

A wooden boat is shown from a low angle, resting on a snowy surface. The words "SUPER HIGH" are written in large, gold, three-dimensional letters along the side of the boat. A camera is mounted on the bow of the boat. The background shows a snowy landscape under a clear blue sky.

**SUPER HIGH**

**LOCKLINES**

# LOCKLINES

## Introduction

As a new charity the Canal & River Trust seeks to evoke passion for the waterways and art projects can be a wonderful way of inspiring new audiences and communities that we might not otherwise reach. Locklines is part of a wider programme led by the Trust, in partnership with Arts Council England, aimed at bringing new supporters to the waterways through the contemporary arts. The programme is in part inspired by early waterway pioneers such as Robert Aickman and LTC Rolt of the Inland Waterways Association, who used their artistic and literary connections to win new advocates for the waterway cause in the 20th century.

Developed by Chrysalis Arts, Locklines' success comes from the highly talented artists and producers selected for the project. The poems were beautifully carved by Peter Coates into new green oak balance beams at the Trust's lock gate workshops in Stanley Ferry and Bradley. The beams were then installed as part of the Trust's annual winter stoppage season, when repairs to the historic locks were carried out and the public were invited to see behind the scenes at selected sites. Local residents were involved in

Locklines, attending poetry sessions with the Canal Laureate and discovering more about the canals that run through their communities.

The Trust is delighted with the final sets of lock gates with their unique locklines inscribed into the beams, and expect thousands of people to stop and reflect on the carved words and the canals that they live on or alongside.

*Chairman, Tony Hales*

All photos in this brochure are by Porl Medlock except where stated.

*Front cover and opposite - LOCKLINES Gargrave Lock 30, Leeds/Liverpool Canal at Holme Bridge, North Yorkshire.*

*Back cover - LOCKLINES Milnsbridge Lock 9E, Huddersfield Narrow Canal, Milnsbridge, West Yorkshire.*



## LOCKLINES ~

lines of poetry carved and inlaid onto a series of lock gates to commemorate the inaugural year of the Canal & River Trust

The Canal & River Trust's historic canals and rivers provide a local haven for people and nature. Created in 2012 to take over from British Waterways, the new charity is entrusted with the care of 2,000 miles of waterways in England and Wales.

In its inaugural year the Trust began a new programme of contemporary arts in partnership with Arts Council England and appointed Chrysalis Arts of Gargrave in North Yorkshire to develop Locklines as a key part of the programme. Chrysalis directors Kate Maddison and Rick Faulkner devised and developed the project in consultation with the Trust's staff, inviting proposals from

artists to celebrate the creation of the new Trust by carefully integrating contemporary art into four new lock gates.

The acclaimed sculptor Peter Coates was chosen to collaborate with leading British poets Jo Bell, Roy Fisher and Ian McMillan to carve their lines of poetry onto the balance beams of new lock gates that were replacing old gates during 2012.

Within the necessary practical, conservation and financial constraints of incorporating art into working heritage waterways, the aim was to inspire new visitors and supporters to the canals and rivers across a wide geographical reach.

Four locks were selected on four canals in different parts of the country:

- 1 **BIRMINGHAM AND FAZELEY CANAL** in central Birmingham
- 2 **HUDDERSFIELD NARROW CANAL** at Milnsbridge, west of Huddersfield
- 3 **LEEDS & LIVERPOOL CANAL** at Gargrave, near Skipton
- 4 **OXFORD CANAL** at Hillmorton in Rugby



## Poetry sessions

To engage people around the locality of the commemorative locks, there have been a series of poetry sessions organised in collaboration with the regional offices of the Canal & River Trust, led by Canal Laureate Jo Bell.

*"The workshops that I've run as part of the project have been humbling and exhilarating. In Yorkshire, a lively crowd of schoolchildren congregated on the working boat, Kennet, to write a long thin poem for the canal, and*

*adults too drew on their memories and imaginations. In Birmingham, a group of talented writers put their heads together to celebrate the second city's great watery network and its characters, from angler to fish, from jogger to boater. At Hillmorton, as the great poet Roy Fisher's words were fixed in place on a lock beam, canal users and writers gathered to write new material about this waterway and others they remember."*

Jo Bell - Poet



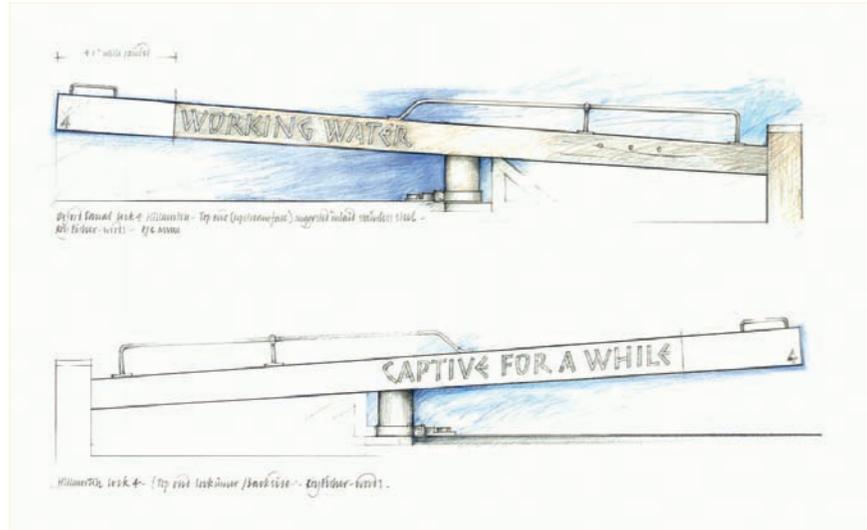
## Web-blog

A dedicated web-blog was created by Chrysalis Arts to document the art project as it unfolded. It gives an insight into the creative process from the different perspectives of all those involved, with comments and contributions from members of the public.

[www.locklines.org.uk](http://www.locklines.org.uk)

## DESIGN DRAWING FOR HILLMORTON LOCK 4 & 5 BY PETER COATES

Artist's statement ~ "The inscriptions are more about rhythm, pattern and decoration than formal letterforms..."



## POETRY FOR HILLMORTON LOCK 4 & 5 BY ROY FISHER

WORKING WATER  
CAPTIVE FOR A WHILE  
CLIMBS CAREFULLY DOWN  
THIS DOOR MAKES DEPTH

## LOCKLINES

Hillmorton Locks 4 & 5 Oxford Canal, Rugby, Warwickshire

» OS Grid Ref: SP 540743

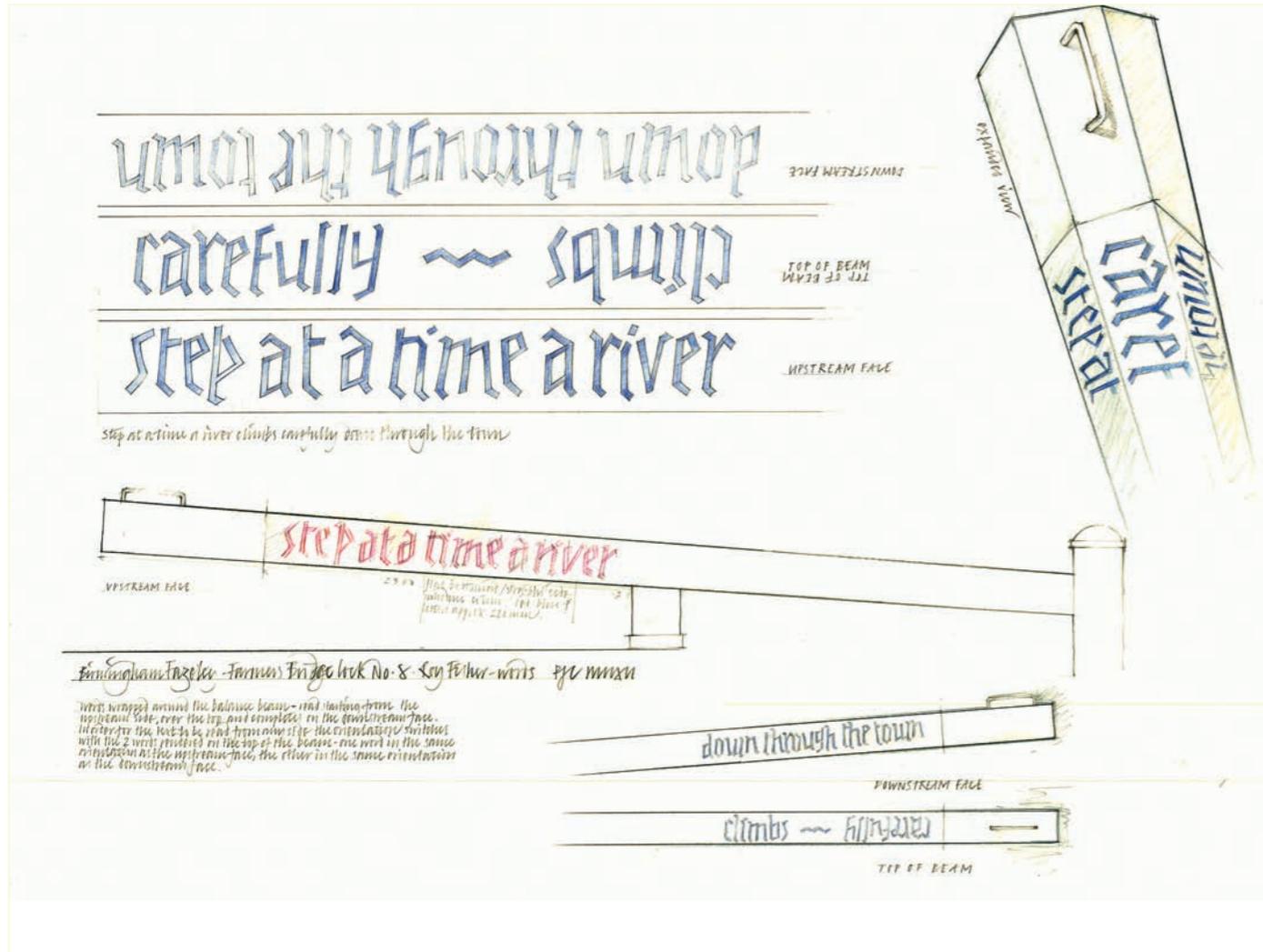


DESIGN DRAWING FOR BIRMINGHAM FARMERS BRIDGE LOCK 8 BY PETER COATES

“...celebrating the locks as crafted structures...”

POETRY FOR BIRMINGHAM FARMERS BRIDGE LOCK 8 BY ROY FISHER

STEP AT A TIME A RIVER  
CLIMBS CAREFULLY  
DOWN THROUGH THE TOWN



## LOCKLINES FOR TWO LOCATIONS

By Roy Fisher

WORKING WATER  
HELD CAPTIVE FOR A WHILE  
THEN SLUICED AWAY TO JOIN  
THE WORLD'S OTHER WATERS AGAIN

OPEN  
ENTER AND  
BE LIFTED SAFE  
WITH WORDS AT YOUR BACK

THESE DOORS MAKE DEPTH

POWER TO SINK YOUR BOAT  
BODILY INTO THE LAND  
AND LET IT GO RIDING OUT  
UNHARMED

STEP AT A TIME A RIVER  
CLIMBS CAREFULLY  
DOWN THROUGH THE TOWN

## LOCKLINES

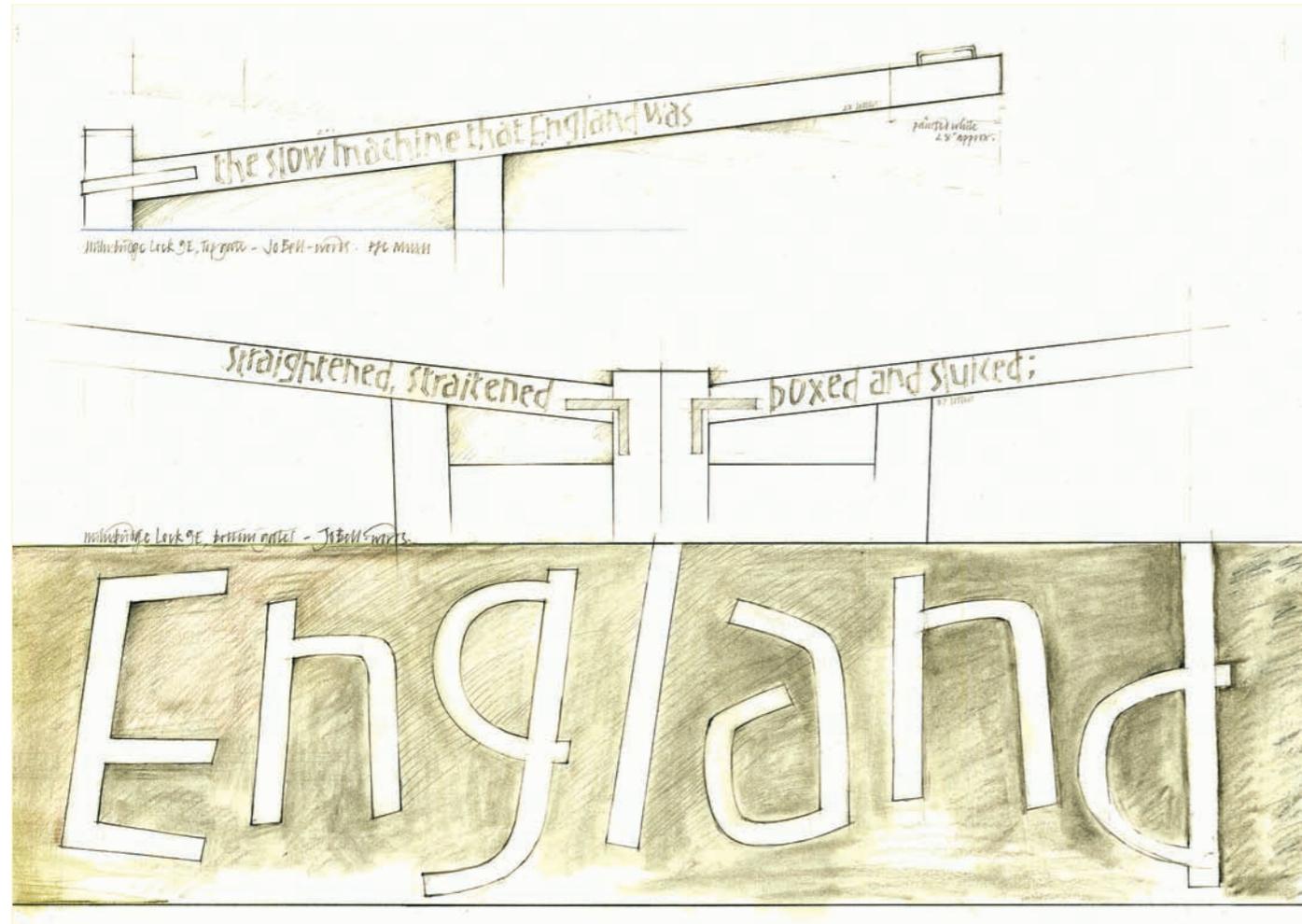
Birmingham Farmers Bridge Lock 8, Birmingham & Fazeley Canal, Birmingham, West Midlands

» OS Grid Ref: SP 064872



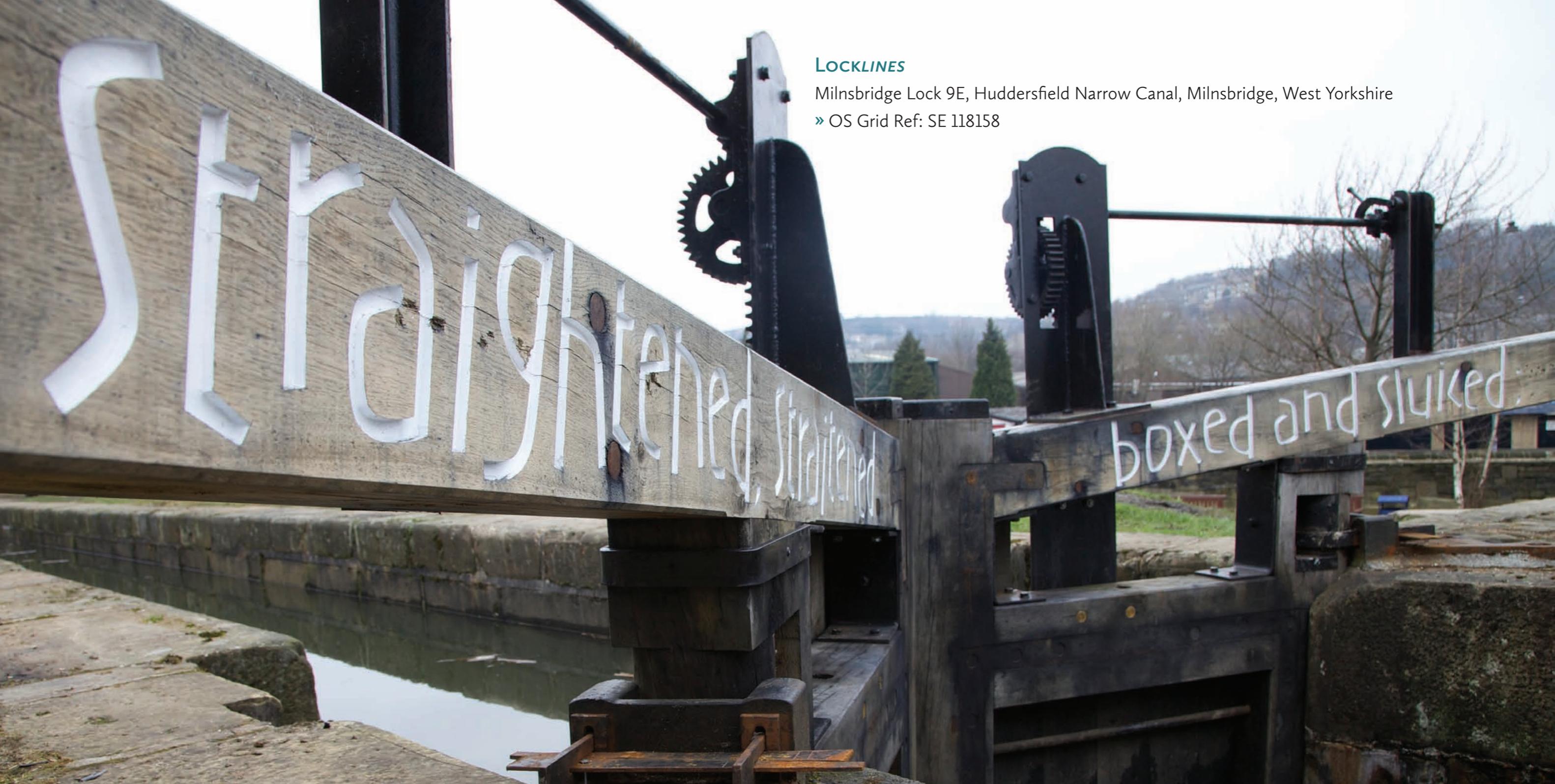
DESIGN DRAWING FOR MILNSBRIDGE LOCK 9E BY PETER COATES

“...content for the imagination that enlivens the locations...”



POETRY FOR MILNSBRIDGE LOCK 9E BY JO BELL

The slow machine that England was  
straightened, straitened, boxed and sluiced;



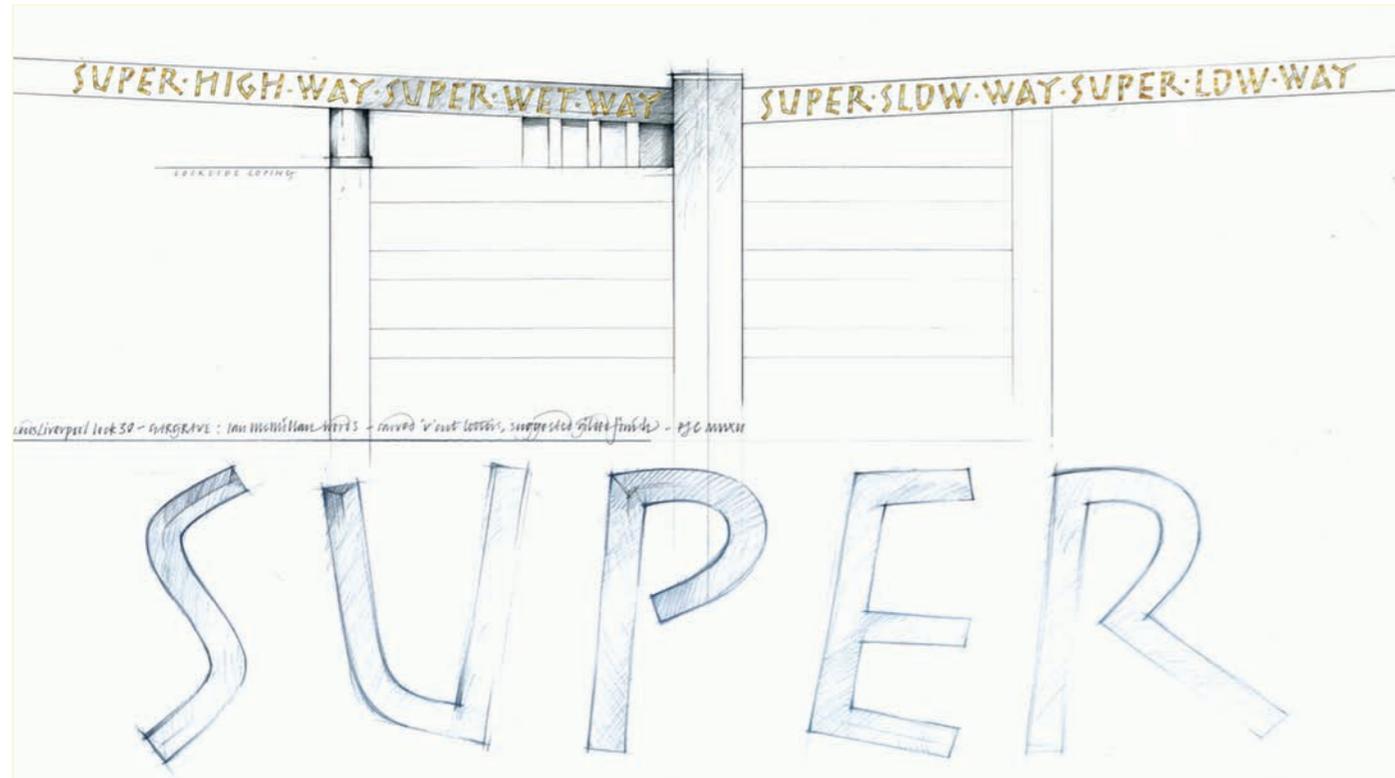
**LOCKLINES**

Milnsbridge Lock 9E, Huddersfield Narrow Canal, Milnsbridge, West Yorkshire

» OS Grid Ref: SE 118158

DESIGN DRAWING FOR GARGRAVE LOCK 30 BY PETER COATES

*"...and connect with the waterways past and present."*



POETRY FOR GARGRAVE LOCK 30 BY IAN McMILLAN

Super · High · Way

Super · Wet · Way

Super · Slow · Way

Super · Low · Way

## CANAL & RIVER TRUST WORKSHOPS AT BRADLEY AND STANLEY FERRY

The Canal & River Trust continually maintains and repairs our canals, including replacing lock gates whenever necessary. Bespoke lock gates are made throughout the year at the Canal & River Trust Workshops at Bradley near Wolverhampton in the Midlands and Stanley Ferry near Wakefield in West Yorkshire. Each lock gate is hand-made in the traditional way by skilled carpenters using green oak fitted with steel brackets, hinges and cast-iron paddle gear. Heavy construction is necessary to hold up the pressure of canal water and take the wear and tear of boats passing through the locks. Lock gates are replaced during the winter works programme, when stoppage of the locks will cause the least disruption to canal users.

*“From our point of view Locklines has been a very exciting project for the Trust’s Workshops to be involved with from the initial selection of an artist... to the practical application of the carvings at both workshops.”*

Janet Tynan ~ Workshops Manager



Anticlockwise from top right: LOCKLINES Gargrave Lock 30, Leeds/Liverpool Canal at Holme Bridge, North Yorkshire. Peter Coates letter carving at Stanley Ferry Workshop. Carved beam and lock gate assembly at Stanley Ferry Workshop, Photos by Porl Medlock. Lock gate installation at Gargrave. Lock beam installation at Gargrave. Photos by Kate Maddison.

## LOCKLINES

### Roy Fisher ~ Poet

Born in Handsworth, acclaimed poet Roy Fisher grew up in Birmingham. He worked as teacher of English in various schools and colleges, notably at Keele University in Staffordshire. He was the Head of English and Drama at Bordesley College of Education in Birmingham and more recently has worked as a freelance writer and a jazz pianist. Roy's work for Locklines was shortlisted for the Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry.

*"In addition to letting me think again about the canals among which I grew up, this commission suited my habitual verbal stinginess. Often when I've collaborated with artists and designers I've noticed that my texts, initially at least, seemed brief; but here the compulsory limitation to a small number of actual characters made me feel at home."* Roy Fisher

### Ian McMillan ~ Poet

Ian is Poet-in-residence for English National Opera, The Academy of Urbanism and Barnsley FC. He's UK Trade & Investment's Poet, Yorkshire TV's Investigative Poet and Humberside Police's Beat Poet. He can often be heard on radio and television and has been acknowledged by Carol Ann Duffy as 'world-class – one of today's greatest poetry performers'.

*"Normally, as I writer, I see my words disappear into the air; sometimes they're preserved on a page but they'll eventually fade away. Now, with my words shining in the sun beside the water, beautifully carved into wood, they'll last forever, or as close to forever as makes no difference. This project has been a perfect partnership of words and visuals, of the kind I've wanted to do for a long time."*

Ian McMillan

### Jo Bell ~ Canal Laureate

Jo Bell is a poet, working all over the UK. Her projects range from Director of National Poetry Day and Programmer for Ledbury Poetry Festival to writing with domestic violence groups and one-on-one mentoring. She is the UK's Canal Laureate, appointed by the Poetry Society and the Canal & River Trust.

*"Through Locklines, I am granted a chance to honour three vocations at once. I'm a boat-dweller, a working poet and was for many years an industrial archaeologist. The UK canals are my home, my workplace and a source of poetry. My poem The Archaeologist of Rivers brings all three together in an attempt to capture the nature of old waterways, and their vital part in the industrial revolution. I saw England as a great engine, with the canals as the vital fluid powering it, connecting all the components that made possible a vast change in our culture, our way of life. My line 'the slow machine that England was' is now embedded in a lock gate at Milnsbridge. The lock also uses my line 'straightened, straitened, boxed and sluiced' – my description of the engineering work that took the most uncontrollable of elements, and trained it into the shapes that would serve a great manufacturing nation."* Jo Bell

### Peter Coates ~ Sculptor

Peter is a highly skilled contemporary artist with a background in architectural sculpture, carving and lettering.

*"Functional objects have always held a fascination. The addition of a further 'texture' using considered and crafted language to these wonderful structures is an exciting prospect – 'working words.'" Peter Coates*

### Chrysalis Arts ~ Art Project Developer

Originally co-founded by Kate Maddison and Rick Faulkner on a canal boat, Chrysalis Arts is a public art and arts development company based at The Art Depot in Gargrave, North Yorkshire, beside the Leeds–Liverpool Canal.

*"I am really excited about this art project which brings two worlds together that I value and have been involved with for many years: that of contemporary public art, and the canals and their heritage. I look forward to seeing a new era where high quality art and traditional skills can be combined in creative ways to delight us now and enrich the heritage of the canals for future generations."* Kate Maddison

### The Canal & River Trust ~ Commissioner

The Canal & River Trust is the new charity entrusted with the care of 2,000 miles of waterways in England and Wales.

*"Our mission is to inspire as many people as possible to connect with our canals and rivers."*

We wish to thank Arts Council England for their funding support and all the groups and individuals who contributed to Locklines with their time and enthusiasm.

*“Locklines strikes a balance between respecting the heritage of the waterways as an industrial monument – which our lines acknowledge – and helping people to see them anew in the latest stage of their evolution, as places of peace and beauty, where there is room for contemplation and renewal as well as history.”*

Jo Bell – Canal Laureate



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Canal &  
River Trust

**chrysalis** arts  
development