

# DEPTFORD LITERATURE FESTIVAL

## SOUNDING DEPTFORD: A SELF-GUIDED AUDIO WALK

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Sounding Deptford is a self-guided audio walk created by Lewisham and South-East London residents and writers James Wilkes and Joe Rizzo Naudi. It is a new way to experience Deptford, its places and stories. You are invited to immerse yourself in and be guided by these audio poems and recordings drawn from and inspired by the sounds of Deptford and its communities.

The walk is based around four 'beacons' located in four places in Deptford. James and Joe have created new poetic sound works, designed specifically to be listened to at each of these sites. To take part, we encourage you to navigate your way to the different locations – via the directions and map below, or via your own circuitous routes – and listen to the pieces in their intended spaces.

James and Joe made the works through a process of walking, talking, listening and recording audio letters to each other, which they turned into text scores and composed in collaboration with Michael. The pieces take inspiration from their personal experiences, from conversations with people they encountered in Deptford, from writers including Christopher Marlowe, Jay Bernard and Linton Kwesi Johnson, and from anonymous sources such as street art and a found letter written in 1947.

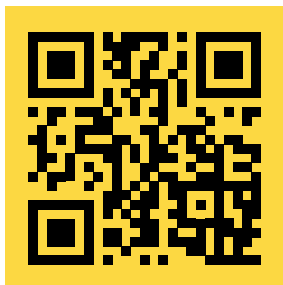
You can access the sound recordings via the QR code below or at: <https://bit.ly/48x4Vic>

Please note this tour is self-guided so you can complete it in your own time. The total listening time is around 25 mins. A transcript is also available at the end of this document.

To walk between the beacons via the route suggested at the end of this document is about 3.5km or just over 2 miles and will take roughly an hour and a half to complete, including listening time.

A map is also available below, or you can access the route on Google Maps via the QR code below, or at: [bit.ly/3TReXXP](https://bit.ly/3TReXXP). A .gpx file is also available at: [bit.ly/3wpEAFw](https://bit.ly/3wpEAFw).

All Audio:



Google Maps:



Do make sure to pay attention to traffic, cyclists and other pedestrians as you follow the walk and keep safe.

# DIRECTIONS

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## **START**

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*Start outside Deptford Lounge on Giffin Street. Stand with your back to the Deptford Lounge building and head straight on, crossing Deptford High Street and go down Douglas Way. Pause when you get to the market square. This is the location of the first beacon.*

## **MARKET**

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[bit.ly/3wDa4lf](https://bit.ly/3wDa4lf)



*Once you've listened to the recording, retrace your steps to the High Street and turn left heading North. When you get to the end of the High Street, cross at the pedestrian crossing and turn right down Creek Road. Bear left onto McMillan Street. Follow this to the end until you see Rachel McMillan Nursery School and Children's Centre. To the left of this you will see St. Nicholas' Church. Enter the churchyard, the location of the second beacon.*

## **CHURCHYARD**

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[bit.ly/3uTj7UW](https://bit.ly/3uTj7UW)



*Head back the way you came out of the churchyard, and then down Stowage, the narrow road running down the side of the church. Follow this round to the right, before making a right hand turn down Gonson Street. Cross straight over the larger Creek Road and continue straight on down Creekside. Follow this until you reach a railway bridge. Go under the bridge and then take an immediate left down the pedestrian and cycle route. Follow this out onto the footbridge over Deptford Creek and stop on the bridge. This is the location of the third beacon.*

## **CREEK**

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[bit.ly/4bZLB04](https://bit.ly/4bZLB04)



*After listening to the recording, return the way you came, back down the footpath, turning left when you reach the road to continue down Creekside. Continue along the road, round a right hand bend and straight across a roundabout, where it then becomes Reginald Road. Continue until you hit the High Street and take a left, going down the High Street until you hit the busy thoroughfare of New Cross Road. Turn right and continue along New Cross Road until, on the right hand side, you meet the turning for Amersham Vale, where you will see signs for New Cross Station, down to your right. This corner is the location of the final beacon.*

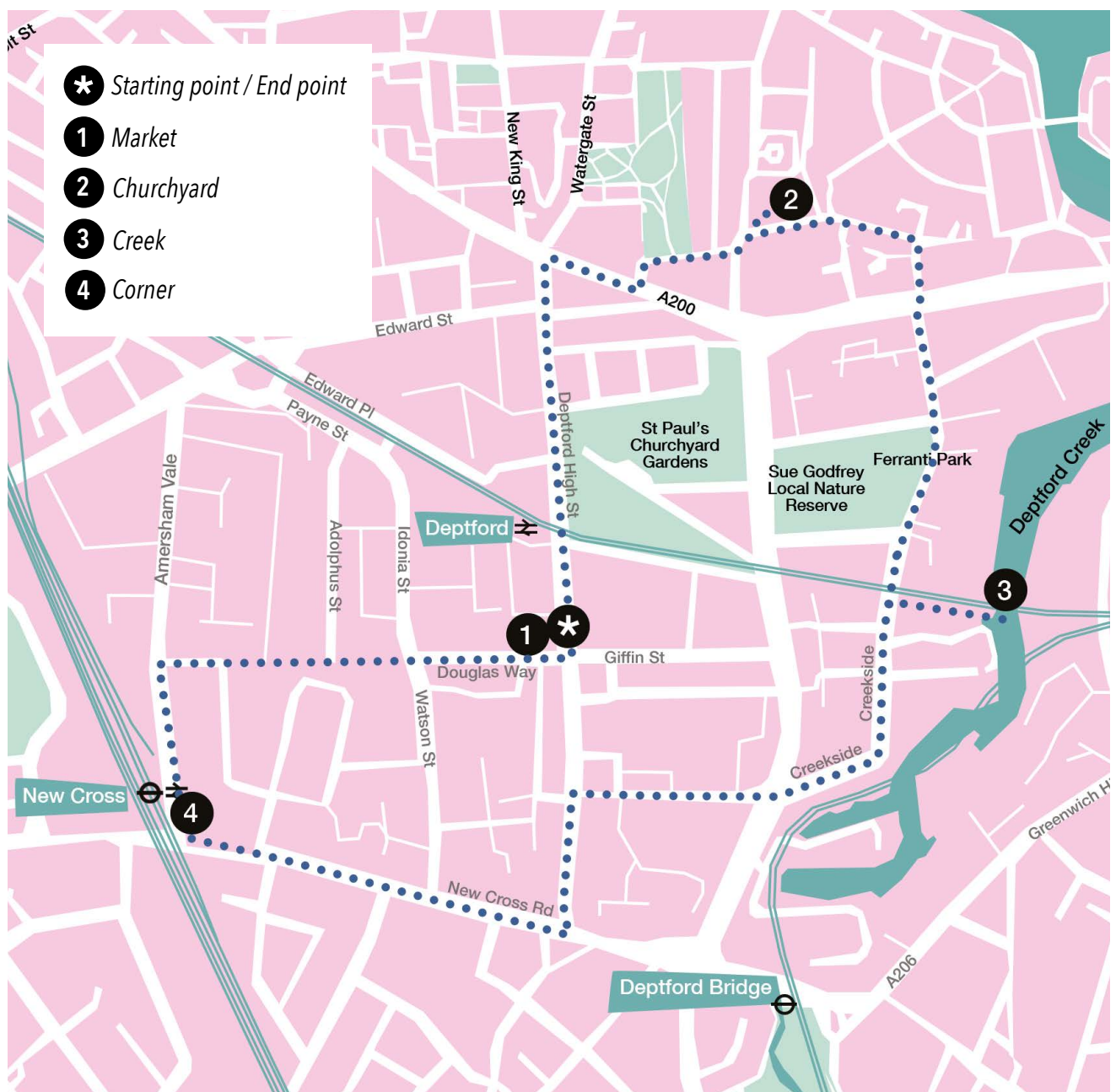
## CORNER

[bit.ly/3TkDB1h](https://bit.ly/3TkDB1h)



Turn down Amersham Vale before, after a few hundred yards, taking the first right down Douglas Way. Where the road curves round to the right, continue straight on taking the pedestrian path through Margaret McMillan Park. At the far side of the park, cross at the zebra crossing and continue straight along Douglas Way, past the Albany Theatre and the site of our first beacon until you hit the High Street. Here you will see Deptford Lounge in front of you and will have returned to your starting point.

## MAP



# SOUNDING DEPTFORD

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## MARKET

i'm in the square now where we  
stopped and talked the market  
square it's quite different today  
it seems a lot quieter

you can sit down on a concrete  
bench here

it is BUSY there's lots and lots of  
people lots of chats going on  
people sort of huddled in their  
coats

stephanie and bernadette came  
round on monday evening and

there's fewer stalls i think or  
maybe they're just in different  
places and it's quiet enough that  
i can hear a humming

a sound of heels tapping on  
the pavement and someone with  
a plastic bag caught on their foot  
shaking it rustling it trying  
to get it off

which might be coming  
from the lights there's kind of a  
series all hung  
above the square making  
almost like tram lines across it like  
in european cities and um i  
can hear a humming which  
seems that it might come from

the voices of the stall traders  
can't really see what's on the  
stalls but getting glimpses of a red  
crate some hi viz padded coats  
and

a letter blowing around 1947  
must've been in a pile of bric a  
brac and when they cleared up  
to go home they just left it to  
blow around on the floor

on saturday we went shopping  
he is now a "LANCE CORPORAL"  
4 new ones were chosen so he  
bought a khaki shirt tie stripes for  
the coat and overcoat

also some nice grey wool under  
the counter at the wool shop for  
a long-sleeved pullover i've  
done the back

and uh i can hear the market  
traders talking to each other  
there's not so many radios as  
there were before before we  
could hear lots of music not so  
much of that today

can hear people coming up and  
greeting each other

yeah thinking i should buy a  
woolly hat it's absolutely freezing  
i should do that but not doing  
that

someone was looking at the gold  
chain then put it back on the stall  
and walked off

had a card from paisley's saying  
they have hose 2 coupons per  
pair 7/2 each do you want any  
or can you manage for the time  
being

it's terribly cold here at the  
moment sun's shining and  
everywhere with its  
layer of snow and ice the  
coal seems to be dwindling  
are you still nice and  
warm

when i was here with you before  
you talked about how  
much like a bunker it is  
the sun on the roof tiles the  
lichen

been along twice to see mr and  
mrs sampson paid the rent in  
advance they

read out a spanish mural i  
translated it for you  
you heard spanish and dutch the  
many accents and  
varieties and dialects of  
english

very lucky someone  
hadn't paid up they only just  
got there before the next  
prospective tenant in fact she  
arrived as they left to be  
disappointed

they are all going swimming  
before breakfast or as  
bernadette said before we get  
up

and a deeper humming  
i think but quite far off  
sort of varying in pitch



# CHURCHYARD

i saw a  
skull mounted atop a gatepost  
it was huge and maybe yeah my  
goodness quite striking this  
skull the pine tree behind  
and in the distance  
another trunk bared branches  
i thought this must be it  
the tower  
almost medieval strange  
i heard two figures walking on the  
path a young pair eyes to the gravel  
politely ignoring me  
talking  
to myself it seems that  
people  
use this  
churchyard  
as a cut through going about their  
business what were all the  
rustlings in the undergrowth  
either  
birds  
or what i couldnt see it was all  
quite  
green fallen sticks in the grass  
and  
on the path under my feet the  
church its corner pieces greyish  
stone large blocks  
like teeth or the foot of a  
wooden box  
and here  
lots of flowers  
recently laid and just the  
aircraft overhead a blackbirds alarm  
and then  
someone approached  
i think  
a woman  
and  
she got off the path  
to let me pass sort of  
giggling as she did i asked  
if she knew where the  
memorial  
was  
she said  
no no and  
shouted something towards the gate

and  
smiling said in undertone  
that maybe the  
keeper  
was there  
i cleaved to the church  
a more modern  
annexe  
and found  
a ramp up to the door hollow  
beneath my cane tip the little porch  
sounding  
as if there were a space below  
perhaps a  
basement crypt  
really how to get there i wanted  
a path  
not the  
grass  
or  
graves  
well  
i walked into branches  
doctor grown full straight  
one belonged to a  
pine tree  
a kind of  
sap among its needles  
which was then upon  
my eyebrow sticky  
and  
approaching this plaque  
i encountered with  
my face and hair a set of spindly  
arms from  
what i thought were  
planes  
to find the place i asked  
a figure  
spotted  
walking round the church a small  
dog by their feet they wore a  
greenish jacket  
and  
a light grey hoody pulled up  
i couldnt see  
their face  
until  
i asked  
if there was  
a plaque for the poet  
and it struck me as  
i said it



how i described him as  
the poet  
embarrassed by his name perhaps  
strange  
the figure thought  
for a moment and then as if  
hit  
by some idea  
they pointed towards the plaque on  
the churchyard wall in white marble  
it was modern yes more modern  
than he and  
written with engraved marks  
from which  
my fingers  
got nothing though a few words  
were more deeply  
graven  
or  
the dirt  
was in them so what i saw was  
near untimely and  
beneath the plaque a few candle  
holders  
one a  
tiny skull  
close by perhaps a  
dozen biros



# CREEK

i'm on the bridge now and it's  
so different the tide is low  
and you can hear the water  
racing there's almost like a little  
weir

a particularly nasty bollard  
shaped a bit like a bell  
squat iron

i dunno if you remember that  
that place where we stopped  
we heard the  
dripping and we saw the the  
ripples of the water uh where it  
was dripping off the bridge and  
into the full very very still creek  
at high tide

very dark iron  
with a loop at the top so it can be  
lifted  
a bell that doesn't ring

do you remember  
you said sometimes  
ripples move over over your  
vision it's something that can  
happen so when there are  
ripples out in the world  
sometimes it can trigger this in  
the inside world like peaks  
and troughs like interference

i'm getting thwarted by a dead  
end

well now it's low and in that  
same place the water is rushing  
down and creating this  
constant constant noise train's  
just going over now as well so  
you've got this double sources  
of white noise

descending a very strange set of  
steps into a kind of parking  
area and lockup area

just asked a well dressed  
gentleman flat cap big brown  
sort of suedey coat about  
the creek

i can see uh seagulls fishing  
framed by  
the railway bridge but i can't  
hear them they're diving down  
into the water and taking off  
again

funny the etiquette of  
talking to strangers we crossed  
together with our sticks tapping  
out together i said i'm using a  
cane as well i don't know if you  
noticed

construction noises and here's  
a DLR train as well  
which makes its own different  
noise from the overground  
it's got a whine

and in the distance the square  
risings of newbuilds  
so clean like computer graphics  
renderings printed onto the  
horizon

a builder on a scaffold calling  
down to someone i don't  
understand what are you  
saying

and i've come to the other side  
the upstream  
side to wait for you and  
there's another little weir so  
that's making its own noise

separated in two by the railway  
arch

been about a year he's been  
using it found it difficult  
at first

and i can just see 3 swans standing  
downstream the water only  
comes up halfway up their legs  
seagulls still behind them

an older lady walking in heels  
and humming to herself  
like a girl

now here come 2 cyclists talking  
to each other i have to squeeze  
up out of their way very busy  
here very busy little  
thoroughfare

3 pavement cyclists  
i said sorry they said nothing

and it's empty i imagine now  
no-one in there no-one using it  
just a big echoing empty space

why am i here why would i come  
here a confluence of  
water of footpaths of transport  
a hanging promontory  
and the graffiti

this park is locked in accordance  
with daylight hours please listen  
for the audible sound

it's been refreshed even since  
we were last here something  
else painted over

big haunted house gate with a  
chain that seems locked ok  
back to the road

i think it says BEMS and there's  
a picture of top cat next to it

and then there's one the new  
one it's very abstract i'd say  
bauhaus almost construction  
kind of black triangles and  
a black circle bisected by a thin  
red line

and soon it will be painted over  
in pastel ONLY KUTE VIBES

i get a pleasure rather than a utility  
from hearing my cane echoing  
from buildings

at the moment I can hear it echoing  
off the church and the houses flats

and then some more  
hallucinatory ones like a giant  
eye and mushrooms on either  
side lots of mushrooms

and then some more pieces  
large kind of wildstyle i've  
discovered they're called ornate  
hard to read

one's painted over a peacock you  
can still see a massive eye

mum and baby in a pushchair  
makes room for me to pass  
thank you  
you're so welcome

which itself is painted over a  
face with green skin and purple  
hair and over the top of all of  
this i can't read i actually can't  
read the word



# CORNER

on the  
corner its cold sunny  
though not the kind of  
day  
to be lingering  
outside  
ive got my  
hat  
on and  
gloves lorries thundering  
its always been like this i think an  
arterial route  
in and out  
ive come specifically to this  
spot  
but theres  
another person  
here  
dark jacket hood up standing on  
the corner facing out towards the  
traffic flowing past them turning  
the other way then looking down  
that  
night i was here not standing but  
walking down this road  
to my friends  
house  
a little bit up so this is the spot  
where  
yes i think im trying to remember  
it was  
it was  
dark  
very very  
dark  
i couldnt see just the  
headlights of cars and peoples  
shadows going left  
and as i was walking that that  
wintery  
night  
i became aware of a  
group  
coming towards me from  
down past

taking that  
right turn down the lane towards  
the station  
and we sort of came upon  
each other on this  
corner  
and they were  
loud voices deep  
and  
bawdy raucous  
i read  
alcohol in the  
way they were and one  
said  
and then repeated it and it was as if  
the  
group had stopped and formed  
around me it felt like although i  
couldn't see  
them  
and one maybe the same one who  
had  
spoken or shouted  
or maybe a different  
one he  
seemed to come in very close to me  
his voice  
very close and  
he yelled  
this  
circular building  
here  
a submarines conning tower  
of glass bricks  
ive always loved  
glass bricks and tiles  
and a kind of overhang its a  
pharmacy painted green white blue  
it says station pharmacy  
and its all  
graffitied red yellow blue  
i wanted to come and  
stand  
on the spot where you  
wrote to me looking back down  
towards the phone booth  
here  
coins and cards so plastered  
in posters and stickers

though not fully recovered i dont  
think i was ever fully ill one  
of those coldy feverish things  
where the  
throat  
seems to  
scratch  
and you wonder

that man standing in that spot on  
the corner hood up dark jacket  
turning now one way  
then  
a woman with a pushchair hand  
extended in the sun dámela dámela  
dámela

i walked up here from  
deliberately in fact because i  
wanted to  
walk  
past the spot where theres  
a plaque on the wall  
there quite small not an official  
one if you know what i mean but  
a plaque just in the sun  
and i was going to spend a bit  
more time close to it but there was  
a guy sitting on the steps  
and  
he said

its a  
house  
right and maybe he lives there  
he was sitting on the steps in the  
sun  
and i didnt want  
to obviously intrude on his  
space so i walked on

the  
winter sun  
though low in the  
sky slanting in over roof tops  
cutting hard shadows in the road  
maybe thats what hes  
doing standing on the corner  
basking in it waiting

but on the way here in my



head

i heard the words he  
slows it right down

such a noisy road this those  
concrete cubes

those  
shin height

adversaries on the  
corner

i imagine it must be quite nice to  
be standing there in the  
sun watching for a bus

or  
waiting for a friend

or about some kind of  
business who knows what there  
are

houses

behind me i think they look like  
a terrace flat fronted sash windows  
period desirable on the websites  
and i think of their

poems

all about memories of that time and  
the activist work that followed  
and i think of the way in  
that evocation its like  
a scar on the landscape

the trauma of a  
community

here

i am seeing them  
brightly brightly bathed in this  
sunshine thats slanting in onto the  
road the full blast of it

its quite hard to see them though i  
didnt know the exact place id  
imagined it was further into

this is the place i think of as

i suppose even though this is the  
station

so the clue is in the name i did tell  
you about this spot before and i feel  
strange coming here but i wanted to  
come to the edge of

to

stand

in the place where

