

Articles for Responsible Cairning

So you're ready to stack, you have an idea but where to start?

NOT UP A FELLSIDE! Building new cairns up mountains confuses the navigational message of those that are already there. Adding to them is also discouraged, many are ancient monuments and you don't want to damage them. The tradition of adding a rock when passing is also discouraged these days because if everyone's collecting stones to stack, it adds to erosion. So take the cairns on high as inspiration but leave them be.

Cairn-care covered, on to the crafting...

- Choose your location
- Get permission
- Get stacking
- Installing and dismantling your cairn
- Showing off your masterpiece

Step 1: Choose your location

This depends on scale – yours may be a miniature, fleeting, table-top sort-of creation at your own place - in which case, you won't have to worry too much about this. But if you're thinking of a more monumental sculpture, consider your cairn-building site with care. If you or your group meet in a regular venue (community centre / church hall etc) then that's a good place to start. But if you'd like to grab a bit more attention, then venture into more public spaces such as:

Town centres • shopping malls • parks and gardens • bus/train stations • school railings • local galleries/museums • bridges • statues • community centres libraries

Step 2: Get permission

Whilst street art is generally anonymous and permission isn't usually sought, Cairns for Cumbria is part of a nationwide Voluntary Arts project and we must stress that if you are planning to build in a public place – YOU MUST GET PERMISSION.

Voluntary Arts cannot be held responsible for any damage to property or people, so please keep you (and those around you) safe, and respect the spot you're embellishing. If you're using stone for example, don't stack so high your creation is likely to topple on people and hurt them.

You can, of course, stack to your heart's content on your own private property – if you are part of an arts venue/community centre or in your own garden, driveway etc. But if you are thinking of using the local park, town square, school playground, village hall etc, you must contact the relevant authorities to get the OK. Part of this may involve carrying out a health & safety risk assessment (for example, if you are going to use ladders to help build your creation or anything heavy).

When contacting the relevant authorities, it is worth mentioning the following:

- Cairns for Cumbria is part of a nationwide project which is aimed at engaging communities and celebrating creativity. When getting in touch with people, please mention Voluntary Arts and point them towards the website, www.voluntaryarts.org
- Unless it's your land, your cairn will be temporary and should be straight-forward to put-up and take down.
- State that you will be the key contact for your cairn, and be responsible for putting up/taking down the work. Provide dates/times for when you intend to do this, along with your contact details.
- Point out that this is a great way of brightening up the neighbourhood and creating something positive for people to see.
- Take a note of the person you spoke to and make sure you are clear about what you can and can't do.

Step 4: Get stacking...

Stacking is meant to be a communal sport - people coming together to make something that's truly more than the sum of its parts. Join with friends, get your club stacking or make it an activity to add a focal point to an event.

You could link-up with other groups in your area and run some open workshops to make bits for your cairn.

If you're a venue why not open your doors/gate and invite local crafters in to use your space. It will no doubt generate public interest in your venue.

Thinking big? Need more people...

- Give a shout out for contributions – These can then be brought together to create a collective piece. For example crocheted rock covers, felted pebbles, pottery faces.
- Run a workshop – Organise a crafty workshop and invite people to make items for your cairn.
- Work with a venue – Approach your local arts venue, school or community centre to see if you could run a workshop with their regular members.
- Link with other groups – Find out about other craft groups in your area and see if you can get creative together.

Saturday May 10 is when the cairn-building party begins with the launch event at Grizedale - that's the start of Voluntary Arts Week when nationwide, arts groups are making a noise about what they do. But there's no deadline, 2014 is one long celebration of the cairn. Perhaps choose a moment when there's something going on where you live so you've got an audience and participants for admiring/building your creation.

You will have discussed when your cairn needs to come down when you asked for permission, so please be aware that it is your responsibility to take down the work and set a date to do so. Take it down before it starts falling down!

Step 6: Showing-off your Cairn

Your cairn is temporary so preserve it digitally - take photos as you build it and of the finished creation.

- Share your work on Facebook at www.facebook.com/upforartscumbria and www.facebook.com/bbcradiocumbria

Email to radio.cumbria@bbc.co.uk

- Tag your photos and videos with the

#CitizenCairn hashtag when sharing via Twitter / Instagram / Youtube

Happy stacking out there.

*If you want tips on taking good photos and on creating a YouTube presence there are free guides to download at www.voluntaryarts.org

Voluntary Arts is the national development agency for arts participation. Up for Arts is a collaboration with BBC Local Radio to promote & support voluntary arts groups.

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