

About the Portrait Bench

The Portrait Bench is a new and unique National collection of local portraits. The figures are inspired and chosen for their individual contribution to the life of the community.

Creating portraits is an old custom - honouring individuals for their philanthropy, political prowess or acts of heroism, and most commonly for the love of family members. All major public spaces are graced by statues or portraits of eminent individuals and family photos are treasured across the world.

Each Portrait Bench is a collection of three distinctive, life-size local figures cut from sheet steel and installed by a simple bench, inviting you to sit or step up into the space and become a part of the portrait group.

The features of each character have been simplified while retaining their essential characteristics. The characters reflect those things that are important to the community; each is inspired by the local heritage, culture and aspirations of the area; some we'll know and some we won't...together they will represent around 230 characters chosen by thousands of people from across the UK.



The new route bridges the Woolfold Gap in Bury

Choosing the Bury portraits

Several local interest groups were consulted and asked to put forward nominations e.g. Local Wildlife, History, Environment, Walking, Cycling groups etc. along with local elected members and the local media. The decision making was consensus based (rather than by a vote) and was based around achieving a broad representation of users and the locality, and how well images fitted together. It was a pleasantly uncontroversial process.

The Bury Portrait Bench is located near to the new viaduct on the Bury Greenway.

New walking and cycling networks

Sustrans is bringing the award winning National Cycle Network deep into the heart of communities across the UK to enable many more people to get about on foot and by bike. Find out more about walking and cycling routes in Bury and how to find this portrait bench at www.sustrans.org.uk/c2/bury

Sustrans is the charity that's enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day.

It's time we all began making smarter travel choices. Make your move and support Sustrans today.

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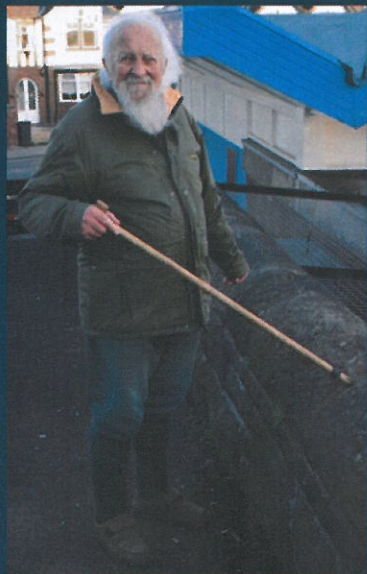
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David Swithenbank



A life-long resident of Holcombe, David Swithenbank is a walker, naturalist and historian. He is also an artist, and is President of Bury Art Society. He was prominent in the campaign for public rights of access on Holcombe Moor which resulted in it being sold by the Ministry of Defence to the National Trust.

David travelled to school in Bury in the 1940s on the Holcombe Brook branch railway. He says that seeing his first kingfisher, partridge and tufted duck through the carriage windows helped him to 'develop an interest in wildlife that has stayed with me ever since'.

Reginald Harris OBE 1920 - 1992

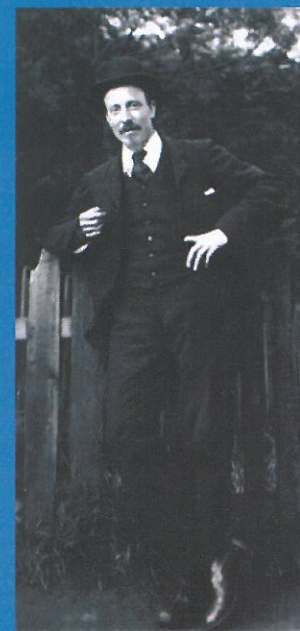


Reginald 'Reg' Harris was a leading English track racing cyclist in the 1940s and 1950s. He grew up in Bury and bought his first bicycle at the age of 14 whilst working as an apprentice motor mechanic.

He won the world amateur sprint title in 1947, two Olympic silver medals in 1948, and the professional title in 1949, 1950, 1951 and 1954. He was one of the nation's most recognised sportsmen in the 1950s, and surprised many with a comeback more than 20 years later, winning a British title in 1974 at the age of 54.

Reg was awarded an OBE in 1958, and was named sportsman of the year by a poll in Sporting Record in 1949.

Ralph Rooney 1862 - 1949



Ralph Rooney was a much-loved local character, well known in Tottington and the surrounding district as a long distance walker, naturalist and councillor. He was born in 1862 and began working at the weaving mill in Tottington at the age of 10. After 44 years as a mill worker, he took up the position of under-gardener at Croich Hey, Hawkshaw, where hundreds of adults and children experienced his kindness and hospitality on visiting his spotless little cottage, way up Hawkshaw Lane on the edge of the West Pennine Moors.

A life-long walker, Ralph was particularly fond of Lancashire, which he regarded as the best of all counties, being rich in Roman and Early English history.