DAD

Press Release
27th July 2021

START

Via Francigena Arts Trail Begins

Dover Arts Development, Kent Downs AONB and the North Downs Way National Trail are delighted to announce that the first of three art installations planned along the Via Francigena has now been confirmed and will be designed by Charles Holland Architects.

The artworks along this section of the North Downs Way arts trail will help promote the special characteristics of the Via Francigena and its pilgrimage heritage as a route for reflection and renewal. The three art structures, commissioned by Dover Arts Development, will act as places for quiet contemplation as well as highlight the natural landscape and inspiring views at Barham Downs, Woolage Village and Waldershare Estate in Canterbury and Dover districts.

The first to be installed is designed by Charles Holland Architects and will be called 'Monumenta Romana'. Built out of recycled timber, the design takes its inspiration from The Belvedere, an 18th century 'folly' visible from the site. The Belvedere is an early example of Palladian architecture in England, a style of architecture imported from Italy and the new artwork draws on aspects of its design as well as artistic cross-currents between the two countries.

Charles Holland says '*We are really pleased to be working with Kent Downs AONB, North Downs Way and Dover Arts Development on a new public artwork for the Via Francigena trail. Both the site on the North Downs Way and the themes of pilgrimage and artistic relationships between England and Italy are very important influences for us and we are thrilled to be working in such a beautiful context.'*

The artworks form part of the International Green Pilgrimage project funded by the European Union Regional Development fund which aims to highlight pilgrimage routes, heritage and links with the beautiful countryside in Kent, Norfolk, Romania, Italy, Norway and Sweden.

Pete Morris, North Downs Way National Trail Manager said *'With artworks already in place in Surrey we can't wait to start the arts trail project in Kent and are excited to see this incredibly inspiring artwork in place. With links to our pilgrimage heritage, local history and of course the wonderful North Downs Way and Via Francigena trails, it will be a great way for visitors to discover the trail and to sit, pause and appreciate the beauty around them.'*

Monumenta Romana will be set within the beautiful 500 acre grounds of Waldershare Estate on the outskirts of the quaint villages of Coldred and Eythorne, around 6.5 miles from Dover. Now owned by the Earl of Guildford the house was built by Sir Henry Furnese and the grounds and gardens now incorporate several footpaths as well as backing onto the North Downs Way National Trail.

Joanna Jones of Dover Arts Development says *'We are really delighted that Charles Holland's Monumenta Romana will be sited on the Earl of Guildford's Waldershare Estate. The North Downs Way crosses through both Canterbury and Dover districts and the Via Francigena artworks will provide opportunities for future pilgrims and walkers to reflect and renew themselves as they connect with contemporary artworks of excellence on this ancient Pilgrim route."*

The new installation is due to be in place at Waldershare Estate in Autumn this year with the Via Francigena section of the North Downs Way Arts Trail completed by December 2021. This will form part of the North Downs Way Arts Trail which will include a total of eight art installations along the trail in Kent and Surrey and will be completed by September 2022.

END

EDITORS NOTES:

Project info https://dadonline.uk/projects/via-francigena-arts-trail/

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North Downs Way - National Trails

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Further information:

About Charles Holland Architects - Charles Holland Architects are a multi-disciplinary practice based in Dover. The practice is run by Charles Holland, who is an Architect, writer and teacher. The practice's work includes architecture, art, writing and research and ranges in scale from the urban masterplan to the domestic interior.

Charles is a former director of FAT. His completed projects include residential, civic and educational buildings as well as exhibitions, interiors and public art. His work has been exhibited at the Royal Academy of Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Venice Biennale. While at FAT, he was the co-designer of A House For Essex, the practice's collaborative project with the artist Grayson Perry. Charles is currently a Professor of Architecture at the University of Brighton where his research focuses on the development of housing and rural development.

About Dover Arts Development - Dover Arts Development (DAD) is an artist-led not for profit limited company that functions as a collaborative, porous framework within which its artist directors conceive, manage & deliver ambitious projects of artistic excellence within the visual arts, poetry, writing, sound & music. DAD advocates for and actively pursues a strategic role for the arts in placemaking, and for the benefits artists bring to Dover and the South East.

About Kent Downs AONB - The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a protected landscape stretching across Kent from the London/Surrey border to the White Cliffs of Dover. The North Downs Way is part of this and follows in the footsteps of pilgrims on a 153-mile journey from Farnham to Canterbury and the White Cliffs of Dover through a beautiful landscape of ancient woodland, coastal paths and chalk grassland. From Canterbury to Dover it forms the UK part of the Via Francigena, the pilgrim route to Rome.

About Green Pilgrimage - Green Pilgrimage Interreg Europe**:** seeks to harness the huge increase in popularity of pilgrimage to protect natural and cultural heritage along Europe's major pilgrimage routes, Key to this is their focus on the power of pilgrimage - recognised today as one of the fastest-growing segments of the travel industry with more than 300 million pilgrims every year. the project brings together seven partners from Norway, sweden, Romania, Italy and the UK to develop low impact tourism, digitalisation, pilgrim accommodation, and to strengthen local traditions, to help reconnect pilgrims to their environment, landscape and culture.