EXPLORING LONDON SINCE 2015

Neighbourhood Connections

NYU LONDON
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WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD CONNECTION!

By Chris Shia

WELCOME MESSAGE

Click on the photos and we will take you to some of the places that we visit

At the start of 2016, a new student programme was born, the 'Neighbourhood Connection'. It was apparent that many NYU students studying in London were not seeking out and visiting the many different and diverse neighbourhoods of London. Maybe it was because they did not know enough about them or there was some apprehension, something that is understandable given that people can be cautious about the unknown and unfamiliar. As a person who grew up in London and has a vast array of knowledge about London’s neighbourhoods and an interest in cities and urbanism, it led me to initiate an idea about having a series of ‘mini trips’ exploring London. It was an obvious way to contribute. We encourage students to engage with these Neighbourhood Connections, have fun and to seek places that you would like to perhaps re-visit or which may become a new favourite ‘hangout’. Engage with new people, make new friends and forge new bonds.

Each participant’s experience will be different but one thing that everyone has in common is that you are in one of the most exciting cities in the world so come and explore it with us and let us guide you!
WHAT IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD CONNECTION?

A neighbourhood is generally defined spatially as a specific geographic area (unitary boundary) and functionally as a set of social networks (defined by the people who live and work there).

A connection (in this context) is a relationship where a person is linked or associated with something else or the action of linking one thing with another. It can be linking people with each other or linking people with their surroundings.

A Neighbourhood Connection (NC) is not a traditional heritage tour but more like a walking conversation regarding neighbourhoods and how people use cities as places to live, work and play. They are not necessarily about buildings and heritage but a more personal take on the local culture. In that sense each person will have a different experience. What really makes London what it is are the people. An NC is an introduction to a neighbourhood that students may revisit on their own but experience it first hand with others. An NC will give participants a ‘true sense of the neighbourhoods past, present and perhaps an indication of its future. It can focus on virtually any aspect one can think of and the NC’s can be funny or serious, informative and exploratory; they may look at the history of a place or what is occurring there today. Simply, it is to make a connection with your fellow peers and that with your adopted city.

“No one can find what will work for our cities by looking at the boulevards of Paris, as the City Beautiful people did, and they can’t find it by looking at suburban garden cities, manipulating scale models, or inventing dream cities. You’ve got to get out and walk.”

— Jane Jacobs

The NC hosts (i.e. the RA’s) will not only share their knowledge and provide guidance but also encourage discussion and participation where opinions and stories are shared.

The NC series is part of the NYU London Residential Life programme and it is aimed at students who love to explore cities and want to explore them in ways other than on top of a tour bus or on a formal tour. These students want to see the city that exists in our minds and hopes and see the art, beauty and soul of place.

A Neighbourhood Connection will allow the participants to:

- Explore the underbelly of the ‘real’ London
- Improve their knowledge about the fabric of the city
- Learn more about where they are living and better understand their adopted city
- See something peculiar
- Make connections with other students
- Make connections or to discover things that resonate with themselves
- Find out about places that they are interested in and would like to revisit or ‘hang out’
- See a neighbourhood’s industries, people, commercial establishments, attractions and what makes it unique
- Explore places that are perhaps ‘lesser-known’
- Have a nice ‘neighbourhood’ meal together in a group setting
- Assist students in finding an identity with themselves
- Take great photos of unique and wonderful places
What do I bring?

- Comfortable footwear
- Water
- A camera
- An Umbrella (Hey, it’s London!)
- Yourself (Don’t Forget!)

How do I Get the Most Out of the Experience?

There is a lot to look at. This is urban exploration with its hidden alleyways and little corners. Walk free of distractions and walk mindfully. Be there in the moment and concentrate on what you are feeling, seeing and smelling. Don’t view what you experience through your smartphone. Observe what the people you encounter are doing or carrying, what are their expressions? Yes take photos but perhaps first understand what you are taking before you take it.

Keep an open mind, have a sense of wonder and closely observe the ordinary. Have that spontaneity but relax and live in the moment.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to pay to come along? Yes a deposit is required to sign up, which you get back if you attend.

I am nervous about coming by myself, should I be? No of course not, the RA’s will have icebreakers and introduce you to the other attendees.

What activities will there be on the day? There will be walking and exploring, eating and there will be a fun and interactive group game called ‘Truth or Rubbish’ will be played during each NC where participants have to decide whether a series of facts or questions about the area are true or false. The group that answers the most correct answers will receive prizes.

So is there always a meal on the day? Yes, the group will visit a local independent restaurant reflecting the diverse population of London.

How long does each Neighbourhood Connection last? Usually around half a day.

What hashtag should I use when posting photos or talking about the Neighbourhood Connection on social media? #neighbourhoodconnections
Useful links

Time Out: http://www.timeout.com/london/area-guides

Londonist: http://londonist.com/

London Town: http://bit.ly/1SFzGZn


Transport for London: https://tfl.gov.uk/
Brixton
Located in the Borough of Lambeth, South London, known for its vibrancy and multiculturalism. It's interesting to learn about the area and how it has changed over time. Students can also enjoy what the markets have to offer.

Greenwich
Students on a NC to Greenwich can take a boat along the River Thames to Greenwich Pier, experience a traditional pie and mash lunch at Goddards restaurant and visit the market. The highlight of this area is the walk up the hill to the Royal Observatory, where students can enjoy a great view and experience stepping on the prime meridian.

Walthamstow
This area, located in North East London, has changed a lot over the past few years, becoming much more 'trendy' but it still retains its authenticity. Some of the attractions include a traditional market, a lot of ethnic restaurants and God's Own Junkyard, the largest stock of vintage neons and signs in Europe.
Notting Hill
Well known for the homonymous film set here, Notting Hill has a lot to offer, from the beautiful colourful houses to one of the most famous markets in London, especially for its antiques.

Richmond
The main attraction of this area are Richmond Park, famous for its wildlife, including free roaming deer and the riverside. Besides exploring the wilderness, students can have lunch at Pembroke Lodge.

Shoreditch
This neighbourhood in East London has become famous for the nightlife, street art and markets, including Brick Lane and Old Spitalfields. There is a wide choice of things to buy and foods to eat, which reflects the diversity of the area.
EXAMPLE ITINERARY - WALTHAMSTOW

Shown above is a sample walking route of a Neighbourhood Connection to Walthamstow in North East London. It takes in several stops of real variety, with some attractions aimed at visitors and some aimed at local residents but they all merge together and anyone can enjoy and experience them in this very diverse part of London. To see the online (and interactive) version of this map then click on the map itself.
The Organisers’ View

“...The Neighbourhood Connections are as much fun to plan as they are to attend. After finally selecting the perfect location and time, we then put careful research into selecting the best restaurant in town for lunch. We also spend a lot of time researching the area and coming up with questions for the “truth or rubbish” game. By the time the event is all planned out, I am so excited to go visit the place that I spent so much time investigating online. Running the event helps me work on my leadership skills too because I am taking a group of students to a new place and trying my best to efficiently show them around, while simultaneously exploring the sites myself. The Neighbourhood Connections that I ran and those that I attended were both fun for different reasons. It feels really good to know that you took students to a place that they might not have visited if it wasn’t offered as a Neighbourhood Connection, especially if they all seem to be having a great time. It is also fun to attend the NC events to see what the other RAs found interesting or worth visiting in a different part of town. I definitely would recommend going to the Neighbourhood Connections because in my experience they have always been great fun with interesting sites, delicious food, and they are a good chance to meet students who also share an interest in exploring London.”

- Daniela Sorgente (Nia) NYUL Byron RA Spring 2016

The Student View

The Neighborhood Connections around London really helped. Even if I couldn’t go to them, I was able to learn that some place like that in London exists.

The Neighborhood Connections allow for culturally enriching and immersive experiences.

Loved the Neighborhood Connection trips.

I really enjoyed, and thought beneficial, the neighborhood excursions that the RA staff put on. It got me to explore areas I may not have gone to on my own.

Any cultural activity like Neighbourhood Connection or day-trips or even weekend-trips were fantastic for cultural exploration.

The Neighborhood Connections were a great way to see London and meet other students.

My favorite program was Neighborhood Connections. The RAs had a great sense of what students would be interested in and they were a lot of fun. It was interesting to see a part of London that I wouldn’t have gotten to on my own.
STUDENTS ON NCS

food

Exploring

Markets

FUN
Keep an eye out for the ResLife weekly e-mail (sent out every Sunday lunchtime) and the Facebook dorm groups to be aware of all the events organised by your RAs!

DoN'T MiSS OuT!