

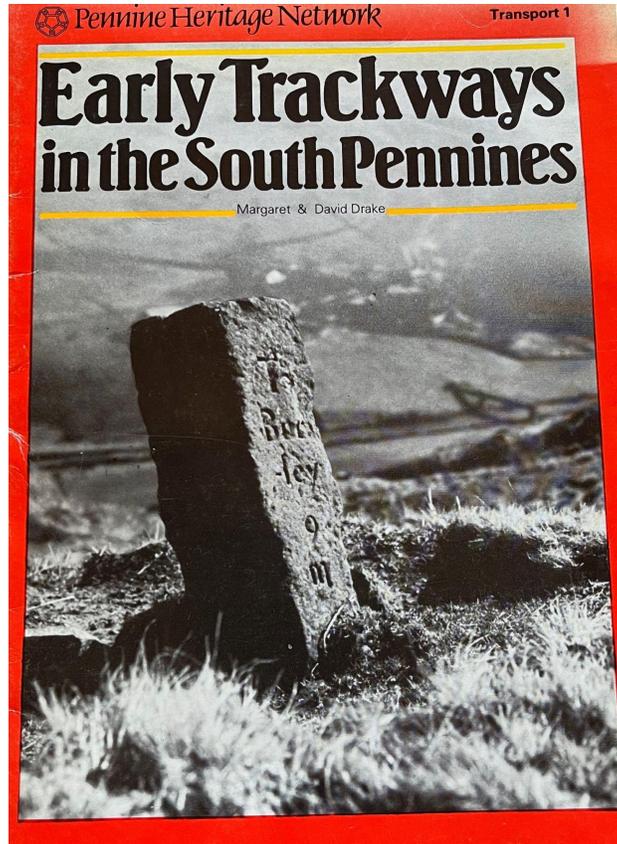
Reflecting on my Analogue Farm Artist Residency by Laura Phillips

For this residency project I was interested in developing and recording sites of transmission and exchange. The core impetus would be to document plague stone sites as a visual metaphor and framework to make new expanded cinema works.

According to the Eighteenth-century historian William Hutton: 'In plague-stricken seventeenth-century England, the need to quarantine sufferers of the disease produced a number of unusual social conventions. Among these was the establishment of so-called plague stones, which served as meeting places for, and boundaries between, the healthy and the sick within an affected community. In addition to serving as a site for exchanging messages, the stones also functioned as a point of commerce where goods were left for the ill, who in turn paid for them by placing coins in a hollow carved into the top of the stone and filled with disinfecting vinegar.'

Part of the residency was also to invite artist Luke Godden, whose own lecture performances are inspired by politics of land management, archaeology and queer histories. For Luke, plague stones and their associated histories are an ongoing research project which focuses on investigations of ancient monuments, artifacts and other evidence which bear links to pandemics, epidemics and other outbreaks of disease. Research by Luke Godden has been largely encouraged by his grandmother, writer and historian Maggie B Dickinson. Most of the findings have been focused on locations in the northwest of England; Lancashire, Cumbria, and the Yorkshire Dales. From medieval stone crosses, ancient packhorse routes and viking tombstones - hunting plague stones opens a portal to histories that show us how life before convenience shaped landscapes and communities. Issues around faith, grief and transformation emerge in reflections.

For this residency, my anchorage was Godden and his family ties to searching for lost ancient moorland trackways. Together, we physically visited sites as guided by Maggie B Dickinson. Her super insightful publication 'Early Trackways of the South Pennines' was invaluable to my understanding of the area and the history of pack ponies.



This copy is available to read at [Todmorden Library](#)

We visited Limers Gate, part of which runs along the eastern boundary of Analogue Farm's field. This route has been a site of inspiration for Analogue Farm co-founder, David Chatton Barker and his previous work; but we also traversed other sites in the Rossendale Valley and further afield. I fondly remember going to Mankinholes, Halifax Piece Hall and Townley Hall in Burnley with Luke and Maggie. I was fortunate to record pack pony bells at Townley Hall Art Gallery and Museum and to film pack pony saddles at Shibden Hall Museum.

Our residency period followed artist Lucy Wright's stay at the cabin. I found our residency echoed Wright's explorations of loss and the landscape. Overwhelmingly, I kept getting drawn to ideas of speculation and a position of traveling through a place. Over the period of the residency I took great inspiration from the cabin's library which contained guided walks and stories about the area such as *The Roof of Lancashire* by Herbert C. Collins.

On one walk over Brown Wardle Hill I happened to encounter the semi-feral herd of fell ponies and had my Bolex camera to hand. Using the farm's darkroom I was able to hand process and develop these images on site.



At the end of the residency, I took part in *Silent Running*, an environmental music festival, an all day event curated by the Analogue Farm clan. That day I got the opportunity to meet people and guide them through a 16mm photogram workshop and installed some textile banners to frame the entrance to the barn space for the evening performances. In addition to the soundscape mixed live, the musician [Thorny Wych](#) added improvised accompaniment on waterphone. The event gave me the opportunity to try out an expanded film performance as a way to present the findings of our research: a mixture of field recordings, photographs, 16mm film and digital video.