



Longbarrow Press



Edgelands (matchbox edition), Matthew Clegg, 2008 (photo by Emma Bolland)

Longbarrow Press is a Sheffield-based independent poetry publisher with a reputation for work that explores the intersections of landscape, history and memory. Since the launch of our first publications in 2006, we've developed an eclectic programme of events, including poetry walks, exhibitions and collaborations with musicians and filmmakers, alongside a growing online archive of field recordings based on our visits to canals, chapels and sea caves in Yorkshire and beyond. Our parallel journey in print has also unfolded with an emphasis on innovation, with titles ranging from maps, acetates and matchboxes to our current series of acclaimed hardback books.

This selection of fourteen poems (and one essay) draws on the fourteen years of Longbarrow Press, from our earliest pamphlets to J.R. Carpenter's forthcoming *This is a Picture of Wind*. A further seventy poems can be accessed via our website (<http://longbarrowpress.com/featured-poem/index>); some of these are accompanied by recordings and short films.

Brian Lewis
Sheffield, March 2020

Parish

We lay the margins down
among our first words:
tree, mountain, river.

While here on the city's western edge
the stump cross marks a beginning
as a late summer sky falls open
and light encloses us.

Some say this was once sea-bed
and if we dig deep enough we would gather up
small finds of shells, stone memories of kelp.

So now the land's insatiable for rain,
the ancient weight of water.

On days like these, I take into myself
something of the earth below my feet,
give this place whatever name I have for home.

I walk the boundaries,
pace out a language I will know it by:
chrann, sliabh, abhainn.

<i>chrann</i>	tree
<i>sliabh</i>	mountain
<i>abhainn</i>	river

James Caruth

From *The Footing* (2013)

Last night

mist rolled in –
a settlement of pale net layered itself
on the hillside opposite, and sagged
into gardens and lanes, bleared terraces
of gable-ends, nestling in to stifle all
but its own rumour, letting only the pin-glow
of street and window lights poke through.
It flattened valleys, lagged farm and woodland,
swallowed Dark Peak and Bradfield's mound
into a sky white with it, tasted our tongues
as we talked of it, beaded our hair and lashes.

Morning sloshes in gutters,
pelts tarmac with its urgent gurgle-hiss,
the radio gushes flood warnings.
I peer out through the weft and warp
of our rain-braided window on mud
leaping puddles in grass and gravel,
Walkley Stream overflowing its runnel,
potholes filling to discharge in gulleys
down our road's ribbed gradient,
and last night's mist, slow to thin
in its outpouring, still fleeces us
of field's depth: near hills show as bones,
roof and tree lines seem sketched
in charcoal on translucent stone.

Fay Musselwhite

From *Contraflow* (2016)

Brigand

I switch off the revs,
pop my ears from the helmet's pod,
and blink white lines from my sight.
I crunch along the footpath
to a hide on Denaby Ings.

A bird I can't name
trills like a rag on soapy glass –
a squeak with a chime in it.
Coots chafe like chair legs on lino;
a dove chants a wood mass.
There are water take-offs,
and water landings –
a lush trawl of sound.

Wing beats ripple
and a gull throttles its cry
on obsessive/compulsive loop.
A jay flits a toy windmill
in and out through the slats;
ducks squeeze their honks
then hush.

This is the moment I love –
when two minutes' silence
is a slow pull of Moonshine.
It's interrupted by gnats
teasing at the edge of buzz
and the clatter and creak
is me donning my helmet
and wrapping this up.

Matthew Clegg

From *The Navigators* (2015)

Open Seas

Yesterday was too rough to write:
my life-raft stayed barely aright.

Out here, navigation is not
a length of steel rope but a knot

like the strokes the Chinese
weave into a sign. My knees

are crushed into a ridge. I see
summits colliding in the sea,

valleys grinning. The reel
of the hull is stomach-real:

I survive on dry bread
above the fathoms where billions have bred.

And when I look out, I'm unsure
if a far thin line might be shore

in the horizon's changing orange-red,
the brightest chart here I've yet read.

Alistair Noon

From *Across the Water* (2012)

From *A Year at Sharpham*

It's still raining. It has always rained. We are silt dwellers, tide chasers,
puddles, floods, mud. The river runs brown topsoil down and out to sea.
From a fir erupts a murmur of starlings. By fir I also mean fur. A pelt of
needles, hackles raised. Storm force ten at the river mouth. The scale goes
up to twelve. After that the sky breaks. The fir comes down and takes two
eucalyptus with it.

J.R. Carpenter

From *This is a Picture of Wind* (forthcoming, 2020)

Rouen

A river of men comes to Rouen
with its twisted timbers.
Crossing the Seine they gather
in the market place for inspection.
Joan was burned here: a martyr
for a town already ample with its dead.

The armies are building kitchens
to feed themselves. All night
the streets are lit from bakery doors,
the cobbles florid and shining.
When black death stole into the houses
the bones lay thigh-deep all winter.

Trains pull out of the station groaning,
laded with bread, field dressings,
young men still half sick from drink.
The loaves sit shaking in racks
as the wagons rattle into a forest,
its pools and spores circling.

Rob Hindle

From *The Grail Roads* (2018)

From *Nine Poems*

It was the days of Edgard Varèse.
I dreamt a whole war, and woke
to an empty street in first light,
and in Arabic, a beautiful language,
spoke my way past the new care homes
and agencies towards the open land.
The war was between artillery and artillery.
The worst thing was the quietness, with
a ticking noise and drum-taps between
enormous crashes full of brass bands
and exploding factories. The open lands
responded in Arabic, where have all the birds gone?

Peter Riley

From *Truth, Justice, and the Companionship of Owls* (2019)

Frome XVI

The revolution is coming to Chin –
it will begin inauspiciously enough, through
nursery tales, paper lanterns strung around
the garrison at evening. But make no mistake
names will be re-named, dynasties finished.

Its too late, I've missed my chance –
I was reading one evening from Li Po
– it was the middle of winter and snow began
to slowly muffle the rattling lime leaves
in the avenue outside and just for that moment
the whole wretched thing became clear.
There's little chance of us ever seeing land again,
I won't comfort my daughter when she weeps,
that, easily divided, we were so simply made
fools of or happily made others to look like fools.

Then I glanced down at my book and it was gone –
illustrious as they are, again, these were merely words –
history flattened out into something done by someone
else to something else, mutterings beneath
an upturned collar under the chipped brown moon.

Andrew Hirst

From *Frome XXIV* (2008)

From *Article 50*

At night I think of the living and the dead
the Irish songs rise like light over Carrickfergus
and I lose my way on Grafton Street,
heading out for the Republic of Song.

In the Republic of Song we're all walking,
I see my father on the road from Wexford Town;
he survives the war and beats the drink,
I see him now on the black road turnabout.

Kelvin Corcoran

i have in
my hands a

map of
water as

i turn by
degrees to

find

my or a way

at all drop
lets of

location drip

from my
fingers in

to rivu lets
losing me

Mark Goodwin

From *Rock as Gloss* (2019)

Dan of the Don

skitters the shallows
where the Sheaf interlopes,
waterboatman-sculptor
summoning splayed relic
stacks amid spate.

Dan's materials
parody permanence,
approximate props from the
lapsed pomp of
manufacture and shipment.

The half-built and derelict
timeshare Dan's habitat,
tributaries into the
current moment.
Dan's finished product

is our purblind straining
astride the meanders for
meaning, tracking an
implicit timeline,
positing vanishing points.

Dan of the Don knows well
the precarious weight
of all we inherit,
expresses the lot in teetering
stanzas of brick.

Pete Green

Fairytale No. 17

Because I am no longer there, the market still stands, the way some people fill the space memory leaves with a plausible alternative. The market stairwell's where I learnt the word *loitering*. And later, on the gallery, is where I got my head shaved, after, but not because of, a miscarriage. They promised the best clementines for the best prices. I bought coconut/ pineapple bubble bath that made my bathroom smell like the "Copacabana". I believe in the olfactory hallucinations of lovers apart, the impossibility of holding still. I buy yards of cotton in gingham and daisies, drink tea the colour of clay and climb the hill home.

I fill the space with wildflowers

a consolation of daisies.

My womb is an interlude of violets.

My tongue is a foxglove.

I have never considered how aphasia is not always only a loss of speech but is also sometimes the loss of thought. Is it enough to picture a hill, when there's so much to think about why I'm picturing this hill? I climb the hill home, past the brutalist flats that have been bought and sold with a marriage proposal, and where one of the newly renovated balconies blasts Radio Three. The soprano says, *the most famous love theme in the world has nothing to do with happiness*. If the story were lost, and I could only feel in silence or music, what would I feel? But how could I answer? How could I ask?

Angelina D'Roza

From *Correspondences* (2019)

The Marketplace

The city-states of ancient Greece had a name for their artistic, political and spiritual centre: the *agora*, an open, expansive ‘gathering place’, in which the *polis* would assemble for military duty and listen to consular speeches. Over time, the political function of the agora was moderated by its use as a marketplace, with merchants setting up their stalls between colonnades. The later Greek verbs *agorázō* (“I shop”) and *agoreúō* (“I speak in public”) reflect the dual life of the agora as a commercial and civic space, and, perhaps, embody an idea (or ideal) of interdependency. It’s an idea that I’d like to explore, and affirm, while also paying tribute to some of the people and collectives whose inspiration and support has been invaluable to me (and to Longbarrow Press) in 2016. In England (if not the UK), the cultural and political narrative is, frequently, one of mute, impersonal, frictionless transactions; disconnection, dispossession, division; a retreat into echo chambers and virtual exclaves. There’s a case to be made for this, of course, and the claims that our public discourse has been cheapened, that our civic spaces have been eroded. It’s not the only story, though.



Longbarrow Press was founded in 2006, and was initially funded with some of the income from my job as a financial services administrator. When I left the security of a full-time (albeit poorly-remunerated) employed position in 2012, I’d barely addressed the question of the press’s economic survival (or my own). My savings wouldn’t last forever, and the prospect of working entirely from home, with little of the routine association with which I’d become familiar in an open-plan office, was faintly alarming. Slowly, I began to make contact with people in my new surroundings, and further afield, picking up bits and pieces of freelance work. Among the first of these projects was *Place & Memory*, a creative professional development programme devised and

mentored by Judit Bodor, Emma Bolland and Tom Rodgers (aka Gordian Projects), taking eight Leeds-based artists into the city for sessions of collective site research, documented through a range of media (photography, film, audio, drawing, found objects, poetry, and prose). I was recruited as a sound recordist for the project, and found myself spending more and more time at Inkwell Arts in Chapel Allerton, north Leeds, where the group was headquartered. Inkwell is a community-focused arts

space, cafe and studio complex on the site of a former pub, renovated and adapted over several years, offering structured support for creative individuals as part of their recovery from mental health issues. The cafe and gallery is the hub, a bright, open, accessible room, enabling conversation between friends and strangers, planned and unplanned encounters. After the project drew to a close in summer 2014, I found that I missed the artists, the staff, the space. Fortunately, I was invited back at the start of this year, working with a new intake of artists to develop websites showcasing their creative CVs and works-in-progress. Most of the sessions were 1-1 tutorials, with space for discussion, application, and growth, the focus and pace varying from one hour to the next. Invariably, I'd be asked at least one question to which I didn't have an immediate answer, and we'd work out a solution together. There was a sense of shared discovery in each of these encounters: listening, looking, learning. The mentoring programme spanned three months, time enough to rethink my ideas about dialogue, project development and workspace.



A week or so after leaving Inkwell, I returned to Leeds for the opening of *Shoddy*, a group exhibition organised and curated by disability rights activist Gill Crawshaw. The exhibition was both a collective exploration of reused textiles (alluding to the original meaning of 'shoddy': new cloth made from woollen waste, a process patented in West Yorkshire) and a creative challenge (or rebuke) to the government's 'shoddy' treatment of disabled people. Fittingly, the venue was the former premises of an Italian clothing wholesaler, now 'repurposed' by Live Art Bistro, a Leeds-based, artist-led organisation. The preview

was packed, and, unlike some that I've attended, the work on display was central, not peripheral, to the occasion. And it was fresh, the thinking and the making, shaped from recycled materials, installed in a secondhand space. Felt. Cloth. Polythene. Paper. Yarn. Natalia Sauvignon's 'Beautiful but Deadly', a sculpture utilising woollen remnants, plastic plants, seashells from the east coast, human hair. 'Shoddy Samplers', a duo of embroidered textiles by Faye Waple, juxtaposing the early and later usages of 'shoddy' (as noun and adjective). A collaborative, multi-sensory wall hanging by Pyramid of Arts, incorporating marks, stitches and woven parts from each of its members. All the leftovers from the marketplace, the scraps and offcuts, gifts passing from hand to hand. A few months after the first *Shoddy* exhibition, Gill hatched another, to be held at Inkwell in August. She had a small budget for a print publication, drawing on texts and photographs from the first show, and asked me if I'd be interested in

taking on the design and editing work. I said yes, and we met to discuss the brochure spec. We agreed that the *Shoddy* booklet should aim to meet the accessibility criteria of the exhibitions. Translated into print, this meant taking care to ensure that the page layouts were interesting, without presenting obstacles for readers with visual or cognitive impairments. We settled on Futura, a clean, modern sans serif typeface, for the headline and body text (the latter in 12pt throughout); paragraphs flush left; black body text with blue titling; wide margins; minimal italicisation. A printed page, like a public place, should invite us in, without clutter or impediment; once inside, it should enable us to navigate, to apprehend each part and to make connections, to read the space between columns. Gill, assisted by volunteers at Inkwel, arranged the *Shoddy* display with good sightlines, texts and labels at a height accessible to wheelchair users, and a clear, inventive visual narrative from wall to wall. As with the first show, it developed from a sense of community, affirmed and renewed by the audience at the opening night at Inkwel, and in the days that followed. People gathering, talking, drinking coffee, tea, taking in the work.

I picked up the *Shoddy* assignment the day after Hillsfest, an ambitious arts weekender for North Sheffield, conceived and directed by Karen Sherwood (founder of Sheffield's Cupola Gallery) and staged in my own community of Hillsborough. Sheffield is, by common consent, a welcoming city; Cupola has always been among its most welcoming spaces. Visitors are greeted with free coffee (and, if they're new to the gallery, a brief tour) and immediately put at ease. The work on display is as varied, challenging and thoughtfully presented as you'll find in any contemporary art space, and it's framed by warmth, not cool detachment. Karen, it must be said, is a resourceful, effective salesperson (a key factor in the survival and growth of Cupola over the last 25 years), but she has no appetite for persuading customers to buy things that they don't need. People trust her judgment, and, in turn, learn to trust their own. At first, I wasn't convinced that I had all the skills required for the role that she'd invited me to take on (curating and presenting the Hillsfest spoken word programme), but Karen believed that I was equal to the task, so I came to believe this too. It helped that the festival team felt like a small community, working for the benefit of a larger community, one nestled inside the other. It's important to me and, I think, to others, that these principles of openness and interdependency should be to the fore in every Longbarrow event, shared within the collective and with the audience. Our long-running series of poetry walks is, among other things, a space for conversation, conviviality, companionship. The landscape invites us to listen, to catch fragments of observational detail, musings on ecology and history, anecdote and conjecture, we all learn, even (or especially) those

of us who have been walking these paths for years, we all gain. I don't think of 'the local' as something to be fetishised, monetised, or, for that matter, disparaged. I don't understand the recent use of 'community' as a pejorative term, a prefix that limits or weakens a project or initiative. It tells me that there's something at stake. A few months ago, I took part in the Small Publishers Fair at London's Conway Hall, organised by Helen Mitchell. It was the second year that Longbarrow Press had taken a stall at SPF (sharing, once again, with Gordian Projects); as in 2015, I was struck by the sense of common endeavour, mutual interest and support that prevailed throughout (which some might find unusual in what is, ostensibly, a marketplace). We might attribute this to several factors: the character of the artists and publishers, selected by Helen; the calm, friendly, positive influence of Helen, her sincere engagement and focused management; the volunteer teams; the audiences, some of whom I'd encountered at previous events, who brought their conversations to our tables, and made the exchanges reciprocal, not transactional; and the Conway Hall itself, built in 1929 by nonconformists (the Conway Hall Ethical Society now advocates secular humanism), and still an important gathering place for political and cultural events. It was Helen who made me aware of the hall's history as a meeting place for collective walks; the



society's members would congregate at 25 Red Lion Square, then set out for Bloomsbury and Clerkenwell. In the heart of the city, yet altogether local. A community in itself, and a place for communities to gather, from near and far.

It was the spirit of the Small Publishers Fair that had called me back for a second year, and which I now sought to muster in Sheffield. On the last Saturday of November, I presented an Independent Publishers Book Fair at Bank Street Arts, in the city's Cathedral Quarter, with the support of Tom and Andrew at BSA and Emma Bolland (who was also staffing the Gordian Projects stall at the fair, and curating a programme of talks, readings and projections in the evening). I'd participated in two previous book fairs at Bank Street Arts, and wondered if a one-day event, along similar lines, might be viable; Tom and Andrew were immediately receptive to the idea, and put their creative and technical resources at our disposal. The opportunity to invite presses whose work I admired was a privilege; happily, almost everyone I contacted was able to take part. The line-up comprised mostly Sheffield-based (or Sheffield-affiliated) publishers and artists – And Other Stories, enjoy your homes, Gordian Projects, Joanne Lee, Longbarrow Press, The Poetry Business, Tilted Axis Press, West House Books – with

others from further afield: Bradical (Bradford), Comma Press (Manchester), Jean McEwan (West Yorkshire), Peepal Tree Press (Leeds). This was the balance I'd hoped we might achieve: artists' books, poetry, fiction, art writing, literary criticism, zines; a showcase for some of the work being published in Sheffield, while making (or renewing) connections with fellow practitioners in the north of England. As well as being a one-day 'marketplace', I wanted the fair to offer an opportunity for creative exchanges, unhurried conversations, surprise and reciprocity. I knew that everyone I'd invited would have something to contribute, and I was especially pleased that Jean McEwan and Bradical (who shared a table on the day) were able to take part. Jean is a collage artist, a maker of zines and 'altered postcards', and co-founder of Wur Bradford, an art and social space in a stall in Kirkgate Market, central Bradford. The stall hosts printmaking and zine-making workshops, art parties, community dialogues, informal education sessions, artists' talks, and more. Bradical (who I first met at a Wur Bradford event) have been an important part of this development, challenging Islamophobia and stereotyping through pointed and playful zines and actions, and sharing Jean's DIY ethic and strategies for engagement. Jean has invited me to speak at a couple of Wur Bradford events in the past few years, and I'm always humbled and inspired by the creativity, generosity, and energy in the room. On Saturday 26 November, these forces were at work at Bank Street Arts, in the dialogues and discoveries, the acts of friendship and solidarity. Jean said something about the inherent value of being in a room with people, of simply talking with them, and I remembered something else that she'd said, that validation was nothing to do with status, or sales, that it is something that happens in the act of exchange. I thought of my mother, now in her late 70s, staffing the Lawn Community Centre Christmas Bazaar that same day, in Swindon, many miles south. The community centre was a collective sketch in the 1970s, and was eventually realised in 1999, on the site of an extinct pub. The intervening decades were spent fundraising, campaigning, organising, and challenging indifferent councillors (who maintained that the project was futile, then declared it a success shortly after it opened). Through it all, the community association kept their nerve, their humour, their belief. I watched them, a child of the estate, helping out with jumble sales and recycling drives, I saw what they could do, working together, supporting each other.

There is no debt, only reciprocity, and work continuing.

Brian Lewis

An earlier version of this piece appeared on the Longbarrow Blog (31 December 2016)

Cells (iii)

I am stone clover,
trinity of light and air,
harrowing darkness.

Seed each cell with light
then tell how the brightest stars
are first to flare out.

Redwoods survive fires
the way we'd like to outlive
pain: old heart, new skin.

Chris Jones

From *Skin* (2015)

Selected Publications

This is a Picture of Wind (2020)

J.R. Carpenter

Cazique (2018), *The Navigators* (2015), *West North East* (2013)

Matthew Clegg

Article 50 (2018), *Words Through a Hole Where Once There Was a Chimpanzee's Face* (2011)

Kelvin Corcoran

Correspondences (2019), *Enviest the Birds* (2016)

Angelina D'Roza

Meridian (2019)

Nancy Gaffield

Rock as Gloss (2019), *Steps* (2014)

Mark Goodwin

Sheffield Almanac (2017)

Pete Green

The Grail Roads (2018), *The Purging of Spence Broughton, a Highwayman* (2009)

Rob Hindle

Hello Dolly (2012), *Frome I-XIV* (2008)

Andrew Hirst

Skin (2015)

Chris Jones

Contraflow (2016)

Fay Musselwhite

QUAD (2017), *Swamp Area* (2012), *Across the Water* (2012)

Alistair Noon

Truth, Justice, and the Companionship of Owls (2019)

Peter Riley

The Footing (2013)

**Angelina Ayers, James Caruth, Mark Goodwin, Rob Hindle, Andrew Hirst,
Chris Jones, Fay Musselwhite**