



A project to create a 'river of names' of importance to the local community, to be etched into the canal towpath, designed by artist Anoushka Havinden.

Part of Scottish Canals' Stockingfield Bridge project.

### Mapping ourselves – Ages 10 and up

What's in a name? Quite a lot! Names are important and powerful.

Names, especially placenames, are often the oldest words we have, and they can tell us a lot – we can unpack history from a name, stories about a place and the people who lived there.

In Scotland, placenames are often a mixture of different languages – we have names derived from Pictish words, Gaelic words, Scots, Norse and English words. They often describe geographical features – no prizes for guessing that the landscape of Ruchill and Gilshochill isn't all that flat.

However, **Maryhill** was named for Mary Hill, Mary Graham, the daughter of Huw Hill. So sometimes names can be deceptive! Often we are detectives hunting for clues, and often people disagree on the possible histories of names or misunderstand them. There can be errors and mis-translation. Names change and places change.

Let's look at some local names.

**Stockingfield** was called so after the fields where linen was laid out to dry. From the Ordnance Survey's book of Scottish placenames: 'A large washing establishment used two years ago as a bleachfield. There are 15 women employed in washing & felting up made linen'. So the history of this area is stitched into the names.

**Ruchill** refers to stooks, or straw piled up at harvest time. Ruck, - A rick of corn or hay; a small stack of any kind,". You can see the farming history of Ruchill in the name.

**Gilsochhill** is a bit mysterious. One suggestion is 'Gil's haugh – or haunch – hill'. So perhaps named after a person called Gil, or something similar. Do you know the history? Can you think of possible stories?

### The Landscape of You

I'd like you to think about your own personal map, your haunts, your hood, your local surroundings. Has this changed over your lifetime? Have you moved? Have names changed?

What names would be included in your map – who would you name the streets after? We use names to commemorate and record history.

They might be nicknames – ‘the Botany’, or ‘The Botny’. Have any changed? How big or small is your map - can we get really local, did you have a name for your close, your street, your part of town? Do you know the history of these names?

Write some of these names down. Try to imagine what area your own lifemap would cover.

**A Note on Privacy:** Please be careful about how you share your home address or other sensitive personal information!

Maps are a conversation that fix us in time and space. They record our history, our story.

\*

You may like to draw a map of your local area. This might be a snapshot of your life right now – where you move around, who you know, events you remember, how you see the local landscape. You can rename the streets, houses, parks, and rivers with your own names or descriptive phrases.

The drawing can be simple, you can trace it from an existing map. (paper held up to a computer screen is a good way to trace from an image – but be very gentle with your pencil as you trace). You may wish to expand it to include other places that are important to you. It doesn't need to be completely accurate – this is a personal map, not one to use instead of an A to Z!

You may like to draw a ‘memory map’. I've done one of the time I lived on a canalboat at Applecross Basin. Draw in pencil first, so you can rub out and adjust. Once you're happy, go over in pen and use colour if you wish.



\*

The National Library of Scotland has a fantastic resource of historical maps. These are great for researching names, and history.

<https://maps.nls.uk/>

The Ordnance Survey Placenames of Scotland have some fascinating information on names, and are searchable online.

<https://scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ordnance-survey-name-books>

Scottish Place Name Society has lots of info, resources and links:

<https://spns.org.uk/>

## NOMINATE A NAME!

Can you think of a name you'd like to see written in the towpath next to the canal?

It can be a place, person, event, thing, wildlife, song title, poem, book title, venue, shop, the name of a dance or even a short phrase that you think is important to the local community. It could be contemporary or from some time in the past.

Please write the name/s here:

And tell me why you would like to see it/them in the River of Names:

THANK YOU!

Find out more about the project on the website:

<https://ariverofnames.com/>

You can also submit names via the website, or by email.

get in touch at:

[ariverofnames@gmail.com](mailto:ariverofnames@gmail.com)

All content produced by Anoushka Havinden, 2021