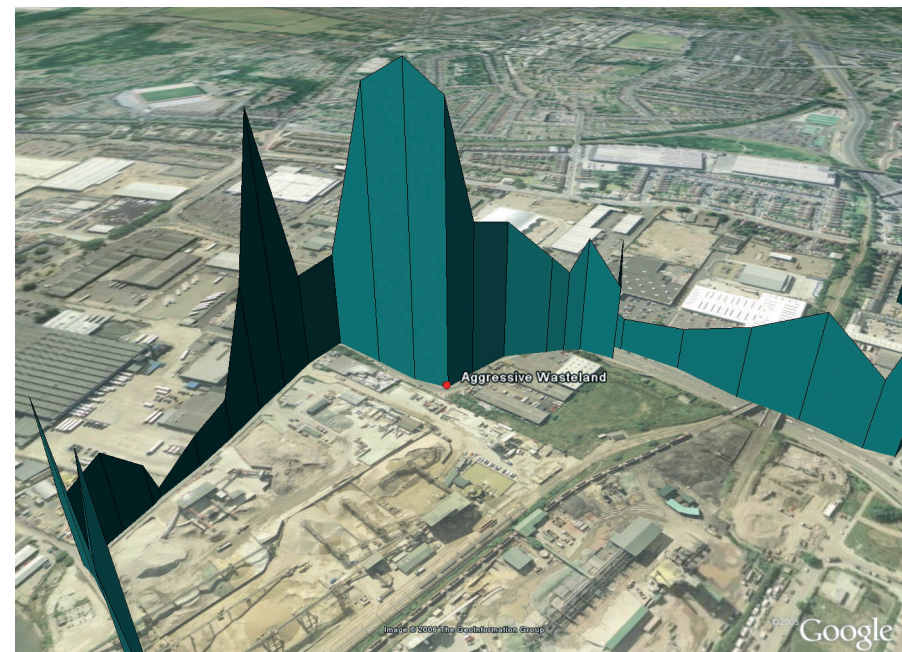


## Key

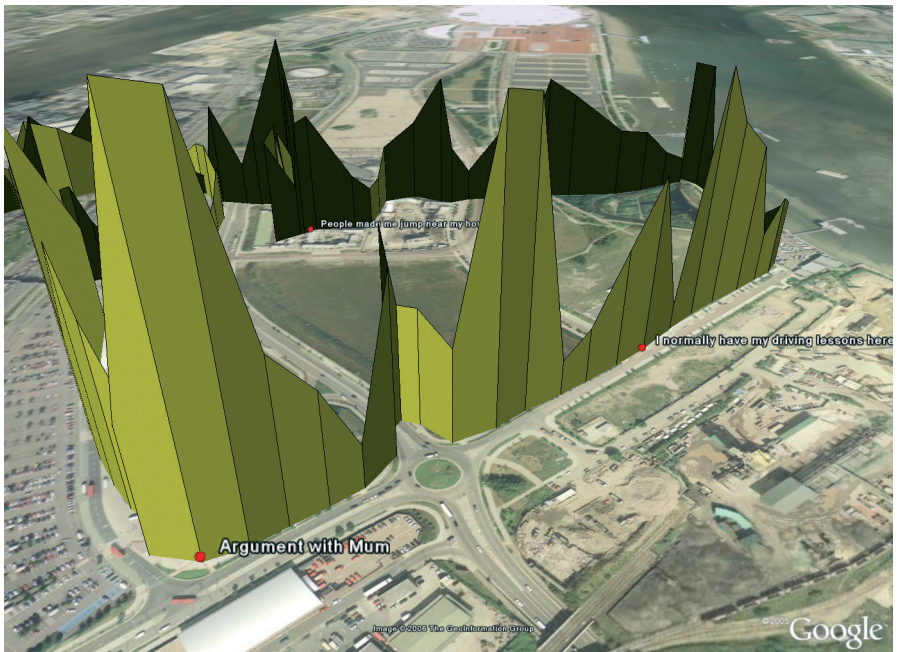
- Participant's track
- Arousal contour
- Location of participant's photograph
- Participant's annotation
- Communal arousal gradient
  - High Arousal
  - Low Arousal

Scale 1:3530

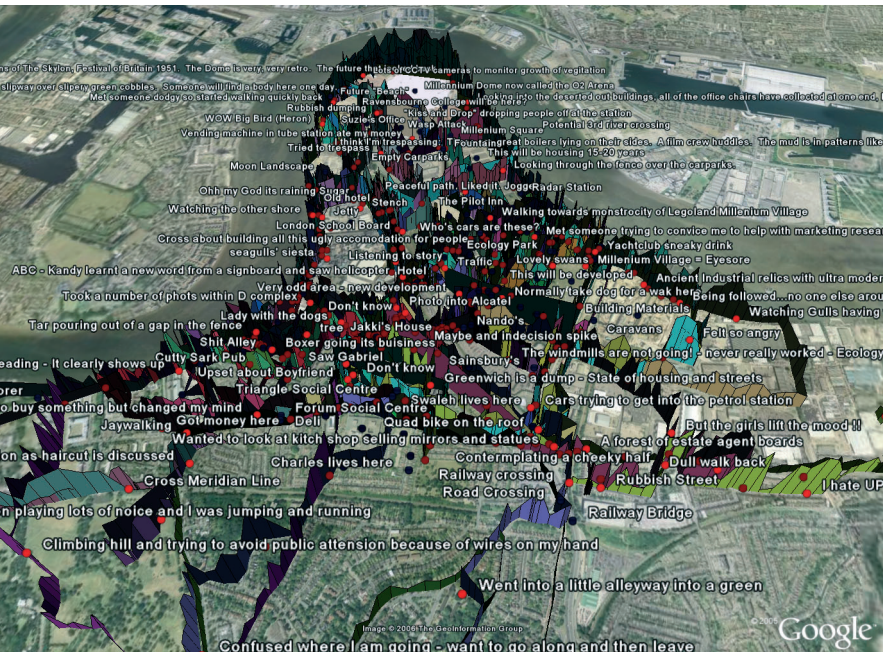
500 metres



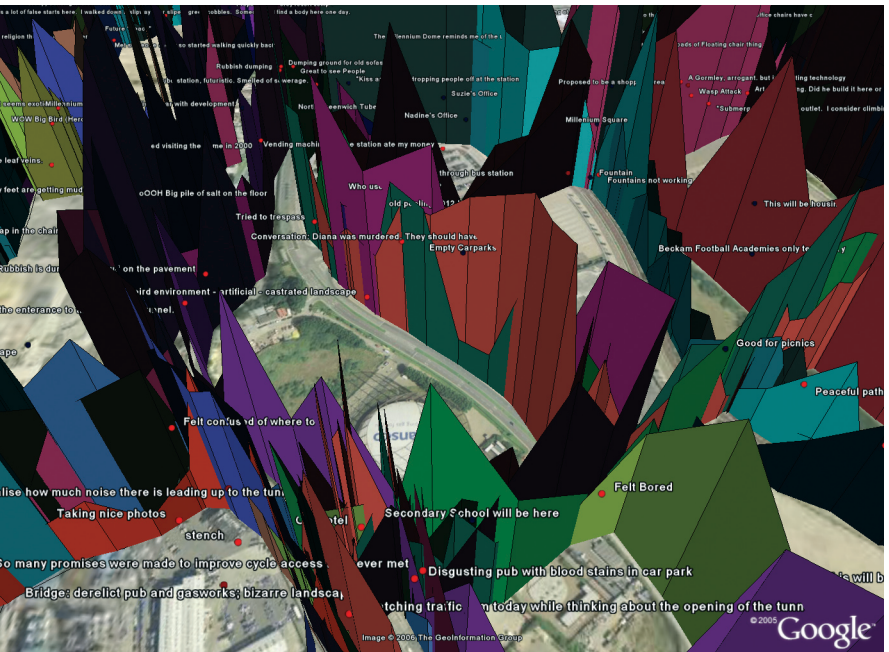
Scott's Bio Mapping track visualised with Google Earth



The peaks and troughs in Rebecca's Bio Mapping track indicate arousal



All the participants' Bio Mapping tracks shown simultaneously



Detail of multiple Bio Mapping tracks

## Participants



The "Greenwich Emotion Map" is part of a series of artists' commissions, called "Peninsula", organised by Independent Photography. "Peninsula" asks digital and media artists to respond to the social, human and physical environment of the Greenwich Peninsula, an area which will change radically over the next 10 years. The commissions are participatory and Peninsula Ward residents are invited to collaborate with the artists to produce new artworks, which are then exhibited and distributed locally and nationally. Independent Photography commissions artists for a range of collaborative programmes across the borough of Greenwich.

[www.peninsulaartists.com](http://www.peninsulaartists.com)  
[www.independentphotography.org.uk](http://www.independentphotography.org.uk)

## How was the Greenwich Emotion Map created?

All maps are a snapshot of a place at a specific moment. This is especially true of the Greenwich Emotion Map, which was created by local residents from the Greenwich Peninsula between October 2005 and March 2006.

In a project organised by the local arts organisation Independent Photography, more than 50 Greenwich residents worked with the artist Christian Nold to create a new map of the area. Backed by a series of weekly group workshops, they individually or in pairs re-explored the local area with the aid of a Bio Mapping device.



The Bio Mapping device was invented by the artist Christian Nold. It combines a finger cuff sensor, which records the wearer's Galvanic Skin Response (GSR) - an index of emotional response - in conjunction with a Global Positioning System (GPS) which locates the wearer's position on earth.

The finger cuff sensor was derived from the Polygraph, where it is used by law enforcement agencies to identify the physiological symptoms of stress induced by lying. Bio Mapping uses this technology very differently. Instead of handing over one's own biometric data to an authority for judging, Bio Mapping empowers the participants to interpret their body's metrics in a more subtle way for themselves.

From a common starting point the participants would walk for up to an hour wherever they wanted in the local area. On returning to the workshop base, they could see their walk represented visually as a personal 'emotion map'.



The track shows the wearer's geographical location while the height indicates the intensity of physiological response at any particular point. The response can be positive or negative and requires active interpretation to make sense of it. In the workshops each participant studied their own track and then talked in the group about their 'emotion map' in relation to their experiences on the walk. As a result of this reflection, they would then add annotations to points along their track that they considered memorable or important.

In this way more than 50 individual annotated tracks were gathered, combined and overlaid to create the communal Greenwich Emotion Map. On the map, the black lines show where all the participants walked. The most dense area near the centre of the map shows the starting point from which people chose to walk wherever they wanted. The coloured surface of the map represents the combined emotional data of all the participants. The contours connect points of individual response to form a communal skin that covers the entire map in a gradient of arousal. The intense red areas indicate hotspots of communal arousal, while the dark blue pools show areas of communal calm. People familiar with the area will recognise the outline of the Greenwich Peninsula but may be surprised that the contours fan out over the river Thames. This is not a map of geographical features but of emotions, which are triggered by many different stimuli including views of the river and beyond.

## What is the relationship between emotions and physical space?

This question has been a concern of many theorists from many disciplines but was perhaps most directly addressed by the Situationists in the late 1960s with their notion of psychogeography and their conceptual tool, the urban drift through the city. While these ideas are extremely interesting, the resulting maps tended to be disappointingly uncommunicative.

Drifting with the Bio Mapping equipment creates very different maps. The Greenwich Emotion Map, visible on the website and here in printed form, is a complex assembly of individual experiences at different perceptual levels that can be partially unravelled by the viewer. At a basic level the map shows a sensory space of embodied experience where personal response appears to be caused by a variety of visual, auditory, taste and smell stimuli. At another level, we seem to see the effects of the built environment represented by traffic crossings and comments about particular local features. But perhaps most striking is the prominence of a third level, that of people's social interaction. This social space - which might be seen as ephemeral and temporary, including as it does surprise meetings with friends, neighbours and strangers - appears to be more important than the other levels.

Rather than the continuous drifting through the city that the Situationists imagined, the Greenwich Emotion Map suggests an experience of the city as a series of distinct 'events', by which we mean moments of distinctive attention. The actual nature of these 'events' varies from meeting people, taking a photo, crossing roads, to being annoyed by one's surroundings. What these events have in common is an element of novelty which has caused the person's attention to become focused. This vision of the environment as a stage for events suggests an active engagement not covered by the normal concept of the 'walk' or 'drift'. It suggests an embodied being within the environment actively interacting with people, objects and places. Within this 'event space', a fork in the road causes a moment of indecision which competes for attention with the family argument taking place at the same time.

## How can you use this map?

While it may be tricky to use this map for straightforward orientation, exploring the peninsula with this map could be a very rich experience. One might, for example, plan a walk that followed all the places of high communal arousal, seeing the actual spaces, along with the map annotations gives some insight into other people's experience and knowledge of the area.

The map represents the Greenwich Peninsula as a living space of human activity where people interact with their environment as well as each other to generate feelings and opinions. This vision challenges the way our cities are officially represented and imagined in terms of important buildings and landmarks. The map also shows the limits and shaping of public space. Large areas of the map are not accessible because they are industrial complexes or fenced-off private land waiting to be developed.

The map is also a record of a particular moment on the Peninsula. The area is undergoing rapid change with hundreds of new homes being built on the currently fenced-off sites. Even during the course of this project, two of the major landmarks changed their names as they were taken over by other companies. In the future, it will be interesting to look back at the map as a discussion space containing strongly contradictory views on developments such as the Millennium Village.

We hope the map continues to be a discussion point and is of use in identifying and solidifying local issues of concern. It could be used to push for better pedestrian or cycle access or to save the Millennium café which is presently under threat. What is most important, though, is that the map reminds us of the diversity of the people who live, work, and walk in this area.

[www.emotionmap.net](http://www.emotionmap.net)

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The numbers indicate the locations where the photographs were taken