

## Basic Info:

- Designed by world-famous, award-winning Catalan artist Jaume Plensa
- Standing on a plinth, Dream is 20 metres, 66 feet high and is fifty times life size
- The sculpture weighs 373 tonnes and sits on the site of Sutton Manor Colliery
- Made from brilliant white pre-cast concrete with Spanish dolomite, the whitest marble
- The plinth in the shape of a miner's tally is 17 metres in diameter, made of 36 units
- The casting of Dream by Evans Concrete of Derbyshire took a total of sixty days
- A total of 6160 man hours were spent in constructing the sculpture
- 54 different panels each weighing 9 tonnes comprise Dream's head
- The supporting piles go 38 metres underground, nearly twice Dream's height
- An incredible 35 million plus vehicles pass Dream each year on the M62

## Dream Awards:

The prestigious Marsh Sculpture Prize 2009, awarded to the UK's best sculpture of the year.

The Best Community Artwork at Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) North West Planning Achievement Award 2009.

The 2009 British Precast Concrete Federation Creativity in Concrete Award. Awarded to Jaume Plensa

The Ambassador Of St Helens 2009 awarded to Gary Conley for his work on and promotion of Dream

The 2010 Civic Trust Award

The 2010 Civic Trust Special Award for Community Engagement

The 2010 Places of Interest Quality Assurance Scheme (PIQAS) accreditation and chosen as the venue for the national launch

The 2010 Visit England Northwest Tourism Award for Public Space, presented to the former miners for their work on Dream.

The 2010 Merseyside Civic Society Best Open Space Award

The 2010 Merseyside Civic Society Civic Pride Award (voted for by the public)

## Directions and parking:

Exit the M62 motorway at Junction 7 - at the roundabout take the exit onto the A57, Warrington Road - turn onto the B5419, Jubits Lane - continue along the B5419 following signs for car parking at King George V car park.

## Links:

**Brilliant Lives:**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBDwS8sLKzk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBDwS8sLKzk)

**The Big Art Project (the St Helens Story):**

[vimeo.com/12737491](http://vimeo.com/12737491)

**Sutton Beauty Dream:**

[www.suttonbeauty.org.uk/beauty/dreamsthelens](http://www.suttonbeauty.org.uk/beauty/dreamsthelens)



St. Helens Council

The story of  
**dream**™  
→ [dreamsthelens.com](http://dreamsthelens.com)



## 1906

Work on Sutton Manor Colliery commences. Local proprietor Richard Evans sinks number 1 shaft with a diameter of 18 feet. Completed in December 1909 when the shaft was extended to a depth of 1,823 feet. The sinking of no.2 shaft at Sutton Manor began in July 1906 and completed in 1912, extended to a depth of 2,343 feet. The equivalent of nearly 5 Blackpool Towers.

## 1910

Coal production starts at the Colliery

## 1964

This year sees Sutton Manor Colliery at its height employing 1,400 people and producing 1500 tons of coal per week.

## 1983

The National Coal Board announced a £14 million investment in Sutton Manor, converting it into one of Britain's most modern collieries.

## 2001

The Forestry Commission leased the site from St.Helens Council and after consulting with the local community put project Wasteland to Woodland into operation.

## 1984

A year-long strike commences. This is a particularly difficult period in the colliery's life not only for the pit but its workforce as well.

## 2005

Sean Durney, the Arts Officer for St.Helens Council, writes an application and nominates the former Sutton Manor colliery site for a new Channel 4 TV programme called 'The Big Art Project' where sites aim to inspire and create unique works of public art across the UK. Its an opportunity for the public to be at the centre of a unique initiative right where they are living and become a central character in a prime-time television series. However, Sean wasn't alone as more than 1400 people across the UK also nominated sites within their own local communities. Former miner Gary Conley is asked to come on board to form a small focus group of ex Sutton Manor miners who will work with an artist to commission an artwork backed by the local authority. Important Council contributions are made by John Whaling (Economic Development Manager who was also the *Dream* Project Manager) and Bob Hepworth (Director Urban Regeneration & Housing).

The project is given a working title, 'Ex Terra Lucem' (from the earth comes light). It's the St Helens former town motto based around coal and glass

## 2006

**January.** The council recruit Laurie Peake of Liverpool Biennial, to act as curator for the project. Laurie recently commissioned Anthony Gormley's work on Crosby Beach entitled 'Another Place'.

**March.** Channel 4 commission Carbon Media to make the TV series and recruit a number of art and regeneration experts to sift through applications. Within months Channel 4 announce a shortlist of twelve sites, which includes the St Helens bid, with the narrowing down the dozen sites to six that would feature in the TV series.

**April.** The six winning sites are announced and the former Sutton Manor Colliery site is NOT chosen. The Big Art Project would instead comprise communities in Burnley, Cardigan, Isle of Mull, Newham in East London, North Belfast and Sheffield. All the planning and discussions with proposed stakeholders and funders in St Helens had come to nothing. Or had it?

**November.** Seeing that all of the chosen sites were encountering difficulty, Channel 4 decide to review its decision on discarding St Helens and decide to include the Sutton Manor site as a seventh location.

## 2004

First the heavily compacted soil was prepared for tree planting and over fifty thousand young trees including alder, willow and ash were planted.

## 1991

**May.** British Coal announced that the pit was unviable after losses of £23 million over the previous five years.

**June.** The colliery closes with over 40 years of coal still underground.

## 2007

**February.** Former miners steering group, hold a meeting to select an artist to work with. From a short list of 12, the former miners unanimously choose world famous Spanish artist Jaume Plensa to submit a proposal, of which he accepts. It is a massive coup to get someone of his stature involved.

**April.** Barcelona-born Plensa visits the Sutton Manor site, meeting the former miners. A close bond is immediately formed with Plensa saying, "The site is an amazing place which has lost its heart".

**August.** Jaume Plensa meets the steering group with his first proposal. It's a 20 metre-mining monument in the shape of a 20-metre miner's lamp, 'The Miner's Soul'. Disappointingly Plensa had produced a structure looking through the former miners eyes keeping the site in the past. The former miners reject the proposal and ask for something more contemporary and inspirationally forward looking.

**September.** The Council's John Whaling taps into external resources, raising 1.9 million pounds from The Arts Council, British Coal Regeneration Scheme, the North West Development Agency and the Forestry Commission.

## 2009

**April.** The topping off ceremony takes place as the final section of *Dream* is winched into place to much media publicity.

**May.** Channel 4's 5-week TV series 'The Big Art Project' starts with the St Helens site and *Dream* becoming pivotal to the success of the programme. St Helens becomes the only site to produce a piece of public artwork of such magnitude.

**June.** The official opening ceremony takes place with a crowd of over 2 thousand people in attendance. It's a very special day with a traditional Whit Walk, brass bands, choirs, and the guest of honour, Jaume Plensa.

## 2008

**February.** Jaume Plensa returns to St Helens with his new proposal '*Dream*'. *Dream* takes the form of the head and neck a 9-year-old girl that has been elongated by a third. Dreaming not only about her future but also that of the former colliery site and St Helens. It's proposed that the landmark will give hope and aspirations for future generations and become a positive symbol for the area. It's to be constructed in English concrete and Spanish dolomite marble. She is to sit on a plinth of a giant miners tally as a reminder of the heritage of the site.

**September.** St.Helens Council grant planning permission for the *Dream* structure. However, delight is tempered by the news from the Highways Agency that *Dream* could not be illuminated.

**October.** Evans Concrete of Derbyshire wins the contract to fabricate *Dream* in ninety individual panels of pre-cast concrete, which is to be conveyed to St Helens in sections. Arup were appointed as Lead Consultant with Cheetham Hill Construction the lead constructors.

## 2012

BBC's 'The One Show'. Alex Riley interviews Gary Conley about *Dream* for a report on public art. It is revealed that over 64,000 people had visited the Sutton Manor site in 2011-12.

## 2011

**March.** St.Helens Council state that 24,000 people visited the site between February and May in 2011.

**August.** Lord Melvyn Bragg visited *Dream* at Sutton Manor to interview the former miners for his three-part BBC2 series 'Class and Culture'. Bragg describes *Dream* as 'A cultural monument for a class'.

## 2010

**May.** Ambient Lights are installed at the base of the sculpture, and *Dream* is illuminated with the beautiful alabaster elongated face. But within days, vandals smash the lights. It's a sad day for St Helens and the site.

**November.** St.Helens Council make an ambitious digital interpretation. From next summer the stories of Sutton Manor Colliery, the site, its ecology and *Dream* are being told using a variety of media.

## 2013

Screenwriter Frank Cottrell Boyce visits *Dream* for a Radio 4 broadcast where he says that he used *Dream* and the motto 'Ex Terra Lucem' as inspiration for the opening ceremony for the 2012 Olympic Games in London.

## 2014

Gary Conley is featured in the Liverpool Echo on the 30 year anniversary of the start of the miners' strike. Gary tells the media that *Dream* will represent the mining heritage in St Helens and will ensure that it will never be forgotten.

## 2015

*Dream* is again featured in the Liverpool Echo entitled: '26 Amazing Things About The Dream Sculpture' It draws great interest and features aerial footage of the sculpture never seen before showing the vastness and beauty of the site.

Stuart Maconie visits *Dream* and the former miners to record a programme for Radio 4 about northern male and the bonds between miners. The recording went on to become Radio 4's documentary of the month.

## 2017

Residents were invited to take part in a free community yoga session at *Dream* to celebrate the Summer Solstice with yoga and Pilates instructor Nisha Srivastava. Nisha has worked with Saints and Everton.

## 2016

Official figures have estimated that there have been 85,000 visits to *Dream* since last year. The final result was calculated using turnstiles at either end of the former site of Sutton Manor Colliery has been used.

