

Trains and boats and planes

A self guided walk around the riverside and docks at North Woolwich



Discover how a remote marsh became a gateway to the world
Find out how waterways have influenced economic boom, decline and revival
See how various transport networks have helped to transform the area
Explore a landscape rapidly evolving through regeneration

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discovered through walks**





Contents

Introduction	3
Route map	4
Practical information	6
Directions	8
Further information	13
Credits	14

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Trains and boats and planes

Explore the changing riverside and docks at North Woolwich

For centuries the part of East London now known as North Woolwich was a remote marsh by the River Thames. Then from the 1840s it became a gateway to the world.

Three new docks - Royal Victoria, Royal Albert and King George V - and the trades that grew around them transformed this area into the industrial heart of the world's largest port.



A busy day in King George V Dock (1965)
© PLA / Museum of London

But this success was not to last.



The DLR and University of East London campus
© Rory Walsh

When the docks closed in 1981 North Woolwich was left isolated and in decline. So a series of projects were established to revive the area, complete with new buildings and transport networks.

This walk follows North Woolwich's story of boom, decline and revival. Find out how its geographical location affected its fortunes. Discover why sites built for industry are now used for leisure.

Travel on routes made over and under the Thames. See houses built on shipyards and watch planes land on water.

Also see how North Woolwich is evolving into a new landscape.

Route overview



Stopping points

- S.** King George V DLR station
- 2.** Former North Woolwich railway station, Pier Road
- 3.** North entrance to Woolwich foot tunnel, Pier Road
- 4.** Woolwich Free Ferry
- 5.** Royal Victoria Gardens
- 6.** Bargehouse Road slipway
- 7.** Gallions Point estate, Gallions Reach
- 8.** Gallions Point estate, Gallions Reach
- 9.** Gallions Point estate, Gallions Reach
- 10.** King George V Dock entrance lock
- 11.** View of the Royal Docks from Woolwich Manor Way
- 12.** View of London City Airport from Sir Steve Redgrave Bridge
- 13.** View of Royal Albert Dock from Sir Steve Redgrave Bridge
- 14.** Gallions Hotel, Gallions Road
- 15.** View of Gallions Reach DLR station from Atlantis Avenue
- 16.** University of East London campus
- F.** Cyprus DLR station

Practical information

Location	North Woolwich, Greater London
Getting there	<p>DLR - North Woolwich is on the Woolwich Arsenal branch. Trains run every 10 minutes from central London.</p> <p>Bus - served by local bus routes 473 (Stratford to North Woolwich) and 474 (Canning Town to Manor Park). Alight on Albert Road at the stop for Pier Road and King George V DLR station.</p> <p>Car - North Woolwich is easily accessible from the A13, A406 (North Circular) and A205 (South Circular). If using the Woolwich Free Ferry, queues are common on both sides of the river especially at peak times. There is limited parking available around the residential areas.</p> <p>Bicycle - National Cycle Route 1 passes along the south bank of the Thames at Woolwich. National Cycle Route 13 (London to Norfolk) passes to the north side of the Royal Docks.</p> <p>Ferry - The Woolwich Free Ferry operates from 6am to 8pm Mondays to Saturdays, from 11.30am to 7.30pm on Sundays.</p> <p>River Bus - North Woolwich is on River Bus route RB5 (Woolwich Shuttle) between London Eye Pier and Royal Arsenal Woolwich Pier. For timetables see www.thamesclippers.com</p>
Start point	King George V DLR station, Pier Road E16 2LH
Finish point	Cyprus DLR station, Strait Road E6 5PH
Walk distance	2 ½ miles
Level	Gentle – A mostly flat route following the Thames Path

Terrain	Urban pavements, paved riverside and dockside paths. There are short flights of steps on the approach to the Royal Docks.
Conditions	Some busy roads to cross and follow. Take care of children by the water's edge, especially by the lock entrance to the Royal Docks (Stop 10). It can be breezy along the dockside so take warm clothing.
Suitable for	<p>Families – plenty to enjoy including the ferry, foot tunnel and plane spotting at London City Airport. Royal Victoria Gardens (Stop 5) has a children's play park and paddling pool.</p> <p>Dogs – must be kept on a lead; take special care by busy roads</p>
Refreshments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Various shops on Pier Road (after Stop 1) - Café (summer only) and picnic tables at Royal Victoria Gardens by the bowling green - There is a restaurant at Gallions Hotel (Stop 15) plus a small café in the gym
Toilets	Please note there are no public toilets on the walk route
Places to visit	<p>Museum of London Docklands tells the story of the Thames and London's docks. Open daily 10am-6pm, free entry. No.1 Warehouse, West India Quay, E14 4AL. www.museumoflondon.org.uk/docklands</p> <p>The Emirates Air Line cable car runs between nearby Royal Docks and North Greenwich DLR stations for spectacular views over Docklands. Open daily, various prices. www.emiratesairline.co.uk</p>
Tourist information	Nearest is Greenwich Tourist Information Centre beside the Cutty Sark in Pepys House, 2 Cutty Sark Gardens, SE10 9LW. Tel: 0870 608 2000 tic@royalgreenwich.gov.uk www.visitgreenwich.org.uk

Directions

These directions are for use with the audio commentary. Listen to each track then read the directions below to get to the next stop.

1. Welcome to North Woolwich

King George V DLR station

Directions 1

With your back to the DLR station entrance go along the road ahead (Pier Road). At the crossroads with Albert Road use the pedestrian crossing on the left and continue straight along Pier Road keeping to the left pavement. After a short distance the road bears right. On the corner is a set of steps. Stop here and look across the road at the red-brick building opposite (for a good view go up the steps onto the platform). Listen to Track 2.

2. The end of the line

Former North Woolwich railway station, Pier Road

Directions 2

With the steps behind you use the traffic island to carefully cross the road towards the station. Take care as the traffic can be fast. With the station on your right continue for about 100 metres to a red-brick circular building. It is on a central island between two roadways used by ferry traffic. Take great care crossing the roads here as traffic can arrive suddenly. Listen by the red brick building to Track 3.

3. Walking under water

North entrance to Woolwich foot tunnel, Pier Road

Directions 3

To cross the river using the foot tunnel use the steps or lift inside the tower to go down to the tunnel. It will take about 12 minutes to walk the full length. Use the steps or lift at the other end to go back up to street level. You can return using the tunnel or free ferry.

To cross the river using the Woolwich ferry (either direction) from the foot tunnel carefully cross the access road by the waiting area for vehicles. Take the pedestrian path and keep the traffic on your right. You may need to wait at the barrier before being allowed on board. The crossing takes about 5 minutes each way.

If you do not want to experience the tunnel and ferry continue past the foot tunnel tower and follow the pavement between the two sections of Pier Road. At the end use the pedestrian crossing to cross the ferry waiting lanes on the left. Go up the ramp and stop at the top for a good view of the ferry.

4. Free for all

North Woolwich Pier, Pier Road

Directions 4

If you have come back across the river on the ferry follow the access road then carefully cross over Pier Road. Turn right and head back towards the foot tunnel. **If you remained on the ramp** go back down from the viewpoint, then carefully cross over Pier Road towards the foot tunnel.

From the foot tunnel entrance retrace your steps back to the old station building. Follow the road round to the left then carefully cross over at the entrance to a park. Pass the sports courts and take the first path on the right. At the end turn left then continue up to the walkway with the river on your right. Stop part way along the walkway. Listen to Track 5.

5. Pleasant gardens

Royal Victoria Gardens

Directions 5

Continue along the walkway to the far end of the park. Go through the gate and follow the signs for the Thames Path which will take you around a slipway. Continue along the next section of riverside walkway. Stop at the top of the next slipway. Listen here to Track 6.

6. Water ways

Bargehouse Road slipway

Directions 6

With the slipway directly behind you go up the slope. Go through the metal gate in the fence to the right to enter a modern housing estate. With the housing blocks on your left go towards the river and continue along the path. Stop past the first block of houses.

If the gate is locked continue up the slope and along Bargehouse Road. Turn right at the end and follow the path up to a large roundabout. Turn right into Fishguard Way. Follow the road round to the right into the estate. Continue ahead through two sets of bollards until you reach the riverside path. Listen to Track 7.

7. Reclaiming the marsh

Galleons Point estate, Gallions Reach

Directions 7

Continue along the riverside path past the second block of houses. Then stop beside the riverside wall. Listen to Track 8.

8. Regenerating the riverside

Galleons Point estate, Gallions Reach

Directions 8

Continue along the riverside path past the Galleons Point estate. Stop when you reach the corner where the Thames Path turns left away from the river. Listen to Track 9.

9. Reaching across

Galleons Point estate, Gallions Reach

Directions 9

Follow the path with the blocks of Gallions Point on your left. The Thames Path continues over the entrance lock to the Royal Docks. Stop by the small redbrick building which is the former lock keeper's cottage. If you prefer, you can stop on the lock itself. **NOTE: The lock is lined with chains but if you do stop over it be very careful, especially with children.**

10. Gateway to the world

King George V Dock entrance lock

Directions 10

If you stood on the lock return to the path. Continue along the gravel path with more Gallions Point blocks on the left. At the end go up the steps to the road bridge. Carefully cross over the road – the traffic can be very busy here so you are advised to turn left and use the traffic island. Once you are on the other side of the bridge stop halfway across it and look out at the expanses of water. Listen to Track 11.

11. Royal dynasty

View of the Royal Docks from Woolwich Manor Way

Directions 11

Continue towards the Sir Steve Redgrave Bridge. The road bends to the left and becomes lined with curved street lamps. Stop when you reach the bus stop and look towards the airport runway between the docks. Listen to Track 12.

12. Taking off

View of London City Airport from Sir Steve Redgrave Bridge

Directions 12

Continue along Sir Steve Redgrave Bridge. Stop when you are level with Royal Albert Dock on the other side of the airport runway. Listen to Track 13.

13. Making a splash

View of Royal Albert Dock from Sir Steve Redgrave Bridge

Directions 13

Continue to the end of the bridge then turn sharp left to follow the path towards the docks. Turn left at the dockside then go under the bridge. Gallions Point Marina will appear on your right. Follow the dockside path as it bears left behind a modern housing block. Stop at the building with tall chimneys that is set behind the modern dockside blocks. Listen beside it to Track 14.

14. Old and new

Gallions Hotel, Gallions Road

Directions 14

Take time to look at the details of the Gallions Hotel. You may like to stop here for refreshments from the restaurant, gym café or the nearby shops. When you are ready, pass the playground behind the hotel and continue along the road lined with trees. At the junction with the main road (Atlantis Avenue), turn left towards the large roundabout. Look across the road at the DLR station. Listen to Track 15.

15. Back on track

Gallions Reach DLR station, Royal Docks Road

Directions 15

Continue to the large roundabout so the DLR line passes overhead. Use the traffic lights to cross over the road. The end of Sir Steve Redgrave Bridge will be on the left. Now follow the dockside path so that the airport runway is over the water on your left. Pass five modern tower blocks on your right. Stop when you reach buildings on the right shaped like cylinders. They are in pairs and brightly coloured. Listen to Track 16.

16. A knowledge dock

University of East London campus, University Way

Directions 16

Continue along the dock-side path past the cylindrical buildings. This is a good spot for watching planes taking off and landing at the airport. When you reach the North Building of the university (set back from the path) go across the square into the university campus. Follow the underpass to the right of the North Building to reach Cyprus DLR station. Stop by the station entrance. Listen to Track 17.

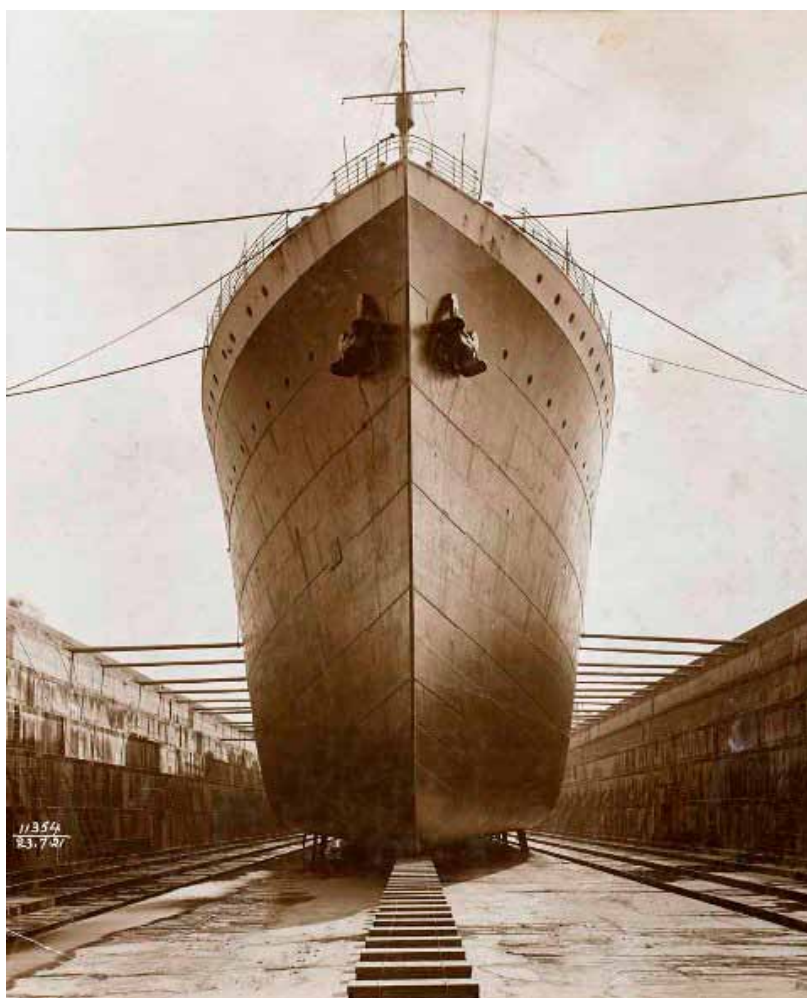
17. Royal restoration

Cyprus DLR station

Directions 17

Now have now reached the end of the walk. To return to King George V DLR station you can walk back along the university dock-side and over the Sir Steve Redgrave Bridge. Alternatively take the DLR from Cyprus and change at Canning Town to transfer to the Woolwich Arsenal branch.

From Cyprus DLR station you may like to visit the ExCel, Emirates Air Line cable car, the O2, Museum of London Docklands or historic Greenwich (including the Cutty Sark, the Royal Naval College and the National Maritime Museum).



A ship in dry dock, King George V Dock (1921)
© PLA / Museum of London

Further information

Asian Business Port

abp-london.co.uk

Crossrail

www.crossrail.co.uk

ExCel London

www.excel-london.co.uk

Friends of Greenwich and Woolwich Foot Tunnels

fogwoft.com

Gallions Point Marina

www.gallionspointmarina.co.uk

London City Airport

www.londoncityairport.com

London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC)

www.lddc-history.org.uk

Museum of London Docklands

www.museumoflondon.org.uk/docklands

Ports of Call

www.portsofcall.org.uk

Royal Docks London Enterprise Zone

www.royaldockslondon.com

Royal Docks Management Authority (RODMA)

www.rodma.co.uk

Royal Docks Trust

www.royaldockstrust.org.uk

The Silvertown

www.silvertownlondon.com

University of East London

www.uel.ac.uk

Credits

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