

Even a square-nosed shovel has cracked with memory of the mines. Little faults criss-cross through the metal, marking a map of underground tunnels crawled through for coal.
19 April 2004, tenth visit

Not very long ago in the Erewash Valley, backdrop to the writing of D.H. Lawrence, a canal was hewn out using only pick, shovel wheelbarrow and cart, by manpower alone, to open up a trade route from the ironworks, brickworks and collieries of the region. The Erewash landscape is marked by the contrasts between rural farming and the industrial revolution. Once the home of major coal mining, iron and steel works which subsided into other industries, most significantly textiles, the green of nature now swaddles the valley's industrial past together with a multitude of other histories, stories and voices dating back 10,000 years.

Perched above this valley Erewash Museum rests on the edge of Ilkeston which, listed in the Doomsday book, has a history that stretches far behind us and through the museum's great wide windows you see over a vast swathe of the valley. It is a Pandora's Box, packed with objects, made, owned or used by people from the area. In the scratches on a coal shovel, the cracks in a pot, the thumbed pages of a ration book or frayed edges of an Edwardian swimsuit, the dark lonely faces in a Victorian school photograph, empty leather boots, the worn school desk and chipped china doll are the intimate, small stories of lives past.

Little leather boots that once supported a family's first steps now sit sad and empty, overshadowed by frivolous red silk slippers with no knowledge of common ground.
24 February 2004, first visit

It is in these tiny details, among the small stories that form so many different histories depending on how you assemble them, that Hannah Carvell's work *Memories of the Little Things* takes its inspiration. The title relates to the hundreds of stories, both real and imagined, that are present in the collection echoing the saying that 'it's the little things that matter'.

Memories spark with each match. Made years ago, they were kept safely by a careful person waiting for the right time to light the flame, to smoke a cigarette, and remember.
21 April 2004, eleventh visit

Carvell has placed transparent photographs on the windows and poetic writing in the some of the cases around the museum. Her dreamlike images and short texts are fragments of thoughts, messages from the past or future, as if stolen from someone else's memory. They imagine the lives behind the objects and transport us to other places, unknown places, places of longing and belonging.

Brassy buttons and shiny medals award the brave and the strong, and yet somehow this quiet, unused dressing gives me a more powerful sense of survival.
7 April 2004, nineth visit

Alice Angus
2004

Quotes are from *Memories of the Little Things* by Hannah Carvell © 2004

Hannah Carvell lives and works in Derby. She graduated in Fine Art from Birmingham Institute of Art and Design in June 2002 and has exhibited at Angel Row Gallery and Wollaton Hall in Nottingham.



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Photographs by Hannah Carvell

Memories of the Little Things by Hannah Carvell and *Out of Curiosity* by Lothar Goetz (Old People's Rest Room, Ashbourne) are the culmination of a one year Visual Arts Action Research project to develop a three year Derbyshire Visual Arts Exhibition Strategy. The research has been undertaken by Alice Angus (Proboscis), in collaboration with curator Deborah Smith for Derbyshire Arts Development Group (DADG): a consortium of independent arts organisations, local authority arts officers and representatives from other cultural and learning agencies.

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Hannah Carvell
Memories of the Little Things



24 March 2004, sixth visit
A bag bursts with a long gone champion's lost marbles. Small glass spheres of happiness knock together and the sound makes me nauseous.



5 April 2004, eighth visit
Awkward little ladies sit having tea and cake, a bucket and shovel on the table between them as though some accident had just occurred.

