

4. Of This Parish, Sul

The focus of our residency in Portugal was the production of our piece, *Of This Parish* (Crow and Prior 2013), a performance score to be undertaken simultaneously by four sound recordists, walking away from a parish church to the sound of its bell. Working with children from a local school and relying on their local knowledge, we devised routes for walking North, East, South and West from the parish Church in the heart of the town of Sul. The children each had a hand held sound recorder and before the walk began, we synchronised the recorders with a simple handclap.



The children started back-to-back and then walked out along the routes they had devised in the workshops we arranged. We had originally intended for them to keep walking until they could no longer hear the bell but in practice, due to the very quiet environment and the local topography this would have taken a very long time indeed in Sul, and would have been neither fair nor safe, so we limited the piece to twenty minutes.

We then synchronised all of the recordings in order to replay them inside the church itself on four pairs of loudspeakers, which were mounted on the North, East, South and West walls. At the beginning of the piece, when the children were standing together, the effect was not dissimilar from a coherent surround-sound recording such as that you might get from a decoded ambisonic microphone. However, as the children walked along their separate routes, their recordings become more and more different. Just like the lists our workshop participants made in Birmingham, there was very little to unite these recordings; except the sound of the ringing bell. The bell chime that we used was not constant so after ringing for twenty seconds or so, it would pause for a similar period. With the onset of each new chime, the relative