

Moving on with learning outside the classroom: reflections of developments in housing and public health walking apps

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Background & context

- Bringing the arts into science subjects
- How to make house history interesting and relevant to very mixed group of students
- Loss of practice/placement/work experience opportunities – how to replicate?
- (Then) MODA resources, other archives
- (Then) Twitter event for #HouseHistoryHour
- Led to local walking tour



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How it started ... a PDF and photovoice influenced walk

Walking Tour with Jill - Hendon - to age housing and also look at building construction and terminology



Look at clues to age and think of this as a 'shotvoice' (<http://shotvoice.org/>) type walk to capture information:

- 1) Street names, age plaques, architectural features.
- 2) Taking a picture as a visual collection: they're like this isn't it?
- 3) Do you see anywhere that may be a 'bad' in class?
- 4) What housing influences do you see? Where, why?
- 5) How many kWhs do you think you use?
- 6) When did building start in this part of London?
- 7) Do you see Victorian, Edwardian, and WW1, interwar suburbs? Where do you see the block of flats?
- 8) What is the date of the newest housing you see?
- 9) Do you see any wider environmental health issues of concern today?


Find other sources that can help you if you don't know the area, for example: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/uk-collections/landscapes>
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What were we hoping to achieve?

- Teaching and learning in a new and student-led way (initially to 'replicate practice')
- Some prompts to describe the route and housing they saw
- Learning activity attached to each, varied and optional so they could focus on what interested them




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Instructions (on paper):



- As you come to the end of Church Road you will see the Daniel Almshouses directly in front of you. These were originally constructed in 1737 under the Merchant Robert Daniel's will – have a look at the plaque. These Almshouses were intended for six men and four women who would receive three shillings a week and a loaf of bread at Christmas. The Almshouses were renovated with money granted in 1892 on request of one of the trustees.
- Learning activity: What are almshouses? What other examples do you know, perhaps near to where you live? What can you tell us about why they were originally built and who now lives there? What clues can you find on the exterior of the building that might indicate the kind of people who live here?



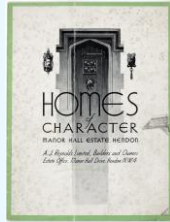
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A sense of rapid place change (previously capture in photographs)



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A sense of the past (e.g. suburbia, using MODA resources)



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Pilot

Student comments on the general experience of walking around Hendon

- "It was surprisingly enjoyable walking around Hendon and discovering the different types of housing that exist."
- "It was a very interesting experience because I saw how much the old buildings had changed..."
- "I enjoyed this activity and getting some fresh air whilst learning."
- "It was different..."
- "I would do all the classes this way"



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What did you find most interesting or surprising on the walk?

- "How varied the housing is within such a small radius – the garage sized properties down an alleyway were shocking and upsetting"
- "How much you walk past every day without noticing"
- "Surprised to see small houses or just rooms for people to live – it seems people with very low income lives there."



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Our reflections as lecturers

- We learnt lots, both about local history and new technology!
- We challenged ourselves to new things and invited students to do as well
- Ongoing approach as to what students would enjoy doing, completely different than sitting in a classroom
- Feedback was far better than we could have expected
- Could be easily adapted to other subject areas



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How it helped teaching 'back in the classroom'

- In the past, even with the more limited PDF based tour, some students said: "I'd never looked up before."
- We were able to refer back in later classes to some of the examples students looked at as "real life examples"
- It was useful for the lecturer to be able to draw in specific examples and see what especially interested students
- Students also had actual places and their location in mind
- Some appeared to be influenced in their interest and coursework subjects from the walk, notably almshouses
- Feedback said students planned to look up more about many things they had seen, one on "every stop we made"



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Enhancing the delivery and publishing our work (Current paper – in press)

- A Walk Through Housing History - an exploration of pedagogical benefits and student evaluation of walking tour to learn about the house history of the Hendon area
- Ethical clearance and Momentive questionnaire capturing data about the students' experience of the walking tour and how they felt it enhanced their learning as well as what they thought might be enhanced going forward
- Rich verbal responses, captured in forthcoming publication in a history journal
- Creative Histories in the Classroom: Walking Through Housing History
- Should be published soon – adds theory around enhanced learning through walking, immersion, enhanced connection with (historic) topic and heightened sense of place



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Learning 'outside the classroom' – some student perspectives

- 'Would have been enjoyable if the weather was more friendly: too cold'
- 'Kind of hidden quiet areas which came up unexpectedly'
- 'Behind the aims-house (visible over a side wall) showed a drastic difference to the front in terms of style and modernisation.'
- '[It] was useful to have some insight into the history. Questions were thought-provoking.'
- 'The design of the buildings are remarkably similar (to where I live) which suggests that these designs were copied nationally.'
- 'look more into historic construction methods.'
- 'Seems very cramped, spaces lent to residential that aren't suitable.'
- 'It's interesting to see how the development over the years has impacted upon the design of thoroughfares in the area. This will have an impact upon public health due to pollution and the lack of green space.'
- 'Building design for both HMO and single occupancy, to understand better, the thermal insulation, ventilation and sanitation issues that are presented to occupants which will have an impact upon their health'




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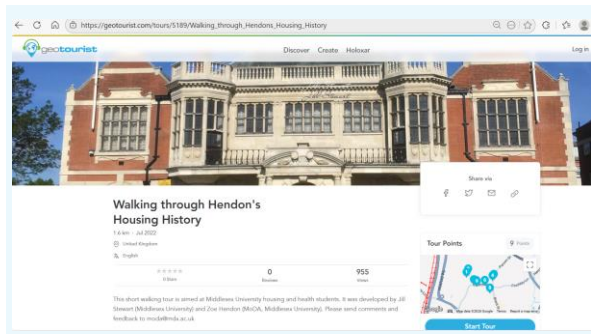
The next challenge:
 Finding a suitable platform that would meet all our needs and be more 'user friendly'

Geotourist

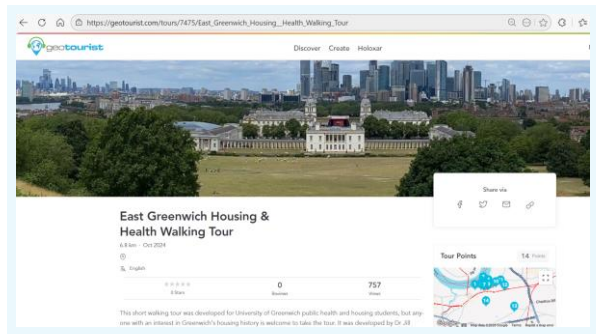
Can explore at the end of this presentation, subject to time



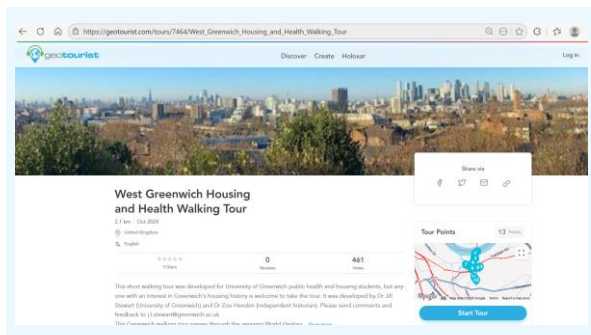
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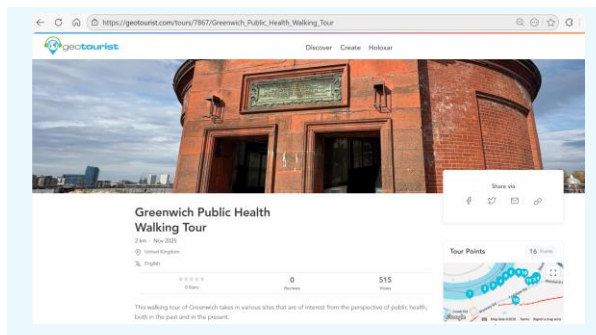
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Greenwich tour co-created with international masters level students

Used by students and wider community

Optional learning activity proved a great success in skills development (e.g. taking suitable photography, 'new' immersive type of research, exploring the links between housing, environment and health, succinct writing and making audio recordings for the app.

Also worked with new people and had fun!



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Impacts

- Co-creation of GeoTourist app-based walking tours, an innovative student-centred approach to experiential learning used by students and the wider public
 - KE – visual, audio, text, accessible, free
 - These tours have achieved 2,312 views/hits (02/2026), 2,693 (03/2026)
 - Publication (in press), disseminated at workshops and conferences
 - Other universities are now replicating this model
- [Walking through Hendon's Housing History | Tour Details – Geotourist](#)
 - Hits 958
 - [West Greenwich Housing and Health Walking Tour | Tour Details – Geotourist](#)
 - Hits 462
 - [East Greenwich Housing & Health Walking Tour | Tour Details – Geotourist](#)
 - Hits 758
 - [Greenwich Public Health Walking Tour | Tour Details – Geotourist](#)
 - Hits 515



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Sources:

- [Learning by walking: housing and health histories of Hendon and Greenwich – Housing Health Creativity](#)
- [A Walking Tour of East Greenwich](#)
- Hendon, Z. and Stewart, J (forthcoming 2026) Creative Histories in the Classroom: Walking through housing history, History Journal Special Issue, ed L. Matthews-Jones and C Feely



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