

reverberations

a re-echoing of sound, a reflecting of light etc.,
subjection to the action of a reverberatory furnace,
something reverberated.

Longman English Dictionary 1968



drawing on the histories, environment and present day experiences of two locations
in Swansea, the Helwick Lightship and the River Tawe

The work in response to the River Tawe and the Helwick lightship are drawn together under the title "reverberations". The River Tawe and the inhabitants of the Lower Swansea Valley were directly affected by the pollution from the reverberatory furnaces utilised for smelting. In terms of Helwick Lightship, it refers to the sounding of the fog horn as a warning to seafarers in extreme weather conditions. The crew were exposed to this deafening sound in tumultuous seas for long periods of time, sometimes resulting in deafness & severe psychosis.

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commissioned by Locws International <http://www.locws2.com>

Locws International staged two citywide arts events that saw international and UK-based artists create new temporary site-specific artworks in prominent venues across the City of Swansea in South Wales, UK in 2000 and 2002. CATALOGUE: Locws International ISBN 0-9545291-0-3



The Helwick Lightship: Light Vessel No 91



The Helwick, now docked beside the Maritime Museum in Swansea, was once situated on the Helwick sand bank, 10 miles off Mumbles Head in the Bristol Channel. The vessel is an extraordinary homage to the craftsmanship and mechanics of its time. It is designed to accommodate seamen to carry out the task of communicating the perils of dangerous waters in severe weather conditions. Seven seamen lived for a month at a time, in the isolation of wild seas & deafening fog signals

"Its high note jarred my nerves and shattered my eardrums almost, while the low note seemed to loosen every tooth in my head. Conversation was cut to a minimum, being conducted in monosyllables between blasts of the siren. All this for twopence an hour extra on our wages" George Goldsmith Carter



Michael Lees <http://www.artlees.com/paintings>



The River Tawe

The River Tawe reveals the histories and present day realities of the Lower Swansea Valley. The local community and city of Swansea have reclaimed the riverbanks & neighbouring land, previously poisoned by the industrial waste from tin, zinc, and copper. Plants, trees and wildlife now thrive where once nothing would grow.

The Swansea smelters developed great skill in the construction and management of the reverbatory, and found it particularly suitable to the great variety of finely pulverised ores of every conceivable composition, which reached their port from all parts of the world.....The Vivians' Hafod tip, was reputed to be one of the highest copper slag tips in Wales, and covered a five-hectare site alongside houses specially built for the workers.

By the 1930s the river, which had given the valley, its life, now ran like a sewer.

'The hardy moss clings to, and even thrives on soilless rock. It dies on the copper slag bank.'

'New Land for Old.'
The Environmental Renaissance of the Lower Swansea Valley.
Stephen J Lavendar, University College of Swansea. 1981

