

# AT HIGH PEAK JUNCTION

## THE PLATELAYER'S WALK



### **SOUND ART COMPOSITION BY JAY DEAN AT HIGH PEAK JUNCTION DURATION 12 MINUTES 18 SECONDS**

High Peak Junction marks the start of the Cromford & High Peak Railway in the northern part of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. The Railway winds its way across Derbyshire to Whaley Bridge. It is unique in many ways; as one of the first railways it was built in the same way as a canal. Locks on steep inclines were replaced with chains, steam engines and tracks to haul the traffic of stone and water. Incredibly some of the Derbyshire villages served by the Railway still relied on water being delivered to them right up to the closure of the line in the late 1960's.

The "Platelayer's Walk" is a composition by artist, performer and owner of Dubrek Studios, Jay Dean. The piece comprises of site field recordings, samples, analogue synthesiser, guitar, ukulele and a reworking of a traditional Derbyshire folk song performed by Julie Russell.

This aural imagining charts the site from the lock keeper's cottage south of the aqueduct and along the canal past the River Derwent, water sluices and woodland into the railway yards of High Peak Junction where locomotives received wagons loaded with stone from the Derbyshire hills.



*"My initial reaction to the project was to create a historic sound walk from the Lock Keeper's cottage to the forge. On a busy day the workshops, locomotives, freight and workmen would have made High Peak quite a noisy place. The contrast of this against the sleepy canal and countryside just south of the site was something I wanted to explore and ties in the 'purpose' of the piece which is to entice the walker and passer-by into the site.*

*All these mechanical aspects have been put together into an abstract sound collage. A journey from the idyllic Lock Keeper's cottage through the sleepy countryside to the forge. Walking across the aqueduct over the Derwent and passing behind the cottages on the Derby Road. I have also included fragments of an old Derbyshire folk song about the railways. In the distance the sound of Leewood Pumphouse and hints of busier times to come. The canal and transhipment shed dominate the next part of the journey. Movement of goods between the railway and canal was facilitated by a huge crane here, along with some hard graft from the workers. Railway sidings flowed away from the shed towards the forge. It is here that wagons were sorted ready for the incline and for destinations further afield. A steam locomotive was used to shunt these heavy wagons and tenders full of water, passing by a workman's hut and the huge steel water tank. Just beyond this is where we pass through the gates to workshops today. Directly ahead is the forge; our destination and final focus. The inside of the workshop is aglow with the forge fire and a steel rod is heated, beaten and forged into large chain links to be used on the incline. Birdsong marks the end of the journey."*

Jay Dean, Artist 2019

**PART OF THE DERWENT VALLEY MILLS GREAT PLACE SCHEME.  
[WWW.DERWENTVALLEYMILLS.ORG](http://WWW.DERWENTVALLEYMILLS.ORG)**

The sound collage was commissioned by Beam and Derbyshire Countryside Services and funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Great Place Scheme.



“...A HISTORIC SOUND WALK  
FROM THE LOCK KEEPER'S  
COTTAGE TO THE FORGE.”



beam