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Borders: investigating liminality,
outsiderness and solitude through an
exploration of the sound environments
of Andover

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for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Ethics Statement

This study was approved by the Bath Spa University Ethics Panel on 21/07/2021. Should you have any concerns regarding ethical matters relating to this study, please contact the Research Support Office at Bath Spa University (researchsupportoffice@bathspa.ac.uk).

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Abstract

This practice-based research project examines the relationships between sound, place, and identity through an investigation of liminality, solitude, and outsidership in the context of Andover, a market town in southern England. The study is centred around a portfolio of soundwalk-based compositions that explore transitional and peripheral environments where urban and rural soundscapes meet.

Using methods grounded in soundwalking, art-walking, and some psychogeographic approaches, the research explores how compositional practices can frame everyday sound environments and how these practices explore the themes of liminality, solitude and outsidership. The work focuses on liminal geographic and acoustic spaces, where differing environmental conditions meet, and examines how these areas can be represented and interpreted through artistic practice.

The compositions are realised through solitary walks and are documented using a range of media, including field recordings, photography, film, and text. These documentations are intended to represent the acoustic features and personal experiences of specific locations and link them with the broader themes being investigated. The compositions engage with the sonic characteristics of Andover's environments and outskirts, and investigate how these contribute to influences on memory and a sense of place.

The thesis presents the outcomes of these explorations as contributions to the understanding of liminal environments and compositional responses to everyday soundscapes. It proposes that soundwalking and related practices provide useful tools for investigating liminality, solitude and outsidership, and for articulating nuanced relationships between individual perception and the acoustic environment.

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Part I – Overview

1.1 Introduction

This project explores the soundworlds where different environments meet, and how this relates to liminality, outsidership and solitude in the context of my personal relationship with my hometown of Andover, Hampshire. It is also a study of these spaces in Andover, through the creation and realisations of scores, documentation of realisations, and personal experiences and memories. These are all accumulated in the resulting composition portfolio, titled *borders*.

The initial idea for the project emerged when I was walking on the outskirts of Andover, near one of the surrounding villages, and I could hear the tyre-wash drones of the A303 in the distance, which seemed to blend in with the surrounding rural environment. I became interested in the fluctuating balancing act between the two soundworlds, and I was curious about the nature of this in-between place, where different soundworlds collided. For a lot of my adult life I have gone on solitary walks. This has always been an opportunity for me to experience and enjoy my own solitude, a value that I regard as important in my own life.

I have always felt like an outsider, something I have come to believe is more common than not. As an outsider, I have always felt I am skirting along the edge of societal contexts, observing. If one is on the edge of a context, then they are also on the edge of another. It is this in-between state that I feel most natural in, a place where I feel I have spent the majority of my life; neither completely here nor entirely there.

This project brings these themes together by investigating these in-between environments and places and by creating and realising scores that reflect on what liminality, solitude and outsidership mean.

1.2 Andover



Maps data: Google, ©2020 / Airbus. Google Earth (Google, 2025)

Fig 1: Overview satellite image of Andover, Hampshire.

Andover is a relatively small town in the southern English county of Hampshire, with a population of 50,887 (Test Valley Borough Council, 2021). It was historically a market town, however in relatively recent times the 'market' aspect has diminished. Like a lot of UK towns of similar size, it has a variety of location types, which include industrial and business estates, lakes and parks, a sprawling network of roads of varying sizes, a town centre and high street, churches and graveyards, and numerous built-up suburban areas which constitute the majority of the town's geographical area. The town is also surrounded generously by Hampshire countryside and farmland, and small villages and country paths. The River Anton, which starts at the north of the town, cuts through the centre of Andover and out into the countryside to the south, before it runs into the River Test. The A303 trunk road swings around the southern edge of the town – this bypass was opened in 1969 to resolve traffic and congestion from within the town centre. There is a railway which cuts through the northern centre, which links the town to London and the South West of England. Starting in 1964, new housing estates were built for housing the London overspill – housing estates are still being built today, and the town is now roughly twice the size in area compared to the early 1960s.

I have grown up and lived in Andover for most of my life so far, and naturally the town holds memories from my past and recent present. I am familiar enough with some locations to call them 'home', and unfamiliar enough with other areas to make the occasional discovery. I dream about certain locations and spaces, and in these dreams I experience a strong sense of place, perhaps more acutely than in waking life. When walking and carrying out my practice, I have visited places from my own past that have tapped into previously forgotten memories, and I feel that my relationship with the town has changed as the overall project has progressed. In a way, I am listening to the environments that I have grown up with and lived within, that I have always been connected to in one way or another, whether I have paid attention to them or not. Rebecca Solnit describes the physical attributes of memories and their relationship to walking:

Memory, like the mind and time, is unimaginable without physical dimensions; to imagine it as a physical place is to make it into a landscape in which its contents are located, and what has location can be approached. That is to say, if memory is imagined as a real space – a place, theater, library – then the act of remembering is imagined as a real act, that is, as a physical act: as walking (Solnit, 2014, p. 77)

Solnit here likens the act of remembering to the act of walking. When we remember a place, we walk through it in our imagination. When walking through familiar places in Andover, or places from my past, I frequently remember past times and experiences of that location – I simultaneously walk (as a physical act) through these places but also walk (by remembering) through the same places in my imagination, through memorised experiences.

Brona Martin explains the importance of sound and soundscapes and their ability to have an emotional effect on an individual through memory:

Soundscape methodology allows a person to retain a sonic memory of a place that they may want to save, such as the sound of their home, which can be more powerful than a photograph. Sound has the power to evoke memories and past experiences, which are part of our connection to place (Martin, 2018, p. 27)

The soundscape of Andover, whether I have been aware of it or not, has influenced my life and given me a strong sense of home. I have only been actively listening to the soundscape since formulating this project, but there is no doubt that the town's soundscape has had an effect on my life so far, albeit unconsciously. For my first fourteen years, I lived on the south side of Andover,

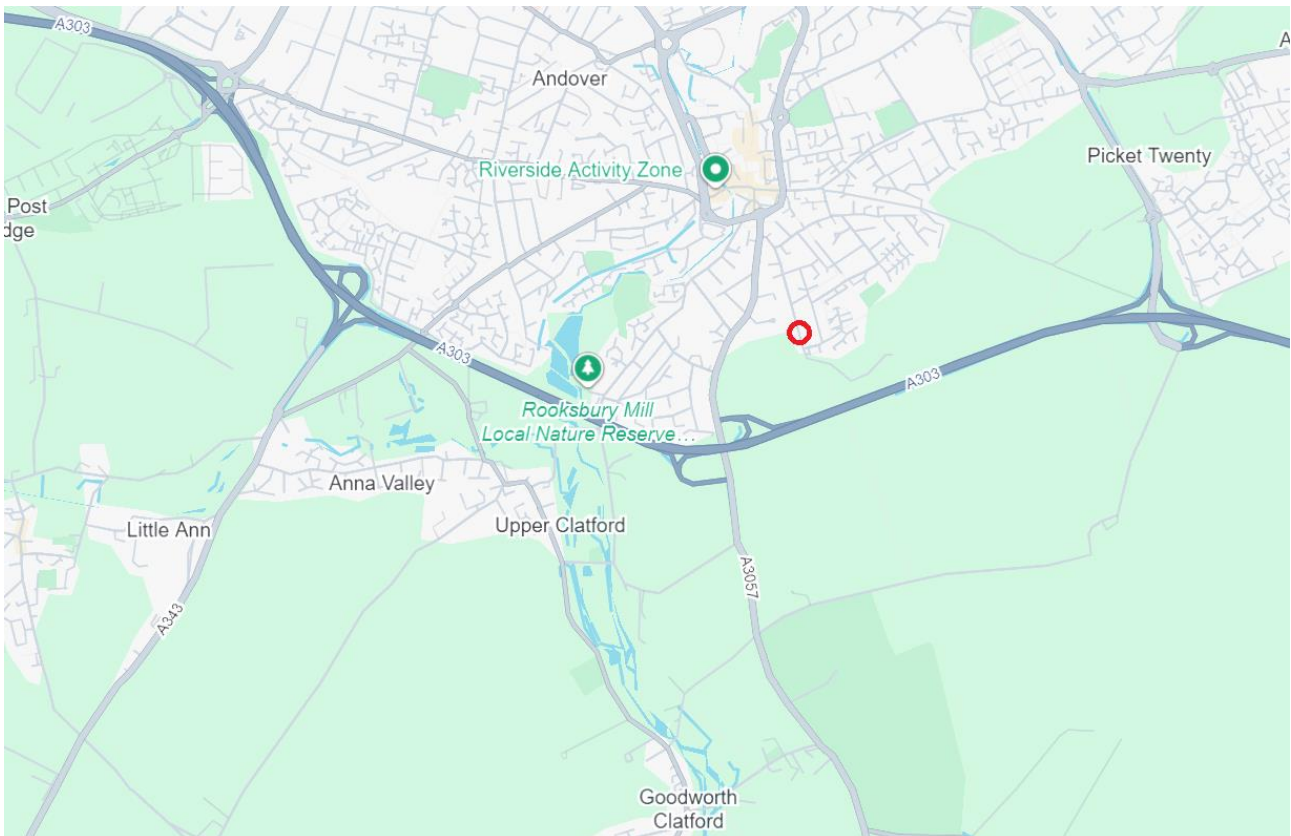
where the A303 can be clearly heard in the background (see Fig 2). This may be why many of the pieces and experiences of realisations tend to return to, and sometimes focus on, the constant droning background traffic from the A303. Perhaps for me it represents a feeling of 'home', a longing to return to my formative years and experiences of my first home – unconscious remembering. Gernot Bohme (2000, p. 16) states that “it has been discovered that the feeling of “home” is strongly mediated by the *soundscape* [sic] of a region, and that the characteristic experience of a lifestyle, of a city’s or a countryside’s atmosphere, is fundamentally determined in each instance by the acoustic space.” Throughout my research and in composing these projects, I am focusing on the environments that make up my hometown, linking my own relationship from these environments to the major themes explored.

Andover's soundworld is relatively varied from location to location, for a town of its size, and includes rural sounds such as birds, trees and running water (from the River Anton). Yet none of these sounds or soundscapes that the town possesses are exotic, rare or, at least on the surface, significant. Whether in the foreground or background, there is a defining feature of Andover's soundworld coming from the main roads and, especially on the south side, the A303. These perpetually droning sounds are more noticeable in quiet areas such as suburbs, hanging in the background with a concrete certainty. And although these sounds are not unique to Andover, they fill up the bulk of the town's soundworld. Kendall Wrightson (2000, p. 10) explains the becoming of this everyday aural phenomenon: “since the industrial revolution, an ever increasing number of unique soundscapes have disappeared completely or submerged into the cloud of homogenised, anonymous noise that is the contemporary city soundscape, with its ubiquitous keynote—traffic.” This is not exclusive to city life – Andover, much smaller than the larger cities, also succumbs to the constant sound of traffic. An example of a related experience occurred during a walk on Ladies Walk, a country path that lies on a hill and swings along the south-eastern edge of the town. Behind me, to the south of the path, the A303 roars continuously. When editing a field recording that I took on this route, I noticed that the bells from St Marys church were ringing – the church stands in the centre of the town. However, the bells were very quiet, and before I could properly focus on them, they stopped ringing. They were largely obscured by the sounds of traffic that radiate from the town and from the A303. How clear the sounding bells must have been before the industrial revolution, and before the automobile – I wonder if they could have been heard from the surrounding villages. From walking around the town, especially with a focus on listening to the environments, I have concluded that the sound of traffic is a defining feature of the soundworld, whether it is in the foreground or the background. When making a recording for *borders #2*, one of the composition projects, a member of the public approached me out of curiosity. I told them what I was doing, and

they mentioned how the A303 was “quiet today”. It may well have been quieter than usual, but it was still there. The trunk road obviously has an effect on the townspeople, especially those who live in its aural radius, within its acoustic footprint.

The outskirts of Andover are surrounded by quintessential Hampshire countryside and farmland, which consists of spacious grass and crop fields, barns, country paths, pockets of woodlands and forests of varying sizes, and villages dotted between these open lands, as if in a static orbit around the town. These areas are defined aurally by the drones of traffic from the town's main roads and the A303. However distant the drones may seem, they are still noticeable and radiate for miles outside of the town – from my experience of walking through the surrounding countryside, the A303 is still relatively clear from the village of Goodworth Clatford, about 1.5 miles south of the trunk road (see Fig 2). Like many countryside locations and environments in England, these drones are a defining feature of rural soundscapes. R. Murray Schafer (1994, p. 78) describes this aural phenomenon, the sound of traffic, from a graphic representation: “When the body of the sound is prolonged and unchanging, it is reproduced by the graphic level recorder as an extended horizontal line. (...) Machines share this important feature, for they create low-information, high redundancy sounds,” and, “The flat continuous line in sound is an artificial construction. Like the flat line in space, it is rarely found in nature.” He goes on to explain the perpetual sound environments, such as those that define the outside edge of Andover: “As roads and railroads and flat-surfaced buildings proliferated in space, so did their acoustic counterparts in time; and eventually flat lines in sound slipped out across the countryside also, as the whine of the transport truck and the airplane drone demonstrate.”

Although these sounds, the droning of traffic, are not found “in nature”, they are a part of the rural countryside soundscape that surrounds our towns and cities. Sometimes, the visual distinction of town and countryside environments can be clear and obvious, but aurally, the countryside is not as peaceful or as purely pastoral as we may think – the urban spills out into the rural, aurally painting a grey overcast over the greens and browns, a blending of sound environments. Much of my own practice takes place on the edges of these spaces, where they collide, and the aural landscape blurs the border of Andover and not-Andover, urban (at least suburban) and rural. Aurally, these spaces are in a liminal state, not entirely urban, not entirely rural, yet this example of liminality is not uncommon nor is it, superficially, exciting – it is an example of the liminality of the mundane, of the everyday.



Maps data: Google, ©2025. Google Maps (Google, 2025)

Fig 2: The south side of Andover, including the A303. The red circle indicates the location where I lived for my first fourteen years.

Andover is a part of my identity, whether I like it or not (and sometimes, I do not). But the opposite is also true; I am also a part of Andover's identity – part of its history. I have lived here for most of my life, to date. The pieces in the portfolio reflect my exploration of these identities. Barry Truax touches on this idea of identity when talking about soundscape composition, of which soundwalking is a major part:

If acoustic ecology is concerned with the relationship of the individual listener and communities of listeners to their environment as mediated by sound, then the individual and collective perception of acoustic space must play a fundamental role. Perhaps the most basic role is that of orientation. The habitual sounds we experience daily both reflect and confirm our sense of physical space, as well as our place within it. (Truax, 2012, p. 2105)

Through the pieces in the portfolio, I am immersing myself in my own everyday, and the soundworlds which I have been attached to, whether I knew it or not, throughout my life. The constant greyness of the distant (and occasionally foregrounded) A303 is an example of this – it has always been there, but it is only in the last few years that I have noticed it, that I have attended to it.

Truax (2012, p. 2105) goes on to explain that “Sound will define what is the boundary of the community, whether the scale is small or large, by distinguishing between what is ‘local’ from what comes the ‘outside’”. This boundary is manifested in the form of the A303 that swings by the south of the town, which for me is a clear divide between where Andover ends, and the countryside begins. Although geographically this may not be accurate (sometimes there are fields and some farmland that separate the town from the trunk road, especially in the south-east), it is a distinction that I have made in terms of sound. The closer you get to the A303, the more the town disappears from aural perception; where the countryside begins is where the soundscape becomes characterised by the undercurrent droning of the A-road. The boundary at the north side of the town is not as clear aurally – the town just seems to stop at many locations, and the environment immediately changes into farmland and countryside. However, the sounding environment of the town radiates out into these fields, and is not masked by the A303 like it is to the south. These contrasting sound environment attributes are an example of what gives the town a fluid soundworld that may appear to be boring and indistinct, but contribute to its everyday existence.

1.3 Overview and Context

The main themes of the project – liminality, outsidership and solitude – come from my own experiences of feeling like an outsider and not feeling fully 'part of' a societal group or context. This, of course, is not exclusive to me, but is a natural and variable part of the human condition. As I became more aware of these experiences of in-between states, metaphorically walking on the edge of contexts and experiencing different contexts as they meet, I became more interested in this aspect of modern life; even down to my own reflections on things such as where my place is in society, or where it should be. The metaphorical walks are turned into literal ones and are presented as scores and pieces that explore the spaces where different environments meet.

The pieces engage with the outsidership and in-between nature of liminal states, and are explored by listening to and walking through different environments, and exploring the liminality within the spaces where these sound environments meet. It is important to clarify that what I mean by being an outsider is to be on or near the edge of an environment, which means that one is also simultaneously on the edge of another environment. It is this in-between state where the theme of liminality is explored – the concepts of outsidership *and* in-betweenness are therefore explored together. The study of liminality for this project is used to convey the idea of in-betweenness.

The reason for solitude when experiencing or realising these pieces is to accentuate the idea of being an outsider; on the edge, as opposed to being within a context (such as a social state, or with a group of people) – to be meaningfully detached from, yet not fully apart; being within a range where one can observe, and attend to different states of modern life, of the everyday. Over the years, I have fallen into a more comfortable place in my own solitude. The pieces in the portfolio attempt to express a positive outlook on solitude.

Since starting, the project has grown from a simple exploration of liminal sound environments to a deeply personal exploration of many things, which includes, as well as liminality: outsidership and the enjoyment of solitude; the opportunity to listen to the environment(s) framed by scores and ideas; a personal record of thoughts, memories and experiences; a walking practice; and, without getting too sentimental, a love-letter to Andover. I view Andover as the ultimate unspectacular, everyday place, acknowledging the personal bias, as it is my home. I consider how my history with Andover gives the project a personal context, allowing me to write about what I know and makes the personal (my own exploration of Andover, memories and experiences) universal (the themes of liminality, outsidership and solitude).

I have created these works and carried out the research from a composition perspective. The grounding, basic principle of the overall project is listening – framing and walking through environments that always change and morph aurally (albeit not always dramatically). I have documented these soundwalks as experiences that may go further than exclusively aural – listening to sound environments can develop to include a variety of sensory experiences. The works may be relatively open (to interpretation, to improvising a walk from a basic premise) but they all have their set rules and boundaries, attempting to frame the everyday and create an art experience, whilst also simultaneously being part of the everyday. These locations, walks, and acts of listening, are structured by their framing and are presented (through realisations and documentation) from an aesthetic view of sound, place and experience – contained-yet-open.

Walking has been a large part of my life since childhood, whether for enjoyment or necessity, and I do not drive, so therefore I rely on walking as my main means of travel. Soundwalking, art-walking, and, to a smaller extent, psychogeography are key methods to my practice. After becoming interested in the concept of soundwalking, it seemed natural to me that this medium would be the main method with which to carry out the practical research, as I felt that this form of composition could convey the themes of the project as clear as possible and in a practical way. While progressing with the project, I have since become interested in other forms and concepts of walking-as-art. Some of these ideas I have incorporated into my work as I feel they are suited for how I want to express the themes of the project and carry out the research.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to frame my investigation of liminality, solitude and outsidership through an exploration of the sound environments of Andover, I aim to explore the following three research questions:

- How are everyday liminal states experienced in geographical terms (in Andover), and how can these be formed and framed into compositions?
- How are the themes of outsidership, solitude and liminality related to compositional practices such as soundwalking?
- How do these compositional practices help create and develop an understanding of liminality, outsidership and solitude?

1.5 Methodologies

This research project is predominantly practice-based. I have created, devised and realised scores and composition projects to explore and investigate the themes of the project and the research questions. I have explored these ideas through my own acts of creativity and carrying out realisations, and this thesis provides context for the work. Linda Candy states that in practice-based research:

Creative output can be produced, or practice undertaken, as an integral part of the research process. However, the outcomes of practice must be accompanied by documentation of the research process, as well as some form of textual analysis or explanation to support its position and to demonstrate critical reflection. (Candy, 2006, p. 2)

I have tried to demonstrate these aspects of practice-based research that Candy describes, both through the documentation of the realisations of scores and the written accounts of the composition projects that constitute the second half of this thesis.

My practice entails creating scores and composition projects, listening, and attending to locations through soundwalking and art-walking. I have also documented the realisations of the sound/art-walks by using material that I deemed applicable for each project. Alongside my practice, I have researched and read literature focused on the themes and aspects of the project, such as soundwalking, art walking, liminality, solitude and outsidership, psychogeography and acoustic ecology.

For the realisations of my scores, I have chosen routes that I believe represent the place where different environments come together, sometimes aurally, mainly geographically. When listening to these environments during soundwalks, I developed a method of attempting to listen to the sounds and soundscapes both objectively and subjectively, fluctuating between the two styles of listening. This fluctuation was an attempt to create a balance between myself and the environment – objective listening gave me a basis, a grounding, from which to listen subjectively. Also, when listening to a soundscape, it was important for me to include all sounds that I could hear – if the sound source is not included within the geographical environment, such as a busy main road that is not a part of a suburban area, yet the sounds still enter the environment, then I will include that external sound as part of the soundscape of the environment. Whilst creating and realising these pieces, I frequently thought about the themes of liminality, outsidership and solitude from a subjective standpoint – to

keep the practical work perpetually relevant to the research, and vice versa.

For each realisation, I attempted to create documentation that I felt was most applicable. Material includes sound recordings, photographs, films, texts and maps. This was because I wanted to present the environment(s) and experiences of each realisation as clearly as possible – for example, for the ‘L’ score in *borders #3*, the soundscape changes were too subtle for a field recording, and the experience of the environmental changes was largely influenced by the landscape, therefore I used photography to present the work as I felt this demonstrated the piece more clearly. For the ‘line and dot’ score in *borders #3* I wanted to differentiate each of the two experiences for the score, and brought together the field recording (from walking the ‘line’) and the film (a static shot, from standing the ‘dot’), therefore giving the impression that although the realisation of the score is somewhat bifurcated, it is all part of the same piece. Other times, however, I just wanted to experiment with different forms – making solely field recordings for each realisation could become stale, and using a variety of material for documentation for *borders #2* was an attempt to present the realisation(s) in a different way to *borders #1*, which mainly used field recordings. This also helped differentiate *borders #2* from *#1*, and I hope that the use of different material for each composition project helped present each project in unique ways from one another. The documentation is an impression of each realisation of a score – the documentation for each piece should not be seen as the piece itself, but rather a reflection of a realisation.

Among the literature research for art-walking and soundwalking, liminality, outsidersness and solitude, I also studied individual works from composers and artists that reflected or had a relation to my own work. Through this, I also came across works that I felt did not share a relationship to my own work, therefore focusing on relevant artworks. This included the consideration of scores for soundwalking and art-walking, thinking about pieces as well as attempting a few realisations of my own.

1.6 List of Pieces

The portfolio contains seven different composition projects. Each have different formats and styles of realisations and documentation, and all contain some form of walking and listening. All pieces in the portfolio were realised on my own.

borders #1 (2018/19) – [<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.c.7691456>] is a collection of text scores. Each score (except for *places*) uses minimal text as instruction for potential realisations. I wanted to make an open form for the pieces so they could potentially be realised in variable geographical locations, albeit within a framework. Several of these pieces are walks to be carried out on or through the edges of urban/suburban and rural areas, where these different environments merge. Others are for realisations in spaces which present other aspects of the in-between, such as the border between two different rooms, and the connection between the past and the present. *places* is a piece for field recordings and environments, where the recordings should be listened to in characteristically opposing environments and therefore a blending of the two different environments (recording and surroundings) can be experienced. The main focus for the pieces in this collection is an exploration of liminality – the liminal is expressed through the experience of these in-between geographical and temporal environments, and the scores aim to frame these spaces and experiences. The list of pieces comprising *borders #1* are as follows:

1) *stand in an open doorway / face the frame / listen to both sides simultaneously* (2018)

[<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28497644>]

2) *walk alone / along the edge of town / listen to the sounds inside and outside the town simultaneously* (2019)

[<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28497668>]

3) *walk alone / from the centre of town / to / the edge of town / and beyond / listen to the transitional stages of different sound environments* (2019)

[<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28497794>]

4) *in an urban park / listen to the sounds inside and outside the park simultaneously / at / the edges / the centre* (2019)

[<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28497827>]

5) *walk alone / from beyond the edge of town / to / the centre of town / listen to the transitional stages of different sound environments* (2019)

[<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28497866>]

6) *places* (2019)

[<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28497896>]

7) *at home / (create) a situation where the sounds inside and outside merge / listen to the resulting sound environment* (2019)

[<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28497959>]

8) *(walk) alone / in a place that you used to know / focus on the memories that this place evokes / listen to your memories and the surrounding environment simultaneously* (2019)

[<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28497998>]

These text scores are also their titles, and I will use shortened versions of some of these scores/titles when discussing them further (for example, *stand in an open doorway / face the frame / listen to both sides simultaneously* will become *stand in an open doorway...* when being discussed).

***borders #2* (2019/20)** – [<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28631903>] is a walking and field recording project focused on different locations around the edge of Andover. The idea for this piece was to walk to these areas that lie on the edge(s) of the town, an exploration of places that may not necessarily be common destination points or points of interest. Each of these locations and experiences is documented by a field recording, a photo and a short piece of text relating to my experience. Here, the focus for this project was the idea of outsidership, evident in the walk to each location, in leaving town and populated areas to observe Andover from a short distance – each time departing from the everyday and, like a satellite, observing and recording it from a detached standpoint. There is also a link to liminality within this project, as many of the places lie on the border where town meets countryside – this project attempts to link the themes of outsidership and liminality.

***interlude* (2020)** – [<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28506185>] is a pair of scores to be realised at home and/or indoor spaces. These pieces were affected by and created during the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic – between the creation of *borders #2* and *#3*. *walking piece for home use* is a soundwalking piece to be realised in the home, where the soundwalker moves between different

rooms. It presents an opportunity to listen to the home environment in a new way. *window scene* (2020) is an experiential piece where the window edge frames the image on the other side, and the soundworld is imagined from this image. The glass itself is the border, the thin liminal space, and the soundworld is experienced in the imagination and not necessarily aurally. It is also an imagined exploration of soundworlds of the everyday – an attempt to experience a familiar environment in a different way.

***film series* (2020)** – [<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28506050>] is a collection of short films where the soundworlds are created in the imagination of the viewer. Related to *window scene*, these silent films are images of everyday locations in Andover, and the viewer is encouraged to create the soundworlds in their imagination. Like the preceding piece, liminality is expressed here by the screen – the screen itself acts like the window pane, the border, through which an image, that of the everyday material world, creates a link to the internal thoughts of the viewer, the imagination.

***borders #3* (2020/21)** – [<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28632491>] is a collection of graphic scores for walking which can be realised in different environments. Each of the ten scores comprises a black horizontal line which represents a border, an edge, and a blue line or dot(s) that represents the instruction for action, whether it be walking or standing. Realisations for these scores took place at a variety of locations and environments across Andover, in order to steer the focus away from the edge of the town. These scores express an opportunity for more play in the choices for the realisations. The documentation material was expanded, and the realisations were documented by a variety of means, including field recordings, photos, film and text. And although I was experimenting with more documentation techniques, the focus was on my own personal experience – the resulting material is just documentation, not the artwork itself. Liminality is expressed here again via walking through changing environments, exploring and playing on and around the edges/borders. Outsiderness is also demonstrated in the routes themselves – when soundwalking in this way, I am simultaneously detached from and part of the everyday, both observing and moving through it.

***border* (2022)** – [<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28506830>] is a year-long walking project. After framing a walking route for this project to be realised (approximately just under a mile long), I walked the same route once each week for a year. I see this project as a culmination of all the projects before, and all the themes are explored and expressed in this piece. Liminality is explored via the changing environments (from a busy main road, through a suburban street, through a small edgeland – the A303 underpass – and out into the rural countryside). Outsiderness is explored by

the repeated action of moving away from a populated area. This was the first time I used deliberate repetition for a project – the decision behind this was to lend more of a focus on these themes and to explore the way that they may or may not change. It is also linked to the everyday – the repetitive journeys people take in their everyday lives (such as to and from work), and the exploration, and potential exhaustion, of an ordinary location. Memories are also linked to this project – I lived on the street for the first fourteen years of my life – and these reflect in my past and present experiences with my hometown. Documentation resulted in a series of photos, field recordings (not presented), and a journal-like text.

2024 (2024) – [<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28506953>] is the final piece in the portfolio. This is a continuation of *border*, and a solidifying of that piece's practice. Another year-long piece, walking the same route once each week, *2024* takes place on a different route, walking alongside the edge of the town. Documentation for this piece consists of a single photograph taken in the same place during each walk, resulting in a collection of these photographs; an attempt at stripping back documentation to a bare minimum. I see this piece as the template for future pieces – I feel that with *2024* I have found a definitive framework with which I can continue my practice and explore the themes further, while also walking through my memories and creating new experiences.

In later chapters, these pieces are described and explained in accounts of the creation of the scores and realisations. In these accounts, I discuss the pieces in more detail and how they link with and reflect the themes and research for the overall project.

1.7 Thesis Structure

After this Overview (Part I), the thesis is split into three parts. Part II consists of two chapters on the major themes of the project, and a summary. Part III is an in-depth account of each of the composition projects. The final section of the thesis, Part IV, is the conclusion.

Part II

Section 2:1 discusses the ideas of different aspects of soundwalking and listening to the environment, including examples of artists and historical practice. This chapter also explores the practices of psychogeography and art-walking.

Section 2:2 discusses the themes of the project: liminality, outsidership and solitude. This chapter explores different examples of liminality that include physical space, geography and the psychological. This chapter also describes the themes of outsidership and solitude.

Section 2:3 is a summary of the themes which brings them together.

Part III

This part takes an in-depth look at each piece, about the projects themselves, and reflects and demonstrates the main themes of the overall project. Section 3:1 is the account of *borders #1*, 3:2 the account of *borders #2*, 3:3 is the account of the projects *film series* and *interlude*, 3:4 the account of *borders #3*, 3:5 is the account of *border*, and 3:6 is the account of the final project in the portfolio, *2024*.

Part IV

The final part discusses the conclusions and findings of the overall project, and ties up all the themes of the project and how this project relates to a wider context. This section also reflects on the research questions, and describes the potential future of the research and work.

Part II – Contexts

The main themes of the overall project are: soundwalking (which includes art-walking), which is the practical choice for the execution of the work and the pieces in the portfolio; liminality, the object of study that the practical work aims to explore; and solitude and outsidership – these combined themes play a large part in the work and the project as a whole. The following subsections investigate these themes, and explore the theory that I have found useful and relevant to my own practice.

2.1 – Soundwalking and Art-walking

2.1.1 – Soundwalking

A soundwalk is defined by Hildegard Westerkamp as:

any excursion whose main purpose is listening to the environment. It is exposing our ears to every sound around us no matter where we are. We may be at home, we may be walking across a downtown street, through a park, along the beach; we may be sitting in a doctor's office, in a hotel lobby, in a bank; we may be shopping in a supermarket, a department store, or a Chinese grocery store; we may be standing at the airport, the train station, the bus-stop. Wherever we go we will give our ears priority. (Westerkamp, 2007, p. 49)

This is arguably the most important, and most quoted statement within the field of soundwalking; Westerkamp has written extensively in the field, and her work is central to the study of acoustic ecology (the relationship between humans and the environment through sound) and what was the World Soundscape Project (a research project formed in the 1960s and led by R. Murray Schafer, its main study being acoustic ecology). Westerkamp explains what a soundwalk is at its most basic level:

Initially a soundwalk is an opportunity to let the world in without any compulsion to respond or—to put it differently—to be open without a need to define, intellectualise, categorise, or interpret, to listen without expectations, assumptions or judgement, to listen without the compulsion to change things or to act immediately. (Westerkamp, 2006)

Although Westerkamp's base definition of a soundwalk is clear and describes the act of objective listening, soundwalks usually then develop to become defined, intellectualised, interpreted, and more subjective, whether from an artistic approach, a research approach, or both. It is this subjectivity that contributes to making a soundwalk an art experience. Andra McCartney takes Westerkamp's definition further, and describes the almost-endless expanse of soundwalking as an artistic medium:

Soundwalks take place in urban, rural, wilderness and multiply mediated locations. A soundwalk can be done individually or in a group. It can be recorded or not. It can be re-situated in the same location, or translated into other media forms with little or a great deal of sound processing. Soundwalk artists maintain differing attitudes toward the place in question, sounds recorded, processes used, audience of the walk itself, and the audiences of interpretive pieces based on soundwalks. Their intentions may be aesthetic, didactic, ecological, political, communicative or some combination of these. (McCartney, 2014, p. 212)

McCartney points out the variability within the medium of soundwalking, and opens up Westerkamp's definition of the artistic form. Soundwalking is, therefore, arguably as simple as just walking/moving/being within the environment and listening to it. However, its openness can contribute to the complexities of the art medium and reveal multiple depths and layers to the experiences. Yet again, there is a perceived simplicity in the act of soundwalking. Westerkamp frequently grounds the idea in its foundational values:

Inherent in the act of going on a soundwalk is the assumption that the environment is worth listening to during every second of the soundwalk. Or, to put it another way, that it is worthwhile to devote a certain time span to the act of listening, no matter what may meet the ear. (Westerkamp, 2006).

Throughout her writing about soundwalking, Westerkamp seems to bring it back to its base foundations – the act of listening to the environment. It is this act itself that detaches the soundwalker from the everyday, yet the soundwalker has to be within the everyday environment to carry out this action. Giving the environment attention is what lends soundwalking its idiosyncratic qualities. There has been discussion of this duality within the nature of soundwalking, which also gives soundwalking its liminal quality. John Levack Drever describes this duality, the fluidity between the attachment and detachment when referencing soundwalking in relation to the everyday:

Taking the everyday as its context, soundwalking mingles in the everyday but is not of the everyday. Akin to other modes of cultural performance, such as the classical music concert, it is a kind of limbo activity, where the goals and stresses of everyday life are temporarily lifted, and the sensation of partaking in a performance event is invoked, but distinctively in soundwalking the relationship between participant and everyday life is conspicuously porous. (Drever, 2009. p. 166)

This intermingling of being part of and not being part of the everyday gives soundwalking its distinctive quality, Drever explains, and thus suggests the identity of the participant as simultaneous composer, performer, and listener. This reflects the setting and subject of the soundwalk, the route, which is both within the world and also the stage, real-life and performed – the route can also be seen as the performer as well as being part of everyday life – it is both the art studio and the sculpture. Drever further explains the blurring of boundaries that the qualities of soundwalking possess, using the example of George Brecht's Water Yam project:

on a card titled Air Conditioning the instructions are: 'move through the place'. There is a parsimony in the delivery of the instruction, and a simplicity in carrying it out, albeit open to interpretation and influence by contingencies of the site, resulting in an ephemeral act that anyone can perform, demonstrating an everyday orientation: suggesting there is no boundary between art and life. (Drever, 2009. p. 184)

This blurring of art and life reflects the notion of the fluidity that soundwalking possesses about being part of and not being part of the everyday, that attachment and detachment. The performative action that takes place, of course, is walking; this everyday action is turned into an act of seeking-out the aesthetic, and through listening while walking, the soundwalker comes to the psychological place that lies between that attachment to and detachment from the experience of the everyday, and therefore comes to the aesthetics of an art experience.

Arguably, in its most basic form, soundwalking is about *experience*. As one would listen to an orchestra in a concert hall, a process which implies closing-off the outside world to focus on this one event for the purposes of listening, one can apply this same mindset for a soundwalk, listening to the environment for its aesthetic value, almost as if the sounding world is performing for our ears. This experience, like listening to instrumental, performed music, can then form other experiences influenced by what we hear: thoughts and ideas, emotions, feelings, tastes and

imagination. Michelle Duffy and Gordon Waitt confirm this when they explain that listening is:

a conscious activity: it requires some level of concentration and engagement; it's a process of actively creating and attributing meaning. Hence, the soundscapes of our everyday lives are not passive outcomes of simply hearing sounds. Rather, as Barry Truax (2001) suggested, soundscapes are an outcome of simultaneously encountering, listening, giving meaning to, responding to, and interacting with the silences and rhythmic and tonal qualities of music and sound. Listening operates in emotional, bodily and psychological ways. (Duffy and Waitt, 2009. p. 20.)

Through listening, these new experiences are formed, not only from what we hear, but what our whole selves absorb, as Westerkamp (2006) states: "aside from heightening aural perception, a soundwalk also alerts all other senses". Westerkamp hints at the self within the environment, the soundwalker themselves, and their own subjective experience to the environment:

Such a soundwalk simply allows participants to hear the environment for what it is and to become aware of their own relationship to the soundscape. In this sense a soundwalk can be similar to a meditation: the world happens, the sounds occur and they pass. The meditating person is aware of all that happens, but does not engage in it, in fact, is detached to a certain extent. (Westerkamp, 2006)

Objective listening turns subjective when the soundwalker "becomes aware" of themselves within the environment. This could happen in an aesthetic, emotional or sonic sense (such as one's own footsteps or breathing) and what transpires, as Westerkamp explains, is that the soundwalk itself then becomes a kind of meditation. However, although Westerkamp states that the person does not engage with the surrounding sound environment, the opposite may be, and is often, true. Engagement comes in the form of emotionality and thinking, especially, but not exclusively, if the brief (the score) for the soundwalk expresses an intent. What happens is a complex, ethereal event between listener and environment; we bring ourselves to the experience. Only a recorder and microphone can listen to the environment in an objective way, and yet there is an attempt by the soundwalker to bring the experience back to objective listening – this is the meditation, the cycle, and this is what gives soundwalking its unique qualities. This "detached to a certain extent" reinforces Drever's description of the unique nature of soundwalking, the duality and fluidity between an art experience and the everyday. The semi-detachment could be the meditation that Westerkamp describes. Westerkamp makes the notion clear about the identity between

soundwalkers and their environment(s):

I often suggest to participants to listen to both, the environment as well as to their own inner sounds, thoughts and voices—i.e. the running inner commentaries, reactions, the inner processing of perceived sounds, or thoughts wandering off into seemingly unrelated areas, and so on. They give us information about our relationship to the environment and the situation in which we happen to be. Thus a soundwalk does not only reveal relationships within the acoustic environment but perhaps more importantly, makes relationships conscious between listeners' experiences and their acoustic - social environment. (Westerkamp, 2006).

Westerkamp reinforces the notion of subjective listening within soundwalking – soundwalking is more than just listening to sounds or the soundscape(s) of the environment. When I watch a movie, I am not only seeing the images on screen, I am also invested in the characters, the themes and the story. When I bring myself to a movie, I get more out of it – I relate to the characters (or the themes, or the setting), and, if I am invested enough, an emotional response is created that can influence my thinking and perhaps even change my mind. I do not simply look at the movie, I watch it. I do not simply hear the soundscape, I listen to it. Through listening to the environment, I bring myself to it, and if I invest enough, I feel related to it in a way that can influence my thoughts or emotionality. Soundwalking is cinema in real time. Andrew Brown (2017) states that soundwalking “can arguably be considered an expanded form of cinema in its manipulation of reality through sound and image, yet generating direct physical experiences within the panoramic moving or static body.” He develops this idea of linking soundwalking with cinema:

The soundwalk experience shares significant features with cinema, such as in the co-constructive relationship between sound and image and the taking of imaginative journeys into other worlds. The cinema experience may be moving towards greater immersivity, yet the consequences within its safe and seductive comfort currently remain limited. Beyond the auditorium screen, a soundwalk provides a far less bounded, even panoramic perspective, placing the participant in a specific setting within which they may be taken through diverse (and possibly contradictory) states. (Brown, 2017)

Soundwalking can tell a story and reveal things about ourselves, or the environment(s), or both, and has the potential to change our minds. Brown uses this cinema analogy to put into context the liminal state between art and life where the artform lies. Because of the subjective nature of

soundwalking, there is always potential for the art experience and the everyday to clash:

Unlike the seductively comfortable cinema auditorium in which we can safely enter other worlds, an illusion broken by the occasional intrusion of our fellow audience members, the soundwalk produces a similarly liminal experience. However, the soundwalk participant is absolutely located in the real world, and with all-too-real consequences, especially from road traffic, to negotiate. (Brown, 2017)

A soundwalker, although the creator and participant of an art experience, must still navigate and respect the external influences of the environment where the walk takes place. Once again, this clashing of different types of experience is what gives soundwalking its unique qualities. In a cinema auditorium, we are somewhat focused on the visual and aural world of the film being shown, and there is an impression that we are cut off from the outside world; in a soundwalk however, this sensory experience is somewhat less focused on the environment or subject. Arguably, the experience is more broken and less consistent as a certain amount of awareness, whether natural, automatic or focused, is needed to navigate the obstacles, interruptions and natural occurrences of the outside everyday world. These obstacles and occurrences can include anything from: traffic, people, weather/conditions, ground inconsistencies (such as different materials, potholes, mounds etc), and buildings or structures to navigate around.

Yet, it is not just external influences and forces that can provide distractions or interruptions from focusing on the environment – internal conditions also factor into the experience of a soundwalk. Physical and mental conditions can influence the level of focus from the soundwalker. Brown explains that:

states of daydreaming, focussed attention, discomfort and boredom may all be felt in the course of a single soundwalk. Along with periods when the mind may become ‘liberated’, there will be others when awareness of bodily sensations such as weight, breath and pressure become acute. (Brown, 2017)

Conditions such as tiredness, aches, and general mental focus and lack of focus can influence the experience of a soundwalk. Sometimes, if the participant is lacking in some focus, or if they are inexperienced, the soundwalk itself can act as a kind of meditation. As the mind drifts to things not related to the environment of the walk, the listener must learn to bring that attention back to the experience of the walk – this cycle of attention becomes more consistent with more soundwalking experience, and is a central, significant quality of the artform itself. This gives the artform an

imperfect quality, and could be likened to the traditional Japanese concept of wabi-sabi (the aesthetics of the beauty of imperfection and transience). The length of the walk could also contribute to these conditions; during a longer soundwalk, the participant can become tired (mentally and physically) and therefore lose a certain amount of focus.

A soundwalk is a fluid experience between environment and soundwalker, time and place, external and internal spaces, and art and everyday life. Westerkamp explains the unique ephemeral nature of soundwalks:

In a soundwalk then, listeners and the environment create a unique “piece” together. It occurs only once, during the time of the walk itself. But an intensified relationship between listener and environment has been established, perhaps precisely because the essence of listening has been experienced with full consciousness and attention: sounds appear and disappear as time passes, no sound is ever repeated twice, our ears do not capture them like recordings do, all sound events are processed and altered by our imagination and memory (Westerkamp, 2006)

With this, Westerkamp summarises the unique and attractive nature of soundwalking. The art experience of the individual soundwalk will never be experienced in the same way again – if more soundwalks take place in the same location, each one will not be the same as another. Even though the location of a soundwalk can be traversed again and again, the experience of each walk will never be repeated.

There is great variety in the creation, formatting and execution of soundwalking scores. Some scores are site-specific, such as Westerkamp's *A Soundwalk in Queen Elizabeth Park in Vancouver* (1974) (included as part of Westerkamp's definitive “Soundwalk” essay), which includes a drawn map of the location, with numbered points marked along the walk which correspond to the instructions on how to listen and what to listen to during the exploration of the location. Peter Ablinger's score, *WHITE / WHITISH 9, paths [WEISS / WEISSLICH 9, Wege]* (1993, 1986), takes a more general and open approach. The following extract from the score provides a simple set of instructions:

- 9a: wind path: walk and listen to the wind
- 9b: water path: walk and listen to the water

The score does not give an indication to the location or time of day for the realisation – neither does it give duration, nor does it indicate that it should be realised alone or in a group. Neither, in the case of 9b, does it state that the piece needs to be realised near a source of water, and by the same token, there is no instruction that 9a cannot be realised during windless days. In contrast to Westerkamp's detailed instructive approach for *A Soundwalk in Queen Elizabeth Park in Vancouver*, there is a more generalised and freeing approach to Ablinger's score. The realisation(s) could theoretically take place anywhere in the world, in urban or rural environments, and at any time of day/night, and these conditions could be different for 9a and 9b, or the same. However, there is a specificity that makes the piece – each part of the score instructs what the listener should focus on; 9a wind, and 9b water. This focus gives each walk, each realisation of each piece, its own character. The specificity comes from the act of listening to the subject of each piece – filtering-out, aurally sculpting or separating the subject(s) from the everyday world to tailor the experience of each soundwalk.

Openness, within the structure of soundwalking scores, can also be varied in approach. Arguably the most open of such scores is Max Neuhaus' *LISTEN* (1966-). Neuhaus was influenced by such composers as Edgard Varese and John Cage, who incorporated everyday sounds into the concert hall, to listen to everyday sounds for their aesthetic value. The score itself – the word LISTEN stamped onto audience members' hands – is simple and demonstrates no further instruction. Neuhaus would then lead audience members, who were expecting a conventional concert or lecture, through an environment outside of the concert hall and into the streets of New York City, simply to listen to the surroundings. Neuhaus made variations of the score, including a poster consisting of a photograph of the underside of Brooklyn Bridge, with the word LISTEN (a site-specific piece), and a postcard with the word LISTEN on the front which can be used in any location – he dubbed this a 'do-it-yourself' version. Although the original of these versions was realised as guided walks through the environment(s), the score itself has no further instruction on what to listen to, nor how to listen. The postcard version takes away Neuhaus as the guide, and instead is to be used and “placed in locations selected by its recipients”. (Neuhaus, 2022, p. 161) It gives no further instruction on whether a walk or listening experience can be improvised or composed. There is no instruction for urban or rural environments, nor any form of soundmaking, and it could be argued that there is no need for the score to be material in the realisation of the piece – people, artists and non-artists, can listen to any environment for its aesthetic value without the use of the score. It is interesting to note that the original versions predated the idea of soundwalking as developed by the World Soundscape Project and Westerkamp.

The comparisons between the simplicity of soundwalking scores can be manyfold. The pieces by Westerkamp, Ablinger and Neuhaus demonstrate different mediums; *A Soundwalk in Queen Elizabeth Park in Vancouver* takes on the form of a map and set of specific instructions, *White/Whitish 9, paths* is a piece of written text, and *LISTEN* a stamp, a poster, a postcard, and arguably merely an idea or a passive instruction. The framing of these pieces differ greatly: Westerkamp's piece frames the location, and specifies the realisation; Ablinger's frames the conditions, widening and removing the frame by not including specificities of location(s); Neuhaus piece goes further still, almost completely dismantling the frame by the passivity of the single word instruction – giving no details on the location or type of environment – neither does it state any instruction or implication that walking should be involved. However, there are similarities with these pieces – none of these scores describe, demonstrate or instruct anything to do with time or duration. Each of these scores can potentially be realised at any time of the day/night/year, and can last any duration the listener chooses. When soundwalks are guided, they are generally constrained to the time frame that the leader of the group has set, however if realising a score alone, the participant has free reign with the duration and time frames for the realisations – this can be planned in advance or improvised in the moment, or anywhere in-between.

Akio Suzuki's *oto-date* (1996-) could be described as an in-between piece that links the instructional attributes of *A Soundwalk in Queen Elizabeth Park...* and *LISTEN*. *oto-date* is a series of listening spots placed in urban areas in several cities, marked by a painted symbol that looks like a hybrid of a pair of ears and a pair of feet (the symbol itself was modelled from John Cage's left ear). These listening points share the specificity of Westerkamp's aforementioned score and similar pieces, where specific spots in the city have been chosen by the composer for places to listen, including the orientation of the direction of listening. These marked spots eliminate the written instructions of Westerkamp's piece by 'suggesting' them into the environments themselves. The simplicity of the act of standing and listening at these specific spots echoes the simplicity of Neuhaus' own instruction to listen. Both *oto-date* and *LISTEN* share similarities in that the stamped symbol is itself the score – the only instruction for each piece is present when they are being realised.

These pieces described so far are instructions and suggestions for going out and simply listening to the environment(s), however there are soundwalking pieces that incorporate media – frequently, but not always exclusively, sound recordings of some form. G. Douglas Barrett's piece *Three Films About Walking* (2009) is an invitation to create different forms of media:

Three Walks.

In an urban or rural setting, wherever you are.

For each, start in a unique place and return to that location.

1. Take photographs at a specific interval of time
(e.g. every five minutes).
2. Take notes of your observations and/or thoughts.
3. Make a sound recording.

It is interesting to note here that the walks themselves do not seem to be the main focus. Barrett is vague about the location and time for the walks; a 'unique place' could be a landmark, a place of historical significance, or an unusual piece of architecture. However, one could argue that everyday spaces are unique – suburban areas may be very similar, but no one is the same as another. The walks are presented here as materials with which to create the documentation as described in the second half of the score. The three different types of media to be created, visual, text and audio, lend variation to each walk. There are also different ways that the walks and documentation creation can be approached; each walk can be assigned to the media form (the first walk focused on photography, the second walk on text descriptions, the third an audio recording), or all three of the media forms can be created in each of the walks. However the score is realised, the resulting realisation is a collection of different forms of materials that document each walk.

2.1.2 – Art-Walking and Psychogeography

Even though the execution of my work is focused on the medium of soundwalking, there are some influences I have taken from the broader field of walking-as-art, a concept that developed in the 1960s. Art-walking encompasses several different areas and themes, including land art, sculpture, the experience of walking, the journey, and like soundwalking, for aural means. Rebecca Solnit's summarisation of art-walking reflects how such a simple act can be defined in a variety of complex concepts:

Walking as art calls attention to the simplest aspects of the act: the way rural walking

measures the body and the earth against each other, the way urban walking elicits unpredictable social encounters. And to the most complex: the rich potential relations between thinking and the body; the way one person's act can be an invitation to another's imagination; the way every gesture can be imagined as a brief and invisible sculpture; the way walking reshapes the world by mapping it, treading paths into it, encountering it; the way each act reflects and reinvents the culture in which it takes place. (Solnit, 2014, p. 276)

Art-walking encompasses any form of art-making where the medium or realisation of a piece consists mainly of walking. For Richard Long, some of his pieces consist of the walk itself (many of the routes are very long), with only a map or a piece of text or photograph as documentation of a piece. On other walks, he has created land sculptures using the materials from the earth, and placing them in the location – sometimes, he has brought these materials to the studio/gallery and created his pieces in these detached locations (detached from the location of the walk). In his first notable piece, *A Line Made by Walking* (1967), Long walked back and forth in a straight line on a field in Wiltshire, the result leaving an impermanent impression in the grass. A single photograph of the somewhat frail impression, caught in the light of the sun, is the only documentation of the piece, which has raised the question of what the piece actually is – is it the walk (the action) itself, or is it the impression in the grass (an impermanent land sculpture), or the simple photograph? Whatever the result, whatever the nature of the piece, Long created the work with no materials other than his own body and his own action of deliberately putting one foot in front of the other. And Long's action, his realisation of the piece, is such a simple and small gesture that had a significant influence and impact on art-walking as a medium. Daniela Zyman explains that:

Ephemeral, time-based works of art continue to exist only in our memories. Typically, they are constructed for the hours, days or weeks of a particular show or enactment. Due to the specific time and place of their enactment, these works do not generate a physical embodiment beyond their performance. Sometimes photographs, films, and other relics prolong their existence beyond that particular moment. (Zyman, 2005, p. 11)

If we take that the action of Long's deliberate walk is the piece itself, then only Long would have truly experienced and witnessed the piece. The line, the impression, in the grass would have disappeared practically overnight, and it has never been concluded where the location of the work was – and whether or not the field still exists as a field or as a suburban or industrial estate, or something else. But it is the ephemeral nature of such pieces that have increasingly interested me in the last few years, and the experiential nature of these works. As Long (2007, p. 26) himself says: “I

like the idea that art can be made anywhere, perhaps seen by few people, or not recognised as art when they do. I think that is a great freedom won for art and for the viewer.” The nature of art-walking itself can only ever be properly experienced in the moment of realisation, and even soundwalks, which are sometimes captured in field recordings, are best experienced in the present moment of creation and action – field recordings are generally only an impression, a recorded memory of that experience. Long summarises his artistic intent in a single sentence:

My work is about my senses, my instinct, my own scale
and my own physical commitment. (Long, 2007, p. 16)

The word 'experience' could encompass all of Long's statement, and there is no intention here of how he wishes his work to be perceived, focusing only on the present experience of the piece. Hamish Fulton points out the dichotomy between the experience of a piece and the documentation: “A (materialised) artwork cannot re-present the experience of a walk. The separation of subject and medium.” (Fulton, 2012, p. 46) This reinforces the ephemeral nature of art-walking, and that the experience cannot be replicated in any other medium – only demonstrated as documentation for the imagination of the viewer.

Another area of art-walking that has influenced my work, perhaps somewhat peripherally, is the idea and practice of psychogeography. Merlin Coverley (2010) broadly defines the term 'psychogeography' as: “the point at which psychology and geography collide, a means of exploring the behavioural impact of urban place.” (p. 10) However, he also states that the term has: “become strangely familiar – strange because, despite the frequency of its usage, no one seems quite able to pin down exactly what it means or where it comes from.” (p. 9) The *dérive*, a technique that puts psychogeography into practice, was developed in Paris in the 1950s by the Letterist International, a group of avant-garde artists. The *dérive* is a wayward wandering, a random and unplanned walk usually through an urban environment. It has been defined as:

a ‘drifting’ on foot through urban spaces that would in turn produce alternative patterns of exploration and protest against the alienation of life under late capitalism. In the *dérive* walking becomes a means of shaking one’s perception of everyday urban space while creating new meaning within it. (Springgay, 2018, p. 55)

With this technique, the Letterist International (later to become the Situationist International)

attempted to blur, and ultimately erase the line between art and life, critiquing and commenting on capitalist ideals and the everyday. Tina Richardson broadens the definition of psychogeography, and brings it out of the confines of the Situationist International in her introduction to 'Walking Inside Out: Contemporary British Psychogeography':

“Psychogeography does not have to be complicated. Anyone can do it. You do not need a map, Gore-Tex, rucksack, or companion. All you need is a curious nature and a comfortable pair of shoes. There are no rules to doing psychogeography – this is its beauty. However, it is this that makes it hard to pin down in any formalized way. It is also this 'unruly' character (disruptive, unsystematic, random) that makes for much discussion about its meaning and purpose, today more than at any other time.” (Richardson, 2015, p. 1)

Richardson also notes the intangibility of psychogeography and therefore points out its variable and ambiguous nature. There seems to be a loose set of parameters to the art form that lends an air of freedom to putting it into practice. A practice that was carried out by mainly white male intellectuals in the 1950s and 60s has since been developed, in ideas and practice, by a wider variety of people from different cultures and professions. There is a kind of freedom to the form, even the term 'psychogeography' itself has been somewhat open to interpretation. Yet this freedom requires focus, as Morag Rose (2015, p. 157) explains: “walking interprets and animates place, and the *dérive* does so using its own unique language, which triggers freedom to explore beyond the everyday, to break through the paradox of aimlessness with a purpose.” The paradoxical nature of the *dérive* gives the art form its character, something that is challenging to grasp intellectually and to define concretely.

For some present day practitioners, psychogeography seems to be an exploration of place, including the history of that place, topography (sometimes), and perhaps more importantly an exploration of a personal history of that place reinforced by memories and imagination, as well as the present experience of the walker. Psychogeography is the link between these aspects. Although my work does not necessarily delve deep into the history of Andover as a place, these notions of history are occasionally touched on when describing a location, for practical purposes perhaps. However, a much stronger aspect of this is my own personal history of the places that I walk through in Andover. Richardson describes and reinforces the idea of attachment to places and how it contributes to a sense of place to the everyday:

A sense of place connects us to a geographic region in a specific way that becomes apparent when we start to explore the emotions attached to particular urban pockets that spark

something in us. It might be a memory from our adolescence, such as an independent record shop in our hometown where we purchased our first piece of vinyl, or a more recent memory of moving to a new town or city and the differing aesthetics of that place compared to our last home.

These memories are not separate from ourselves; they inform and form us. The experiences of the everyday that are played out in space – walking to the train station, going to the supermarket, taking the dog for a walk – make up a significant part of our days. These practices are imprinted on our psyches over time, forming our relationships with space, and at the same time they are laid down in our memories of that place, creating our attachments to it. What is particularly pertinent to our memories of place is that they are subjective and partial – they cannot be anything other. It is this that lends itself to the multifarious and often contradictory accounts of specific spaces. (Richardson, 2015, p. 73)

Richardson's statement here brings psychogeographical ideas into the personal and the individual. Whereas psychogeography of the past explores socio-political themes, Richardson describes a form of practice that delves into the internal, a link between our surrounding environment(s) and our individual self. Many aspects of art-walking and soundwalking are formed by the responses and experiences of the participator(s), that is, their internal thought processes and emotionality. When attuned to an environment, a sense of place develops whether we have memories of that place or not: memories however can reinforce this type of experience when walking through familiar environments. And these types of experiences, senses of place, are what contribute to and make up the aesthetics of a walking piece – these aesthetics are (not always) documented in material such as photographs, videos, field recordings and writing.

2.2 – Liminality, Solitude and Outsiderness

These are the overarching themes for the project, and the context to the work. This chapter explores the themes, what they are, and how they relate to sound/art-walking and the project. This section shows some of the theory behind these themes, before putting the themes into practice as demonstrated in Part III.

2.2.1 – Liminality

Robert T. Tally Jr. states that liminality:

signifies a threshold between two zones, an anteroom distinct from that which could be said to be definitely inside or outside, here and there. The term *ambiguity* literally refers to “both ways”, and one who is located in the space of the liminal must be ever attuned to the presence of adverse or conflicting possibilities. (Tally Jr., 2018. p. xii)

As we pass through or between different environments, we are passing through liminal states, whether we notice or pay attention to them or not. In everyday environments, such as a small town like Andover, geographical liminality can be difficult to spot. There are hard edges, signified by a fence, a road, a line of bushes or trees, or a footpath, but then there are softer, implicit edges, such as an open field, a car park, unkempt farmland, or an empty space. Sound environments, however, can blend or obscure these in-between spaces further – you could be walking into a rural setting, while still being able to clearly hear the groaning, droning sounds of an industrial landscape. You could be within a quiet suburban area – the place itself could be quiet, but made noisy by external sound environments that invade the location such as town-centre hustle and bustle, or a nearby trunk road. Such “conflicting possibilities” can be unbalanced and unpredictable, which itself can be a liminal situation.

Liminality, although its ultimate definition is still somewhat ambiguous and variable, is the space between different states. As Paul Stenner explains:

the liminal is precisely not a clear thing. It is better described in terms of a cultural symbolization (predominantly in the medium of ritual) in response to the ambiguity, ambivalence and potentiality produced by a process of transition *as such*. Liminality thus evokes transition as it is happening, and as such is quite literally neither the world of

departure nor that of arrival. (2018, p. 178).

Sound, sounds, soundscapes, can signify or demonstrate liminal states, states of transition and ambiguity. You could walk from a town/city, miles deep into the countryside before the urban and rural environments are finally balanced aurally, where neither soundworld overpowers the other. Keep going, and the rural soundscape will take over. Soundscapes can “evoke transition” long after the environments themselves change, a demonstration that liminality, in some form, is still in process – making the idea of a liminal environment more ambiguous.

Emma Cocker describes the universality of liminality in modern times:

Whilst the border operates as a specific kind of liminal landscape, the contemporary landscape – as it is increasingly shaped or indeed unshaped by the processes of global capital – might be considered as a liminal landscape in itself, a space of transience, transition and perpetual flux. The new world order is no longer considered in stable categories, for now everywhere appears to be constantly shifting; everything seemingly a little liquid, precarious. Contemporary times are now often characterized by their liminal properties – ambiguity, openness, and indeterminacy – however unlike traditional conceptualizations of liminality such experiences are perpetual rather than passing. The individual is never re-aggregated back into a stable societal landscape (for this has all but disappeared), but instead remains interminably disoriented, in limbo. (2012, p. 63)

With this statement, Cocker concisely describes liminality in the modern world, and also touches on how this may be experienced. From my personal experience, I have never really felt settled in my life (this is also, arguably, a universal, perpetual experience). Being settled is a concept that seems untouchable, out of reach. As an example, my grandparents lived in the same house since the 1950s. My parents have moved homes several times in their lives before and after I was born (different paths of moving houses; my parents divorced when I was young). I have myself lived in three different homes during this research project. A lot of people, especially young people, no longer get a mortgage on a house and stay there for the rest of their lives – circumstances, whether personal or from external influences, change. All this is just an example of the ever-changing, constantly-shifting and “perpetual flux” nature of the present day, even when it comes down to that most everyday of concepts, the idea of home. A key word in Cocker’s statement is “perpetual”. A walk is something in perpetual motion, by its definition. The environment, and the experience, changes all the time, even when walking through what could broadly be classed as a single environment (such

as countryside). A walk in itself can be described as a liminal action, departing from one location to arrive at a destination. Tao G. Vrhovec Sambolec states that:

Depending on the physical and social conditions of the space, we adjust the way we walk and the itinerary we follow. In this sense walking is a liminal activity, shaped by the walker as much as it is conditioned by the space in which it takes place. (Vrhovec Sambolec, 2022, p. 203)

If a walk can be a liminal activity, then a soundwalk can itself be a perpetually liminal act. Paul Stenner states that:

In traditional rites of passage, the 'passengers' are guided through by an experienced master of ceremonies or Shaman for whom liminal experience is the norm rather than the exception. In spontaneous liminal events, such guidance is typically lacking, and there are no guarantees about what will be made of the situation. (Stenner, 2018, p. 63)

In relation to soundwalking, the “Shaman” is the composer who created the score/route for the participants to experience, or literally the guide when leading a group-based soundwalk. The Shaman composer-guide has (usually) walked and researched the route before creating the score (a score could be a map or a set of instructions or directions) or guiding a group of soundwalking through the place – both the act of soundwalking, and the location, could be taken as the liminal experience that is the “norm” for the composer. However, the second part of the statement could also be attributed to soundwalking. For soundwalks and scores which need to be interpreted, such as text-scores that hint at or suggest soundwalking routes or techniques, there can be a certain unpredictability about the realisation or the outcome of a soundwalk. Stenner (2018, p. 172) concludes later that “the spontaneous liminal experiences of life cry out, as it were, for symbolic expression, precisely because they challenge and transform the *de facto* important and hence *significant*.” In rites of passage, people change social or psychological status from one thing to another – a soundwalk, as expressed earlier, can have the ability to change one's mind, or at least introduce new areas of thought or experience for the participant. To relate soundwalking to rites of passage, and Shamans, and symbolic expressions and transformations, may pretentiously enlarge the importance of soundwalk experiences, but the nature of soundwalks can themselves be liminal, or can express or explore liminality in relation to the everyday, albeit in a somewhat grounded approach.

Andra McCartney describes the transitional periods of moving through different sound environments during a soundwalk:

there are segues or border regions rather than the rigid boundaries that appear on a map: walking down from the lookout into the quarry of the sunken garden, for instance, the acoustics subtly change over time becoming more enclosed, the sound of the waterfall gradually increases and the sound of the drummers diminishes. (McCartney, 2014, p. 224)

Liminality may not be apparent in the environments themselves, but aurally there is material for this, material for the imagination to create a liminal experience of the everyday. Emma Cocker (2012, p. 57) points out the imaginative, somewhat intangible aspect of certain spaces, such as the transition between different environments, in geographical terms: “Borders are not always signalled by a continuous line on land but can exist as much in an imaginary or even narrative sense, where the boundary is often drawn in contractual rather than physical terms.” Les Roberts touches on the internal nature of such liminal spaces:

When thinking about the liminal constitution of everyday spaces and landscapes, it is important to keep in mind the no-less-commanding psycho-social dynamics of these spaces in-between. They are as much interior and psychological as they are social and material. (Roberts, 2020, p. 42)

This relates again to the liminal aspect of soundwalking, where the listener is paying attention to both the external sound environment(s) and internal thoughts and emotions, as suggested by Westerkamp.

The transient nature of walking makes the act itself a liminal state – especially when leaving one place to reach another. The walker is always passing through different environments which gives way to changing experiences and thought processes. Yet, even when there is no destination at the end of the walk, such as a soundwalk (the route itself is the subject), the act of walking can still be taken as a liminal activity. Even if walking through what could be framed as one environment, there are changes in external and internal experiences that demonstrate the transient nature of the activity of walking. Of course, in this context, the environment changes could be so slight as to be imperceivable. And although a walk can be relatively easily defined as a liminal activity (as can all forms of travel), it is still somewhat a construction – liminality here is used as a framing device to define walking as a liminal activity. As Stenner explains, liminality can be in the eye of the

beholder:

Considered in a purely physical and spatial sense, for instance, liminality becomes entirely relative and meaning-free because anything and nothing can be liminal depending upon the frame of comparison that is used. (Stenner, 2018. p. 179)

Stenner (2018. p. 14) describes the experience of liminality as when: “the forms of process (socio-psycho-organico-physical) that usually sustain, enable and compose our lives are, for some reason, disrupted, interrupted, transformed or suspended.” A walk can certainly fit into this description of a liminal experience. However, not only actions, but the locations themselves can be defined as liminal in terms of their material or even atmospheric characteristics. Such locations can be defined as 'edgeland' spaces. Marion Shoard clearly defines edgeland spaces:

Between urban and rural stands a kind of landscape quite different from either. Often vast in area, though hardly noticed, it is characterised by rubbish tips and warehouses, superstores and derelict industrial plant, office parks and gypsy encampments, golf courses, allotments and fragmented, frequently scruffy, farmland. (Shoard, 2002, p. 117)

Edgelands are seen as liminal spaces, not quite urban, and not quite rural. One could question why these kinds of spaces, as described in Shoard's definition, are deemed liminal. The warehouses, superstores and office parks are somewhat distinctly urban, with their stubby, monolithic grey-brown buildings, and grey, hard asphalt roads and grid-like structures. Golf courses, and even Traveller encampments and scruffy farmland, are distinctly rural – greens, browns, grass, trees, foliage. Perhaps these edgeland spaces only really exist in the city sprawls – cities' untidy, half-extensions from the edge reaching out into the countryside. Although Andover does have its fair share of edgeland spaces, they are not as numerous or as distinctive as the edgelands in larger cities. Andover does not really have a sprawl – only when large housing estates are in the process of being built, however not when they are complete and are attached to the town. Yet Andover still has these locations that Shoard describes; should they be seen as edgelands? The superstores, office parks and business estates are not necessarily “hardly noticed”, they are massive areas of employment where many people from the town work – people frequent these spaces every day.

Edgelands are not the only type of landscape that can be defined as liminal. Bjorn Thomassen makes clear the definition of liminal spaces:

Liminal spaces are attractive. They are the places we go to in search of a break from the normal. They can be real places, parts of a larger territory, or they can be imagined or dreamed. Liminal landscapes are found at the fringes, at the limits. However, there is more to it than that. Had we just been talking about the peripheral, or the far-away, we would be dealing with marginality: that which is the furthest away from the centre. Liminal landscapes are in-between spaces. (Thomassen, 2012. p. 21)

This echoes Shoard's definition of edgeland spaces, but takes the notion further. Although the word "edgeland" implies that these kinds of places lie on the periphery of urban areas, they can also exist within a defined urban area (or even rural area). Andover contains edgeland spaces, as defined by Shoard, well within the limits of the town's outer edge. Another important factor in Thomassen's statement is that liminal spaces can exist within the imagination. Edgelands are definitively liminal spaces, however imaginative processes can frame any space into a liminal place. And it is not just edgelands; there are numerous liminal spaces and locations all around us. Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (2012, p. 1) touch on the environmental aspect of the liminal: "the liminal already in some way connotes the *spatial*: a boundary, border, a transitional *landscape*, or a doorway". Liminality, especially in spatial terms, is very much part of the everyday, as Stenner (2018, p. 275) describes: "liminality is at play always and everywhere and it can emerge into salience during even the most familiar and routine social practices." We are constantly crossing thresholds in our everyday lives that are both spatial and temporal, and practices such as soundwalks can lend a focus to this spaces and occurrences, as Stenner explains the benefits of the actualisation of liminality:

To be concerned with process and liminality is to insist that the transitions, borders, gaps, voids, fissures and movements between state, positions, system and disciplines are not *nothing* but are crucial zones or space/times in which new forms are created and experimented with (Stenner, 2018, p. 25)

There is an intangibility to these liminal environments, such as edgelands, and only by framing these spaces, using imagination, does the liminal become more salient. Liminality, by its very nature, is only 'there' once we have framed it. Emily Orley points out the challenging nature of liminal places in reference to time:

Tomorrow's 'now' is not the same as yesterday's, and this applies to 'here' too. Place is therefore relative and nowhere is stable. Seen in this way, all landscapes are liminal, transitory by their very nature, constantly suspended in a state of in-between-ness. (Orley,

An urban area can be liminal if one is passing through to get to the countryside, and vice versa. Going on holiday can be a liminal period or place – to take a break from the stresses of everyday life. Yet the antithesis to that, a place of work, can be liminal – having to get through the working day to reach the other side for home; recently, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been much talk of the “work/life balance” – there is an assumption here that work is somehow outside of life, something we must pass through to get back to life. Liminality is defined by how we frame things, spaces, time periods.

The entire *borders* project is, in a somewhat superficial sense, an exploration of the edges of environments, where one environment meets a different one, *and* an exploration of the experiences of these environments – the external, physical aspect, and the internal, psychological and emotional. Les Roberts explains the fluidity of experiencing liminal environments, which also links with the 'detached, yet not fully' aspect of the practice of soundwalking:

To look upon everyday landscapes in terms of liminality and transitional phenomena is not to imbue them with fixed accordances or properties but rather to make explicit the phenomenological intensity of the spatially immersive world that informs who and what we are as embodied subjects, both adrift and tethered in equal measure. (Roberts, 2020. p. xii)

Roberts hints at the idea of human beings are themselves liminal, both a part of the everyday landscape, and also experiencing it. Liminality is intangible and hard to pin down in today's world, and Roberts' statement shares similar observations with Emma Cocker's passage about the fluidity and liquid nature of liminality within the contemporary landscape. Liminality *is* the nature of the contemporary world; in time, space, psychological and emotional, internal and external. Being in the world is not being settled. A soundwalk could be seen as liminality-in-action, or a demonstration, an exploration.

2.2.2 – Solitude

Solitude is something that can be considered valuable, and like liminality is an essential aspect of life. Humans may well be social creatures, but they are also solitary ones – though of course this spectrum differs from person to person. Anthony Storr (1989, p. 85) explains this idea of the difference for the need of solitude in individual persons: “At the very least, we all need the solitude

of sleep; but, in waking life, people vary widely in how much they value experiences involving human relationships and how much they value what happens when they are alone.”

In an increasingly hectic world with an abundance of over-information coming from countless sources, it can be considered important that we find some time to be by ourselves and with our own thoughts – this could be for internal processing, the strive for quietude, our own individual interests and so on. Emma Jackson (2016) points out the importance of solitude in everyday life: “we all try to avoid the pain incumbent on being human, but in an attempt to avoid our own solitude, we surely deny the potential for our own growth and fruitfulness.” (p. 417) Jackson also notes that: “In a world that appears rife with over-communication, solitude seems like a concept rather than a reality.” (p. 407) This statement hints at the challenge of finding true solitude in the modern world and also suggests at the importance of doing so. She continues: “it seems that this clinging to communication betrays an underlying dismissal of solitude, a mask against the fearful alone-ness that is an inevitable feature of being human.” (p. 407) Jackson is suggesting that there is a need to accept that solitude and alone-ness is an important aspect of life, and mirrors my own transition of this acceptance within the past decade or so. After this acceptance, I have from time to time given attention to the act of being solitary and have been interested in its aesthetics. In the past, I was a passive experiencer of occasional solitude and perhaps, like Emma Jackson explains, masking myself from these feelings of alone-ness, however as I have grown older I have become more assertive and attentive to my own solitary states, and have frequently (but not always, of course) enjoyed these experiences. It is these experiences that I attempt to actualise and reflect in the composition projects that make up *borders*.

During a walk through Edgware (London), whilst he was carrying out his practice of 'deep topography', Nick Papadimitriou discovered this memory:

The first time I came this way was in the late summer of 2001, during a period of hospitalization at Edgware. Tiring of the telly in the day room, the patients' self-piteous talk unravelling like the smoke from the endless cigarettes they sucked on, I escaped for a few hours and walked northwards until I came to the edge of town, a final few yards taking me past a crumbling 1930s shopping parade to this wasteland, these pylons. Somehow I found myself on this broad concrete track, by this rubbish tip and the stream clogged with black bin-liners. It was here that I stopped and took stock of my predicament. The unmapped landscape I inhabited internally found its exact image in the clutter weed growing at the base of the pylon nearby, in the quietly ticking ant-hills and scraps of fleece caught on the barbed-

wire fences. There was the same absence of human proximity – only birds could hear me chattering to myself. As I sat and smoked, watching the mandible motorway a half-mile off dragging never-ending streams of living steel into the city's jaws, my solitude was transmuted into love of this place. (Papadimitriou, 2013. p. 125)

Here, Papadimitriou confirms the importance of solitude and its positive power, especially through walking. His sense of personal self-discovery and his attachment to place demonstrates a finding of purpose and awareness of his own existence, linked with a placeness that intertwines with his being internally and externally.

2.2.3 – Outsiderness

The psychosocial state of outsiderness is an aspect of the human condition that differs from person to person – it is as common as it is individual, as Warren S. Poland describes:

Each person, like each moment, is particular and singular. While no number of illustrations can prove universality, the regularity with which one finds outsider feelings once one begins to look for them suggests that such states ought not to be considered merely neurotic eccentricities. More likely, beyond such idiosyncratic distortions, there are qualities essential to the human condition that, therefore, are held in common despite the private ways in which they unfold in individual lives. Outsiderness is such an aspect of essential human nature.

(Poland, 2008, p. 595)

As Poland touches on here, outsiderness is a contradiction in human nature. We can occasionally feel like outsiders some of the time, but we experience this in different aspects/times in our lives makes the concept more universal than one might think – more common, inevitable, essential. Feelings of societal outsiderness, especially in an everyday sense, are part of the human condition that everyone can relate to and experience – however, the individuality of the experience(s) gives way to the unique sense of isolation and “idiosyncratic” sensations that make one feel unrelatable. These sensations vary from person to person and can vary in severity, and yet is still a universal part of the human experience.

During the celebratory period at the turn of the millennium, Iain Sinclair explains his thoughts about how his own enjoyment of the specific time is brought on by his own outsiderness:

There's always a warm glow in not belonging, in being the only abstainer at a *fleadh* in Ballycastle, the only non-Iberian bull-runner in Pamplona who hasn't read Hemingway; it means that you're not responsible. You don't *have* to enjoy yourself. It's not part of the contract to become one with the spirit of place. You are not obliged to spew, fight, sing, dance, wreck your car or in any other way amuse yourself. And this is very liberating. (Sinclair, 2003. pp. 19-20)

I have myself experienced similar feelings of liberation in “not belonging” during similar events, especially in recent years, in contrast to my younger years where I would have been afraid of missing out if I did not join in. Perhaps this has come about via an acceptance of outsidership, or my own solitude, or just becoming more confident in knowing what I like and what I do not. But this experience is not exclusive to social gatherings or celebrations, and can manifest itself from larger, more perpetual societal aspects of life. An example would be social media. At the time of writing, I am not a part of any social media platform, despite being part of a generation that grew up as these platforms were forming and becoming popular – I did participate in the use of social media until about 2015, then I decided it was simply not for me. The point being that I feel my life has not been hindered by my non-use of social media platforms, and perhaps I have benefited from it. I no longer have the anxiety of the perceived social competition of being in the know and keeping up with the personal-public details of people's lives, yet I still keep in healthy contact with people in my own life. This is a long way of saying that certain individual choices that may be seen as coming from an aspect of outsidership may in fact be beneficial to people's mental health and wellbeing, and sense of identity.

It is perhaps important to clarify that my own views on outsidership in this context are to do with personal and social aspects – the term ‘outsider art’ does not really apply to the project as a whole. While I feel that a small number of certain aspects of my creative practice could be considered in this way – for example, I am not actively involved in art circles, socially or professionally – I believe that because my work comes from a foundation of established forms, namely soundwalking, art-walking and twentieth and twenty-first century contemporary music, I do not consider my work to be outsider art, neither do I consider myself as an outsider artist entirely.

2.3 – Summary

Soundwalking can be a significant tool for exploring the themes of liminality, solitude and outsidership. From moving through environments, we experience liminality through the changes that occur from the surroundings and from what we can hear. We can focus on the idea of liminality itself – if liminality is an emotion, what does it feel like? What effect do these external changes have to our internal thoughts – and vice versa? When we experience, in the context of a soundwalk, familiar environments or environments from our individual pasts, how do our memories reflect or contribute to these feelings of liminality? We can effectively have conversations with the environment(s) through our thoughts and feelings, as if the subjects of both environment and self are equal.

Liminality, outsidership and solitude are interlinked. To be an outsider, from personal experience, means to be on the edge of an environment, on the edge of a social nexus, context, or way of being – which means that one is also on the edge of another environment/social nexus/way of being – whether this 'another' means complete isolation and aloneness, or a social context, or social thought. To be on the outside, on the periphery, “attached yet not fully” to two or several of these contexts means to also be in-between them. Outsidership can be a perpetual state of liminality, to observe different states, maybe even experience them, but not be imbedded in them. Solitude reinforces this detachment, and could contribute to making one's own decisions without being fully influenced by a certain, definitive way of thinking.

Of course, imagination has a role to play in all of this. Making connections between these themes requires a certain amount of thought-play. Soundwalking can bring out, realise, put into action these abstract ideas. It can connect or contradict these concepts, a tool for exploring, with an open-endedness that does not give way to definitive answers or ideas – an exploration in-flux, a form of liminality in itself.

The variety of formats, ideas and content that make up the sporadic library of soundwalking scores has helped me explore my own way of score-making and creation of pieces. I have used text-based scores, graphic scores, maps and sometimes no definitive score at all. Creating a soundwalking score is an attempt to explore and find the clearest way of communicating an idea. It is also about trying to find the right aesthetic for the piece. The pieces in the portfolio aim to demonstrate, explore, and create an impression of the themes of liminality, outsidership and solitude.

Part III – borders

In Part III, I reflect on the compositional process and my realisations of the pieces in the *borders* portfolio. These discussions aim to communicate the aesthetics and exploratory nature of the project through soundwalking and listening to the environments, in relation to the themes of liminality, outsidership and solitude, memories and the everyday – in, around and through my hometown of Andover. For each piece in the portfolio I discuss the compositional intent and reflect on the realisations I made, linking these to the themes investigated in the research.

3.1 – *borders* #1 (2018-2019)

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3.1.1 – Concept

These pieces were designed to frame the listening experiences of liminal sound environments; where the edges of different sound environments meet, and transitioning sound environments. The scores themselves are presented as text instructions for the listener-performer (and for these realisations, me) to interpret and realise. I should note that the individual scores are also the title for the scores; the text is the score, on a blank page, clear, and provides no (or at the most very little) extra influence for the reader. The pieces are as much about individuality and the self as they are about sound environments. They were created as instructions to be realised by anyone, but it rapidly became apparent to me that I was only interested in my own realisations, as the overall project progressed into the focus of individual exploration and my own relationship to my hometown.

As these pieces explore the nature of the in-between, they also explore outsidership. To demonstrate this, the scores were created to be realised alone, to accentuate the nature of outsidership and to focus on the self. This is also, and perhaps more importantly, an aesthetic choice – I enjoy solitude, and I wanted to express this idea in these pieces. Soundwalking (and to a broader extent, all music) is often, but not always, experienced in a participatory and social manner; soundwalking is often carried out in groups. *borders*, when realised, is based around the idea of soundwalking, and I wanted to make pieces that lend an opportunity for individual, solitary experiences; a reflection of my own enjoyment of walking, listening to music, and some lifestyle choices in general. It must be expressed that this is not an anti-social idea, but rather a balanced view on, and an opportunity for, solitude.

All the pieces in *#1* have more of a focus on liminality than the other themes of the project – the project was in its early stages at this point, and the themes of outsidership, solitude, Andover and the everyday had yet to develop.

There are two scores that I have deemed the 'centre pieces' of this initial part of the portfolio. They demonstrate an expansive and structured soundworld that helped define the project as it progressed. These two are: *walk alone / along the edge of town / listen to the sounds inside and outside the town simultaneously*, and, *walk alone / from the centre of town / to / the edge of town / and beyond / listen to the transitional stages of different sound environments*. Some of my frequented and favourite walks in Andover generally cover aspects of these two pieces – this allowed me to formalise and structure the scores over a period of months (the initial stages of the ideas for these scores had formed before starting the research project).

3.1.2 – Scores and Realisations

stand in an open doorway / face the frame / listen to both sides simultaneously (2018) –
[<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28497644>]

In *stand in an open doorway...*, the first piece I made, liminality is demonstrated in the position of the listener. Standing between two rooms, I attempted to listen to the soundworlds of both rooms from this point, trying to find a balance in the blending of each environment. From experiences of realisations, this balance-seeking is a challenge, depending on the types of room. Even in the home, one room can be more sonically active than the other. An example of this would be kitchen/living room. During one realisation, the fridge-buzz filled the acoustic space of the kitchen, while the silent living room inevitably struggled to hold my attention. Turning on the television in the living room changed the experience completely, and then trying to find the right volume so it would balance with the sound of the fridge-buzz presented a new challenge. This balance-seeking is an attempt to hold the liminal space, and was repeated in other pieces from *#1*.

in an urban park / listen to the sounds inside and outside the park simultaneously / at / the edges / the centre (2019) – [<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28497827>]

in an urban park... is an exploration of an already-existing liminal sound environment. This was one of very few realisations that took place outside of Andover. The location for this piece was Bute

Park in Cardiff, a place that, although does not have the same strength of connection for me as Andover does, I have taken a liking to over the years. Andover itself does not have such an urban park – it does not need one, since the town is surrounded by countryside just a short distance away. Cities need areas such as these, as a place of respite from the busy urban areas. However, their soundworlds do not always comply with this idea of respite or calm. One noticeable sounding location of Bute Park is the River Taff that runs through it – it bubbles, babbles, splashes, and roars at different locations (the small weir at the north of the park masks the surrounding soundworld when in close proximity). The crows in the trees above the river are always prominent. However, the droning main roads that surround the park paint the sound environment in a blanket of grey, insistent and nagging. Liminality here is represented by this balance of urban and rural soundworlds clashing together, and sometimes out of balance when close to the edge of the park (closer to the busy roads), or when next to the weir.

walk alone / from the centre of town / to / the edge of town / and beyond / listen to the transitional stages of different sound environments (2019) – [<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28497794>]

Liminality is presented here as transition, the main transition being the movement from an urban to a rural setting. However, when realisations took place, there was more potentiality in variation of transitioning sound environments - mini transitions; from inside the shopping mall to outside onto the high street, from the high street onto the ring road surrounding the centre, from the ring road onto the housing estates, from the housing estates onto the edge of town, and so on. It is a piece about movement, flow; where one environment passes and another envelopes. The score is an instruction to challenge the focus on these transitioning places; how possible is it to really grab and keep hold of a transition before it disappears, how tangible are these environments?

Realisations of this score took place from the centre of town to the countryside at the south of the town (see Fig. 3). The walk as a whole seemed to take on the form of a long diminuendo, more dramatic in the first half, and consistently calmer in the second. During the half-hour walk, the umbrella of changing micro-environments was enveloped in a broader transition that morphs from loud to quiet, from noisy to calm, from something that is in-flux to something more still. There was a strange balancing act from the shape of this walk; from passing under the A303, this realisation seemed to play like an extended song outro. Perhaps, when thinking about the balance and the shape of the piece, I should have ended the realisation long before I got deeper into the countryside, but after listening back to the recording of the walk, and thinking about this first proper realisation, I decided that it was a positive balance from which the consistency of the sound environment in the

latter half complements the more dramatically-changing environment in the first half. In this instance then, the timing and duration of the piece can be just as important as place and space, and the variation in time and duration of a realisation can give new dimensions to the piece as much as the variation of locations and spaces.



Map data: Google, ©2025 / Airbus. Google Earth (Google, 2025)

Fig 3: Route of realisations, from north to south.

During a different realisation on the same route, there was an interesting difference that contrasted with the discoveries made during the first realisation. The reason for doing this second version of the same walk was to see what, if anything significant, would be different and to demonstrate that the same piece will be different every time, even in the same location(s).

Listening back to the recording of the first version several times, small events became “hooks”. The cadence from the pop song sounding from the mall's speaker system, people talking in the high street, the terrifying bin lorry on Old Winton Road, and so on. Obviously, during the second realisation, these small sounds that make up the whole were different – different music in the mall, a

varied concentration of people on the high street, and no sign of the bin lorry. But generally speaking, the sound environments themselves were similar – the reverberation in the mall, the garden birds coming into the foreground on Old Winton Road, the low density of traffic at the entrance to Ladies Walk. But what was an important change this time was what happened after coming out of the underpass that the A303 flies over, and onto the bridleway.

The small wooded copse on the left of the bridleway is known locally as 'the plantations', or 'the plannies', and in this copse are hills and mounds that have been dug out for BMXing and dirt-biking. The presence of the bikes changed the 'long outro' of the walk dramatically, not necessarily being obtrusive to the calm of the open fields and the bridleway, but rather giving more vibrancy to the same space in the relatively unchanging sound environment (as experienced during the first realisation). The buzzing bikes, a distinctive and unique sound that comes from the edge of town, extending the townspeople to the edges of the countryside, a liminal leakage. This experience complicated the smooth diminuendo of the first realisation, and I realised that the piece, the score and the realisations, have potentially more variety and dimensions than I first thought. The sound environment of the countryside is a stark contrast to that of the town and the town centre, in terms of consistent sounds, noise and dynamics, but the edge of town is where unpredictability can flourish, where tranquillity has yet to take over. Sometimes this environment is undecided.

walk alone / along the edge of town / listen to the sounds inside and outside the town simultaneously (2019) – [<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28497668>]

walk alone / along the edge of town... presents a different exploration of liminality. The idea here was to capture a liminal space for an entire walk and attempt to balance the sound environment within the route, trying to stay within a liminal environment without listening to the environments that framed it. I quickly realised that the surrounding environments defined the soundworld of the imagined liminal environment itself. It became a framing device to listen to the opposing soundworlds simultaneously. The main realisation for this piece took place on Ladies Walk, a country path that swings around the south-eastern edge of Andover, itself surrounded by the town, countryside and the A303 (see Fig. 4). What I found was that this location was both a quiet bubble in itself, in terms of the soundworld, and affected by the surrounding environments. However, it was challenging to find a balance. Sometimes the A303 (to the south) would dominate the soundscape with grey, droning traffic, sometimes the town (to the north-west) would replicate this sound, and other times, especially on windy days, the trees that frame the path would drown the external soundworlds out. I began to question what a liminal sound environment meant, and came to a conclusion that the attempt to find one is the piece – to make an attempt to listen and to imagine

that this soundworld is an in-between location that had its own, subtly changing identity.



Map data: Google, ©2020. Google Earth (Google, 2025)

Fig 4: The strip of trees from south to east is Ladies Walk. The A303 to the south.

The idea for this piece had been formulating for a couple of years before starting this research project. The idea is the impetus for the project as a whole, along with the other aforementioned centre piece. Following the three-sentence structure of the first piece I wrote for the portfolio, *stand in an open doorway...*, the words came easily, keeping it simple and direct. *along the edge of town* gives the piece a flexibility for the realisations to take place, as well as a potential variety of listening experiences. I knew that I wanted to make these scores realisable and adaptable for varied locations, so using the word 'town' seemed apt (this was before I came to the realisation that Andover would become the main focus of the project). I decided that 'town' could include hamlet/village, small/large town, city/metropolis, and so on – to encompass a variety of urban areas. This, therefore, not only makes the scores realisable by anyone living in different areas, but also

lends itself to a variety of different experiences – the sound environment at the centre of a city will obviously be different to the sound environment at the centre of a village, for example.

I imagined the piece as literally walking on a liminal line, a line between two places, and trying to sustain a balance between both sides. I also came up with an idea that the sound environments would be clear, for example, urban sounds in the left ear, and rural in the right, although of course this was not the case, and therefore the importance of merging sounds became a focus point. Ladies Walk itself is under a long canopy of trees, and on top of a hill that boasts beautiful views of the town itself. I have fond memories of socialising with friends, especially in my mid-to-late teens, sharing these views of a town from which we all wanted to get away.

From growing up as a child, through my teens, and now into my adulthood, I have always felt like a bit of an outsider. After the arduous half-decade of secondary school finally ended, me and my friends spent the summer enjoying the company of each other with very little influence from other people, or, what it felt like at the time, society as a whole. I can't speak for my friends here, but it certainly felt that way for me. Looking over the town from Ladies Walk (Fig. 5), as an adult, as my friends and I occasionally did after secondary education finally ended, the emotion, and image, reflects those feelings of outsidership. I am literally on the edge; on the edge of a town, on the edge of a population of people, physically on the edge of society. I feel I am in my zone, my natural state. And behind me, the rest of the world – fields and farmland, Harewood Forest in the distance, the dreaded, noisy A303.

These are the feelings, images and ideas of outsidership that helped define the pieces, and the project itself. It is a state of being that is important to me, and I feel is a part of my identity, and I wanted to reflect and demonstrate that in my work. Outsidership is an important part of the project, and these pieces, the scores and the realisations (particularly in Ladies Walk) I feel are clear representations of outsidership – just on the edge, in a close orbit to society.

The first challenge in realising this piece was to find suitable places to walk. As mentioned before, Ladies Walk was the obvious choice – bordering the town and the countryside. Perhaps less so with cities, Andover's edge seems to stop immediately before the countryside – it does not necessarily have that urban sprawl that a lot of cities do. Certain edges contain several paths that run along the edge, linking the town to the countryside, and linking different sections of the town (a cut-through from suburban to industrial areas, for example). These kinds of paths are suitable spaces where this piece can be realised.



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Fig 5: Looking over Andover from Ladies Walk.

One short path, a ten-minute walk on the north-west side of the town, is a sharp edge that immediately borders the industrial estate with farmland (see Fig. 6). When realising the piece on this path, I found that it was challenging to balance the sounds from both environments – the hum and noise of factories and warehouses overpowered the sounds from the farmland and fields.

Along this walk, I bumped into a few solitary figures. A dog walker, a teenager on his phone, and a jogger. Does this path, or this type of edgeland path, attract solitary people more than groups, and if so, why is that? Are these types of edgeland path actually utilised for solitude, to get away from people? Is solitude, when associated with outsidership, really pushed to the edges, to the edgelands, where it feels more acceptable? Visit the edgeland path to take time out and away from the crowds, from responsibilities, to take a break, and return to everyday life from a short distance. A space to collect oneself. To *visit* the edge, not to run away from, but to keep things at arm's length. To take time out, through a liminal state, in a liminal space, on the edge of the everyday.



Map data: Google, ©2024 / Airbus. Google Earth (Google, 2025)

Fig 6: A sharp edge, moving from north to south.

places (2019) – [<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28497896>]

places is a project that presents, or attempts to present, a different impression of liminality using recordings. The work is made up of six field recordings of different locations which are meant to be listened to in different or opposing sound environments to each recording. For example, one of the recordings is the main hall of the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff, with its reverb-heavy acoustics defined by the sounds of people talking, walking, and the canteen. A different environment to this could be an external location, in the countryside, away from people. The recording should then be set so that the level blends in with the countryside environment. This brings together these two different sound environments, and the liminal here is the coming-together of these opposing soundworlds – the listening experience itself is the representation of liminality, not necessarily the location. This was simply another exploration of this idea, before soundwalking became the main action of the portfolio (although walking is involved in order to find a location to listen to each recording in), and before I came to the realisation that Andover would be the centre of the overall project.

at home / (create) a situation where the sounds inside and outside merge / listen to the resulting sound environment (2019) – [<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28497959>]

at home / (create) a situation where the sounds inside and outside merge... is a piece similar to *stand in an open doorway* in how it represents liminality. It is also a related piece to the scores in *interlude*. Yet it is also similar to *places*, in which two different sound environments are brought together. *at home* allows for the most ‘everyday’ of the everyday sound environment(s) to be experienced in a new way – the comforts of home sounds are merged with that of the outside world. When finding a balance for the two soundworlds to exist, experimentation with opening windows/doors to varying degrees, turning on household appliances or moving closer to sounding appliances can contribute to the soundworld. Again, what I mean by balance here is attempting to balance. This piece is an attempt to find or create a liminal sounding environment to be listened to within the home.

(walk) alone / in a place that you used to know / focus on the memories that this place evokes / listen to your memories and the surrounding environment simultaneously (2019) – [<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28497998>]

The final piece in the first part of the portfolio, *(walk) alone / in a place that you used to know...*, combines explorations of space and time – the location is a place where memories are held, and liminality here is demonstrated as the attempt to focus on the present moment, the place, and the memories of the place – both past and present come together. With hindsight, this became an important piece in the portfolio, as themes of memory and past/present dualities developed as the overall project progressed. Also, the importance of Andover to the overall project, including my own relationship to the town, started here before being developed further. A realisation of this piece took place around the area of Anton Lakes, to the north of the town, where I used to visit as a teenager. Since returning to this place over time, the potency of the memories has faded, and this is something that is somewhat explored in *border*. The exploration of liminality is more complex in this piece, bringing in psychological and personal colours to the work that are further developed in proceeding pieces. Although aforementioned pieces, such as the soundwalking pieces, equipped me with the tools to explore the theme of liminality within sound environments, *(walk) alone / in a place that you used to know...* expanded upon this theme with a more in-depth and challenging opportunity for further exploration.

3.1.3 – Summary

These pieces for me acted almost as an introduction to my practical research. They revealed the types of locations and spaces that would become common motifs for the overall project, and also revealed the specific places that would repeat themselves in the following composition projects, such as the A303 underpass at the south of the town. What started solely as an exploration of the sounds and soundscapes of certain spaces, and what happens sonically within these spaces, it became apparent that there was more to discover underneath, the emotional aspect. From listening to these environments, framed by the scores, I was drawn to the more personal and emotional processes that went hand-in-hand with the spaces. The initial intention for these scores was to reflect the themes of liminality, solitude and outsidersness – to bring the themes together in an image, a soundscape, the act of walking. And although this is still true, the scores also created an openness to explore these themes in a deeper way, and the final piece in *borders #1* bridged the gap between the material and objective soundscape, and the personally reflective and subjective quality of the project.

3.2 – *borders* #2 (2019-2020)

[<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28631903>]

3.2.1 – Concept

This project was developed from a score from *borders* #1 titled *walk alone / along the edge of town / listen to the sounds inside and outside the town simultaneously*. The initial idea for *borders* #2 was to make an attempt to exhaust the area of Ladies Walk, a path that overlooks the town from the south-eastern side; to exhaust this area through walking, listening and recording. As I started to make (static) recordings along the path and the surrounding fields, over a period of time, I found it challenging to come up with a conclusive formula, or set of rules, from which to frame and give reason for this type of rigorous exploration of this location. Along with each recording I made a small journal entry, with times and dates, and sometimes descriptions of aural experiences, and thoughts relating to the project's themes, which helped link the recordings when ordering and sorting them. Through the repetition of visiting and recording the same broad location, and through the repetition of carrying out the same act over a matter of weeks, I started to find myself uninspired by this process, and I wondered if a wider exploratory approach would be more suitable.

On a walk through and via Ladies Walk, I started to expand the location for the work out and beyond to different areas around the edge of Andover. Naturally, I started to discover a wider variety of sound experiences, unlike Ladies Walk's generally unchanging soundscape – some man-made sounds, some natural, and almost always intertwining together along the semi-imagined circumference of the edge of Andover. From this initial expansion, the project itself started to take form, a bit more shape, an on-going experiential piece that involved walking, listening, recording, and always alone. I started to imagine myself as a kind of solitary satellite orbiting the town – the work itself was the orbit, where I would return back to everyday life in the interim periods, and launch out again towards the edge when starting a new session, semi-improvising and finding a new variation in the orbit.

3.2.2 – Developing *borders* #2

The first of these sessions took place at several separate locations: two different corners of the town, the north-east and north-west corners, both on the edges of different industrial estates, and one on the east side of Ladies Walk. When reaching the north-east corner, via Walworth industrial estate, I set up the recorder and listened to the environment. A final road on the town's edge runs under a

small tunnel, on top of which lies the railway. Through the other side of the tunnel is Finkley Down farm, a small farm open to the public, mainly aimed at young children. After making this recording, I walked back via Ladies Walk, the intended destination being the east corner of the walk, and listened from a long field that separates the eastern side of Ladies Walk from Andover, and overlooks the south entrance of Walworth – its grey-droning traffic constant in the mid-distance.

The project was now in flow, and I would go on to choose other locations with little formula, sometimes randomly, scouting areas first before walking, listening and recording. I was intrigued to see what the environments had to offer, how sound environments may differ, what I may end up discovering, and what may happen to my memories. As the project was progressing, I continued to think about the nature of the piece. I had begun to realise that the act of walking and listening – my experiences, along with making the recordings – was the piece itself. It was a work that was made and experienced in-the-moment. I found it a rewarding experience deliberately detaching myself from the everyday, experiencing it from the edge, between the two worlds of town and beyond, thinking, feeling and recording, before coming back to the everyday and its relative mundaneness. These were not simply just walks out onto the edge of the countryside – these were walks that were informed by the sound environments, my own memories, my own unfamiliarity with some surroundings, and deep yet relatively fleeting experiences with my own solitude.

As the project progressed, I started to write short texts that supported the walks and listening experiences. They were an attempt to suggest the themes of *borders* from thoughts that originated from each of the walks. I would write drafts of these texts on my phone at the time of making the recordings, in order to capture ideas as they came, then edited and finalised them when editing the recordings at home. These texts were designed to help any potential listener, and myself, to link the recordings with a suggested emotional and/or thought process to my own experiences of the walks. Instead of just making an archive of raw recordings, I hoped that these texts would bind the project together into a more solidified piece, running the themes of *borders* throughout. As I created more texts and recordings, I imagined that the texts themselves would act as title, caption and description, and perhaps be an amalgamation of those things, lying somewhere in-between their usage.

3.2.3 – Realising *borders* #2

During the first session, on the walk towards the north-east corner and Finkley Down farm, walking through Walworth industrial estate, I passed by a factory that I worked at during the summer of 2009. I had not set foot in this area of the town since then (I've had no reason to) and naturally this

brought back memories that I had not thought about for years. I found it interesting to discover these memories and past sensations when walking through the business park, it was as if the memories had preserved there. Who comes to an industrial estate to reminisce? Without the ideas and themes of this project, however, it would have been unlikely that these memories would have revealed themselves. This has been a significant part of the research project as a whole, walking around the edge of town, and drawing out these past experiences. Attempting to listen to my memories and the surrounding environments simultaneously was a challenging yet enjoyable experience (these experiences are linked with the final score from *borders #1*). I like the idea that being on the edge of town also puts me on the edge of my memories; the outer and inner environments are interlinked. *borders #2* has brought out this memorising more to the forefront than *borders #1*. Even in locations that I had never been to before had a strong impact on thinking about my past and my relationships with places. The entrance to Ladies Walk, on the south edge of the town, is very close the house I grew up in during my first fourteen years. This past home has occasionally been in my dreams since, and when visiting the location of Ladies Walk, thoughts and memories are stirred.

Whilst listening and recording in a field just outside the north edge of the town, memories overlapped. First walking through a housing estate to the location, I passed a house that my dad used to live in, where I used to go every weekend with my brother. I had not been to this suburban area (Saxon Fields) since he moved from there, and had not really thought about it since. Finally reaching my destination, recording the drones from the main road, I remembered that in the fields beyond I used to help out a gamekeeper, as well as occasionally taking part in beating days (driving the pheasants across the fields and through the crops towards the guns) during hunting seasons. I have not participated in these sorts of activities for many years; I had lost interest and since then my attitudes have changed. But while recording between both locations, both forms of memories overlapped. It was a part of my past that I do not find myself thinking about, so it was emotive to visit these past experiences. I wondered how my life would have been if I had made different choices. Like passing through the industrial estate with the factory that I used to work in, realising this composition project opened up places from my past that I had since forgotten or not thought about, reformed memories, and helped me solidify my relationship with my hometown – the town walks through me as much as I walk through it.

My routine became more rigorous as the project progressed. For approximately six hours, I would dedicate my time to being out in the field to carry out the research, exploration and the composition. I viewed the satellite image of the town and visited places that I felt were worth exploring, usually

going to two or three locations that were in relatively close proximity. Obviously there were some failures: some places, I thought, were not applicable to the project, or that I found uninteresting (sometimes depending on my mood), or others like the construction site of a new housing estate that I will describe later. To get to the locations on the edge of town, I would usually walk through environments such as suburbs and business parks that lie on the fringes, weaving through streets and finding openings and cut-throughs to the intended destinations – many of these passing locations I had not been to before. I had visited fifty different locations during the project – twenty-five of which I used for the final presentation of the project.

Since the beginning of *borders #2*, and as it progressed, I found that underpasses are notable points that mark where the edge of the town ends, and the countryside begins. The soundworlds of these locations are coarse and harsh, loud and oppressive. The characters of these underpasses vary throughout the town, and underpasses which are main roads themselves can be unpleasantly loud, especially when listening to them for long periods of time. The thick walls-of-sound from tyre-wash reverberate off the large, ugly concrete walls and equally ugly ceilings. These are the noisiest locations on the edge of town, a final, aggressive explosion of sound before diminishing slowly into the countryside. The white-noise from the A roads themselves are the main backdrop to most of the countryside, not noise from the town itself. Once coming close to these underpasses and out into the countryside, the sound of the town is no longer audible; continuously contained within this wall of white-noise that circles the town, especially the southern side.

There are other underpasses, however, which can only be traversed through by foot, leaving the traffic noise from above to hang in the air. These places are usually surrounded by edgeland trees and paths, dark and slightly unkempt areas of the town which have not been developed or maintained since these underpasses were first built. In these locations, such as the south of the town just past the entrance to Ladies Walk, the voicings of small birds pierce through the wall of sound – a clash where urban sound meets rural. The foliage here is dark and wild, and the old trees on the steep banks overhang the wide, grey-brown dirt path which eventually leads out from under the A303 and turns into a bridleway that stretches and cuts across the countryside and eventually to Harewood Forest.

The latter kinds of these underpasses lie at liminal states, where the town ends and countryside begins; their soundworlds are typically unsettled and harsh, as if the urban is having one last angry scream before the rural sets in. These underpasses represent a final frontier before the rest of the world, open gateways marking the end of a place before unending space, a relatively small point of

transition, whether it be via road or path, motor vehicle or foot. These locations also contain signs of outliers and outsiders, whose activities are pushed to the edges of towns; the druggy graffiti sketched on the walls, the dirt bikes that travel under them to get to a dirt track amongst the fringe, where people walk their dogs towards the green of the countryside. These places are usually unpopular, if only to travel through; these places are not typically destinations of interest or given attention to. But they are clear representations of the end of one location and the beginning of another; places of transition that have their own unique soundworld of oppressive traffic noise.

Sometimes I would question my being in, and walking through some locations: 'Who walks through a suburban housing estate with no business being there, only to stand on the edge of it to listen? I have not been here before, never had a reason to, I have no one to visit in this location of homes.' An example of this was during a session that took place on the north-west edge of Charlton, a village on the outskirts of Andover that has for decades joined up with the edge of Andover itself – Andover ends just as Charlton begins. Walking through Charlton lakes and its surrounding fields, through a housing estate, I set up the microphone in a small edgeland field and began to record and listen to the environment.

After finishing my time in this location, I decided to walk behind the houses to my left, north-eastwards towards a field which was to be my next destination. Once again, I imagined that only the people who lived here venture through this place, if at all. It was a thin, grubby path that on my right side was bordered with seven-foot fencing and gates that edged back gardens, and to my left was a small wire fence that separated Charlton from the fields and countryside. This path was a small, thin line of the immediate edge of town; maybe *this* was where Andover (via Charlton) ended, stubbornly and suddenly. This was the kind of place where teenagers would bring in their bicycles late at night after meeting with friends, where cats would prowl the fences and find refuge in exploring through the dirt and through holes in the wire fence, where foxes would stroll in peacefully yet cautiously at night from the countryside and into gardens to find scraps of food, and small birds would congregate in the over-hanging trees which bent the fencing and darkened the path.

A challenge that arose during this project, and the research as a whole, is how to actually define what the edge is. For example, in the north-east area of the town, much construction of new housing estates was taking place (Fig. 7). When taking initial walks, I was interested to listen to the sound environment of being within a half-completed housing estate, and the sounds of construction work in the foreground and background. This is a sound environment which I have associated in the past

and since as definitively liminal – the edge has yet to be completed and concrete, it is itself still in a liminal state, it is not quite yet a defined edge, it is still in formation. After returning to this location again a few weeks later, to listen and make recordings, I found that the sound environment had changed drastically – it was much quieter and not as chaotic as it was before. This was because either a lot of the construction had been completed or had paused. Although I did not make a recording during this session, I found it interesting that in this location the sound environment itself was so changeable and undefinable that I could not rely what I expected to find. However, I had subsequently found a similar environment to the south of this location, and had managed to record the sound of construction that I was looking for. From this, I learned not to rely on sound sources and environments for my work, but to accept and adapt with the changeability that the exploration and experiences would encounter. Such environments have several layers of the “perpetual flux” (Cocker, 2012) of modern-day liminality; the in-flux nature of the edge of town as it is being constructed over a period of time, pushing itself into the countryside, and the unpredictability of the resultant soundworld, which always changes, almost a liquid state for the period of construction time. Such environments are clear definitions of liminality in the everyday; they are not yet on any map, yet they are there.



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Fig 7: A fresh new housing estate being built on the north-east edge of town. An environment changing in real-time, from rural to suburban.

3.2.4 – Summary

Liminality is a challenging subject to define, as Paul Stenner hints at (2017). I hope that my attempts at exploring the edge of town contribute to the notion of what is liminal, in terms of sound environments and the experiences of these environments. There is a wide variety of different environments: the loud and oppressive underpasses; the quietude and relative stillness of some places such as the north-west corner where the Harrow Way path cuts through Portway industrial estate – a bridleway enclosed by trees which hides between warehouses, factories and office buildings; to the south, where the droning, oppressive backdrop of the A303 flies over a small edgeland woodland, wild and unkempt, and continuously duels/duets with a small flowing stream that connects to the River Anton – the flowing of the urban and the rural respectively, where the two states meet and clash with similar-yet-different characteristics; the distant soundworld of the urban, best experienced in the fields by Ladies Walk, where the grey urban drones of traffic spill into the quiet countryside, a place of green grass, proud trees and birds – two different states, yet connected by the sounds of opposing environments. These are just a few examples of the variety of sound experiences of the liminal and the edge, where urban meets rural, where town ends, and countryside begins.



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Fig 8: Recording in various locations.

Linking in with these experiences are my own memories that shift around the town, sometimes familiar, sometimes unfamiliar, and otherwise in-between. Some of these locations connect my past memories with the present, places that I have frequented in the past and that I still visit. Other locations I had never set foot in before, such as the fields just beyond the north of Finkley Down farm, or the newly-built housing estate of Augusta Park to the north of the town. I have created new memories since realising this project. Layers of memories from events and non-events that have

occurred in the recent past or further back. From this, my internal thoughts connect with the external sound environments of these locations, as Westerkamp encourages (2006), where the self and the world meet, and these memories and feelings represent the liminal state where the inner and outer worlds collide.

3.3 – *interlude and film series (2020)*

3.3.1 – *interlude* – [<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28506185>]

Like many people during the first lockdown in response to Covid-19, I was sent home from my place of work indefinitely. Boredom did not, and does not, bother me much, and I found this a calming period, despite all that was going on at the time. Weeks went by quickly, days seemed to merge into one, and I spent a lot of time in my room watching films, playing games, reading etc. I was, however, frustrated that I could not, nor did I feel safe to, leave the house to realise soundwalking pieces or create new projects – I had finished *borders* #2 by this point, and was starting to create the ideas and scores that would later become *borders* #3. Since these new pieces were scores for walking on the edge of town, I felt that these pieces were becoming irrelevant, and with the simultaneously clear and unclear government advice (and excessive doom-and-gloom of media coverage, and general public confusion and worry), I found it difficult to put this new project into practice, so I decided to put it on hold. There were projects by other artists at the time who were recording the soundscapes during the lockdown(s), many recordings of which can be found on sites such as Radio Aporee. Since I did not feel entirely safe, I chose not to participate in recording the sound of lockdown, however I did notice changes within the sound environment – the constant drone from the A303, which can be heard from nearly any point in the south, east and west of Andover, was quiet and muted, and sometimes seemed completely absent. I would not say I entirely missed this keynote sound, which had thus far been a frequent motif of realising *borders* pieces, but after the sound of traffic slowly crawled its way back into the consciousness after the first month of lockdown, I did miss the quiet and relative stillness of the town's soundscape.

As my projects so far largely consisted of walking through outdoor environments, I realised I had to adapt to this massive, global change. Stripping my thoughts back to the bare essential themes of the research project, liminality, outsidersness and solitude, I started to think about pieces to do in the home. I had two pieces in *borders* #1 that could be realised at home, one of them specifically for home use. The piece *standing in an open doorway...* seemed like a good jumping off point for development. As walking was now a major part of my practical work, I started to create what I thought of as the sister piece to *standing in an open doorway...*, which consisted of simply walking through doorways and into different rooms, listening to the changing sound spaces of each room. This new piece was a blend of the aforementioned piece, and a kind of microcosm of the pieces that consisted of walking from urban to rural environments, albeit in an internal, restricted environment.

With this new piece, the aim was to bring the theme of liminality to within the home. This piece was partly inspired by Georges Perec's *Species of Spaces*, in which he describes the mundanity of such familiar spaces and rooms. I hope with this new piece I made it open enough so anyone can attempt it in their own homes – every room is different, and every home is different. Each realisation, like most of the scores for *borders* so far, would be unique to the person realising the piece - unique to their homes, and unique to their experiences. The intention of the score is for the performer to listen to the home and to become aware and attend to this environment and its spaces – the ultimate mundanity, the almost-absolute definition of the everyday – in a different and hopefully engaging way.

The second piece written during this period was the simply titled *window scene*. Since I spent a lot of time in my room during the lockdown period, I got very used to the view from the window. I had not long moved into this new second-floor flat; in fact, I moved in just a couple of weeks before lockdown began. Attempting to adapt to the situation, and trying to think of new ways to explore liminality from this restricted position, I was beginning to get interested in potentially new ways of listening, in the context of my own previous work, which could be accessible to anyone. During this period, I spent plenty of time looking through my bedroom window, and understood that a lot of the population was doing the same – I imagined that during the period when lockdown was in full swing, many people got very familiar with the images that their windows framed and presented. Restricted by these new limitations, this was an attempt to bring the outside in. If certain soundscapes could not be experienced due to restrictions such as lockdowns, then perhaps everyday images could encourage imagined soundscapes. This was the principal idea behind this piece – another 'home' piece from which the soundworld was created in the imagination of the listener-performer – imagination as an area that could not be limited by the situation. The concept of liminality here is presented by two aspects: the physicality of the windowpane itself, separating the internal and external environments, and the connection between the real world and the imagined.

3.3.2 – film series – [<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28506050>]

This project was developed from *window scene*, when I attempted to record a realisation of the piece, and by filming the window frame from my bedroom. This idea came from that realisation, by filming static, silent shots of scenes from which the soundworlds could be realised in the imagination of the viewer. These films are intended to be visual scores from which the viewer creates the soundworld.

These films were made mostly, but not exclusively, in edgeland environments. I attempted to find and frame scenes which were a little mysterious and which lie on the edge of the everyday, except for one which takes place in a suburb. The first film was taken at the southern underpass near the western entrance to Ladies Walk; this underpass has been a frequent point of focus for myself when beginning new projects – although it's slightly beyond the last houses and suburbs, I see it as the last frontier of the town before moving into the countryside proper. It is a typical edgeland location, the underpass itself is unkempt and grubby; the grey-brown walls are sparsely-yet-sporadically covered in druggy, rough graffiti, and the ground underneath is an old gravel track that consists of dirty, dull mud. The sound environment is a typical edgeland soundworld – loud, constant traffic, from the trunk road overhead.

The framing of this first film is a close up of the edge of the underpass concrete wall in the left half of the frame, and the right half is the bank that leads up to the road, out-of-focus. The idea for this framing was to lend an air of mystery to the location and the potential soundworld, for the viewer to hopefully question the environment and lend an openness to the potential imagined sound experience(s). Obviously the trunk road is out of frame, however the dirty brown of the wall and foliage of the bank heavily suggest the edgeland-ness of the location. I think of this film as the most challenging visual score of the film series, and the films that followed contained and hinted at more visual information for sounds and soundworlds to be imagined.

The films that followed shared the same framing techniques, attempting to hint at the environment without totally giving everything away. These include: a shot overlooking the town from a hillside, where the town is largely obscured by the tall grass, the lower-leg of a pylon, backgrounded by unkempt edgeland trees (in light rain), a train line through a high metal fence – a train never appears, hinting at a tension and absence – and a simple shot of a suburban street. I hoped that these films presented a variety of different imagined sound experiences, however I struggled to settle with idea of the project – I found that the actualisation of the idea was not perfect, finding it challenging to film what I wanted to get across; I felt like I was running out of ideas for films quickly, and from feeling nervous with being outside during the heart of the lockdown period, I decided to end the project with ten films.

3.3.3 – Summary

interlude and *film series* were a reaction to the Covid-19 pandemic, an attempt to create something within the limitations of a lockdown world. All the pieces here, including the films, can be

experienced or realised without leaving home. This period was an opportunity to try something different with my compositional practice, and with my exploration of the themes. These pieces, especially *window scene* and *film series*, add a variety of creative output when considering the portfolio as a whole, and demonstrate a style of exploration and experience that steers away from soundwalking.

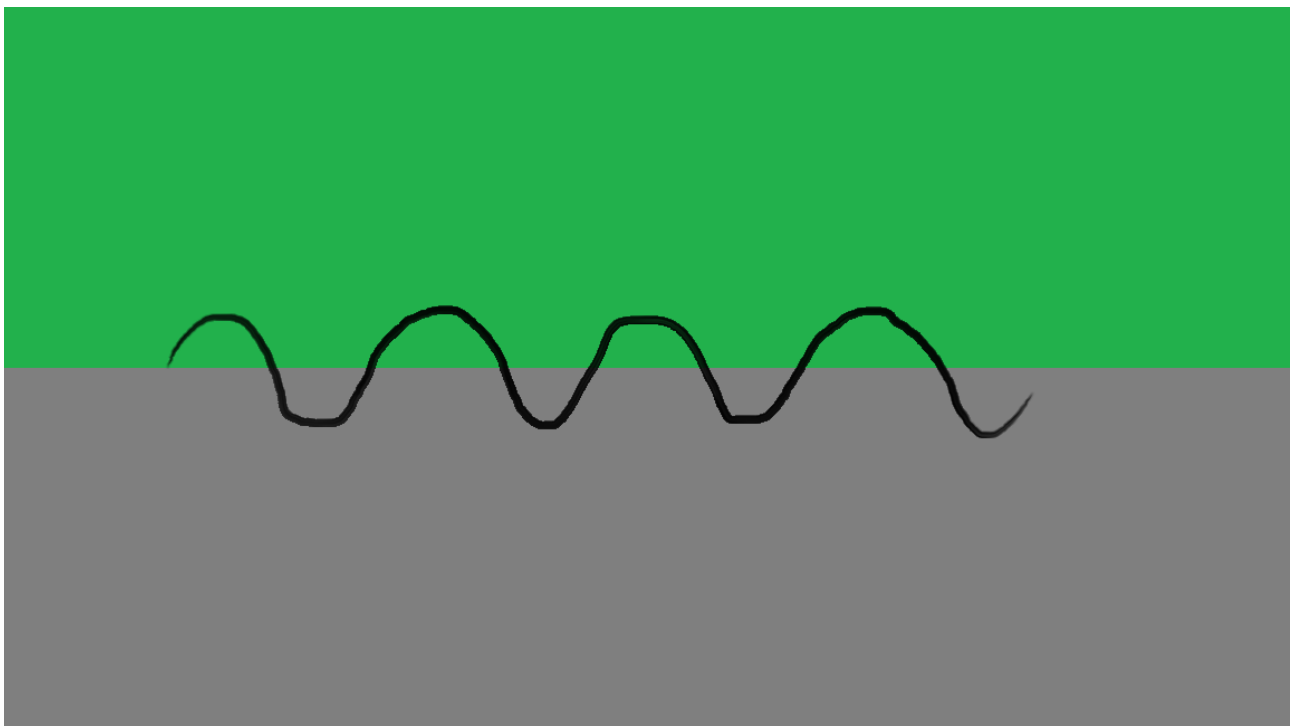
3.4 – *borders #3* (2020-2021)

[<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28632491>]

3.4.1 – Concept

Writing and realising the scores for *borders #3* was intertwined with the Covid-19 pandemic that started in early 2020, however the pieces themselves are not a reaction to the pandemic nor related to the idea of lockdowns. The idea for this project was to suggest a more open mindset for exploring and walking through different environments; to experiment with walking routes and create scores that demonstrated a more varied and playful exploration of moving through different sounding locations. I felt that scores that were more graphic than text-based would be more suitable to convey these ideas, as the visual aspect may lend to more ambiguous interpretations for realisations.

I started to conceive the idea for this collection before the pandemic took hold. The scores are graphic representations, impressions, of soundwalks that could be realised in any location that I felt suitable. Early versions of the visual elements of the scores had a design that leaned towards the digital – two colour-fields (grey and green) which split the page in two halves horizontally, with a black line or shape across the page that represented an imagined route (Fig. 9). The grey colour-field represented an urban environment, and the green represented rural. I started to realise some of these scores before the designs were finalised.



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Fig 9: An early design of a score for *borders #3*.

3.4.2 – Developing *borders* #3

I developed a more reduced visual idea for the final versions of these scores; the first version consisted of drawings of a central straight black line, representing the point where two different environments met, and a blue line or shape showing the idea of the walking route for each piece, drawn as neatly as possible. The second and final version kept the visual motif, but with a more sketched approach as opposed to carefully measured lines and shapes, giving the scores a handwritten, personal look. The discarded idea of the colour-fields now gave me much more scope and variation as to what the different environments could be; I had started to feel restricted by the idea of urban/rural, environments that mainly lie on the edge of town, and now I felt there was more opportunity to walk through a variety of different environments in Andover, and expanding the idea of what 'two different environments' could mean. Liminality is in the eye of the beholder, and Stenner hints that “anything and nothing can be liminal depending upon the frame of comparison”. (Stenner, 2018)

I had around six or seven different scores of the colour-field version, and this new minimal version allowed me to expand and play more freely with a variety of different scores. The walking-lines were created using different techniques; some were created from walks that were familiar, and others were drawn from more improvised ideas, experimenting with putting pen-to-paper, improvising a line, and wondering what the potential walk may be. Some scores are simple to understand, others were more challenging and seemingly near-impossible – the idea to simply make an attempt to realise, without the certainty of any kind of success. An invitation for experimentation and failure.

I completed twenty-five scores altogether. However, by the time I had realised about half of them, I started to notice that a lot of the scores had certain similarities. These similarities consisted of slight variations of similar shapes and walking-routes, and the number of points where the walk crossed the border. I whittled down the collection from twenty-five to ten, discarding the ones that I felt were too similar, and therefore perhaps too arbitrary in their creation, and kept the scores that I felt were the simplest and most essential.

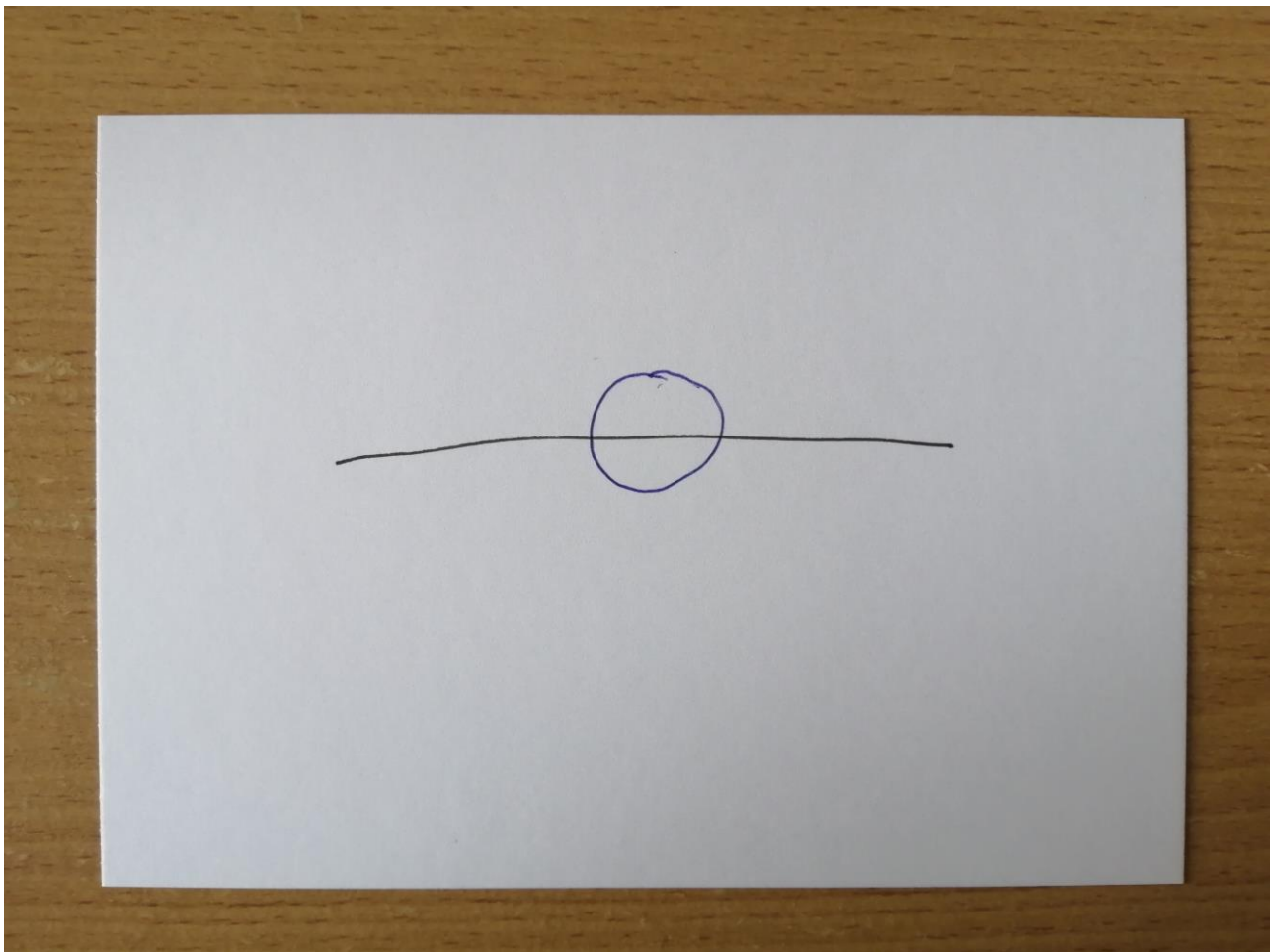
This final collection of scores I deemed finished in the first quarter of 2021, long after I had already made realisations of some of these pieces, including ones that I had since discarded, which were spread out infrequently across the year due to the pandemic and lockdowns. This project was put on hold in its early stages during the first lockdown in 2020 where I focused on *interlude* and *films*

series. As mentioned before, the realisations of the scores were sporadic, especially to begin with. Although I had conceived the ideas for *borders #3* early in 2020, I only started to realise some of the pieces in the early summer – like a lot of people, the months from March to June were mainly spent indoors, leaving only for essential purposes which did not, unfortunately, seem to include art-making.

3.4.3 – Realising *borders #3*

At the beginning, I had started to think about realising what I deemed the easier pieces, and focused on the ‘circle’ score (see Fig. 10). I decided to do this piece around the area of Ladies Walk, as I knew that there were many roads and paths that passed through this area that linked the town to the countryside. For this first walk, I treated Ladies Walk itself as the black line – the border – and although there are relatively small fields that separate this path from the town, I saw Ladies Walk as the last frontier of Andover before deep countryside. This means that I did not think of the border in aural terms, but rather a geographical location. Because I wanted these scores to be more open and somewhat less structured than the scores from *borders #1*, how I defined the border was down to my own interpretation – I saw this realisation as a walk on the edge of town, but in a blurred fashion; a softer, wider edge.

I planned a route that had a circular design that passed through into the countryside, and round through Ladies Walk and into the suburbs. The shapes of these walks were not to be taken literally; what I was aiming for was a rough circular shape instead of a perfect circle. The route, and the routes for other scores, proved challenging to design, as it seems that nothing in nature has a straight line, yet everything man-made does. Roads and pavements are generally straight, jagged, sprawled and angular, and footpaths in the countryside are largely the same, obviously as to not make ramblers walk freely over farmland and privately-owned land. The shapes of the realisations of these walking routes were therefore irregular, in contrast to their clearly-formatted scores. Naturally-occurring curved lines are hard to come by in terms of walking on paths in the town or the countryside; I nearly always walked in straight lines.



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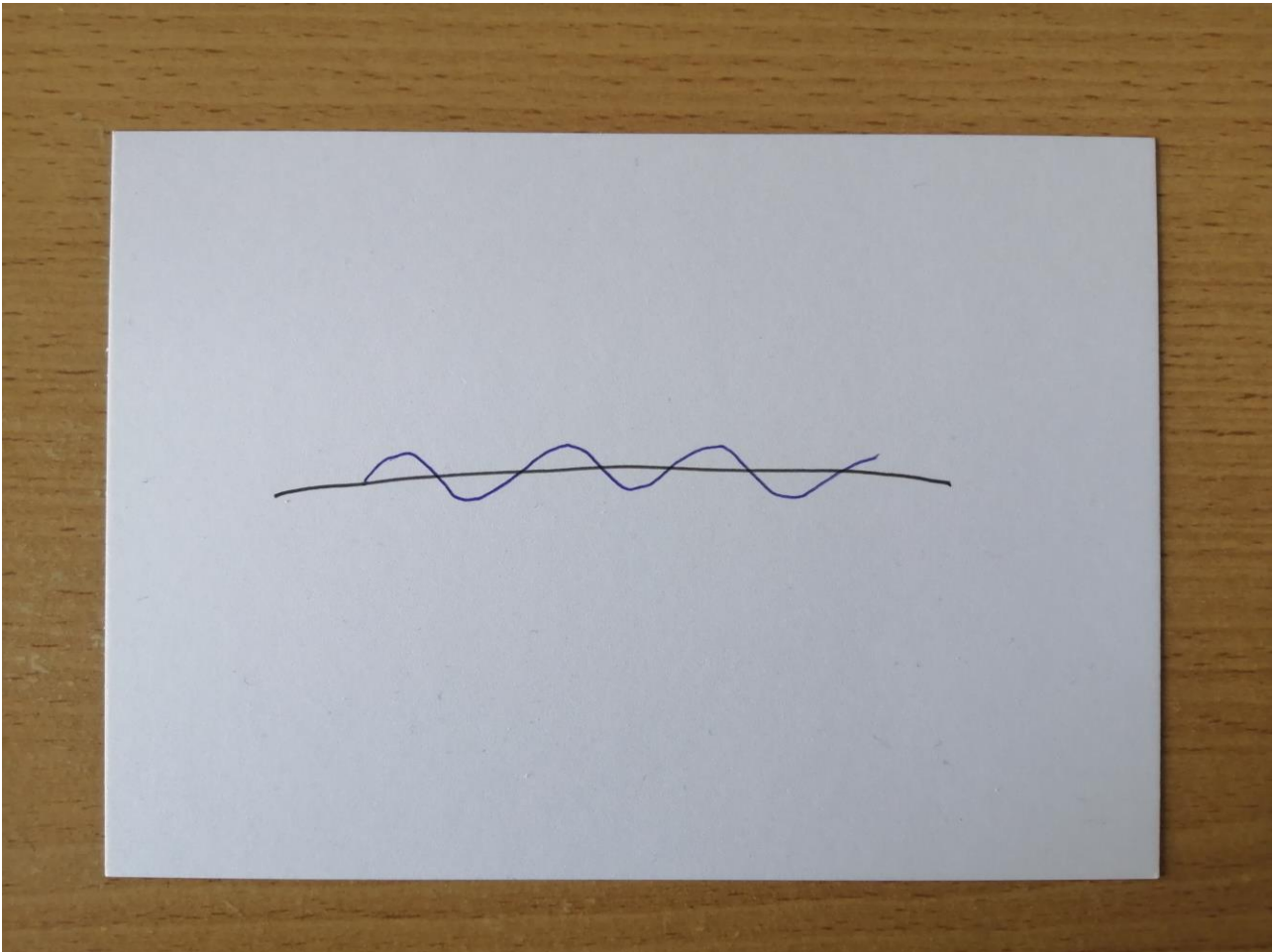
Fig 10: The 'circle' score.

I realised a different score in this area, the score that consists of a wavey-line (see Fig. 11) that passes through the border several times. For this, I decided that the border would be where the suburbs end, and the fields begin, and Ladies Walk as the furthest point of the rural side of the frame. This end of town has many paths that link to Ladies Walk and beyond, and I thought this would give an irregular, varied pattern to my walk. The suburbs were relatively quiet, vehicles were infrequent, and these roads do not consistently mask the environment as, say, a main road would. This lent space to listen, and dynamic changes were more noticeable. And yet, the A303 drones always hung in the background.

Because the scores are open, and do not specify geographic location, there was an opportunity to do realisations of the same scores in different locations, and realisations of different scores in the same locations. It depended on where or how I defined the border. Examples of this are different realisations of the wavey-line score (Fig. 11), realised in different locations.

One take on this score consisted of walking across and through the town itself. I re-defined the

border as a man-made structure, the railway that cuts through the northern-centre of Andover (see Fig. 12). Starting in the west and moving eastward through the town, I crossed the railway via every bridge, tunnel or path that I could walk. Once again, I used the border itself as a geographical location, not as the meeting point between two different sound environments. The idea here was to see how many different environments I could move through and experience, using the railway as a centre point and anchor.



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Fig 11: Wavey-line score from the *borders #3* collection.

While walking, I noticed how the railway itself was a silent, definite border. Only one or two trains passed by during the one-hundred minutes (or so) of the walk. This environment seemed unchanged since it was built – an environment locked in that time, and also somewhat timeless. The dark colours of the ground on which the tracks lay, and the unchanging, silent nature of the environment of the railway was consistent. When walking along side it, it presented itself as a stubborn object; this environment would not change for any sort of town development – literally an immovable, unchanging border that separates different town environments. On one side, busy main roads, on another, relatively quiet suburbs. Crossing the tracks was like resetting my experiences of each

environment as I moved into another, a brief moment of inner-quiet interlude. Some of the locations that the railway divided may not have been noticeably different (such as suburb to suburb), but I did get a sense that I was in a different part of the town – a different street, a different locale. A different age, old housing/newer housing. Another aspect was moving through both familiar and unfamiliar places. Places that I knew well, others from my past, and others I had never been before. If you want to get to know a town, follow the railway.



Map data: Google, ©2025 / Airbus. Google Earth (Google, 2025)

Fig 12: Route of the realisation of the wavy-line score. The yellow line represents the route I took, from west to east, crossing the railway where I could. The light-grey line represents the railway.

Some other scores have more than one walking route, and these routes are deliberately detached from one another. The idea for this was to provide different listening experiences within the same approximate locale. Some of these scores also incorporate standing instructions (signified by a dot), and this was to provide variety to the ways of listening to a place, especially in the context of motion-against-stillness. I wanted to experiment with walking through different places within the same location.

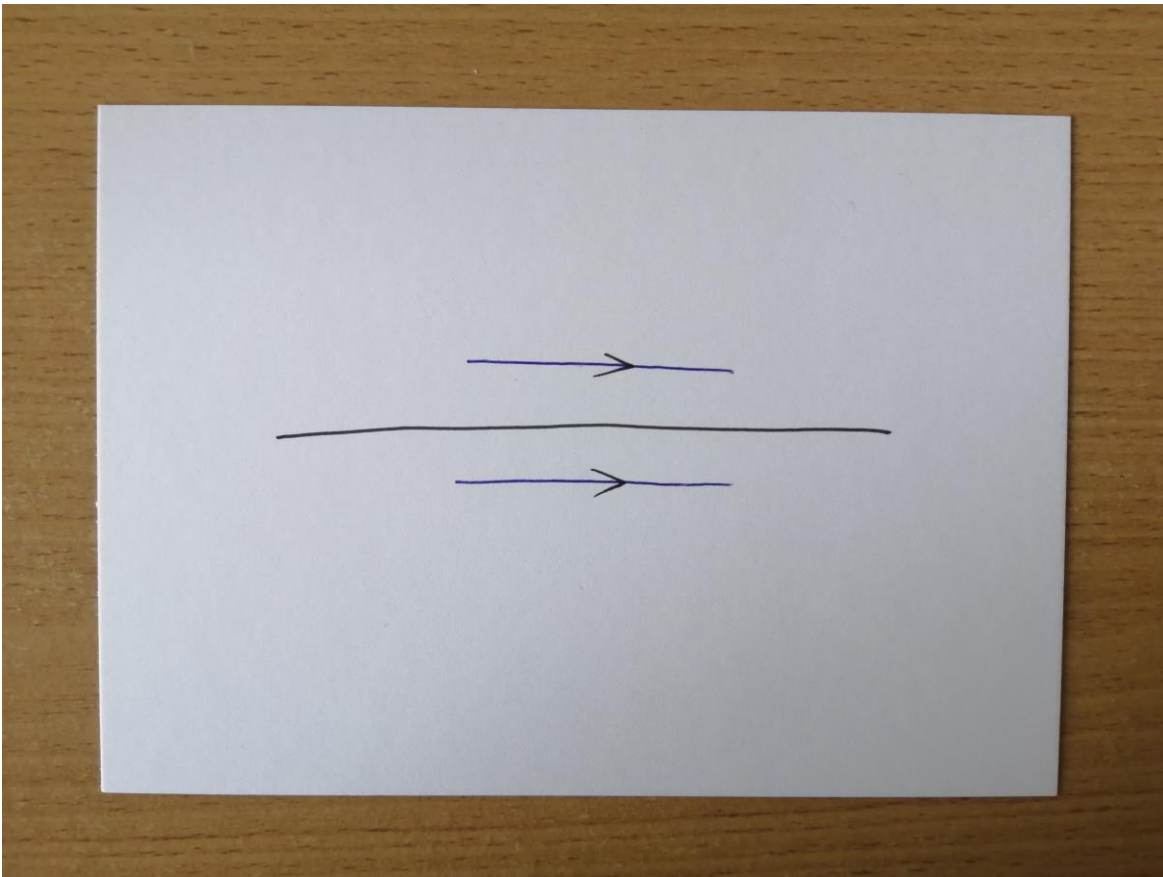
An example of this is a score that has two directional walking lines either side of, and running parallel with, the border (Fig. 13). I realised this piece on the southern edge of the town, the border being, naturally, the A303. The two environments either side of the A303 were completely different: one was dull, seemingly insignificant, noisy, dark (see the yellow line on Fig. 14); the other was bright, open, quiet and calm (see the light grey line on Fig. 14). Separated by the edge, a liminal place that is neither town nor countryside, a place that exists only to travel through and not to

experience as a destination. There is no edgeland here, the A road separates town from countryside in a clear manner. Two different walking experiences and two different sound environments, only from an arm's length from each other, and what united them was my experience of both walks, separated by a pause in listening and attention when I moved from one route to the other; a piece in two movements, divided by an interlude – a liminal absence.

3.4.4 – Summary

Throughout these walks, and from previous projects, I realised that soundwalking has as much to do about the full experience of being in a place than just listening to the sounding environments. Of course, these pieces are predominantly about listening to spaces, but I found that listening drew me into the environments in a more conscious way, and into other methods of experiencing, using and paying attention to the other senses. As mentioned before, and something that has an undercurrent to my experiences, many places that I walk through have effected my own memories, something that I feel would be artificial to ignore. These memories may or may not have been activated by the soundscapes of places, yet it demonstrates to me that I am attuned to the environment(s) that I am in. Westerkamp herself hints at the relationship between the external and internal environments when soundwalking, listening to one's inner thoughts and feelings while also listening to the surrounding environment(s) is a unique characteristic of soundwalking.

As I experienced the environments in a variety of ways, firstly by listening then by using other senses, I decided to experiment with the documentation of these realisations, as opposed to just using field recordings as I had done with previous projects. Along with field recordings, I also used texts, lists, photographs, film, and maps to document my experiences and the environments. Going by instinct, I decided on the form the material would take that I thought would be best applicable to document the walk; however the walks themselves were not necessarily biased to whatever form I chose. This opened up possibilities within thinking about these walks, and also lifted the somewhat restrictive actions of half-focusing on documenting or making field recordings. Previously, when recording walks with my microphone, I have been frustrated with not attending to the environment or the experience as much as I would have liked, as some of my attention was making sure that the recording was going smoothly. Although some of these realisations are documented by field recordings, I worried less about the quality of the recording and focused more on the present experience. The pieces are the walks themselves; the documentation is representational and are reflections of my experiences, and are also materials to show that I have realised these pieces.



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Fig 13: A score from *borders #3*, parallel lines.



Map data: Google, ©2020. Google Earth (Google, 2025)

Fig 14: Realisation of the score with parallel lines; each route moving from NW to SE.

3.5 – *border* (2022)

[<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28506830>]

3.5.1 – Concept

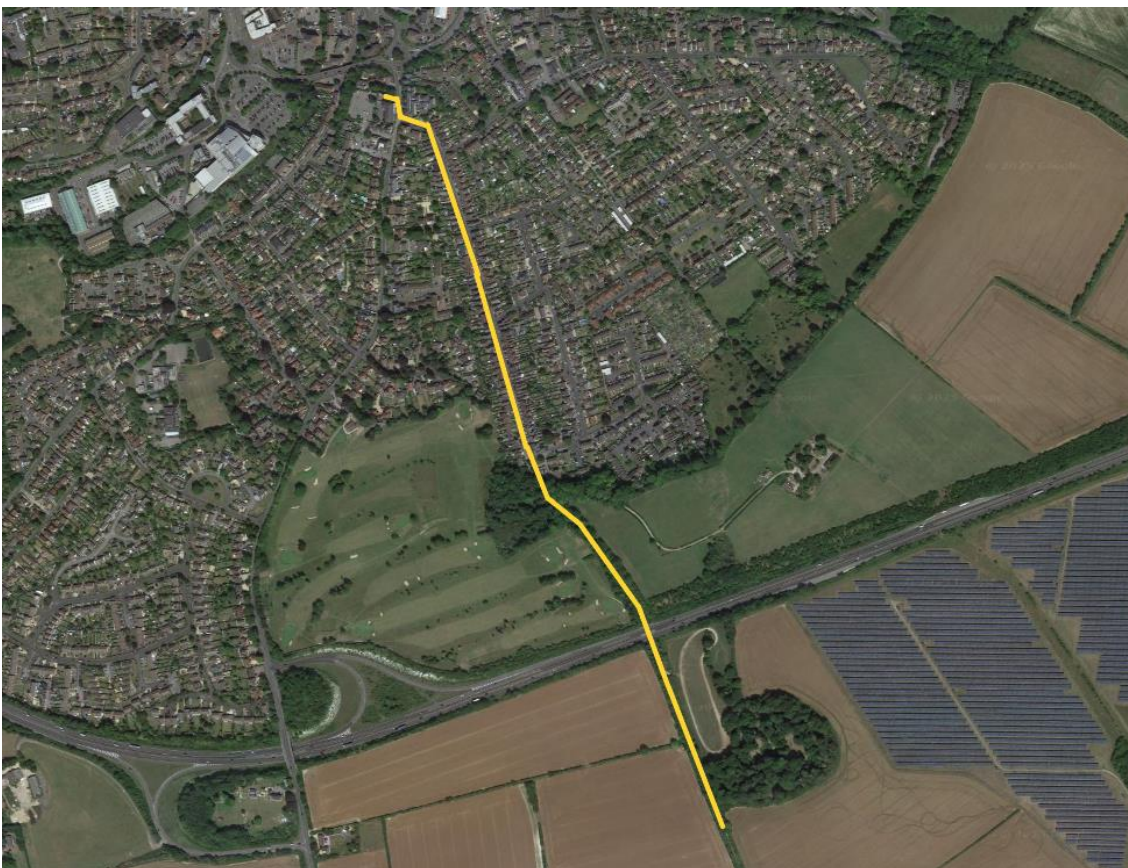
This piece consists of walking the same route, once each week, for a year. The idea to do a year-long piece was inspired by several things. Firstly, my friend and composer Joe Hamlen had completed a year-piece, titled *Here*, where he made a field recording every day in his back garden for a year – each recording was one minute long. He then layered these field recordings, adding them each day, and presenting them as such – the process was as much the piece as the final recordings themselves. I had also become interested in Tehching Hsieh's year-long pieces, such as *One Year Performance 1980-1981*, and *One Year Performance 1981-1982*, and I also enjoyed the processes, documentation, and the notion of his art as simply 'doing time'. His pieces existed only in the act of his doing, and once they were finished, we are left with the documentation, usually in the form of photographs, charts and texts, calendars and also maps. I noticed some similarities in Richard Long's walking pieces, where the walk itself is the piece, and what we have as observers is just a single photograph (usually of a land sculpture that Long made with the materials in situ) or a short piece of text, minimal documentation that feeds our imagination of the walk. This idea of 'the walk is the piece' had been developing throughout the project of *borders*, and this piece, *border*, I feel is the most mature representation of the idea in my work thus far. There is also a repetitive nature to *border*, something I had not yet explored. This repetition, repeating the same walk each week, reflects the repetitive walks of everyday life – whether it be walking to-and-from work, walking to the shops, walking the dog, or walking to any destination in everyday life where the same route may be unavoidable. The repetition is also an opportunity to reflect on each experience of the same route – how each experience differs, how each experience is similar. This piece occurred in 2022, starting from the first week of the year, ending at the last week.

3.5.2 – Developing *border*

The reason for setting the parameter for the walk to occur once each week was simply for everyday issues. Covid-19 was still an issue, and in fact I had to wait a day to recover from Covid before I could do one of these walks (I contracted the virus for the first time in March). Also, the potential for illness could have hindered the routine if the parameter was to do the walk everyday – the route started about half an hour away from my home. I also decided to allow a little room for manoeuvre if needed – if I did become unwell for a significant amount of time, or if a 'life event' had occurred,

I would do two walks one week to make up for the walk-less week, however, this did not happen. Also, as I worked at my day-job three days a week during the year, this would also make it difficult to do the walk on these days, especially in the winter months when it was darker in the mornings and evenings (there is no lighting after Old Winton Road ends, and it felt unsafe to walk there at night).

The route that I was planning for the piece was to have at least one border, whether it be geographical or otherwise. After thinking about and walking preliminary routes, I settled on the walk going from north to south, up Old Winton Road, and beyond, under the A303 underpass and out into the countryside (see Fig. 15). This area had echoed throughout the project – first of all, it is a place important to me as I lived in a house on the south-end of the road for the first fourteen years of my life, and I wondered how memories might affect this piece. Also, the A303 underpass had been a significant place in several previous pieces, as I deem this to be a notable geographical border in Andover (Fig. 16) – I see it as a place where Andover ends, and the rest of the world begins. It is also an edgeland space somewhat – the old dirt road extends from Old Winton Road, and the grey-brown underpass acts as a kind of gateway to the countryside. Of course, the sound of the trunk road's traffic is constant, and has been a notable sound source throughout the project.



Map data: Google, ©2020. Google Earth (Google, 2025)

Fig 15: The route for *border*, moving from north to south.



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Fig 16: Underpass – the A303 crosses above.

Firstly, the route begins on a small Quaker burial site (Fig. 17), situated between the Southampton Arms pub and a community centre on Winchester Road. The route continues crossing over Winchester Road, and turning onto Old Winton Road – the route has two significant geographical and sounding borders, this is the first of them. Moving off of the busy Winchester Road, the relative quiet of Old Winton Road is near-immediately experienced. This street is long, relatively straight, has a steady incline, and is lined with houses of varied nature, some detached, semi-detached and terraced, and some houses larger than others. At the end of the road, the incline gets steeper, the asphalt disappears and changes into large gravel, stones and sometimes mud. This wide path cuts into the top of the hill between farmland and a golf course, the trees overhang on each side. Then, as the peak of the hill is reached, the path turns slightly and follows under the A303. This section of the route, including and ending with the underpass, is the second significant border. The sound environment becomes generally quieter, a less-open space, and climaxes with the roaring trunk road. The sounds naturally reverberate in the underpass, and continuing south opens up to a country path, and the droning traffic radiates out into the countryside.



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Fig 17: A small Quaker burial site, the start of the walk.

3.5.3 – Realising *border*

What I found as the piece progressed, is that these borders, where places and sound environment change, are not as clear cut as imagined. There are borders everywhere, from walking off the Quaker grave site onto the main road; off the main road onto Old Winton Road; the street is relatively consistent, but passing by houses can give varied results – garden birds may congregate at one house, but not others; house works could be occurring outside the occasional front parking space, whereas further on the environment could be quieter. At the end of the road, the town sounds start to die away – this is the last time that vehicles on the road are in the foreground. Also, at this point, bird species change from typical garden birds to the country birds in the trees, resulting in different bird calls, reverberating through the trees; a different acoustic space. Town sounds fade away and the A303 fades in when moving along the edgeland path, occasionally punctuated by golf swings, signified by a light, dull 'ting'. Then, there are potentially three borders involving the underpass: before entering, moving under it, and exiting the environment. Out in the countryside, the droning A303 slowly fades away, intertwining with wind through foliage, and ending with the

swooshing trees from the copse that marks the end of the walk. All these geographical changes could potentially be examples of borders on the walk. Borders may in fact be more fluid than I initially thought – obviously in the more dramatic areas, such as the underpass, changes in the soundscape are more noticeable, but becoming more assimilated into the walk through repetition, and through further listening as the project progressed, the aural experiences of each walk became more fluid, and less easy to define a border, while discovering new borders that are again more challenging to define, depending on the point of reference.

There were consistencies; the roundabout near Winchester Road was always noisy, and moving onto Old Winton Road always brought a quieter atmosphere. The road itself was always quiet – birds and distant traffic were the main sound sources, however when a vehicle moved along the road, and as the road is long, straight and exposed, it would take a while to return to the characteristic quiet – foreground vehicles were very loud. The bin lorry was a frequent event – the metallic growling could be heard from almost anywhere on the road, and obviously masked all other sounds when nearby. The A303 always droned, to varying degrees, especially when carried by the wind.

Memories were also a major factor of the piece, mainly signifying my first home. Memorising, and nostalgia, was initially welcoming, but as the walk progressed this mindset became less frequent, and sometimes I was not in the mood for nostalgic feelings. Nostalgia can sometimes be joyous, yet also painful at other times. I realised that I could not control such emotions, and when these experiences occurred, they usually influenced the mood of the entire walk. Memories of playing on my Nintendo console as a child, with my brother, tended to be my happiest. Escapism like this always seemed more enjoyable than reality, back then and now. Less joyous were the thoughts that were saying that I could never return to such a state of free time – this is, of course, not exclusive to me, and perhaps like most people, my childhood was not exclusively happy. I have felt in recent years that the house I grew up in on Old Winton Road was perhaps the only place I could ever call “home” - moving house when I was fourteen was, understandably, a relatively traumatic experience for me. Perhaps that was what *border* was – simply an excuse to return home, albeit not physically.

Certain events in my own life between the walks occasionally had an effect on my moods. I was more affected than I thought I would be by my everyday life that surrounded these walks, however I cannot remember most things that may have influenced these changes in mood, faded away by time and experience. However, once such event did have an effect – my mother and brother moved out of the house that we had moved into after Old Winton Road, and not by their own choice. That place, that I had moved out of before starting the overall project, was naturally a place of comfort

for me, closer to the notion of “home” than my own flat at the time of *border*. This lent me towards feelings of anger and sadness, naturally, and I was aware of a kind of parallel as I was passing by my first home during the walks – my everyday life, and the piece itself, mirrored each other during this period. I started to question the notion of “home” during these walks, and some terrible clichés rolled around in my thoughts: “home is where the heart is”, “home is wherever I lay my hat”. These are certainly not entirely true, it is far more complicated than that. Perhaps “home” is simply the place where you have your fondest, most comfortable memories – perhaps one's detachment from “home” is inevitable, and that is how “home” is defined? This notion has frequently cropped up in my work as a developing musician/artist; the word “home” appears in all of the songs I wrote in my college and foundation degree years, and the fact that the overall project of *borders* is centred in Andover, the exploration of my relationship to home was probably inevitable. I do not even like living in Andover half the time, but I think accepting that has been a major part of my development through adulthood. Perhaps that is what “home” is – acceptance.

My views on the piece itself as I was doing it varied in an irregular fashion. Sometimes I felt clear in what the piece was and enjoyed the experience, other times I felt lost, dissatisfied, and clouded in my thoughts. It seemed to never settle, maybe because there was a week between each walk, enough time for me to think, or not think about it. My focus on listening to the environment(s) was varied in consistency too, usually influenced by my moods. I felt guilty at not coming to the piece with the same enthusiasm each walk, however, due to the work's personal nature, it was difficult to come to the environment each time with an objective mindset – listening to the environment(s) means also listening to yourself – we have microphones that listen objectively for us. I felt that it would be remiss of me not to bring my own experiences to the project – only towards the last third of the project did I come to terms with my inconsistent listening and attention. One thing though, this is all internal – external influences, such as the weather, did not have an effect on how I listened during the walks, only what I brought to them, not what was presented to me.

3.5.4 – Summary

Now, after the project is finished, I am not actually sure of what it is. Or rather, it might be many things: an investigation of a place/places; an exploration of home, of memories, of nostalgia; a series of ephemeral listening experiences; a rumination on nature, on town and countryside; or simply an opportunity to get away from things, to briefly escape my own everyday life, or was the piece the act of escaping such things itself; to escape reality while also being a part of it – to walk the border between reality and escapism. Something as seemingly simple as a one-kilometre,

roughly twenty-minute walk is in fact a complex range of feelings, emotions, changes and experiences, especially when the action and the geographical location of the walk is repeated fifty-two times – the piece, the walks, and my experience(s) became more complex and unsettled as the project progressed.

3.6 – 2024 (2024)

[<https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.28506953>]

3.6.1 – Concept and Developing 2024

This piece is a continuation of *border*, in that it is a walk along the same route, once each week, for a year. Where the route for *border* crosses the edge of town, the route used for 2024 was an attempt to walk along the edge (Fig. 18). Starting from South End Road at the southern edge of the town, close to where *border* crosses the edge, the route then continues easterly, briefly moving by the last few houses that back onto the hill that Ladies Walk lies on. Then, onto a footpath that cuts between the bottom of the hill and an area of allotments. Turning north slightly onto the edge of a field, a play park at the far end, then turning south-west and up the hill about two-thirds of the way, then walking north-easterly on the side of the hill (its gradient becoming shallower), parallel with Ladies Walk, and eventually moving onto the footpath for a short while. Next, at the point where Micheldever Road slices the hill in two, 2024 moves onto a footpath north-westerly before crossing the road and onto the edge of a housing estate. Very briefly edging this environment, another play park on a small field, before moving onto the final environment of the walk – a large, unkempt field, the route staying close to the edge of the final houses of the town, Ladies Walk on the other side of the field, keeping its distance. The walk ends at a cut-through to an eastern housing estate. The route is approximately a mile and a quarter long.

As stated, this route was an attempt to walk as close to the edge of town as is physically, and legally, possible. For this, I deemed the edge as the last house gardens, before the vast rural area between the houses and the A303 (which also includes Ladies Walk). Therefore, the route fluctuates between suburban and rural environments, however it spends most of its time in the rural, outside of the housing estates and away from asphalt. This is because potential suburban routes are more restricted at keeping close to the edge than the rural routes. There are very few cut-throughs to neighbouring housing estates, and I would have had to deviate from the edge to move forward with the route. There are also limited crossings at Micheldever Road due to housing and the hill (the only crossing point on Ladies Walk is a small iron bridge that hovers over the road, sheer drops on either side). These restrictions contributed to the shaping of the route, attempting to find the right path along the edge.



Maps data: Google, ©2020. Google Earth (Google, 2025)

Fig 18: The route for 2024, moving from SW to NE.

3.6.2 – Realising 2024

The sound environment relied heavy on the grey drones of the A303. However, this was not always consistent across the year. Depending on wind velocity, the traffic drones from the town were much clearer than the A303, which sometimes seemed to disappear entirely, even on calm days when the wind was very light. The sound of the town was pale in comparison to the sound of the trunk road. The grey-drone noise was lower in pitch – traffic generally moves slower in the town than on the A303. The town noise also seemed to fluctuate more, as if unconfident to let its voice be heard, fearful of being bullied by the A303. I have always found it challenging to describe the town, in terms of character, in a single word or phrase. I have heard it called a quiet town, or even a sleepy town, which when compared to larger towns and cities seems applicable, however there is a bustle to Andover, and the (relatively small) high street can become busy on market days, and usually Saturdays. Yet I would not necessarily call it a lively town, a busy town – even its nightlife seems a little tame, perhaps surprising when one considers the number of pubs and bars in the town centre. The high street is not exactly a bustling, “happening” place on Friday or Saturday nights. If I were to define Andover through listening, because of its low-pitched drones that radiate softly, obscured by the A303, I would define Andover as a “slow town”. That was the best I could come up with,

when trying hard not to compare it with other places.

Like *border*, internal mood had an influence on the experience of each walk. Sometimes, more frequently closer to the centre of the year, I would get a sense-of-place from the route, a comfort in knowing the limits of the walk, and with a sensation that those distant drones, whether from the town or the A303, were briefly part of a world that I had no intention of being in. Distance lends perspective and comfort. However, naturally, there were times when the walk would become a chore. Becoming more familiar with the environments to the point of near-boredom, losing focus on the environment, letting the mind wander. There were points when I found the walk difficult; climbing up the hill to Ladies Walk in wet or cold weather would bring thoughts of ‘why am I doing this?’ when I reached the top breathless. Sometimes, it was a struggle to even bring myself to do the walk – the forty-minute journey to the walk sometimes felt like that dry, melancholic commute to work. In those moments however, I would remind myself that ‘doing it’ was the most important thing. The nature of the piece changed throughout, fluctuating between aesthetic pleasure and moderate annoyance. I never really felt that I settled into the piece as much as I did for *border*.

Physically, there were times when it was more difficult to walk, when the ground was muddy during or after rain, and my focus on listening and attending was challenged again. I wondered if I would be more focused to listen if I did the walk only once instead of fifty-two of them throughout a year? Due to life changes, doing this piece was more difficult than doing *border*. A lot had changed in my own life during those two years that separated the projects, and it was interesting to notice how external influences (life changes and events) had an effect on the realisation of *2024* – it may well be more difficult for me to do another weekly year-long project in the future, which may result in less focus on the aesthetics and experience(s) of the environment(s).

3.6.3 – Summary

A few thoughts that came during the final walks of *2024* touched on how fickle, how weak the nature of sound seemed to be. The shallowest contour on the topography, or a simple wooden fence, could significantly change the soundscape, obscuring and morphing, dampening and dulling the distant traffic drones, and wind through the trees that make up the soundscape of Ladies Walk. The environment continuously shapes the soundworld, while the weather continuously attempts to break it down. I thought about how slow the speed of sound is, especially when compared to the speed of light. Perhaps this unconscious fragility that sound possesses is what makes it so interesting and infuriating to study or to create from.

Part IV – Conclusion

These projects and scores are attempts to find a balance within certain soundworlds that lie in the spaces between, or the transitional spaces of different everyday environments. However, balance in this context is as fickle as the nature of sound itself. Where I have had experiences where the sound environments of the urban/suburban and rural seemed balanced, there were always factors that threatened to break, and indeed did break, that balance. Weather (wind is nearly always a factor) and conditions, topography, structures, and even thought and mood can change things. Mood *does* influence listening, no matter how objective we try to be when listening to an environment. Learning to accept this is part of listening. I am always listening as myself, listening to how the environments and experiences have an effect on me.

As expressed before, liminality, outsidership and solitude are interlinked with one another. Some pieces in this project consciously lean towards one theme more than another, some focus solely on a single theme, where others integrate two out of the three themes, and some incorporate all three. There is even a fluctuation of balance and imbalance within the pieces themselves. Everything is an attempt to aim for balance – being objective is actually making an attempt to be objective. Imagination plays a big role in seeing these themes interlinked and realised through pieces – carrying out these pieces almost awakens these themes, unlocking them through imagination and attending to them through the lens of the everyday.

The first research question in the project asked how everyday liminal states can be experienced, and how these geographical everyday states can be formed and framed into compositions. Creating routes and framing environments and locations helps to focus experiences of everyday landscapes. The town of Andover itself lends a normality and a ground-level view of everyday life that is familiar, through its everyday-ness and through my own relationship to the town. To know the place, or places, provides a head start in being able to determine what may be a liminal geographical location. These familiarities can build a strong sense of place(s), which can be a vital tool in framing liminality, whether it be geographical, personal, imagined, or a combination of these contexts. Having a personal attachment to certain places, whether it be through memory, history or familiarity, provides a strong foundation to frame locations into compositions, and through these compositions, an internal and/or external liminality can be experienced. The text-scores that make the *borders #1* series were the first attempt at creating such framed experiences, and by *borders #2* the compositions already took on a more explicitly personal approach – especially from my

acceptance of the project focusing solely on Andover, its environments, and my relationship with the town.

The second research question asked how liminality, outsidership and solitude can relate to soundwalking. As stated previously, liminality is a challenging subject to define, and I feel similar with outsidership and solitude. For me, the pieces in the portfolio and my practice are a more apt way to express and explore these main themes. Liminality, outsidership and solitude can all be explored simultaneously through the medium of soundwalking. Setting parameters for each soundwalk can determine the level of focus on a specific theme to explore. The pieces in *borders #1* focused more on liminality and solitude, whereas *borders #2* lent more focus towards the theme of outsidership. As the project progressed and pieces became structurally different, the blurring of the themes became more apparent. Soundwalking can also contribute to this blurring – *borders #3* and *border* attempt to incorporate all the themes as one. In turn, these compositional practices can help create and develop an understanding of liminality, outsidership and solitude (the third research question) by lending open and potentially varied forms of exploration of external (geographical) and internal (psychological) environments. The compositional practice gave way to my discovery of the interchangeability of the themes, and because of this I feel that the work overall is stronger for it, rather than exploring the themes in solely individual terms.

As the project progressed, and as I realised more and more how interchangeable the themes really were, it felt natural to lean into and accept this blurring of the themes – instead of trying to present or portray one of the themes with each piece, it seemed logical to continue the work by creating pieces that could incorporate liminality, outsidership and solitude without being explicit about it. The minimal, reduced scores for *borders #3* opened opportunities to play with the explorations of the themes without tying them down to a specific theme. Therefore, although this gave me choices with how to approach the realisations (say, I could focus on liminality only for one score, and outsidership only for another) I fell into a more natural rhythm where all the themes could be explored and presented. The latter year-long pieces continued this approach while focusing on a single location – this single location became an immovable, unchanging parameter with which I could explore and experience all the themes, across a lengthy period of time where the balances between the focus on the themes was allowed to fluctuate.

As my experiences of the realisations became more involved and more personal, the documentation became less prominent, and perhaps less important. I realised more and more that I could not replicate my experiences in material form, so I created documentation of these experiences that

were more suggestive. For *border*, a catalogue of each of the fifty-two walks, presented by using two different forms of material, photograph and text, was created. As I considered this a major project, I felt that the documentation should attempt to give a more detailed and focused presentation of my experience(s) than say the materials that present *borders* #3. However, although I personally like the outcome of this documentation (for *border*), no matter how much detail, specifics or focus the material may give, it still would not come close to my individual experience of each walk. The images and texts, although lend some detail, give only an impression of each walk and my experiences of them – they cannot replicate the place, conditions, time and duration of each experience. Therefore, for 2024, I stripped the documentation back, echoing some of the photographic material for *borders* #3, to give the merest suggestion towards the experiences of each walk, and as a document to simply show that I had carried out the project.

I feel that the contextual research gave me a good foundation with which to investigate and explore the themes through the pieces. As the pieces progressed, so did my understanding of liminality, solitude and outsidership. My understanding became richer, more open and complex as I finished each composition project and moved onto the next. For example, sometimes it became difficult to determine where the themes of liminality ended and outsidership began, such as in the practice and ruminations of *borders* #2. The discovering and effecting of memories reinforced these ruminations for each composition project – almost as if they created a grounding alongside the contextual research for my explorations to develop. The investigations and explorations of the themes are better demonstrated in the scores and the realisations than writing about them – I hope that this is how the overall project comes across.

I have plans to carry on with the *borders* project in the future. I have already begun the next piece, which picks up where *border* and 2024 left off. This current piece, titled 2025, is a walk along the same route once each month for a year, resulting in twelve walks. The route is along Harrow Way, walking westward, and carrying on along the route of the ancient road with the same name as it cuts through Portway industrial estate, and ending the route on the very edge of Andover (this route, including certain points along it, have featured in previous pieces for *borders*). This route crosses suburban, industrial, and edgeland environments. The planned piece after, 2026, is a walk once each season for a year through the middle of a polo field on the outskirts of the nearby town of Ludgershall, resulting in four walks. A departure in terms of geography from what I have done before, this is a walk across a large open area away from suburban environments. My father used to live in Ludgershall, and occasionally we would take the dog for a walk on the field. This field is an attempt to represent the edge of my memories, before personally-unknown countryside and military

grounds. The fourth and final piece in what I deem to be a series (starting with *2024*), titled *2027*, will be a single walk that will occur at the very centre of the year, the location and route have yet to be determined. The length of each route for each piece also gets shorter. I like the idea of marking each year with different measures of time, attempting to create a rough time frame, a fluid balance between each walk, and how experiences may be different within these time frames. I also like the idea of doing a ‘year-long piece’ that may potentially be a single walk of only five minutes in duration. Each of these walks, for all the pieces, will be documented by a single photograph, to keep the documentation consistent with *2024*. There will be no other form of documentation. Of course, these future pieces are conditional. Another reason for lessening the quantity of the walks was that the weekly walk of *2024* was surprisingly challenging, and sometimes difficult, compared with *border* two years earlier. I have found that as time goes on, life gets in the way more often. There is still a chance that some of these future pieces may be disrupted. But that is my aim for the next three years in terms of *borders* pieces.

I also plan to create a film about Andover, making fixed-camera shots, and field recordings of different locations within and around the town and compiling them together. The style of the film will consist of a series of these location shots accompanied by their sounding environments, and sometimes some shots will be accompanied by silence, or by the soundscapes of juxtaposing locations, or by music. To bring it all together and give the film its themes, I plan on writing a narration to go over the film that will suggest at ruminations and perhaps a longing for some places which, combined with the images, will hopefully evoke sense-of-place themes, and to present different areas of the town as if it were a memory in the mind of a fictional person (the narrator). The main idea is to link the personal with place, almost as a love-letter to the town itself, while also hinting at the melancholy of missing a loved place. This film is currently in its initial stages, and I have begun to take shots of different locations and to build a library of these framed places. As this is a new project, all of this is conditional.

Tangentially, I am working on an on-going project called *listening stones*. This project consists of writing words/phrases on stones and placing them in different environments where people may find them. These stones are an invitation to stop and listen, the words on the found stones are suggestions for listening. On the underside of each stone is a link to the *listening stones* website where there is a short paragraph explaining the project, and a contact form for people who wish to describe their experiences. At the time of writing, I have received several correspondences of varying experiences – some explaining in detail their listening experience, while others sending their thoughts of one or two words, and some others asking questions. Also at the time of writing, I

have placed over 100 stones – a lot of them within and around the Andover area, but plenty in other places outside of Andover too. With this project, I am beginning to branch out from exclusively Andover environments, while also creating something that is not focused on my own experiences, but rather other people's. Eventually, I would like to make some sort of product (book, website) that compiles all the correspondence I have received, as well as a list of all the stones and their approximate locations of placement (this list is currently on-going and is the main documentation of the project).

Perhaps I will never come to any definitive conclusion to my practice or research, and maybe that is the point. Nick Papadimitriou, who has spent the vast majority of his adult life walking around and through an area of north London, a study which he terms 'deep topography', explains his doubts with his working practice:

Examining an Edwardian suburb, a complex network of manorial boundaries or an industrial corridor on the margins of a market town, I'm faced with and threatened by an awful blankness. I hardly know what it is I'm looking at and in spite of all the effort expended on getting to know and understand the deep topography of my region I never seem to gain the accretion of knowledge that would enable me to declare myself an expert. (Papadimitriou, 2013. p. 78)

In relation to this, I am not always entirely sure of the knowledge I have accrued throughout the project. However, I believe that I have generated new knowledge about the soundscape of Andover, bringing to light how the town, and different locations in and around the town sound, including the relationship between the soundworld of the town itself against the soundworld of the A303. I have acquired new knowledge through a personal understanding and exploration of a familiar setting, and this potentially provides a model for others to explore their own similar and familiar locations, and their own relationships to those places through their own practice. I hope that my work contributes to the knowledge of the sound environments of similar locations, and in a sense to point towards, reveal, and discover an aesthetic exploration of places that may be deemed as un-exotic, common, normal, everyday. I believe that through exploring the soundscapes of Andover, and through framing them as such, my research has made a small contribution to the knowledge of liminality, outsidership and solitude within everyday life, in a relatable way. Considering these, ultimately I hope that my work has the potential to encourage similar explorations and investigations of one's own hometown, however that may be defined – to explore and pay attention to sounds and sound environments that one is surrounded by every day, and also to explore what these everyday sound

environments mean to an individual – perhaps different themes can be explored, themes that have a personal resonance to each person, like liminality, outsidership and solitude do to myself.

I often think about Annet Németh's comment that "You don't have to travel to exotic locations to gather material for a composition; use what's around you, and is available for free." Anywhere can be aesthetically pleasing, and especially the familiar, the everyday. Even mundanity can be beautiful. I feel that my work is not dramatic – drama comes from external influences (I think about the final, fifty-second walk of *border*, with its raging, harsh winds). Listening, whether you are in the Bahamas, the Amazon rainforest, the Himalayas, with your head inside a bucket, on the moon, or just outside your front door, is about being present, being attentive, not just to the environment itself, but also to your inner self – listening is the link between yourself and the world, between yourself and everything else. Or rather, it is about attempting to be present, attempting to explore that linkage.

Listening is liminal.

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