

Thameside Historical Walk

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Starting Point: The Banker Pub, 200 meters from Cannon Street Tube and Rail Station

Ending Point: Canary Wharf Clipper Pier or DLR Station

Distance: 4.5 miles/7 km

Difficulty: 1 out of 10

Points of Interest:

Loads of iconic London sites – Old Billingsgate Market; Custom House; Tower of London; Tower Bridge; the Shard; HMS Belfast; Wapping; Canary Wharf – but of particular note.....

The Town of Ramsgate – A notable specimen of a waterman’s tavern, located in the ancient hamlet of Wapping. The present grade II listed building dates back to 1758; however, evidence indicates that it was built on earlier foundations. Allegedly, the first pub on the site was founded during the War of the Roses in the 1460s and was called the Hostel. In 1533, it became known as the Red Cow – a reference to the bar maid at the time. The notorious Judge Jeffreys (who sent many to death) was captured here trying to escape to Hamburg. In 1766, it became the Ramsgate Old Town – the name coming from the fact that the fishermen from Ramsgate would unload their fish at the Old Wapping Stairs to avoid higher river taxes imposed near Billingsgate Market (passed earlier on the walk).

The Prospect of Whitby – Claims to be the oldest riverside pub in London – dating back to 1520. It was formerly known as the Pelican and the Devil’s Tavern and is located next to the former Wapping Execution Dock. All that remains of the original structure is the flagstone floor. It was also frequented by “Hanging” Judge Jeffreys. Its name comes from a Tyne collier which use to bring coal to London from Newcastle-upon-Tyne and docked nearby.

The Grapes – A grade II listed public house now owned in a partnership with Sir Ian McKellen. The current building dates to 1720 and is on the site of a pub built in 1583. It was formerly a working-class tavern serving the dock workers of the nearby Limehouse Basin. It features in the writings of Pepys and Dickens.

Walk Summary: An easy amble following the **Thames Path** between Cannon Street and Canary Wharf, passing through historic Wapping. Along the way, the route passes three historic pubs – two of which claim to be the oldest riverside

pub in London – you decide which has the best claim. Instructions are hardly required for this route – simply keep the river to your right – though occasionally the Thames Path leaves the riverside....

Walk Instructions:

1. To reach the **Banker pub** for the starting point, exit from the Cannon Street Tube Station and *turn left* to walk down Dowgate Hill. In 100 meters cross over Upper Thames Street to continue in the same direction down Cousin Lane, arriving at the Banker Pub in 100 meters on the left at the riverside.
2. When ready for the walk, leave the Banker by *turning right* (with the river at your back) to go through a passageway under a building following some blue colored lights in the pavement.
3. In 60 meters emerge from the covered passage way and *turn right and then almost immediately left* to carry along a riverside walk. In 200 meters go under London Bridge to carry along the Thames Path. In 60 meters ignore a Thames Path sign pointing left and continue ahead down some steps along the riverside. In a further 40 meters pass by the historic **Billingsgate Fish Market** on the left and just past the building, *turn left and then right* to keep along the Thames Path. Soon, you will pass by the **Custom House** on the left.
4. In 150 meters (basically at the end of the Custom House), *turn left* and then in 50 meters *turn right* along a road. In 150 meters, you arrive at the **Tower of London** where you continue ahead to skirt to the left of a large tree and Tower of London Shop and then *turn right* to go through some usually open black gates. In 40 meters *turn left* to carry along the side of the river on the Thames Path.
5. In 200 meters go under Tower Bridge and *turn right and then left* to carry along near the river. In a further 150 meters go over a wooden plank bridge and *turn left* to enter St. Katherine Dock.
6. In 30 meters (about 20 meters before reaching the boat basin), *turn right* to follow the Thames Path up some steps and then down some steps where you *turn right* to follow a red brick road towards Devon House. In 60 meters *turn right* with the brick road (which is no longer red).
7. In 100 meters pass Alderman Stairs on the right and in a further 10 meters, *turn right* to follow the Thames Path and in 15 meters *turn left* to rejoin the riverside.
8. In 100 meters *turn left* and in 45 meters *turn right* on a road following the Thames Path signs. Almost immediately, at a junction with a road, *veer right*.
9. In 30 meters, just past a Wapping High Street sign, *turn hard right* (almost back on yourself) to enter into a park. Continue towards the river and *turn left* to walk along the Thames.
10. In 75 meters *turn left and then right* to continue along the river with some modern flats and a restaurant on the left. In a further 250 meters follow the path around to the left to emerge onto a brick road (Wapping High Street) and *turn right* to continue following the Thames Path. In 75 meters, you reach the **Town of Ramsgate** on the right, the first of our three historical stops. *Note the narrow flight of steps down an alley to the right “the Wapping Old Stairs” where at low tide criminals were shackled and left for three high tides.*
11. After adequately slaking your thirst, leave the pub and *turn right*. In 280 meters pass by the Captain Kidd on the right (also a pleasant watering hole with a large riverside outdoor area – but not adequately historic for our purposes) and in a further 150 meters, you pass by the Wapping Overground station on your right. Continue along in the same direction.
12. In 30 meters, *turn right* to follow a Thames Path sign and go through a metal gate – give the gate a good push to walk down a passageway and rejoin the Thames where you *turn left*. **Canary Wharf** will

be visible ahead to the right. **Note – this gate may be locked due to some refurbishment works on the riverside. In this case** – just continue ahead along the road.

13. If on the river path, in 110 meters *turn left* and pass right through a usually open gate and *turn left* to rejoin Wapping High Street where you continue ahead passing by a Chinese restaurant on your right (if on the road, in 100 meters follow it as it curves around to the left past the Chinese restaurant (on a short out and back diversion -- you can peek out at the river by turning right down an alley near the Chinese restaurant)).
14. In 40 meters at a road junction, *turn right* following a Thames Path sign to your left.
15. In 250 meters, you arrive at the **Prospect of Whitby** on the right, our second historical stop. *Note the Hangman's Noose out the back windows*. When suitably refreshed, leave the Prospect of Whitby and *turn right*.
16. In 10 meters *turn hard right* to follow the Thames Path; then in 15 meters *turn left* to follow the river. In 125 meters follow the path around to the left by the Shadwell Basin Outdoor Activity Center.
17. In 60 meters *turn right* to go over a bridge with nice views back to the **City of London** on the left. In 40 meters at a concrete playing field/construction area on the right, *turn right* to follow a concrete path with the construction site/recreation area now on the left. In 100 meters follow the path around to the left to rejoin the river which you follow for 500 meters.
18. **Note – there may be a slight diversion here due to some construction works – in which case:** shortly after rejoining the river, *veer left* into the park and continue along a path next to some wood barriers. In 90 meters *turn right* onto a paved path in the park and in a further 40 meters *turn right* to follow a Thames Path sign. In 10 meters rejoin the river and *turn left* for 350 meters. In either case (after 500 or 350 meters along the river), *turn left* and in 20 meters *turn right* to continue down Narrow Street in a further 20 meters.
19. In 140 meters *turn right* to follow a Thames Path sign down an alley to the river where you *turn left*. In 100 meters, you continue along the path that runs to the right of **The Narrows**, a Gordon Ramsey pub, eventually *turning left* to go up some stairs where you *turn right* to go over a bridge to carry on along the road.
20. In 200 meters, you reach **The Grapes** on the right for the last historical stop and tippie of the evening. *If still light outside, note the Antony Gormley sculpture in the Thames out the back window*.
21. Leaving the Grapes, *turn right*. In 75 meters ignore a Thames Path sign to the right (now private) to keep ahead on the road. In a further 55 meters, at a white building (Dunbar Wharf) that looks as if it is on stilts, *turn right* through some barriers to continue along a passageway under the building. In 30 meters go over a bridge over an inlet to continue ahead with the Thames now on your right.
22. In 350 meters at **Canary Wharf pier** you could catch a **Thames Clipper** back to central London. Alternatively, if interested in the DLR, *turn left* up some steps. At the top of the steps, continue ahead across a bricked pedestrian road and in further 30 meters cross a vehicular road onto the center of a rotary. Continue ahead (right or left) through the center circle of the rotary to cross another road where you can either continue ahead towards the right or left into the heart of the Canary Wharf buildings.
23. In 200 meters continue through Cabot Square – either on the right, left or through the middle strip. 120 meters beyond Cabot Square (going right or left at the end of the square), you arrive at the **Canary Wharf DLR station**.
24. Hope you had a nice evening and are fully hydrated!