

The 'Upstairs - Downstairs' Walk - Urban Contrasts in Greenwich and Woolwich

Naval College Maritime Museum

One of the grandest assemblies of royal buildings in Europe, and over a century of the court's classical style, from the plain Palladian Queen's House of 1666 to the chapel of 1780. Great architects - Inigo Jones, Wren and Hawksmoor were involved.

St. Alphage's Church

St. Alphage was martyred by the Danes in 1012. The church was rebuilt by Hawksmoor in 1711-14. War damage destroyed Grinling Gibbons' wood work.

Woolwich Dockyard

The dockyard closed in 1869 but the arsenal basins in the wake of the Crimean War. A few old buildings remain.

Morris Walk Estate

1963-6. The first big council estate to use the Larsen-Nielsen industrial system. Not very pretty!

Woolwich

The town supplied guns and ships required by British Imperialism. In 1744 there were 400 ropemakers in the town. The modern town has few remnants of its past.



Route designed by Basil Cracknell.
Map, photographs and text by Jim Hart.

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- Observatory.** By Wren, 1675-6. The observatory was moved to Sussex after the Second World War.
- Croomb's Hill.** Downhill is a varied succession of large houses of the past three centuries.
- Lethbridge Estate.** From the wealthy streets east of Blackheath you descend a hundred feet or so of wooden steps into grim, dun-coloured slab-blocks. It is one of the sharpest social contrasts in London - truly 'upstairs-downstairs' (PEOPLE IN WHEELCHAIRS CONTINUE DOWN MORRIS HILL)
- Greenwich Centre.** The little centre was rebuilt in 1830 to the design of Joseph Kay. The shrouded facades are in the 'Nash' style. Inside are nice alleyways and a covered market. All-in-all Greenwich is one of the most attractive places in London.
- Information:** Cherry & Reesner Buildings of England, London 2: South.
- St. John's Church.** 1852. On an island site in a pleasant Victorian suburb.
- Blackheath.** From dense streets you emerge on to a vast expanse of grass - the 'gateway to London'. The Roman road crosses it. Wat Tyler camped here in 1381, and Londoners welcomed Henry VIII back from Ajacourt here. Around it are mansions from past centuries mixed with modern housing.
- Langston Way.** A pleasant gravel road with well-chosen housing.
- Greenwich Park.** The brick wall dates to the time of James I. The park was laid out in the continental style - straight avenues by Louis XIV celebrated garden Le Nôtre. There are panoramic views of the City and the Isle of Dogs, etc.
- St. Mary Magdalene.** A 'Fifty New Churches Act' of 1727. Much altered and modernised.
- R.A. Barracks.** Begun in 1775. The great facade - 1700s feet long faces south. So took round to see it.
- Woolwich Town Hall.** Florid Edwardian Baroque, at 1902-6. (Short detour).
- Charlton Village.** Pleasant enough. The Bugle Horn in the church is of 1630 with an interesting interior and many monuments.
- Charlton House.** The finest Jacobean mansion to survive in London, with a community centre, fine staircase, fireplaces, ceilings worth a visit.