

INHABIT
BROMFORD

ARTIST'S STATEMENT : JANE BAKER

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Bromford is self contained, quiet, with little passing traffic. Very few outsiders know of its existence. The shops are overlooked by tower blocks forever rumoured to be coming down, circled by houses below. They, in turn, are hemmed in on one side by a busy motorway and on the other a thriving woodland. Airplanes fly overhead. Local residents are joined by council staff or those in the maintenance trade, builders, electricians and plumbers who come in and out during the day. Together they pop into the shops for the odd item often forgotten at the nearby supermarket or for a takeaway, some new specs, a prescription, something from the hardware shop or to pick up their pension. Some, old and young, simply come to stand outside and chat.

Bromford is young in its years - forty or there about. Then, what was once a racecourse became a shiny new housing estate full of promise. The sound of horse hooves turned to the pitter patter of children's feet as young families moved into what felt like a new beginning - new homes, new friends, new shops and even a new football team. Everything was shiny, beautiful, full of hope. Today many of those fresh faced children still live here,

now aged, some in retirement, some still frequenting the same old pub to reminisce, take stock and put the world to rights. One thing that really stands out is the strong sense of community here.

The younger generation and those who have moved here since only know Bromford for what it is now, tired and worn, so it's hard for them to join in and reminisce and easier to look at the now. Behind the faded scenes there are a few dedicated people working hard to restore Bromford to its former glory; youth workers and spirited local residents alike, engaging at times with the local authority.

Of course the shops take geographical centre stage. Some take their position with pride and hold their heads high in these difficult economic times. Some are worn down by years, some shops have changed, some remain the same.

And that's where Inhabit has taken centre stage too, on the high street. It's four walls witness to stories of the past, present and future; of hopes and dreams for what is yet to come here in Bromford...





MOHINDER SINGH HARRISH
OWNER, BROMFORD POST OFFICE
AND GENERAL STORE
(148 BROMFORD DRIVE)

The main business is the post office that helps us survive. We can't survive just on selling chocolate and cigarettes. Here you have to come to get your money; benefits mostly. If people have the money in their hand they spend it in here first, then go elsewhere.

Every business is struggling to survive.



NADEEM HUSSAIN

NADEEM HUSSAIN
OWNER, NEEDFUL THINGS
(144 BROMFORD DRIVE)

I always wanted to get my own shop and to have a business, so I thought I'd try it. I'm the kind of person that can't sit at home and sign on. I want to be out there working. I haven't signed on since the age of eighteen and I'm thirty-three now. I want to support my family.

Also pictured : Anthony Manning, customer



**ARKLE STORES – GENERAL STORE
RUN BY KASHMIR SINGH BATH
(51 BROMFORD DRIVE)**

Financially I had to claw everything in to the shop. Every few years we find a new sleeping dinosaur or a new line that you can make loads of money on and then it vanishes, like, videos, then dvds. The big stores have got a lot of clout. Now we fight for everything we can get from them. Give it another, say, ten years and you'll see the end of the corner shop.

BHARAT AMIN ▶
**OWNER, NISA LOCAL
(152 - 156 BROMFORD DRIVE)**

We are getting back people's confidence to use the shop, as their local shop. Gradually people are accepting it now. We know we're all in the same boat. What's the point crying over it? That's the way I look at it. If you think positive you'll always achieve it, if you think negative you'll never achieve it!



BHARAT AMIN



KAREN
LOCAL BROMFORD RESIDENT AND
SHOP MANAGER, SW OPTICS LTD
(140 BROMFORD DRIVE)

When I first came on to this estate these shops had just been built. It was beautiful. Over the years it has been dragged down and down and down.

I must love this estate? Forty-four years and I've not even left the house!

I know if I'm feeling down I could knock on a multitude of doors and there will always be somebody there to listen.



HAYLEY SMITH
LOCAL BROMFORD RESIDENT WITH CHILDREN
WHO ATTEND THE HUB
(146 BROMFORD DRIVE)

I am a full time mum. I have six children. I moved here to be closer to my mum so the kids can see their Nan. Everyone used to say it was quite rough but when I actually moved here I didn't think it was as bad as everyone made it out to be. My son absolutely loves it. As soon as he finishes school he says 'Mum can I run round to The Hub'. It's the only thing on the Bromford for kids to do.



ANTHONY BOLGER
LOCAL BROMFORD RESIDENT

I'm currently unemployed at the moment and am looking to find work, but it is difficult in these economic times. I think now in the modern society the internet is becoming a valuable tool for job search, research and everything else. One thing that would be fantastic around here for people like myself is a place where you could access the internet, just like the library on our doorstep.



TERRY SMITH
LOCAL BROMFORD RESIDENT

I'm eighty-nine years of age. I'm still very active. I'm one of the oldest residents here. When we came to live in Birmingham I'd been through the war and that and come back and got married. The people are good here. They're friendly. I'm on the tasking committee and I'm very interested in anything concerning the estate.



MOSES T BIDIMBU
LOCAL BROMFORD RESIDENT

I come from Belgium. I moved to the UK to learn English, to write English, to speak English. English is my seventh language. I would like an internet café and something like a library. It would be fantastic and would help young people come together.



DONNA MARIE EVANS
LOCAL BROMFORD RESIDENT AND
VOLUNTEER YOUTH WORKER AT THE HUB
(146 BROMFORD DRIVE)

Talking to friend and neighbour Kayleigh (not pictured):

People say our area looks worse but our community spirit is better. I've said to one of my friends if I did leave Bromford I would miss it quite badly not so much because of what we have round here but because of all my friends. I think its good that we've got that because not a lot of areas have got it to be fair. I think that's what makes us.



RYAN WALTAN
LOCAL BROMFORD RESIDENT
ATTENDS THE BOYS GROUP AT THE HUB

PHILIP BODENHAM ▾
YOUTH WORKER TALKS TO
RYAN WALTAN DURING THE
BOYS GROUP AT THE HUB



LANCE BOYCE
LOCAL BROMFORD RESIDENT
AND VOLUNTEER YOUTH WORKER

The youth work courses going on in The Hub are community orientated. You are doing it because you want to give back in to the community. It seems like David Cameron has got his idea of 'The big Society' from The Hub.



EILEEN JOHNSON
LOCAL RESIDENT AND
CUSTOMER AT BROMFORD
MEMBERS CLUB



Eileen:

It was beautiful when I first moved here. It was so clean. I thought 'what a lovely place'.

Friend (not pictured):

A lot of people condemn pubs but it's a place where people meet. A lot of other people go to a shrink to get rid of their problems but I come down here and talk to my mates. If your local is gone, then you've got nothing. We had the 'Big Society' before this [new idea] all came out. She'd take my washing in and i'd take her milk in.



**GRAHAM BARTON AND STEPHEN BARTON
GREW UP IN BROMFORD AS CHILDREN. NO LONGER LIVE LOCALLY BUT
ARE STILL CUSTOMERS AT BROMFORD MEMBERS CLUB**

Stephen (pictured on the left)
I have lived on the Bromford since I was ten or twelve weeks old. I've got to admit I was drinking in here before I was eighteen but the landlord didn't know that. I got rather told off when he found out, when I invited him to drinks on my eighteenth birthday!

Graham We actually moved on to the top of the Bromford in 1967. When we were kids we used to climb on the fences with catapults and hit the horses arses with the stones, didn't we? It's true!

It was brand new when we moved to the Bromford. Most of the people who moved on had young families. So we had new friends, a new football team, everything. It was like a new start.



**CONKY
LOCAL RESIDENT AND CUSTOMER
AT BROMFORD MEMBERS CLUB**

I've been on Bromford for virtually all my life, since I was a baby. I grew up with some right characters on here, absolutely diamond people and they still are today. This used to be the race course. As we got older Dad wanted to nick the grass so we pinched all the turf and put it down in the back garden. We got away with it! I hope the youngsters when they get to our age they'll appreciate what they've got. Enjoy life because it's too short when you get to our age.

INHABIT IS A PROGRAMME OF CREATIVE ACTIVITY TO RE-INVIGORATE LOCAL HIGH STREETS AND RAISE COMMUNITY CONFIDENCE IN LOCAL SPACES. IT AIMS TO SUPPORT LOCAL AREAS DURING THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN, REVIVING SHOPPING CENTRES BY TRANSFORMING VACANT SPACES INTO VIBRANT PLACES.

INHABIT IS BEING DELIVERED BY HYBRID – A CATALYST ORGANISATION THAT ENGAGES IN CROSS-SECTORAL AND INTERCULTURAL CONVERSATIONS AND RESEARCH. WE HAVE BEEN PRODUCING COMMUNITY BASED ARTS WORK WITH INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS SINCE 2001.

IN 2010/2011, AROUND 13% OF THE SHOPS IN THE UK ARE VACANT. IT IS THOUGHT THAT ONE IN FIVE MAY NEVER BE USED AGAIN. THE EMPTY SHOPS INITIATIVE AIMS TO HELP NEW BUSINESSES ‘START UP’ ON THE HIGH STREET, BRING VISITORS BACK TO THEIR LOCAL HIGH STREET AND HELP THE LOCAL COMMUNITY TURN PRIVATE SPACES INTO PUBLIC PLACES.

BY THE CLOSE OF INHABIT, FOUR TEAROOMS WILL HAVE TRAVELLED ACROSS BIRMINGHAM REACHING LADYWOOD, HANDSWORTH, STIRCHLEY AND BROMFORD. THE TEAROOMS PROVIDED INVITING SPACES FOR OVER 2000 PEOPLE TO MEET, TALK, PARTICIPATE IN CREATIVE WORKSHOPS, REINVENT THEIR LOCAL HIGH STREETS AND ENJOY SHOPPING LOCALLY.

THEY WILL ALSO HAVE PROVIDED AN ENORMOUSLY DIVERSE RANGE OF ARTS AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES, ENGAGEMENTS AND OUTPUTS. EACH OF THE TEAROOMS HAS BEEN HOST TO A CROSS SECTION OF ARTISTS, OFFERING A WIDE RANGE OF ARTS FORMS AND APPROACHES.

INHABIT: STIRCHLEY WAS OUR THIRD TEAROOM AND WE OCCUPIED THE SPACE FROM JANUARY 2011 UNTIL MARCH 2011, WE THEN MOVED TO OUR FINAL TEAROOM INHABIT: BROMFORD FROM FEBRUARY 2011 UNTIL APRIL 2011. HUNDREDS OF CUPS OF TEA WERE MADE AND DRANK, CAKE WAS EATEN AND STORIES WERE SHARED. WE’D LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE WHO VISITED OUR TEAROOMS. WE HOPE THAT YOU ENJOYED HAVING US, AND FOUND THE TEAROOM SOMETHING TO REMARK UPON – SOMETHING REMARKABLE. THIS ALBUM FORMS PART OF

THE HISTORY OF OUR STAY IN STIRCHLEY AND BROMFORD AND OFFERS A SMALL PORTRAIT OF TWO LOCAL BIRMINGHAM HIGH STREETS.

INHABIT IS FUNDED BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND. IT WAS COMMISSIONED BY BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL AS PART OF THE ‘CULTURE ON YOUR DOORSTEP’ STRAND OF BIRMINGHAM’S CULTURAL STRATEGY.

INHABIT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE GENEROSITY OF OUR LANDLORDS. LORRAINE MOORE AND IVY GUYAH WHO GAVE US THEIR FRESHLY REBUILT SPACE AT 1474 PERSHORE ROAD AND TIM EVANS AND PAUL WRIGHT IN BROMFORD WHO OPENED UP WORTH UNLIMITED AT 146 BROMFORD DRIVE FOR US. THE PAVILIONS SHOPPING CENTRE ENABLED US TO EXHIBIT ALL OF THE WORK AS A RESULT OF THEIR ON-GOING SUPPORT FOR ARTS AND COMMUNITY PROJECTS IN AND AROUND THE CITY.

**SAMINA ZAHIR
DIRECTOR, HYBRID**

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON INHABIT, PLEASE VISIT HYBRID’S WEBSITE AT WWW.HYBRIDCONSULTING.ORG.UK

