

Journey- an installation



Creative Practitioners: Mandy Lane and Bill Taylor-Beales
Music and lyrics- Rachel Taylor Beales
School St Joseph's – Greenhill, Swansea
Class Teacher: Cerian Appleby
Class: Y5A



Working on the second year of the Lead Creative Schools Scheme, funded by Welsh Assembly Government and the Arts Council of Wales, the class pupils of Y5A in St Joseph's Primary School have been on a creative journey. A journey of exploration through the heritage of their school, local community and cathedral. All three find their origins in the settling of Irish immigrants in the 1850's. The story is one of great destitution and desperation, of faith and community and of hope and education.

Over 7 weeks the pupils, staff and creative practitioners explored this legacy through a wide spectrum of art practices and processes. From film to forge, the pupils have experienced 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional pathways to unpack and illuminate this human story of endurance and endeavour.

The installation is a collective of related artefacts gathered into a cohesive viewing and interactive experience.

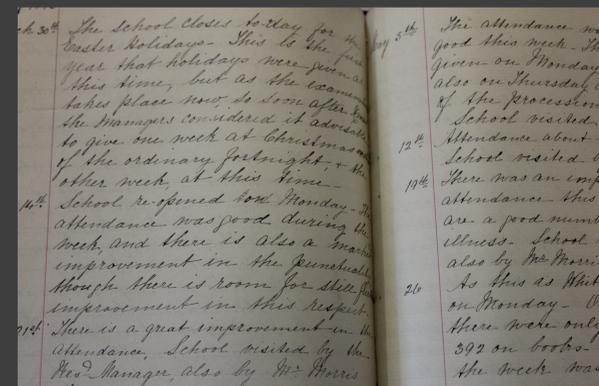
Elements of Journey

Cast hands

Cast in plaster and with slip wash - Lightly present over a bed of sand we find pairs of children's hands – together they form a wave of human entanglement – holding on to each other – that symbolise community, togetherness and unity.

Stone's Throw film- 'Journey':

Projected over these cast hands we see a short film of children retracing the literal steps of those children who may have trod the shores of Swansea a 170 years ago – children sing the words of 'Stones Throw' a song depicting images of refugees and displacement both old and new – stones are gathered and words of hope and pain are written in chalk upon them and they are then cast into the sea- as the tide retreats the stones are gathered and placed in cairns along the shore.



Talking Tide:

Audio recordings of pupils over the constant tidal surf – the pupils read out their labels from the 1870 census allowing a forgotten voice to be heard once more.

Fragile lines:

Simple graphite on crumpled paper – pupils take crushed sheets of paper and draw and discover a delicate pathway across the confusion of creases and folds from one side of the paper canvas to the other.

Journey was initially part of a local installation in Swansea Cathedral timely held on 17th March, St. Patrick's Day. People from the local parish and wider community gathered together to play tribute to the Irish heritage of the cathedral and surrounding area. Just as St. Patrick journeyed to a strange land and experienced difficulties and great hardships this was also true of the first Irish Immigrants who settled in Greenhill, Swansea or 'Little Ireland' as it was known then. It was the faith of those early settlers that helped them through their own struggles.

Later in April, the installation was exhibited in Tate Exchange as part of a celebration of the work produced in Wales as part of the Lead Creative Schools Scheme. It gave the children chance to view their work. Work produced in Wales, in collaboration with local artists and to see its place in an international modern and contemporary art setting.

The installation is a collection of the pupils' work all related in the theme of journey and inspired by the Irish men, women and children who first settled here in Swansea. It is a recreation of the physical shoreline – where the ocean meets the land - where dreams meet reality – where lost feet find new pathways.

The project has seen increased positive attitude to learning and a belief that they can achieve, can collaborate, can do well at school, and can produce things every day to be proud of. That they simply can.