

## Calder Navigation – Episode 6: This Here Land - Transcript



**[00:00:02.730] - Samantha**

Welcome to Calder Navigation, the podcast that embarks on a transformative journey through the lives and stories of the incredible people of Calderdale.

**[00:00:12.030] - Samantha**

I'm your host, Samantha McCormick, Artistic Director and Founder of Curious Motion, and I'm thrilled to have you join me on this adventure. Calder Navigation invites you to open your hearts and minds to the tapestry of everyday moments and significant events that shape our lives. Through authentic and relaxed conversations, we'll delve into the complexities of what it means to be human, celebrating the diversity and resilience of our community. This podcast is not just a collection of stories. Each episode is a unique exploration, a tribute to the rich tapestry of our shared experiences.

**[00:00:48.750] - Samantha**

So come and join us on this journey and let's celebrate the remarkable individuals who call the Calder Valley home and let's uncover the depth and beauty of the human experience together.

**[00:01:00.850] - Samantha**

Today we're going on a bit of a different journey as we transport you into the world of live dance. During the last week of July this year, we created a piece of choreography from scratch to share at our Welland Showcase event. The piece was made and rehearsed over five days with a group of wonderful local people, some of which are professional dancers and others who are not.

**[00:01:26.250] - Samantha**

It was our first foray into opening up a professional creative process and performance opportunity to the local community, welcoming people of any background and experience level to be part of it. It was an incredible five days, full of such rich exchange, creativity and commitment from everyone involved. We started from nothing, just a motivation to make a dance piece to share with our local community that would leave them feeling inspired and connected.

**[00:01:58.800] - Samantha**

Well, by day three, we had a full 15 minute choreography. We then spent the final two days practising and rehearsing, and the performance itself followed on day six at our Welland Showcase. A creative process is often very intense. It brings up many emotions and feelings, some of which can be challenging. And in

dance we are navigating our physical experience and bodily held emotions too, which can result in surprising and unexpected outcomes.

**[00:02:32.130] - Samantha**

So a true sense of openness, teamwork and generally being in it together is essential, and I'm incredibly grateful to everyone who was part of the process, as they certainly achieved this. Each day would start with the essentials: a pot of coffee and a catch up, followed by an uplifting and open warmup before we got into creative tasks and exploration.

**[00:02:57.050] - Samantha**

The group welcomed everything with open arms. For some, everything they were experiencing was brand new. This was their first time making a dance piece and there was such a warm and open energy in the room that allowed for everyone to remain fully included, valued and free to participate in the way that was best for them. It was really heartwarming to be part of, witnessing such openness care and commitment from individuals who had never worked together and some who only met on the Monday morning.

**[00:03:28.530] - Samantha**

What emerged was a beautiful piece of contemporary dance, if I do say so myself. Drawing inspiration from the rich local area and identity of Elland, the dancers take the audience on a compelling exploration of the town's landmarks, memories and defining moments, inviting them to connect with the essence of this land, its past, present and future, and how we might build community together.

**[00:03:55.770] - Samantha**

We called it This Here Land, and now it's your turn to experience This Here Land, albeit in a slightly different way. In today's episode, one of the dancers, Matt Lackford, will take you on an audio journey through the work. You'll be transported inside the piece as an opportunity to unleash your imagination and let go of the world around you for a little while.

**[00:04:22.610] - Samantha**

This Here Land was performed by Rosalind Arden, Molly Caton, Sandile Duma, Isla Hurst, Matt Lackford and Lizzie Leadbeater. With choreography by myself and the performers and additional creative input from Emily Hutchinson. It's a collective effort of everyone involved who work together for the very first time to bring you their shared vision, creativity and spirit. To set the scene, This Here Land takes place within a large hall, with the audience seated in rows that are organised to create a rectangular shape around the outside of the rim, and the piece takes place inside the rectangle. There are spaces between some rows of seats, creating mini aisles, and there are openings at the corners of the rectangle for the dancers to move in and out of. It's immersive and intimate with everyone together in the same space.

**[00:05:19.190] - Samantha**

We encourage you to visualise and imagine what you hear, creating your own unique version of This Here Land.

**[00:05:28.490] - Matt**

A feeling of anticipation fills the room as the audience waits in their seats. Soft sounds of birdsong begin to fill the room. Six dancers enter one by one, quietly and softly from the edges of the room, moving through the audience as they meander along their individual pathways, drawing out a map of Elland with their footsteps. They walk, turn, swing and sway before finding each other in the centre of the space.

**[00:06:11.110] - Matt**

The group stops. They move as one along a diagonal line with sharper and more urgent quality, before turning to face the opposite direction. A soft, flowing dynamic returns as they take us on a journey along Elland's Canal, through a lock, along the water and a fleeting moment with the not so friendly swan that lives there, then onto and over Elland Bridge. Finally pausing in the strong and powerful stance of Britannia, who sits proudly atop of the former Halifax and Huddersfield Bank holding a Trident in her right hand. We like to imagine she welcomes people to Elland as they arrive.

**[00:07:07.000] - Matt**

The energy changes. We are transported to fun and vibrant social experiences. The dancers move in pairs, stirring and stretching ladles of imaginary sweet mixture, finishing with a scrumptious taste of Elland's famous Joseph and Dobson sweets.

**[00:07:27.360] - Matt**

A momentary visit to the Fleece results in a big cheers to the audience. And then we're in the Rex Cinema, enjoying our popcorn, cup of tea or hiding from the film, depending on which one we've chosen. Next we're at the band stand on Southgate, dancing, singing or playing a musical instrument. A quick and fun rhythmical pause. One and two is followed by a sudden pause. The dancers move in slow motion. Where are they going? They slowly create a line facing alternate ways down the centre of the room. A cheeky swing and sway emerges, following the shape of the gyratory that connects the bypass to Elland and then into circles and spins as we imagine our journey taking us around Elland's roundabout. The dancers finish facing the opposite direction and hold their arms up wide as if holding a large scroll.

**[00:08:39.000] - Matt**

Elland's Charter. Did you know that Elland Market began with an ancient Royal charter which confirmed Elland's status as a market town?

**[00:08:52.380] - Matt**

The dancers snap their hands together and the next thing we know, we're at the market. A basket of Dobson's Toffee sweets appears. And calls can be heard around the room. Buy one, get one free. Come and get your sweets. Four for a pound. A bell rings. The room stops. Silence falls.

**[00:09:23.540] - Matt**

Swiftly, five dancers are in a new formation, crouched down as if on an Olympic starting line, waiting to go. A rhythmical beat starts. Suddenly all five dancers move in unison, reaching their right arm forwards, followed by their left. Arms reach out and fingers wriggle. Clap. They stand and turn. Their legs and arms pump up and down together, one way and then the other. Clap. They turn sharply to face the opposite way and return to the starting line before melting away into their own worlds.

**[00:10:02.880] - Matt**

A sea of curves, waves, lines and claps and pauses build from the ground up and back again, as if taking us on a journey of a row of seeds, building and growing together. Each dancer invites us into their own atmosphere as they move up and back down again. Click. Click. Click. Click.

**[00:10:28.840] - Matt**

One dancer has stopped. She is laying on her side on the floor with one hand in the air and is clicking her fingers. Another dancer joins her, following her rhythm. One by one, the dancers pause and click their fingers. A collective click fills the air. A dancer steps forward. The clicks continue. We're invited to join them. Click your fingers, everybody.

**[00:10:59.620] - Matt**

The room joins in. A feeling of excitement, anticipation builds. We click and snap together. Smiles emerge. An unexpected crescendo happens and suddenly the dancers are moving energetically around the space, swinging, swaying and lifting each other as they play and explore movement together. At times they almost fall, but they catch each other every time. Teamwork. It's energetic, fun, risky and exciting. We watch as they move up, down, around, in, out and along. Then it dissolves slowly. The dancers let go, release, and find themselves resting on the floor. Deep breaths, deep breaths, deep breaths.

**[00:12:16.230] - Matt**

Quiet. Peace. Waiting. One by one, they slowly stand and find a place around the edges of the space, next to the audience. Gentle sounds of guitar and piano begin, creating a waltz. 1 2 3 1 2 3 1. Altogether, the dancers move along the edges of the rectangular space, transporting us to a world of water. Elant meaning river and land, meaning land surrounded wholly or partly by water.

**[00:13:03.020] - Matt**

Undulating waves roll. Dancers twirl under imaginary umbrellas, one way and then the other. Long, sweeping and swinging arms create their own current. Like the waves crashing on the beach and feet splash and kick in puddles. Our collective rectangle becomes a flowing and meandering form of beauty, warmth and togetherness, as dancers swing, sway, play, splash and twirl.

**[00:13:44.700] - Matt**

1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2 3. A dancer emerges from the centre, holding her hands together above her head as she rises onto her toes. The others join her in this elevated position. They pause together, suspended. A collective breath in, breathe out, and they've melted away, back to the undulating, watery rectangle. Another appears. This time they throw their arms up and then down as if chucking out a bucket of water. The others join. We lift and they throw.

**[00:14:39.930] - Matt**

The next moment, we're back to umbrellas, waves, puddles and swings before we find ourselves noticing a third dancer who has stopped in the centre with her arm up in the air, gazing upwards as if she stopped in her tracks. She holds herself there, suspended. Is she moving at all? Slightly, we think. It's almost imperceptible. The others have joined her.

**[00:15:14.920] - Matt**

A moment to pause together, to reflect, to hold, to savour and to breathe. Whoosh, a collective drop and release, and we're back to the undulating twirling, flicking and swinging, all the while maintaining our rectangular form. Two dances capture our attention as they begin to turn in slow motion with their hands out and fingers wiggling slightly as if they were resting their hands on top of a river. The whole group then gathers their arms into the air in unison before dropping back down and all moving into the slow motion turn with hands out and down and fingers gently tapping along the surface of water, the rectangle continues. Water is flowing, flicking, swaying and twirling all around us. Next, the dancers break the flow, moving strong arms downwards like a powerful waterfall. One, two and three.

**[00:16:42.370] - Matt**

Whoosh. Then they melt back to our watery waltz of one, two, three. Eventually, the rectangle floats away as the dancers dissolve into their own worlds. Eventually, the rectangle floats away as the dancers dissolve into their own worlds. Slowly coming into the centre of the space, new ripples, waves, swirls and sways, emerge and release. Our watery waltz slowly fades away.

**[00:17:33.280] - Matt**

One by one, the dancers release. They each leave the space along their individual meandering pathways and echo from the beginning slowly, slowly, quietly, gently fading and then pause. The end.

**[00:18:16.350] - Matt**

This Here Land. Rapturous applause erupts from the room. Smiles are seen all around. Gentle tears are swept away from eyes, hugs, laughter, cheering, relief, achievement, amazement and gratitude. The dancers take a bow as the audience continues to clap and cheer. Thank you. The dancers rotate to face all four sides. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

**[00:19:05.710] - Samantha**

Well, I hope you enjoyed being transported into another world for a little while. Feel free to come back and listen again at any time too. You might find new moments emerge. Do also head to our episode page on our website. If you'd like to see some visuals from the piece and find out more about the people involved and their experiences, just go to [curiousmotion.org.uk](http://curiousmotion.org.uk).

**[00:19:34.150] - Samantha**

A huge thank you to Matt, Rosalind, Molly, Lizzie, Sandile, Isla and Emily for being part of making this happen. I'm incredibly grateful to each of them for trusting me and offering such openness and creativity. Hopefully, it's the start of much more.

**[00:19:53.610] - Samantha**

This is the final episode for a few weeks whilst we have a summer break to rest and recharge. We'll be back with four more episodes from Thursday the 14th of September. In the meantime, do listen back to any episodes you've missed and all the episodes from our previous podcast, Curious Emotion, which were created in the lockdowns, are also available and they're full of different life stories. Thank you for being with us on this journey and I look forward to more in September.

**[00:20:25.030] - Samantha**

And that brings us to the end of another captivating episode of Calder Navigation. Thank you for joining us on this voyage through the stories that shape Calderdale. We hope that these conversations have touched your heart, inspired your mind and reminded you of the power of human connection. As we navigate life together, let's carry these stories with us, cherishing the lessons they teach us and the bonds they strengthen.

**[00:20:48.410] - Samantha**

Remember, Calder Navigation is just one part of the Welland Activator Project, a collective effort to combat loneliness and isolation in our community. We encourage you to explore the various classes,

workshops and walks offered through the programme and join us at our special showcase event, Welland, where we can come together and celebrate the magic of Elland and Calderdale. You can find out more about the project at [curiousmotion.org.uk](http://curiousmotion.org.uk).

**[00:21:15.230] - Samantha**

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to Calderdale Council Reaching Communities from the National Lottery Community Fund and Arts Council England for their invaluable support in making this podcast and the Welland Activator possible. Thanks to Untold Creative for production support. If you haven't already, be sure to subscribe to Calder Navigation on your preferred podcast platform so you never miss an episode.

**[00:21:37.930] - Samantha**

And please help us spread the word by sharing the podcast with your friends, family and anyone who might find solace, inspiration or a sense of belonging in these stories. As we conclude this chapter, we invite you to keep exploring, keep connecting and keep navigating the currents of life with curiosity and compassion. Remember, the journey continues and together we can make a difference. Until next time, fair winds and warm hearts.