6 detailed wall displays and 10 hanging banners, spanning 80m of the King’s Treatment Centre street.
NEW HOSPITAL – OLD MEMORIES

In October 2005 Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust embarked on a £320m PFI contract to modernise acute services in central Nottinghamshire. The old hospital, originally an ex WWII US Military Hospital, was held in fond regard by many of the members of staff and voluntary organisations. Much of the old hospital is due to be replaced in the redevelopment. Niki Holmes of Arts Emphasis, the hospital’s arts coordinator, was set the task of developing a multifaceted arts strategy with the aim of embracing and engaging staff, patients, visitors and the local community.

As a major part of this strategy a heritage display was proposed to span along the length of the new King’s Treatment Centre street. The KTC street would link the whole of the new hospital and with 9m high walls and an opaque domed roof structure, would provide plenty of natural light for a dramatic large scale artwork. As specialists in this area, Niki contacted us to obtain outline costs and for advice on how best to start the process of historical research and sourcing of archive material. A history project committee was formed as part of the hospital’s design review group and chaired by Brian Meakin.
Design review group, history project sub committee

The history project sub committee was set up with a diverse group of interested parties. Some from the hospital's voluntary support groups, others with estates construction and management experience, some from the patient reference group and others from the hospital board. All shared an enthusiasm and an interest in preserving the hospital's heritage.

The first task involved the hospital's community relations department with a press appeal calling for historical documents, photos, anecdotes and memorabilia held by anyone who had been involved with the hospital - patients, staff, volunteers and visitors. This appeal for information went in the local and regional press and was also publicised on local radio and in the hospital's staff magazine as well as through the hospital intranet.

At first this prompted a slow trickle of responses and (committee member) Chas Hickling, a Capital Projects Engineer, volunteered to act as the central hub to catalogue and safely store all the artefacts as they arrived. Chas possesses a vast personal knowledge of both the hospital and local community history. His enthusiasm and drive were a key factor in helping us to arrive at a successful conclusion of the project. Chas was our primary point of contact and the first person to turn to if we needed anything clarifying. But the whole committee worked hard with many members spending countless hours interviewing, researching and gathering information for the project.

Part way through this process, in August 2007, Niki Holmes, the arts coordinator, invited us to talk to the committee so that we could present examples of previous projects and explore the potential scope of this one. At this stage the catalogue listed only 60 items and it was clear we needed to escalate our efforts. We pointed the committee in the direction of regional and national archives and alternative historical photo archives. Chas researched and found imagery available in America. King's Mill Hospital started its operational life as a WWII US military hospital and by this stage many of the fantastic stories of romance between the local girls and the GIs were coming to light. Jane Stubbings, Beryl Perrin and Brian Meakin were amongst those working hard to find information both in the local community and by contacting people in the USA.

The slow trickle of information had, by December 2007, become a flood with many new submissions after the press appeals had been re-issued with more information on the project and examples given of the memorabilia and anecdotes we had already received. People could see the project was full of interesting stories and were keen to contribute their own! All of a sudden we had a catalogue of thousands of items (and the archive is still growing) and we were ready to start work on the next phase. So how do you decide on what to include, where and how to display it?

Project scope

Arts coordinator, Niki Holmes and the Design Review Group, had already ear marked much of the available wall space of the new King’s Treatment Centre street for this project. Our next task was to sub divide the history into logical sections and present our proposals and budget costs to the committee. We finally decided to create 6 detailed historical displays at eye level, and 10 giant banners to hang at a height of 9m on the face of the sheer wall of the KTC street.
BANNER DESIGN THEMES
Naturally at this stage we were full of excitement at the scale and location of the project. Also the historical content gave us some very interesting themes to work with. The history had some very distinct and varied periods but we needed a starting point, a design theme.

Stories of the US Army hospital had a distinct hint of glamour during the hardships of wartime Britain, and the visit of film star Clark Gable to the hospital gave us a spark of inspiration. We decided to base the design for each of the 10 wall hanging banners on the design of a movie poster from the corresponding period - as you can see below.
DISPLAY DESIGN THEMES

Whilst the giant wall hanging banners would provide dramatic scale and visual impact on the KTC street, the history and heritage of King’s Mill Hospital would be portrayed in the 6 detailed displays, and we now turned our attention to develop a design theme for them.

We realised that a very strong feature of the new King’s Treatment Centre frontage was the use of bold blocks of coloured glass and we recognised that this was a feature that could provide a visual link in our displays. We knew that each subject area would need to be clearly defined and decided that we could use vertical bands of colour to structurally separate them. For each display we have chosen a colour scheme which links with the wall banners above them. Finally, to add visual scale and dramatic impact we added a life size photo to each display. The photos are of people relevant to each era with a range of occupations - images of interest that most people can easily relate to.

The general idea was to create 6 displays which are dramatic and eye-catching from a distance and full of interesting detail when viewed close-up. The first display and corresponding banner traces the history from medieval times to pre 1940s. The subsequent 5 displays and banners each depict the history over approximately 2 decades.
PANEL ONE – THE BEGINNINGS

The tale of Henry II and the Miller of Mansfield - how King’s Mill came by its name. An overview of the trades of the region:- agriculture, hosiery, coal mining, light engineering. Mansfield Hospital pre 1940s. Feature on the Lamb family, farmers of the land on which the hospital is now sited.
PANEL TWO – FIRST UNITED STATES ARMY HOSPITAL IN ENGLAND
The building of the Sutton Emergency Hospital, later to become King’s Mill Hospital and its occupation by the American Forces in WW2, with a strong emphasis on personal recollections and romances. Also features the adjacent Italian POW camp. This panel portrays some of the excitement generated socially - chewing gum, tinned fruit, music and dances and American baseball to name but a few. A surprise visit to the military hospital by 1940s Hollywood heart-throb Clark Gable.
PANEL THREE – OUR MEMORIAL TO THE FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN
Training school for nurses. Start of the NHS in 1948 and the official opening of the King's Mill as an NHS hospital in September 1951 by Health Minister, Hilary Marquand.
PANEL FOUR – FROM BOOMING BABIES TO DAFFODIL LADIES!
The early years of the King’s Mill Hospital from 1950s to 60s, including the TB Wards and the opening of a new maternity and premature baby unit. The forming of the first hospital volunteer movement, the Daffodil Voluntary Service. Prizes, presentations and fun and frolics of the sixties.
PANEL FIVE – NEW HOPES AND CHANGES FOR THE BETTER
The Dukeries Centre Maternity Unit opened by the Duchess of Devonshire in 1975. Improvements in the eighties. The various specialist hospitals in the area often situated in grand houses, and how they gradually changed and amalgamated with King’s Mill.
PANEL SIX – THE DAWN OF A NEW MILLENNIUM
The official opening of Phase 3 by Princess Anne. Modernisation of Acute Services and the PFI scheme. Featuring all the fundraising groups that have raised funds to buy items for the hospital from tables and chairs for the waiting rooms to CT and MRI scanners. Excellence awards for all staff. The various phases of large scale building work to bring the hospital to the present date.
OFFICIAL OPENING
The official opening day with a special 1940s themed dedication ceremony was held at King’s Mill Hospital, on Friday 4 July 2008, the American Day of Independence. This also coincided with celebrations for the 60th anniversary of the National Health Service in Britain.

The event was arranged to celebrate the important links between the local community and the American wartime occupants of King’s Mill Hospital. A former US soldier and a Mansfield GI bride were invited from America to be guests of honour at the launch. People featured on the mural were flown in from America and those who were unwell due to age were interviewed at the BBC in Washington. The local BBC featured the hospital and its American guests every evening in the week leading up to and including the event. There was extensive coverage in the local press and also in local newspapers in America.
‘A GRAND DAY OUT’
The event on the day included many volunteers dressed in the style of the 1940s, the award-winning Skelmanthorpe Brass Band played, there was Jitterbug dancing by the Festival Swing Dance Society to a medley of well-known 1940s Big Band tunes performed in the main thoroughfare, or ‘street’, at the King’s Treatment Centre – the first building set to open as part of the hospital’s £320m Redevelopment.

Towards midday everyone went outside to view the flypast of a 1930s Harvard American military aircraft which was used by the Royal Air Force.

As part of an evaluation questionnaire conducted on the day, in answer to the question “What was your opinion of the overall standard of the content and design of the displays” - 69% answered excellent and 31% answered very good.
CLIENT COMMENT

“The display is a reflection of a role that art and heritage can play in not only making our hospital environment more calming and welcoming for patients and visitors but also provides a means of remaining close to our supportive community, plus friends all around the world. Not only does it capture King’s Mill Hospitals fascinating past, it also points ahead to a bright future in the creation of the new hospital at the centre of our local community. This combination is something that creates a sense of purpose and pride in a community that is still recovering from the demise of the mining industry and the loss of much of its manufacturing base.”

Brian Meakin, History Project Chairman

“The response of staff and visitors to the heritage displays produced by Woodgate Design for the new King’s Treatment Centre has been overwhelmingly positive. The displays reinforce a strong sense of King’s Mills place in the heart of a vibrant community serving and caring for generations of local people. The displays celebrate this vital connection and continuity, by bringing the Hospital communities shared heritage to life with personal stories and interesting insights. Such has been the level of interest from the local public; people have been visiting the hospital just to look at the displays. The striking design of the project has enhanced and enlivened the hospital street; the displays and banners engage and compliment the impressive open vaulted space. The distinctive era themes of the panels and the life size insert photos of people, draw the eye along the Street and act as way-markers for patients on their way to appointments. Each panel has a wealth of clearly and creatively arranged images and information, that demand and reward attention. The heritage project and the themed event day have engaged and inspired the hospital community, opening the way for further cultural and heritage activities and commissions.”

Niki Holmes, Arts Coordinator, King’s Mill Hospital

VIRTUAL MUSEUM - TOUCHSCREEN AUDIO VISUAL CONSOLES

Three interactive touchscreen consoles featuring audio, video and slideshows have now been completed. The audio and video recordings bring the colourful and poignant memories of staff and patients to life. See the separate case study for full details.
### Project location
King’s Treatment Centre ‘street’, King’s Mill Hospital, Sutton in Ashfield, Nottinghamshire. Part of a £320 million redevelopment of acute services, with final completion due in 2011. The Hospital will provide cutting edge medical care for Central Nottinghamshire.

### Timescale
August 2007 to July 2008

### Project scope
6 eye level displays and 10 wall banners, hanging from a height of 9m, spanning 80m of the King’s Treatment Centre street.

### Commissioning & clients
History Project Sub-Committee with specialist advice from Niki Holmes, Hospital Arts Coordinator; Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

### Summary artists brief
To lead the project in the research and collation of all archive material, write a concise history to work in harmony with the design. To create proposals showing options for scale, location, number of displays and specifications for fabrication. To design the historical display murals and provide draft versions for proof checking prior to completion of artworks. Finally to source and project manage the manufacture and installation.

### Funding sources
Trust capital budget, charitable and private donations, Skanska UK PLC.

### Materials
The displays are high quality photographic prints sandwiched between a dibond alloy backing and hard wearing anti-reflective polycarbonate. This provides a very tough protective surface, which is fire retardant and easy to clean, with a backing which is light, strong and rigid. The banners are printed on cleanable fire retardant fibreglass fabric, chosen for its texture, print and hanging qualities. They are hung with high quality aluminium fixings and tensioned at the bottom.