

NICOLA HENSHAW
THAME WAY FINDING

**COMMUNITY
CENTRED**

**PUBLIC ART WORK
FOR THAME
LEA PARK
FUN FACT TRAIL**

**PROJECT OUTLINE
AND COSTINGS**





WAYFINDING FROM THAME CENTRE TO & THROUGH LEA PARK

Nicola Henshaw commenced her Thame 'Art Leading Wayfinding' project with creative community engagement, involving a wide range of residents. The outcome of this work was a decision to establish 3 trails across Thame, each linking different areas of the town to the Town Centre - to encourage residents to walk more and make more use of the current footpath network.

The first Trail incorporated a community-created story and will run from Thame Meadows into Thame Town Centre. The second trail will have more of a 'fun fact' feel and help people navigate their way from Lea Park to the town centre; as well as across Lea Park to the destinations that border it - including the Football Stadium, Skate Park and Rugby ground.

The work done in developing the overall aesthetic at the start of the Public Art project influenced the style and content of the artwork designed as part of the Lea Park which, like the first trail, will include Totems and branded wayfinding signs. However, as well as this the geographical landscape led to the decision to also incorporate a bench as part of the final work to be installed. Alongside this Nicola ran a workshop with Barley Hill School Year 3 pupils. This led to designs that also led to the inclusion of the artwork to adorn the railings of the school.

The heritage represented in Lea Park - through the street names that connect the estate to the Civil War, and the location of The Moat, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, was the prime influencers of the content of each piece of designed work.

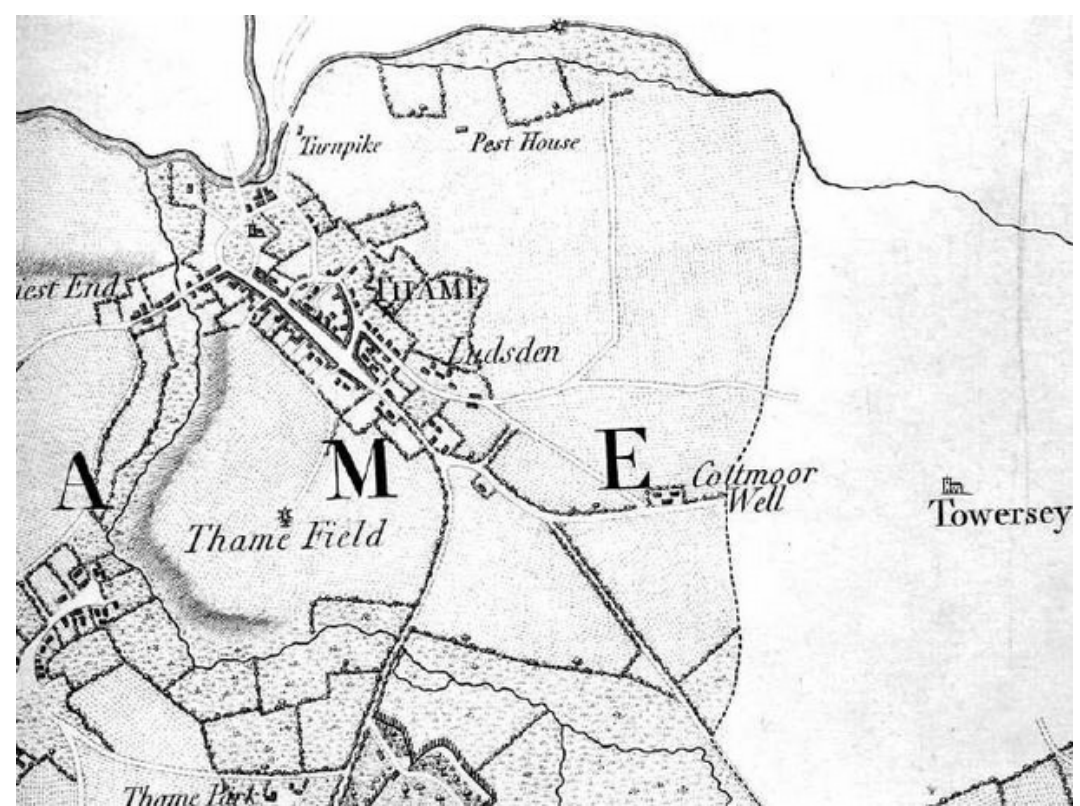
CREATING THE FUN FACTS

Nicola drew on work completed by the Public Art Working Group when developing Thame's strategy, as well as commissioning Jo Cockwell to further research and develop the 'facts' of Lea Park into fun, interactive elements that would encouraged children to connect with the art work. Through this work jo identified 6 topics that would provide engaging content. These were:

1. The Moat
2. John Hampden
3. Boy
4. Thame's Pest House
5. Women in the civil war
6. Allegiance swapping/family problems during the civil war

Jo created words that brought these elements to life. Following further exploration of the topics it was felt that the ones that connected most to Thame were:

1. The Moat, due to its geographical location
2. John Hampden due to his close connection to Thame
3. Boy: King Charles I's nephew, Prince 'Robber' Rupert, had a rare, white, hunting, pet poodle that he called 'Boy'. The possible location of one of the Totems was along a path well used for dog-walking and part of the 'Thame Inner Circuit'. It was felt that this could be a great way to connect people today with history through the common connection of a much loved pet.
4. Allegiance swapping in the civil war. There is documented evidence of men regularly swapping sides during the war, with the Lea Park roads containing names of Cavaliers and Roundheads all muddled together, we thought this would be a great additional element to incorporate into the project.



Along with these topics, Jo also identified some interesting 'Military Smippets'. Two that stood out were:

What is the 'Great Hedge'?:

A useful piece of shrubbery just outside Thame for the Cavaliers [over there →]. They hid behind it at the start of the Battle of Chalgrove.

What do hedgehogs have to do with Military history?

Infantry/foot soldiers could form a hedgehog of pikemen (sticking pikes of 16-18 feet out) which allowed musketeers to hide underneath and shelter from any advancing cavalry.

[Both Roundheads & Cavaliers would have done this]



A happy misunderstanding

During development of the facts, Jo also outlined the difference between 'Horse' v Dragoon:

- 'Horse' are soldiers who fight on horseback.
- Dragoons are mounted infantry. Soldiers who ride into position on the battlefield on ponies or cobs and dismount to fight.

When sharing the information, the word Dragoon was misread as 'Dragon. Dragoons are definitely not anything to do with dragons, however Thame's heritage includes a Dragon with JRR Tolkien's 'Farmer Giles of Ham' short story - based in Thame (or 'Ham') as it is referred to in the book - featuring a tremendous dragon. The Tolkien Family named 'Ham Wood' so as a result of this book. This wood is accessible by walking through Queen Elizabeth's Circle, and crossing over Tythrop Way, before making your way up Moorend Lane to discover it on your left.

This led to a real excitement to be able to weave the Civil War and Tolkien connections to Thame together.

The Roundheads HQ

The Roundheads used to have their HQ within Thame Town Centre. This was felt to be a great way to connect the trail to the town centre through wayfinding elements.

The final part of the research including Symbols used in the civil war.

Cavalier symbols were said to include

- Feather?
- Oak?

The colour that they associated with was the Crimson red for officers

Roundhead symbols

- Parliamentary gates?
- 5 stars?

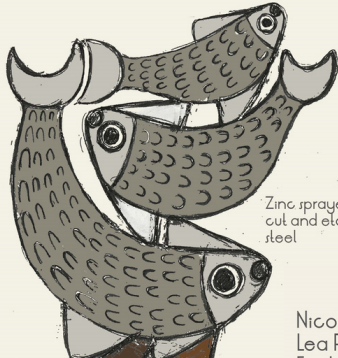
The colour associated with their officers was pale blue



THEMED TOTEMS ILLUSTRATING THE FACTS

Created in Corten, Galvanised Steel, Vitreous enamel panels and cast aluminium (including QR links to a webpage where people can find out more about each Totem and what each element represents. - with links to Thame Museum to find out more.

Nicola Henshaw
Lea Park
Fact trail
Sculpture 4



Zinc sprayed laser cut and etched steel

Nicola Henshaw
Lea Park
Fact trail
Sculpture 2



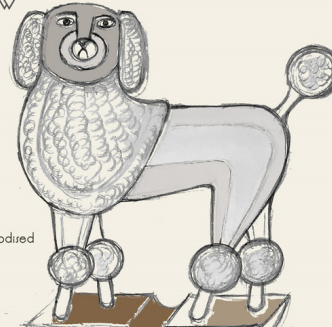
Corten and anodised aluminum

Corten steel with laser etched text

Zinc sprayed steel with laser etched text. Information will be etched on all sides of the base.

'Horse' v Dragon:
'Horse' are soldiers who fight on horseback. Dragons are mounted infantry. Soldiers who ride into position on the battlefield on ponies or cobs and dismount to fight. They are definitely not anything to do with dragons.

Nicola Henshaw
Lea Park
Fact trail
Sculpture 1



Corten anodised aluminum

Corten steel with laser etched text

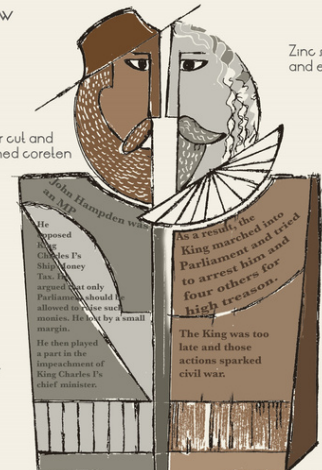
BOY
Do you have a pet poodle? If you did, what would you like it to do?

Predict the future?
Become invisible?
Shape shift?
Speak many different languages?
Find hidden treasure?
Catch bullets in their teeth?

King Charles I's nephew, Prince 'Robber' Rupert, had a rare, white, hunting, pet poodle that could do all those things. Maybe.

Zinc sprayed steel with laser etched text. Information will be etched on all sides of the base.

Nicola Henshaw
Lea Park
Fact trail
Sculpture 3



Zinc sprayed laser cut and etched steel

Laser cut and etched corten

Zinc sprayed laser cut and etched steel

Laser cut and etched corten



PROPOSED LOCATIONS FOR TOTEMS

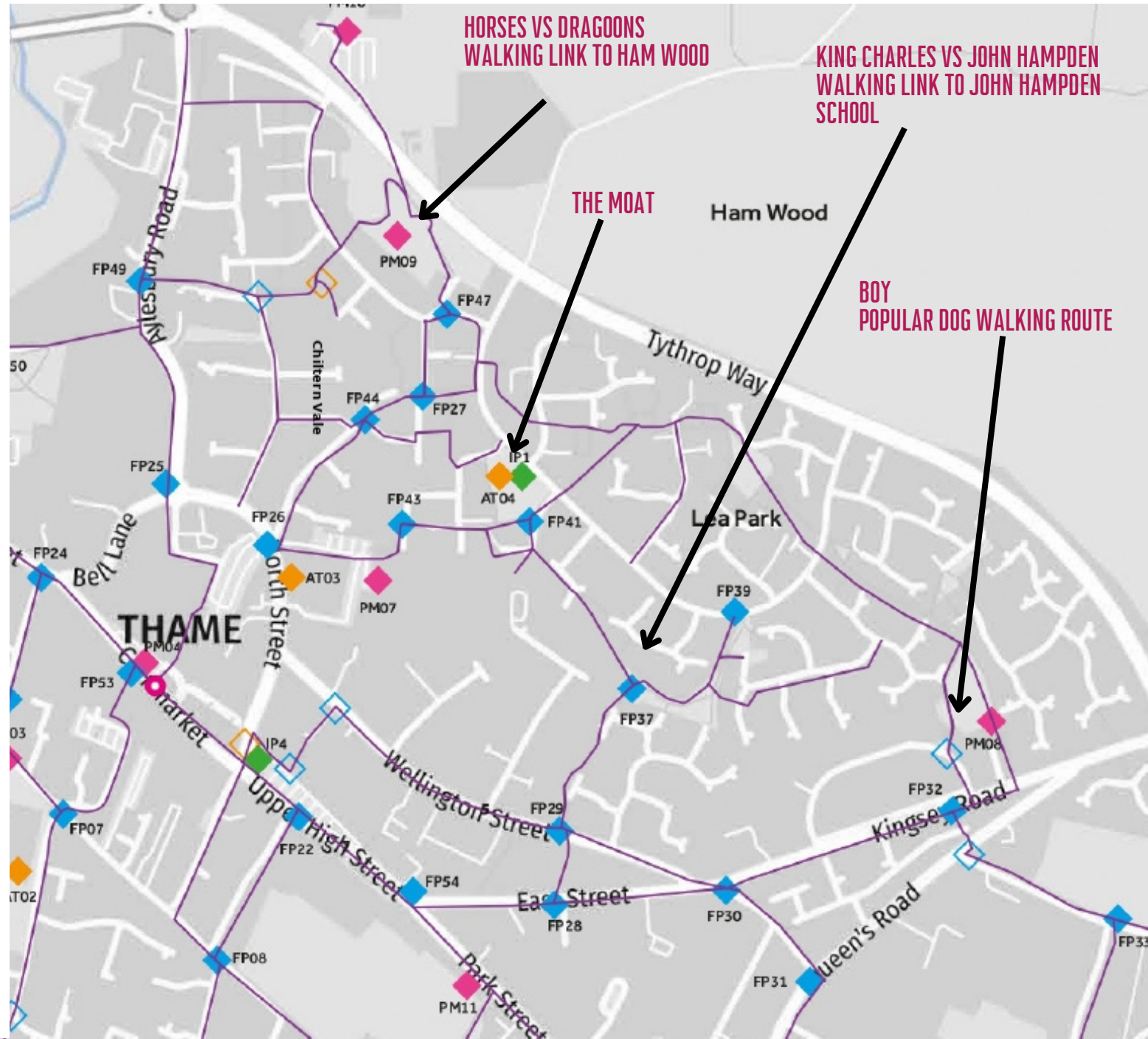
At the start of the Public Art project a Wayfinding report for Thame was commissioned to identify the key wayfinding routes through the town. Due to the complexity of walking routes through Lea Park it would not be possible to sign them all without it becoming over cluttered and over complicated. It was crucial to identify the main routes, so that people felt confident in using these - allowing individuals to then identify their 'short cuts' as they became more familiar with the area.

The main routes are shown on the map opposite.

It then became crucial to ensure that the artwork was cited in key locations. These were settled on as:

1. Queen Elizabeth Circle
2. The Moat
3. Lenthall Green
4. Churchill Crescent Play are

With the exception of The Moat (crucial as a result of the historical significance) the other 3 provided open space needed to site a piece of art, and also acted as 'gateways' to Lea Park - all situated at the edge of the estate.



THEMED WAY FINDING TO BE MOUNTED ON LAMP POSTS

Using the feather and star icon that was created through workshops in Barley Hill School, a 'logo' has been created to help people identify that they are in 'Lea Park'. These will sign post to key locations, as well as help people work their way through the 'trail' if they decide to explore Lea Park by hunting out each totem.



BRINGING STREET NAMES TO LIFE

The project delivered with Barley Hill School raised awareness that many pupils and staff didn't even know the estate is called 'Lea Park' and definitely didn't know about the significance of the street names. In order to raise awareness of this LPRAs wants to install a notice board on The Moat to share this info. However this project proposes an alternative idea.

During the school workshops, children created images of Roundheads and Cavaliers through a fun game of consequences. Nicola has developed these drawings and created designs for bespoke panels that would be displayed along the railings that border the pathway between The Cattlemarket Car Park and Pym Road. Barleyhill school has had site of these and is very keen to go ahead with the project.

The result would be an information panel for each street name within Lea Park, detailing its Civil War significance.



Astley Road



Jacob Astley, Baron Astley of Reading, was a major-general in the Royalist Army. He commanded the infantry at the Battle of Naseby.

Blake Way



Robert Blake was an Admiral in the Royal Navy, after serving in the New Model Army, on the side of Parliament.

THE MOAT - BENCH AND TOTEM

The Moat is of crucial significance for Lea Park - both in its history and in the way it is used today.

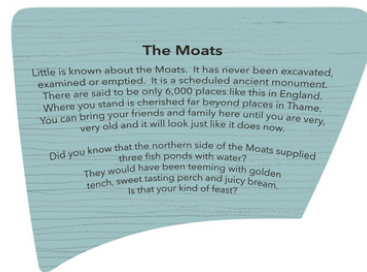
The Totem will help to bring the historical significance of the site to life and help to educate people about this.

To make the area more user-friendly for the way it is used today we want to use some of our Public Art funding to create and install a bench. This bench will have multiple uses, including allowing parents to sit and watch their children play, or people to sit and wait for the Thame envisioned 'Hopper Bus' to collect them.

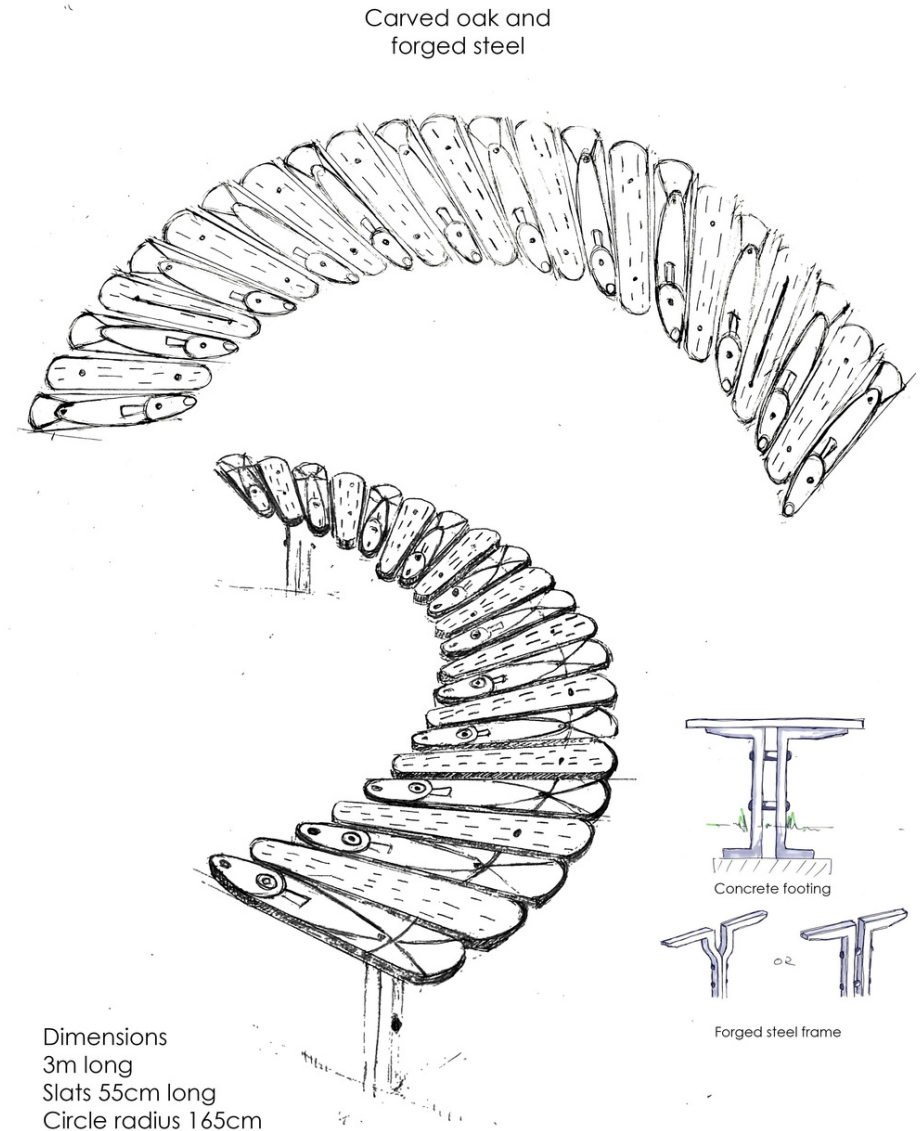
The location of the totem is still to be decided. To ensure that it does not compromise any area of historical significance we propose that it is sited next to the bench on the corner of Denbigh road and Cromwell Avenue.



The Moat totem will include vitreous enamel panels that share its history in more detail.



The Bench design will pick up the design of The Moat totem.



OTHER ELEMENTS

The Allegiance swapping outlined in Jo Cockwells research provided inspiration for a way to bring some colour to Lea Park. Throughout the estate there are concrete bollards that are dull and functional.

The proposal is to paint these in the colours and symbols of the Round Heads and Cavaliers, to raise awareness of this element of Civil War history,



To help people navigate from 'Roundheads HQ' (i.e. the centre of town) to the estate the proposal is to provide waymarking that is set into the ground or similar.

This could be through a similar method as already used for historical trails in Thame - themed bronze plaques set into the pavement.

However budget may determine something less expensive, so a designed floor sticker may be the final solution subject to further discussion and health and safety checks.

Whatever the final decision these will be themed with the name and 'logo' of the trail.

