

# The Sawrey Sculpture Trail

Throughout 2007 I have been working to uncover a lost sculpture trail that exists between Far Sawrey and Moss Eccles tarn. There may be some sculptures I have missed, but I hope you enjoy the walk in its current form. The trail was resurrected for and funded by FRED 2007 - the Art Invasion that takes place in Cumbria during the first two weeks in October each year. Many thanks to them for the opportunity to show off this lovely part of Lakeland and the art contained within it.

Bryan Eccleshall, Near Sawrey, September 2007.

Starting from Sawrey Stores in Far Sawrey, the trail crosses the main road and ascends the lane with the sign "Public Bridleway to Moss Eccles Tarn and Claife Heights". Just before the wall on the left turns into a fence look to your left and into the tree...

## 01: "Home From Home" - Lucas Smith

Sadly these few planks are all that remain of a scale model of the Parthenon created by Smith as a tribute to the Athenian society on which all Western Civilisation is based. Sometimes Smith dons a toga and recites Socratic text to accompany his sculptures. The wooden version of the Parthenon made here remained unpainted. It was designed to be almost hidden, much like society's history, which is underpinned by Greek ideas of justice, self-reliance and democracy.

...carry on up the path until you get to the building on the right. Look up and you'll see the cross shapes under the eaves...

## 02: "Homage to St Francis" - Harold Burns

Before becoming an artist Burns had a career as a monk. He was drummed out of the Franciscan order after making "obscene" drawings on a church wall. As we can see from this cruciform piece, he never quite renounced his faith or his devotion to St

Francis. These openings provide access for bats and birds to the loft behind, thus echoing the story of Francis preaching to animals and the birds.

Burns spent the last years of his life as a guest of a monastic order in Perugia, where he died in 2004.



...continue along the path and stop at the second large tree on the right...

## 03: "My Tree" - Penny Arancho



Arancho is an Anglo-Spanish artist who, in her early career, used simple naming techniques to claim objects and events that were otherwise considered public or unowned in any conventional sense. The artist's signature has long been a sign of provenance in the art world and Arancho here uses it both as a sign

of ownership and creation. In effect she simultaneously stakes a claim to and gives away the tree, presumably to us as well as to birds and other animals. Since this piece, Aranchó has tried to introduce her own currency in Barcelona but with no success.

...walk up into the fields on the same path and stop on the wooden bridge...

#### **04: "For Sawrey, Near and Far" - Jeep and Co. (George Morecombe and Jennifer McCartney)**

Jeep and Co. were commissioned to produce a sculpture that would "benefit the community in an effective way". This extremely tight brief resulted in them simply designing and building this bridge. It makes this whole trail accessible in one easy journey. The straightforward design means the bridge is easily repaired by local carpenters, thus avoiding some of the issues that blight other sculpture trails that fail to negotiate maintenance strategies. They have since produced bridges and walkways all over the world, most famously the "sky-swagger" in Sao Paulo.

...follow the path up the hill. Stop just before another path joins from the left...

#### **05: "Mythic Door #7 aka Where To Now, My Dear?" - Jane Shannon**

*"There are things known, and there are things unknown, and inbetween there are doors."*  
This plain and seemingly abandoned door was placed here by Shannon while she was working with ideas relating to mythology and legend. Like the wardrobe in the Narnia novels, the door is designed to act as a conceptual bridge between two worlds.

...continue uphill a few yards and stop at the

pile of logs on the right...

#### **06: "Tempus Fugit" - Jason Gottlieb-Lewis**



This piece is only now coming to maturity - much like a fine wine. The logs are collapsing slowly (it was originally a pyramid), in line with Gottlieb-Lewis' intention. The moss growing on the logs demonstrates nature's own clock. Each year a further thickness is added. Since this piece was created Gottlieb-Lewis has returned to his native Berlin and now makes organic sculptures along the line of the old Berlin Wall. He deliberately doesn't get permission and he records how long the work lasts before being removed by the agents of democracy. Each year the artist returns and photographs this piece with a view to producing a time lapse film sometime in the future.

...keep walking up the path. You will soon see a blue pipe on your left...

#### **07: "Blue Line" - Unknown Artist**

Although nothing is known about this work or the artist who placed it here, we can safely assume that the artist was keen to reference Kandinsky's notion of "taking a line for a walk" in a new, original and very literal way. It seems significant that the artist has chosen a colour that stands out from its surroundings. The pipe draws a line from the relatively remote farming area towards the residential part of the village below. Neatly, the piece

also has a functional side as the farmer has employed the pipe for field drainage.

...as you walk up towards Moss Eccles Tarn look out for a rock outcrop on the left in front of a field entrance...

### 08: "Blanket" - Ernest Nicholas

Here we have a seemingly abandoned piece of farm machinery, but in fact the artist has used the machinery (indeed obsolete and from the local farm), to make a subtle and resonant point. By placing the metal links over the rock and grass, Nicholas alludes to the way farm practices have shaped the land around here (and indeed, throughout the world), and how eventually nature will overtake the intervention of humanity as the grass will grow over the metal and reclaim it. Nicholas' work tends to be pessimistic in outlook when seen from humanity's point of view, though he denies that saying *"people may be under threat, but the world will carry on. We'll pass just like the dinosaurs and something more wonderful will replace us."*

...on the ground around here there are fragments of yellow tarmac...

### 09: "Yellow Drawing" - Yamada Taro

Japanese artist Yamada Taro originally came to Sawrey to volunteer at Hill Top - the Beatrix Potter property in the village - but stayed on to make large paintings in yellow on the paths. Not realising he was actually operating illegally he was mortified when told. Consequently he smashed up all the drawings (which were of names in large Japanese



Script - this one was "mountain" in Kanji script (see above). All that is left now is the coloured asphalt. It is my pleasure to reinstate it as a feature of the Sawrey Sculpture Trail.

...you now need to walk up to and beyond Moss Eccles Tarn, keeping the tarn on your left. As you cross a small beck you will notice some rusted pipes...

### 10: "To The Stars" - David "Buck" Tufnel



This is all that remains of an organ-like structure that stood upright for about three years. Eventually the sheep rubbing up against it knocked it over and the rest was removed for health and safety reasons. Tufnel was originally associated with the "proto-brutalist" movement that flowered briefly in British Columbia in the 1970's. They famously fell apart acrimoniously when Tufnel - a leading light in the group - declared himself "bored of metal". This piece demonstrates that this attitude was only temporary. Tufnel has become notorious for sculptures that are dangerous to the public. He is allegedly uninsurable nowadays and consequently his work is rarely seen. We should consider ourselves fortunate to see at least a shadow of one of his pieces.

...a little further on from Tufnel's piece the path climbs up. Stay on the main path. At a junction of paths is the site of a sculpture that is no longer here...

### 11: "Arch" - Simon Coltrane

Sadly all evidence of Coltrane's piece has been removed. At this junction of pathways was once a large willow and paper archway. It resembled the Arch of Constatine in Rome but onto its sides were drawings depicting the artist's life. The Arch is no longer here because it never really survived the first winter. The paper wasn't waterproofed and the underlying willow structure wasn't strong enough to survive beyond the first winter. It was removed about ten years ago. Since this piece Coltrane has made a name for himself making other large paper structures, but mostly works in North America. He produced an arch for the Superbowl in 1998.

...for the final sculpture keep walking along the path and through a gate. As the view of the Langdale Fells opens up in front of you, find the first rock outcrop on your left...

### 12: "Sentinel Number 1" - Sandeep Singh

Singh is an Indian artist who worked for three years in the UK on an exchange programme. He spent a good deal of his time locating iconic views and photographing them with an old Box Brownie camera bought in Camden Market. When he reached Cumbria, and specifically this view of the Langdale Pikes he was bowled over, much in the way Alfred Wainwright had been at Orrest Head years before when he saw his life's work laid out before him. To memorialise his reaction Singh took a cast of this rock and has since remade it in front of other iconic views around the world. He often gilds them to mark them as special. This, however remains the original and best.

...that concludes The Sawrey Sculpture Trail. You can return the way you came or take the path down to Near Sawrey and return to Far Sawrey along the marked footpaths.

