

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.



Choosing the Harrogate portraits

Nidderdale Greenway Steering Group selected 10 people. The nominations were put to a public vote with voting at local libraries, web based, postal and a local school. The steering group then made the final decision from the chosen top 4. Over 1300 votes were received.

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 Harrogate and how to find this portrait bench at www.sustrans.org.uk/c2/harrogate

Portrait Bench Harrogate



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.

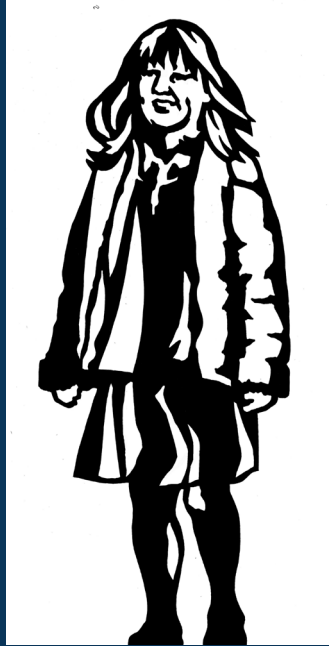
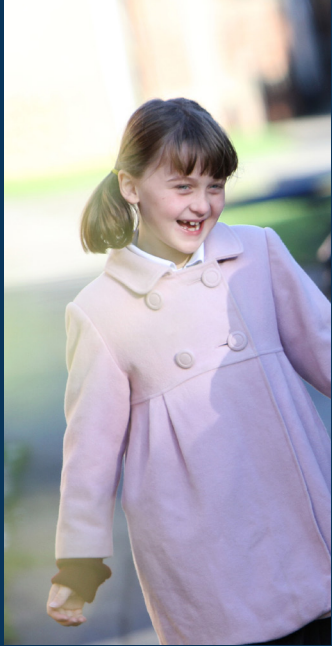
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Young Girl



A local school assisted the steering group by nominating characters for the portrait bench and one of the suggestions was a child from Harrogate to represent the future generations of Harrogate.

This excellent idea proved very popular in the voting.

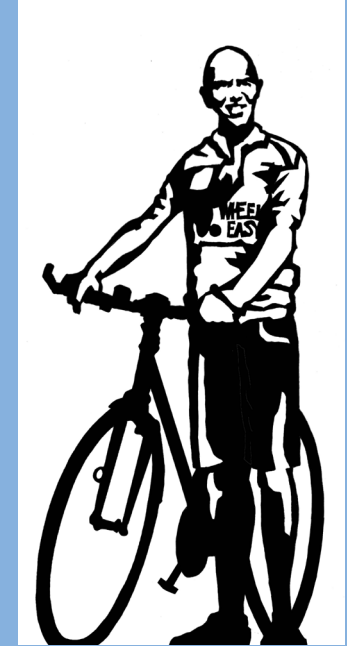
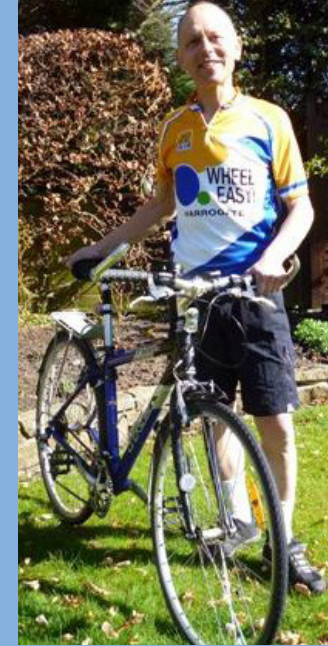
Keith Wilkinson



Keith Wilkinson is a local resident. Born in 1943 he is dedicated to the conservation of Nidd Gorge wildlife.

As a founder member of the Bilton Conservation Group which formed in 1982 he has championed its campaigns to buy much of the Nidd Gorge woodlands and put them in the hands of the Woodland Trust; to protect them for future generations to enjoy. Having spent most of his working life in the deprived areas of our region he believes in the therapeutic value of the beauty and tranquility of the countryside on our doorstep.

Malcolm Margolis



Malcolm Margolis and his wife Gia are life-long cyclists who founded Harrogate 'Wheel Easy' leisure cycling club in 2006.

A former sports retailer, Malcolm led successful campaigns for cycle paths on Harrogate Stray and for the Nidderdale Greenway, and is a volunteer Sustrans Ranger. He has a long involvement with wider environmental issues as Co-ordinator of Harrogate Friends of the Earth and founding Chair of Harrogate Fairtrade Group. He believes passionately in the benefits of Sustrans paths and thinks of them in the light of an old American Indian proverb 'We will be known forever by the tracks we leave'.