Road area of Accrington; an area which was undergoing significant change as a result of the HMR Programme.

This area had previously proved difficult for officers to engage with due to language barriers and mistrust of the Council by resident businesses.

The project aimed to use art as a vehicle to engage with local businesses and gain a better understanding of how the changes on Blackburn Road were affecting those businesses.

A major part of the project was the creation of a visual record of the area which will be useful for comparisons after the regeneration is completed.

The project was the first time that Hyndburn Borough Council had used an arts based project in this way and due to its innovative nature, there were some issues in managing the process.

However, the results have been really useful, adding some real detail to an empirical survey that had been commissioned, and the project was the start of a process of engagement which has helped reduce many of the barriers.

We have not come across Arts and Economic Development operating in partnership in this way before, but it is definitely an approach which we would be keen to repeat in the future. ”

Vladimir Pejcinovic
Economic Development, Hyndburn Borough Council

Theory behind the practice!

Throughout Britain local economies are being threatened by various economic and political forces, with enormous human, social and environmental consequences.

Can they be brought back to life?

This first volume of Talking Shop highlights how working with artists can help and support independent businesses, both strategically and at a local level celebrate their existence. On an academic level key statements that follow, help place the innovative role Talking Shop plays within the wider regeneration context and debate as a tool for engagement.

There has been criticism of the more universal solutions to urban problems, and it is now understood that the key to encouraging development lies at the neighbourhood level. In their book 'Sustainable Cities' (1994), Haughton and Hunter refer to the term 'organic planning' to describe how successful sustainable neighbourhood regeneration is achievable by rejecting the blueprint solutions from outside parties and concentrating on ideas generated locally which respect local conditions. What better way to advocate a role for Talking Shop as a means for consulting independent retailers and local communities.

The following are quotes from academic theorists who recognise the importance of local distinctiveness in regeneration.

“ A recognition of how refurbishing the old fostered distinctiveness, identity and could generate money. ”

Charles Landry, The Creative City.

“ Local life, in fact, is all about communicating across boundaries, even if one lives in an economic 'ghetto' of rich or poor. Part of the process of looking around is listening to each other. ”

Lucy Lippard, The Lure of the Local

“ The key to developing sustainable urban forms lies in encouraging development at the neighbourhood level. Through the inclusion of the neighbourhood in planning for their locality, grass roots expertise and knowledge are utilised, so respecting local conditions and valuing local social processes. ”

Tim Hall, Urban Geography

TALKING SHOP

Pennine Lancashire

This project has been ambitious with a small budget. It has involved diverse communities and their local shops and employed very different creative approaches to engage different audiences. This has been the strength of the initiative, however it has also led to some shortfalls. This publication has hopefully addressed some of this by providing the contextual information that the initial projects seemed to lack. The maps provide key information about where the shops are situated and their position in relation to one another.

Context

The map below provides an overview of the area which is fed by the M65 motorway. Completed in 1998 this motorway travels down the valley through Blackburn, Burnley, Nelson and ends in Colne. The location of the Rossendale

Valley is interesting to consider, the map reveals its rural location and the ribbon villages located along the valley floor. The shops located here do take on a different function as it is easy to see how the community has quite a distance to travel to the nearest town and supermarket. Burnley, Nelson and Colne could almost be viewed as one large town as could Oswaldtwistle and Accrington. The shops depicted in this project have provided the day to day perishables needed for everyday living, there seems to be a change towards more specialist shops opening whilst the butchers and bakers manage to keep their loyal clientele. Many of the shops appear to be in need of refurbishment, many have closed.

This project has been a creative initiative, the maps and images form an important visual contribution to the documented information, they must be read as well as the text.

A brief summary of outputs to date:

- 154 shopkeepers engaged
- 3 local authorities directly engaged in Talking Shop developments including 1 senior management team (Rossendale Borough Council)
- 1 business development officer directly engaged
- 2 neighbourhood management schemes engaged
- 10 artists employed
- 14 exhibitions in community spaces, libraries, Architruck and MPA gallery space
- 3 postcard packs
- 1 book
- 3 DVDs
- 1 commissioned play/performance
- £29,035 total funding generated



Talking Shop
Project Areas

Revisits and Reflection by Anita Burrows

“ Part of my brief to evaluate the Pennine Lancashire projects was to revisit some of the shops which have been documented which included one of the initial sites of the first project in Pendle. The image on the right is of No.1 Market Street, the building that has replaced the former Lamberts market.

I visited the former site of Lamberts Market in the hope of discovering information about some of the retail businesses that used to reside there. I began by chatting to a few people as I walked around the area with my camera; it was lunch time on a Wednesday. My first conversation was with a woman who had lived locally for a long time and she reminisced about the former market that was present a long time ago.

I got to know where a few of the stallholders had moved to, including the former greengrocer of the old Lambert's Market. He told me how happy he was to be back trading after having been closed for a year but had managed to relocate successfully picking up most of his previous customers in the first two weeks of being open. The local paper helped by printing a free advert and he was very appreciative of this. He told me that business was good and he was very happy. He asked if shopkeepers in other areas were suffering like Nelson. The greengrocer had worked in Nelson for over 20 years. He thought the idea of opening up the pedestrian street to traffic again was a good one, it would ironically be safer and his customers would be able to park outside his shop. ”

Oswaldtwistle by Gayle Knight

Gayle Knight, project manager for the Oswaldtwistle Talking Shop, revisited the shops in 2008 and compiled a case study of the shops on Union Road. The gentleman featured in the chair reported that, "business was more or less ticking over as ever it was."

A few of the businesses had ceased trading however and the closure of the Post Office had a negative effect on many of shops located near to it. Over the time of Gayle's documentation, both Post Offices had closed and although one had been re-sited in the Co-op many traders reported that people could drive to the Co-op and therefore they missed out on passing trade.

Gayle reports that on the whole the outlook for a small business was concerning, eight shops had closed in the intervening period, five premises were now used for completely new business, two had new owners, two were in the process of selling and three new businesses had opened on premises not visited before.



The films made alongside the postcard packs provide more detail of the history and the social networks connected to these businesses over the years. The conversations reveal committed people, aware of customer loyalty and providing a service and the difficulty in keeping going when the competition has a huge power base for buying in bulk. However, these shopkeepers recognised their strength as offering a particular personal face to face service, providing knowledge and advice from the perspective of many years of experience.



Gayle suggested that a shopkeepers forum would perhaps help develop relationships between the traders and contribute to promotion.

Pendle

Pilot Project, Shopkeepers 2005



TALKING SHOP Pendle

Pilot Project, Shopkeepers 2005

Documenting the social and economic changes affecting Pennine Lancashire today.

The pilot project named Shopkeepers produced a postcard pack of photographs.

The images on the postcards reveal businesses of an independent nature, some in obvious need of repair. Many of the owners of these independent businesses obviously feel proud to be associated with them, evidenced by their willingness to be photographed alongside them. If one compares the images of these independent shops with their competition, which they cite as large supermarket chains who are pushing more and more independent businesses to the wall, the images invoke a sense of decay compared to the slick made-to-measure buildings used for supermarkets where one can park a car outside and fill it with all one desires. These independent businesses often housed in buildings which were built in terraces for owner occupation at the beginning of the 20th century provide the necessities for life, none reveal the sale of luxury items.

Councillor Alan Davies, Leader of Pendle Council, said:
"This is the first step to a new Nelson. The £5 million business centre is a key part of the Council's plans to regenerate Nelson town centre. It will house over 500 employees, substantially increasing the amount of people coming into Nelson town centre on a daily basis, spending money in the shops and making the town much more attractive to retailers, investors and developers."

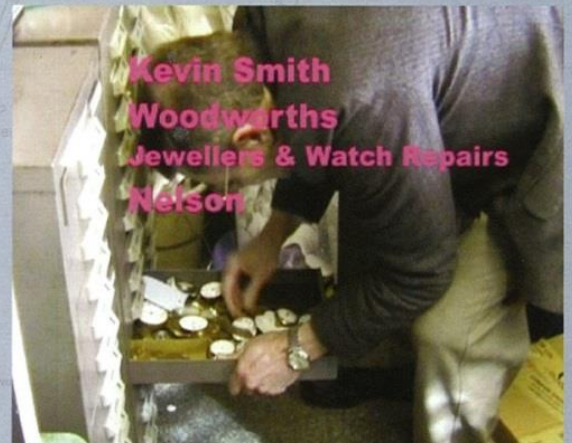
Brian Cookson, Executive Director (Regeneration), said:
"This week, phase one of the demolition begins. This will see the former hairdresser's and the Old Lambert's Market buildings on Cross Street, plus the small shops on Market Street, all demolished. We expect the demolition work to last around four weeks and ask that local people bear with us while this first part of the site is cleared. Further demolition work will follow shortly after, when Compulsory Purchase Order procedures are completed."

Kevin Smith, Woodwarths, Jewellers & Watch Repairs

Images and transcript conversation from DVD

“ I've repaired watches all my life, whatever I've done - I've been a soldier, a sailor, I've had a few shops and I've always made a few bob by repairing watches. You've got to want to do it. Got to persevere. Time as a subject, it is a dimension! ”

In January 2008 Kevin is still trading in the same place, there is a new building planned for the site opposite where the Salvation Army Citadel once stood.



Gradwells Butchers, Lamberts Market

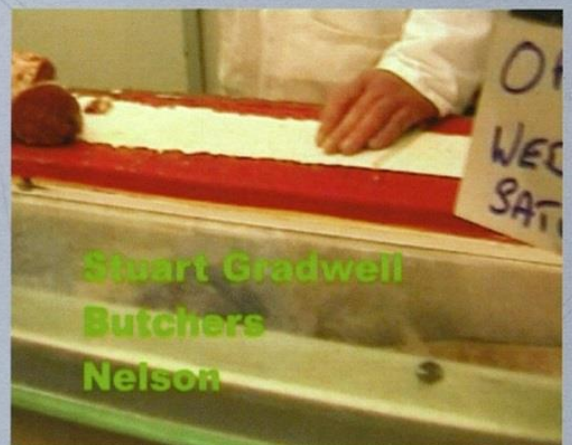
Images and transcript conversation from DVD

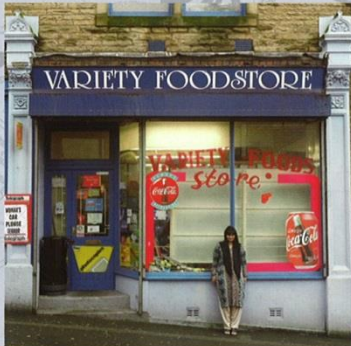
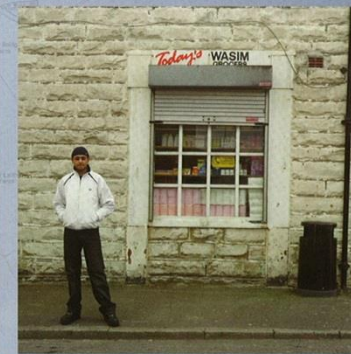
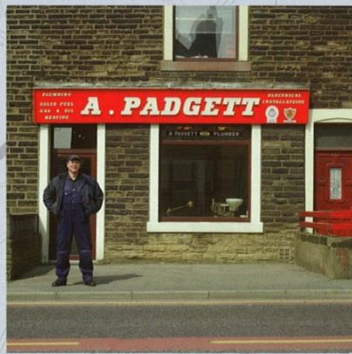
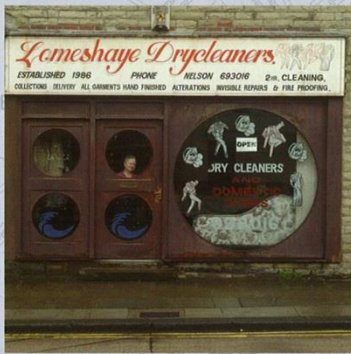
“ There used to be another market hall here 20-25 years ago, across the road where the library is now. The market was heaving then, you could get everything you needed, bread, cheese, toiletries, groceries, everything. ”

The supermarkets came along and gradually more and more businesses have disappeared.

We used to have 5 full time staff on this stall. My dad took over the business about 40 years ago and doubled the takings in the first week he was open. There were 5 or 6 butchers in the vicinity of 200 yards then. I've been coming to the stall for over 40 years, helping my dad since I was 12. On a Friday and Saturday we wouldn't finish until 7 or 8 o' clock at night. I would meet the lads here at the stall after I had finished and go straight to the pictures. ”

In January 2008 this butcher is still in business but has moved to a shop in Brierfield.





Reflection and Evaluation by Anita Burrows

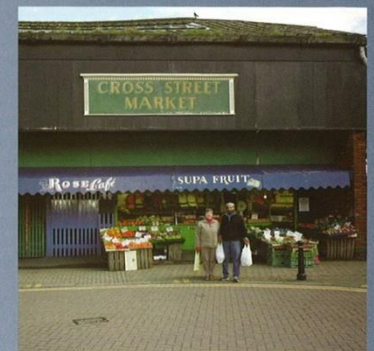
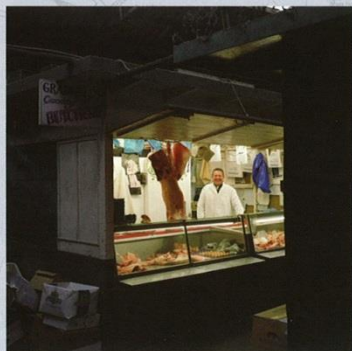
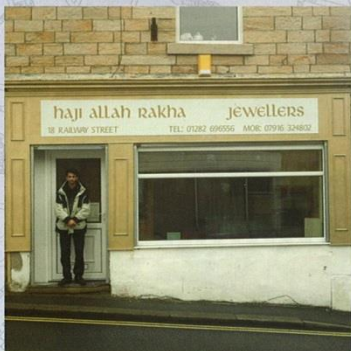
“The DVD made alongside these postcards reveals more of the history and the social networks connected to these businesses over the years.

The conversations on the DVD reveal committed people, aware of customer loyalty and providing a service and the difficulty in keeping going when the competition has a huge power base for buying in bulk. However these shopkeepers recognised their strength as offering a particular personal face to face service, providing knowledge and advice from the perspective of many years of experience.

I visited Nelson in February 2008 the new business centre known as No.1 Market Street is now open.

I visited the former site of Lamberts Market in the hope of discovering information about some of the retail businesses that used to reside there. I began by chatting to a few people as I walked around the area with my camera; it was lunch time on a Wednesday. My first conversation was with a woman who had lived locally for a long time and she reminisced about the former market that was present a long time ago. The Salvation Army centre had recently been demolished she didn't know what was going to happen in that space. I got to know where a few of the stall holders had moved to, but she didn't know what No.1 Market street housed, she guessed it was a lot of office workers who had moved across the road from the Town Hall which seemed odd to her.

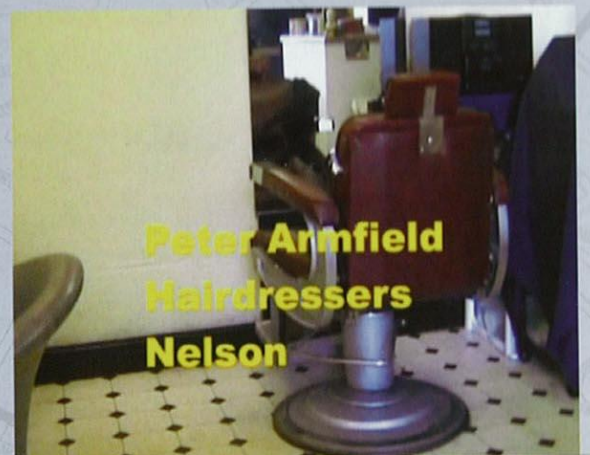
I visited the new site for the greengrocer formerly trading in Lambert's Market. He told me how happy he was to be back trading after having been closed for a year but had managed to relocate successfully picking up most of his previous customers in the first two weeks of being open. The local paper helped by printing a free advert and he was very appreciative of this. He told me that business was good and he was very happy. He asked if shopkeepers in other areas were suffering like Nelson. The greengrocer had worked in Nelson for over 20 years. He thought the idea of opening up the pedestrianised street to traffic again was a good one, it would ironically be safer and his customers would be able to park outside his shop.”



Peter Armfield, Hairdresser
Images and transcript conversation from DVD

“ When I heard Morrisons were opening, I thought if you can't beat 'em, join 'em – so I painted me shop yella and black like Morrisons. It's actually been a hairdressers for over 80 years, 1977 I bought the shop. The social history of the market is fascinating, the characters, there was a bloke called the Fez, he could sell umbrellas on a sunny day. It was a vibrant place. This is the end of an era. I have a lot of loyal customers, but I am looking for a job now. ”

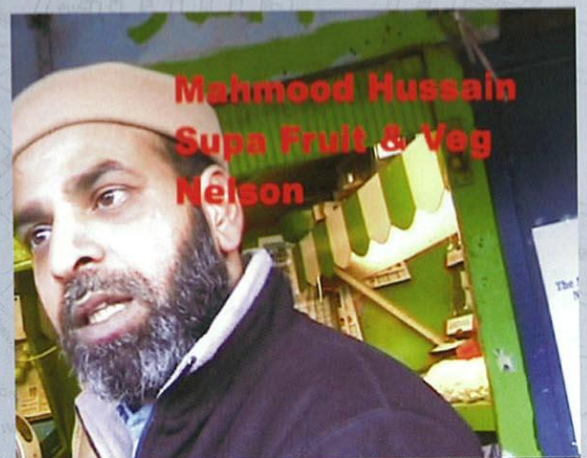
In January 2008 the hairdresser hadn't reopened and no-one seemed to know what he was doing now.



Mahmood Hussain, Greengrocer
Images and transcript conversation from DVD

“ 20 years I've been in business. I've had customers for 20 years, they are loyal and say they'll stay with me if I open another shop. I like being with the people, it's what makes me happy. ”

Visiting Nelson in January 2008 to view the changes that had taken place over the intervening 3 years: Mahmood the greengrocer was very pleased with the outcome; he had been shut for a year, but had managed to relocate successfully picking up most of his previous customers in the first two weeks of being open. The local paper helped by printing a free advert and he was very appreciative of this. He told me that business was good and he was very happy. He asked if shopkeepers in other areas were suffering like Nelson. He thought the idea of opening up the pedestrianised street to traffic again was a good one – it would be safer and his customers would be able to park outside his shop.



Burnley

Celebrating Shopkeepers in Burnley



Cockshott's Greengrocers

Images and transcript conversation from DVD

“ I started when I was 14 years old with a horse and lorry over in Bolton. The business has changed, on a Tuesday ladies would queue for fish right down Plumb Street. I've not done fish for over 10 years. The Council give supermarkets right of way to build roundabouts and traffic lights to redirect traffic for them. This has had an impact on our business because customers can't cross for the traffic and there are now double yellow lines outside the shop. We are just ticking over, I'm at the end of the ladder so it doesn't matter for me. I think the business will end with me. My daughter is a florist so there's a possibility of it becoming a florist's, but I wouldn't recommend it. It would help business if these houses got done up round here, get 'em done correctly instead of making wide open spaces.”



Wool Shop

Images and transcript conversation from DVD

“ This shop has existed for 40 years. I've always been a knitter. The shop has given me an income whilst still being able to look after the children. I came to Burnley because my husband came to work here, I was very isolated in Burnley at the beginning. There is now a resurgence of knitting clubs, more in London, but I have a steady trade with a core loyal group, bulk of customers over 50, a lot over 70, many knit for charity. Not many knit garments for themselves. Schools don't offer the same hands-on experiences, there is design technology, but they have to offer a basic education which leads to work. The placement of the shop (where it is situated) does not help trade. It is in a run-down neighbourhood. My trade comes from out of the area. I am the only specialist wool shop in Burnley. Today there are six shops on the street. 17 years ago all the shops were owner occupied, there are 3 still occupied. I feel if the boarded-up houses were refurbished, the street cleaned and improved this would help business. A facelift would improve business. The Council is trying to help. The community police are working hard, people do feel safer. The business will end with me.”

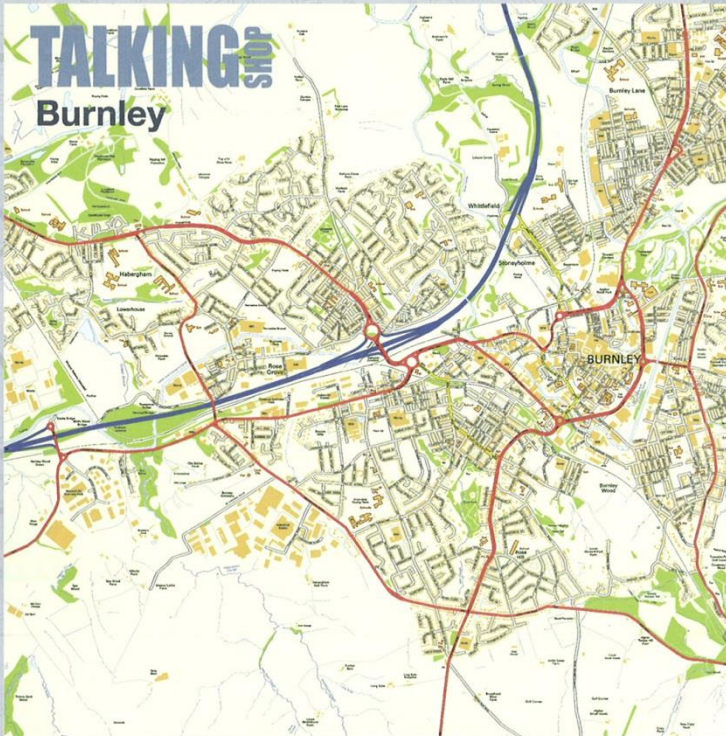
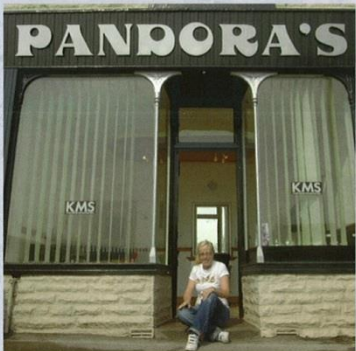


A. Knowles, Vacuum Repairer

Images and transcript conversation from DVD

“ My father started the business in 1969, I began working for my father when I was 18. The business is essentially the same – 60% vac repairs, 40% washing machines. This is not an affluent neighbourhood. People buy from me because I can offer repair. Machines are not built to last, people keep them for 2-3 years then throw them away. The closing of the casualty department at the then Victoria Hospital in Burnley had a large impact on my business. I don't see a future for small shops. Supermarkets too powerful and we can't compete. Specialist shops are just about surviving, but this shop will just die away because there is only enough business to keep one person going. I don't see any future for the business.”





Reflection and Evaluation by Anita Burrows

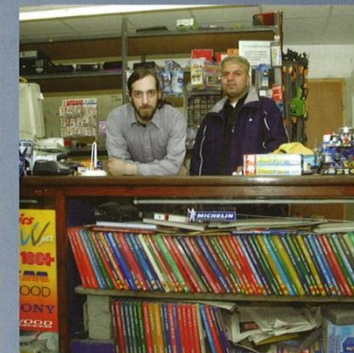
“The DVD made alongside these postcards reveals more of the history and the social networks connected to these businesses over the years.

Talking Shop began in 2006 when photographer Andy Ford documented the local shops and businesses in particular wards in Burnley. These wards were part of a large area due for housing renewal. The photographs provided visual information about these particular shops in 2006 and they were exhibited at the Mid-Pennine Gallery also in Burnley, as well as touring the wards documented in RIBAs Architruck. The resulting photographs, a few represented here, provide a visual record of these particular shops.

Alongside the photographs a filmmaker was commissioned to interview the shopkeepers and produce a DVD. The reverse side of this leaflet provides visual and transcribed information from this intervention. The conversations reveal the particular knowledge and expertise of the sole traders involved in the interviews, ‘this street knowledge is insufficiently used as a rich resource by urban professionals or academics who often live divorced from and as outsiders to the problems they deal with. Community artists have been one of the few groups to tap into this tacit knowledge.’ (Landry, The Creative City, p249) ‘Talking Shop’ provides evidence of this implicit information, how the closure of the newsagents impacts on the trade of the butcher and the many other examples cited overleaf.

This leaflet is being published in order to reveal this implicit information gathered by creative practitioners. It is hoped that representing this particular information from areas undergoing regeneration in Pennine Lancashire in a visual and creative format will contribute to validating this approach by urban professionals involved in regeneration.

Contextual information from the areas involved in this intervention is provided by the map facing and the visual information provided in the printed images. However, anyone wishing to become authentically informed of these areas should visit the shops and chat to the shopkeepers themselves.”



Berkins, Butchers

Images and transcript conversation from DVD

“ I have owned the shop for four years, however my father owned it before that and my grandfather before my father. Grandfather took over the shop in 1944. I began helping in the shop from being 5 or 6. Things are changing as people are leaving supermarkets and returning to the smaller butcher because they want full traceability of the meat they are purchasing. I source my meat from family run local farms who are second and third generation producer farmers. They are family run businesses, I like to source everything I sell from local suppliers.

The community has always supported me, personally and from a business point of view. Building that trust and confidence has taken years. The National Small Shopkeepers Awards have been good for business. I have been taking part in the UKTV Food Local Hero Award and I am down to the last 50 out of 5500.

There are very few small shops left. There is a knock-on effect from other small businesses closing down. The newsagent closed across the road and I lost all my early morning Saturday trade when this happened. There used to be every type of shop in Rosegrove, chemists, shoe shop, every shop you needed, there aren't many small shops in larger towns now.

I work 70 hours a week, 7 days a week, 1 week holiday a year. I am really busy. Customers queue out of the door all day on a Saturday. There is a community spirit, customers ask for advice and share information.

Supermarkets have become too powerful, farmers can't make a living.”



Mac's Fishing Tackle Shop

Images and transcript conversation from DVD

“ I've always fished, I was a roofer before I got fed up of roofing. I bought the business two years ago and I've enjoyed it from the start.

The shop has been here 50 odd years. It used to be a gun shop. I know all the shop's history, we get a lot of characters in here, they come from all over – Todmorden, Skipton, Bacup, Rawtenstall. I still fish so all the lads know me.

Got to change with the times, "it's toys for the boys". We're competing with the internet, Argos, Tesco, but they don't give after-sales service.

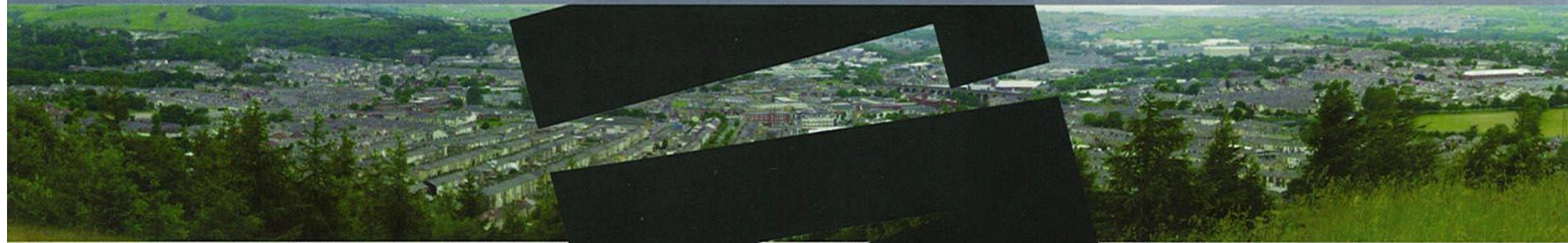
We can't go out on a Friday evening now as we have to be up early for the business on a Saturday. People come in here to natter about fishing, 2 hour visits, families sharing their lives.

We have no car parking facilities, that would improve business. Good to get youngsters involved in fishing, give them more incentive.”



Accrington

Blackburn Road - supporting West Accrington's future retail offer



TALKING SHOP

Accrington Blackburn Road

Alongside the DVD documentation artists Louise Brookes and Brian Percival visited the shops in Blackburn Road, Accrington and used this consultative approach to deliver their creative response. Brookes and Percival used the motif of a found £1 coin to document transactions to that value with the businesses located in Blackburn Road. This encounter was called 'Untitled Exchanges'.

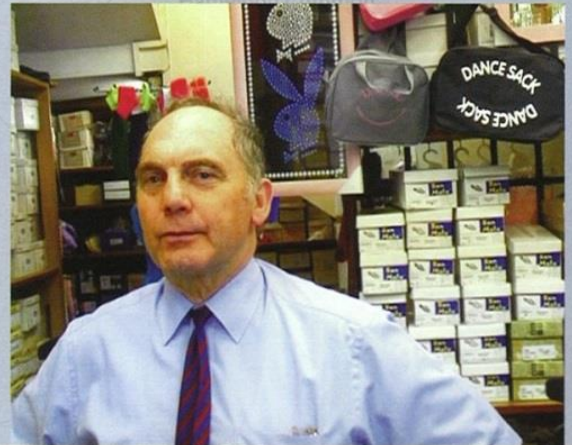
Artefacts and images collected through the documentation of 'Untitled Exchanges' were exhibited at the Mid Pennine Gallery and a postcard pack was also published. This idea was successful in providing a novel approach to engaging the community in an art project and the documentary evidence provided a rich source of information about shops and shopping in Blackburn Road, Accrington in 2007.

The reverse side of this leaflet displays some of the images from the postcard pack produced as part of this 'Untitled Exchanges' project. The visual information recorded is a narrative for the £1 transactions initiated by the artists.

Urban geographer Tim Hall suggests that future regeneration projects will pay "greater attention to issues such as social welfare, economic and environmental sustainability and the ethnic and cultural diversity of urban populations." He suggests that regeneration has revolved around the economic and built environment at the expense of the local neighbourhood.

Archway Footwear, Blackburn Road, Accrington *Images and transcript conversation from DVD*

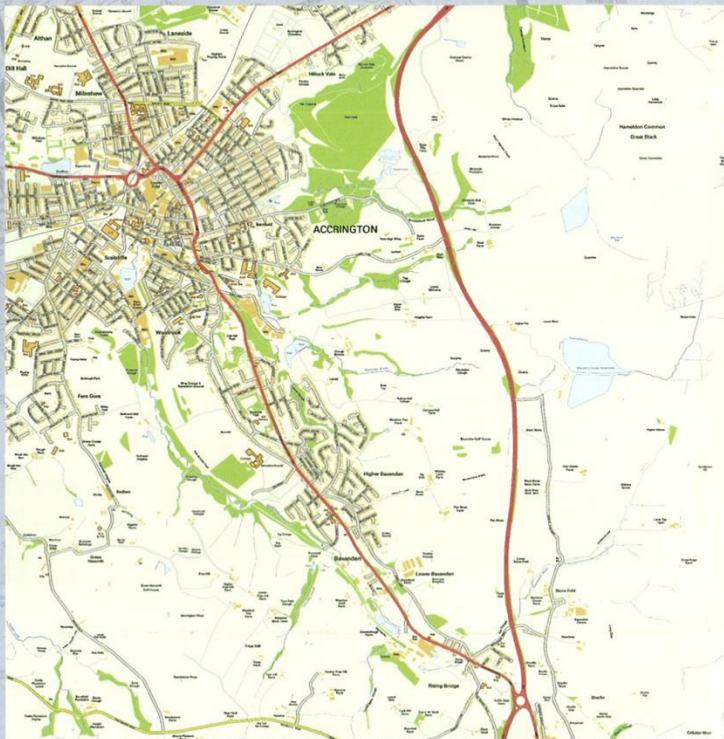
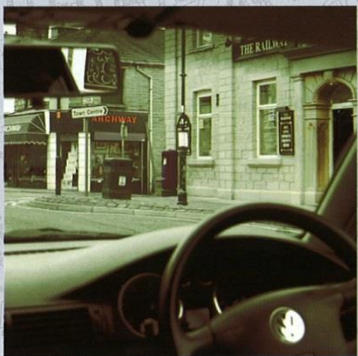
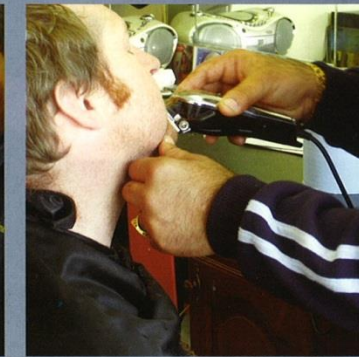
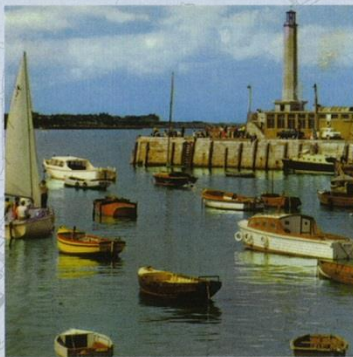
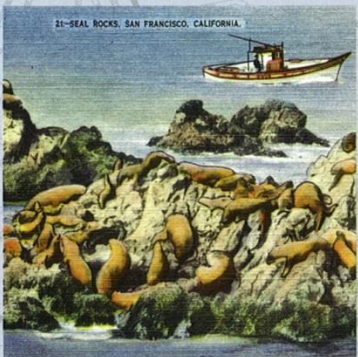
- “ I bought the business because I wanted to give up working for someone else. My wife helps. We have a website. We sell furniture, lighting and fancy goods. We specialise in certain things. There has been a slight recession. The website is not the main business, it has supplemented it and we have made changes. The street in general over 20 years has gone down; the road layout, other changes in Accrington have had a big impact. In the last 5-7 years business has started to come back. There are 2 new hairdressers. You've got to have stamina and maintain morale to keep going. We have looked for niches in the market. The business is changing. The oldest item in shop, pair of shoes I've had for twenty years, ladies size 9. ”



Rivaj Boutique *Images and transcript conversation from DVD*

- “ It is a family business, myself and my sister. We have been open for 1 year, seen developments, more shops have opened. We specialise in Asian/English/children's clothes. The wedding season is a busy time, lots of saris. Clientele coming from all over the region. We are bilingual. We sell exclusive pieces of jewellery. We have a nail salon. Parking is a big issue. Security as well. Every day is a different day and we'll just take it as it comes. ”





TALKING SHOP

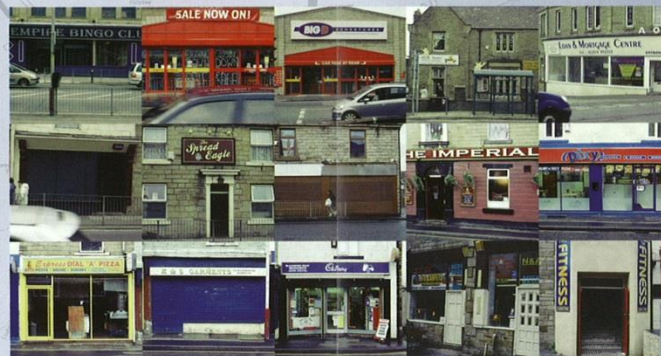
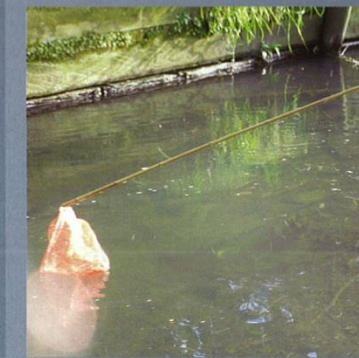
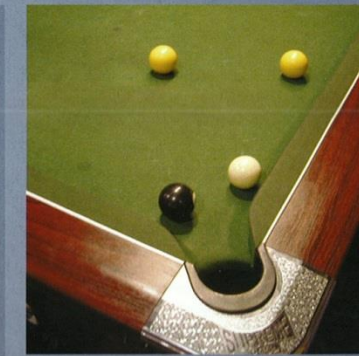
Accrington Blackburn Road

B&P Projects' Aims:

“Untitled Exchanges aims to celebrate the enterprise of local business, depict the diversity of the business of Blackburn Road and highlight the potential values and exchanges inherent within the process of shopping local – literally investing in and supporting local businesses and consequently contributing to and benefitting the wider community.”

Currently in early phases of regeneration, the section of Blackburn Road has a total of 85 diverse businesses, some apparently thriving, others less so. Over the research period, several businesses have closed with others reopening.”

This project has contributed to the possible development of a business forum in West Accrington. Meetings are currently taking place.



(promised) ...computer game...second £1-00
ghter...£1 taxi ride...£1 donation to Labour Party...
1 bet...2 darts flights...2 bottles tomato ketchup...
it...henna...box of sweets...carpet sample/mat...
magic tree air freshener...box of sweets...printer
eard trim...toy shopping basket...hair-slides...2
use and plastic flowers...fishing net...pain-killers
e-lolly moulds...hair conditioner...1 piece of fried
attenes...plastic flowers...tv remote control...
ssible for £1...found negatives in box brownie
eets and pain-killers...batteries...1 bingo game
use...condoms...2 pieces of fried chicken...2
...fabric...hair-grooming set...carpet sample/mat...
nail extension (promised)...1 red rose...insole for

Henry Gregson's Cycles, Blackburn Road, Accrington

Images and transcript conversation from DVD

“ The shop was started by my father-in-law who was Henry Gregson. Henry Rawbottom had the shop before that in the 1930's. I am the current owner and I joined Henry in 1975.

I have always ridden bikes. I served my time in engineering. One of the oldest things in the shop is the till. It goes back to the 1950's.

I enjoy talking to people about the sport I love, encouraging them. Most shops selling bikes don't give any information or help and advice. They sell them totally unsuitable bikes.

In 1975 the shop was open from 9.30am to 7.00pm. We have very loyal appreciative customers, but only a few. Customer base has declined because of bigger outlet trend supermarket mentality. The thinking, bigger outlets, better value which is not true.

Blackburn Road used to be a road of high quality shops and 40 years ago was nicknamed 'Millionaires Row' because all shops did well.

I've had one or two people interested in buying it, I'm 59 and I'd like to retire. If someone had to borrow money to buy the business, small businesses do not make enough money to pay for the borrowing and a wage. I don't have any borrowing, mortgage or a young family.

Don't think anything is possible to change the shop for the future. Supermarkets have more power than the government. They dictate to government how they can trade.

Things will change. I think it's criminal the way things are thrown away rather than repaired. Digging up the earth's resources to make cheap stuff to throw away.”



Prima Florists, Blackburn Road, Accrington

Images and transcript conversation from DVD

“ I started after leaving school. 1955 my grandfather had a flower hire business, plastic flowers to pubs and clubs. I went into the business with my grandfather. We had a market stall in Great Harwood 20 odd years ago.

You have to go with the flow.

We are a traditional florists with a modern touch. A lot of loyal customers, some for over 20 years.

Accrington is a close-knit town, things go by word of mouth. Supermarkets have affected the bunches business, but it's not personalised. Produce thousands of bunches in 1 minute using a machine which is why they can sell them so cheaply.

I can make a living and enjoy my work. I'm learning all the time.

Council could improve the area by developing the whole street. More shops open the better. I like the traditional market in Accrington.

It would be better if they rubbed the yellow lines out. They would be able to stop the car and get out and buy, nowhere to park.

Brighten it up – Christmas lights ended outside my shop.”



Oswaldtwistle

Capturing the stories of local shopkeepers



The Reduced Oswaldtwistle Players

The photograph opposite shows the group performing 'The History of Oswaldtwistle – Abridged' at Oswaldtwistle Mills in 2006.

Perhaps it is pertinent to mention Charles Landry's claim (urban specialist and author of 'The Creative City') that 'A recognition of how refurbishing the old fostered distinctiveness, identity and could generate money.' When we consider history and the role of iconic buildings such as Oswaldtwistle Mills.

The researcher suggests that local shops could perhaps build on the influx of visitors to Oswaldtwistle Mills by expanding the 'visitor experience'. This could include visits to local beauty spots accompanied by a packed lunch from a local bakers, local maps of walks available through the bookshop etc.



The Chippy

Sheryl and David had not been in the chip shop long in 2006 and the researcher discovered in 2008 that they had sold soon after that 2006 visit.

Sean Reid, the new owner, reported that he was busy and had no complaints. The researcher talked with him about the changing eating habits of people and how 20 years ago fish and chips were seen as a treat and now are everyday fare. Sean explained that trade had not increased though as there are now more takeaways including pizza, curry and Chinese.

Sean explained that fish and chips is one of the healthiest takeaway meals as there are no food additives and the fat drains off, he felt this should be made more public.



Riley's Books

Riley's bookshop was revisited in 2008 and the researcher learned that sales are definitely down and the lack of passing trade has had a real impact since the Post Office closed. In 2006 the shop reported a large proportion of business was done over the internet, but even these sales are low at the moment. According to the proprietor the low value of the dollar is affecting her business and increases in postal rates is also seen as a factor.

The researcher recorded that when she revisited Oswaldtwistle's Union Road in 2008 the outlook was quite concerning. The most telling information being that 17 shops reported a downturn in their sales in year on year comparisons.





Shadsworth



TALKING SHOP Oswaldtwistle

Some of the shops on Union Road, Oswaldtwistle, which form part of a postcard pack produced for 'Talking Shop'.

These images were displayed at Oswaldtwistle Mills over a weekend and then for one day in Architruck (a large movable display space).

To accompany this project a new drama was commissioned called 'The History of Oswaldtwistle - Abridged'. This was performed by the Reduced Oswaldtwistle Players at Oswaldtwistle Mills.

You can read more about the drama overleaf.

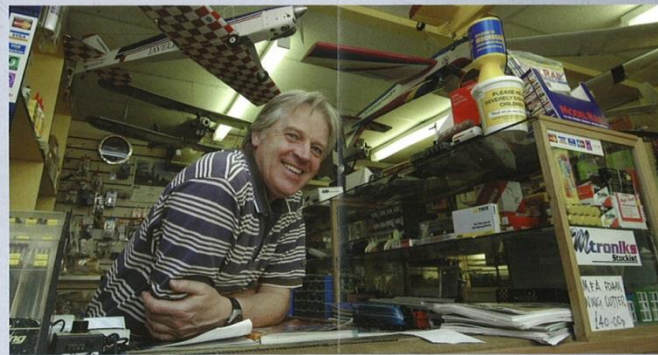


“ Union Road, the main thoroughfare through the town (as can be seen on the map opposite) was chosen to document the 47 local shops in Oswaldtwistle.

Most of these images are of the interiors of the shops revealing the type of business and smiling faces of the proprietors. The fact that the shots were taken on a sunny day does have an impact on how one reads the image, people appear relaxed and happy. The shops in Oswaldtwistle are not situated in an Housing Market Renewal area and the shops appear to be in a state of good repair and this appearance gives one the idea that businesses are flourishing, trade is good.

In April 2008 the shops were revisited and a report was compiled. This reveals that the assumption that Oswaldtwistle sole traders were flourishing was misplaced as many of the shops visited in 2006 have closed by 2008. The shops that remain vary from what Gayle Knight, the researcher describes as 'destination shops' to local suppliers of perishables such as bread and meat. These 'destination shops' are specialist shops trading in equine goods to ball gowns.

Gayle reports that the closure of two Post Offices on Union Road has had an impact on the traders which were sited near them. The Post Office is now found in the Co-op. ”



Hole Martin's Bakery

The last bakery on the high street, Martin's was owned by the present owner's grandfather and has therefore been passed down through the family.

A baker has been on the spot for over 90 years. Lyndon Martin reported in 2008 that it gets more difficult every year. Shops have closed around him and the impact of the Post Office closing has been felt as 'pension day' is not a busy day anymore, older people were inclined to treat themselves to a cake or a sandwich when collecting their weekly pension. People now drive to the Co-op, where the Post Office is now situated, to collect their pension and do the rest of their shopping whilst there.



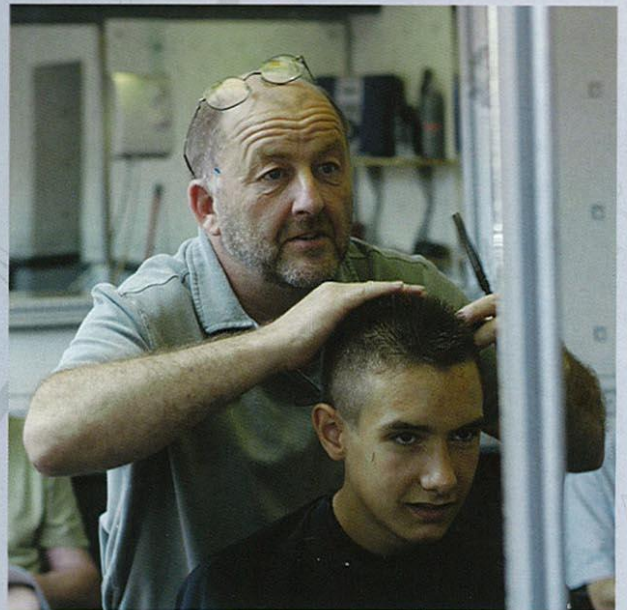
Shadsworth

Jim's Barbers

Jim has been a barber on Union Road for over 40 years. He is well known locally and possibly one of the biggest personalities of Union Road.

When the Talking Shop exhibition was held at Oswaldtwistle Mills in 2006 a gentleman saw Jim's picture and recognised him from many years ago. The gentleman visited the shop and has been a regular customer every since.

People comment on the number of hairdressers in Oswaldtwistle, perhaps a positive reflection on how many people are choosing to move to the area.



Rossendale

Young people's rural perspective

www.lancashiretalkingshop.co.uk



Elevate East Lancashire
New life for neighbourhoods



SHOP

TALKING SHOP ROSSENDALE

The project in Rossendale involved artists Lucy Bergman, Daniel Nicholls and Tayla Baldwin working in ten rural primary schools and involving ten local village shops. The artists initiated a rich and diverse range of creativity in their work with the children and where possible invited dialogue and discussion with the shopkeepers through visits into school.

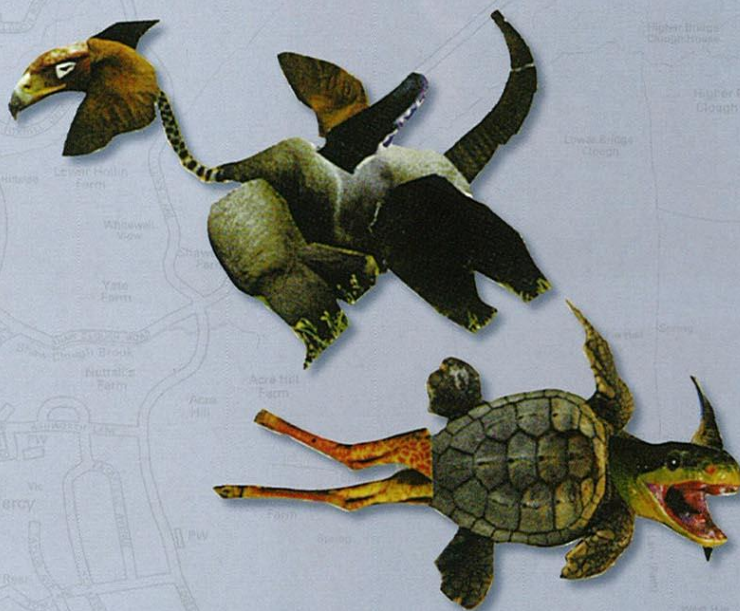
This engagement emphasised the importance of the local village shop and the awareness of all participants to the value the shops played in community life was made more apparent. The project resulted in the publication of a book which illustrates the wonderful creative work produced by the children and the diverse range of independent shops to be found in Rossendale's rural villages.

The project recorded the children's creative responses to how they felt about their local shops and provides the shops with a very positive response to their presence in the community. It focuses on young people, but the shopkeepers were able to voice how they felt about the changing economic climate, their hopes and fear for the future. The visuals we are given of the shops show well stocked shops in a good state of repair. The project was set in a rural place in contrast to the rest of the research which happened in an urban setting; the role of the local shop is therefore different.

One of the artists offered some reflection on how the project developed:

“ I think the children gained some fantastic literacy, communication and artistic skills. They also had the opportunity to meet the shopkeepers, ask questions, form opinions and make decisions.

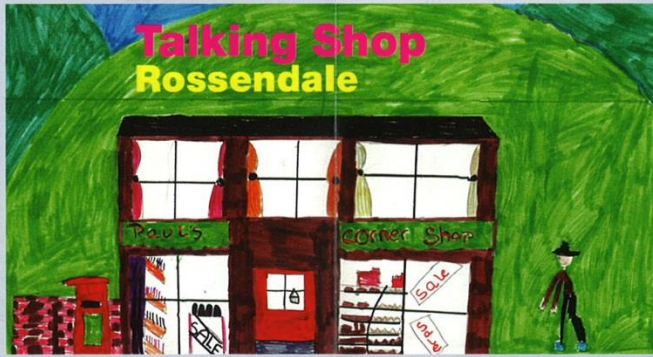
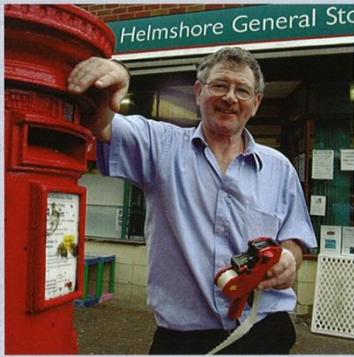
I think most of the shopkeepers enjoyed being involved and having their pictures taken! I'm not sure how much they really got out of it, but they were certainly very willing to participate and share their knowledge with the kids. It's a shame there wasn't an interview element to the project as I think it would've been good to have a document of the shopkeepers feelings and opinions.”



The schools involved were:

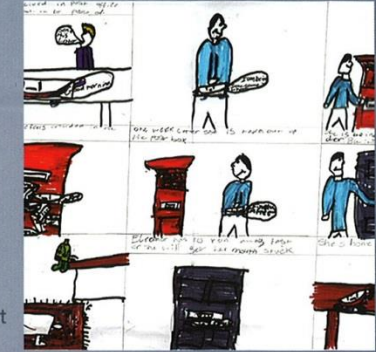
- Brittania Primary School
- Crawshawbooth Primary School
- Edenfield Primary School
- Newchurch Primary School
- Northern Primary School
- Our Lady and St. Anselm's Primary School
- St. John and St. Michael's Primary School
- St. Veronica's Primary School
- Stonefold Primary School
- Stubbins Primary School





TALKING SHOP Rossendale

The aim of the Talking Shop project in Rossendale was to celebrate the diversity and importance of local shops and shopkeepers. These images are from a book produced by the artists working with 10 different schools in the Rossendale area. Each school was linked to its local shop, ranging from post offices to pet supplies. The children were asked to create stories, illustrations, poems, jingles, posters, storyboards and characters in response to their thoughts and feelings about their local shop.



The artists encouraged the children to think why the shop was important not just for themselves, but for the community as a whole, young and old. Together they discussed what would happen if the shops were to disappear.



The shopkeepers came into school to visit the children and answered their questions and also offered the children some insight into what life was like for them running a small business.

Through participating in this project the children gained a better understanding of why small shops are important in supplying the local community with everyday needs such as food, newspapers etc. They came to realise that shops are important social places and are central to people's lives for many different reasons. The children became more aware of the challenges and determination required to run a small business and how they themselves could make a difference by supporting the local shops. The shopkeepers on the other hand were able to voice how they felt about the changing economic climate, their hopes, fears and plans for the future.



The artists encouraged the children to think why the shop was important, not just for themselves, but for the community as a whole, young and old. Together they discussed what would happen if the shops were to disappear.

The shopkeepers came into school to visit the children and answered their questions and also offered the children some insight into what life was like for them running a small business.

The children became more aware of the challenges and determination required to run a small business and how they themselves could make a difference by supporting the local shops.



This image of Joe and Sparky illustrates a poem this young man compiled about an adventure with his dog Sparky. It celebrates the role the local shop plays in his life, a safe place where he is known and can buy the items he needs. The shop is almost part of his extended family.

This emphasises the role the shop plays in the life of the community, a place which is open where you are greeted with warmth and respect and can find the everyday items you need without having to travel far.

The artists involved in working alongside the children recorded that this project raised the children's awareness of the social role the shops played as well as a place to buy things.

