

Ashford Arts and Heritage Trail Documentation of development work 2002/2003

THE REMAINS OF

Mrs. ELIZABETH WATERS

WIFE OF

OLD WILLIAM

DEPARTED

THIS LIFE

ON THE 15th OF MARCH 1813 IN THE 77th YEAR OF HER AGE

HE DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON THE 15th OF JUNE 1810 IN THE 90th YEAR OF HIS AGE

THEY WERE BURIED IN THE SAME GRAVE

IN THE SAME LANDS FORTY YEARS

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Introduction

This booklet is intended to document the consultative and collaborative development process initiated by Ashford Town Centre Partnership. This process was begun to reevaluate and investigate the potential for an arts and heritage trail within the historic Ashford Town Centre and its environs.

This document attempts to offer a flavour of the collaborative and discursive nature of the project. In this commission the role of the artist was not that of a remote practitioner but more of an amateur archivist exploring methods to offer a valid representation of the complex and fascinating heritage of Ashford.

Ashford is a site of great historic significance. Aspects of the old market town are still visible within the centre and traces of its architectural heritage jostle for position within the contemporary developments. Ashford bears evidence to the utopian and grand town planning schemes of the post-war era. A sweeping ring road, an incongruously large office development and a plethora of car parks pay testament to the ambitious plans for expansion that have reshaped the urban landscape. In recent times Ashford's role has once again been reassessed. The emergence of the channel tunnel rail link connection has relocated Ashford as a potential commuting and commercial centre which may serve to relate to both London and Paris. This immense significance suggests that Ashford will once again embark on a process of social and architectural change. The hypothetical expansion of the sixties looks set to become a reality over the next decade. It is in this context that the consultative and exploratory process has been undertaken.

It became obvious that this may be a unique point in Ashford's history. While it is essential that the physical heritage of Ashford is carefully protected and preserved a more transient resource is also perhaps uniquely available. At this point of optimism and future planning the population of Ashford contains a precious resource in the living memories of its inhabitants. Spanning the transitions of the twentieth century from members of the community who remember vividly the landscape of the town before the dramatic redesign of the Sixties and Seventies to younger members of the community who have known of the International rail connection for their whole lives and who may remember with nostalgia the current landscape in light of the forthcoming investment and urban improvement.



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ASHFORD ARTS & HERITAGE TRAIL

ARTIST'S BRIEF (DRAFT) – THE TRAIL ARTIST

1. INTRODUCTION

A collaboration of Ashford Town Centre Partnership and Ashford Borough Council wishes to commission an artist to work on the first phase of an Arts and Heritage Trail for Ashford Town Centre. This first phase consists of research and consultation, plus outline design of markers and creative forms of interpretation for the Trail. The outcome of the research and the outline designs will contribute to funding applications for the implementation of the route, and further commissions once this phase is complete.

2. BACKGROUND

Ashford is a town that is growing and changing to reflect the changing economy of the area and the impact of its major transport and communication terminal. The Town Centre Partnership and the Council are keen to enhance the perception that people have of the town as a Heritage and Tourist destination - a fact that can be overshadowed by the rail terminal and communication industries.

This project aims to:

create new interest in Ashford Town Centre, working with artists to highlight its unique heritage, both historical and contemporary
create a walking trail for visitors and residents, which improves perceptions of safety through use of light where appropriate
create a regional and nationally significant tourist trail for visitors to Ashford.

The trail will be created through a commission to a single artist, and will be augmented by an associated body of artistic commissions in the future.

A general route has been identified for the trail through a Heritage Trail study commissioned in 2000 by the Town Centre Partnership. As well as detailing a route, this study indicated areas of significant historic interest and also possible sites for installation of artworks. The intention of this first phase commission is to review this route and allow an artistic approach to developing the route itself.

3. TRAIL ARTIST'S BRIEF

The Trail Artist is required to carry out a research and development phase into the Ashford Arts and Heritage Trail.

This will consist of:

reviewing existing research and the existing suggested route (as noted above) to arrive at an overall vision of the trail
marking the trail through creating designs for a family of trail markers, working with the input of locally based people
within the vision for the trail, identifying areas for historic interpretation and/or sites for future artists' commissions

The artist needs to bear in mind that there is a possibility that the trail could grow in future years.

All of the commissions linked to the trail should be contemporary in their feel, utilising innovative technologies and creative interpretation techniques, but in doing so remain sensitive and respectful, bringing people's attention to the historic nature of the town centre. The work should be challenging and questioning on a human scale and protect a sense of scale and intimacy that prevails when in the town on foot. The project should encourage pedestrian use of the town. The artist should consider the diversity of sites presented within the town, and note that the boundaries of the town centre are not necessarily fixed within the current scope of the trail – it may be that people's perceptions of the town centre are different to the area suggested by roads and buildings.

Commission Tasks:

The tasks below have been separated out for clarity, but it is expected that they may run concurrently, with information, research and consultation all feeding into the overall picture for the Trail.

a) Review existing route/research, creating overall vision
The Trail Artist will be expected to spend time researching the route as currently indicated, and thinking about any variations or additions which might make sense historically, aesthetically or in terms of access. Access to historians, local museums and tourism information will be facilitated, and a coherent trail with particular sites of interest should be the outcome. The trail need not need a definite start or finish point, nor necessarily be a circular route, but clear orientation and a logical way of finding the route is essential.

b) Marking the trail

The artist will be required to consult with a small team of locally based people – who either live or work in the town centre – to create designs for a clear, contemporary but sensitive family of trail markers and

The Brief (continued)

interpretation. They should also consider the possibility of talking to visitors to Ashford. The consultative nature of this commission should not result in elements designed or made by the participants, rather their input should brief the artist into what people think of and like about Ashford, and what is important to them. Clearly this consultative process could also feed into the overall route, as well as selection of sites for historical or artistic interpretation. The artist might wish to convene with a group of people as an introduction to the project, or may prefer to carry out research themselves first, before discussing it with others. The artist should also note future development plans for the town centre, and the Steering Group will be able to provide briefings on that.

The artist should consider particularly the use of light and new technology in the creation of the markers, so that they are visible both night and day. They will not be intrusive in the already cluttered urban environment, but will be able to be found where needed, e.g. at junctions. The designs will need to take into account how people will actually access the trail – will the marker themselves make it clear this is a trail, or will it need interpretative leaflets or panels to introduce it?

c) Historic interpretation and commission sites

The artist should consult with local tourism officers and possibly local historians regarding the information to be provided at each site of historic or other significance. The artist will suggest a form of interpretation at each site. This should preferably be different from the standard “interpretation panel” and could perhaps be interactive and make use of sound or projection. The design of the interpretation should relate to the design of the markers and be constant at each site, with only the content varying, so that the information is easy to recognise.

In addition, at each site, the Trail Artist should suggest whether the site is marked purely by interpretation, or whether another artist might be commissioned to make a more substantial artwork in the future, budget allowing, which relates to the interpretation of the site.

Other issues for consideration:

Durability

The Trail is intended to be permanent, and therefore the design for the markers and interpretation should be durable, and acknowledge the possibility of graffiti and vandalism.

Maintenance

Consideration should be given to maintenance regimes, and a requirement for highly technical or specialised maintenance will not be acceptable.

Accessible Designs

Designs should not create a hostile environment for disabled people. Consideration should be given to including different types of interactive designs which work with all of the senses – hearing, touch, smell as well as visual. The artist should also take into account the different views that people will have of the designs – children, wheelchair users, etc. The designs must also take all Highway safety considerations into account – Council officers will be able to advise.

4. OUTPUTS

The artist will report to a Steering Group which will run the commission, and will be required to present the following during the commission, all of which will need to be approved and agreed by the Group:

Concept vision for the route and interpretation/commission sites

- the results of the research and review period, looking at the existing suggested route and after discussion and consultation

Concept designs for markers and interpretation – to include a written rationale and sketches or photomontage to indicate the appearance and effect

Outline designs to include locations, materials, scale and technical requirements, to test the feasibility of the designs and give an indication of costs

5. WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Arts and Heritage Trail Steering Group

As noted above, this group will run the commission and approve all designs to go forwards. The group is made up of members of the Town Centre Partnership, officers from Ashford Borough Council and a representative of Ashford Visual Artists group. This group will have been responsible for selection of the artist.

Margery Thomas – Town Centre Partnership

Margery Thomas will be the first point of contact for businesses and other organisations connected with the town centre. She will be able to offer contacts and information about the town centre, and will also be facilitating the Steering Group.

Sam Wilkinson/Hazel Colquhoun, Ashford Borough Council public art consultants

Sam and Hazel will be managing the commission on behalf of the Steering Group and will be the first point of contact for the artist, assisting with liaison and information where appropriate.

Chris Fuller – Cultural Projects Manager, Ashford Borough Council

Chris will be the client from the Borough Council side, and will sit on the Steering Group. She will be able to facilitate contacts and information through Council officers.

6. BUDGET AND FEES

The fee for the Trail Artist for this research and development stage is £4,000, to include all transport expenses.

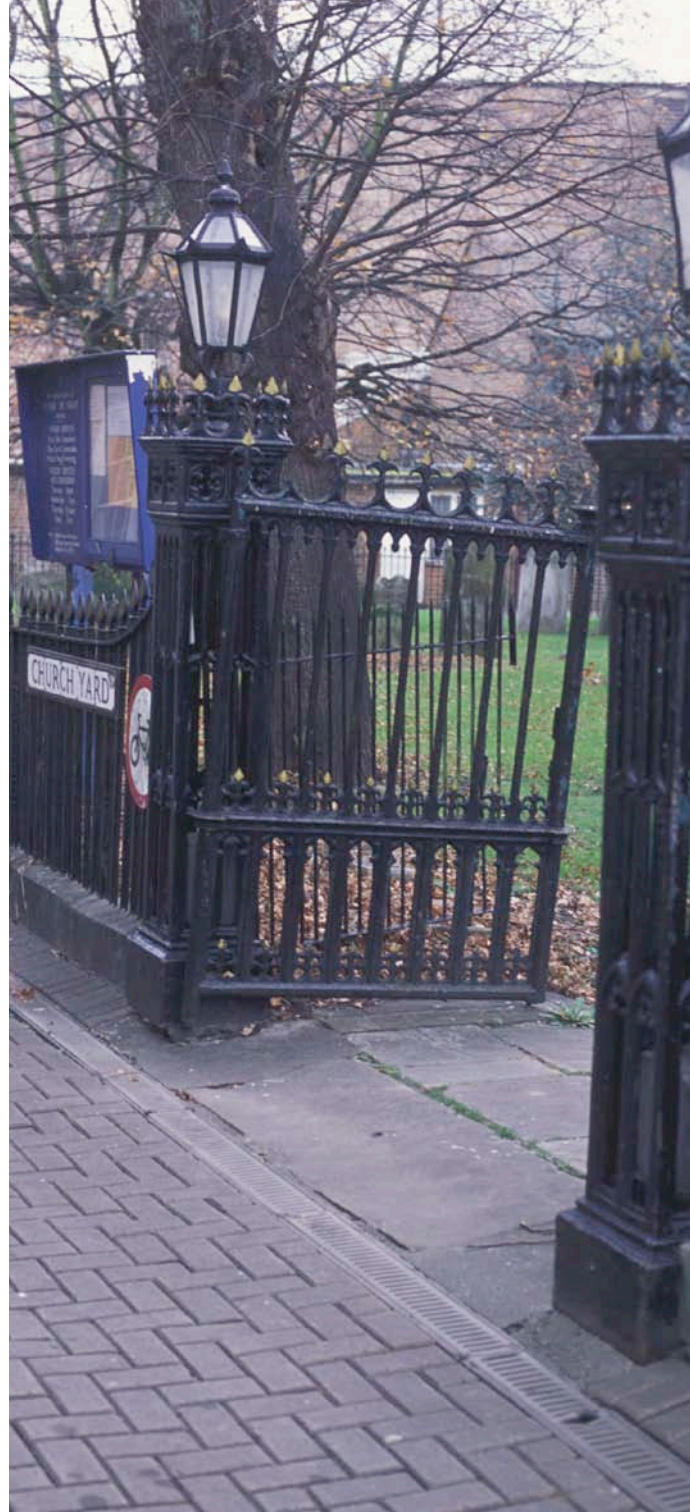
We envisage a budget for the implementation of the trail markers and interpretation of approximately £15,000 - £25,000, to be carried out in future phases of the project. As noted in the introduction to this document, funding applications will be made to resource these future phases.

7. TIMETABLE

Appointment of artist –	June 2002
Research and development –	July/August 2002
Concepts for approval -	September 2002
Designs for approval -	October 2002

8. CONTRACT

The artist will be appointed to Ashford Town Centre Partnership on a commissioned design contract, which will detail copyright, ownership, reproduction and other rights.





venue for interviews in Ashford

↑ ↓ Reply Reply All [Icons: Print, Forward, Delete, Add, Move]

From: Hazel Colquhoun <hcolquhoun@compuserve.com>
Date: Tuesday, June 18, 2002 08:14
To: muf <studio@muf.co.uk>, jo fairfax <jo@fairfax1.freereserve.co.uk>, deirdre kashdan <deirdrekashdan@btinternet.com>, david cotterrell <d.cotterrell@herts.ac.uk>, Leo Fitzmaurice <leo@lfitzmaurice.fsnet.co.uk>
Cc: sam wilkinson <sam@swpa.com>
Subject: venue for interviews in Ashford

▶ Attachments:ashford town centre.gif

Dear All

Please note that the venue for the interviews in Ashford has been confirmed for next Monday 24th - Elwick Club, Church Road, Ashford. This is opposite Ashford Library. Nearest parking is at Vicarage Lane Car Park, and it is about 10-15 minute's walk from the station. (please see map attached).

I will also send out a hard copy of this and the interview letter today. We will be providing a slide projector, data projector and laptop if required and possibly a video (although the latter is not confirmed). Can you let me know if you need anything else.

thanks
Hazel

The Interview

David Cotterrell
7 Brett Road
London
E8 1JP

Dear David

Interviews Ashford Town Centre Arts and Heritage Trail

Thank you very much for agreeing to come to interview in connection with the above commission. The interviews will take place at
on

Monday June 24

The times of the interviews are as follows:

10.30	Deidre Kashdan
11.15	David Cotterrell
12.00	muf
1.30	Jo & Michael Fairfax
2.15	Leo Fitzmaurice

The interview will last approximately 40 – 45 minutes. You will be expected to give a presentation about yourself and your past work, and your approach to working on a project of this kind, with an initial response to the artist's brief (enclosed). A slide projector and a data projector will be available, please let me know if you need any other equipment. Your presentation should last for 20 to 25 minutes. The panel will then ask you questions and you will have a chance to ask any questions yourself at the end of the interview.

The selection panel will be as follows:

Chris Fuller -	Cultural Projects Mgr, Ashford Borough Council
Sarah Barber -	Head of Tourism/Heritage, Ashford BC
Gordon Turner-	TCP Environment Working Group & local historian
Andrew Bray -	Ashford Visual Artists
Cllr Cochrane or Cllr Laughton -	Ashford Borough Council

There is no guided site visit as such, but you might like to come a little early for your interview and walk around Ashford Town Centre – which is 15 minutes walk from the railway station, and 5 minutes walk from the interview venue.

Travel expenses equivalent to standard class rail fares will be reimbursed – please keep your receipts.

Best wishes

Hazel Colquhoun

September October

CINEMAS

1		1	
2	NORWOOD ST. DRILL HALL		
3	22/11/09	3 Sun	
4		4	
5 Sun	ASHFORD ELECTRIC PICTURE PALACE	5	
6	TUFTON ST.	6 Sun	
7	1911 - 22/7/39		
8		8	
9	ROYAL CINEMA DE LUXE		
10	BEAVER ROAD (PICTURE HOUSE)	10 Sun	
11	24/6/12 -	11	
12	THE CINEMA (14/11/35)		
13	TRIPLE MAY 1987 - JAN 1997		
14		14	
15	ODEON 35 1/4 ST.		
16	31 AUGUST 1936 - 30 AUGUST 1975		
17	10,000 Residents petitioned to	17 Sun	
18	keep cinema	18	
19 Sun		19	
20		20	
21	RAYMONT BRICKS DEAR		
22	29/4/94 TOOK RANK TO		
23	COURT RE: BINGO (MAY 3)		
24		24 Sun	
25 Sun		25	
26		26	
27		27 Sun	
28		28	
29		29	
30 Sun		30	
31			

November December 2004

1	COUNCILLOR RICHARD KING		
2		2	
3	CHAIRMAN KENT COUNTY		
4	COUNCIL TRANSPORT OPERATIONS		
5	BUACT.	5 Sun	ANTI CAR
6		6	
7 Sun	PAUL CLOKIE LEADER		
8	ASHFORD COUNCIL		PRO CAR
9		9	
10	COUNCILLOR PERK		
11	MARGETT LABOUR		
12		12 Sun	
13		13	
14 Sun		14	
15		15	
16		16	
17		17	
18		18	MAGA
19		19 Sun	
20		20	10909
21 Sun		21	
22			
23	RELEASE FROM JONAS		JONO
	PICTURE WEB		

SECRET

Name and Address Telephone

TOM MAUL

1623893/

MR COLEMAN.

CATHY PLANNING VISION 12pm.

CHRIS WEST.

MARIE BRADBURY
ECONOMIC PLANNING
OFFICER

SARAH TOURISM &
HERITAGE

TWINNING - BRITANNIA

ALASTAIR FREE

INTERNATIONAL
STATION PROJECT

SHARON ANN LOGAN

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
OFFICER

Name and Address Telephone

6246
CULTURAL
PROJECTS
SPORTS - ARTS - ETC

WENDY TRAMER
ARTS OFFICER.

PHILIP CARTER
CHAIRMAN.
TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP

MIKE BENNETT
KENTISH TIMES

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

TM. LIBRARY

ANDREW BRAY

PHILLIP (HIGHWAYS)

MARKET TUESDAY, FRIDAY
SATURDAY.

Ashford - The Saxon Beginning

↑ Allan Johnson

Ashford - The Saxon Beginning (lit)

The Rationale

I am interested in exposing the complexity of history and the plurality of opinions about the past. While Ashford has a rich and well documented history, there are many more stories in Ashford which remain undiscussed. It is these stories, offered to me by local people willing to chat, that will most influence the structure and form of my artwork.

Concept vision for route & interpretation/ commission sites

In essence, I would propose locating a number of sites, which would have significance for local people. These may not be the buildings or sites commonly referred to in local histories.

For example: the site which is currently the back of the Iceland store on Park Street. A resident recently spoke with me about the previous building on the site, the Canadian Servicemen's Club which had seen its fair share of wild nights and bare-knuckle brawls. I would be very interested in continuing my discussion with this man and recording his memories to be played to members of the public as they passed this highly specialised 'area of historical significance'. Other places of interest are, the site of the Royal Cinema in Beaver Road, The tombstone of Old William and Mary Waters in the parish Churchyard, The site of the Victoria Road Catholic School destroyed by a flying bomb during World War II and the grave of Simone Weill in the new cemetery.

As mentioned in our previous meeting I would very much like to allow a process of open submission, a kind of self-nomination to occur, whereby residents (old and young) of Ashford could suggest places or persons of personal historical importance. It could be the pub where someone

was proposed to, the alleyway where an idea was formed or the site of the home of an individual who was responsible for a courageous act. I would like to invite the collaboration of the Kentish Express in extending a unique invitation for people to suggest moments and locations to be transformed into places of significance by the act of declaring them. In a unique counter-proposal to the Blue-Plaques of Kensington and Bloomsbury. The extraordinary moments of 'ordinary' lives could be documented with the same reverence and sensitivity as the Victorian monuments to leadership and dynamism that shape our visual understanding of History through the vast array of portraiture and inscriptions which annotate our cities and towns. I would like to facilitate the initiation of a heritage trail of anecdotes and first hand witness statements. Where the illusionary memory of contributors will be appended to the received history of the town and emphasise the rich and varied experience which the environment of the town has played host to.

Concept designs for markers & interpretation

Due to the dramatic changes in the landscape of Ashford over the last fifty years it is possible that some of the markers will define places which have been transformed beyond all recognition. In the case of the Beaver Road cinema, it is now impossible to stand where the entrance to this historic building once stood, as you would need to negotiate the busy traffic of a roundabout, which currently occupies the site. I suggest that the markers could be positioned at vantagepoints overlooking the stage of the narratives, which have been selected. These markers will have to be constructed in such a way that they do not undermine the sense of identity of the conservation areas of Ashford or appear incongruent in the more industrial locations. The markers would need to be identifiable to facilitate their role as landmarks within a trail but not so

Ashford 620352 621500

James Bayler

Mark & Sons

✓

The King Road

The buildings through the past

Ashford's history as a thriving exponent of cinema

The idiosyncratic stories of historical individuals

The living history of Arthur Coleman and colleagues

the history of the town

opportunities to nominate locations of personal significance via Kentish Times

the British led by Tom Carr

the British led by Tom Carr

the British led by Tom Carr

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the British led by Tom Carr

distracting as to undermine the environment which they are celebrating. The issue is further complicated by my desire to include an audio component within the trail. This raises issues of maintenance requirements and vulnerability to vandalism. I have presented a number of opening suggestions for the possible format of these devices and I will elaborate on them further in this text. To facilitate a sound component in a way which is audible but not intrusive, I believe that there are three methods available.

Install a small speaker in the marker which can be activated, either by sensor or button

Install an audio socket to allow visitors to listen with their own or with borrowed headphones

Install an earpiece such as a telephone handset within the marker.

The speaker would work effectively in many environments but might prove problematic in areas of greater ambient noise, particularly in locations which may be close to the ring road. The audio socket would work effectively, but does require a certain level of preplanning for the visitor to participate. For the section of the population which regularly carry personal stereos with them then this would present no problem but for other sections of the population this could risk alienating the potential audience. The final solution is familiar and self-sufficient. A great deal of research has taken place over the last eighty years to create robust devices and many options are available. The possible disadvantage is that design considerations could be overly dominated by the technical requirements of the installation.

I am attracted by the subtlety of the last option in producing markers which essentially borrow much of their format from the existing functional street furniture. The markers could blend in with the environment but be

produced with small visual clues belying their purpose. The subversion of a rapidly super-ceded communication tool to an instrument of community documentation is attractive.

I think that a light source would be an important element in signifying the continuation of the trail and would assist people in their navigation between markers. A light source would indicate activity and could also allow for potential variation in the format of the markers while a series identity is retained.

Potentially it would not be technically very difficult to involve a visual multimedia element to the marker and this kind of technology is now available at a reasonable price. However I believe that in this case restraint is beneficial. In allowing an audio experience to exist which may contrast with the physical environments and certainly influence our perception of it, I think that a visual representation within the marker could potentially limit the scope of the markers to stimulate a re-evaluation of the physical landscape around. I think that the leaps of imagination triggered by the stories on the recording could be unnecessarily contained with the parameters of a defined historical or contemporary image.

Outline designs

The accompanying images document a couple of example sites and suggest the possible contrast in location that might be achieved through the trail. I have used the image of contemporary and traditional phone kiosks as a starting point for discussion. Should a variation on this theme be used it would be possible for the audio to be triggered by the lifting of the handset within the booth. If more than one recorded interview exert was available for a location. It would not be overly complex to make the action of lifting the receiver trigger a random selection of these audio files.

Ideally these devices could be solar powered as pioneered within Ashford by the development of solar powered parking pay points (image included). If the 'kiosk' incorporated a glass component, it might be possible to etch into this material a 'sightline' to indicate the direction of the point of interest, within the environment.

Next step

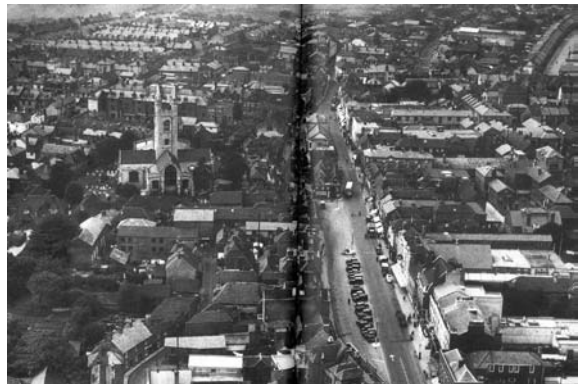
I have been in informal contact with Mr Chris Denham (Senior Reporter, Kent Messenger Group Newspapers). He has expressed great enthusiasm in using the local paper's unique position to invite contributions to the project and to raise local interest in the scheme. Subject to your consent he would be willing to follow the progress of the project and run stories which would encourage local participation through both the Kentish Express and the Extra Newspapers. The paper currently has a circulation of approximately 55,000 and would allow the project a welcome level of democratisation. In addition Mr Tom Hall of the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin and the Ashford museum has suggested that the museum had attempted to start the process of recording interviews with local people with a view to creating an archive of spoken history. This project has been delayed because of a lack of technical knowledge and equipment. Mr Hall was quite enthusiastic that there might be some overlap of intention in the two projects. With the development of the heritage trail project they are planning to restart their project and to make recordings available to the trail, if appropriate. I hope be able to offer them some technical assistance.

The next stage is to decide whether to proceed with the Kent Messenger group collaboration and if so, to plan a method of receiving local contributions. I am unsure whether the best solution would be to allow a contact email or equivalent number for myself personally, or

whether there is some organisation within Ashford which might be willing to receive mail on my behalf, perhaps the Town Centre partnership or similar. This might be ideal in that the project would have a local base address which might increase confidence in the integrity of the venture, however it could put additional strain on the organisation concerned.

I hope the above contribution is interesting at this stage and I would welcome comments and suggestions. I hope that this can be seen as the basis for discussion rather than an absolute declaration of intent. Please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone, email or post if you would find further details useful at this stage.

David Cotterrell.



Action Notes 13.12.02

Action notes from meeting 13 December 2002

Present:

David Cotterrell	Artist
Lisa De Marco	ADO, Ashford Borough Council
Sue Gatward	Ashford Town Centre Partnership
Chris West	Ashford Town Centre Manager
Cllr Laughton	Mayor
Sarah Barber	Head of Tourism, Ashford Borough Council
Kathy Puttnam	Urban Designer, Ashford Borough Council

Action David presented his outline ideas, which were very well received, and there was much discussion around form, design and content. Copies were given out at the meeting, and Ashford TCP undertook to scan and distribute copies of his proposals to the people who did not attend –

All should send feedback and comment to David

The content will be gathered through an appeal in the local newspapers and also through direct mail to schools. David will circulate proposed wording for the newspaper article for comment.

DC to map initial thoughts on location and give to Kathy so that she can drop them on a detailed plan

? Note that the museum would be interested in keeping all of the content as part of an oral history project

? How to select which people are used for the project? Perhaps a small selection panel to be created which will select from the interviews. Also possibility of making the pieces changeable so that the voices will change periodically

? NB 2004 is Heritage Year for the Culture 2000 project, possible we could try to fundraise from this but would need 2 French partners. Kathy is forging links with Lille which may be a possibility.

? How to select which people are used for the project? Perhaps a small selection panel to be created which will select from the interviews. Also possibility of making the pieces changeable so that the voices will change periodically

**Next meeting: Thursday 20 February Elwick Club 12.30 – 2.30pm Presentation of outline designs
SG to send copies to A.Bray, G Turner. Cllr Cochrane HC to draft letter to schools and Lisa DM to distribute after Christmas hols**



EARLY DAYS: The Royal Cinema at its opening in 1912. It later became known as the fleapit before ending up as the town's bingo hall



PIECE OF HISTORY: The old cinema in Beaver Road in the 1970s



GONE FOREVER: The Beaver Road cinema site is now under this roundabout *Ref: p4832165*

Artist is hot on the trail of town's past

BATTLES, monuments and famous buildings are the usual ingredients of a town heritage trail.

But what of the more personal histories that make up a town's character?

As Ashford prepares to undergo its biggest transformation since the Sixties, a new trail is being set up to represent a part of the town's history that will be lost forever.

Artist David Cotterrell is appealing for people to come forward with their personal tales from Ashford's past.

"We're looking for stories with personal significance," he said. "The kind of story you won't find in the history books."

"An example would be people who got engaged in a home where the Ring

by **Chris Denham**

Road is now.

"We want to break the preconception that there was nothing there before Charter House."

Sites under consideration include the Royal Cinema and the picture palace in Beaver Road, which is now a roundabout, and the legendary American Donut Dugout in Park Street.

Any memories of fun and even fights from the club would be welcomed on the Heritage Trail.

The markers for the trail, being set up with the Town Centre Partnership, will be positioned at points overlooking the areas they signify, while blending in with the surroundings.

It is hoped to use audio technology to tell the tales, with first-hand

from the people involved.

"The town is about to change again, with the number of people attracted by the rail link, and we want the stories of people who were here before to be documented before old Ashford is gone," added Mr Cotterrell.

The stories do not have to be old to make it to the trail, history is two years ago as much as 50.

The Kentish Express will be keeping up with the trail as it develops and publishing the best anecdotes, and it is hoped that all the memories will be kept at the library whether they are part of the trail or not.

Please send any memories, ideas and nominations to Sue Gatward, Ashford Town Centre Partnership, Hydra House, 26 North Street, Ashford, Kent.



MAJOR WORKS: Charter House under construction in 1974, showing what an impact it had on the surrounding area



Press contact

↑ ↓ Reply Reply All Forward

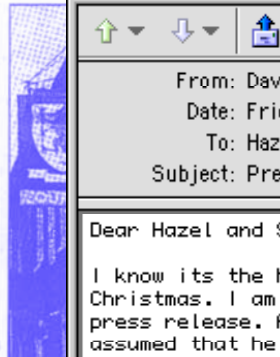
From: David Cotterrell <davidcotterrell@hotmail.com>

Date: Friday, December 27, 2002 13:09

To: Hazel Colquhoun <hcolquhoun@compuserve.com>, <sue@ashfordtcp.plus.com>
Subject: Press contact

Dear Hazel and Sue,

I know its the holiday break. I hope you both had a lovely time over Christmas. I am just writing to as a quick reminder for the Kentish Express press release. Amazingly Chris Denham (the reporter) rang me again today. I assumed that he would still be on holiday. He would like any contact deta



The Call for Anecdotes

ASHFORD Heritage Trail Commission : Press Information

When we think about a “heritage trail” in our town, we imagine monuments to famous people, sites of spectacular battles or ruins of ancient buildings.

Ashford has a rich and well-documented history of this type, but there are many more stories from the area that remain undiscovered.

The new heritage trail for Ashford, proposed by artist David Cotterrell, will look to these less well known stories, nominated by local people. Working with the Town Centre Partnership and Ashford Borough Council, David hopes to create a trail constructed from anecdotes and first-hand witness accounts, rather than historical research in a library.

The train will include a number of sites, scattered throughout the town centre, based on the memories and knowledge of local residents.

Some of these ‘areas of local interest’ might discuss buildings now demolished and replaced – for example at the back of the *Iceland* shop in Park Street was once the Canadian Servicemen’s Club, an infamous haunt for wild nights and bare-knuckle brawls!

Other sites currently under consideration are the old home of the Royal Cinema on Beaver Road, the tombstone of Old William and Mary Waters in the parish churchyard, the Victoria Road Catholic School (destroyed by a flying bomb in WWII), and the grave of Simone Weill in the new cemetery.

We want the people of Ashford to submit suggestions for special sites to form this heritage trail, places which are significant to **you**, not just the history books! The shop where you bought your first party dress; the pub where you proposed to your wife or the home of a courageous member of the public can all have equal weight with the more recognised historical sites currently on Ashford’s map.

The markers for the Heritage Trail will be positioned at points overlooking the sites selected. The markers will be designed to blend in with the surrounding area, whilst still being identifiable as landmarks. They will be vandal-proof and use both audio and visual technology, with the intention of being long-lasting additions to Ashford’s landscape.

We want residents young and old to take part in the creation of the trail. History can mean something that has happened in the last one or two years, as well as fifty years ago! Why not send in your suggestions for places and memories to be included in the trail? The best anecdotes and ideas may be published, and we hope that all of the memories recorded will be stored in Ashford library, whether they are part of the physical trail or not.

Text adapted by Hazel Colquhoun

21 JAN 2003

Bridge Cottage
Snargate Lane
Kenardington
Ashford
Kent. TN26 2NH
Telephone: 01233 733215

Sue Gatward
Ashford Town Centre Partnership
Hydra House
26 North St.
Ashford.

19/1/03

Regarding the photographs of the old
Ashford cinemas in last week's Kentish
Express. The Royal Cinema does not
ring true as the oldest cinema in the
town was the Palace in Tufton Street
which is now Courts furniture store,
my father was the manager there when
"talkies" were new. Before that it showed
silent films with a lady named Nellie
Pope playing suitable piano music to
dramatise the flickering pictures on the
screen, she also was in the ticket
office in the foyer between recitals!
It was the purpose built Odeon in
the High St which became the Bingo Hall

in the High Street. During the last war a boy was employed to take the newsreel from the Odeon to the Cinema on his bike as only one reel was allowed per town. It kept him fit of course.

I was born, along with my four sisters in Somerset Rd which is now part of the race track known as the Rig Rd. It was a very quiet residential road then of course (1930) there was a blacksmith in Belletrey Rd where I remember being taken to see the horses being shod. The Somerset Arms was at the bottom of the road and the public house on the corner of North St. was the Alfred Arms, not far away from the bakery called the Alfred Joint Stock bakery. The landlady of the Somerset Arms whose name I believe was Mrs Ayres for several years gave a Christmas party in the Parish Room in the Churchyard for the local children

which was greatly enjoyed by all the local kids.

The town also had its own theatre called the Hippodrome in Station Rd which my father also ran, before he became involved in moving pictures, which were the in thing of that time I believe quite a few famous actors and actresses appeared there in plays and musicals, there are probably some records of it somewhere perhaps in the local paper of the time if there was such a thing. There are so many things I can remember about old Ashford, it would take ages to write them all down. Almost every road and street has a tale to tell or an interesting character who lived there. I am so pleased some of it is going to be recorded at last before it is all forgotten. Please contact me if I can be of any more help with any 'tit bits', either I or my sister

could probably fill in the gaps.

Yours sincerely
Janet Dickinson

Malthouse Farm

PILGRIMS WAY · BOUGHTON ALUPH · NEAR ASHFORD · KENT · TN25 4EX · ASHFORD (KENT) ϕ 233-623887

Jan 23rd 05

Re. the Somerset Arms pub.

Dear Mr. Gattward,

As my husband was driving down North Street he saw the pub' being demolished & the workmen were hauling stuff onto a huge bonfire.

He stopped & asked if he could buy the front door & the 'jug & bottle' department door glazing. Unfortunately I recently sold the jug & bottle glass as we had it lying around for years, but the 'Somerset Arms' Glazing is in the door of a building ~~at~~ ^{on} our farm. The old door got very worny & rotten so the ^{england} glass is safely in a new door.

Hope this is of some interest - you can visit the door whenever you like!

Best Wishes

Maarie St John

iralph1

From: "John Ralph" <john.ralph2@virgin.net>
To: <sue@ashfordtcp.plus.com>
Sent: 16 January 2003 15:26

Good Afternoon,

Have just read Chris Denhams item in the Kentish Express and with great interest notice the photo of the Somerset Arms, the on the opposite page the Hare & Hounds (my local).

Some 18 months ago while on steward duty at Ashford Museum I was 'volunteered' into checking the closing down of Inns, Public Houses etc in Ashford. Whilst I have not completed, and I don't suppose I ever will as things keep changing, however, it now contains Names, Addresses, Dates of Landlords and even where some were born, their wives and children.

Many books have been published with photos etc. but very little detail about the people and families living in Ashford in the late 19th and early 20th century.

I have all the present details and info. on computer, which when printed out is over thirty pages, so if you think this might be of interest please contact me and if you would like a copy just give me a ring on Ashford 631491.

John Ralph

"THE CINEMA"

To, Sue Catward

I wonder how many remember coming out of the cinema on a lovely sunny afternoon & standing in Beaver Road after a talk about 'BURMA'

Each year I remember the use of the 'A' Bomb as it saved us from going

Ms D M Wise
48 William Road
Ashford
Kent
TN23 7UU



My Unit at The Paddocks -
Smeth was disbanded along
with others in this area

Kind Regards.

Denis

EX PTE R.A.M.C.

Sue Gatward,
Ashford Town Centre Partnership,
Hydra House,
26, North Street,
Ashford,
Kent,
TN28 8JR

19, Goose Green Road,
Snettisham,
King's Lynn,
Norfolk,
PE31 7PW
Tel; 01485 544377
21 January 2003

Dear Sue Gatward,

I would challenge the "potted history" of the Beaver Road cinema as portrayed in the article which appeared in the Kentish Express (Ashford Edition) of 16th Jan. 2003.

As I recall, the Royal Cinema de Luxe as it was originally called, did not finish its days as a bingo hall but at its demise was showing films as a three screen cinema. "Flea pit" it most certainly never was!

The cinema which became the town's bingo hall was surely the Odeon in the High Street.

Ashford's oldest purpose-built cinema was "The Picture Palace" (Now a Furniture store) in Tufton Street which opened in December 1911. Before that films were shown on a hand cranked projector in the old drill hall in Norwood Street. The drill hall did not have a raked floor and before the show, a slide projected onto the screen carried the request "Will ladies please remove their hats".

As a youngster in the late '20s I used to queue up for the Saturday afternoon "tuppenny" rush" (actually 2½d in old money) outside the Picture Palace for a programme usually consisting of a Tom Mix or Buck Jones Western plus an early cartoon from the series "Out Of The Inkwell" and a comedy. Laurel and Hardy were firm favourites in those days and when the Laurel and Hardy credit titles appeared on the screen the noise of young voices cheering and the stamping of several hundred pairs of feet was deafening!!! These thunderous outbursts were quickly quelled by the sight of the imposing figure of commissioner Fred Willmore striding menacingly down the central aisle resplendent in his dark blue uniform

2)

with its gold and brown trimmings.

During the evening performance intervals Fred would patrol the aisles holding aloft a pressurised brass swan-necked canister spraying perfume to purify the stale air and disguise the smell of tobacco smoke.

The rear stall seats were tolerably comfortable unless you were unfortunate enough to be placed behind one of the pillars supporting the balcony, in which event a good deal of head weaving was necessary depending on which part of the screen the main action was taking place!

After the dear old Palace had shown its final reel of film the projectionist, Mr. Scarff became the second projectionist at the newly built 1560-seat Odeon which opened in 1937 with, I believe, Eddie Cantor's film "Strike Me Pink".

In the middle fifties and being at a loose end during recovery from a bout of tuberculosis, I wrote to the then manager of the Odeon, a Mr McIver, a tall fair haired gentleman asking if I might spend a few hours behind the scenes in that holy of holies, the projection suite.

To my great surprise and joy I was duly invited to spend the whole of an afternoon's matinee with the chief projectionist and his staff— it was a real educational experience.

As I had owned a succession of toy cinematographs and Pathoscope silent projectors from an early age, it was all fascinating stuff, which stood me in good stead for the day when I became qualified as a projectionist to show films as an amateur, to audiences of up to 200 people, for my model engineering club.

I still have my own two sound projectors which, sad to say are seldom used these days.

Yours sincerely,



R.A.Barham.



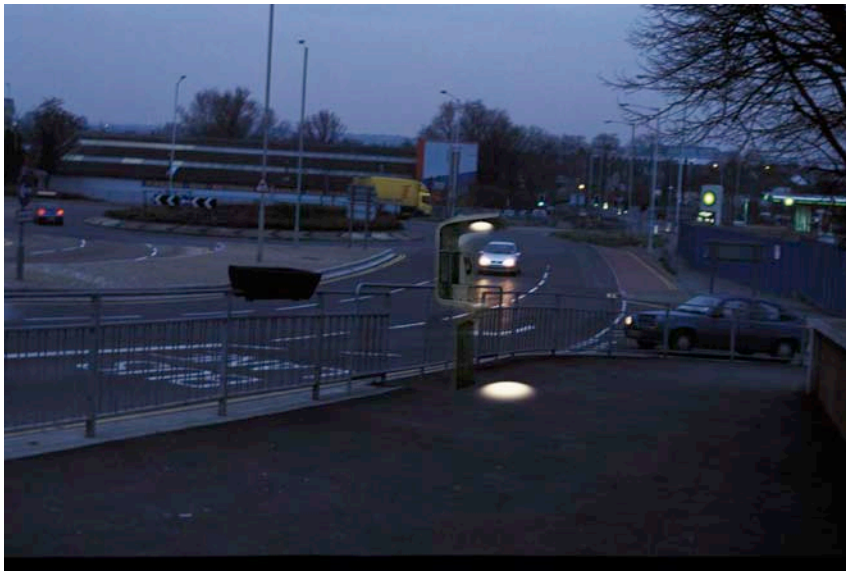
Initial Designs





71. The Royal cinema in Beaver Road before the last war. This was the last cinema in Ashford to be closed, but has now been demolished to make way for the new international railway station.

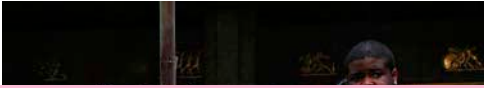


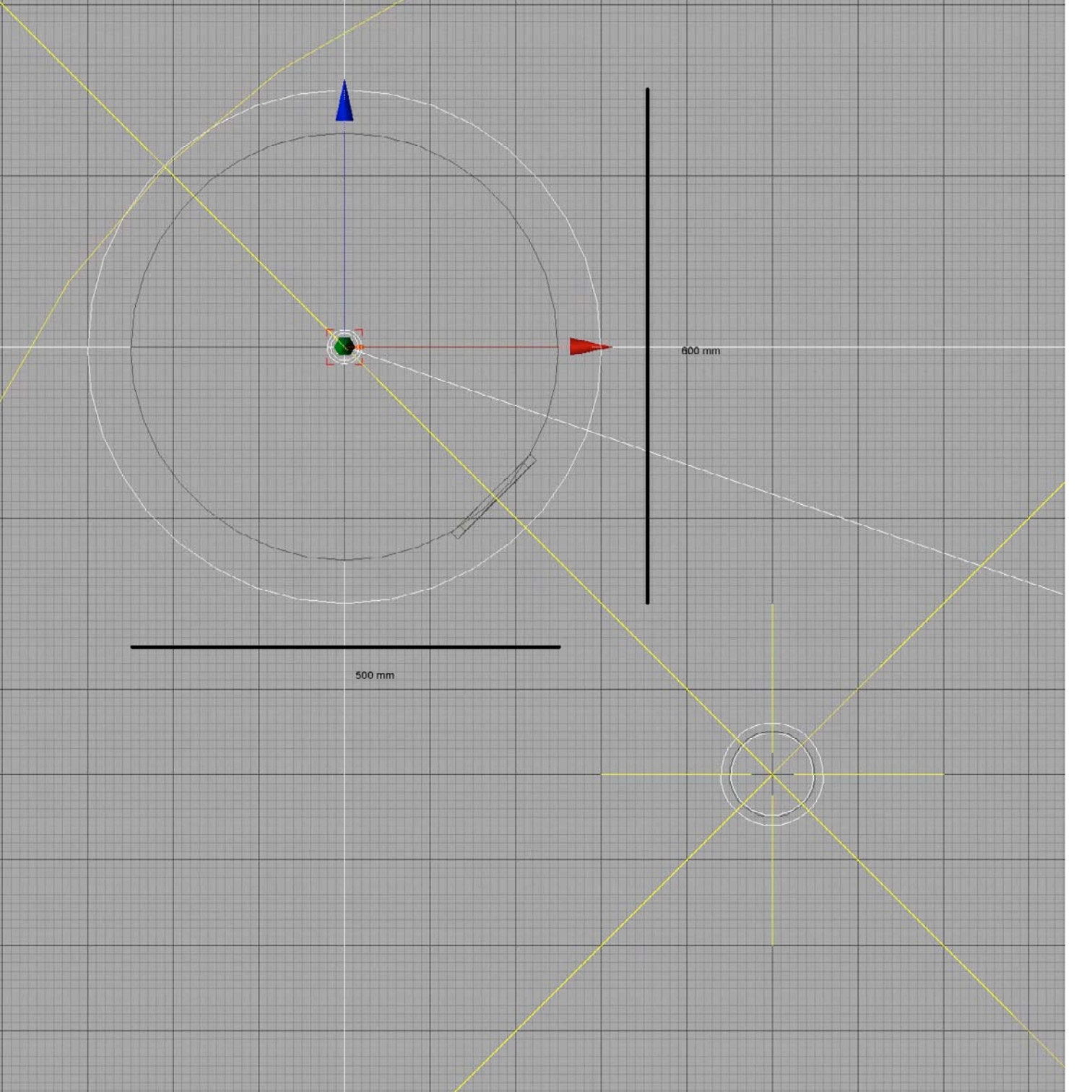


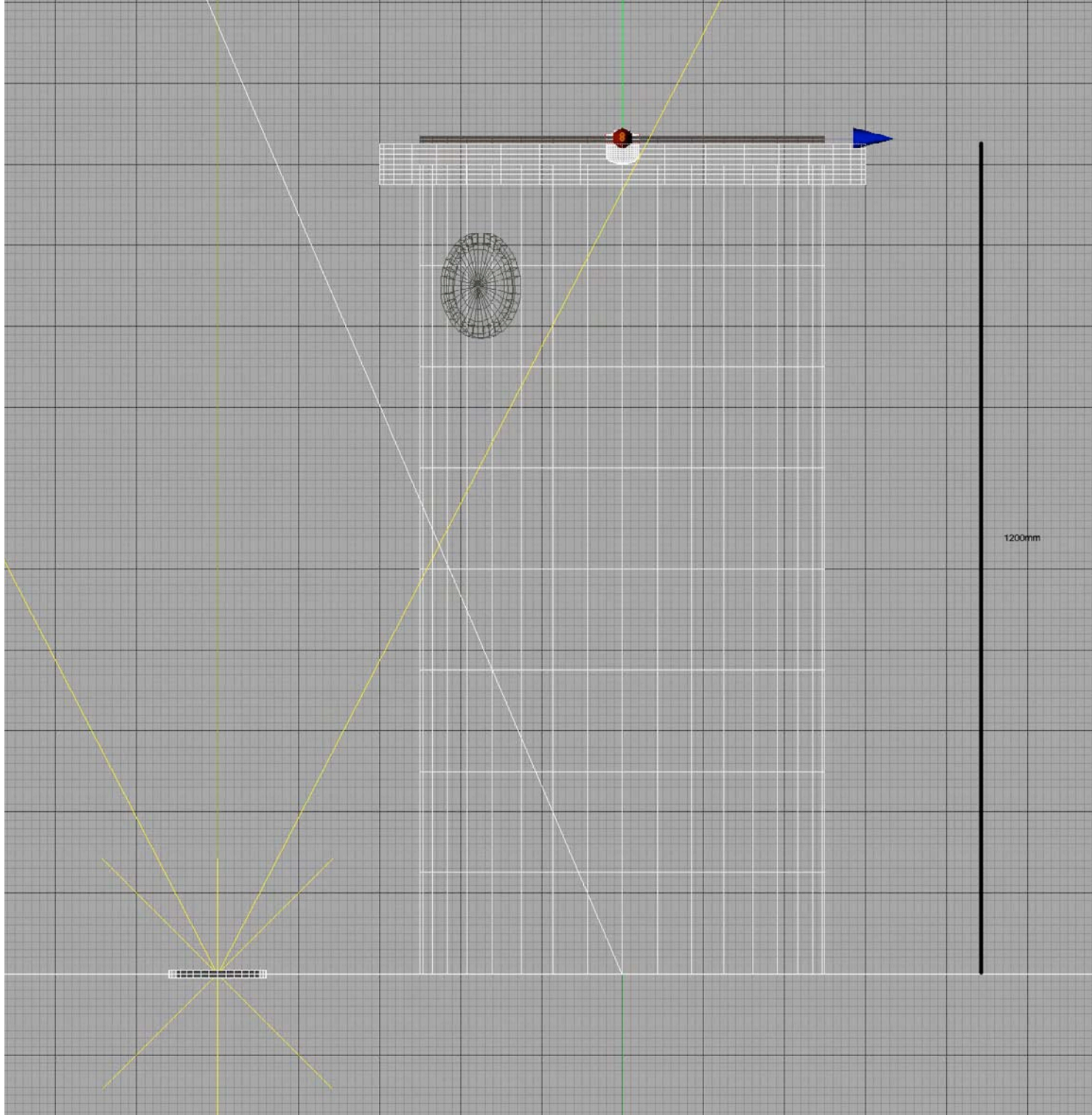




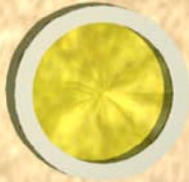
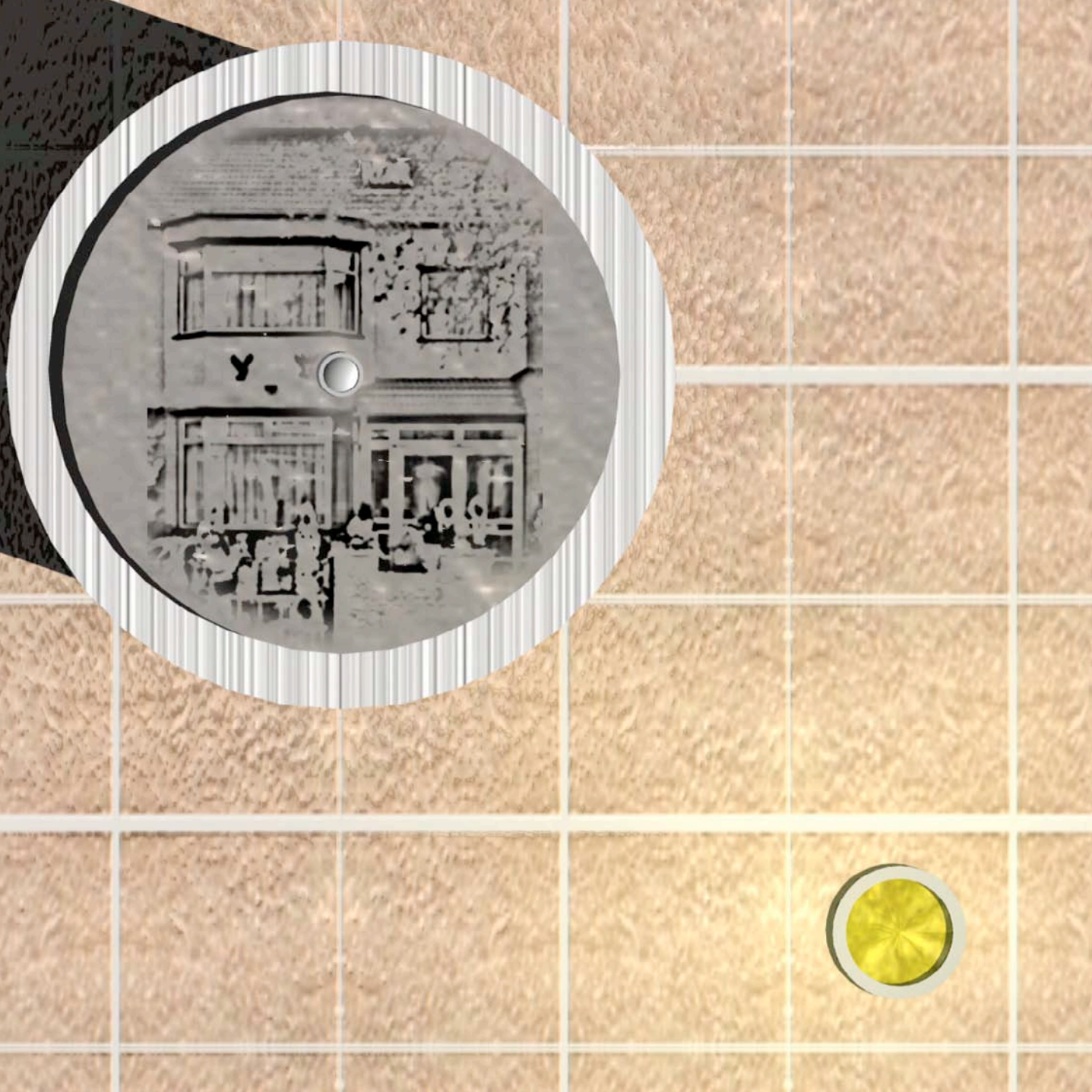








1200mm



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MacFi-e

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MacFi-e Shown

MacFi-e Adds:

- Serial (RS-232) control
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The MacFi-e adds convenient recording and random access capability to Mackenzie Laboratories, Inc.'s line of digital message repeaters. The MacFi-e is designed for any audio messaging application which requires several, locally recorded or frequently changed, messages to be accessible.

The MacFi offers 8 message locations selected via independent control inputs. Dynamic Message Length (DML) technology has been incorporated in the MacFi allowing each of the 8 messages to be of different duration. DML also provides for replacement messages to be a different length than the original, maximizing memory efficiency and compatibility with future applications. Local recording is accomplished through a straight forward user interface with standard line level and microphone connections. Line and amplified audio outputs are provided with level control.

The MacFi-e adds enhanced functionality to the standard MacFi. These features include Serial (RS-232) control of record and play, increased message capacity and synchronization relay. Push buttons and LED indicators of the MacFi-e are relocated to the front of the system for better accessibility in rack mount applications.

The MacFi is based on solid state, non-volatile, flash memory which stores messages until they are re-written. Message data is protected from power outages and no battery is required. The system contains no moving parts and offers unsurpassed reliability. MacFi is available in both 8 minute and 16 minute versions.

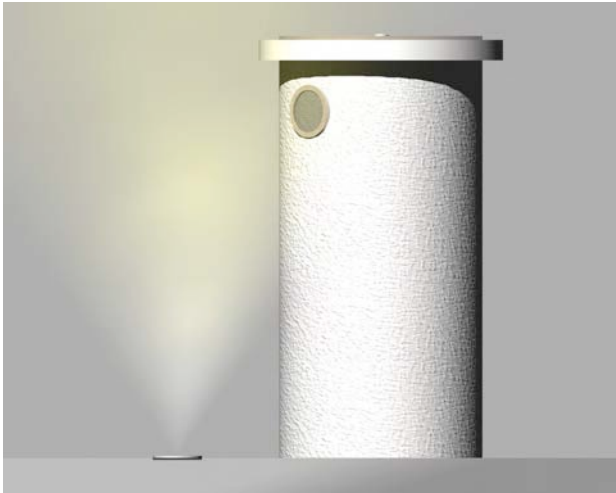
The MacFi offers a standard one year warranty and is proudly manufactured in the USA.

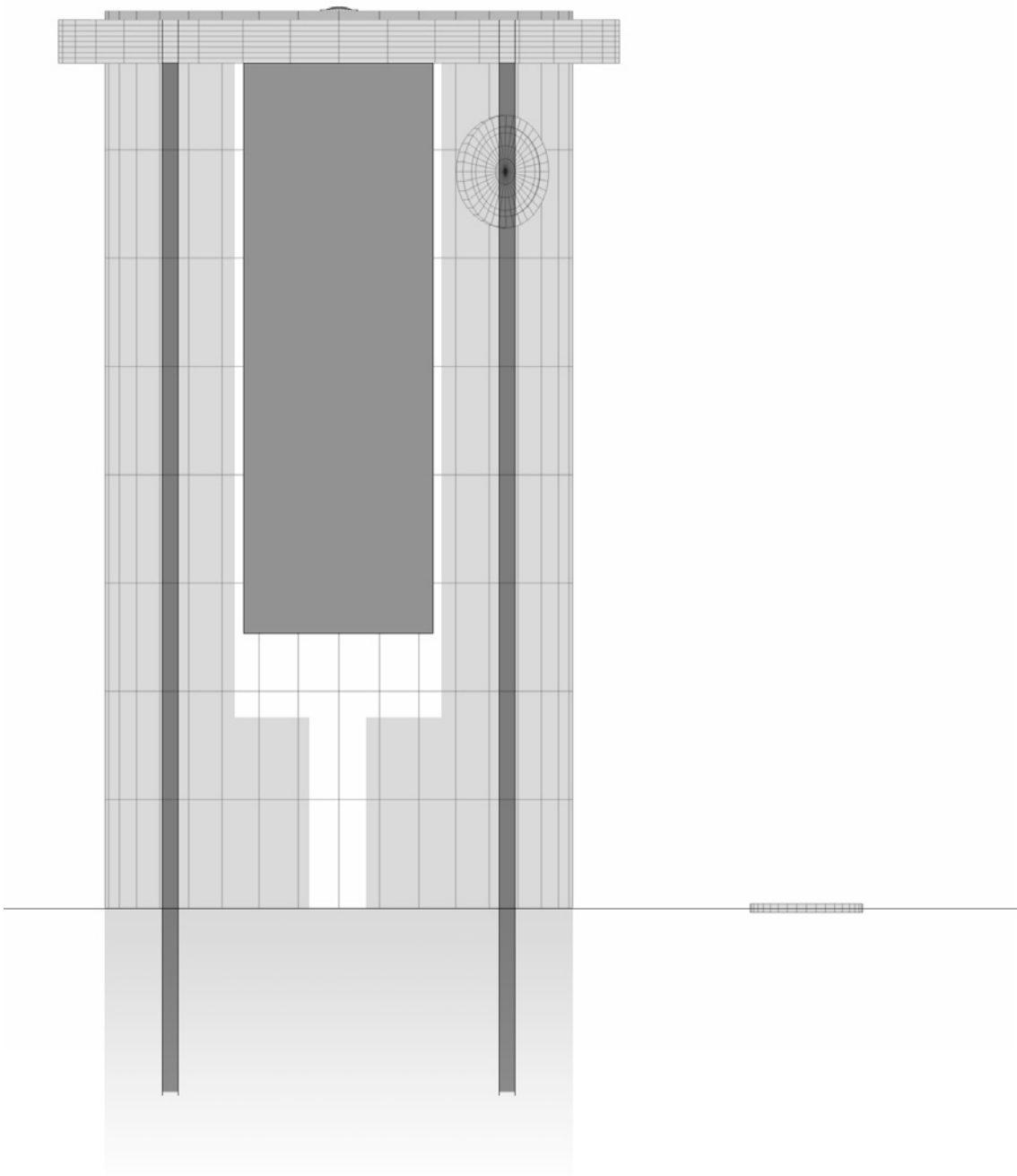
APPLICATIONS:

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Making A Difference, One At A Time

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Electronics housing: 24"x8"x2" : 609.6 x 203.2 x 50.8 (diagonal = $\sqrt{(203.2^2 + 50.8^2)} = 209.5$)

Proposed Budget

Quantity	Description	Price per unit	Total Price
<i>Lighting</i>			
1	ChromaRange 2 Chroma controller and PSU	£140	£140
1	Chroma Scape waterproof (IP68) spotlight LED luminaire	£250	£250
1	Ground Mounting Kit	£25	£25
1	Rs232 – XLR cable	£30	£30
1	Peripheral electrical fixtures	£100	£100
<i>Sound Equipment</i>			
1	Mackensie MacFi: Eight Message (16minute) Digital Audio Record/Play System. With Flash memory and automatic consecutive play function	£500	£500
1	All Weather speaker and vandal resistant protective grille	£120	£120
1	Power Supply Unit (240v – 12v) regulated supply	£100	£100
1	All cables, connectors and custom chassis to house electronics	£280	£280
1	Vandal Resistant Large Actuation Area Illuminated Piezo Switch	£34	£34
<i>Manufacture</i>			
1	Reinforced cast concrete (High stone content) base unit	£600	£600
1	5mm x 50mm diameter Stainless Steel Information Panel. BS314/6		
	Chemical Etching Process, studwork and laser cutting	£230	£230
1	15mm x 50 mm diameter Mild Steel support plate	£66	£66
1	Security fixings and bit	£30	£30
<i>Contingency</i>			
1	Contingency to allow for unexpected costs including modification to initial specifications following survey.	£TBA	£TBA
Sub Total			£2,505

Please note the above figures exclude VAT and cover equipment costs at standard retail rate.

The Somerset Arms.
The corner of North
St. and Somerset Rd.
(demolished)

The tombstone of
Old William and Mary
Waters in the parish
Churchyard

Liquid 'n Life - Cales II
(Cales Nightclub)
The Flour Mill
East Hill

The site of the Royal
Cinema De Luxe in
Beaver Road. Est 1912
(demolished)



Possible Sites for Initial Markers

Summary

The Designs detailed on the previous pages and the associated budget are intended to act as a potential template for an expandable trail. The markers are conservatively designed, rugged but made from high quality materials with an excellent build quality. While more flamboyant designs are entirely possible, through discussion it was acknowledged that the highly varied architecture and competing visual statements experienced within Ashford led to a desire to produce markers which were sober in impact. While not attempting to struggle for visual dominance the pillars would deceptively house extremely contemporary solid state technology.

The pillars could be seen as viewing platforms mimicking the traditional navigational plaques at cliff top vantage points. When standing at these points members of the public will be encouraged to reassess their visual understanding of the location through the vivid anecdotes and recollections of an audio component. While they may be directed to gaze at the mundanity of a roundabout or department store facade, by touching a central button their surroundings would be reanimated through the audio tapestry of memories, activity and structures which had once given this vista huge personal significance to various residents of Ashford. Whether it is the site of a remarkable early cinema, the location of the house of railway worker, the place where a child learned to cycle or perhaps all three at different times. The factual and fictitious recollections of varying voices would allow a constantly shifting imaginary superimposition of previous drama and history onto the contemporary landscape.

Within each pillar a chip based recording and playback unit can accommodate up to eight different audio recordings with a total playback time of up to 16 minutes. It is possible to program the units to replay a random choice of these recordings so that the viewer could repeatedly encounter the marker and experience a different contextual analysis at each occasion. This facility would also allow for a range of stories, anecdotes and tales to be documented from different age groups and with varying degrees of traditional historic importance, without the selection necessarily imposing a value judgement on the relative significance of each history. This aspect of the project is fundamentally important as it begins to address a concern with the democratisation of history and the acknowledgement that ownership of heritage can occur on a local and personal level as well as a monumental and national basis. It would be a welcome development if the markers could be periodically partially reprogrammed through local schools projects or by periodic invitations through the local press. The installed hardware would allow for this and it could open up the markers to provide an evolving living record of the experience of the resident and transitory local population.



Acknowledgments

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Urban Designer

Local Historians

Tom Hall

Arthur Coleman

Kentish Express

Chris Denham

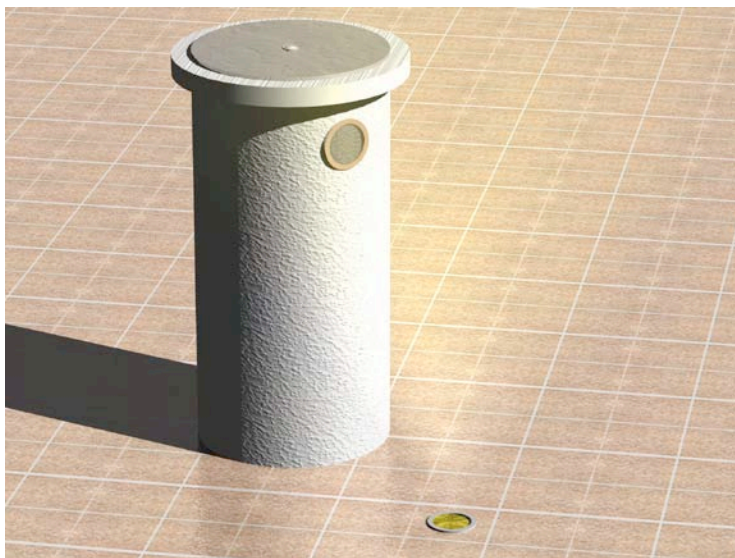
Senior Reporter

Artist

David Cotterrell

Additional Thanks

The authors of this booklet would like to gratefully acknowledge the many residents of Ashford who kindly donated time to discuss their concerns and to reply to the initial call for anecdotes. Thank you to all involved in this process and for the additional members of the Borough Council and Steering group who actively supported and engaged with this project.



Produced in UK. Not for resale.

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