

At Tapton Festival

Here we become ourselves.

Connor Draper has climbed to the top of BOTH climbing walls!
(while Aimee Draper ate a picnic).

The bodgers, Shaun, Richard and Andy,
have made moon chairs,
refuse to let pole lathe turning die out,
make chairs for fairies
 gates for opening
 bats for rounders
 willow wands for spells.

Today they use sycamore,
other days ash, sweet chestnut.
They are the rescuers of fallen trees,
keep the woodland turning,
bring the earth into our homes, our gardens.

Did you know, say Chesterfield Canal Trust,
that this canal is forty-six miles long
and Tapton's only the start of it?

Mark and Lee-Anne don't just give us coffee,
they have brought sunshine with them,
on T-shirts, cups, in lemon cake, banana loaf,
in a rusty van, lovingly rebuilt
and yellow, so yellow.
We drink sunshine, warmed by its rays.

Jodie the Fibre Smith spins,
weaves felt, says she was born knowing how.
She fulls, tabby weaves, on tenterhooks.
Once she had a studio, but couldn't bear the roof,
the walls, longed for trees and cherry wood buttons.
Teasing fibre from bobbin, flyer whizzing,
she treadles and talks, talks and treadles.

Did you know this Canal is called the Cuckoo Way?
Did you know they're renovating the Dawn Rose
and the horse is ready to draw her
but they have to finish her first?

Webby and Hady chose Tapton today
over Hadfield Sheepdog Trials
to set out their jewellery

sell ponchos so soft and warm
you want to bury yourself inside
while at the next stall, Mick paints
 darkness in light,
 past in present,
worries about some of the pictures he's sold,
wishes he hadn't.

Did you know this canal took ten years to build?
Did you know there are eight miles still to restore?
Did you know they have to go under the M1,
replace a tunnel, reroute it round houses
and so far it's taken every weekend
for thirty years?

Anya's felting, she tells us, looks like Einstein.
This excites Claud, the black Labrador,
and two lonely worms,
 who arrive on the carding blanket
to see what's going on.

Instructions for Felting at Home

by Susan, Derbyshire Countryside Services:

1. Go for a walk in Derbyshire.
2. Find some sheep's wool.
3. Take it home.
4. Brush it between two hair brushes to make it soft.
5. Put it on a table. Squirt it with soapy water.
6. Bash it, flatten it, squash it, squidge it.
7. Throw it at the table. Lots of times.
8. Cut a square from it.
9. Make a hundred more.
10. Sew them together. Ta da! A blanket.

Ewan's picture of two ducks on the canal
has won fifth prize in the photography competition.

What is a canal? I ask everyone.

'A hungry snake,' says Alison

'No, a swimming school for ducks,' says Cathy.

'A great place for a walk, or a picnic with the family,' says Amanda.

'A home for a dog or a frog,' concludes Jamie.

Andy is selling beer in the shade.

'All you need is passion' he says.

Tudor, Wasps Nest, Lily the Pink,

but today's best buy is Jerusalem,
'Probably because of the Rugby,
makes 'em patriotic,' he says.

'A canal is a place for the puddled,' says Jeremy.
'Home to a cob and a pen and a black moorhen,'
says John; a poet, does he know it?

Many children are canoeing their bright way along the water
Many adults are boarding the John Varley for a ride.

What are you doing? I ask everyone.

Connor, Aimee, Thomas, Naomi, Reece and Jessica
have done some fantastic crafts.

Dawn and Gracie have shared a beautiful moment
while rag rugging with an inspiring kiwi,
Finlay has been fighting with some willow herb.
Grace has made a colourful duck with a blue and green eye.

Speaking of Grace, she has WON the photography competition
with her picture of a boat coming through the lock.
'You feel like you're on it,' her Grandma says.
October 8th is the day she gets her first camera.
She's going to be a photographer.
She already is.

And all the time, Amy's Data Draw machine sits
like a sci-fi object, guzzling data
and throwing out art to take away.
Sylvia isn't techy at all but learns to love it.

'A canal?' says Andy.
'A canal is ... wet.'

Helen's heart is bursting with pride.
'All the answers are inside us, you know,' says Karl.

Here we become ourselves.