



# *Turf Twinning*

Colchester, June 2012 - Sept 2013

1<sup>st</sup> Twinning  
Magnolia Field with firstsite

2<sup>nd</sup> Twinning  
St Thomas More's with The Minories Galleries

3<sup>rd</sup> Twinning  
St Thomas More's with Salary Brook

4<sup>th</sup> Twinning  
Magdalen Street with Hilly Fields

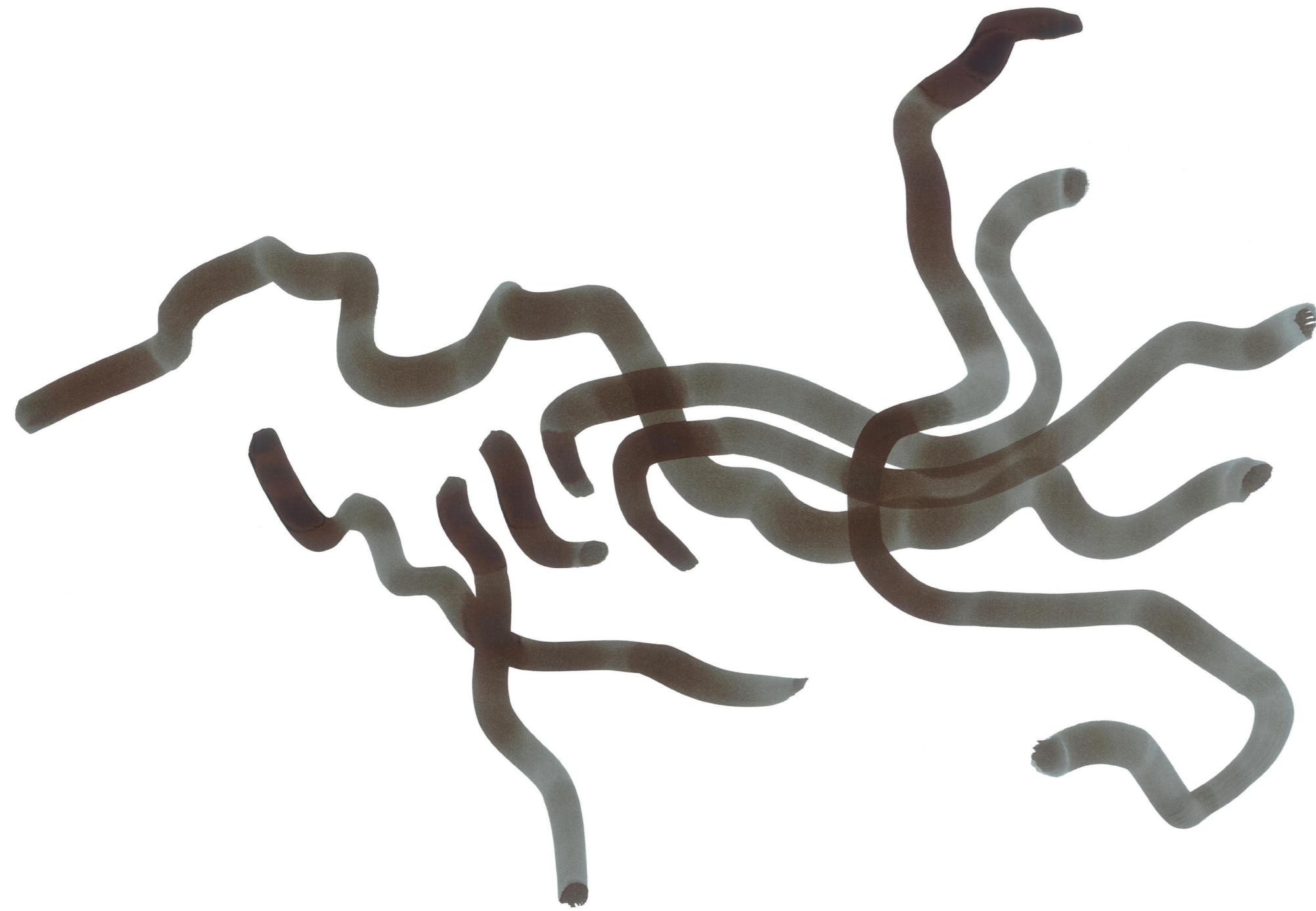
5<sup>th</sup> Twinning  
Salary Brook with Lexden

6<sup>th</sup> Twinning  
Colchester Academy with The University of Essex

7<sup>th</sup> Twinning  
The Glebe (West Mersea) with Vineyard Stairs

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The drawing above is a stylized map representing the seven twinnings.

The shortest line represents the twinning of St Thomas More's and The Minories. The line that wriggles from far left to far right represents the twinning of a location near Lexden with Salary Brook. The line that reaches down more or less due south represents the twinning of Vineyard Stairs with The Glebe, West Mersea.

#### Postal Addresses of The Locations Involved (unless specified, all are in Colchester)

1st Twinning  
firstsite, Lewis Gardens, High Street, CO1 1JH & Magnolia Field, close to Viola Walk, Greenstead, CO4 3SN

2nd Twinning  
Detached playing field (Berryfield) of St

Thomas More's Catholic Primary School, close to firstsite (address as above) & The Minories Galleries, 74 High St, CO1 1UE

3rd Twinning  
Wildlife Garden, St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School, Priory St, CO1 2QB & Salary Brook Nature Reserve, close to Sandpiper Close, CO4 3GE

4th Twinning  
109 Magdalen Street, CO1 2LA & Hilly Fields, close to St Mary's Fields, CO3 3BP

5th Twinning  
Salary Brook, close to Pickford Walk, CO4 3TJ & A location near Lexden

6th Twinning  
The Nurture Garden, Colchester Academy, Hawthorn Avenue, CO4 3JL & The Lakes, Wivenhoe Park, University of Essex, CO4 3SQ

7th Twinning  
The Glebe, Colchester Road, West Mersea, CO5 8RS & Vineyard Stairs, close to Vineyard Gate, CO1 1LS

#### What Is Turf Twinning?

It began with a joke. Someone compared the grass on Greenstead with the posh turf down at the gallery.

It was part of the craic, it wasn't meant seriously. But the idea stayed with us. What if we did swap some turf? What would it mean for the growing relationship between firstsite and Greenstead? What if we did it and the grass yellowed and died?

Digging up a turf needs no special equipment. All it takes is five minutes and a spade. The part we enjoyed was how this quick simple act can turn into something symbolic. For each green space, we found out who cared for the place, who used it, what other green space they might want to swap turf with.

As Turf Twinning has developed, we have kept in mind the light-hearted way we started. A few things have become established in Turf Twinning tradition: the size and shape (a circle with 60cm diameter), the access (twinning should happen in public green spaces). All the other decisions are made by those involved in each particular twinning: how to transport the turf, whether the twinning is a public celebration or a private ritual, how to mark the final location.

In this way people can use Turf Twinning to celebrate grass as a living surface on which we can join together to relax, to play, and to constitute ourselves as a living community.

#### How To Find The Turfs

These descriptions are provided by the following people - Debbie Bentley, Lawrence Bradby, Claire Pringle Brammer, Kaavous Clayton, Kellie Grady, Alex Hammond, Jevan Watkins Jones, Nicky Payne, Leona Sacker & St Thomas More's Year 6 - each of whom was part of the twinning they are describing.

The turf from firstsite lawn in Magnolia Field (1st twinning)  
*If you follow the footpath between Gardenia Walk and Miranda Walk across Magnolia Field, you come to a tree, a birch or an ash, which is on its own. Stand at the edge of the path, and measure out, heel to toe, 14 feet towards this tree. You'll see the turf.* DB & KG

The turf from Magnolia Field in firstsite lawn (1st twinning)  
*Find the sunken semi-circular lawn on the north side of the firstsite building. A short flight of stone steps descends from the tarmac track down to the level of the lawn. Stand at the base of these steps towards the left hand side. The grass receives some hard use, don't mistake the various divots and scorches for the turf. Take 10 big strides (10 metres) towards firstsite keeping a fire door directly in front of you. You are now standing on the turf.* LB & JWJ

The turf from St Thomas More's at The Minories (2nd twinning)  
*First locate the plaque that commemorates the twinning. With the plaque to your back, pass through the fire exit that is just to your left and take about 10 paces. Turn 90 degrees clockwise so you are facing the Georgian facade. Align yourself with the second window from the left (which is also the third window from the right). To your left is a square of concrete set into the ground; move backwards or forwards until you are aligned centrally with this. You should now be standing in the centre of the turf from Berryfield.* KC

The turf from The Minories at St Thomas More's (2nd twinning)  
*The turf was placed in Berryfield, (St Thomas More's detached field) at the back of the firstsite building. Leave the firstsite cafe area and take the steps down from the balcony onto the grass. If you stand with your back to the building, the location of the twinning*

*was to the far left hand section of the field. Follow the line of the balcony. Near the end there is a Fire Door. Use this as a starting point. Stand with your back to the centre of the Fire Door and walk 12 paces forward. This will bring you to the approximate location of the twinning - it is really hard to find the grass now as the exact site has been camouflaged.* LS & STMY6

The turf from St Thomas More's Wildlife Garden in Salary Brook Nature Reserve (3rd twinning)  
*Closest pedestrian access is via Sandpiper Close - CO4 3GE. Walk easterly onto the hard surfaced path (cycle route) from the end of this Close. Look left down the slope to the area of less managed grassland behind the goal posts. Locate the bonsai-looking oak tree and the smaller semi-circle of smaller oaks close by. The turf is near there.* Lat. 51.892225 Lon. 0.952193. NP

The turf from Salary Brook Nature Reserve in St Thomas More's Wildlife Garden (3rd twinning)  
*The turf is located in St Thomas More's Wildlife Garden, positioned in the eastern edge of the large playground. Here you will find a wooden gate. To access the garden use the handle on the inside of the gate. Open the gate so that it is perpendicular to the green wired fencing. Stand at the end of the gate, turn right, still in line with the gate and take one step forward. The turf has begun to blend into the surroundings, because the surrounding grasses also originated from managed wildlife land, but if you look carefully, you may be able to spot the slightly darker green blades of grass.* LS & STMY6

The turf from Balcerne Heights at Magdalen Road (4th twinning)  
*Go east along Magdalen Street. After Aldi and shortly before the cross roads with Brook Street, there is a two-story factory on the right hand side. Between the factory car park and the pavement is a raised grassed area with a brick wall around it. Hop up onto this. The turf is level with the back of the bus stop.* LB & JWJ

The turf from Magdalen Road at Balcerne Heights (4th twinning)  
*Start at the top of the tarmac footpath leading off St Mary's Fields and into Hilly Fields Nature Reserve. Just to your left is a gated housing development (1 - 8 Topfields) and to your right is more new housing (1 St Mary's Fields). Take the footpath downhill, passing buddleia and pampas grass on your right and brambles on your left. Counting from the dog poo bin, go 75 paces. You should now be level with the first hawthorn bush on your left. Turf is 4 paces from the path towards this bush.* LB & JWJ

Grass Seeds from a Location near Lexden in Claire's Hill (Salary Brook) (5th twinning)  
*From Pickford Walk go towards the Brook. Cross the Brook, continuing until you reach a styte that takes you into a field. Follow the footpath through the field, climbing uphill all the way. You need 3 people to find the exact spot. One stays on the path with the oak tree to the right of a pylon and to the left of a metal fence that looks like a gate. The second person stands off*

*the footpath, 50 yards further up the hill in the middle of the 'sacred dip'. The third person lines themselves up between the first two. They then take 17 heel to toe steps (in size 71/2 shoes) and then 2 heel to toe steps to the left of this line.* CPB

Grass Seeds from Claire's Hill (Salary Brook) in a location near Lexden (5th twinning)  
*At the request of one of the instigators of this twinning, the exact whereabouts of this publicly accessible site remain known only by those who carried out the twinning.*

The 6th and 7th twinnings were still in the planning stage at the time of publication.

#### Photo Captions

A. 1st twinning: turf from Magnolia Field being settling into place in the firstsite lawn.

B. 5th twinning: grass seed gathered from the slopes above Salary Brook being sprinkled at a location somewhere near Lexden.

C. 2nd twinning: children from St Thomas More's carrying a turf cut from their detached playing field through the firstsite building.

D. 2nd twinning: at The Minories Galleries, with the two turfs about to exchange places. The turf from St Thomas More's is in the foreground. The Minories turf is behind the boy with the trowel.

E. 3rd twinning: back at St Thomas More's and unloading the turf collected from Salary Brook.

F. 3rd twinning: at Salary Brook Nature Reserve, cutting out the turf.

G. 7th twinning: planning the locations and the route.

H. 4th twinning: the Balcerne Heights turf arriving back at Magdalen Street.

#### The Turf Twinners

As well as those mentioned under **How To Find the Turfs**, the following people were involved: Reece Bentley, Emma Bradstreet, 8th Colchester Scout Group (Beavers), Tony Francis, Bridget Harris, Lesley King, Sam Lancaster, The Minories Galleries, Terry Marshall, Judith Merritt, Jay Prosser, Lee Pugh, Leona Sacker, 2nd Lexden (St Leonard's) Scout Group, Year 8 Nurture Group Colchester Academy.

During *Turf Twinning* Jevan Watkins Jones and Lawrence Bradby were firstsite Associate Artists.

All photos are by Jevan Watkins Jones and Lawrence Bradby.

