

30 March - 11 May  
**Angela Maddock: Sometimes all you can do is walk**



Derbyniodd Angela Maddock her gan ei ffôn, sef mynd i Middlesbrough. Ddechrau mis Hydref 2018 cychwynnodd ar droed o'r oriel a threuliodd y mis yn cerdded i ogledd-ddwyrain Lloegr, drwy ei thref enedigol yng nghanolbarth Lloegr. Byddai'n dod o hyd i ddeunydd ar hyd y ffordd ac yn ei anfon yn ôl i'r oriel bob hyn a hyn, felly mae'r arddangosfa yn adrodd stori ei thaith; y dystiolaeth a gasglwyd, a ddychwelwyd ac a drawsffurfiwyd.

Angela Maddock's phone dealt her a challenge: go to Middlesbrough. At the beginning of October 2018, she set out on foot from the gallery and spent the month walking to north-east England, via her hometown in the Midlands. Finding material along the way and sending it back to the gallery every few days, the exhibition is the tale of her journey; of evidence gathered, returned and transformed.

**Sometimes all you can do is walk by Angela Maddock**

It wasn't an escape, but I did need to go somewhere, a place far off and barely known and to get there under my own steam. And I always wanted to do it. Set off, walk and keep walking. There had been too much sitting down, too much physical stillness. So I followed a sign dealt by my phone and walked to Middlesbrough.

I've always understood walking to be a salve to body and mind. I'm a lone walker, perhaps enjoying the company of one or two friends, but not groups. I set my own pace, which varies from skipping to crawling, and I like quiet when I walk. I don't listen to music and I enjoy walking alone at night, often taking a solitary turn around my patch. This is my habit, born years ago, and one I imagine shared with others. My walk is a pause from other things, a constitutional, a ritual not that dissimilar to 'beating the bounds' before bed. I am the nocturnal fox, seeing but rarely seen.

I walk with an outward focus; curious about how others live, what I might find, new places walked into, through and beyond. I follow Robert Macfarlane in thinking of 'walking as enabling sight and thought rather than encouraging retreat and escape; paths as offering not only means of traversing space, but also ways of feeling, being and knowing' (Macfarlane, 2013: 24) It is with this attitude that I set off to Middlesbrough.

**A seed planted by Ruby Maddock**

A Seed planted  
The mother took the mistake as  
A prophecy  
Instruction to walk along a line.  
A selvedge  
Towards Middlesbrough via home.

I thought it might be a joke, but the mother's word became her bond.  
Walking a 307-mile line, to a destination with no purpose and to no particular end  
But the mud dumplings, dorodango, shiny dark and round  
Japanese spheres held in her mind.  
Crawling on her hands and knees  
For fear of being blown away  
"Will you keep yourself safe?"  
Raised eyebrows, concerned frowns.  
Containers of dirt  
Sent back in small parcels  
Containers of place  
Embedded in the soles of shoes and under fingernails.  
Trodden on, walked over, taken for granted.  
Counts hours of holding and shaping.  
Fixing and polishing  
Picking up, Dropping,  
Walking and making are spaces for processing.  
Adopted child's play.  
A brown dirt dumpling  
The mother holds and forms  
raw earth.  
As she holds and forms the child  
Containers of space and place  
A record of her passage across the dirt.  
A found constellation, a map for way finding.  
Some slate, a feather. Heavy and light.  
My mother walked  
I followed, watched  
A landscape written on her feet.  
The blisters  
Her word as bandages.  
The dorodango  
The constellation  
A physical record in the gallery  
Blisters  
A physical record on her body.

And I walked as a maker, as someone heavily invested in threads and cloth based practice – stitching, spinning, knitting, weaving – and in the habit of thinking 'textile wise', by which I mean that I am forever occupied with the processes, acts and habits of textile practice: of cutting, seaming, threading, gathering, folding, looping, unfolding and piecing. I walked with all this in my mind.

The first steps had the quality of unravelling, a thread teased from its spool, extending and lengthening. Reaching eastwards. Within me, a lightness of step, as if the whole of me might be unfolding. All this matched with an optimism that seemed as clear as the sky was blue. I am never far away from knowing how fortunate I am to be doing this, how others are not.

I left without knowing what I might bring back, other than the soil. I walked following paths made by others and occasionally my own, and I didn't carry maps. This might seem reckless, but I found the GPS of my phone very reliable, except for a stretch between Bethlehem and Myddfai, when I mostly travelled in circles, forwards and backwards, like the looped path of hand knitting.

The edge of a field, like that which binds the width of a woven cloth, is known as a selvedge. Tracing this edge returned me to thinking about cloth bodies, and a childhood fantasy that the whole world was covered in a fitted carpet, which, if turned up at the edges, might reveal a global underlay of dark loam. I feel this most keenly in the Brecon Beacons. In the bone dry fields, my boots barely stirred the surface, later, as I walked through the rains of storm Callum, it clung to them as mud, penetrating my boots and socks. Slowing me to a crawl.

And what of that soil? Mostly gathered from roadsides and back gardens, reflecting my reluctance to add steps by straying of course for something better. In its transformation to dorodango, it is, as I know my daughter has understood, a physical manifestation of my journey, a map of sorts. I collect it with a small travel shovel meant for an altogether different kind of soil. I'm a bit furtive in my soil gathering, aware of how odd this might look and how some are so attached to the ground beneath our feet. I think, even before I read anything, that soil is a tricky thing, so tied to ideas of territory, home, fertility and health and ownership. For the Nazis, 'blood and soil' was inextricably linked to National Socialist ideology, for the English Organicists of the early 19th century, soil health was also ideologically driven. (Matless, 2016) There's nothing innocent about soil, and it is of us, all of us. Our ending so often means that we are all to be found there, in time. And I walk at a time when a concern with boundaries and borders, of 'taking back control', threatens to undo us all. I walk from Wales into England, only a change in the logo on the dalek like green dustbins marks my border crossing, I have traded Powys for Shropshire. Now, weeks on, a layer of dust carpets every surface. It's under my fingernails, in my hair, at my feet and brings me to thoughts of dirt and cleaning and tidying, of putting it all back in its place. And I am trying to gather it, making these mud balls, over and over again.

And the bits and bobs, the 'this and that' of the other map, my constellation. A mismatched collection of the discarded, broken, misplaced and overlooked.



## Stone to Stoke-on-Trent, 8.2 miles, 18th October 2018 Sarah Christie

Angela has already walked about 137 miles from Carmarthen to where we meet at Stone station. Her backpack is tiny and shockingly heavy. I am breaking the spell of her thus far solitary undertaking, hoping not to disturb her progress.

It's the sort of intensely bright day that can only follow its complete opposite. Angela has earned this after facing down Storm Callum. Breakfast oatcakes will see us to Stoke, familiar to me, first time for Angela. There will be a small detour for tea at Wedgwood because we can't visit the potteries without visiting a pottery.

Stone and Stoke are close geographically and alphabetically, joined by parallel lines with next to no chance of getting lost. The route is straight, along the Trent and Mersey Canal towpath, parallel to the railway and overhead wires. We walk perpendicular to the plough lines exposing red flashes of the local eturia marl clay seam.

To walk is to be in touch with the physical, sensory world. To relate to the world as participant, rather than as master. To shift the gaze upwards and outwards. To allow time and space to expand.

To walk with someone is to adopt her stride. To hear her steps, keep her pace, and stop without warning. To see what she sees. To listen, start conversations, forget them, be interrupted, maintain silence. To stay the course while risking dissatisfaction. To share leftover pizza slices. And vice versa.

To join a walker is to be an interloper, changing the atmosphere in ways only the walker knows. Walking is good for conversation. We have started many more than we finished, which bodes well. Starting a conversation is more important than finishing it.

Later I am back on a time-machine to Euston. Angela walks on, and I know I am missing out.



A child's dummy keys, bottle caps, china shards, electrical cable, the occasional twig, conker, and fleece scavenged from wire fences. All stuffed alongside bags of soil, handed across post office counters and back to Carmarthen. Now, laid out across a table, these souvenirs are combined one with another in an act of playfulness that matches the mud larking of the dorodango making, except that that grows up, I find play particularly difficult. Always anxious about what it might be, ought to be. And, unlike the dorodango – singular markers of time and place, their very idea borrowed from another culture – the constellation is a blending of north with south and middle with west and like a crazy quilt, defies meaning. I have been messing around with dirt and rubbish, trying to make something out of nothing.

Long distance walking, like a good knit, is properly expansive, it stretches us into relationships with new things, new experiences and others. For me, the kindness of new friends in a far off and hardly known place, the mounting excitement at nearing my goal, the colossus of Middlesbrough's Transporter Bridge and visiting MILMA, a jewelled box that still turns in my mind.

Returning home I watch the landscape from the train window. I was there. Many weeks later my thoughts still return to that journey and all of me remembering a very particular spot, the incline of a new hill, the scrub beneath a hedge, the sting of my blisters, how I was startled by the screech of pheasants, conversations shared with friendly strangers in cafes and on canal towpaths. There's a quote I often use in teaching, it's really about empathy, what it means to understand something from another's point of view, of this, 'Empathy means that you travel out of yourself a little and expand.' (Solnit, 2014: 195) And I know I have done this, all of it.

*Macfarlane, R (2013) The Old Ways (London: Penguin)*  
*Matless, D (2016) Landscape and Englishness (London: Reaktion)*  
*Solnit, R. (2013). The Faraway Nearby (London: Granta)*



## Ghosts in the landscape Alicia Kent

I had two days between childcare, which meant a late Monday train out of Euston into Manchester Piccadilly and bedding down for the night in a hotel near the station, before crossing Manchester in the morning to get another train towards Rochdale and the Canal. I used to live in Manchester, and it is disconcerting to return to somewhere that used to be home, only to find it changed. Waking on a dreary Tuesday in October as the night struggled to leave the day, I remembered the oppressive skies of the North West, where you can feel the atmospheric pressure flattening you.

Angela and I were walking from Littleborough to Hebden Bridge, and from there to Haworth and the Brontë Museum over two days. As the train went out along the moorland and towards the section of the Pennine Way we'd be walking that day, I was looking forward to seeing Angela and to getting started. Half way up the hill towards the pub where Angela was staying, I began to wonder whether this was a good idea after all. I'd done no training and spent the previous couple of months mainly sitting. I spent the next two days struggling to keep up. Angela was walking from Wales to Middlesbrough, had 200 miles in her legs by this point, and the breathtaking blisters to prove it.

Climbing up out of Littleborough and onto the Way, the wind was really blowing. The view from the White House, which marked our entry point into the Pennines, back down to Littleborough was industrial and agricultural, with a skyline dominated by pylons and a wind farm. Walking mid-week meant it was mostly just the two of us, and we got to know one another much better over the two days, our lives accompanying us as we walked.

Autumn is my favourite season, and as we rounded the reservoirs and walked first towards, then down from the Stoodley Pike monument into Hebden Bridge, we had all the colours. Of course, we got lost and walked a circuitous route into town and my legs fell off, but the warm welcome from Gemma, who was our host for the evening, and the tea of meat and potato pie with chips washed down with a Guinness restored me.

I woke in the morning to a ghost tale. In the night Angela had felt an eerie presence nearby. As we struck out for Haworth following Gemma's instructions, with some of her lemon drizzle cake for sustenance, we wondered what it might have been. And how close we were to Pendle and the Lancaster witches.

In bright contrast to the previous day, Wednesday was glorious walking with coats off and arms out. We had hoped to pick up the Pennine Way again and head for Top Withens to channel our inner Emily Brontë and Kate Bush, but that would have meant going back over lost ground. We had done enough retracing of steps the day before, when we headed the wrong way down the canal path and away from rather than towards Hebden Bridge.

As we walked along the Haworth Old Road and towards Leesshaw reservoir, our chat turned from family to work. We discussed the exhibition and Angela's attempts through the dorodango mud balls, the journal, the photographs, and eventually the exhibition to make

