

THE TREE CARVING DESIGN

Roots Project

The idea of the carvings is to celebrate both the history of Sudbury and the life of the park. The images unfold and lead the viewer around the trunk and back to the beginning.

We begin with the large head representing the river Stour as a water goddess, guardian spirit of the town, the river valley being the reason for the early settlement. So she has both fish leaping through her hair and a heron catching one. Her hair spills down the trunk and forms the river flowing around the base of the tree with the watermill represented at the base.

Immediately to the left is a map of Saxon Sudbury based on the Barry Wall illustration in his history of Sudbury. Above this is a girl sliding down the weir. Two women told the artist that they used to do this as girls! She also represents all the people who swam in the river and later used the lido adjacent to the park. On the left hand fork is a Victorian girl playing hoop and stick to represent the generations of children who have played in the park. Her hoop is thus a snake with its tail in its mouth, a symbol of time and eternity (also to be found in St. Gregory's church). Above her is a skateboarder representing modern play.

Following the river round the trunk to the right, where it joins a cascade of cloth, an image of the long association of the town with broadcloth. The cloth unrolls into the river to symbolize the many processes of manufacture that utilized the waters of the Stour.

Above and to the right is a market stall of 2006 and to the left one from 1340. The two stalls are imagined to have been on the same area of ground separated by hundreds of years. The man reaches across time to offer an apple to the woman and also to the viewer. She is selling cloth and the date alludes to the setting up of the broadcloth processes and the success of the local market.

On the cloth itself is the word "Sudbury" to name both the town and the involvement of students from the secondary school and young people from The Suffolk County Council Youth and Connexions Service in the creation of ideas for the design. Above and to her left is "Great Cornard" as that school was also involved. The sunflowers are grown by children of the village each year and planted in the churchyard.

If you examine the lettering of Sudbury closely you will find plants and wildlife depicted as well as the saffron crocus, which was grown in what, is now the park to provide a cloth dye. At this point the viewer arrives back to the map of Sudbury. The benches placed around the carving are sited so that viewers get the best perspective on the carvings and the overall flow of the design while going closer reveals details and textures. The benches are lettered with the names of those who sponsored the project.

The images were carved by Jeff Higley and the lettering designs created by Kate Pyper.