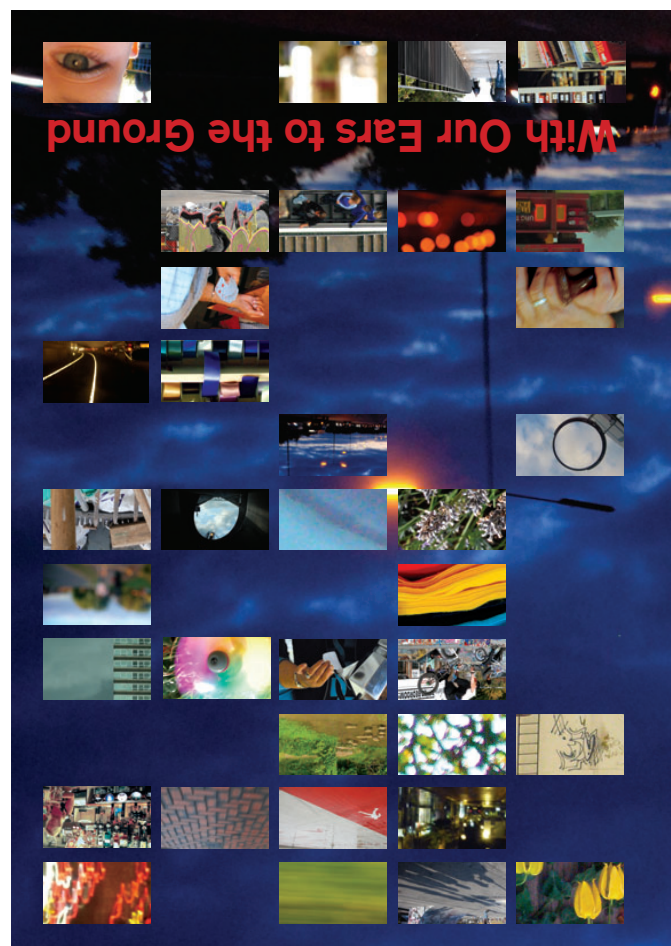
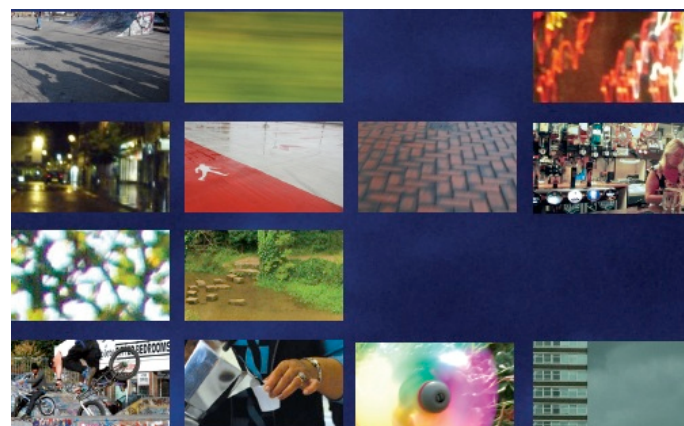
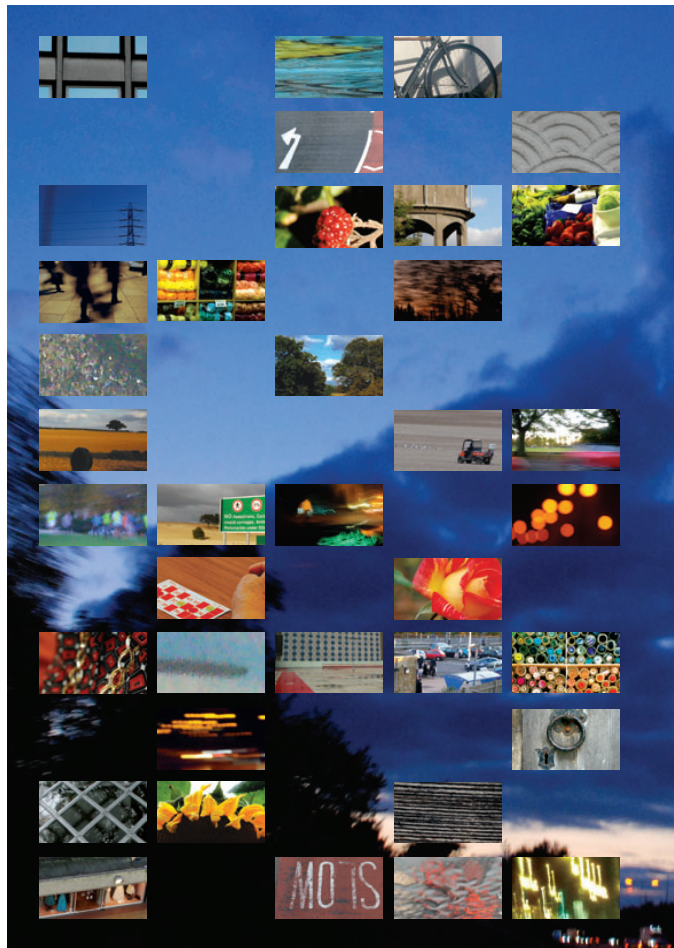




I've been at this gypsy site for years, I'm no further forward. I can still get 28 days notice, even after living here for more than 20 years.



Alice Angus and Orlagh Woods



In mid 2009 we (arts organisation Proboscis) travelled around Hertfordshire meeting over 280 people from Watford, Stevenage, North Hertfordshire and Broxbourne. We set out on an autumn day to drive up through Cheshunt, Broxbourne and Hoddesdon, over to Ware and Stevenage then Letchworth, up to Ashwell, down to Pilton, Hitchin across to Watford and back to London. It was a journey through old and new; market towns, new towns, agricultural land and urban centres. In the weeks that followed we put our ears to the ground and got to know Hertfordshire and its communities through the stories of its people. We researched urban centres, towns and villages and travelled through the county in cars, trains, by cycle and on foot, on narrow lanes and motorways.

We talked to people in groups, individually, inside, outside, in pubs, cafes, community centres, libraries, at home and at work. We gathered their opinions and experiences of their communities, what it's like living in their neighbourhoods and what gives them a sense of belonging. These experiences, whilst locally specific, are relevant to Hertfordshire as a whole. We met people between the ages of 5 and 94, from many cultures and backgrounds, from small organisations, schools, community groups, urban centres and rural villages. We captured their views through informal conversations on the street, hosting a stall at the local market and visiting community groups. We ran a creative workshop with a youth group and collected stories through other activities and events. From this research emerged the six themes of Transport, Movement, Listening, Community, Getting involved and publications.

With Our Ears to the Ground



With Our Ears to the Ground is a Perception Area project facilitated by Green Heart Partnership in collaboration with Hertfordshire County Council. With Our Ears to the Ground was supported by a partnership of representatives from Hertfordshire County Council, Watford Borough Council, North Hertfordshire District Council, Stevenage Borough Council and Broxbourne Council. Green Heart Partnership is an Arts Council England, East sponsored Arts Generation project funded by its partners, the eleven local authorities in Hertfordshire and Arts Council England. East. GHP is a strategic partnership project managed by Haring Woods Studio that aims to achieve growth and capacity across the arts and environment sectors to creatively and collaboratively address government priorities. www.greenheartpartnership.org



The photographs in this book are of Hertfordshire during 2009. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution, Noncommercial, No Derivative Works

Proboscis are an arts organisation based in London www.proboscis.org.uk Designer: Proboscis with Shanshan Lai Proboscis team: Alice Angus, Giles Lane, Oragh Woods

With Our Ears to the Ground was created and published by Proboscis 2009

For information on volunteering in Hertfordshire see www.volunteeringherts.org Tel: Hertfordshire County Council Strategic Partnerships Unit: 01992 556709 <http://withourears.totheground.wordpress.com>

To find out more or share your thoughts about your community see:

Wood Studio for their support.
Station and Tony Beckwith, Adriana Marques, Nicola Padick and Ali Winstanley of Haring Young Parents To Be Group. We'd also like to thank National Express at Broxbourne Watford Market; Watford Muslim Women's Organisation; Watford Skate Park; Bowes Lyon Stevenage Community Development Officers; Stevenage In-town Training; Kristy Thackur; Hitchin; Suzanne Rider; Sophie Ronsom; Michael Stewinak and the Polish Community; Ethnic Forum; people outside Stevenage Job Centre; Pilton Joycare; The Priory School North Herts Community Development Officers and Wendy Tooke; North Herts Minority Ricky Manning; Hendon Community Bar; North Herts College Supported Learners Group; Hoddesdon Rotary Club; Kimpton Bench Working Party; Leavesden Green Community Cafe; (A Hertfordshire County Council Gypsy site); Kevin Harris; Hertfordshire Music Service; Peppina Albanese; Age Concern Hertfordshire; Broxbourne Station commuters; Council for Voluntary Service Broxbourne and East Herts; Chells Manor Youth Club; Douglas Drive Centre; Great Ashby Community Centre; residents of Halldale Lane Caravan Park

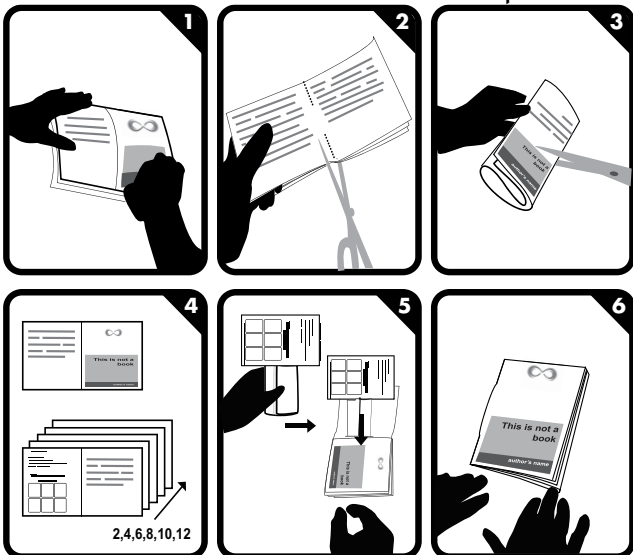
The text in this book is quoted or paraphrased from conversations with people in Hertfordshire between August and November 2009. We would like to thank all those who participated in With Our Ears to the Ground especially to the people of Hertfordshire who were so welcoming and gave their time so generously. Thank you to all on this list, to anyone not included here and to the people we spoke to informally along the way.

Thanks

2010-01-12

A Proboscis project commissioned by Green Heart Partnership with Hertfordshire County Council to explore peoples ideas about community. Part 1 of 6 eBooks based on the limited edition publication. <http://withourears.totheground.wordpress.com/>

made with www.bookleteer.com from proboscis



who feel part of it.
second generation
fully integrate. It's the
about 20 years to
Apparently it takes

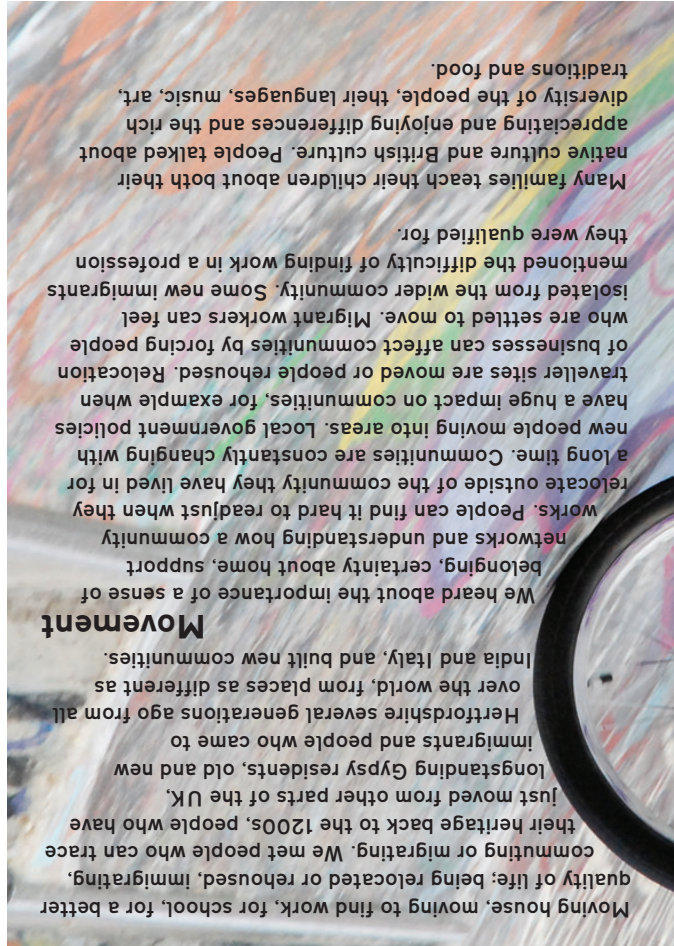
I have lived here about 25 years. My grandfather helped
set this gypsy site up. There were only 10 pitches originally.
We're saddened because they want to take it away from
us... They think they know what's best for us. If they were
to move this site now, shift it and make it bigger, it would
be ruined. It would destroy this peaceful community.



We came over here from
Sicily with a work permit
to give our family a better
way of life.
I speak in Italian, he speaks
in English, our children had
to learn both languages.
I spent most of my life here.
I belong here more than my
homeland of Bangladesh.

**9 times out of 10 you'll get a smile back – you
get out what you put in.**

I've been here 46 years. I married into Pitton from Letchworth.
When I first came to the village I did potat'ering and pea picking.
my neighbour used to say, "Lovely, isn't it, out there in the fields"
and I'd be thinking, "I'd rather be behind a desk!"



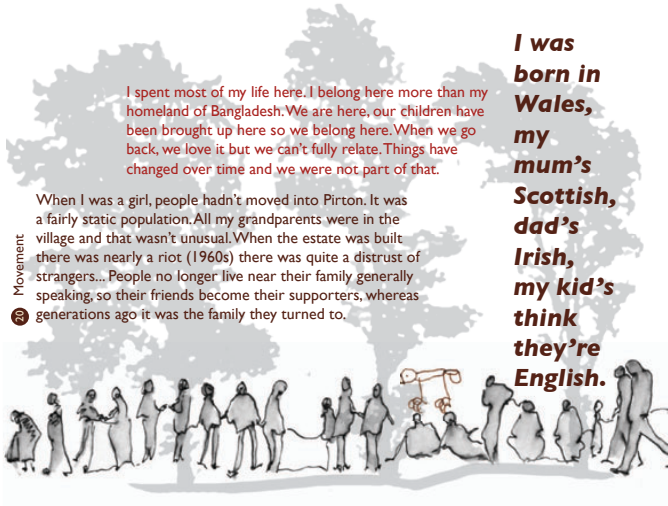
In all this we've taken Proboscis' anarchaeology approach,
to informally and creatively excavate layers of meaning
and understanding to get beneath the surface of some of
Hertfordshire's communities.

Our enduring experience of this journey has been of the
generosity of the people, the ambition of their ideas and the
determination and commitment they devote to building their
communities.

This book is one of 6 that are based on the limited edition
publication printed to accompany the project. It draws together
the multiple layers of ideas and experiences we found across
different communities and it is designed to reflect those ideas
and voices.

Alice Angus and Orlagh Woods, Proboscis 2009

With Our Ears to the Ground is a project by arts organisation Proboscis.
It was commissioned by Green Heart Partnership with Hertfordshire
County Council. It builds upon previous consultations, by Hertfordshire
County Council, that used traditional surveys to find out how well people
from different backgrounds get on with each other. This publication
and the project research will be presented to the community, Council
Members and Project Team to inform the Hertfordshire Forward
Community Cohesion Strategy, equalities planning across the county,
and to support the partners to build stronger communities where people
feel valued, get along well together and feel they belong.



**I was
born in
Wales,
my
mum's
Scottish,
dad's
Irish,
my kid's
think
they're
English.**

I spent most of my life here. I belong here more than my
homeland of Bangladesh. We are here, our children have
been brought up here so we belong here. When we go
back, we love it but we can't fully relate. Things have
changed over time and we were not part of that.

When I was a girl, people hadn't moved into Pitton. It was
a fairly static population. All my grandparents were in the
village and that wasn't unusual. When the estate was built,
there was nearly a riot (1960s) there was quite a distrust of
strangers... People no longer live near their family generally
speaking, so their friends become their supporters, whereas
generations ago it was the family they turned to.

Movement





Initially it was really difficult moving to Great Ashby because they were still building the road that I lived in. There were only two houses that were lived in so there was nobody around apart from builders.

Something's got to be done to help the youngsters that live in Stevenage get further up that ladder to have a place of their own. Some of them can't afford a mortgage or private rent.

The community is changing; there's a different aspect of the community now, there are other languages being taught and when you walk up the high road you hear mostly Eastern European languages, Polish in particular.

If you smile at someone...



The collage consists of several black and white photographs. The top left shows a street scene with a car and a person walking. The top right shows a person walking. The middle left shows a group of people. The middle right shows a person walking. The bottom left shows a street scene with a car and a person walking. The bottom right shows a person walking. The images are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with some text overlaid on them.