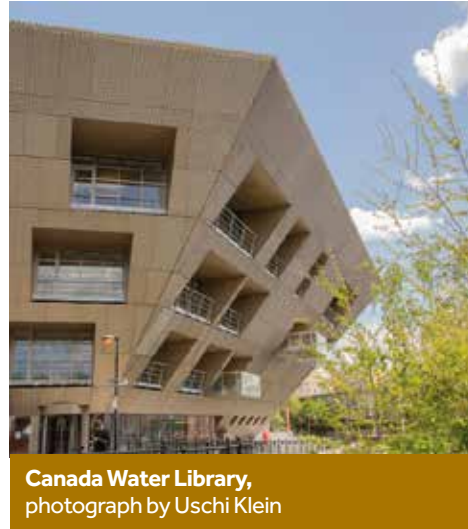




Explore the history and changing architectural face of the Docklands – at one time the world’s largest port.

1 Canada Water Library This unusual shape was designed by Piers Gough to “look civic and grand without being pompous”. Inside, the wooden spiral staircase draws visitors up to an expansive top floor. “I was keen that people would really walk up,” says Gough, “from the noisy downstairs to the quieter, more relaxed place above.”

The name Canada Water comes from the small lake directly beside the Library. This occupies about a third of the former Canada Dock; the rest was turned into the shopping centre in 1988. It is actually a freshwater lake supplied by a new 80m borehole sunk during the construction of the Jubilee line and powered by a traditional windpump.



Canada Water Library, photograph by Uschi Klein

2 Surrey Quays Housing Estates You are now walking through an area that shows a mixture of housing styles. Built during the 1980s, before the ‘modernist’ taste of the 1990s, there is a distinctly suburban feel in the heart of the city. Redriff Road is particularly unusual; many of its detached villas are romantically surrounded by shallow water.

Along the waterway you will also pass the red Scherzer lift bridge. This would have rolled like a rocking chair to allow ships to enter the dock.

What the walkers say...

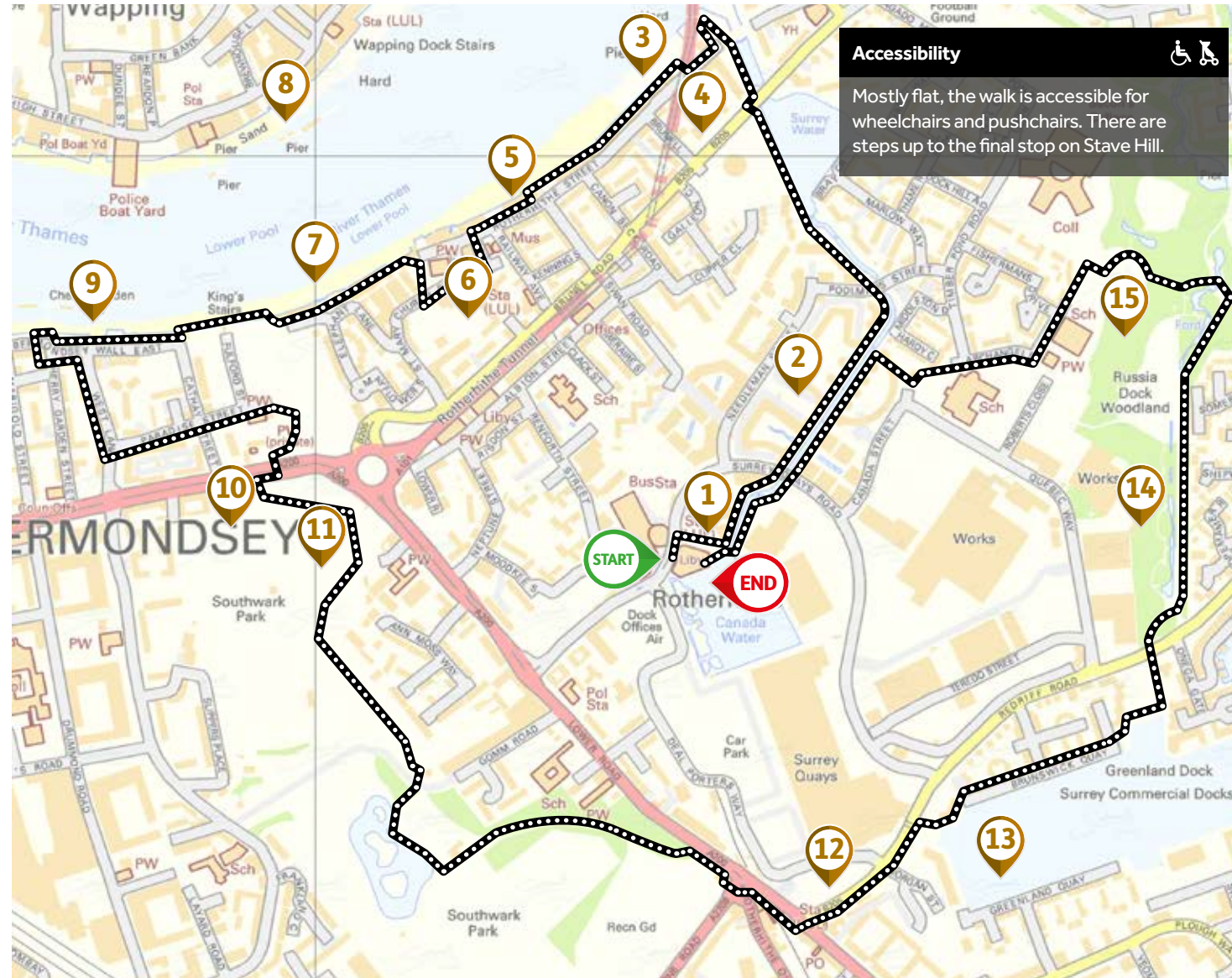
“Very nice, learning more about London. Thanks.”



Surrey Quays Housing Estate, photograph by Uschi Klein



Heart-shaped atoll, Surrey Quays Housing Estate, photograph by Vera Dohrenbusch



Accessibility Mostly flat, the walk is accessible for wheelchairs and pushchairs. There are steps up to the final stop on Stave Hill.



3 The Dolphin

This isn't what you might think it is. A dolphin is a structure built to assist ships to manoeuvre and moor while entering or leaving the dock entrance. This one survives from 1860.

4 Rotherhithe Tunnel

Isambard Kingdom Brunel (more famous for his railways) oversaw the building of the first ever tunnel under the Thames, based on his father Marc's design. It took 25 years to complete because the work was incredibly dangerous; many men died in floods or suffered severe mental distress through the fear of imminent death from the river above.

5 Sculpture of Pilgrims by the River

Peter McClean's 1991 sculpture shows a 17th century pilgrim. He is looking with astonishment at a boy reading a 1930s paper with the story of The Mayflower and the modern USA. In his pocket is a London A to Z, dated 1620. Put money in the Pilgrim's pocket for good luck!

6 St. Mary's Church

Christopher Jones, captain of the Mayflower, is buried here. The memorial to him shows St. Christopher looking back at the Old World while the child in his arms looks towards the New World. The tomb of Mother Rachel decorated with pigs' heads can also be found here. 'Dance around it at midnight and she will appear!' Also buried here is Prince Lee Boo, the son of a Polynesian King who was brought to London to be educated. Across the road is the 18th century watch house built to guard against body snatchers in the graveyard. Next door is Peter Hill School, Rotherhithe's oldest charity school founded in 1613.



The Dolphin, photograph by Uschi Klein

7 Rotherhithe Street

The name Rotherhithe is Saxon, meaning 'Mariners' landing place', which shows how long seafarers and shipbuilders have been living here. At over two miles, this street is said to be the longest in London, and follows the line of the old river wall that was built to contain flooding from the Thames.

8 Captain Kidd Pub

This pub is named after one of the most colourful outlaws of all time. He was found guilty of murder and five counts of piracy, and hanged at nearby Execution Dock in 1701. His body was then doused in tar, left to rot and suspended in a cage over the Thames for three years as a warning to others.

9 Angel Pub and Edward III Manor House

The Angel is one of the oldest pubs in the area, recorded since the late 1600s. Captain Cook is said to have prepared for his voyage to Australia here. The tobacco warehouses that once surrounded it have been pulled down to reveal the foundations of Edward III's 14th century palace.

What the walkers say...

"I feel entertained and educated."

What the walkers say...

"I think it is great that people give up their free time to lead the walks. I have just moved to London and feel like I know a bit of London better."

10 Southwark Park

First opening its gates to the public in 1869, the design of this park is attributed to Alexander McKenzie. It boasts London's first public memorial to honour a working class man: a drinking fountain to commemorate Mr Jabez West, a member of a local Temperance Society.

11 Jubilee Line Vent

Vent and escape shafts are needed at stations and at 1km intervals along the Jubilee Line. Ian Ritchie Architects designed six shafts between London Bridge and Canary Wharf. The intention was to create sculptural objects which illustrate 'flow'.

12 Redriff Road, Dockers' Shelter

Most dock workers were casual labourers, only hired for perhaps a few hours each day. Work was never guaranteed, but employers still wanted to have a large number of men available. This shelter is a replica of one that stood near Lower Road, where hundreds of men would meet every day hoping to work. A mural on the back wall of the building gives a flavour of what wit might have looked like.



Blue Plaque for Brunel, photograph by Robert Larkin-Frost

13 Greenland Dock

This was originally a 17th century haven to protect and repair merchant ships. The entrance lock designed by Sir John Wolfe Barry in 1904 has been preserved, although it is now unused. The bascule bridge at the west end allowed ships access to Surrey Commercial Dock from here.

14 Russia Dock Woodland

This area was created in 1981 in the former dock basin by the John Stedman Design Group. Look out for remnants of the old dock's working life: entrance depth gauges, canal sides with bollards, mooring chains and former crane tracks. A compass set in the path hints at the dock's former trade.

15 Stave Hill

On a clear day you can see Wembley Stadium from here. The platform was created from industrial spoil from the Albion Channel (the waterway you walked along between stop 1 and 2). A bronze relief map by Michael Rizzello, which fills with rainwater, shows the docks as they were in 1896.



Jubilee Line Vent, photograph by Vera Dohrenbusch