

PORTS OF CALL

AUDIOtrails

walks of art at the royal docks



walk 1: the west silvertown trail
gunpowder, fire and flood

walk 2: the asta trail, silvertown
trains, planes and graffiti walls

walk 3: the north woolwich trail
deep water



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special thanks to

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Design: boinggraphics.com

Trails conceived and directed by

Toby Butler, memoryscape.org.uk

Ports of Call Project conceived by Phil Cohen

TRAIL 1 AND 2:

composed and produced by Jo Thomas at Glitchwork Studios, London.
jo@glitchworksmusic.com

TRAIL 3:

Artist: Mark Hunter
Sound design:
Jasmine Allodi

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Music © Jo Thomas.

The aim of the Ports of Call project is to create walking trails, artwork and historical interpretation with members of the communities surrounding the Royal Docks in London. The closure of the working docks, once the busiest in the world, and ongoing redevelopment has transformed the landscape and the population of communities such as Silvertown, West Silvertown and North Woolwich. By creating online maps, public art and 'memoryscape' audio trails with the involvement of residents it is hoped that locals and newcomers alike can discover new ways of interpreting their surroundings, and visitors can gain a deeper understanding of this fascinating part of East London.

This set contains three self-guided audio trails of two miles or less (allow two hours for each walk) near the Royal Docks in East London. The trails contain original interviews with dozens of people who have lived and worked in the docks, factories and communities of Silvertown, West Silvertown and North Woolwich. The walks include some of the most impressive and startling views in London, and each trail begins and ends near a Docklands Light Railway Station.

All you need is this CD set and map booklet and a portable CD player. If you would prefer to use an MP3 player, you can transfer the tracks from the CDs or download MP3s from portsofcall.org.uk

There are excellent cafés at the end of each walk that serve lunches on most days (Barrier Park, City Airport and UEL Docklands campus) and shops on each route where you can find the ingredients for a picnic.

More information, photographs and maps are available from the website

portsofcall.org.uk

walk 1:

the west silvertown trail: gunpowder, fire and flood

Commentary by Jo Thomas

“ The area around the Royal Docks sings regeneration, energy and desolation. When the Albert Dock opened in 1880 the Royals became the first docks to be lit by electricity and for the next century most of London's electricity was generated in the Docklands area.

In my composition I have tried to weave a tapestry of mechanical and electrical sounds that reflect the industrial revolution and its adoption of this vibrant electrical power. The musical suggestion of trains, cranes and hydraulic power work as transitions, movements in the history we experience through the archive recordings and recorded conversations.

The role of the female voice is especially important within this score. Women did not have a strong visual presence in the docks, but the support of the mothers, lovers and wives of the men that worked there was ever-present, and many women worked in the local factories. I wanted to capture the delicacy and refined nature of the voice of Anne Griffiths in track two, the gentle tremble at the end of every sentence which captures a moment of suspended time. The score starts with a single pitched micro-sound pulsing gently and creating an intimate sound world that captures her presence.

Music by Machines (track three) is all about the sound of machinery. Bill talks about the rollers and the mist created by the flour dust. The Mechanical sounds were created through micro-sound impulse, counterbalanced with the lethal beauty of the mist.

The sound world in Barrier Park initially reflects the micro-climate of the low gardens of the Green Dock - an imaginary sound world of tropical animals, micro-objects and micro-melodies. Next to the river the Blitz Memorial reminds us of those who lost their lives in the terrible bombing here, reflected in a simple melodic line resembling a song blowing through the wind over the docks.

With this music I wanted to capture a sense of vast riverscape, remembrance and voice. The melody finally returns to the theme of electricity, current and light while we consider Andrew Mawson's vision for the this area as a water city. ”



Toby Butler



Toby Butler

1: green electra

Jo Thomas, Andrew Verner, Bill Perry, Alan Spong

2: vast nature, gentle voices

Anne Griffiths, Bill Perry, Jo Thomas, Alan Spong,
Andrew Verner, Eileen Gibbons, Toby Butler, Kevin Murphy

3: music by machines

Anne Griffiths, Bill Perry, Jo Thomas

4: rule britannia

Linda May Bingham, Stanley Rose, Keeley Prowse

5: gunpowder explosion

Toby Butler

6: micro macro spaces

Phil Riley, young people from the Asta Centre

7: closing memories, future visions

Eileen Gibbons, Andrew Mawson

walk 1: the west silvertown trail: gunpowder, fire and flood

1: green electro

Stand outside the main entrance of the Excel Centre. Play track 1.

2: vast nature, gentle voices

Stand in the centre of the Bridge. Look at the docks in the direction of City Airport and the Connaught Bridge.

3: music by machines

Stand next to chimney at the top of Mill Rd. Look at the wall of the old flour mill.

4: rule britannia

Stand outside Britannia Village Primary School.

5: gunpowder explosion

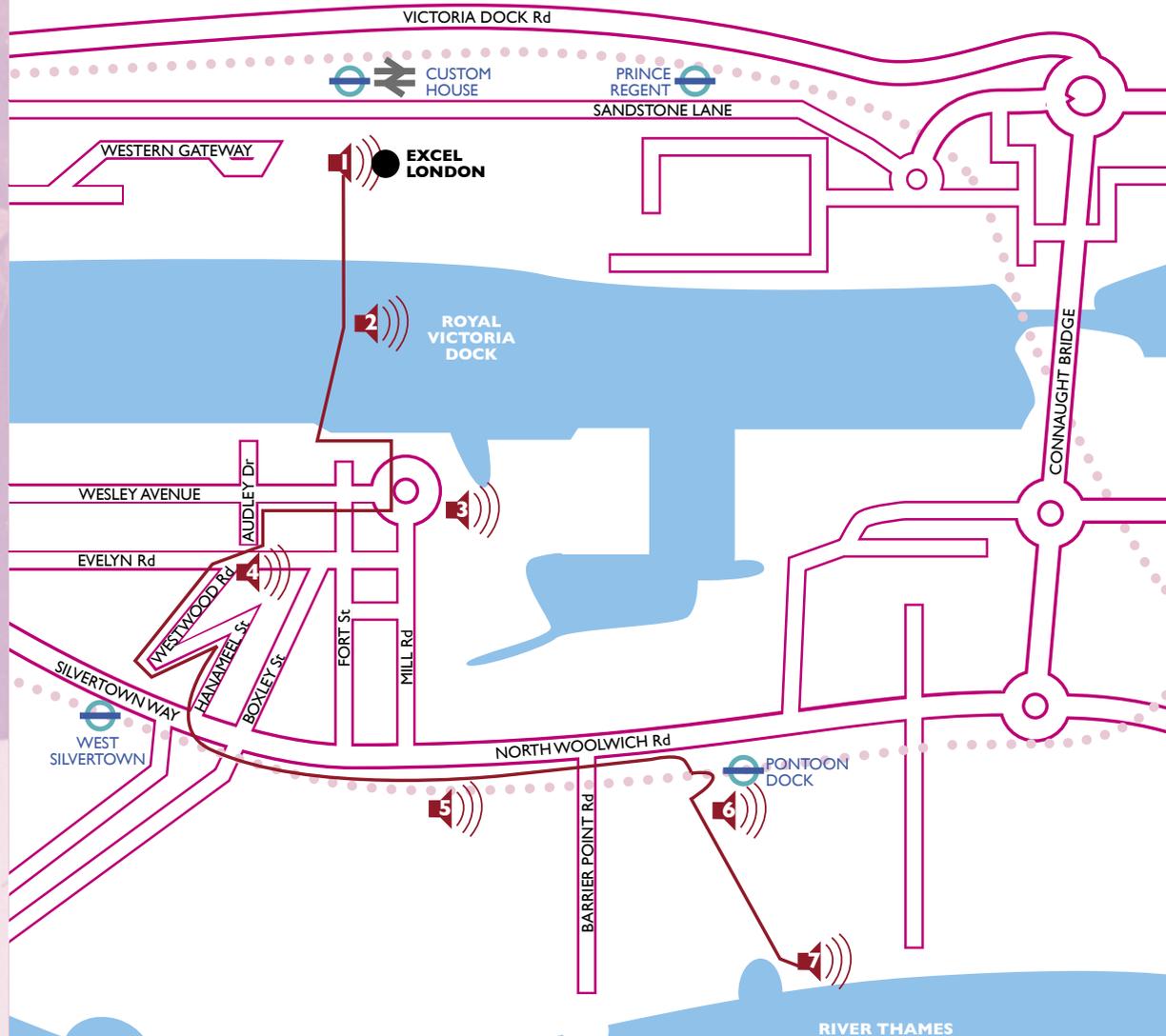
Find the war memorial and the explosion memorial that are set back from the road (combined).

6: micro macro spaces

Go into to café, look out through the windows and listen, or sit outside if it is closed.

7: closing memories, future visions

Pass the London Blitz memorial to the edge of the river, where there are great views of the Thames Barrier. Walk and listen along the promenade or stand and listen.



walk 2:

the asta trail, silvertown: trains, planes & graffiti walls

Commentary by Jo Thomas and Toby Butler

“ The Asta trail was written in the summer of 2007 with the young people at the Asta Centre youth club. The idea was to encourage the young people to express personal narratives and narratives of place through sound and music. After a number of group walkabouts the young people chose areas that were important to them, wrote lyrics around the chosen locations and spent two weeks in the summer mixing their words with their own beats.

This commission was especially exciting to work on in regards to the distribution of music via mp3 technology. Many of the young people had mobile phones and were very adept at using them. Some chose to save their music onto their phones and listen and share what they had created. The music they wrote became mobile within Silvertown before the project was actually finished. This mobility of sound through the phones in people's pockets happily echoed the idea of a sound walk.

The young people were given mp3 players at the end of their project so they all could play the music they had written along with other music of their own choice. They also visited the music studios and the design laboratories of the University of East London and had a chance to work with the facilities there. This gave them the opportunity to find out what happens on the new campus that is on their doorstep, and discover some of the more exciting aspects of university life.

With some professional guidance and tuition from a trained journalist on how to record interviews, small groups of young people armed with a digital recorder also went on visits to question people that had important roles in their community. These ranged from the local shopkeeper to Lord Mawson (responsible for the future development of the area adjacent to Silvertown, near Pontoon Dock).

These interviews didn't just give the participants the chance to gain some confidence in oral skills (many spoke English as a second language); it also gave the interviewees a chance to meet and really engage with some members of the next generation of Silvertown residents. ”



Toby Butler



Toby Butler

1: song, voice and beats

Malcolm; Sydney; Brenda; young people from the Asta Centre

2: up and coming area

Malcolm, young people from Asta Centre, Mr Sriramamoorthy

3: silver is as good as gold

Malcolm, Kathy Taylor (North Woolwich Old Station Museum), Toby Butler, young people from Asta Centre

4: pink hazes of sugar

Toby Butler, Kathy Taylor, young people from the Asta Centre

5: vast skies of venture

Victoria Jeeves (London City Airport); Toby Butler; young people from the Asta Centre

Music was composed by the young people from the Asta Centre, Silvertown and arranged by Jo Thomas

walk 2: the asta trail, silvertown: trains, planes & graffiti walls

1: song, voice and beats

Use the map to find the Asta Centre on the corner of Drew Road. This trail was made in the studio inside. Stand outside and play track 1.

2: up and coming area

Go through the alley way to get to the precinct and shops on Constance St. Opposite the grocers shop play track 2.

3: silver is good as gold

Cross at the zebra crossing on Albert Rd. You will see a pedestrian bridge over the railway. Go up on to the bridge and face the Tate and Lyle sugar factory. Play track 3.

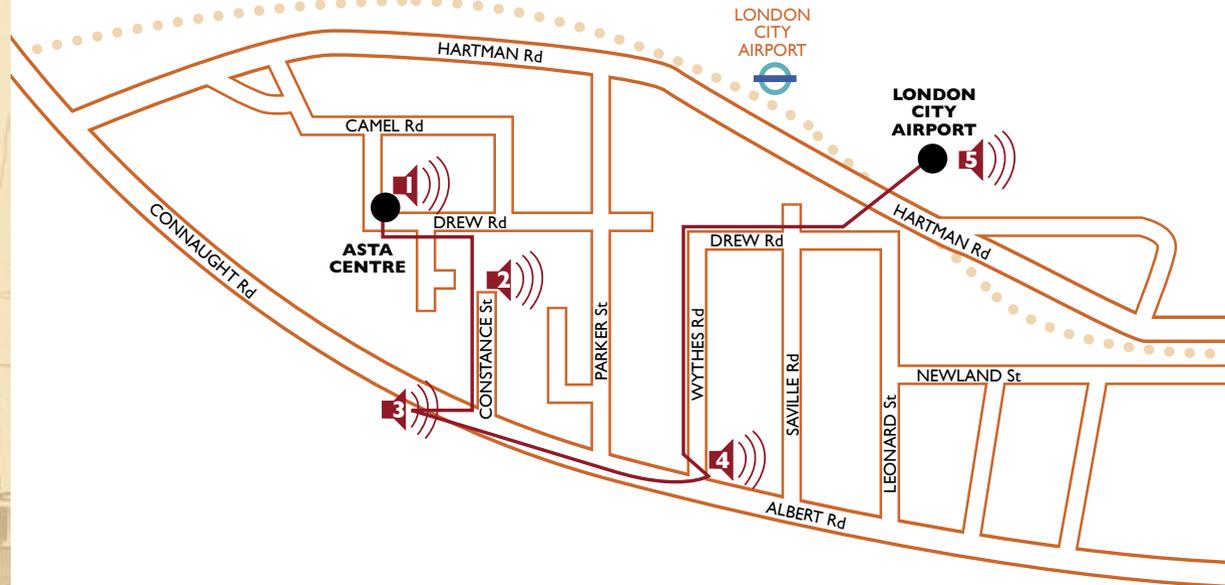
4: pink hazes of sugar

On the corner of Albert Road and Whythes Rd you will find a bench in a grassy area. Sit down opposite the Tate and Lyle factory and play track 4.

5: vast skies of venture

Pass the primary school and head for City Airport. If it is open, cross the check in hall and go up the escalators.

Walk to you left. Look down over the hall and play track 5.



walk 3: the north woolwich trail: deep water

Commentary by Mark Hunter

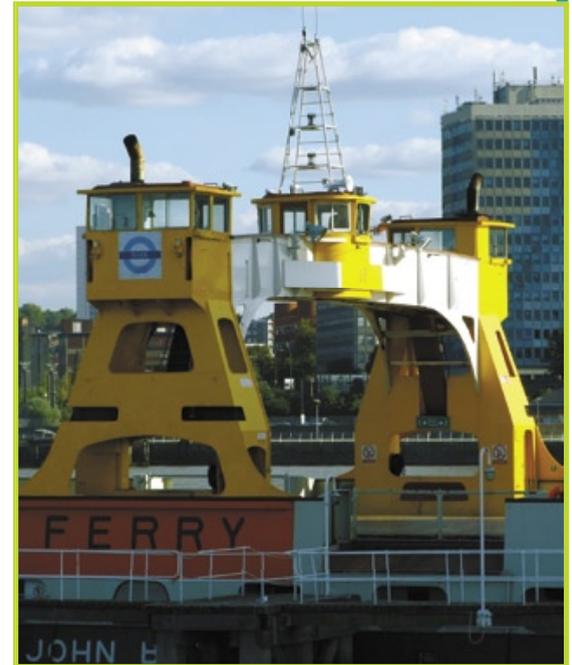
“ North Woolwich: Deep Water is a journey through North Woolwich past and present. Constructed around interviews from both the Eastside Community Heritage archive and the Museum in Docklands oral history collection, this sound walk brings together a wide range of ideas, attitudes and memories through the voices of local people.

You will not hear my voice on these tracks; my aim was to gather the materials and work them into a soundscape that represents itself without my voice intervening. In this way I play the role both of curator - carefully selecting and editing material from the catalogue of the archive recordings, and sculptor - constructing a sonic monument of and to the people featured in the recordings.

The trail is also an investigation into the performance of memory in Newham in 2008. The complex and overlapping contexts of 'regeneration' that are present in the 2012 Olympics and the Thames Gateway development sit in stark contrast to the immediate surroundings of North Woolwich.

The redevelopment zone surrounding North Woolwich offers a very specific narrative of place that, I would argue, does not account for the history or people of the area.

This sound walk is an attempt to map the stories and memories of the local people onto the terrain of North Woolwich, offering an experience where the 'here and now' of the walk is contested by the 'there and then' of the stories you will listen to. ”



Steve Whiting



Steve Whiting

- 1: king george v DLR
Charles Beck
- 2: woodman street
Gertie Duffy; Victor Pardoe; Alex Collyer
- 3: the royal oak
Alex Collyer; Doreen Harvey; Roy & Marion Cable; Stanley Morris
- 4: royal victoria gardens
Owen Macomish
- 5: north woolwich pier
Roy Cable; Victor Pardoe
- 6: bargehouse road slipway
George Gibbs; Doreen Harvey; Lottie Lowry
- 7: harland & wolff
Owen McComish; Roy Cable; E. Glibbery
- 8: bascule bridge
George Gibbs; Owen McComish; Ada Tebb
- 9: dockside, royal albert dock
AS Ellis; George Gibbs; Lottie Lowry
- 10: university of east london campus
Eileen Brome; Paul North; Harold Morison
- 11: cyprus DLR
Charles Beck

walk 3: the north woolwich trail: deep water

1: king george v DLR station

This station is named after the old dock and is situated on the dockside. The new concrete wall running along the DLR is a physical barrier to dockside access, just as the old dock walls once were. Singer Charles Beck worked as a docker.

2: woodman street

This is the heart of North Woolwich: surrounded by water on all sides, when the locks and bridges were open this was effectively an island. Hear Victor Pardoe list the names of the factories and works along the main road, which along with the docks made North Woolwich such a busy place.

3: the royal oak

The Royal Oak is one of the last remaining pubs in North Woolwich - go in and have a drink, the landlady is expecting you! There used to be dozens of pubs in the area, serving the thirsty local workforce.

4: royal victoria gardens

A popular pleasure garden since 1851, day-trippers would come here by train and steamer to enjoy entertainments here, such as acrobats, hot air balloons, fireworks and dancing. The gardens have more of a park-like feel today, but they are still well used by people of all ages. Owen McComish's story is a memorial to a sad event here over fifty years ago.

5: north woolwich pier

Climb the steps to get a good view of the old pier, the free ferry and the Thames across to Woolwich. If you wish you can ride on the free ferry (established 1889); Roy Cable worked as a stoker when the ferry was powered by coal. At low tide you can gain access to the foreshore, and the old railway station here is now a museum, and well worth a visit if it is open (weekend afternoons and school holidays). There is also a half-kilometre long, public foot tunnel here connecting North and South Woolwich which until 1965 were both part of the county of Kent.

6: bargehouse road slipway

A ferry has been crossing here at least as far back as the earliest record of it in 1308. The ferryman lived in the Bargehouse which gave the road its name. Children have long played along the Thames foreshore and some have even swum across the Thames, despite treacherous currents. Please take care if you walk down the slipway, it can be very slippery.

7: harland & wolff

Galleons Point Estate is a new housing development built on the site of the Harland & Wolff ship repair yard: one of the most important employers in North Woolwich. The original works gates are displayed in Lyle Park, West Silvertown.

8: bascule bridge

The Bascule Bridge can lift up to allow access into the dock for larger ships. These locks were the gateway to the tidal Thames and the world. Stand on the steps overlooking the locks to escape the traffic noise. See if you can spot the Gallions Hotel, a listed Victorian pub now surrounded by a new housing development; cruise ship passengers rubbed shoulders with dockers here.

9: dockside

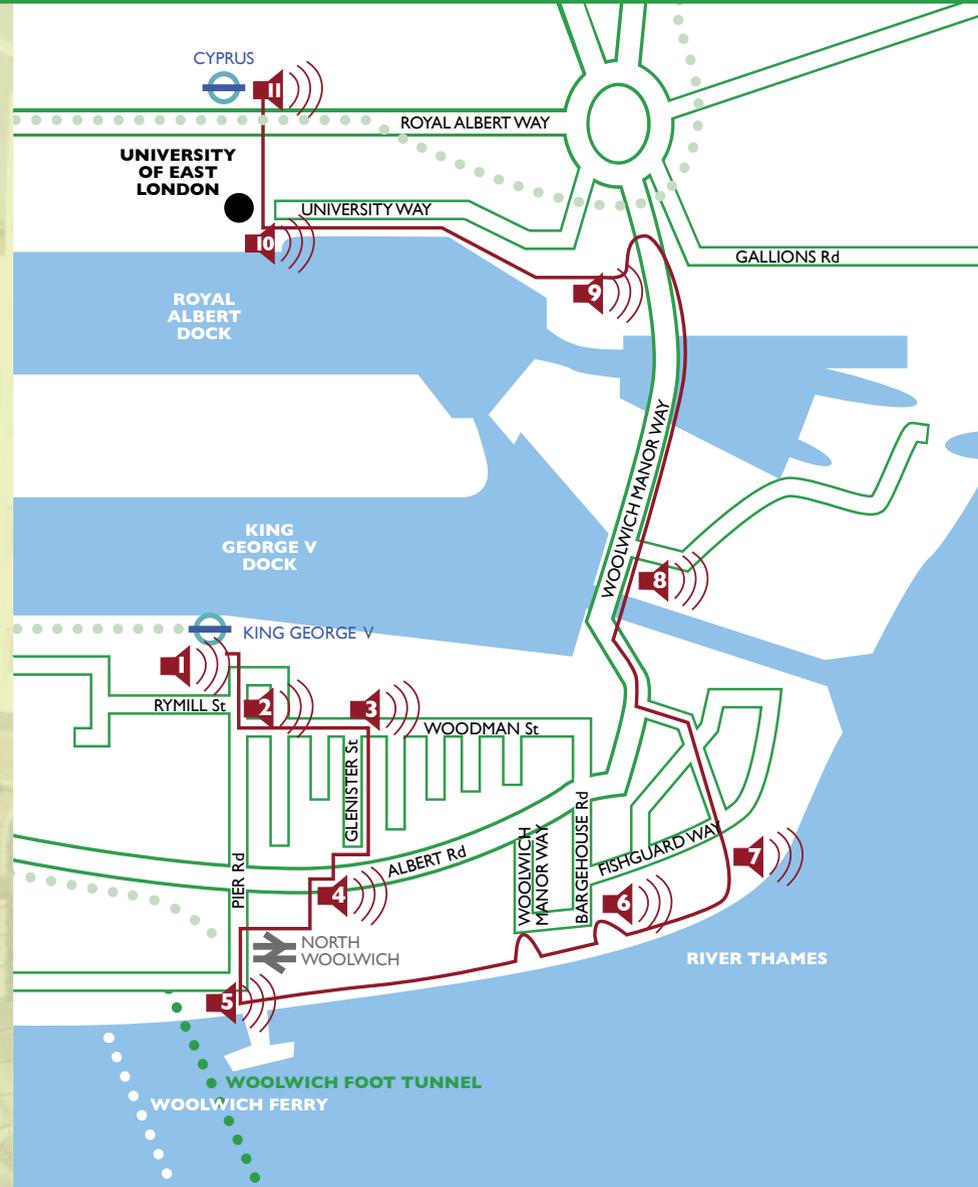
Thousands of men would gather at the Connaught Bridge to get a day's work - you can see this bridge today if you look right, towards Canary Wharf; this was called 'going on the stones'. The dockers (in the docks and warehouses), stevedores (who loaded the ships) and crane drivers were employed to move the cargo in what was once the busiest port in the world.

10: university of east london campus

The university is on the site of warehouses 5, 7, 9 & 11, where goods from around the world arrived by the ton, ranging from bananas to mail. UEL has 20,000 students from all corners of the world. The Docklands campus opened in 2000 and was short-listed for Building of the Year for its energy efficient design. There are cafés and toilet facilities here.

11: cyprus DLR

The end of the trail. The DLR and local buses go from here to North Woolwich and beyond.



toby butler (project director)

Toby Butler is a visiting fellow and project director at the London East Research Institute, University of East London. He has worked as a tour guide, journalist and editor before entering academia, where he has published work in the fields of cultural geography, oral history and museum studies. The Ports of Call audio trail programme is a community-based development of his earlier work on 'memoryscapes' which integrate sound and oral history recordings. Toby has published two more trails, Dockers and Drifting (available from memoryscape.org.uk) in a collaborative project with the Museum of London and Royal Holloway, University of London.

jo thomas (composer)

Jo Thomas lives and works as a composer in East and North London. She lectures in electronic composition and sound design at the University of East London. Her composition research work concentrates on the development of micro-sound, glitch, technological artefacts and their relationship to human utterance and the human body. Her music is released by NMC Recordings and is distributed by the British Music Information Centre. The music for these trails was composed and produced at Glitchwork Studios, London. jo@glitchworksmusic.com
myspace.com/jothomaselectrosound

mark hunter (artist)

Mark Hunter is a senior lecturer and programme leader of the BA (Hons) Community Arts Practice programme at the University of East London. He has worked in public and community settings over the past ten years, often utilising walking as a means of investigating the history, memories and archaeology of different locales. Mark has led projects and walks for Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Lickey Hills Country Park, the Live Art Development Agency, and Minefield amongst others. m.hunter@uel.ac.uk or visit uel.ac.uk/ipad/.

front cover images:
Museum in Docklands
(background)
Toby Butler
(inset)