

## SWC Short Walk 12: Greenwich Park (Island Gardens to Cutty Sark)

Greenwich Park (Island Gardens to Cutty sark)		
1 <sup>st</sup> walk check	2 <sup>nd</sup> walk check	3 <sup>rd</sup> walk check
27 August 2019		
Current status	Document last update: 23 August 2019	

This document and information herein are copyrighted to Saturday Walkers' Club. If you are interested in printing or displaying any of this material, Saturday Walkers' Club grants permission to use, copy, and distribute this document delivered from this World Wide Web server with the following conditions:

- The document will not be edited or abridged, and the material will be produced exactly as it appears. Modification of the material or use of it for any other purpose is a violation of our copyright and other proprietary rights.
- Reproduction of this document is for free distribution and will not be sold.
- This permission is granted for a one-time distribution.
- All copies, links, or pages of the documents must carry the following copyright notice and this permission notice:

Saturday Walkers' Club, Copyright © 2009-2019, used with permission. All rights reserved. [www.walkingclub.org.uk](http://www.walkingclub.org.uk)

This walk has been checked as noted above, however neither the publisher nor the author can accept responsibility for any problems encountered by readers.

- Start:** Island Gardens DLR (or Canary Wharf Jubilee Line exit (DLR side))
- Finish:** Cutty Sark DLR/Greenwich or Maze Hill Mainline/Thames Clipper
- Length:** 4 miles/6 km (6 miles/8 km if starting from Canary Wharf)
- Difficulty:** 2
- Time:** 2 hours if starting from Island Gardens/3 hours from Canary Wharf
- Options:** You can lengthen the walk by starting in Canary Wharf -- this route starts in a thriving business capital of London and takes you along **historic docklands** and through a **city farm** before passing by the **Island Gardens DLR** where you can continue with the main route. For this option, see the instruction **From Canary Wharf** at the end of the main instructions.

### From Island Gardens DLR Station:

1. Leaving the DLR station, cross the road and carry on ahead along the Thames Path down Douglas Path with playing fields on the left. In 75 meters cross over a road and carry on ahead through the black iron gate into Islands Gardens Park with the domed entrance to the foot tunnel visible ahead. Before entering the tunnel, detour slightly left for a grand view of the Greenwich waterfront – most notably the Old Royal Naval College buildings and the Queen's House explored more fully during the rest of the walk.
2. After admiring the view, return to the foot tunnel entrance and enter the **Greenwich Foot Tunnel** (note the narrow section at the beginning, a repair made to damage suffered by the tunnel during a 1940s blitz attack -- the tunnel was an essential part of the war effort, allowing the movement of people across the river).

**Greenwich Foot Tunnel:** Opened on 4 August 1902 to replace an expensive and unreliable ferry service used by workers living south of the Thames to reach the dockyards in or near the Isle of Dogs. It is made from cast iron and is 1,215 feet (370.2m) long and 50 feet (15.2m) deep.

3. Emerge from the foot tunnel with the mighty **Cutty Sark** and all of her rigging immediately ahead.

**Cutty Sark:** means "short chemise" in 18<sup>th</sup> century Scottish....She was built in Glasgow in 1869 and was one of the last (and fastest) tea clippers to be built before steam ships came on the scene. She then turned to the wool trade with Australia. At one point, she sailed by the name *Ferreira* under a Portuguese flag. She is one of only 3 remaining composite construction ships (wooden hull on an iron frame).

4. After admiring the Cutty Sark, turn hard left (almost back on yourself to the railings along the Thames). Follow the railings with the river and pier on your left and some concessions on the right. In about 100 meters, the concessions end and you curve right along the river towards the buildings of the **Old Royal Naval College** (with a view of the Greenwich Power Station ahead). In 40 meters, turn left to follow the Thames Path along the river's edge, eventually along a narrow path between iron fencing.

**Old Royal Naval College:** is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Described by UNESCO to be the "finest and most dramatically sited architectural and landscape ensemble in the British Isles". The buildings were originally constructed to serve as the **Royal Hospital for Seamen** (1692-1869) and was designed by Christopher Wren. It was built between 1696 and 1712 on the grounds of the former Tudor **Greenwich Palace** (previously known as the Palace of Placentia (prior to Henry VII's redevelopment of the property)), birthplace of Henry VIII, Mary I and Elizabeth I. Greenwich Palace was reputedly Henry VIII's favorite palace – but it fell into disrepair during the English Civil War and was torn down in 1694 to make way for the Hospital (some remains exist in the basements of the present buildings – most notably the building containing the Painted Hall). The **Chapel** and **Painted Hall** are highlights.

5. In 150 meters you reach a large black gate on the right, where you turn right up some steps into the grounds of the naval college (now part of the Greenwich University campus) with two impressive building on either side (if the gate is closed for some reason, carry on ahead and turn right in front of the Trafalgar Tavern and in 70 meters where there is a large gate on your right pick up with the instructions at point 9). As an optional extra, if the tide is out, you may enjoy going down the steps on the left to the beach to walk along the beach and up the steps 65 meters ahead – at the top of the steps turn hard right back on yourself to return along the narrow path to the black gate and turn left up the steps.

6. In 85 meters cross over a tarmac road and continue up some steps on the far side (note, in the building on the left, is the **Chapel** (worth a quick look if open) and, in the one on the right, the recently refurbished **Painted Hall** (ticket required) with the **Queen's House** now visible ahead and the **Royal Observatory** visible slightly to the right.

**Queen's House:** Built as an adjunct to the Tudor Palace of Greenwich between 1616 and 1635 by architect Inigo Jones, originally for Anne of Denmark (the queen of James I) who died before it was completed and then for queen consort Henrietta Maria who was given the house by Charles I. It was effectively a small "garden house" to the larger rambling Tudor palace and was used by the queen's inner circle. It is noteworthy as the first consciously classical building constructed in England.

7. At the top of the steps, turn left and in 20 meters turn right to walk down the colonnade. In 60 meters at the end of the colonnade, you have a choice,
  - a. if the iron gate across the road is open (usually before 6 or 7pm), you can walk through the museum grounds (recommended), turn right and in 120 turn left through the bollards and iron gate to cross the road at the crossing and turn left. In 50 meters turn right into the grounds of the **National Maritime Museum** and head towards the museum. In front of the museum turn left and then turn right when you reach the edge of the building with Queen's House on the left. Walk up the steps and turn left along the breezeway and in 50 meters walk under the Queen's House and up onto the next breezeway where you turn right and turn right again in 20 meters to the front of the Queen's House where you turn left towards a hopefully open door and some steps down and back up into **Greenwich Park** where you turn left on a wide tarmac path. In 100 meters (with a boating pond ahead on the right), turn right up an even wider tarmac path and pick up with point 9.
  - b. if the iron gate across the road is closed (usually about 6 or 7pm), the museum grounds are closed and you will need to turn right and pick-up with point 8.
8. Turn hard right (back the way you came) to walk towards the river between the two main buildings of the naval college. In 60 meters, go back down the steps and turn right along the tarmac road. In 150 meters go through a large open gate to exit the college grounds and turn immediately right.
9. In 100 meters cross Romney road at the traffic lights and carry on ahead to enter **Greenwich Park** in 150 meters.
10. In 30 meters, with a boating pond ahead on the left, carry on ahead up a very wide tarmac path and in 140 meters at a 6-way junction, [!] take the path second from the left heading *profoundly* uphill and, in 150 meters at the top of **One Tree Hill**, turn right towards a bench encircled tree to catch your breath with a great view of London from the London Eye to the Shard to the City and then Canary Wharf.
11. After admiring the view, retrace your steps to the path you took up the hill and turn right along its continuation (a tarmac path along a flat plateau). In 200 meters at a 6-way junction (and gate ahead) turn half right onto the middle of three path options (away from the gate) along a

tarmac path. In 60 meters, you will notice a large grassy mound on the right, this is the site of an **ancient Roman temple**. There is an interesting info panel ahead on the right on the far side of the mound under some trees with an illustrative depiction of the structure.

**Ancient Roman Temple:** Thought to be a Roman-Celtic temple used extensively between AD 43-410. This spot is near the road between the Kent ports and London and may have been frequented by travelers. The site was first excavated in 1902.

12. After exploring the area and reading about the temple, return to the tarmac path and with your back to the info panel and mound, turn right to head across a grassy plateau towards some small trees with the temple remains behind you. In 200 meters at a tarmac path, turn left.
13. In 70 meters at a large junction of paths turn right through an iron gate to enter into the **flower garden**. [!] In 70 meters where there is both an earth and gravel track on the left, turn left into the thicket on the first of the two tracks (the earth one) and in 50 meters you reach an enclosure for the **Greenwich Deer Park** often with some deer hanging out in this area. After admiring the deer, retrace your steps back towards the path, but, in 10 meters, fork left to continue along through the thicket with the deer fence on your left. In 80 meters fork left and ignore all ways off to emerge, in 40 meters, back onto the tarmac path in the flower garden where you turn left.
14. In 25 meters at a T-junction turn right and in 80 meters turn left. In 30 meters pass a pond on the left and in a further 15 meters turn left. In 130 meters at a T-junction, turn right and in 75 meters go through a gate and carry on ahead across a road with parking on the side. On the far side of the road veer slightly right to skirt around the right-hand side of a toilet block. In 100 meters at a tarmac path, turn right. In 100 meters carry on ahead at a cross-paths and in 50 meters with a well-manicured hedge off to the left, veer left towards the hedge to examine **Queen's Caroline's Bath**.

**Queen Caroline's Bath:** Queen Caroline was the estranged wife of King George IV and lived at Montague House on the edge of Greenwich Park from 1798-1813. She held notoriously boisterous parties and rumors circulated that she had an illegitimate child. A Royal commission cleared her of adultery but said her behavior was open to "unfavorable interpretations". She left England in 1814 and Montague House was demolished, leaving just the outline of her bath.

15. Return to the tarmac path and continue ahead to, in 50 meters, enter the **Rose Garden** with the **Ranger's House** on the left. In 100 meters exit the garden and carry on ahead. In 75 meters at a round bench in the midst of a 5-way junction with a gate to the left, take the path half right. In 140 meters' you pass a **Henry Moore** sculpture (*Large Standing Figure: Knife Edge*) on the right (this area is also the site of an **Anglo-Saxon Barrow Cemetery**) to start a steep descent.
16. In 140 meters cross over a road through the park and, in 40 meters, fork right uphill. In 40 meters, cross a round area to carry on steeply uphill on the right-hand path.
17. In 110 meters, at the top of the hill you reach the **Royal Observatory** on the right. If you want the quintessential Greenwich experience to straddle the East-West divide in one step, turn hard

right (almost back on yourself) through a gate to find the **Prime Meridian** 10 meters ahead. After straddling the hemispheres, return to the front of the Observatory and admire the unique 24-hour clock by the gate. When finished, turn left to head towards the General Wolfe statue and enjoy the vast view of London, Canary Wharf, the Old Royal Naval College and the Queen's House.

**Royal Observatory:** Was commissioned in 1675 by Charles II on a site chosen by Christopher Wren. It has played a major role in the history of astronomy and now mainly serves as a museum. It best known for the fact that the Prime Meridian runs through it.

**Prime Meridian:** Is a meridian (a line of longitude) defined as 0°. It was established in 1851.

18. After admiring the view, turn your back on it and turn left down a tarmac path that runs along the crest of the hill (note: the Orbit sculpture in Stratford is visible in the distance). In 150 meters at a T-Junction, carry on a head to see the **Queen Elizabeth Tree** (every Royal Park should have one). Facing the tree, turn left along the tarmac path heading downhill. In 150 meters at a junction of paths, turn right. In a further 150 meters you have a choice:
  - a. If before 8:30pm, carry on ahead to exit the park through the gate you entered in about 100 meters, turn right to find the **Plume of Feathers** pub (the recommended food and bevie stop) 50 meters ahead on the left.
  - b. If after 8:30 and you want food, veer half left on a tarmac path to exit the park in 350 meters through a large gate. You will find the **Greenwich Tavern** on the left and host of other hostelries 100 meters up the road.

#### From Canary Wharf:

1. Exiting the Jubilee Line tube station, turn left and walk towards a glass building with Orbica written on the front.
2. In 75 meters enter the glass building and walk straight through to exit on the far side just in front of a pedestrian bridge. Cross the bridge and turn left on the far side.
3. In 100 meters, just past the Hafezz bar, turn right away from the dock to diagonally cross a pedestrian plaza.
4. In 100 meters cross under the DLR line and then over a road and turn left.
5. In 50 meters, in front of the South Quay DLR station, turn right to walk along a dock (on your left).
6. In 100 meters, in front of the Pepper Saint Ontiod pub, turn left to cross a bridge over the dock and turn right to carry along with the dock now on your right.
7. In 175 meters follow the edge of the dock around to the left and in a further 85 meters continue around the dock (with info panel on right). In a further 45 meters, where there is a diving/observation platform jutting into the dock, turn left up some steps to then drop down some steps under the DLR line; go back up the steps, cross the road and turn right.
8. In 10 meters veer half left up the footpath under a trellis; through the trellis carry on in the same direction along a path, through a gate and up more steps.
9. At the top of the steps turn right onto the path with open grassland on your left.

10. In 50 meters just before a black fence, turn left down some steps with an open field on your left and paddocks on your right. In about 100 meters, the paddocks on the right have sheep and alpacas. **Welcome to the Mudchute City Farm!**
11. In a further 80 meters, pass through a usually open field gate and notice the interesting WW2 gun emplacement on the right.
12. About 20 meters after the gun emplacement, turn right to walk along the path between various animal enclosures.
13. In 75 meters follow path around to the right; in a further 50 meters at a path junction in front of a pig enclosure; fork left between the pig paddocks (be careful – pigs bite!). Follow this path around to the left, soon with allotments on the right. Eventually go up some steps, across a path, down steps, across a car-wide track and back up some more steps to turn left on a narrow elevated path.
14. In 110 meters follow path as it curves around to the left and in a further 15 meters turn right down the steps under a trellis and turn right across a grassy area. In 30 meters rejoin a brick pathway and turn right for 10 meters; then left towards a large athletic field to carry along the tarmac path along left-hand side of this field.
15. In 200 meters at a circular space with a sculpture in the middle, turn left around the outer edge and head towards the **Island Gardens DLR station** ahead where you can pick up the main walk instructions.