

## **SEASON 2, EPISODE 4 - CLARE DONEGAN**

**[00:00:02.190] - Samantha**

Welcome back to Calder Navigation, where each episode serves as a compass guiding you through the vibrant tapestry of Calderdale. I'm Samantha McCormick, your host and Artistic Director of Curious Motion. I'm delighted to present Season 2 as part of our CultureDale Commission, celebrating Calderdale's rich cultural heritage during the year of culture.

**[00:00:25.050] - Samantha**

In this season, we continue to champion the voices of our remarkable neighbours, celebrating their resilience, diversity, and the shared experiences that bind us together. From intimate conversations to profound revelations, each episode is an invitation to connect, reflect, and celebrate the human experience. Season 2 of Calder Navigation is not just a podcast. It's a celebration of community, culture, and the enduring spirit of Calderdale. Join us as we delve into the heart and soul of our community, exploring the myriad of stories that shape our shared experience.

**[00:01:05.970] - Samantha**

Today, we're excited to welcome Clare Donegan, a passionate advocate for nature and the arts and artistic director of Inna Nature. Clare lives a rich and vibrant life, passionately promoting the importance of nature for our wellbeing and the health of our planet. Clare says she's always felt most at home in the natural world, and she deeply believes in the transformative power of creativity. She's also a dedicated meditator with a lifelong interest in ancient texts and practises. Clare co-founded Inna Nature during her recovery from a significant illness, aiming to empower and connect communities with the natural world.

**[00:01:46.730] - Samantha**

Clare is also collaborating with us here at Curious Motion, bringing creative nature connection practises to Elland's community as part of our Welland Activator project. Together, we are offering seasonal tree time workshops in Elland. And just go to the show notes for this episode for more information on Inna Nature and Clare's work.

**[00:02:09.130] - Samantha**

Okay, let's go. Time to join us as we explore Clare's journey and her inspiring work in fostering community and environmental wellbeing. Welcome, Clare. It's lovely to have you on Calder Navigation. Thank you.

**[00:02:34.610] - Clare**

Thank you for having me, Sam.

**[00:02:36.360] - Samantha**

I'm excited to talk to you. It's going to be a lovely chat, I think.

**[00:02:39.600] - Clare**

Oh, bless.

**[00:02:40.940] - Samantha**

So could we start with a little bit about you? Where would you like to start?

**[00:02:46.120] - Clare**

Sure. I'm going to start off in the Caribbean, if that's okay.

**[00:02:49.380] - Samantha**

Please do.

**[00:02:50.480] - Clare**

So the last social enterprise that I headed up ended up working over in Jamaica. We were working with the British Council and the Arts Council England, and we were really working with disengaged young people in Kingston. And we were using predominantly contemporary dance as a way of bringing these young people up into a better way of being within themselves. And we spent some time over there, and then I had a phone call saying that my mum was seriously ill. And I made as quick plans as possible, and I headed back to Dublin. And I remember being in my little bedroom, looking out the window and seeing the panoramic, beautiful view of the Dublin Wicklow Mountains and just feeling a note in the solace that they were bringing to my heart that was feeling very wobbly, very unsure of what journey we were going to be on right now, as we were back in Ireland, and that we being myself and my son in that moment. So we spent some time there. We spent on and off, we were there for nine months. And then my mum, unfortunately, passed over, and I was lucky to be there with her when she did.

**[00:04:19.260] - Clare**

And then all roads led back to Hebden Bridge. And I found myself then several months later in quite a big period of grief, really trying to understand the loss of my mum, feeling like it all happened so fast. I was about 42 at the time. And then I started getting very poorly, and I got diagnosed with an autoimmune condition. And my body started reacting very badly to the medications that were doled out. And all I could really do was sit in the garden. So I spent the best part of four years sat in the garden. And I'm lucky to have a really nice space here in Hebden, where there's a real incredible mix of broadleaf trees and some really nice conifers as well. And I just sat with the trees pretty much all day, every day. I used to set up a

little camp when it was winter. I'd have a little fire sometimes on the go, might even bring the laptop out. And I realised that I was starting to heal. Now, I was doing lots of other things to help myself heal. I wasn't just in the garden. However, the garden brought me to a place of stillness where I could hear what I needed to do to get well, but also a place where I felt very, very supported because I couldn't really walk and friends could visit sometimes and other members of family and my son.

**[00:05:59.010] - Clare**

But there was huge periods of time every day, most days, where I would be just solo in the garden. So I reached into nature like I did as a child. I reached into the woods around me. I reached into what we call the modern human world and found some real solace there and subsequently started to heal. And as I was healing, I came across the practice of forest bathing. Now, without going into this explicitly in this podcast moment, Sam, forest bathing is a practice that was developed in the '80s in Japan with the Japanese government because Japanese people were experiencing huge amounts of stress and autoimmune conditions from working basically too hard. Because Japan, I think, is about 80% covered in forest, the government basically said, Let's pipe up here, let's do something, let's create a modality, an intervention that could really help the people. So they created what we now know is shinrin-yoku, which means to bathe in the atmosphere of the forest. Now, in Japan, there's a very strong emphasis on aesthetics, and the Japanese look to-, they do haikup, they do bathing with the cherry blossom, they do bathing with leaves, they do bathing with little springs of water. So they do this bathing. This is not brand new for them. They're very accustomed to sitting in nature in a way that's very slow, feels almost radical because it's so slow. And they follow, usually, some invitations in order to be able to deepen their practice and come out of what we call the monkey mind.

**[00:07:48.160] - Clare**

And I've been a long term mindfulness practitioner because I follow a Zen Buddhist path. I try to. So I trained in mindfulness-based stress reduction a few years ago, and I've been teaching mindfulness programmes as well. So back to the garden, I realised then that there was a way that I could train. As I started to get well, I could train to lead people on the type of journey I was having just myself. So that's what I did. And I trained with a group called the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Guides, a bit of a mouthful there, based in Arizona. I didn't go to Arizona. And I started working in partnership with the National Trust in Hardcastle Crag, just down the road from me. And I started just guiding groups of people into the woodland for a nature immersion, I called it.

**[00:08:40.090] - Clare**

So it's a three-hour journey into themselves, into their inner nature and their outer nature. And as I got stronger, and there was a whole plethora of interesting, beautiful souls coming in, all types of people, all walks of life, window cleaners, hairdressers, police officers, the whole shebang. And then as I started to get well, I said to myself, Okay, what would I really love to do? Well, I'd love to make this work more inclusive. I'd love to make this work like I used to do, run a social enterprise, go for funding, and be

able to offer it out to more people, people who may not have the opportunity to do this. So that's what we did. And that's how then Inna Nature came about.

**[00:09:27.110] - Samantha**

So Clare, just before we come to our absolute present day, let's jump back just a little bit. What brought you to Jamaica? Why were you there?

**[00:09:35.180] - Clare**

Okay, good question.

**[00:09:37.820] - Samantha**

I know that there's lots in this as well.

**[00:09:41.100] - Clare**

We'll keep it succinct. I'll do my best. Well, the previous organisation that I headed up, we began in the recession in 2006 in sunny Calderdale. And there wasn't that much going on here then. And we got some funding from Arts Council, and we did a consultation, and we were basically bringing urban art forms up and down the valley. And after we did that for a couple of years, so we did the DJing, we did hip hop battles, we did the breakdancing, and we did the contemporary. And then after doing that for about two years, we started to then expand this idea into a new model. And the model was that we would connect with dancers around the world using a type of Skype technology. And we'd find a way to create choreography online and to have some really interesting showcases as a result of having streams, excuse me, coming in from foreign lands. It was very much a multicultural exchange with a twist. And that went down really well. So we did one for the Tour de France when it was the Grand Depart going through Yorkshire. We linked into a wonderful dance company called Black Blanc Beur, who are just on the outskirts, they're in a ghetto, basically, just on the outskirts of Paris.

**[00:11:14.740] - Clare**

We worked with a group in Dubrovnik, Croatia, when we did the first ever Youth Arts Festival in the north of the UK, where we took over the Peace Hall. This was in 2011. We had dancers from all over the country, live on the stage, doing their best, doing fabulously. And then on a screen, on a truck, we had a live video link from Dubrovnik, Croatia, of dancers there. And they danced together and they showed each other some tricks. And it was really beautiful, considering it rained. Oh, my God, did it rain. So then we emulated that model around the world, and we ended up then in Jamaica doing that. And it was really wonderful work. The Jamaicans were incredibly up for it. They were ready to dance, and we had a wonderful time. I also taught them some mindfulness as well to help with some of the stage fright, because one of the shows was quite a big deal. It was at the Contact Theatre in Manchester, and we had the live link coming in from Kingston. Then we had the Jamaicans teaching the dancers who were live on

the stage who were representing Halifax and Leeds, and they did a live workshop in African Soca Dance. And that was a glorious impromptu moment.

**[00:12:42.610] - Samantha**

Yeah, that's amazing.

**[00:12:43.110] - Clare**

And we had such a good team. We were really able to pull off those moments with a real sense of, we can be spontaneous because we trust that we can pull it off, give or take the odd digital lag moment because the technology wasn't as fast as it is now.

**[00:13:00.600] - Samantha**

Wow, yeah.

**[00:13:01.020] - Clare**

So that's why we ended up in Jamaica, yeah.

**[00:13:03.500] - Samantha**

So there's a huge amount of experience that you've had there that you're able to bring with you into this period of your life and your work now.

**[00:13:12.030] - Clare**

I hope so, yeah. Because Inna Nature is really a new vehicle for social change, empowerment, helping people be in right relationship with the Earth. And that really is an extension of Out of Place. It really is.

**[00:13:34.500] - Samantha**

Yeah. So, could you tell us just a little bit about what Inna Nature does and what the aims are?

**[00:13:40.750] - Clare**

Absolutely. Well, the vision for Inna Nature is for more gentler and more aware world because I feel like-, just to be a little a bit big for a moment. I feel with everything that's going on in the world at the moment, because of the wars that are going on, there's not just the war in Ukraine or the war in Gaza, there's actually lots of wars going on at the moment. And I feel-, but because there's two that are incredibly in the news a lot, and rightly so, and they're really big, I feel this is a really important time for the world to wake up more. And when we look back to, for example, the '70s, and we look to the war in Vietnam, we see the

counterculture that developed then was instrumental. That summer of love wasn't just a bunch of hippies with flowers in their hair. That was a huge moment with the application of psychedelics, with the application of monogamy, lots of facets of spirituality coming into the West. And essentially, I think that's happening again now. I think we're at a pivotal moment, and I think our little Inna Nature is able to hopefully ride, surf that particular wave, because that's the wave of change. And the wave of change is what we're about.

**[00:15:16.850] - Clare**

To hone it down, we say we've got three pillars, three facets, and that is high creativity engagement, high quality creativity engagement. We work with the best artists in in our area to bring high quality creativity. That can be music, that can be dance, that can be visual art, 2D art, that can be expressive writing. Secondly, nature. Nature, nature, nature. So nature connection is at the heart of everything we do because we know it's our home and we truly believe that we are instrumentally part of nature. So for us, and the benefits are huge as science is now showing, but we already knew that because our ancestors knew that. What we're doing is nothing really new there. Then thirdly, the other facet or pillar, if you will, is the mindfulness, which is the two-, if you imagine mindfulness as a bird, so if mindfulness is a little wren, there's two wings on the wren. One is the wing of compassion, and the other is the wing of wisdom. And mindfulness is about being able to be in the present moment in a non-judgmental way, easier said than done. It's a training, it's a practice. You can do it while you're washing your hair.

**[00:16:38.180] - Clare**

But it's also about what comes with this heightened awareness? Because mindfulness has had some really bad press because you get people sometimes in the likes of big, superpowered organisations like the military, and they might be training the soldiers to be more mindful, but without the compassion of the wisdom. So that could just mean that we're aware. Awareness is absolutely the bedrock to a greater, healthier, more wholesome sense of self, and knock-on effects are huge into the community, politicians, hello. But then what happens after mindfulness? What happens when we are a little bit more aware? Are we going to choose to be more compassionate in that sense of awareness, or are we going to choose to be devious, destructive, harmful? A mindfulness is like a pause. It gives us space. It gives us the opportunity to choose which way we're going to act so we're not reacting, we're acting in a way that's hopefully authentic. So that's very much at the bedrock of what we do as well. So a typical workshop with Inna Nature, for example, at the moment, we have workshops going on in Ovenden, north Halifax, where the dog came from, that you're currently holding.

**[00:18:05.400] - Samantha**

You can't see the dog, but I'm having a lovely cuddle with him while I listen.

**[00:18:09.280] - Clare**

She's having a cuddle with Beebe. Beebe, Beebe.

**[00:18:10.960] - Samantha**

Gorgeous.

**[00:18:11.880] - Clare**

So Beebe came from Ovenden, and funnily enough, then we ended up delivering projects there. So we've been in Ovenden for just over a year. And at the start, anyway, of one of our sessions, one of our workshops, we have a grounding practice. We'll sit in a circle. I will lead then a simple formal mindfulness. It could be a short body scan. Then we might go out onto the land at Forest Cottage, and I might offer some nature connection invitations. Then we'll have a little pause and we'll come in and we'll start creating. It's that flow that our sessions usually follow. We're looking to build on the work that we've started in Todmorden with the young people. So that's quite exciting because we've just had the screening of our first film called Tod Roots. So we're looking, and that was very much about charting young people's journey in through the natural world, through dance and mindfulness. So we're looking at building on that. I'll maybe doing some exchange work with other companies, with other organisations, on a local, national, maybe global level, again, let's see. And I'm really interested in how other people in other cultures connect with the natural world, because that's a whole big, big, big thing because some cultures are quite afraid of nature.

**[00:19:48.380] - Clare**

Some cultures look at nature as just a place that you dump things. There's a lot there that I find really fascinating, right? And I love the whole idea of exchanges because I've done them for the last 10 years, and I think you learn so much together. And then if you don't have to be flying people around the world and don't have to be creating more of a carbon footprint, you can do it all with technology. That's pretty cool. So there's that. And then building up on what we started in north Halifax is really part of our vision as well, because there really isn't that much exciting culture going on in north Halifax. And we feel quite privileged to be in a place where we are now delivering some very exciting work there. Making pinhole cameras, I mean, that has just been very freshly delivered and freshly received in Ovenden. So, yeah, continuing on what we have started as a little CIC, pulling in some more people to help with our expertise. Seeing what we can learn from other cultures and seeing how we can help to protect the world, the natural world, and each other, and continue nourishing our inner nature and our outer nature.

**[00:21:19.640] - Samantha**

Yeah.

**[00:21:20.510] - Clare**

Thank you.

**[00:21:21.680] - Samantha**

And I'm really excited for that for you as well. And also, as Curious Motion has worked, we've worked together a little bit so far, haven't we?

**[00:21:30.530] - Clare**

Yeah.

**[00:21:31.070] - Samantha**

On a workshop called Tree Time, which we have done a couple of times in Elland. We're exploring how to-, there's not a forest accessible to us immediately in that area. So we've brought it into the park, and I've been getting a little flavour from you on the possibilities of what that might mean for our community and how we might be able to collaborate as well. I'm excited to see where your journey takes you, and hopefully we can be a little part of that, too.

**[00:22:03.160] - Clare**

It's been wonderful, Sam. We've really enjoyed working with you guys. And I think there's something so-, some lovely people, all lovely people as well, coming on board. But it's just been so good, just to be in a regular park and practicing in the way that we have. The last session was just glorious because we were blessed with the weather.

**[00:22:25.350] - Samantha**

I know.

**[00:22:25.960] - Clare**

The daffodils were in full bloom. And there was dog walkers coming around occasionally, having their moment, but they would just completely leave us to it because they could feel that we were doing something a little bit chilled out, a little bit different. We were meditating, we were connecting with the natural world, and they just left us to it. So I think TreeTime, what we've created together, is a really good example of how my practice and Inna Nature's practice can be fully transportable and it can be accessible as well, which is just so important in our world because there is just so many needs and everyone should have opportunities. So, yeah, Tree Time is a beautiful thing, and I think we are continuing that. I know the next one is going to be at the beginning of August for the Harvest Festival of-,

**[00:23:28.390] - Samantha**

We always get this word wrong. I'm leaving it to you, Clare. There's no hope with me getting it right.

**[00:23:36.770] - Clare**

Lughnasadh, and I do speak some Irish. We're going to do something for that. Where we're going to be celebrating that particular point because we're mapping out the Celtic wheel. So we're mapping out the fire festivals, basically, and the other festivals that go around the wheel of the Celtic spiritualist or the Celtic pagan, or whatever you want to call it. And it's just these pivotal moments of the year. And I think it might be okay to say as well that we're hopefully going to do something with Welland.

**[00:24:15.120] - Samantha**

Definitely, definitely. Yeah. In October.

**[00:24:17.040] - Clare**

Which is Samhain, and the Samhain period is also in the Celtic Irish-, it's actually our new year.

**[00:24:25.160] - Samantha**

Yes.

**[00:24:25.980] - Clare**

Because that's when they-, I won't say any more to that because that will be open up a huge other conversation, but the Samhain, so we'll be opening up in the new year with the practice that we evolve for that as well. So I think it's really exciting that we're starting to spread our little wings, our little tentacles, over to Elland as well. So thank you, Sam, for that opportunity.

**[00:24:49.960] - Samantha**

Oh, no, it's my absolute pleasure. I could listen to you all day, but I have to actually speak.

**[00:24:56.110] - Clare**

Sorry.

**[00:24:56.560] - Samantha**

No, it's good. It's really good. So creativity has been a through line, I think, in all of your work, hasn't it? And now we have these wonderful additional facets of nature connection. I wondered if you could just go a little bit deeper for us about how creativity and nature intersect and what that place is between both of them. Could you tell us a little bit more?

**[00:25:22.070] - Clare**

Yeah, well, for me, the natural world is the most creative entity on the planet. So everything about the natural world is incredibly creative. There's patterns right the way through the natural world, which we know now from 1975, where a French scientist came up with the notion of the fractal and being able to see patterns and shapes that repeated themselves throughout nature. Now, we now know that certain parts of our human organism also contain fractals. So this is just one of the the million and trillion and multitude of ways that we are nature. So you see, there really is no creativity in nature intersection, they are one. Now, on a more simplistic level, you could say, which is really important, if we go way back and we go to, say, South France and we go to the caves, we see the drawings that were done on the caves, which depicted human life working in partnership with the animals before domestication of animals, of herd animals, et cetera. And they're all over these drawings, you can go and see them, as we know. You can also see in the likes of Germany, where they have found bones which they've turned into flutes.

**[00:26:52.050] - Clare**

So this idea that we have literally been in close partnership with nature has always been the case. On our workshops, we might, for example, bring in a, what would be deemed a weed, but we might call it a flower, and we might bring it in. And we might sit with that flower and open up, say, six senses, and then we might create an image of that flower, or we might respond to how that flower makes us feel.

**[00:27:26.580] - Clare**

There's just so much in that question, Sam. I feel like the closer we are to nature, the more we can feel more alive. And the more alive we feel and the more at ease, nature makes us feel, when we're out in the natural world, if it's the garden, or even if it's just looking at a potted plant, nature makes us feel very-, it changes our attention. So our attention, as soon as we're in a building, our attention is narrower. As soon as we go outside, our attention broadens. It's one of the many things that happens once we actually go into nature more closer. As a result of that, the brain waves change.

**[00:28:14.040] - Clare**

So at the moment, me and you are in beta brain frequency. But as soon as we go outside, or even if I pick up my cactus without getting too pricked, we're going into alpha. And alpha is a very creative state to create from. Dancers are often in alpha. Painters are often in alpha. So not only does nature inspire us, it gives us tools, it gives us ways to create flutes, hello. But it also brings us to a place of heightened creativity, a place where we can create from a better place, a bit of stillness. And if you're very upset, as we all know, I always went out to a certain bit of woodland when I was upset growing up because it's the only way I could really feel centred again. And I don't buy into this big tortured artist thing. I think it's always a better place to be able to create from a place of grounded, still, ideally, kindly awareness. So I hope that answers that question.

**[00:29:29.290] - Samantha**

Yeah, it's a really-, I think it's incredibly helpful in the world we live in to have that reminder of these things are not all separate from each other and that we are not separate from the environment, the natural place we are in. And there is so much more in that that we don't know. We could find out about maybe, maybe not. We can connect to, we can access, we can become part of a bigger picture. There's something really important about that, I think.

**[00:30:05.980] - Clare**

I think that's a really beautiful point, because one of the most important things for me about spending so much time in the garden at that time and now in woods and forests and whatnot, is the fact that there is a mystery.

**[00:30:20.330] - Samantha**

Yeah.

**[00:30:21.610] - Clare**

And we will never have the answers. And I don't want the answers to everything. Sure, I love knowledge, and I love reading, and I love information, and I can be a little sponge sometimes. But I also know that I don't know very much either. There is a sense. And I think, just if I may quote one of my favourite Zen practitioners, Shunryu Roshi, who basically coined the term beginner's mind.

**[00:30:51.050] - Samantha**

Wow, yeah.

**[00:30:52.270] - Clare**

And he said, "In the beginner's mind, there are many possibilities. But in the expert's mind, there is few." And what he means by that is if we go around thinking we know everything, which is very Western, it's all about what you know, very much the brain, the cognitive processes. Hello, me, I'm an expert. Well, actually, none of us really could ever possibly be really experts because there's always going to be unknown factors. And unless we have some space inside ourselves, like sometimes we meet people, one of my family members, sorry for listening, who's a surgeon and feels like he knows so much and everything in a way about certain subjects in medicine, which is great. And he's helped loads of people, no doubt.

**[00:31:48.170] - Clare**

But you can never, ever know everything. And I think unless we have space, that's why we say in the beginner's mind, there are many possibilities. That doesn't mean you're an absolute beginner who doesn't know what you're doing. That means you're open to new possibilities, you're open to the mystery, you're open to learning and seeing things with fresh perspective.

**[00:32:12.840] - Samantha**

Yeah, so important.

**[00:32:14.560] - Clare**

Which is what our project in Ovenden is about.

**[00:32:18.210] - Samantha**

Yes.

**[00:32:19.020] - Clare**

New ways of seeing. New ways of seeing, stroke, new ways of being. And by the time we air this podcast, hopefully we'll be on the other side of the exhibition showcase and all will be well. No panic.

**[00:32:34.020] - Samantha**

Yeah.

**[00:32:34.900] - Clare**

You know?

**[00:32:35.860] - Samantha**

Yeah. Yeah. No, that's great. So let's get into nature connection a little bit more.

**[00:32:41.080] - Clare**

Yes, please.

**[00:32:41.950] - Samantha**

Could you give us a little bit of a feel of what nature connection practises involve and how we benefit from them, really.

**[00:32:52.470] - Clare**

Absolutely, Sam. Okay, well, I'll just start by saying that the practice I deliver, the main key practice I deliver, which I do tweak, excuse me, is based on the training that I did, and it's also based on my mindfulness training. It's also based on just being a creative person. But the training I did is called Forest Therapy Guide Training. Now, that's a very interesting one because as soon as you say to people, "Oh, hi, I'm a forest therapist." "Oh, you're a therapist." No. Even though therapy is definitely a byproduct of the practice. The words are Forest Therapy Guide, g-g-guide. That's the key. So I like to say, based on what I learned with ANFT, which is the forest is the therapist. That's the key. I am holding space, I'm the guide, and it's a very important role, don't get me wrong. But ultimately, it's nature that's providing the healing, if you will, if healing is needed. Because people come on these nature immersions, as I call them, like I said earlier, for a whole bunch of different reasons. Some people might be grieving. Some people might just want to calm down, find more space. Some people might want to regulate their nervous system. And we know now from much, much, much peer-reviewed papers, clinical research that's been done over the years, that there is some really key benefits to spend in time.

**[00:34:33.930] - Clare**

But the trick is to spend it slowly. We're not trying to-, it's not a hike. We're not trying to go from A to B in a hurry or on our phones or in conversation. Because sometimes I've noticed if I'm with a friend and I go into the woods and I'm talking, I haven't really been in the woods. I've been in the conversation in the woods, right? So it's a really different thing what we're doing here. So we're slowing down, and I invite people, I give practices, I give invitations so that people know what they're doing and they can slow down. And that might take a while because some people come in, myself sometimes as well, with a super busy mind. And it takes a while, like we say in the mindfulness regime, if you will, to drop out of the monkey mind and to drop into the body.

**[00:35:28.750] - Clare**

Now, If we're in the body, our senses become a lot more alive. We are literally then in the body of the Earth, you could go as far as to say. We know that we came out of water. We know that we grew up around the savannah. So ultimately, if we grew up around the savannah, if we grew up around trees, trees are our allies, they're our friends. It is absolutely normal, and it is nothing new to go to the woodlands and the forest for healing and restoration. And that's what we do. We inspire, hopefully, a place where people can have whatever experience they need. And we have these invitations. Then we come back in circle and we share your experience, if you want to. And we encourage people to keep the words to a limit so that we can stay as dropped in as possible. Then they'll go out and they'll do another invitation. Then they'll come back, and it follows this out and in, out and in process. And then towards the end, I'll rustle around, find some nice leaves, always easily done, even in the middle of winter, We've done this in the snow.

**[00:36:46.870] - Clare**

And we will create a little space for a tea circle. Now, this is not the way of tea, the Chan methodology from Japan, even though that's something I've studied myself. This is a very beautiful but very still-, there's no cultural appropriation here, basically, is what I'm saying. This is a very lovely, very still, very chilled, anyone could do it, set of cups that represent-, well, I'm going to have to go to our friend who passed a few years ago, the late great Vietnamese Buddhist master, Thích Nhất Hạnh, who coined the phrase inter-being. And I wrote a soundscape about it. It's on my website, which I can give a little thing at the end. But basically, inter-being is about the notion that if I'm drinking a cup of tea, that cup of tea had to come through, initially the cloud and the rainfall, down to the reservoir, down to certain filtration systems. Hello, Yorkshire water. Down then eventually into our taps, boiled into our kettles. The tea might have come from India. Who picked that tea? Who processed that tea? Did they get paid enough money? I don't know. I hope so. Then basically, so we have all these ethical choices along this route. Then eventually, this becomes a cup of tea that we can drink together. But this tea doesn't exist on its own. There's no such thing as a cup of tea, really. A cup of tea is made up of a whole series of events to become a cup of tea.

**[00:38:34.120] - Samantha**

Clare. Oh, gosh. The next time I have a cup of tea, I'm going to need a minute. No, I get it. I hear you. I do. It's really, again, so important to sit with this and really think, what does that mean? Absolutely.

**[00:38:58.670] - Clare**

Absolutely. Absolutely. And I think it's really, really beautiful and really humbling when we do actually sit back and ponder or reflect in that way. So that's when we would start then coming out of the-, we might have a few little bits of chocolate, of course.

**[00:39:15.860] - Samantha**

Of course.

**[00:39:17.100] - Clare**

Of course. And then we'll start coming back into the more mundane world of planning and shopping and talking and relationships and all of this stuff that we all do most days. And we'll come back then, into that way, into that normal way of being through that process of drinking that tea. And we'll also always have a little poem. And there's a line that's actually coming to me now. Can I share it?

**[00:39:46.790] - Samantha**

Please, yes.

**[00:39:48.280] - Clare**

Some of my family come from the west of Ireland, and there's an incredible poet called John O'Donohue who, when it was-, just a little bit of backstory before the pandemic, before we really knew that that was actually going to be a thing. We got some funding from Manchester University. Me and a friend who was doing his doctorate at the time, we're going to go over and we were going to do a piece of work about John O'Donohue. Now, John O'Donohue who has left the Earth, has passed over. He passed over a few years ago, but his legacy truly lives on. And he was a poet, he was a Celtic spiritualist, but he was, for many, many moons as well, an Irish standard Catholic priest. And as somebody who was heavily indoctrinated with Catholicism as a child, when I found him as a young woman, I was over the moon to see that somebody existed who felt like I did about the world, that it was animistic, it was alive, it was sentient, and respected that, but had the Catholic upbringing and was able to see some of the beauty in that, and that it wasn't all just doom and gloom, even though some of it definitely is. So, yeah, this is a line from John O'Donohue that I just really, really love, and it would be a real honour to share that with the listeners as we wind up our beautiful time together.

**[00:41:17.720] - Samantha**

Thank you. That would be great, Clare. Go for it.

**[00:41:21.870] - Clare**

"I'd like to live as a river flows, surprised by my own unfurling. I'd like to live as a river flows, surprised by my own unfurling."

**[00:41:38.700] - Samantha**

Gosh. Powerful. Unfurling.

**[00:41:43.820] - Clare**

I love that because we never know how life is going to go.

**[00:41:54.480] - Samantha**

Yeah.

**[00:41:57.030] - Clare**

And if we can meet it with a sense of curiosity, compassion, it's a good thing. It's a really good thing if we can.

**[00:42:14.740] - Samantha**

It's so important.

**[00:42:15.790] - Clare**

It really is.

**[00:42:17.370] - Samantha**

For everybody and everything. Yeah.

**[00:42:19.740] - Clare**

Because the life isn't that long. No. And it is precious. And the very last line I'll say is the line from the Mary Oliver poem, which many people are more familiar with now since the pandemic because poetry became more popular then, which is, "So tell me, what are you going to do with your one wild and precious life."

**[00:42:48.540] - Samantha**

Yeah. Oh my God, Clare. I'm just going to have to sit down and think about those two things for the rest of-, that's so beautiful and exactly what we need to be sharing.

**[00:43:09.150] - Clare**

Oh, thank you so much. Thank you, Sam.

**[00:43:13.310] - Samantha**

No, thank you.

**[00:43:15.610] - Samantha**

It's time to wrap up another episode of Calder Navigation. And as we do, we want to express our gratitude for joining us on this journey through Calderdale's stories. We hope these conversations have moved you and reminded you of the power of human connection.

**[00:43:33.710] - Samantha**

Calder Navigation is part of the Welland Activator Project, aimed at combating loneliness in Elland and Calderdale. A massive thank you to our funders, Calderdale Council, Culturedale, and Reaching Community from the National Lottery Community Fund, empowering us to continue our mission of fostering connexion and combating loneliness through projects like the Welland Activator. A big thank you to Untold Creative for production support, too.



**[00:43:59.370] - Samantha**

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