

Talking Shop Project Coordinator, Mid Pennine Arts
Lucy Green

The empty shop window we are using is very public and relevant space to communicate the *Talking Shop* message that independent traders are key to the local economy, and that by working with artists we can shed new light on the issues. Alice's work beautifully illustrates the skills and creativity that typify independent traders and we're delighted to present it and the forthcoming publication as a record of Lancaster, As It Comes.

As *It Comes*, by Alice Angus, is part of *Talking Shop* a creative regeneration programme, run by Mid Pennine Arts since 2005, engaging creative practitioners to work with independent businesses to highlight their importance as hubs of their local communities. The projects have included exhibitions, films, and publications. You can see details at www.midpenninearts.org.uk

In Lancaster the Chamber of Commerce had identified a need to support the independent retailers to survive the recession and compete as a visitor destination. Discussions developed between us around the strong heritage of independent trade and the stories and people behind it. The Chamber decided to commission an artist through *Talking Shop* to tell the story of the traders who are so crucial to the city's success. Funding came from Lancaster City Council through the Department for Communities and Local Government. The project represents a new partnership between Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce, Storey Gallery and Lancaster University.

Talking Shops

As It Comes

In August 2010 I was commissioned by Mid Pennine Arts and Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce, to create a new piece of work about Lancaster's independent traders.

Building on my previous work about markets and traders I worked with historian Michael Winstanley and artist Caroline MacLennan to research the trading history of the city and to interview local people, shop keepers and traders. On my visits I began to sketch in their places of work, where we would talk about craft and knowledge; communities and friendships and the relationships they have with commodities, food, and people. What's inspired me is their skills and care; whether selling fabric, tailoring a suit, fitting a floor; repairing tools, advising on paint, gutting fish or butchering meat. I saw many tools of the trade though its not the physical things that people mention most but knowledge, ability to talk to people, honesty and trust.

I've visited about 20 city traders to have conversations, collect audio interviews, make drawings and take photographs which have inspired new works combining traditional embroidery with drawing and digital printing on fabric. Lancaster used to be famous worldwide for cotton manufacturing; embroidering seemed appropriate to so many fleeting conversations about the intangible skills, experiential knowledge and unique relationships the traders and their customers have.

Alice Angus
(artist and Co-Director of Proboscis, www.proboscis.org.uk)



This project would have been impossible to produce if it were not for the generosity of the people who shared memories and allowed me to draw and photograph them at work including: David Clarkson and all at the Marsh History Group. In the Indoor Market & Assembly Rooms: The Bacon Stall; Burgess Cheese; Children's & Babywear; M Green & Son Household Textiles; D Gregory Butcher; R&P Shaw Fishmonger; Hesters Habadashery; Bebe Babette; First Age Comics; Malcolm's Place; Wonders. Other traders: C E Barrow; Jennifer Pritchard Couchman; Dalton Square Florist; The Edge Gallery; Fabrix; Kings Carpets; Lile Tool Shop; The Paper Gallery; Mackies of Lancaster; Studio Arts. For support and great conversations thanks to John Angus, Lucy Green, Caroline MacLennan, Ann Morris, Jeremy North, Michael Winstanley, Oliver Wilson-Fish.

As *It Comes* is A Mid Pennine Arts *Talking Shop* project, delivered in partnership with Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce, Storey Gallery and the History Department, Lancaster University.

Acknowledgements

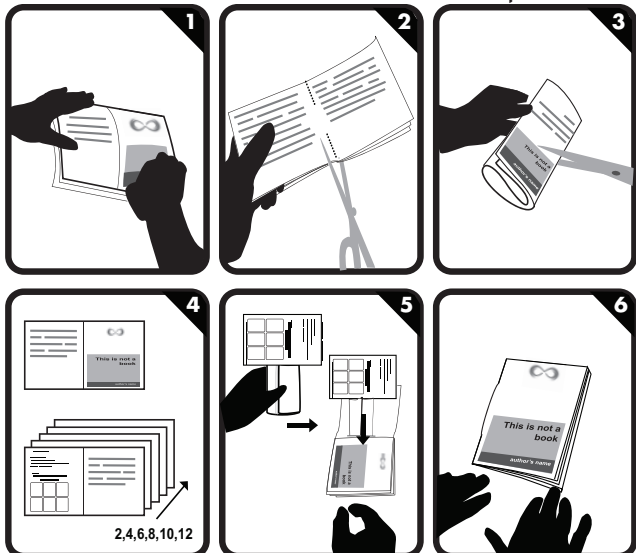
As It Comes; talking shop in Lancaster

Alice Angus

A brochure for As It Comes, a project about independent traders in Lancaster.

2010-11-08

made with www.bookleteer.com from proboscis





Exhibition; 18 New Street windows 10 Nov - 16 Dec 2010.

Artists Talk and Walk; Sat 4th Dec, 1pm call Lucy at MPA on 01282 421986 for details.

Project book; available from the 4th Dec, in print and to download from the website.

StoryCubes; set of 4 card cubes you can collect around Lancaster or download from the website.

visit lancasterasitcomes.wordpress.com to follow the conversations, stories, and issues.

