

The Thames Path on the north bank...

KEW BRIDGE TO BARNES FOOTBRIDGE
Strand-on-the-Green and Picturesque Pubs

The broad and beautiful sweep of the Thames at Kew Bridge marks the start of lovely Strand-on-the-Green, an ever-popular choice for a Sunday stroll. Once past the Old Pier House the narrow, picturesque footpath is lined with idyllic houses and vintage pubs with benches set out on the walkway to enjoy the perfect, placid views. First in line is the Bell & Crown, then the house of painter John Zoffany is followed by the City Barge, the sailing club and the Bull's Head pub. From here the Thames Path turns inland through the Conservation Area of Grove Park Road bearing right at the roundabout into Hartington Road. A ten-minute walk brings sports grounds into view, just beyond Cavendish Road: turn right here into Chiswick Quay and follow the ivy-clad wall off to the right to reach the riverside promenade, ending at the lock at the entrance to Chiswick Quay's marina. Walk across the lock gates doubling back, then right, to regain Hartington Road and turn right here past the rugby grounds to Chiswick Bridge. Walk past the racks of boats stored under the bridge and cross to the tree-lined path beside the river for the peaceful and largely traffic-free stretch around Duke's Meadow golf club and allotments. Skirting Chiswick Boathouse, the route becomes more rustic still: a quiet country lane leads under the railway bridge, turning right alongside well-screened playing fields that include the Civil Service Sports Club. As the lane bends left, follow the narrow right-hand path through the greenery to regain the river at the foot of Barnes Bridge. The station is five minutes away, at the far end of the bridge.

BARNES FOOTBRIDGE TO PUTNEY BRIDGE
Elegant Chiswick and William Morris' Riverside Home

From Barnes Bridge, follow the riverside grassy terrace to the glinting sculpture of a gull and chicks, where a footpath offers a short stroll to Palladian Chiswick House (1), built for Lord Burlington in 1728. The Thames Path itself wiggles on to follow the river along the open walkway of desirable Corney Reach estate and Chiswick Pier. As you emerge, detour via Church Street to reach Hogarth's House (2), or just walk as far as St Nicholas' (3) churchyard to see the tombs of Hogarth and Whistler and the grave of Henry Joy, the trumpeter who sounded the Charge of the Light Brigade. Next comes elegant Chiswick Mall, where the lane runs between gracious, spacious houses and their private riverside gardens, bright with flowers. In Hammersmith Terrace, pause to look at No 7, the perfectly-preserved Arts & Crafts home of Emery Walker (4) before strolling on past the Black Lion pub to Riverside Walk with views of Hammersmith Bridge. Beyond the Old Ship is the Upper Mall, where William Morris lived at No 26, now the headquarters of the William Morris Society and Museum (5). Morris and his associates frequented the neighbouring 17th-century Dove tavern, a favourite haunt of Ernest Hemingway and Graham Greene. Take the passage beside it into Furnivall Gardens, created to celebrate the Festival of Britain on Hammersmith's old wharf area blitzed in WWII. From here, walk on past yet more historic pubs and under the bridge to turn left, then right into Crisp Road. Pass the Riverside Studios (6), West London's leading centre for contemporary and international performance, film, exhibitions and television production, which often stage free exhibitions, and turn immediately right to regain the riverside before taking another slight diversion inland. Beyond the River Restaurant and offices of the Richard Rogers Partnership, the path leads inland and then sharp right around the garden of the Crabtree pub to follow the river past flats and houses, eventually joining the road at Fulham Football Club's Craven Cottage stadium and café (7). Just past the stadium, turn right to reach the leafy, riverside walk in Bishop's Park surrounding Fulham Palace (and museum) (8) the former home of the Bishops of London. At the far end of the park, take the

tiled tunnel under Putney Bridge, just in front of All Saints church. Now walk to the riverside and cross Swan Drawdock, turning left when faced with the railway bridge to reach the road. Putney Bridge station is just ahead, or go under the arch to continue the walk.

PUTNEY BRIDGE TO ALBERT BRIDGE
Chelsea Harbour and Cheyne Walk

Setting out from Putney Bridge station, turn left then left again under the railway arch into Ranelagh Gardens, turning into Napier Avenue by the gates of Hurlingham Park. At the end of the avenue, head right and take the second gate into the park. Signs point across the grass to the white running track, then on across the sports field to the road at the far side. Turn right at the road and follow the brick wall round to the river, looking across at the mouth of the River Wandle, where giant red cranes lower huge waste containers onto waiting barges. The next inland detour leads via Carnwath Road and down the side of a vacant wharf to regain the river with Wandsworth Bridge ahead. Cross at the lights on the bridge and take the right-hand arm of the crossroads, walking straight on and across Sainsbury's car park where the waterfront soon provides good views of the action at Battersea Heliport, on the far bank. From here, the riverside walkway at Imperial Wharf dips under a railway bridge to emerge on the spacious walkway at Chelsea Harbour. Stroll either side of the inlet to view yachts in the exclusive marina then carry on along the river to Chelsea Harbour Drive, where the great chimneys and massive bulk of the Lots Road Pumping Station, now disused and awaiting redevelopment, leap into view. Cross the road bridge at the end of the drive and turn right into Lots Road, hugging the wall of the power station that dwarfs lesser buildings over the way. Now the stark brick towers of World's End are straight ahead, with riverside Cremorne Gardens to the right. A line of stylish houseboats stretches ahead to Battersea Bridge, while over the road, blue plaques on Cheyne Walk distinguish the former homes of artist Philip Wilson Steer and sculptor John Tweed. At the bridge, turn inland at the lights and cross Beaufort Street to walk past the Great Hall of 15th century Crosby Hall, moved here from Bishopsgate in 1910. Now detour down

Cheyne Walk and into Cheyne Row to visit the beautiful Queen Anne house owned by the “Sage of Chelsea”, Thomas Carlyle (9). Emerge again at Albert Bridge (saved from demolition by public outcry) to follow the Thames Path to central London, along the Chelsea Embankment.

The Thames Path on the south bank...

KEW BRIDGE TO BARNES FOOTBRIDGE Country Character and Budweiser Beer

Cottages and allotments set the country scene as the Thames Path once again parts company with the traffic, moments from Kew Bridge. Under the railway bridge, the path skirts the grounds of the National Archives (10), guardian of 900 years of historical records from Domesday Book to Shakespeare’s will. Now begins the rustic, willowy walk past the prestigious new apartments of Kew Riverside Park, with green nooks set aside to accommodate the endangered two-lipped snail and veil various water works from sight. Where the raised voices of rowers mingle with the cry of gulls, Putney Town Rowing Club comes into view. The path broadens to pass the well-kept grounds of Hammersmith Cemetery before a final, still-rural flourish leads on beneath an arch of Chiswick’s ornate suspension bridge. Next comes Thames Bank, with its pastel-painted houses and welcoming seats, where the Ship inn sits almost in the shadow of Mortlake’s Stag Brewery. The Thames Path narrows here to squeeze between the river and the brewery wall, shaking off the heady Budweiser smell to wend its way behind assorted flats, houses and community buildings to the White Hart pub, the ideal spot for watching the exciting final stages of the Boat Race. Barnes Bridge is now straight ahead: take the steps up to the station and the river footbridge or follow The Terrace under the bridge for another change of scene.

BARNES FOOTBRIDGE TO PUTNEY BRIDGE Hidden Habitats and lots of Boats

With its raised walkway, elegant architecture and wide-reaching river views, the Terrace at Barnes wears the jaunty air of a seafront promenade. Gustav Holst’s house stands out amongst colour washed houses with wrought iron balconies that offer tantalising glimpses of pretty cottages in old-world lanes. Beyond Barnes High Street and the Bull’s Head hostelry, famous for its jazz, the path leaves the road to beat a tranquil, rural route around the old reservoir, now the Leg o’ Mutton Nature Reserve, with distant views across to Chiswick Mall. Off to the right, the Swedish School marks the start of peaceful playing fields which keep pace with the path all the way to Hammersmith Bridge. After the bridge, the tree-lined path shakes off its brief brush with the traffic, leading on behind mansion blocks and the grandiose Harrods Furniture “Depository”, now apartments. From here it enjoys a peaceful progress along the river frontage of yet more attractive, modern flats to reach a stunningly remote and silent stretch with nothing but bushes, birdsong and acres of open sky. Behind this vast green bank lies the London Wetland Centre (11), an award-winning showcase for wetland habitats providing shelter for wildfowl from around the world. Entry is via Queen Elizabeth Walk (signed Red Lion pub) beyond the monument to oarsman Steve Fairbairn, sited at the Mile Post of the Boat Race course. Beyond that, Barn Elms Boathouse gives the hint of things to come. As gravel meets tarmac at Beverley Brook, the Embankment becomes a succession of “hards” serving rowing and sailing clubs, stretching almost to the foot of Putney Bridge – the oldest Thames Bridge still in use. To walk on, cross over to St Mary’s church, with the blue and gold clock and turning left down its far side to reach cafés and restaurants beside the river.

PUTNEY BRIDGE TO ALBERT BRIDGE The River Wandle and Turner’s London Views

Refreshed by the stop at Putney Bridge, walk on beside the river. Bear right then first left into Deodar Road, passing under the railway bridge and through the archway into Blade Mews to rejoin the river in Wandsworth Park. Leaving the park, go past the moored boats and riverside restaurant and turn right immediately at Riverside Quarter and then left into Osier Road just before the railway bridge. Go right into Enterprise Way, which crosses the River Wandle. Enjoy a brief browse around the Wetland Terraces beside the Thames, at the mouth of the Wandle, then press on following Smugglers Way past the Waste Transfer Station and left onto Nickols Walk, back to the river. Pause at the river to watch the barges being loaded, then follow the nicely landscaped walkway to the back of the Ship Inn. Turn left here, crossing into Jews Row, then cross at the traffic lights on Wandsworth Bridge. Bear left along the dual carriageway taking the first left into Juniper Drive to reach the river at Plantation Wharf, with its nostalgic names like Molasses House or Cinnamon Row. Where the path cuts across the car park, turn left onto the main York Road then left into Lombard Road, quickly picking up signage back to the river. The comings and goings of Battersea Heliport are now right here, beside the path. After a brief diversion inland, under the bridge, Chelsea Harbour and Lots Road Power Station appear on the far bank. Ahead, the tree-lined walkway weaves on past homely houseboats and into the churchyard of St Mary’s Battersea, whose tower is said to have provided Turner with some of his finest London views. Contemporary buildings take over from here, with the emphasis on glass. Up and over Battersea Bridge, slick new offices pave the way to the Victorian Albert Bridge, painted in delicate ice-cream colours, where a sign instructs troops from Chelsea Barracks to break step when crossing. Walk on to the bridge for first views of central London’s skyline before following the Thames Path into Battersea Park.