

Rotherhithe (away from the river)		
1 st walk check	2 nd walk check	3 rd walk check
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Rotherhithe (away from the river)

Start: Bermondsey Underground **Finish:** Canada Water, Rotherhithe or Bermondsey Under-/Overground

Length: 7.3 km/4.5 mi (up to)

Ascent: negligible

Time: 1 ¾ hours

Transport: Bermondsey and Canada Water Underground stations are served by the Jubilee Line. Canada Water lies at the junction with the former East London Line, now part of the Overground, which also stops at Surrey Quays and Rotherhithe. All those stations are passed en route and in Travelcard Zone 2.

Walk Notes:

This varied route explores parks and waterways on the Rotherhithe peninsula rarely seen by occasional visitors, who tend to follow the Thames Path.

Start from Bermondsey tube near the boundary with Rotherhithe, following a meandering route through the well-kept Southwark Park, then cut across to Greenland Dock, one of the few remnants of the once ubiquitous ponds and water channels of the Surrey Commercial Docks, used mainly for timber and grain trading, before walking along the spine of the peninsula through the enchanting Russia Dock Woodland, an infilled dock with plenty of visible reminders of its past.

A short loop through the Stave Hill Ecology Park leads up to one of the finest low viewpoints in town: Stave Hill, a 9-metre artificial mound with surround views to the Olympic Park, Canary Wharf, the City of London, Westminster and most high points in South East London.

You then skirt around Surrey Water and follow the well-maintained Albion Channel (more remains of the former docks and quays) to Canada Water, currently one of London's largest regeneration sites, before a final loop through the historic Rotherhithe village and – for a short stretch – along the Thames River, passing some famous pubs and ending back in Bermondsey.

Southwark Park closes at night, check page 2 for the exact times. Russia Dock Woodland is open 24 hours.

Walk Options:

Surrey Quays, Canada Water and Rotherhithe stations are passed en route, as are several bus stops, enabling **later starts/earlier finishes**.

Refreshments

Southwark Park Pavilion Café, lakeside, Southwark Park; **The Yellow House**, Lower Road, Surrey Quays; **The Moby Dick** (Fuller's), Greenland Dock; **Leadbelly's Bar & Kitchen**, Deal Porter Square, Canada Water; **The Brunel**, Swan Road, Rotherhithe; **The Mayflower** (The Black Dog Pub Company), Rotherhithe Street, Rotherhithe Village; **Simplicity Café & Restaurant**, Tunnel Road, Rotherhithe Village; **The Watchhouse Café**, St. Marychurch Street, Rotherhithe Village; **The Ship**, St. Marychurch Street, Rotherhithe Village; **The Angel** (Sam Smith's), Bermondsey Wall East, Rotherhithe; **The Gregorian** (Antic Collective Pub Company), Jamaica Road, Bermondsey.

Notes

Bermondsey Station

... is in the eastern part of Bermondsey and also serves the western part of Rotherhithe. It has been built as part of the Jubilee Line Extension between London Bridge and Canada Water stations and is notable for its extensive use of natural light, achieved by latticed concrete beams letting light penetrate to the platforms.

Rotherhithe

Rotherhithe lies on a peninsula in a bow of the Thames River on formerly marshy land unsuitable for farming, opposite Wapping, Shadwell and Limehouse on the north bank and Poplar and Millwall on the Isle of Dogs. The name derives from the Anglo-Saxon *Hryðer-hȳð*, meaning "landing-place for cattle". In the past Rotherhithe was also known as Redriff/Redriffe and it borders Bermondsey to the west and Deptford to the south east. Originally the most north easterly part of Surrey, it became part of the Metropolitan Borough of Bermondsey from 1900 to 1965. The Borough of Bermondsey was then amalgamated with Southwark and Camberwell Boroughs to become the modern-day London Borough of Southwark.

Rotherhithe has a long history as a port, with many shipyards from Elizabethan times until the early 20th century and with working docks until the 1970s. All but a few of these have since been demolished, infilled and developed for housing.

Famously, in 1620 The Mayflower sailed from Rotherhithe with its cargo of Pilgrims, and in the 19th century, the Brunels (father and son) built the Thames Tunnel, the first underwater tunnel in the world, linking Rotherhithe to Wapping (it is now part of the Overground railway).

As a legacy of the former strong trade links to Scandinavia and the Baltic region, the area is still home to a thriving Scandinavian community and to Norwegian, Finnish and Swedish churches, which were originally established as seafarer's missions. During WWII, Rotherhithe housed the Norwegian Government-in-Exile.

Southwark Park

Southwark Park is located in Rotherhithe, and is managed by the London Borough of Southwark. It was first opened in 1869 by the Metropolitan Board of Works as one of its first parks and covers 250,000 m².

Although now within the modern-day London Borough of Southwark, at the time of its opening Rotherhithe was part of Surrey, so it is thought that the park's name was chosen to reflect the then Parliamentary constituency of Southwark.

Facilities include: a (replica of a) bandstand from 1884, originally sited in the Royal Horticultural Society grounds at South Kensington, an Old English Cottage-garden, a rose garden, a wildlife garden, a café, a boating lake and Southwark Park Galleries (split over two buildings). Sports facilities include an athletics track, a bowling green, football pitches, a cricket pitch and tennis courts. The park also has a children's playground on the site of a former lido. <http://www.friendsofsouthwarkpark.co.uk/>

Closing times: 17.00 Jan, 18.00 Feb, 18.30/20.00 Mar, 20.30 Apr, 21.00 May, 21.30 Jun & Jul, 21.00 Aug, 20.00 Sep, 19.00/17.00 Oct, 17.00 Nov, 16.30 Dec.

Greenland Dock/Surrey Commercial Docks

The Surrey Commercial Docks were a large group of docks in Rotherhithe, located on the south bank (the Surrey side) of the River Thames. The docks operated in one form or another from 1695 to 1969. Most were subsequently filled in and redeveloped for residential housing, and the area is now known as Surrey Quays, although the name Surrey Docks is retained for the electoral ward.

The area had long been associated with maritime activities: in July 1620 the Mayflower sailed from Rotherhithe to New England, and a major Navy dockyard was located just down the river at Deptford. The oldest of London's riverside wet docks, Howland Dock (after the family who owned the land) was laid out between 1695 and 1699 to form the largest dock of its time, able to accommodate 120 ships. By the mid-18th Century, the dock had become a base for Arctic whalers and was renamed Greenland Dock.

By the 19th century an influx of commercial traffic from Scandinavia and the Baltic (principally timber) and Canada (foodstuffs) led to Greenland Dock being greatly expanded and more docks being dug for the increasing number of vessels. Eventually, 85% of the peninsula (1.9 km²), was covered by a system of nine docks, six timber ponds and the Grand Surrey Canal. Several of the docks were named after the origins of their cargoes, hence Canada Dock, Quebec Pond, Norway Dock, Russia Dock. The decline set in after massive bomb damage in WWII, and was then hastened by the containerisation of global trade.

The surviving areas of open water are: Greenland Dock, Surrey Dock (now Surrey Water), South Dock (a marina), remnants of Canada Dock (now Canada Water) and Norway Dock (re-dug after infill).

Russia Dock Woodland

Russia Dock Woodland is a wooded linear park of 140,000 m², created by the infilling of Russia Dock (originally: Grand Surrey Inner Dock), save for a thin 'stream' through the woodland. The dock was originally used for importing softwood timber from Norway, Russia and Sweden. Known as "deal wood", it was mostly used for newsprint and for manufacturing furniture. The woodland still contains surviving dock features including the retaining wall capstones, depth gauges, bollards, mooring chains and crane tracks.

Stave Hill Ecology Park

Stave Hill Ecology Park is a 21,000 m² nature area located on the infilled site of the former Stave Dock in the centre of the former Surrey Commercial Docks.

WALK DIRECTIONS

Emerging from **Bermondsey Station**, *turn right* along **Jamaica Road**, immediately crossing Keaton's Road. You pass a long row of shops, en route crossing Drummond Road and **Southwark Park Road** (at a set of lights), now crossing into **Rotherhithe**. In another 130m you pass **Scout House**, the last house on the right, and *turn right* through **Christ Church Gate** into **Southwark Park** (SP). Take the left of two wide tarmac paths under mature plane trees, passing a map of the park. In 140m you pass an info panel on the **SP Bandstand** and cross the circular gravel area to the right of the bandstand. In 60m, on the far side of the gravel area, continue in the same direction along a tarmac path, signed 'Bowls Club, Tennis Courts, The Lake, Jamaica Gate'. In 70m, by an info panel by the **Jabez West Drinking Fountain**, you *bear right* to the right of the **SP Bowls Club**. In 90m *bear right* along tarmac, where the hedge and main path curve to the left. In 40m *turn left* at a T-junction of paths and in 70m go through wrought iron gates either side of a crossing road to enter the southern part of the park.

In 25m pass an info panel for the **Caryatides of Rotherhithe Old Town Hall**, on display 20m away in some flowerbeds. In 20m *bear left* with the iron fence on the left. In 60m *turn left* through an iron gate into the **Ada Salter Garden** [Ada was one half of a local political power couple, both socialists, social reformers and councillors at the beginning of the 20th Century; she went on to become the first female Mayor in London (of the Borough of Bermondsey) and President of the National Gardens Guild]. You pass an info panel en route as you walk along the northern shore of the **SP Lake** and in 80m *turn right* at a T-junction of paths and follow the lake's shore (behind trees initially). In 50m you pass to the right of a children's playground (on the footprint of a former lido) and in 80m go between the main building of the **SP (Art) Gallery** on the left (notice the multi-directional signpost, an artwork) and the **Southwark Park Pavilion Café** on the right (open to about 18.30 in summer). *Turn right* at a T-junction of paths.

You have a large grassy area on the left, used as cricket and football pitch as well as event space. In 100m you pass the **Boating Pavilion** and *turn left* at a T-junction of paths, signed 'Dilston Grove'. In 100m ignore a right turning path to another exit and pass the **Dilston Grove** building (an ex-church, now secondary venue for SP Gallery). In 110m you pass a fenced children's playroom on the left and in another 75m *bear left* inside the park, ignoring a right turn to the **Hawkstone Gate**. The path leads to the left of the fenced **SP Sports & Athletics Centre** first and then to the right of the grassy sports field. In 220m *fork right* with the fence and head towards the **China Hall Gate** to leave the park in 100m onto (Deptford) **Lower Road**. *Bear to the right* along the pavement and in 50m you pass the **Yellow House Bar & Kitchen** and reach a busy multi-road junction opposite **Surrey Quays Overground** Station.

Turn left to the other side of Lower Road, using three sets of lights to get there. *Turn right* along the opposite pavement, with the railway below on the left behind a high wall. In 50m *turn left* through bike barriers and in 20m cross **Deal Porters Way** in the grounds of the **Surrey Quays Shopping & Leisure Centre**. You *turn right* to stay to the right of the Shopping Centre and to the left of some bus stops. In 120m continue in the same direction along a gently descending path, ignoring a right forking pavement. The path curves to the left and in 60m you *turn right* with it to go under **Redriff Road** and then under the (redundant) **rolling bascule lift bridge** [the path you walk along was a channel linking Canada Dock and Greenland Dock]. You emerge on the shores of **Greenland Dock** by an info panel on its history, with many of Canary Wharf's higher buildings beyond its far shore. You *turn left* along the dock, signed 'Surrey Docks Farm, Russia Dock Woodland'. **[!] But the most complete views of Canary Wharf** can be had from a position about 100m to the right. **[!]**

In 60m *bear right* with the dock's shore, now with an old iron crane track in the paved ground. You have a tree-lined residential road (Brunswick Quay) on the left. In 240m *turn left* to the left of an inlet (the historic link channel to Russia Dock) and in 40m *turn right* with the shore, with **The Moby Dick** pub now ahead. [!] In 30m *turn left* along a descending paved path to in 80m go under **Redriff Road** again and enter **Russia Dock Woodland**. The path gently ascends and curves to the right. You ignore a first left turn and in another 20m *turn left* at a T-junction of paths (there is a bus stop away to the right on the road). Follow the old quay of **Russia Dock**, which now has a reed-filled 'stream' to the left and has plenty of old quayside hardware still in place: **retaining wall capstones, depth gauges, bollards, mooring chains and crane tracks**.

You pass a map and in 90m *turn left* across the **Alfred Salter Bridge** and *turn right* on the far side, initially gently ascending along tarmac. In 150m at a four-way junction with an open area ahead, *turn right* across **St. John Bridge** over the 'stream' back onto the quayside path and *turn left* along it. [There is an interesting toposcope in the ground in the shape of a compass, listing all the places the dock used to trade with and what goods it traded with those locations.] In 25m you pass an info panel on the **Surrey Commercial Docks** and in 60m *fork right* away from the quayside along a wide path. You have the reed-filled 'stream' again on the left and in 100m ignore a left turn, which crosses the 'stream' via stepping stones. In another 20m by a large concrete **Jubilee Line airshaft** on the right, you *turn left* with the path and in 25m cross another bridge.

You continue in the same direction (signed 'Thames Path') and in 100m pass the fenced **Redriff Primary School** on the right. In 25m, just **before** some metal barriers, [!] *turn hard left* along a fenced path to the left a pond. In 50m you pass a **Stave Hill Ecology Park** sign and *fork up to the left* along a stepped path. In 40m *turn left* at a T-junction with a gravel path (there is also a faint path ahead into growth) and in 20m you descend along a stepped path (ignore a right turn in 10m) into an open area. *Fork right* on the flat and in 25m – at a bend – *turn left*. In 40m you leave the Ecology Park and *turn right* along a paved path around the base of **Stave Hill**. In 50m *turn left* up the **59 steps** to the viewing platform with a bronze relief map (Michael Rizzello, 1986), showing the extent of the old docks. Views encompass Stratford's Arcelor Mittal Tower, Canary Wharf, Shooters Hill, Deptford, Crystal Palace, Nine Elms, Westminster, the West End and the City, The Shard and Tower Bridge and the area around Canada Water.

Descend the way you came, down the steps and continue in the same direction along the tree-lined pedestrianised **Dock Hill Avenue**. In 170m cross Timber Pond Road and continue in the same direction along a shady residential street. In 90m you cross Thame Road/Deck Close and continue in the same direction along a pedestrianised stretch. In 40m you pass a pagoda-shaped shelter and in 35m *turn left* along the shore of **Surrey Water**, along the residential Bray Crescent, soon with a disused gas holder visible ahead. In 120m go through metal barriers and *turn right* across a drawbridge across the **Albion Channel**. *Turn left* on the far side, with the landscaped and reed-filled waterway on your left (a remnant of the largely infilled Albion Dock). In 120m you go under **Poolmans Street** and in 40m *curve to the right* with the channel. In 250m go under Surrey Quays Road and in 130m meet **Canada Water** by a drawbridge on the left.

You have the Surrey Quays Shopping Centre away on the left and *turn right* to stay to the right of the award-winning **Canada Water Library** building and cross **Deal Porter Square** to its far-right corner, passing **Leadbelly's Bar & Kitchen** in the process. Cross Surrey Quays Road at a pedestrian crossing with Belisha beacons and *bear left* around one of the entrances to **Canada Water Station** (Underground and Overground) and *turn right* along a metal railing to the right of **Canada Water Bus Station**. In 50m at the far end of the bus station, continue in the same direction along the pedestrianised **Albatross Way**, in 50m passing an old **Pump House** on the left. In 100m ignore

Province Drive to the right and in 80m by **Dominion Drive** on the right, [!] you *turn left* down some steps and continue along **Swan Road** (ignore a left turn). In 130m cross **Albion Street**. In 40m (having unknowingly crossed the **Rotherhithe Tunnel** below ground) you cross **Brunel Road** and *turn left* along it, immediately passing **The Brunel** pub. In 70m by **Rotherhithe Overground Station**, you *turn right* along **Railway Avenue**. In 100m you pass the **Brunel Museum**, located in the Thames Tunnel shaft, and in 20m *turn left* along **Rotherhithe Street**, with the Thames River away to the right. You pass a **coffee kiosk** (Thu-Sun 11.00 to 17.00) and ignore Tunnel Road turning left. Continue between a historic riverfront warehouse on the right and a linked ex-granary warehouse on the left, these days used by **Sands Film Studios & Rotherhithe Picture Research Library** (free cinema club every Tuesday at 20.00 hours, book online or just turn up).

You pass **The Mayflower** pub and continue to the right of **St. Mary the Virgin, Rotherhithe** and to the left of the **Thames Tunnel Mill Warehouse**. In 30m [!] *turn left* into the churchyard and pass the church on its right-hand side. Leave the churchyard onto St. Marychurch Street, opposite the **Old School House** with its first-floor figurines, and with **Simplicity Café & Restaurant** away to the left and the **Watchhouse Café** on the right. *Turn right* along the road, passing **Hope (Suffernance) Wharf** on the right and then the **Old Fire Engine House** on the left. You curve to the left with the road, and by **The Ship** pub *turn right* along **Cottle Way** (i.e.: not hard right along Elephant Lane) through the **St Mary Estate** along a shared cycle- and footpath to the right of some car park spaces.

In 60m cross **Mayflower Street** and in another 25m enter **King's Stairs Gardens**. Ignore a left turn and in 75m at the far end of the little park, *bear right* to the left of a fenced in playground, ignoring Paradise Street ahead. You have some raised grassy ground on the right and in 60m continue along the pavement of **Fulford Street**. In 50m at a T-junction with the Thames Path, *turn left* along it and in 50m pass **The Angel** pub on the right, followed on the right by the **Salter Family Sculptures** and an info panel and on the left by the historic **King Edward III Manor House** ruins. Continue along **Bermondsey Wall East**, eventually passing **National Terrace** on the right and the **Angel Wharf** on the left. At the end of those buildings, where **West Lane** joins from the left, you re-enter **Bermondsey** and *fork right* into a riverfront small garden (Cherry Gardens) and in 40m *fork left* again to get around **Cherry Gardens Pier** (special hire riverboat cruises) and *fork right* again to go through another part of the garden.

You have striking views upstream to Tower Bridge and the City of London. In 130m, just before the path turns right around a house and with the **Chambers Wharf Tideway** site ahead, *bear left* down a newly landscaped terraced area to the road. Cross **Bermondsey Wall East** and continue down a small alley, to the left of the timber-framed former pub the **Old Justice** and to the right of a former sluice building ('Sewers Surrey & Kent, Duffield Sluice 1822'). In 80m by **Riverside Primary School** *turn left* along **Emba Street**. In 20m *turn right* along the school boundary wall along **Janeway Street**, with the **Wilson Grove Estate** to the left (a Salter initiative: replacing dense and unhealthy slum housing with "Garden City" style cottages). In 50m *bear right* along **Scott Lidgett Crescent** and in 60m *turn left* across the road and continue along a paved path to the right of a fenced basketball court. In 75m you emerge on **Jamaica Road**, opposite **Bermondsey Underground** Station.

You find one last refreshment option, **The Gregorian** pub, 170m away to the right.