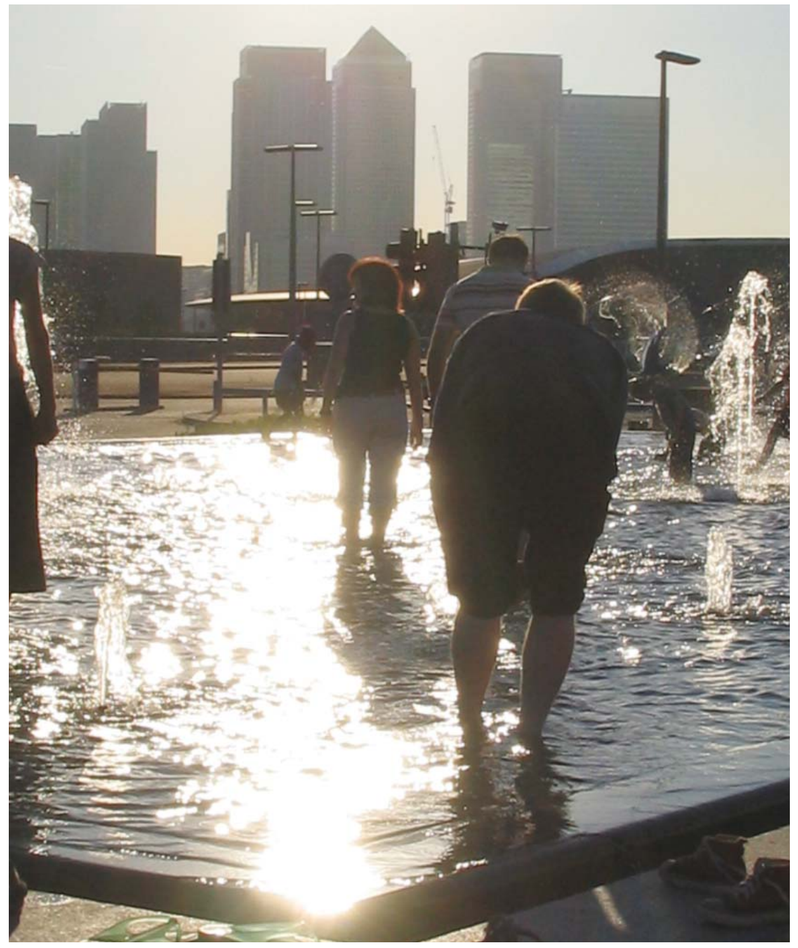
ACCIDENTAL HOLIDAY

A wildish guide to the Greenwich Peninsula



Created in collaboration with:

Year 3 children and parents at Millennium Primary School, in particular: Sue, Chris, Herbie and Josh Jackson, Ruth Ridout and Kaya Safa, Helia, Klarita and Dad, Sam his brother and his mum, Rachel Gibson and George, Oonagh, her sister and her Dad Oswin, Alison O'Sullivan and Jessica

Paul Lambert – teacher at Millennium Primary School
Tom Farnsworth – teacher at Millennium Primary School
Paul Webberwood – Greenwich Liberal Democrat councillor
Lawrence Robertson – Meridian Delta Ltd
Suzie Wilson – Community Development Manager Meridian Delta Ltd
Paul Revel – journalist New Shopper
Isabel Lilly – Independent Photography
Andy Robinson – Independent Photography
Jennifer Maddock – Royal College of Art student
Joanne Smith and her son – Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park
Rose Waites – local resident
Kenny and Emma – the London Diner Company
and Fabian Tompsett, Hannah Rickards, Eleanor Brown, Tenyen, REG and Calverts

Special Thanks to

Rich Sylvester – artist, storyteller and local guide
All the children in Paul Lambert and Tom Farnsworth's Class at Millennium Primary School
Greenman, who coined the term accidental holiday

Conceived by Lottie Child 2006
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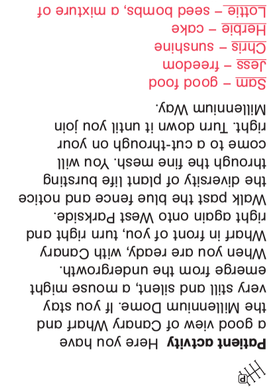
Accidental Holiday is one of a series of commissions called Peninsula, organized by Independent Photography. Peninsula asks artists to respond to the social, human and physical environment of the Greenwich Peninsula, an area which will change radically over the next ten years.
www.peninsulaprojects.net
www.independentphotography.org.uk

Printed on 100% recycled paper using vegetable oil based inks

Travel to and from the Greenwich Peninsula:
North Greenwich Tube
Buses 188,108,161,422,472,486

Excellent local refreshments can be found at:
London Diner Company at North Greenwich Tube
Millennium Motel on Blackwall Lane
Pilot Inn off West Parkside

To know more about the Greenwich Peninsula try one of Rich Sylvester's guided walks exploring the area's history. **richs@onetel.com**



ACCIDENTAL HOLIDAY

Accidental Holiday is a guide to the Greenwich Peninsula created at a time when the peninsula is poised for dramatic change in the form of a "masterplanned community"[1]. Consisting of a walk and suggested activities, this guide invites you to engage with the area in playful ways that call into question the appropriate use of public space. It is the result of collaborative research that brought together people with a particular link to the area, each with their own perspective. They included: a local Liberal Democrat councillor, children and parents from Millennium Primary School, local residents and workers, employees of the company developing the area – Meridian Delta Ltd – and local media arts company Independent Photography, who commissioned the project. Together we took outings across the peninsula, engaging with each other and the environment. Our activities raised discussion of pertinent issues which you will find printed throughout the guide.

All over the Greenwich Peninsula, plants are bursting through fences and breaking through concrete. Sometimes in big cities, the people are doing little more than surviving, while in forgotten corners a diverse array of plants and animals, birds and insects are really thriving in a complex web of interdependence. This leads to the question, what do people need in order to thrive in the city? Do we need to copy some of the characteristics of feral plant and animal life and be

lawless	devious	exuberant	curious	trusting
challenging	risky	nurturing	patient	primal

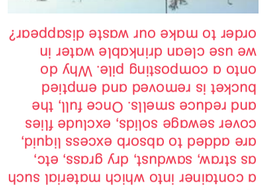
Inspired by wild things, this guide invites you to behave in a variety of ways that contrast with the increasing homogenisation of public space. This behaviour aims to retain some of the complexity that is lost when concrete asserts itself and when public space is privatised, controlled and sanitized.

Once marshland, the peninsula is always changing. Places you are directed to may no longer exist. Many things including a large farm, market gardens, houses and allotments as well as a gas company, existed here before the current developments. Records dating back to 1622 make reference to nettles and brambles in the area[2]. Are wild plants and animals so persistent that they will thrive here long after the present phase of development? Or do we need to provide the right conditions for the feral plants and wildlife of the future?

Lottie Child
July 2006

1. "Masterplanned community" is how Meridian Delta describe the redevelopment on their website www.meridiandeltaltd.com. They are working together with English Partnerships, the Government's national regeneration agency and Anschutz Entertainment Group, responsible for the redevelopment of the former Millennium Dome, now named The O2.

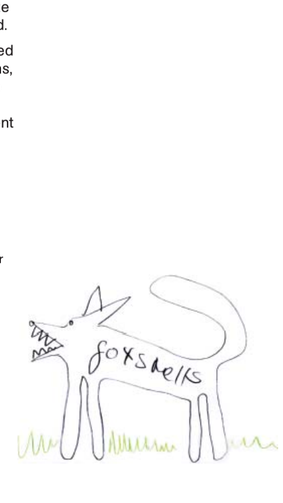
2. Letter from Mary Mills to Meridian Line magazine 1999.



During a research outing the question was asked – what do you personally need in order to thrive?

Thrive: To grow vigorously and healthily; to make steady progress; prosper; to flourish.

Paul – space, air and sunshine.
Isabel – excitement and passion.
Suzie – good family and good friends.
Lawrence – space and light.
Rich – community and communication.
Tom – Ideas and conversation.
Jen – loved ones.
Andy – friends around me.
Chris – family and friends.
Rachel - friends family and space and tranquillity.
Paul – stability and continuity.
Duan – family and peace.
Klarita – good friends and free time.
Paul – freedom.
Ruth – peace and quiet.
Oswin – my daughters and a good bottle of wine.
Alison – family and a safe environment for my family.
Joanne – family and friends and big spaces.
George – an anti-tank gun.
Jessica – friends family and my mum.
Kaya – green stuff, green stuff, green stuff and the green stuff is the environment.
Lottie – friends, family and adventure.



GUIDED WALK

Some preliminaries The walk will take around four hours, finishing with a campfire on the beach. You may want to gather a few adults and children together for it, as some of the activities are more fun in a group. You will find it helpful to carry a few lengths of string with you and could also bring a picnic. Rather than carrying it with you, why not hide it in the bushes at the far end of the car park at North Greenwich tube, behind the blank billboards.

The walk will return you there later.

Be careful when you are climbing on fences and walls and when tending the fire and polite to security guards should you come into contact. Deliberately testing socially imposed boundaries can result in risk and insight.

Start at the entrance to the Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park on the Thames Path, off John Harrison Way. The ecology park is an important wetland site, protecting and nurturing plants and animals whose UK populations are falling.

The first activity takes place on the foreshore directly below the ecology park. To get down to the water's edge, either climb over the fence, or, with the Thames in front of you, turn right along the Thames Path until you get to a gap in the fence. Be careful on the rocks as they are slippery and wobbly. Turn left along the shore and head for a concrete area and a rusty sewage outlet pipe with a hinged opening. This pipe is for waste water from the ecology park.

Curious activity Sit very quietly next to the pipe, notice the sounds, and take in your surroundings. Then lift the lid at the entrance to the pipe and peer in. Is there a frog inside?

What do people need to thrive?

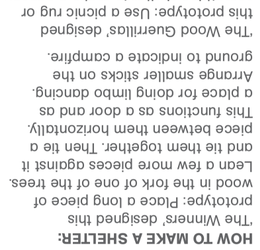
Lottie – to co-exist with frogs because they are sensitive to pollution.
Sam – air, food and water.
George – milkshakes.

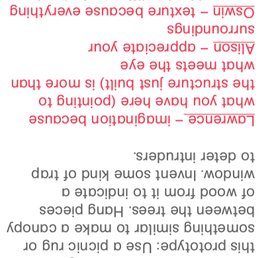
Resourceful activity Collect the longest, largest pieces of driftwood you can find. You will use them later to make a shelter. Driftwood is often found high on the shore, in the undergrowth where the tide has tossed it. Get a few useful pieces over the fence, turn right, with the river behind you, and walk along the Thames Path. Turn left at John Harrison Way and walk along until you reach Central Park.

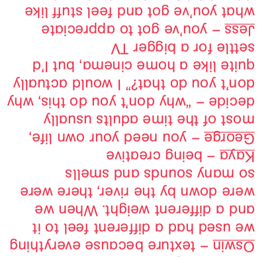
Playful activity If you have children with you, ask them to show you how to play, or on the low walls that run down the middle of Central Park. Or, try walking along a wall and jumping off the end into the ivy, getting up the run and repeating this until you feel like moving on. You might also like to try some wood to the fork of one of the trees. Leon a few more pieces against it and tie them together. Then it is ready for doing limbo dancing, This functions as a door and as a piece between them horizontally. This Wood Quemtiles' designed a piece for doing limbo dancing, arrange smaller sticks on the ground to indicate a campfire.

'The Wood Quemtiles' designed this prototype. Use a picnic rug or something similar to make a canopy between the trees. Hang pieces of wood from the fork of one of the trees. Leon a few more pieces against it and tie them together. Then it is ready for doing limbo dancing, arrange smaller sticks on the ground to indicate a campfire.

Lawrence – Imagination because what you have here (pointing to the structure just built) is more than just a structure. **Alison** – appreciate your surroundings
Oswin – texture because everything we used had a different feel to it and a different weight. When we were down by the river, there were so many sounds and smells
Kaya – being creative
George – you need your own life, most of the time adults usually decide – 'why don't we do this, why don't you do that?' I would actually quite like a home cinema, but I'd settle for a bigger TV
Jess – you've got to appreciate what you've got and feel stuff like this stick I found on the beach. It's something like a new born baby because it's so soft. You've just got to appreciate what you've got in life
Lottie – to grow your own food because it connects you to the earth and the seasons



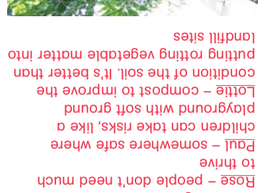


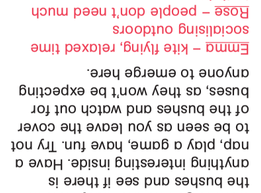


Foraging activity opposite you is Boord Street. Cross the road towards the clump of trees on the Willoughby Lane side. From the middle of July, the Willoughby plums will be yellow and ripe, on the second tree from the road. Eat some plums and then left heading south along Millennium Way until you get to Old School Close. On your right is the Victorian school building that now houses artefacts from the Horniman Museum. Straight ahead of you, is the site that used to be allotments for workers at the gasworks. It has now been boarded off by English Partnerships.

Lawless activity there is a metal gate ahead with a large concrete block. Turn left and walk along on your right. You will see a traffic island. Covered with small oval holes and bushes. Turn right and follow the concrete wall till you get to Blackwall Lane. Then head down to the river towards the jetty. Where you will see all kinds of flotsam and jetsam thrown up by the tide. You can find a good spot near the water to be the river towards Look around for some dry wood: try to collect different sizes – small, medium and large – to get the fire going.

Emma – kite flying, relaxed time socialising outdoors
Rose – people don't need much room, just a bit of grass
Paul – somewhere safe where children can take risks, like a playground with soft ground
Lottie – compost to improve the condition of the soil. It's better than putting rotting vegetable matter into landfill sites





Devious activity head towards the underground station but don't go in. Turn left and walk along on your right. You will see a traffic island. Covered with small oval holes and bushes. Turn right and follow the concrete wall till you get to Blackwall Lane. Then head down to the river towards the jetty. Where you will see all kinds of flotsam and jetsam thrown up by the tide. You can find a good spot near the water to be the river towards Look around for some dry wood: try to collect different sizes – small, medium and large – to get the fire going.

Primal activity Head out of the station, in the direction of the Dome. Turn left, cross the road and you will pointing to the right. Take the path, bear right and follow the concrete wall till you get to Blackwall Lane. Then head down to the river towards the jetty. Where you will see all kinds of flotsam and jetsam thrown up by the tide. You can find a good spot near the water to be the river towards Look around for some dry wood: try to collect different sizes – small, medium and large – to get the fire going.

Rose – it would be good if food toxis used the slipway for the Dome
Ivan – you a nice change from the Tube!
Santa mum – places to park
Rachel – a sense of community and social cohesion
Paul – a playground and places for young people to spend time
Sue – cafés, somewhere we can chill out and the kids can play
Susie – I think what people need is to feel that they 'fit' in a place. A place which is tolerant of different viewpoints and which embraces a little bit of quirkiness in people's characters, in terms of tales and viewpoints that are different to your own. Tolerance, a new development, is a variety of texture, both in the landscaping and in the buildings themselves. I think what opposite is many people work, a stage post if you like, that is reasonable and manageable size
When you've finished, make sure you put out the fire by pouring on lots of water.
Don't leave the fire until it's out cold and make sure you don't walk away from any smouldering embers.

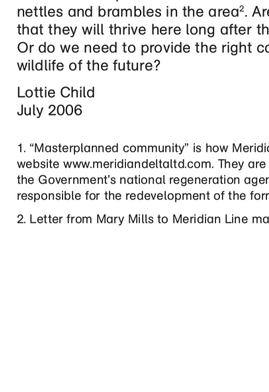
CAMPFIRE TIPS:

Clear a 3 metre (10 foot) diameter area for the dry wood
Remove any other grass, twigs, needles, firewood nearby that could catch fire.
Ideally, build a circle of rocks around your fire, to keep it from spreading.
Don't build a campfire on a windy day. Sparks and other burning material can travel large distances.
Try to keep your fire to a
When you've finished, make sure you put out the fire by pouring on lots of water.
Don't leave the fire until it's out cold and make sure you don't walk away from any smouldering embers.

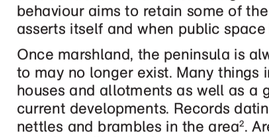
At this place which is soon to change forever, at the water's edge, by the fire, surrounded by a chaos of undergrowth, plants and objects displaced by the constantly shifting water, there is a view of the sky and the wide open river as well as Canary Wharf – a great spot for feeling like you're on an accidental holiday.

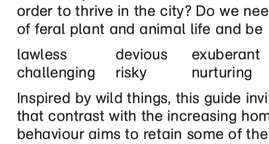
Playful activity 2 Cross the road from the fountain and play on the bike racks in the car park. Try balancing, swinging, going under over to the blank billboards of the back of the disused car park. In summer, you will see lavender, cocktails and, towards the end of September, you will see empty champagne bottles. During the winter, you might have fun playing football with a pebble. During the research for this guide, 23 people that security guards would normally intervene.

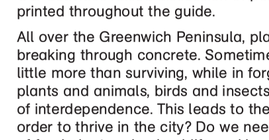
Exuberant activity If the fountain has water in it and it's a hot day, take your shoes and socks off and get in. If the fountain is switched off, you might have fun playing over the rocks. Then head over to the disused car park. In summer, you will see lavender, cocktails and, towards the end of September, you will see empty champagne bottles. During the research for this guide, 23 people had a picnic with homemade wildflower cordial and food made with organic vegetables given away at the end of a fruit and vegetable market.



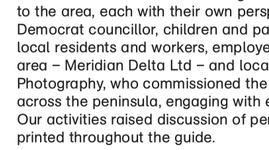
Potent activity Here you have a good view of Canary Wharf and the Millennium Dome. If you emerge from the undergrowth. When you are ready, with Canary Wharf in front of you, turn right and right again onto West Parkside. Walk past the blue fence and notice the diversity of plant life bursting through the fine mesh. You will come to a cut-through on your right. Turn down it until you join Millennium Way.

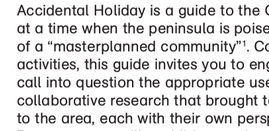






Sam – good food
Jess – freedom
Chris – sunshine
Herbie – cake
Lottie – seed bombs, a mixture of clay soil and wildflower seeds that are lobbed into spaces in need of plant diversity





Chris – a paddling pool
Alison – sole dancing water
Lottie – compost toilets. They often look like a normal toilet but have a container into which material such as straw, sawdust, dry grass, etc. are added to absorb excess liquid, cover sewage solids, exclude flies and reduce smells. Once full, the bucket is removed and emptied onto a composting pile. Why do we use clean drinkable water in order to make our waste disappear?

Lottie – to walk at night in high heels, without fear
Josh – to meditate
Helia – to act like a maniac

Deviant activity Head towards the underground station but don't go in. Turn left and walk along on your right. You will see a traffic island. Covered with small oval holes and bushes. Turn right and follow the concrete wall till you get to Blackwall Lane. Then head down to the river towards the jetty. Where you will see all kinds of flotsam and jetsam thrown up by the tide. You can find a good spot near the water to be the river towards Look around for some dry wood: play or game. Have fun. Try not to be seen as you leave the cover of the bushes, as they won't be expecting anyone to emerge here.

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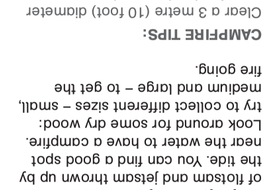
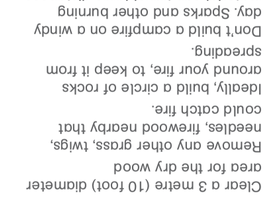
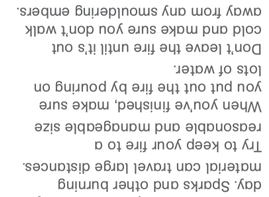
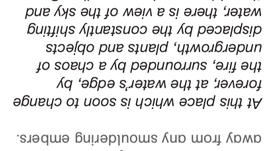
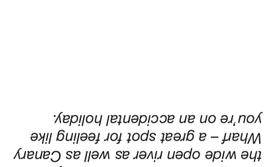
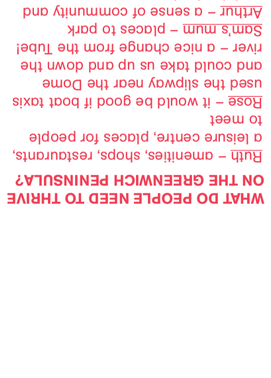
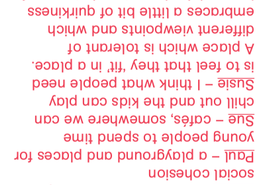
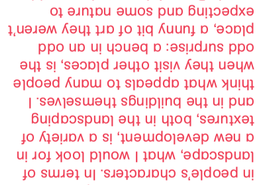
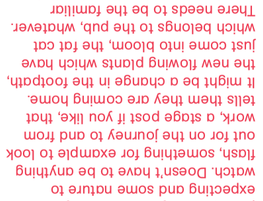
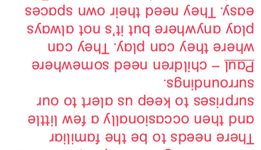
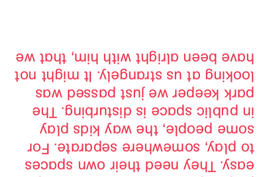
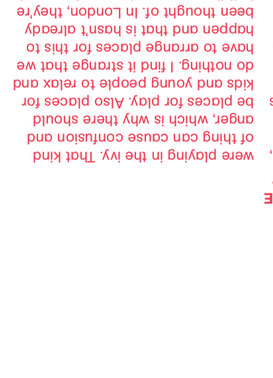
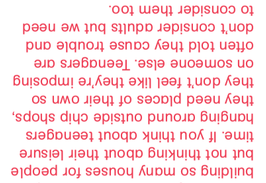
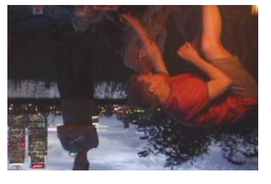
WHAT DO PEOPLE NEED TO THRIVE ON THE GREENWICH PENINSULA?

Built – amenities, shops, restaurants, a leisure centre, places for people to meet
Rose – it would be good if food toxis used the slipway for the Dome
Ivan – you a nice change from the Tube!
Santa mum – places to park
Rachel – a sense of community and social cohesion
Paul – a playground and places for young people to spend time
Sue – cafés, somewhere we can chill out and the kids can play
Susie – I think what people need is to feel that they 'fit' in a place. A place which is tolerant of different viewpoints and which embraces a little bit of quirkiness in people's characters, in terms of tales and viewpoints that are different to your own. Tolerance, a new development, is a variety of texture, both in the landscaping and in the buildings themselves. I think what opposite is many people work, a stage post if you like, that is reasonable and manageable size
When you've finished, make sure you put out the fire by pouring on lots of water.
Don't leave the fire until it's out cold and make sure you don't walk away from any smouldering embers.