

Neckinger

by Amy Sharrocks

The Neckinger River - and its connection to the Surrey Canal - was dowsed to Burgess Park on 24 June 2008 by Ana Laura Lopez de la Torre, Amy Sharrocks and Vicky Sweetlove. Its continuation to the Thames was dowsed on 22 July by Ana Laura Lopez de la Torre and Amy Sharrocks.

The course of the Neckinger River was then walked on the night of 23 September 2008, as a collaborative live art event by Ana Laura Lopez de la Torre and Amy Sharrocks, in the company of 25 people.

The Neckinger River was the first time I attempted to dowse (after coaching from Vicky). Ana Laura and I set off, and to our amazement dowsed almost the exact route that Vicky had remotely dowsed, happening upon a mass of watery coincidences all evening. At the end we dowsed our way right around the other side of Jacob's Island, where the river gives out onto the Thames: an extraordinary moment.

When we made our night-time walk along the Neckinger, we asked everyone to walk in silence. We became very aware of the contours of the land, and the city fell away. The sounds of leaves and footfalls are my only memories. We approached the city like orienteers: reading – or more precisely, not reading, but feeling - the city as a landscape, the swell and drop of it. There was a knowledge that our feet and bodies gained, and after a certain time, our feet seemed to know where to go.

We explored the sounds of a group silence, and a group speed, which slipped between maddeningly slow and too speedy. At this time, too, Martin Creed's runners were pegging it through the galleries at Tate Britain – going so fast while we went so slow. I was very aware of the lines we were all drawing across London.

"I can't tell you where it comes from. It comes from silence, most of it. I sit around and I'm waiting. I'm waiting and waiting"
Scott Walker interviewed in the Wire, May 1995.

