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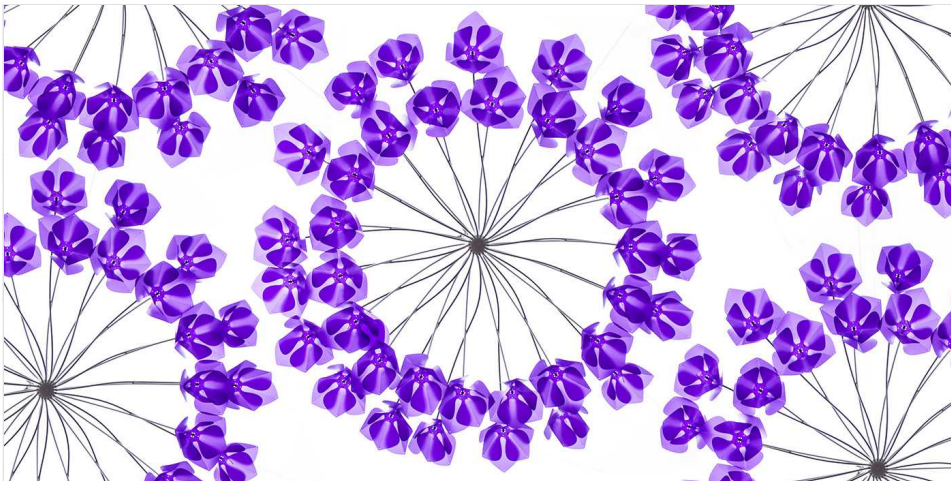
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CronxWire

Event review: Never Mind the Boxbark

By [Steve Thompson](#) - Tuesday 4th July, 2017

Instagrammers' tour of Croydon culture from punk to pop-ups



Crocus valley art installation in North End.
Image by the Whitgift Foundation, used with permission.

The fascinating 'Never Mind the Boxbark' walk was the brilliantly researched brainchild of Angela Martin and Julia Woollams of the [Croydonist](#). The Facebook description, "a collection of the best bits of the borough according to us", was particularly apt for this walk.

After meeting our small group at the foot of the No. 1 Croydon tower, also known as Threepenny Bit building, Angela and Julia's preparation was immediately apparent. We were given a postcard containing relevant social media handles and hashtags, along with safety guidelines. They had also saved a multitude of historical images onto an iPad, which helped to tell the back-stories of each location, including a number of film locations. Not being much of a film buff myself, I continually forget these, but Croydon is of course a very popular location for film-makers.

A quick stop at Dingwall Road was followed by a look at another Seifert building, Corinthian House. Opposite Dingwall Road is Boxbark, which is a symbol of the revitalisation of Croydon to some, but divided the opinions among the walkers. The Corinthian House shows the archetypal Seifert trademark of stilts at ground level.

It was so interesting to visit familiar places with unfamiliar people because there are always new things to



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We moved on to the 'space-landing' inspired buildings, the Lunar House and Apollo House, plus a smaller building that I never previously noticed, the Voyager House, which has four rather fine space-related mosaics on the entrance steps.

The Croydon School of Art was next. It's a brutalist building with some notable alumni such as David Bowie, Turner Prize nominees Helen Chadwick and Sean Scully, and the Sex Pistols manager Malcolm McLaren just to name a few. This led on nicely to St George's Walk, which has Gavin Kinch's punk artwork above the entrance and reproductions of old gig posters within to celebrate forty years since the first punk single, 'New Rose' by the Damned. The displays are perhaps lamenting the contemporary lack of medium-sized music venues in Croydon which play music other than grime, dubstep and other urban genres.

St George's Walk contains some amazing street art of widely varying styles. I particularly liked the couple of works by Mr Doodle and of course the Rise Gallery's. The owner of Rise Gallery, Kevin Zuchowski-Morrison, has been hugely responsible for the burgeoning street art scene in Croydon.

A look at the popular Winston Churchill mural by New Yorker David Hollier led to a special installation for the Croydon Heritage Festival by the entrance to the Whitgift Centre. The installation is a canopy of origami crocus flowers created by Aether & Hemera, and artists Gloria Ronchi and Claudio Benghi, as reference to the origin of the name Croydon, 'valley of the crocus'.

This walk was one of the highlights of the Croydon Heritage Festival



Boy soldier in Surrey Street.

Photo by Liz Sheppard-Jones, used with permission.

Although I have seen a number of Turf projects work both in Platform, Ruskin Square and in Wandle Park, I have never previously been inside the gallery on Keeley Road, which is my loss. The intriguing current exhibition, 'Last Words, so it goes', is well worth a visit and runs until 15th July.

There was more art in Surrey Street – as part of the market's regeneration project which is somewhat controversial and unpopular with the traders – such as the frequently lampooned neon work by Lauren Baker, 'A simple hello could lead to a million things', and the blue 'Boy Soldier' by Tristan Schoonraad, which depicts a boy holding a grenade. Schoonraad's work was installed, perhaps insensitively, only a few days after the terror attack on the Borough Market and London Bridge.

Finally we ended up at Reeves Corner, and heard the story of how the Reeves' furniture business, founded 150 years ago, became a victim of the 2011 riots, but part of original

site survived. Opposite the House of Reeves is the new Croydon Upcycling centre, which creates furniture from items such as old pallets. Next door Cr'Oyster Mushrooms grows oyster mushrooms on old coffee grounds collected from local cafés.

It was so interesting to visit familiar places with unfamiliar people because there are always new things to see and discover.

This walk was one of the highlights of the Croydon Heritage Festival and it is a credit to Angela and Julia that everyone had such a fascinating time that afternoon.



Corinthian House.

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Steve Thompson

I have been a Croydon resident for over 30 years, and have recently retired from a career in banking. Whilst appreciating many aspects of the regeneration of Croydon I do have a number of concerns about its effects. My main interests are rock music, walking, travel, and last but not least, good pubs and quality beer!

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