

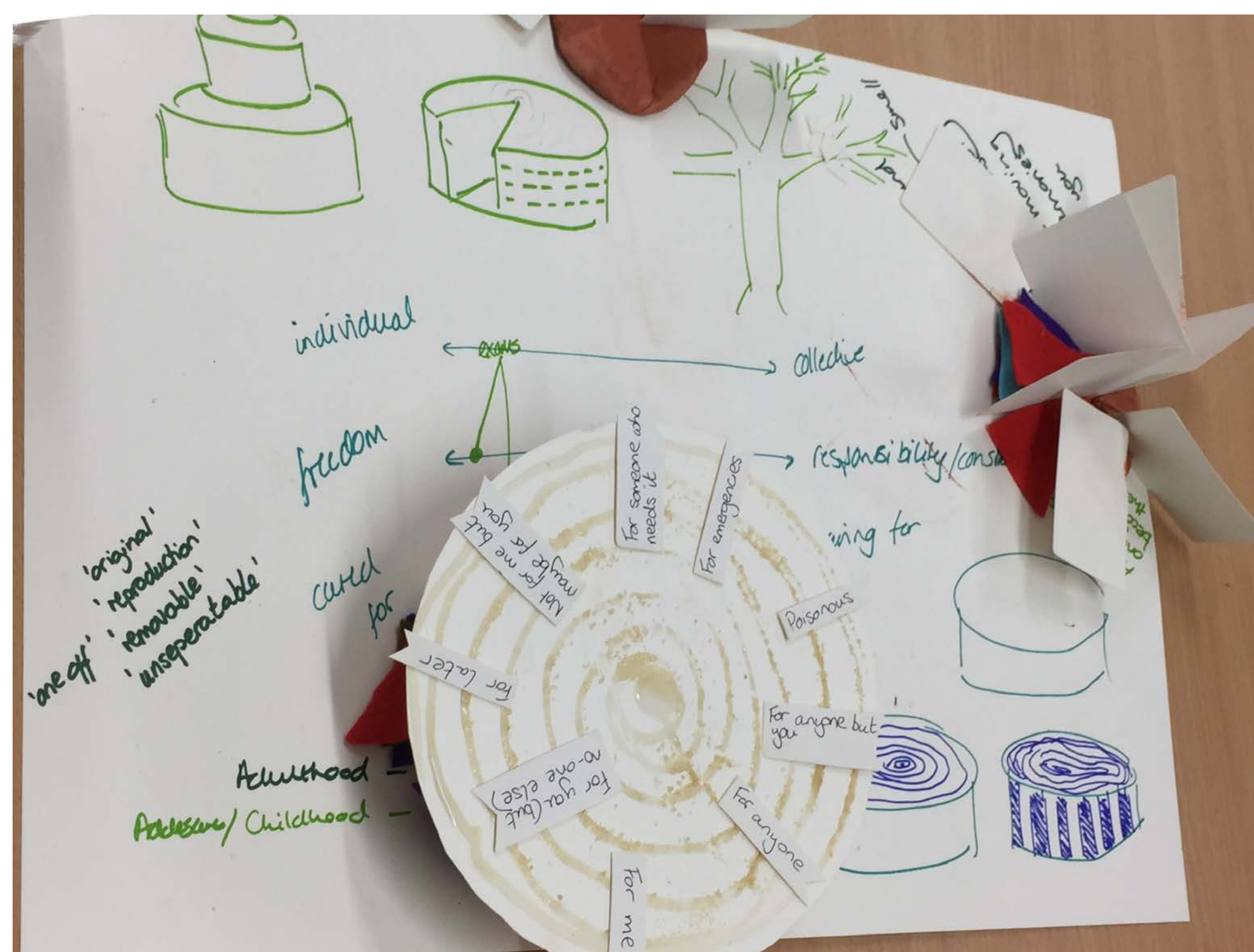
THE MEMORY MACHINE

Background

With digital footprints now beginning in the womb our entire lives can be chronicled through our interaction, both explicitly and implicitly, with digital technologies. These digital footprints are becoming a key way to access and revisit our memories. The Memory Machine (MeMa) project explores how these technologies might interface between our real, subjective visceral and sensory experiences, and our perception of memory.

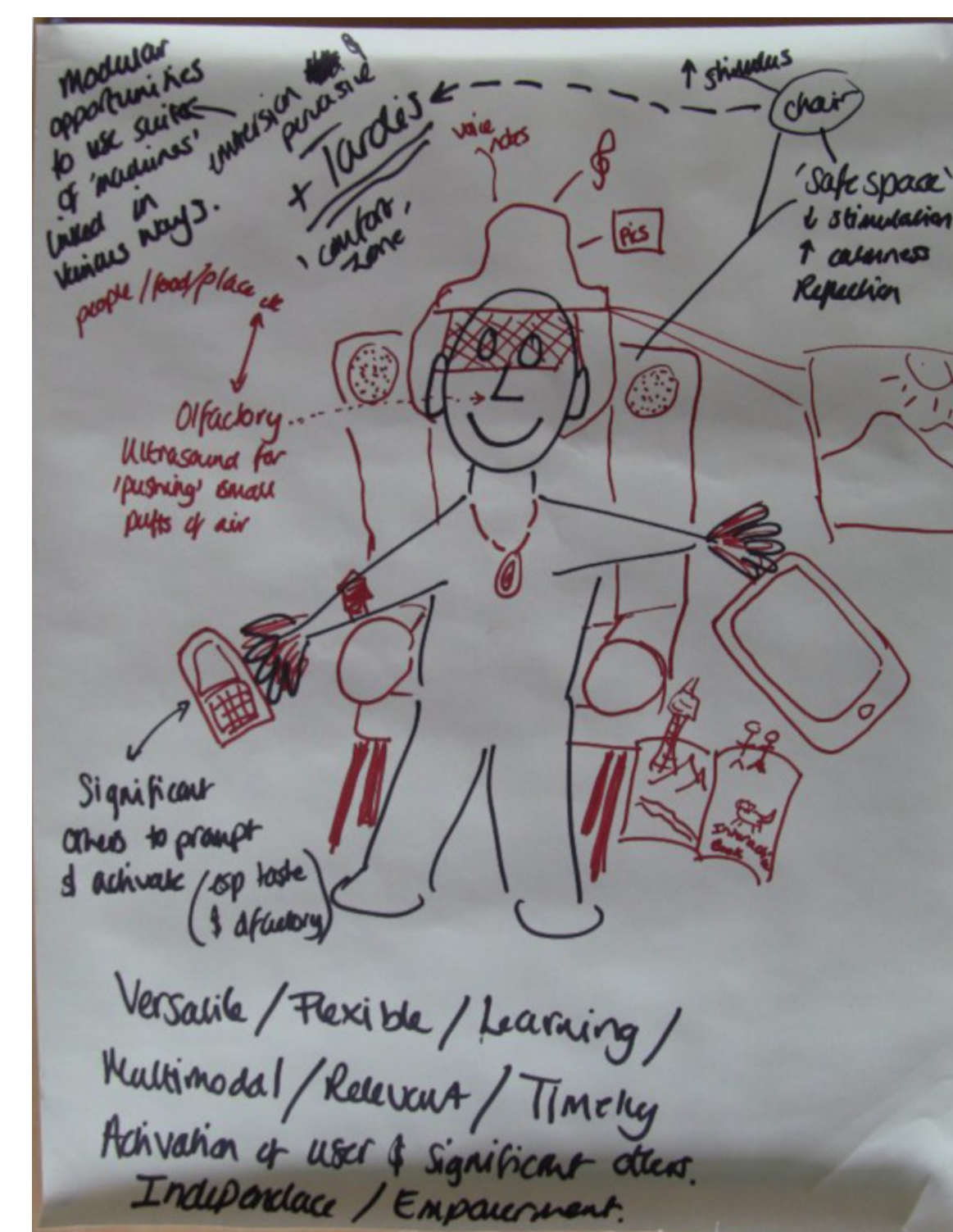
Approach

The MeMa project has to date conducted a series of four workshops, each with a different theme relating to the concept of memory. The workshops were led by an artist/researcher and facilitators drawn from the research team. The workshop themes were selected by the team based on their individual expertises and highlighted as important to explore for the construction of a MeMa.



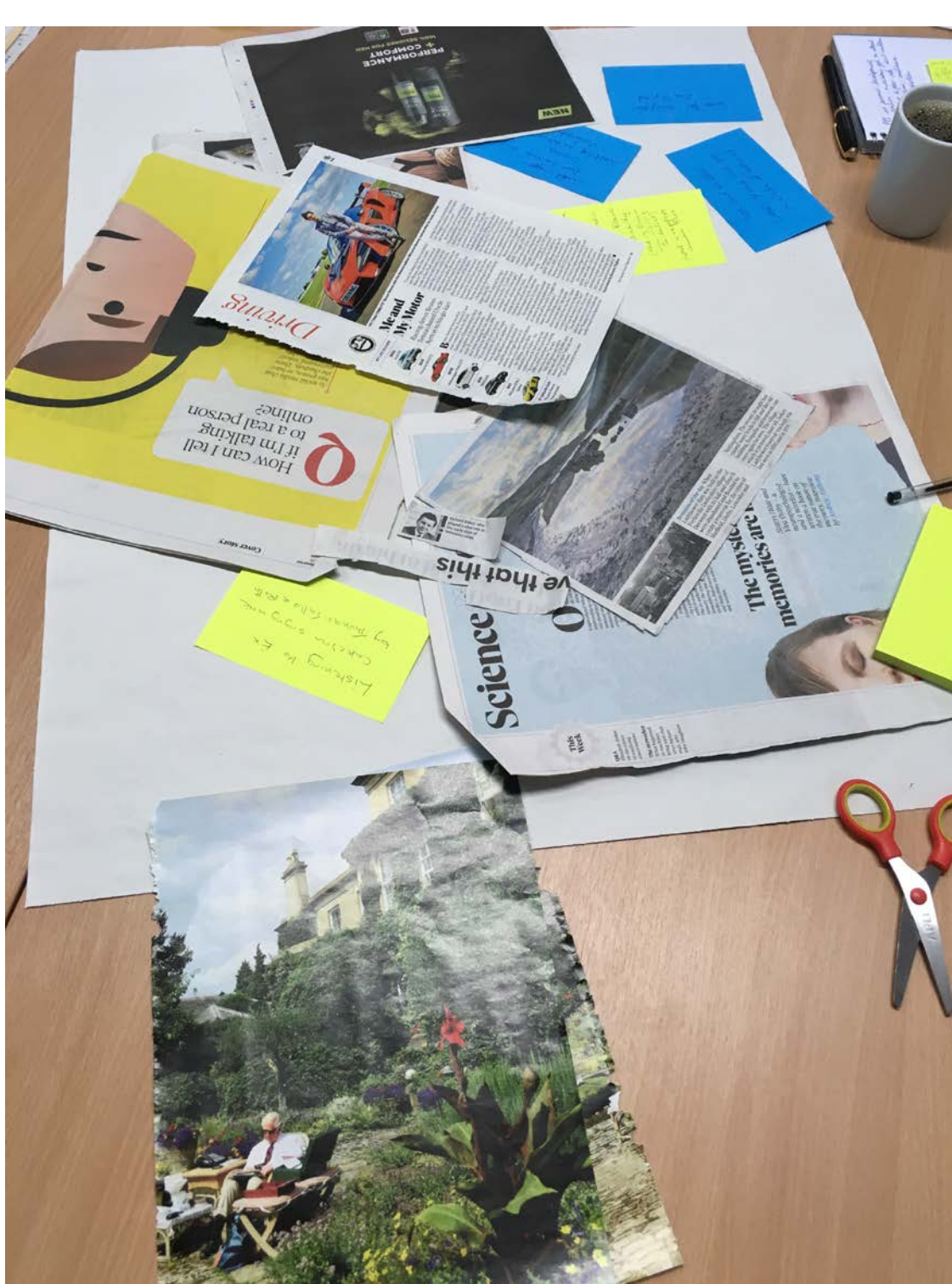
Workshop 2 - Memory, Privacy, Consent, and Ethics

For the second workshop, participants were asked to bring along photographs or other representations of some of important memories from key parts of their lives. At the beginning of the workshop, participants were introduced to the concepts of privacy, consent, and ethics, and how these might relate to memories.



Workshop 1 - Memory and Identity

Participants were asked to choose a memory or keepsake to bring along and during the workshop they were asked to show and describe why this keepsake was important to them. Discussions explored how participants felt about recalling specific memories and how recollection affects their wellbeing.



Workshop 4 - Memory, Media, and Archives

The fourth workshop examined how media and archives of media (e.g., newspapers, television programs, music) influence and evoke memories. Participants were asked to come prepared with an example of a piece of media that evoked a particularly strong memory for them. The workshop began with a discussion in groups about the media and their memories. Participants were asked as part of this process to see if they could categorize the types of media.



Workshop 3 - Memory, Wellbeing, and Place

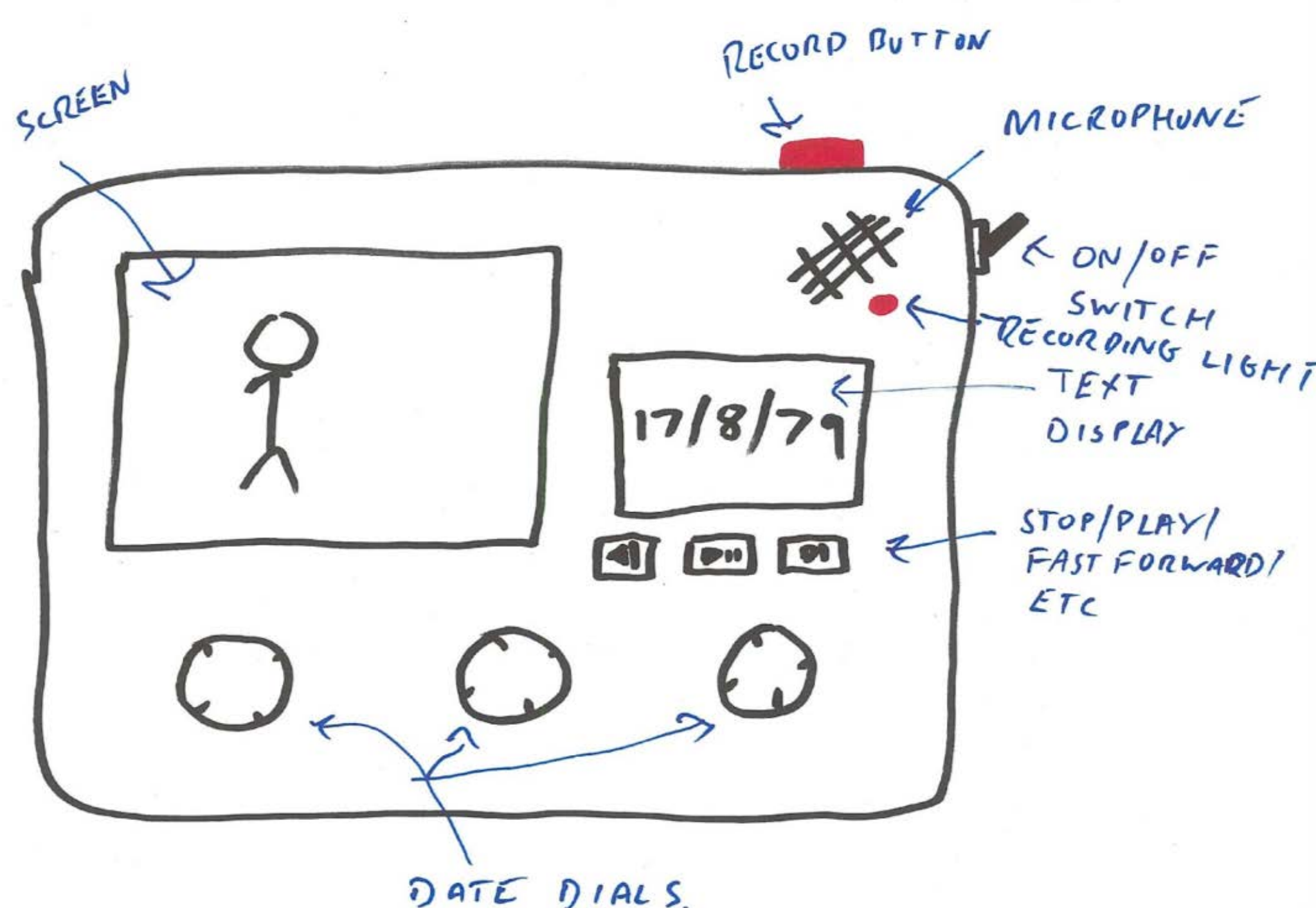
For the third workshop, participants were invited to join the facilitators on a walk around the local area in order to prompt a discussion on how memory relates to place. Due to inclement weather this walk was curtailed, however this created a discussion around memory, weather, and place and how the latter two can affect the former.

MeMa: Designing the Memory Machine

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Discussion and Future Work

Two distinct themes emerged from the workshops that have a bearing on the development of the MeMa, and of future co-design on the MeMa. The first theme is that of recollection and reminiscence. Participants were strongly inclined to reminiscence in the groups and to share their memories with other participants. In particular this reminiscence took place as part of a dialogue. This strongly suggests that a MeMa designed for capturing memories would benefit from maintaining a conversation with its users. The second theme is that of togetherness. By engaging in creative activities as part of a group, the participants become part of an unfolding enacted narrative towards the co-creation of a MeMa. Further, enacting togetherness within the co-design process promoting a sense of togetherness that can stimulate and add value to discussions and shared personal reflections with the potential for improved wellbeing amongst the participants. The designs and concepts produced and the findings of the workshops, to be analysed using thematic analysis techniques, will be used to inform the development of a prototype MeMa. In particular, the responses by the participants to the workshop themes will be important in developing features to support identity, privacy, place, and media. This prototype will then be evaluated with the workshop participants as a continuation of the co-design process.

Acknowledgments

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