





The city is a tree

Somatic City: A series of 8 choreographic navigations through Milton Keynes.

Beatrice Jarvis in collaboration with Bob Jarvis





Groundwork

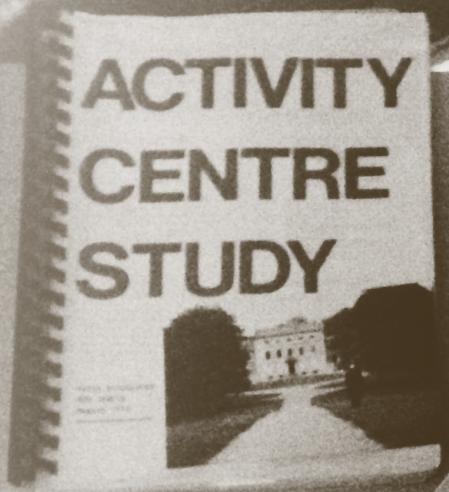
This work has been commissioned by Tracing the Pathway as part of their project Groundwork, a cross disciplinary arts platform and research project for and about Milton Keynes.

With special thanks to Cara Davies, Ashleigh Bowmott and Tom Eke.

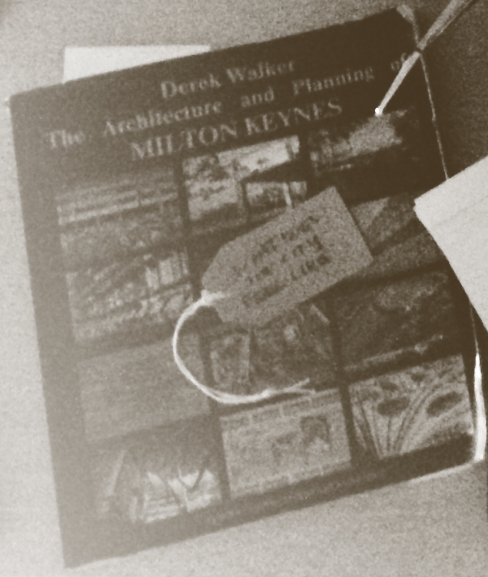
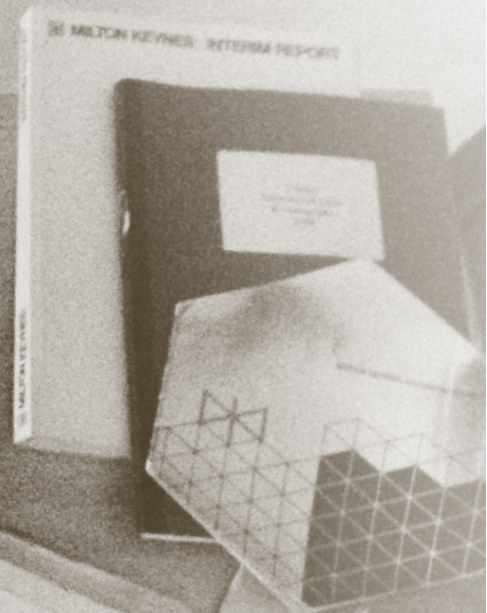
This project is deeply personal, it has been a very rich experience working with, talking to, walking with, driving with, drawing with, listening to, my father, Dr Bob Jarvis. He is my real inspiration and I wish to thank him truly for his time, effort and energy exploring Milton Keynes.



WHAT IS THE GRANCE OF MILTON KEYNES?

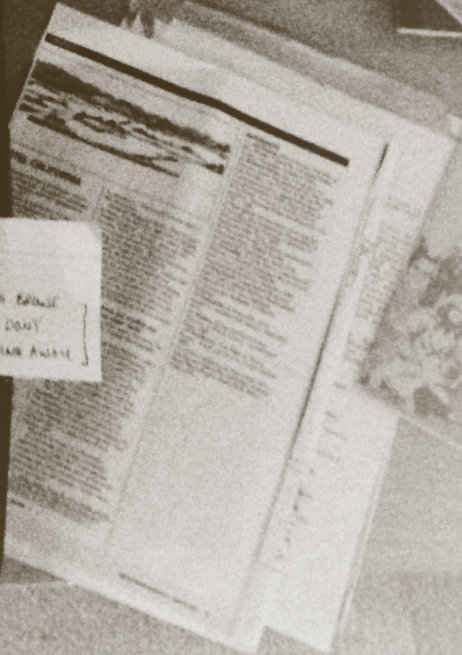


The safe and convenient movement of pedestrians is a goal of the Corporation's transport policy. It is one of the main reasons why the new city is a goal of the Corporation's transport policy. An ENVIRONMENTAL AREA. Pedestrians can move safely and freely along paths leading towards the ACTIVITY CENTRE at the midpoint of the edge of the town. There will be A SAFE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING either over or under the road, making it safe for pedestrians to cross. There will also be a generally pedestrian crossing at each end of the square road. LOCAL conditions make it necessary for the road to be lit. It will be lit by the UNDERPASS.



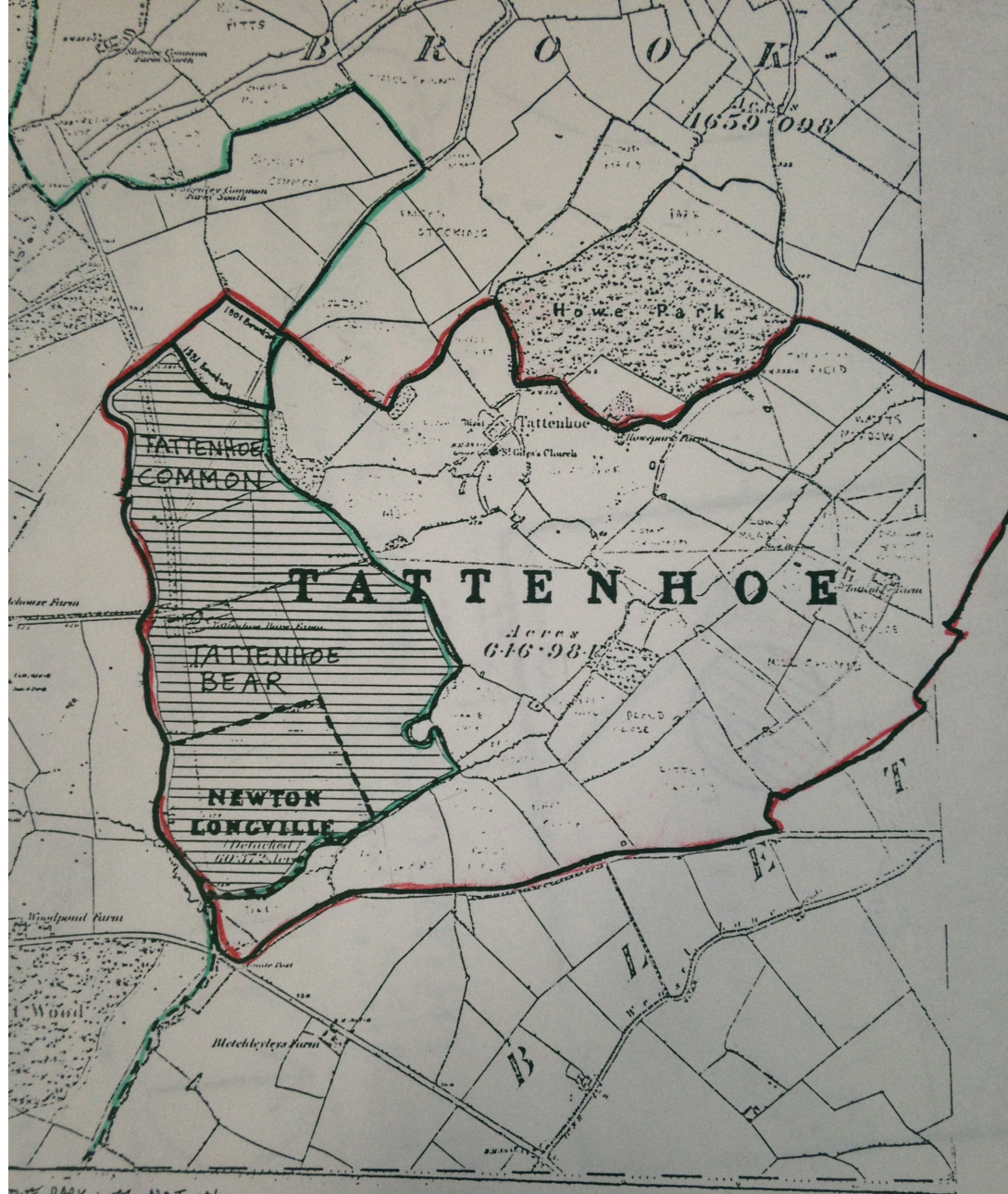
Handwritten note on a small piece of paper, partially obscured by the typewriter.

Remove paper.
FEEL FREE TO REMOVE
BUT PLEASE DON'T
TAKE ANYTHING AWAY



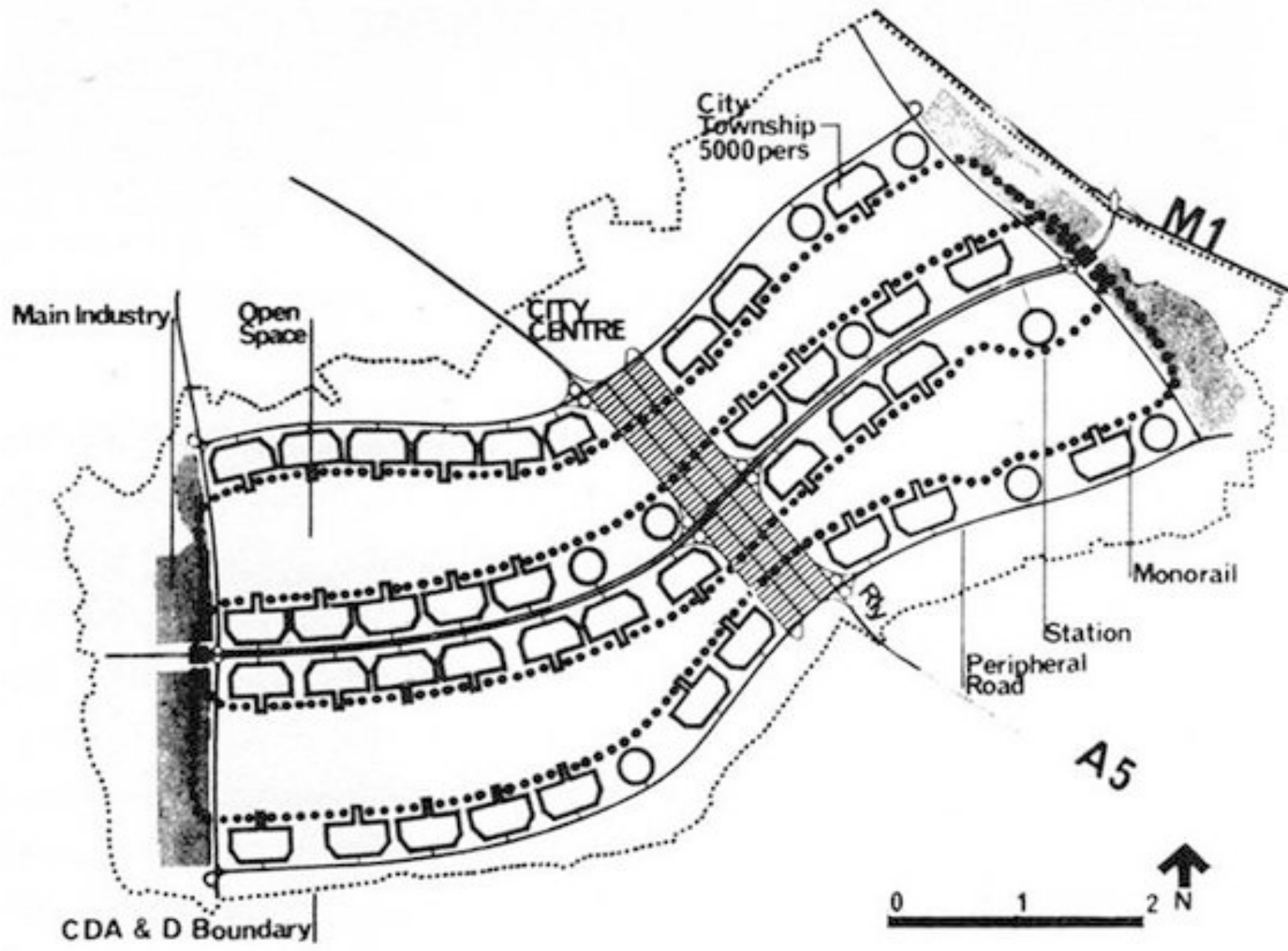






HOWE PARK WAS NOT IN
WHADDON CHASE IN 1801

BOUNDS OF TATTENHOE GIVEN ON 1801 MAP SHOWN IN
BOUNDS OF WHADDON CHASE ON 1801 MAP SHOWN IN



people call it the
city of trees

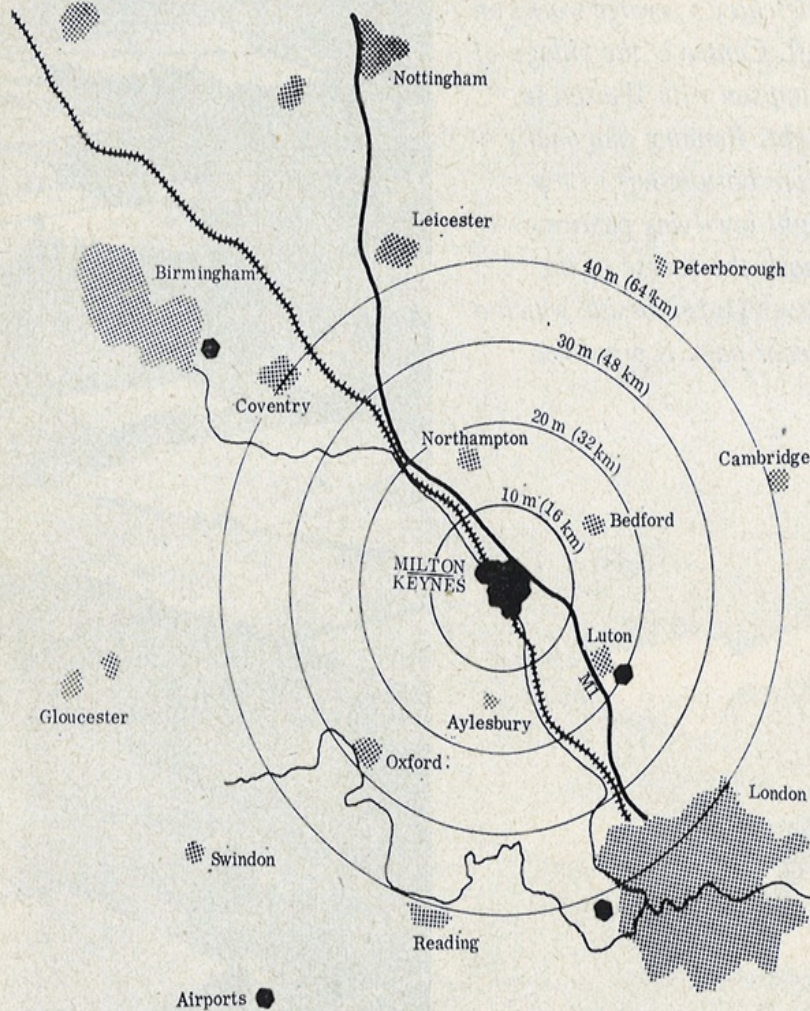
Audrey aged 11 Stantonbury

Daniel aged 14 Simpson



OH! I'D
LOVE TO LIVE
IN MILTON
KEYNES, ALL
THOSE LOVELY
TREES. WE
LONDON DOGS
ONLY GET
LAMPPOSTS

Milton Keynes: New city for the South-east



This week the Interim report to the Development Corporation for Milton Keynes—the largest and most ambitious of our new town plans so far—was released by Llewelyn Davies, Weeks, Forestier-Walker & Bor, consultants to the corporation. The following planning study is a summary of that report, accompanied by a series of aerial views of the designated area as it is today (photos, Aerofilms Ltd) flying northwards across the site, and with down-to-earth views of some of the villages and buildings within the designated area whose environmental qualities demand to be preserved

A Regional location of Milton Keynes in relation to major developments and transport routes in the area



4 iv) INSECT SPECIES supported by TREES

Oak	284	Hazel	73
Willow	286	Beech	64
Birch	229	Ash	41
Hawthorn	149	Spruce	37
Poplar	97	Lime	31
Crab Apple	93	Hawthorn	28
Scots Pine	91	Larch	17
Alder	90	Fir	16
Elm	82	Holly	7



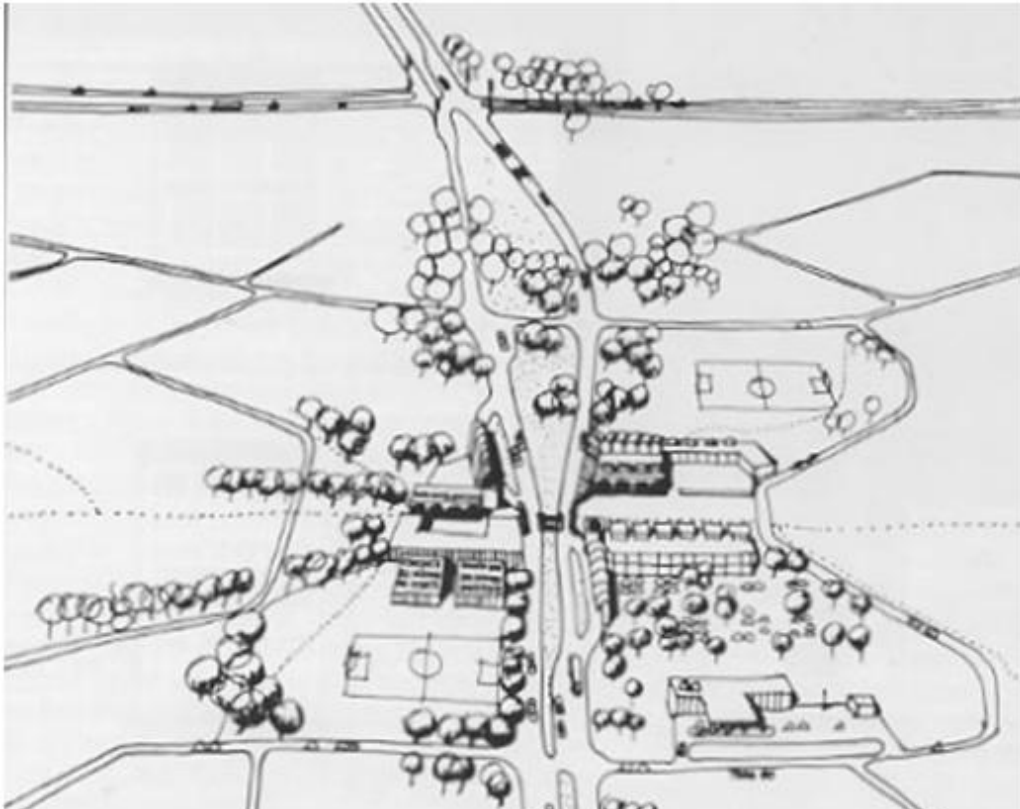
RECENT SIGHTINGS

APRIL

- 11/4 5 Willow Warblers
14/4 Marsh Harrier over
15/4 20+ Sand Martins at KFB
19/4 Sedge Warbler, 2 Little Ringed Plovers
23/4 Cuckoo
25/4 Swallow prominent, Streamer (moths)
27 1 Yellow W.T.
27/4 Cuckoo on far side of the reserve







to circulate it. "Did I write it in the office?" Bill demanded.

Gradually things got better. Peter brought in papers from Berkeley that were to become "Pattern Language" (5) and we tried to figure out what "Activity Centres" were; but our mix of vacant lots and roadside strips, learning from Bletchley, Drostes Agora and The Yellow Pages (6) didn't fit the dominantly architectural model; Andrew told me about this American magazine and showed me his aerial views, as I showed him the panorama from above Brickhill and he taught me to draw expanded axonometrics (8); he drew the city as a matrix of trees and dots with precision pen points while I struggled with the changing patterns of street lights.

"You can check out anytime you like, but you can never leave"

Now it seems a false dawn. Inevitably the production of a city became the dominant mode.

David, who'd come from Berkeley, with a bag of best Poets LP's and disintegrating Coke cans we made into an exhibition, to monitor the city against its goals left to go into housing work; the first group of planners, Mike and Dai, Jeremy and Ian bought a boat and sailed away into the Mediterranean. And when they said they could teach me all I needed to know about urban design, I knew it was time to leave.

This brief interlude seems to have disappeared from the history of the city. The planning staff aren't credited in the first celebration of architectural imagery (9). It's the dealings of the Board and the Chief Officers that is written in the official history (10).

Which is as it ever is with history.

But never the less, when I eventually started in one of the "new" Metropolitan County Councils and saw local government straining new status on old connections, answering to the old agendas, I knew where I'd left my heart.

".. those voices from far away/wake you up in the middle of the night/just to hear them say/welcome to the Hotel California (11)"

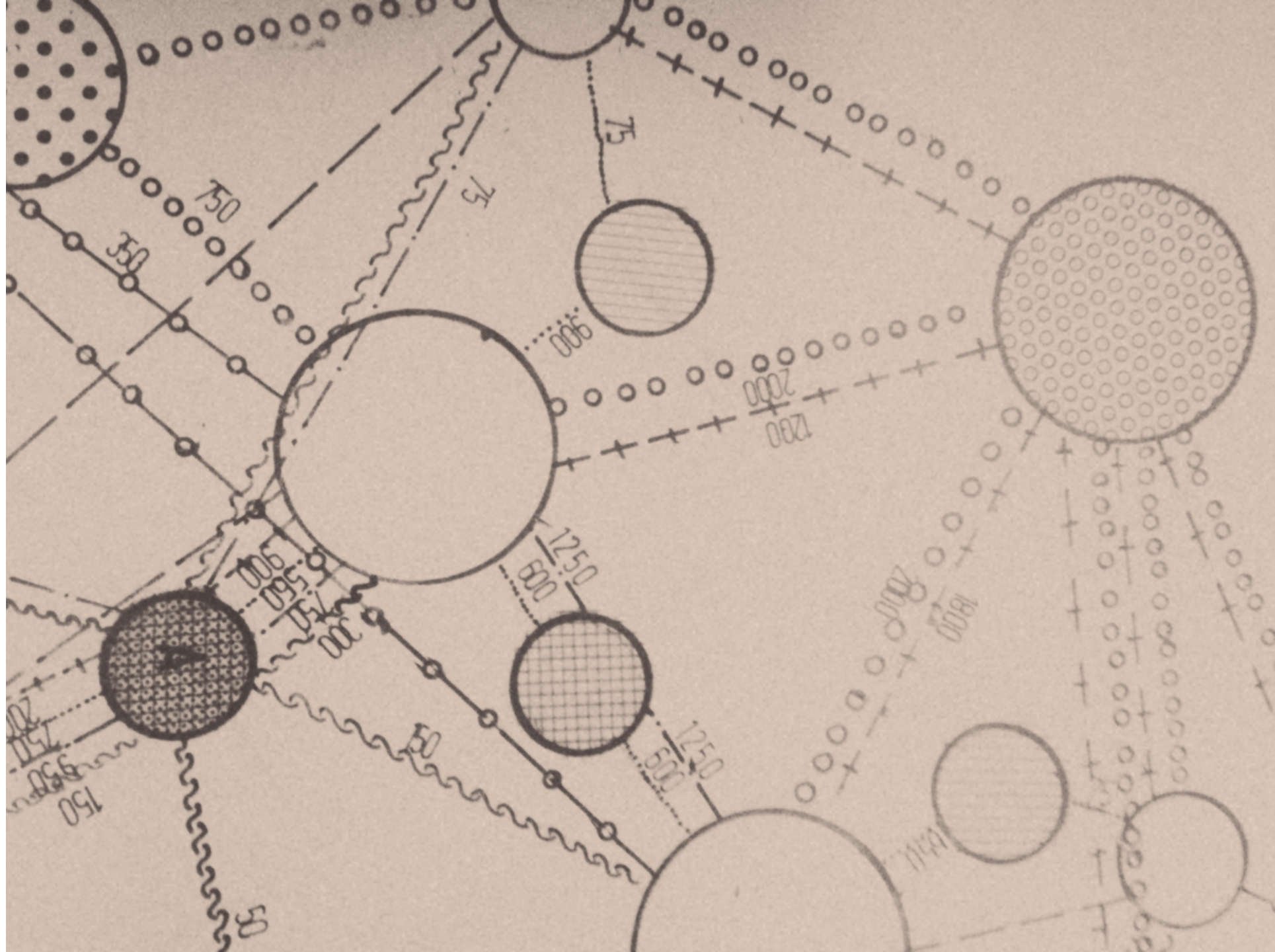
Bob Jarvis

was

Peter aged 10 Stantonbury

I like Milton Keynes
Because everything is new.
In my new school the toys
are new but at my other
school the toys were
scratched and broken.

Ian aged 10 Fishermead



A city is not a tree

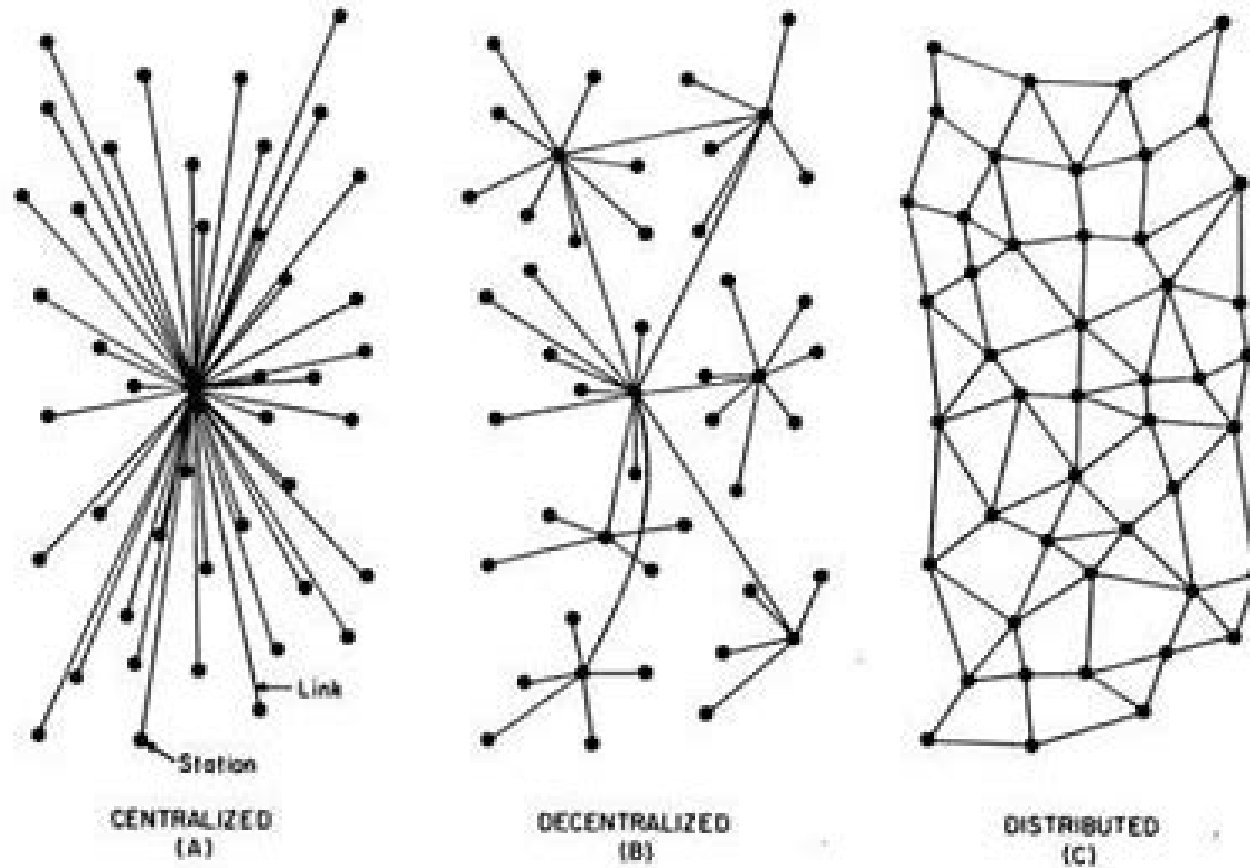
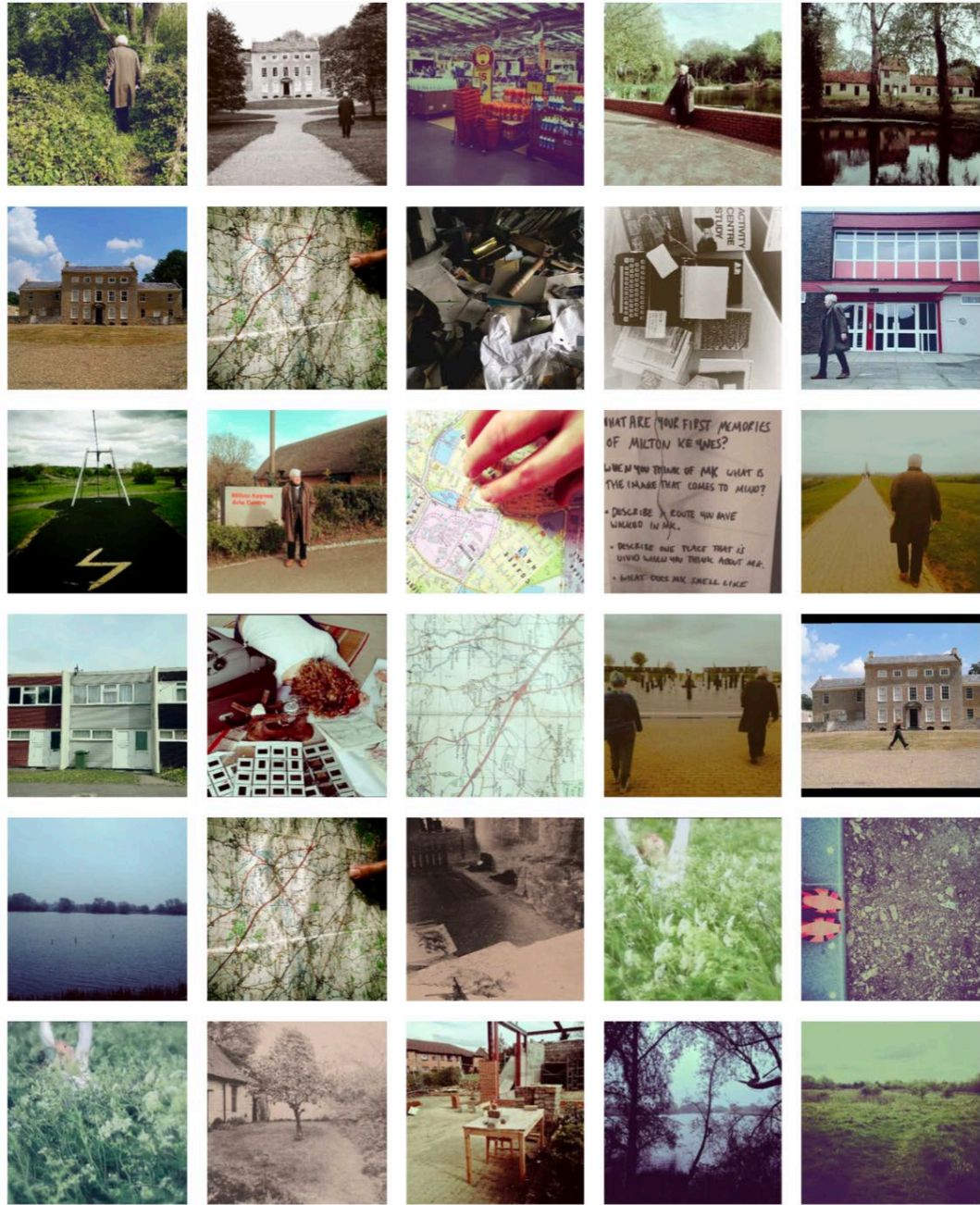


FIG. 1 - Centralized, Decentralized and Distributed Networks

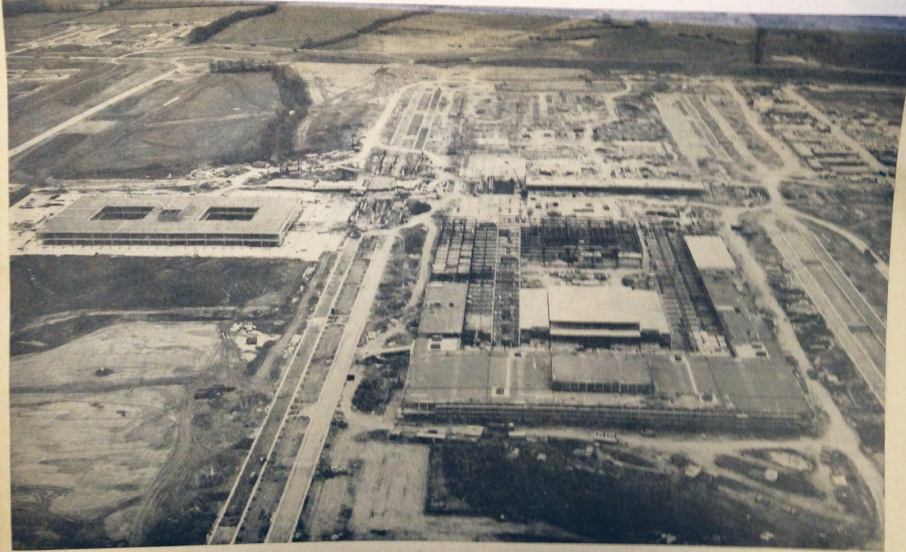




A massive covered shopping building takes shape in the city's centre



Milton Keynes is to have one of the largest covered shopping areas in Europe and this is it; The Shopping Building. Above is a model showing how the completed building will look. Below is a recent helicopter shot. The building will be nearly half a mile long and will have over 150 shops and catering and entertainment facilities.





we are all in capsules
these worlds, paths and places

I want to see the fields as they used to be with no houses
only your cat
who collected rabbits
which the council would collect

now the city is yours
I watch you looking
I see through your glasses

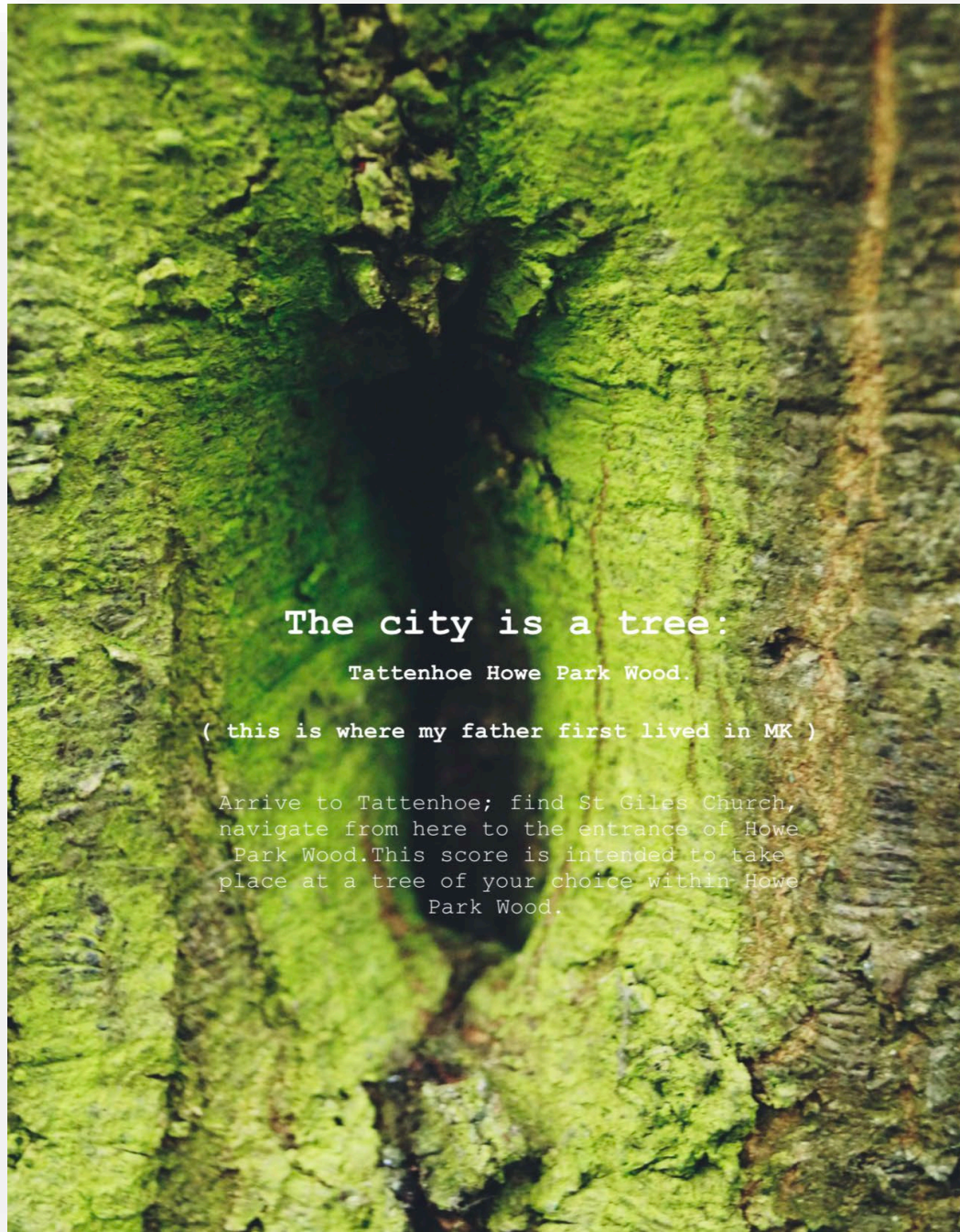
our feet are side by side
the map is from 1960
when the city did not exist
I wonder what you wore then
and how you used to walk









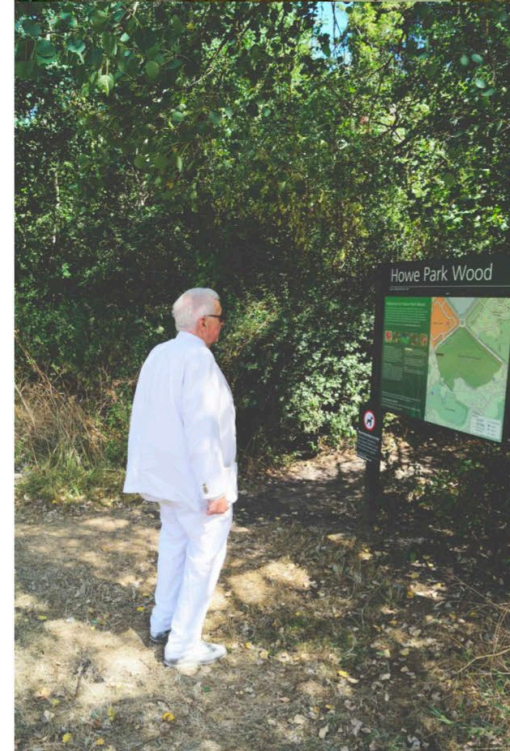


The city is a tree:

Tattenhoe Howe Park Wood.

(this is where my father first lived in MK)

Arrive to Tattenhoe; find St Giles Church,
navigate from here to the entrance of Howe
Park Wood. This score is intended to take
place at a tree of your choice within Howe
Park Wood.



How do you navigate a wood?

What leads you?

Do you follow paths?

What happens when you leave the path?

Can you make your own trail in the wood?

Have you walked in a circle?

What materials can you see around you?

What colours can you see?

What is moving around you?

Can you describe all the movements you see?

Try to trace the movements with your body.

Find a space in the wood, find a place to be very still.

In the space, explore how you can make very subtle

movements

Linking your body to the wood.

Mimic the movements you see.

The very small dance of the wood and you.

Together you are dancing.

Perhaps remove your shoes.

Place your feet in the earth.

Muddy toes.





Finding a tree in Tattenhoe, Howe Park Wood.

When walking Milton Keynes with my father, he speaks of Howe Park Wood in the 1960's, close to his home, where he used to come for picnics, younger trees then and the sky came through much more clearly. The wood was there before the city, and still remains.

If these trees could speak

Nestled away from the central hub, the air feels softer here.

Out of harms way perhaps. To be quite still, a deep listening to the roots and trees, the branches and their leaves. What do you notice here? What does the ground feel like underneath your feet? How do your lungs feel when you breathe the air? Is there a way you can be here in this wood more softly?

Imagine the animals who live here, who might they be? Could you imagine the foot prints of a door mouse in the deep forest? How quietly can you tread? How curious can you be about the space, how nervous and how bold? Are you an explorer? A walker? How do you pass through this space and how do you exchange with the space?

Take a moment, a clean sheet of paper, place the paper on the next tree you pass, take a rubbing with a crayon or pencil on the sheet, see the marks, patterns and forms the tree can make on the page. Feel the tree with you own hand and explore the texture and form and take the time to experience the sensation of the tree against your hand. Note the texture try to find words which might describe it. Imagine you are telling someone who has never been to this wood about your experience, tell them in as much detail as you can about what you see and how you see it. Write these observations down, read them later on in the central Milton Keynes.











Feel the weight of your body pouring and rooting down to your feet.

Stand close to a tree in Howe Park wood.

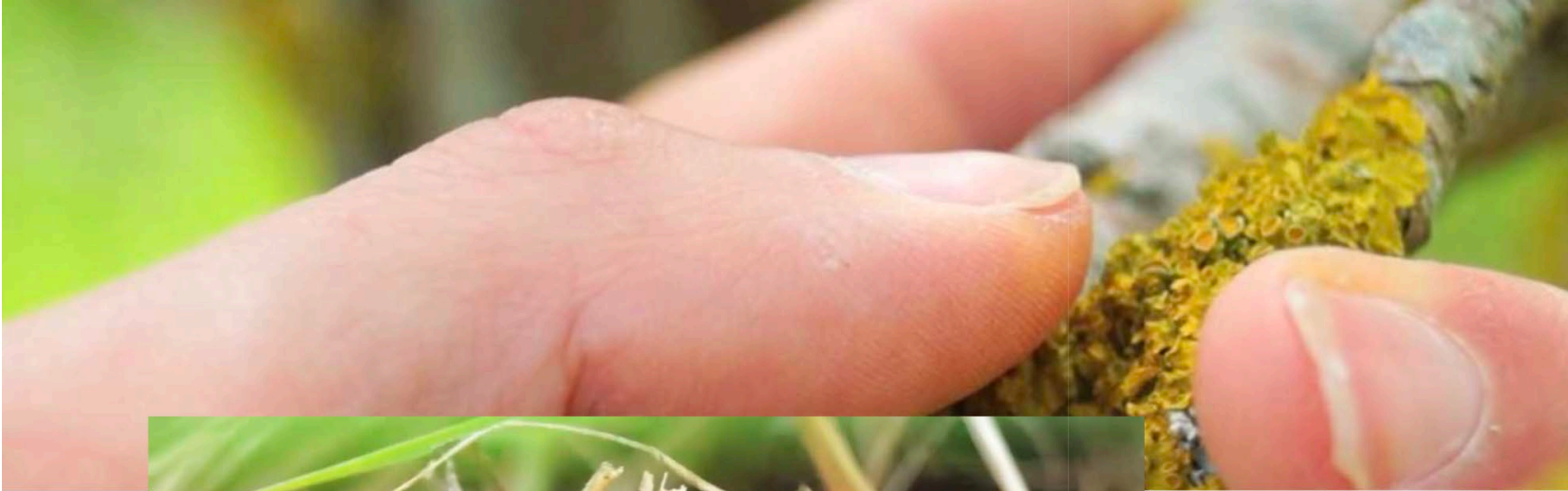
Feel the souls of your feet touching the earth beneath them. Take a moment to sense your breath; feel your lungs inflate and deflate.

Think about where on this earth you are. Find an image of this place and yourself in it. We are all here Now.

Thich Nhat Hanh famously says: **Walk as if you are kissing the earth with your feet.**

Take this time to consider your level of attention to the place you are in.

Allow yourself some moments of deep listening, sounds can you hear in this wood? The first sounds, simple perhaps, then the sounds under those sounds, the sounds which you perhaps might not hear, what are they? Can you hum softly in response? How do you add to the soundscape of this place? How is your breath? The noise of your bones, organs, joints, can you hear them? Can you hear the trees? Do you hear the noises of the ground under your feet? What noise does a tree root make? How are you listening? Cover your ears, tightly, then take your hands away, allow sound to flood your body and let yourself float.



Be still. breathe
let go, the need to do anything
sense stillness, emptiness, at the bottom of the breath,
Pause in the turning moment, between one breath and the next,
Open the inside of the body,
Open the pathways of bone, open the skin,
let the body spread open like a sail to the wind
Move into the spaces in and around the body
Sense endings and beginnings
Sense the possibility of movement
Interval, silence, emptiness
Listen to the space between one moment and the next.
Let the body breathe, make room,
sense the body
Sense the horizon.

listen to the beat of your heart
let the face/ throat/ jaw soften
sense the expression of the face
let the face feel the heart
let the face and the heart listen to each other
imagine their conversation

in making or moving
send a message from the heart to the face

spend time with a partner
speak only of what brings you joy
what delights and what heartens you?
what keeps you warm
share It.
face to face
side to side

then move it
move with the delight that warms your heart. '



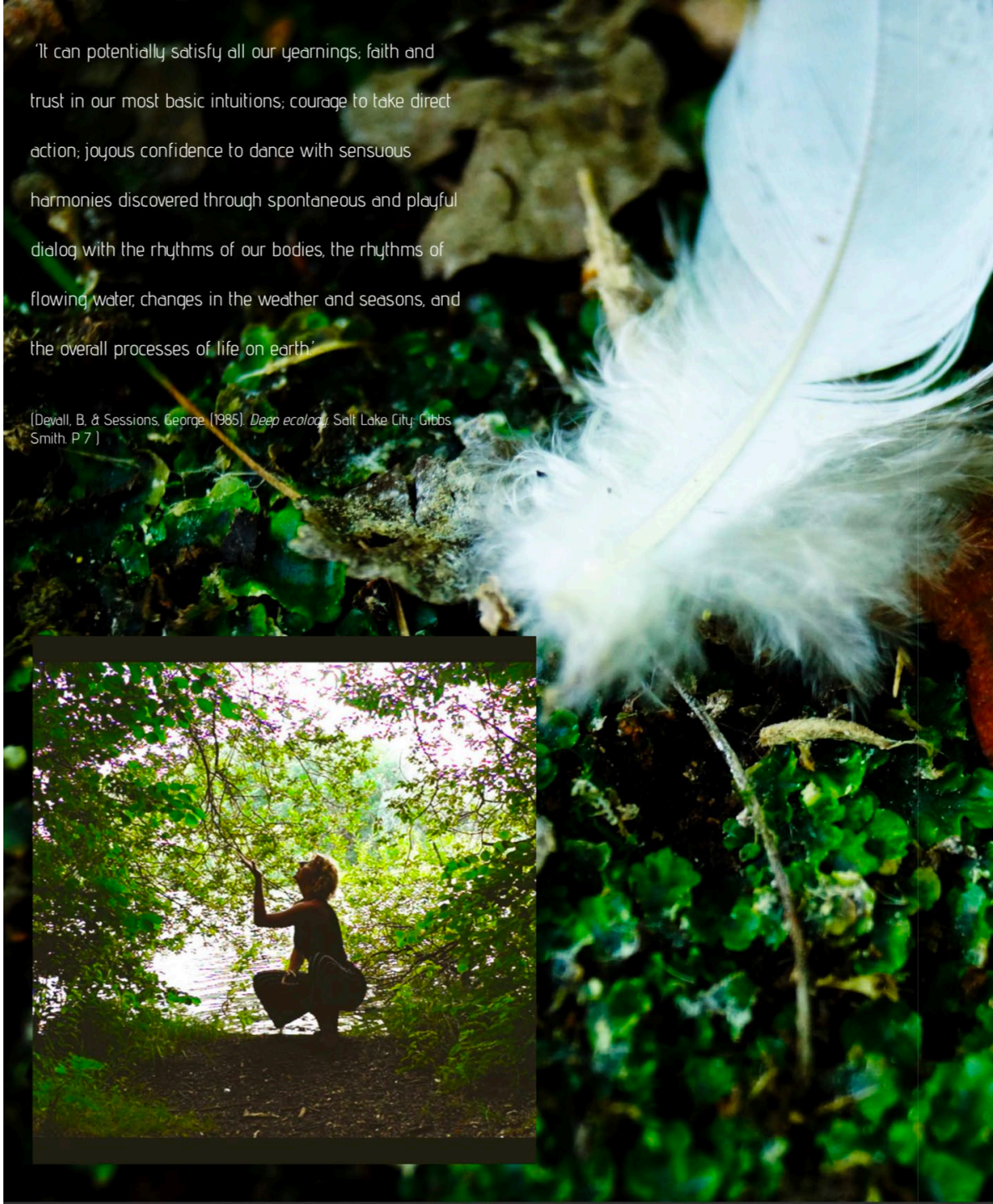




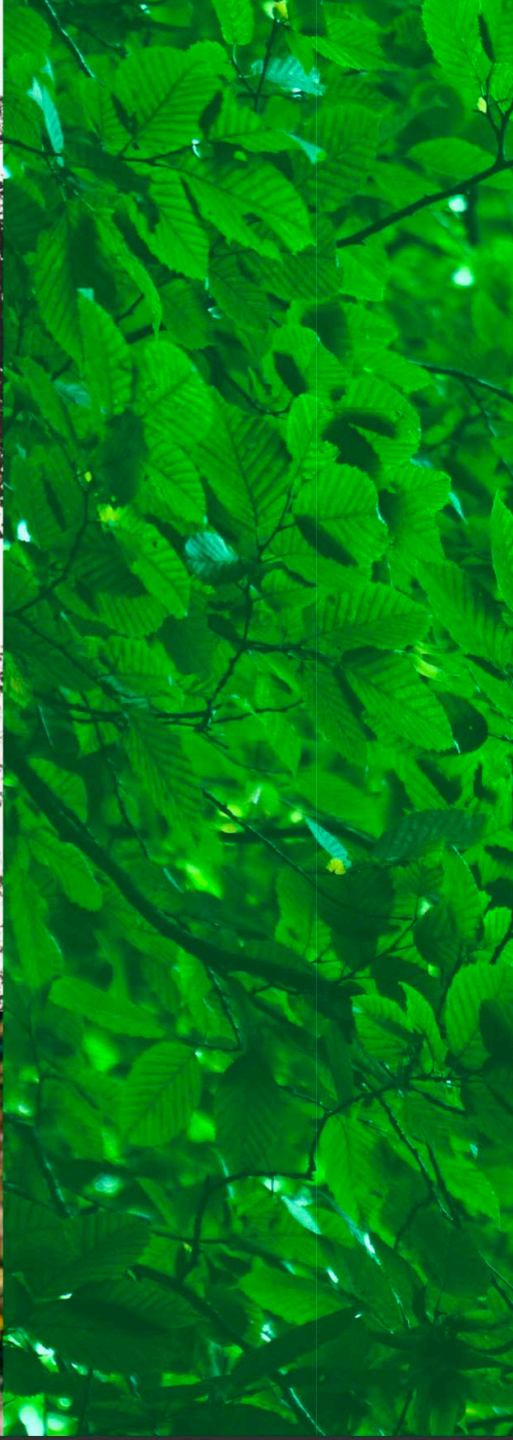


'It can potentially satisfy all our yearnings; faith and trust in our most basic intuitions; courage to take direct action; joyous confidence to dance with sensuous harmonies discovered through spontaneous and playful dialog with the rhythms of our bodies, the rhythms of flowing water, changes in the weather and seasons, and the overall processes of life on earth.'

[Devall, B. & Sessions, George (1985). *Deep ecology*. Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith. P 7.]



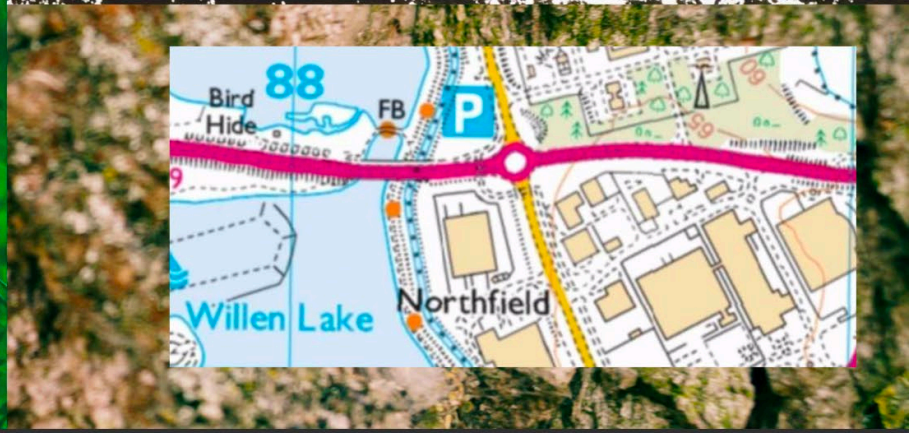




The city is a
plantation:

Willen Lake Poplar Plantation

Willen Lake is a very popular and busy destination, a general atmosphere of recreation. I sat with my father on a cold summers day and he smiled a lot. This was how he had imagined it might be. The poplar plantation is one of the oldest tree plantations in the city, planted as the city emerged in 1971. In this gentle score, find one one tree within the plantation to form a dialogue with for the duration of the score.







To place one's feet on the ground beneath their feet, one by one, and, in this relatively simple action of weight transfer from one leg to the other, the body and the mind can consider the very nature of their existence. Through the movement of walking one can consider one's body, anatomically and physically; one's environment; context; relationship to others, and the landscape that one's body is passing through. In this detailed sense of considered action, walking becomes the truest form of embodied phenomenology.

Walking is a dialogue between the body and the surfaces and contexts which it encounters.

What is learned by body? It is not something that one has, like knowledge that can be brandished about, but something that one is and so the body is thus constantly mingled with all the knowledge it reproduces " (Bourdieu 1990, 73)

What can the city remember? What can the tree remember?

"The city goes soft; it awaits the imprint of an identity. For better or worse, it invites you to remake it, to consolidate it into a shape you can live in. You, too. Decide who you are, and the city will again assume a fixed form around you. Decide what it is, and your own identity will be revealed, like a position on a map fixed by triangulation. Raban.] (1998) Soft city. London. Harvill. P11.

The city functions as a mechanism shaped by the routines, the established and non-established sets of practices of daily life. A vehicle for the population who inhabit it, going about their daily lives shaped by the factors they collectively and individually determine. The city is an emblem for their needs and can become a projection for their various intentions.

what emerges/ what remains?

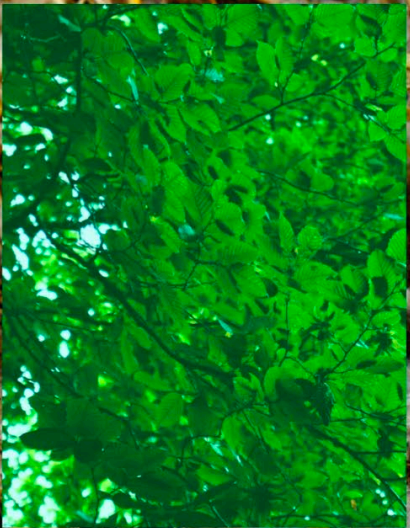








As you begin your journey around the plantation, start first to consider your spine; with your eyes closed, press your spine firmly against a selected tree, root down with your feet into the earth and imagining, you like the tree, are rooting yourself deeply into the ground. Use this time to consider yourself as a sapling, shot, or infant, with deep breath, see your body growing, changing and forming. Consider how your bones have grown and changed, how you have changed shape and height. The tree you are standing against was planted in 1971, now in 2018, consider what the tree may have witnessed, what shifts and growths. The tree stands tall and witnesses, for a moment, allow yourself the time and space to witness your environment in the same way. To witness and not to judge, to allow your surroundings and your body to coexist. Allow yourself to be absorbed in this sensory universe, the noise of the leaves, the grid roads, the passing joggers, what leads your senses, where in this moment are you taken? Press your hands now tightly together, allow the warmth of your energy to radiate, rub your hands vigorously together and then place your palms over your eyes, in this darkness, listen, listen again, allow yourself to be bathed in sound. Can you hear your breath? Take a very gentle motion to the floor and allow yourself to lie down and look up at the trees, take in the size, shape and weight of the tree, the colour of the sky, allow this gaze to take your mind to reflect upon the passing of time and the need for rooted grounded soles of your feet.





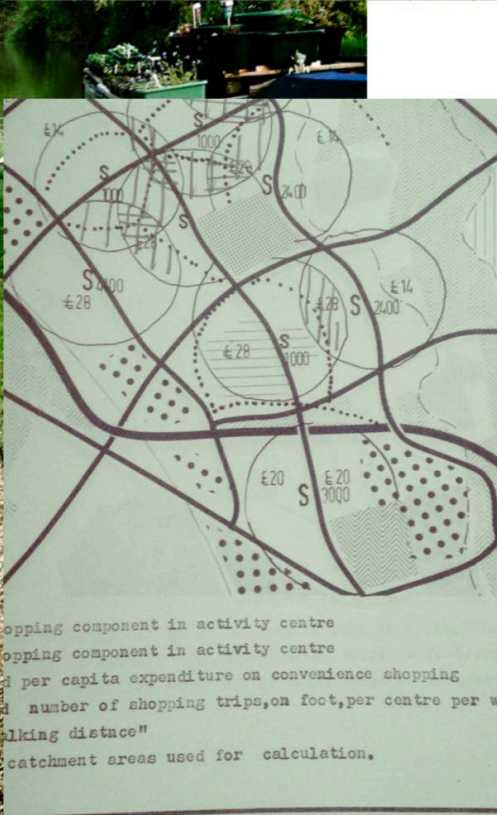
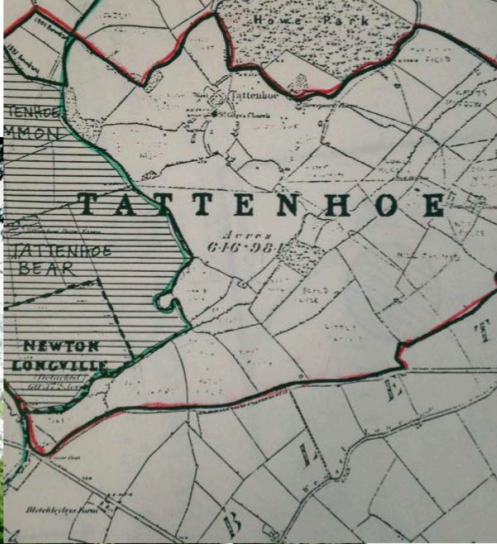
I never thought it would turn out like this

The following pages are explorations from Bob Jarvis, who in 1969 was a planner in Milton Keynes

When I worked at Milton Keynes it didn't exist. I was interviewed on a grey February day at Walton Hall and when I was offered a job as 'Graduate Assistant' and with several job offers (those were the days!) my tutor at Newcastle told me "take it – there will always be local authorities, there won't be anything like this again"

So with a draft of the plan and some vague ideas I started as in September in the planning team wondering (with Peter Simpson) what on earth 50% owner occupied housing would look like on the ground, then fiddling around with small sites and conserving the character of Woughton on the Green (I still have the complex layered assessment I drew up) with Mike Clegg in the planning team; and then as 'urban design' got started (though I think it was called 'city structure') two years with Peter Winchester and Andrew Mahaddie trying to work out what 'Activity Centres' would be and how a city wide footpath network would shape up (while Andrew was drawing his wonderful long view perspectives of the future city and dotting a map of every future tree with his Rotring pen).















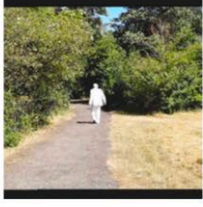
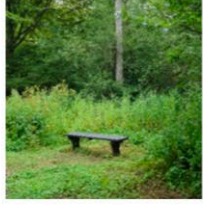
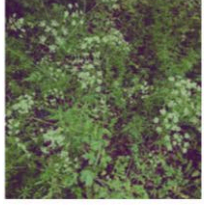
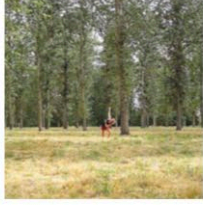
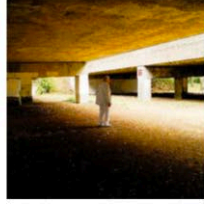
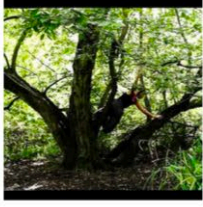
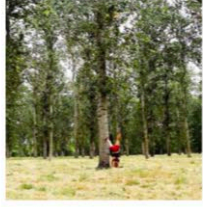
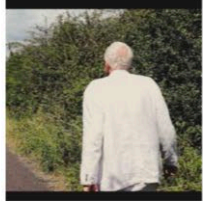
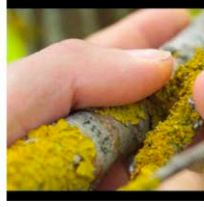
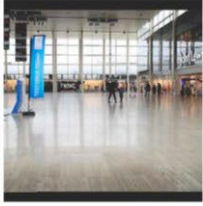
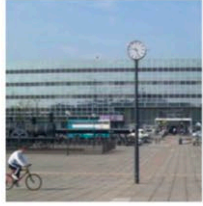
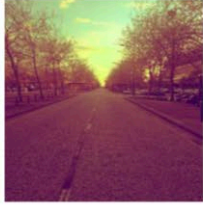
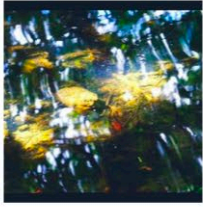
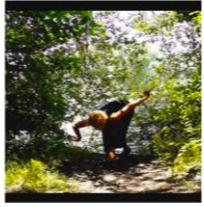
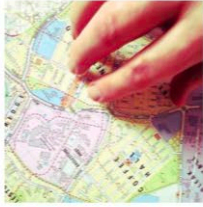
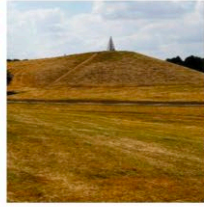
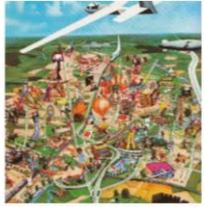






Pedestrians do not have Priority







I would like Milton Keynes
to stay as it is because
if they built any more
shops there would be to
much rush and the roads
would be full of traffic
and there would be
hardly any fields and
nice places to go for
walks in.

Jane aged 8 Bletchley

I think Milton Keynes could
be quite a nice place only
if they stop and
repeat stop building.

Roger aged 12 Wolverton





More about the project collaborators:

Dr. Bob Jarvis is a town planner with extensive experience in urban design teaching and research. He worked at Milton Keynes Development Corporation before "Milton Keynes" existed, then undertook a two year research programme joining Tyne and Wear County Council to work on the environmental aspects of their structure plan. He subsequently became Gateshead's first conservation officer - the experience of which has been written as Talking About Special Places for his doctoral research. He also undertook pioneering work for their National Garden Festival. Recently he has have begun to develop interests in Romanian urbanism to provide new and stimulating perspectives - the UK and Romania are at the opposite ends of Europe and Romania's entry into the EU offers exciting possibilities which was reflected in the award of a British Academy Small Projects award. He is currently pursuing a new PhD in Romanian Art History at the University of Sussex.

Dr Beatrice Jarvis is an creative facilitator, choreographer and researcher, and founder of the Urban Research Forum and The Living Collective. She is currently a full time lecturer in Dance at Kingston University, London. She holds a practice based PhD from The University of Ulster and the University of Kingston exploring dance as medium to explore spatial and social conflict Her practice merges essential dance techniques of somatic practice in a sociological framework of critical perspectives, cultivating a unique stance point to practice based research and the role of the body as archive and conduit in society. Her socio-choreographic research has been profiled within Pina Bausch Symposium, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, dOCUMENTA (13), The National School of Art Bucharest, Galway Dance Festival, Goldsmiths CUCR Tate, and the American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting 2013. Her commissions include Steven Lawrence Center, Schiume Festival (Venice) and EGFK Berlin. Her current performance research explores Deep Ecology and Ecosomatic practice through screen dance in rural Ireland and was exhibited and presented at the Conference of Irish Geographers 2018.

For more information see <http://beatricejarvis.net/>



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With special thanks to Cara Davies, Ashleigh Bowmott and Tom Eke.

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Any questions, ideas, please email b.jarvis@kingston.ac.uk

Oak	284	Hazel	73
Willow	286	Beech	64
Birch	229	Ash	41
Hawthorn	149	Spruce	37
Poplar	97	Lime	31
Crab Apple	93	Hawthorn	28
Scots Pine	91	Larch	17
Alder	90	Fir	16
Elm	82	Holly	7