**The Train Track and the Basket by Claire Barber**

**Hull Paragon Railway Station April 7 – Jun 29 2017**

**Briefing note for volunteers**

*The Train Track and The Basket* has been commissioned by Hull2017 as part of *Look Up*, a programme of temporary artworks made for the city’s public spaces and places.

The artist is Claire Barber - a Senior Lecturer in Textile Practice at the University of Huddersfield, whose work often creates a conceptual approach to textiles, with wide ranging results ranging from detailed, interactive artworks to large scale architectural interventions.

**Installation**

The work will be installed from 4th to 6th April by local company Signs Express (Hull) who have also printed the vinyl graphics. The work will be taken down after 29 June.

**Interpretation**

There will be a leaflet to be given out which should be available on the first day of complete installation or at the beginning of the following week.

There are interpretation panels on 2 sandwich boards which should be put out in the station entrance area each morning and put safely away in the pod each night. There are also some smaller interpretation panels which will be fixed to the pillars in the entrance area, behind the pod, and therefore available at all times.

**Information about the artwork**

The text of the information leaflet is on the next page, which gives good background and information about the artwork.

Some additional notes – there are some articles on the web if people want to research further, they just need to google “transmigration in Hull” e.g. <http://www.norwayheritage.com/articles/templates/voyages.asp?articleid=28&zoneid=6>

Dr Nicholas Evans at University of Hull has done a lot of work on this.

Also, one of the original waiting rooms built specifically for the migrants still stands on Anlaby Rd, just past the station car park (not a very remarkable building!).

You might point out to visitors that there is no platform 1 at Hull Paragon station – all trains start from Platform 2 onwards. Platform 1 was built for the transmigrants to keep them separate from other residents/travellers.

Text from the info leaflet is on the following page.

**The Train Track and the Basket**

Between 1848 and 1914, more than 2 million people arrived into Hull by ship from mainland Europe, then left by train for the ports of Liverpool and Southampton. They were on their way to a new life, in the USA, Canada and South Africa. Many of these people stayed in Hull for only a few hours, a brief stop on a long and uncertain journey. The scale of this “transmigration” created a need for a dedicated platform at the station (once the longest in the UK), and supported a substantial service industry of transport agents, caterers and rooms for resting around the city.

Claire Barber’s large scale artwork on the arched windows of the station entrance – windows shaped like an upturned woven basket – is the product of her extensive research into transmigration. The site for the artwork suggests both beginnings and endings, and entry to another space. The war memorial plaques here reinforce this – it was because of the outbreak of WW1 that transmigration abruptly stopped. The station entrance is also a place where the constant movement of people mirrors the weaving process – the action of layers crossing over layers, “warp and weft” forming new patterns every time people enter and exit the building

The images seen on the windows derive from Claire’s research into the craft skills and tools which migrated along these routes, as well as the people themselves. Many of the migrants took their belongings in traditionally woven baskets, an expression and reflection of the rural communities and craft-based traditions that they carried with them. Some of the basket weaving patterns and skills now present in North America can be traced back to northern Europe from these times.

With the assistance of the University of Huddersfield, Claire visited Ellis Island in New York during the research for this project and experienced the arrival into the same spaces and entrance buildings as the Hull transmigrants over 100 years ago. She was also able to examine and record original migrants’ luggage in the museum there.

The images on the windows relate to original basket weave designs, the materials from which these craft objects are made, and the hopeful experience of arrival at destinations. Look closely at some of the strands of basket weave and the viewer will find images of the very train tracks travelled by the migrants.

“My work explores the creative conjunction of two seemingly disparate objects, the basket and the train track, to articulate a tangle of poetic metaphors relating to transmigration” Claire Barber