



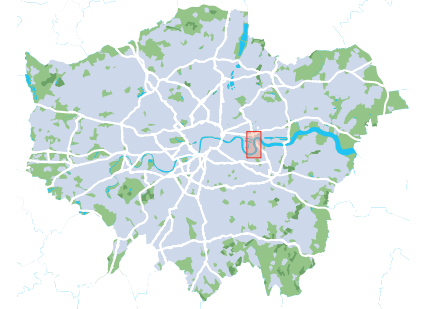
Thames Path north bank



Section 4 of 4

Island Gardens to East India Dock

- Section start:** Island Gardens / Greenwich Foot Tunnel
- Nearest station to start:** Island Gardens
- Section finish:** East India Docks
- Nearest stations to finish:** East India or Canning Town
- Section distance:** 2.5 miles (4.5 kilometres)



Introduction

Beyond the Greenwich Foot Tunnel, the route is no longer designated as a National Trail and is waymarked with the Thames Barge symbol rather than the National Trail acorn.

This is because the Thames Path National Trail officially ends on the north bank at Island Gardens on the Isle of Dogs, but Tower Hamlets has achieved a near-continuous riverside walk onwards, with a few road breaks, as far as the mouth of the River Lea.

The working river displays all the muscularity of its ancient history, built up by hard graft since Henry VIII's royal dockyard at Woolwich was established to build a new generation of naval warships. Woolwich Arsenal grew up alongside to supply munitions, and Thamesmead was built on a vast network of 'tumps' to contain explosions, some of which can still be seen.

Across the river, equally vast operations are visible on the north bank where giant cranes move and shape the last landfill into new hillsides and Ford at Dagenham's wind turbines symbolise new ways to generate energy using nature.


The cargo ships now come only as far as Tilbury and the vast sea container ports on the north side of the river; whereas Erith with its pier, once a Victorian pleasure resort, retains a seaside feel.



Did you know?

The huge plane trees along the waterfront were planted to hide the industrial buildings inland from the Naval College at Greenwich.

Directions


 **1** From Island Gardens (once a huge reed bed), admire the classical view of Greenwich on the south side.

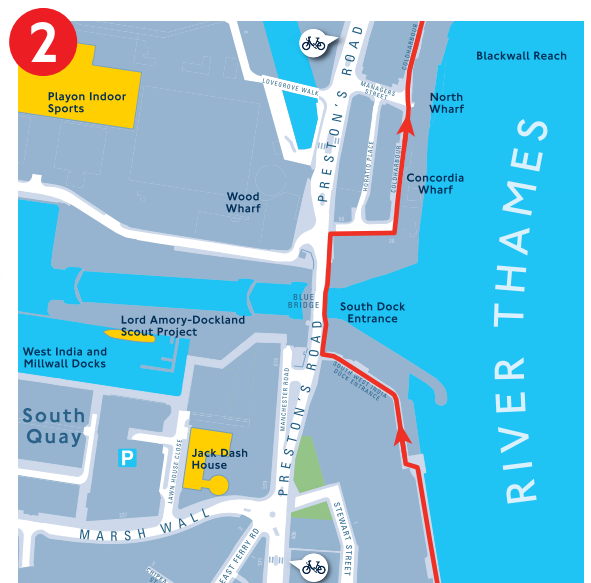
There is a small cafe near the foot tunnel entrance. The opening of the foot tunnel marked the end of the ferry that used to ply its trade from The Ferry House pub (which still remains to the west).

From the riverside walk turn left, walk through the gate at the far end of the Gardens, past riverside apartments and under the arcade round the Newcastle Draw Dock by The Great Eastern pub. This area was rebuilt after bombings in World War II.

Carry on past apartment blocks until the path is blocked by a remaining industrial warehouse at Storers Quay, now converted to apartments. Walk through the car park behind it to skirt round and rejoin the riverside on its far side. Shortly after passing a private pier on the river the path runs round a shelving beach.

Follow the riverside path passing an Indian restaurant on the left. The tower block Kelson House is a landmark ahead. At Folly Wall the path turns left at the end of the houses. Cross the cul-de-sac and enter the gate opposite leading past the pumping station.

 **2** Very soon after the pumping house the path passes a new reed bed and continues along an access road to the new housing. Turn right at the junction with Preston's Road and walk over the lock giving access to the complex of West India Docks.




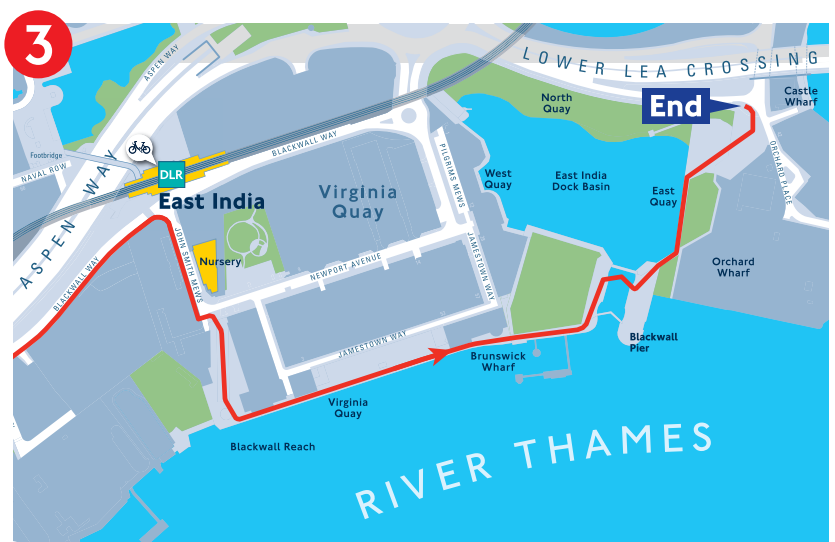
Did you know?

The West India Docks was a vast group of docks. They closed to commercial traffic in 1980 and Canary Wharf is built on much of the old site.

Turn first right down Coldharbour. The Gun gastropub is at the end of the street. This historic pub was where Nelson used to meet Lady Hamilton in an upper room.

Carry on down the cobbled street until it turns left onto Preston's Road once more. Turn right, crossing over the opening to the smaller Blackwall Basin and Poplar Dock. Take the second right down Yabsley Street and follow it round to the left. Cross over into Blackwall Way. At the mini roundabout ignore Fairmount Avenue on the right, but instead go straight ahead.

 **3** Now follow the road round to the right, which is parallel with the major Limehouse Link road. Note the air shaft for the Blackwall Tunnel in the middle of wasteland.



Walk in front of East India Docklands Light Railway station on the left and turn right along the new Newport Avenue. As the road bends to the left, carry on straight ahead along the footpath that leads to the riverside. Turn left (downstream) along the river, passing the Virginia Quay monument.

Go through the gate into London's only salt marsh - the old East India Dock, now managed by the Lea Valley Regional Park. Follow the path bridging the dock inlet and exit on the far side into Orchard Place through the Salome Gates. This is the Leamouth area - retrace the walk to East India DLR station or join the Lea Valley Walk (another Walk London route) up the Lea River to reach Canning Town transport interchange.



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