





1 If leaving an eastbound train start walk by descending steps or ramp directly from the platform towards the rear of the train. If arriving on DLR or westbound train, take the subway at the western end of the platform to start the walk.

Greenwich, Blackheath & Deptford

Although there are infinite possibilities for walks in the Greenwich area, I have distilled three circular walks, starting from the station. All are on dry footpaths and pavements. Greenwich can get very busy on market days.

Deptford

Deptford (deep ford) began life as a ford of the Ravensbourne (near what is now Deptford Bridge DLR station) on a Celtic track way, then Roman road, Watling Street, later the route for pilgrims to Canterbury. A second settlement developed as a modest fishing village on the Thames, then chosen by Henry VIII as a royal repair dock, building and supplying ships. It grew in size and importance, shipbuilding remaining in operation until March 1869. Trinity House, the organisation concerned with the safety of navigation around the British Isles, was formed in Deptford in 1514, before moving to Stepney in 1618. The name "Trinity House" derives from the church of Holy Trinity and St Clement, adjoining the dockyard. As a result of the royal dockyard, Deptford thrived but by 1869 the Dockyard had become outdated and unsuitable to launch ships, and so closed permanently that year with the loss of many jobs. Samuel Pepys often visited the Dockyard when he was Clerk to the Navy Board, his friend and fellow-diarist John Evelyn lived here in the manor house called Sayes Court. Grinling Gibbons the famous wood-carver was first discovered by John Evelyn when he was

working near Sayes Court. Christopher Marlowe the Elizabethan poet and playwright was murdered in a Deptford tavern in 1593 and buried at St Nicholas. In 1698 Peter the Great, Tsar of Russia, spent several months studying shipbuilding in Deptford, where he stayed at Sayes Court. (We pass a statue to him). Drake, Frobisher, Raleigh and much later, Captain James Cook in his ship the Endeavour, sailed from here to Australia and New Zealand in 1768. The thriving market takes place every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, in Deptford High Street.

Greenwich

Greenwich also started as a fishing port in Saxon times. In 1427 Humphrey Duke of Gloucester acquired land there, enclosing 200 acres of Blackheath for a deer park and converting old abbey buildings into Bella Court which developed into Placentia Palace, favourite residences of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. The town developed to service the court. There are simply too many buildings of interest to list here. The present church of St Alfege, named after the Archbishop of Canterbury who was martyred there by the Danes in 1012, is by Nicholas Hawksmoor and is the resting place of Thomas Tallis.

Blackheath

In contrast, Blackheath started out as the wastes of the adjacent manors of Charlton, Greenwich, Kidbrook and Lewisham and only developed much later. Situated on the east

side of Blackheath is the sizeable estate of Blackheath Park, created by John Cator in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It contains many fine examples of substantial Georgian and Victorian houses – notably The Paragon (1793-1806) – as well as some 1930s and 1960s additions. The Cator Estate was built on land formerly owned by Sir John Morden, whose Morden College (1695) nearby. The estate also contains innovative 1960s 'Span' houses and flats by Span Developments (architect Eric Lyons). St Michael and All Angels Church, designed by local architect George Smith and completed in 1830, was dubbed the Needle of Kent in honour of its tall, thin spire (nicknamed the Devil's Toothpick!). All Saints Church, situated on the heath, designed by the architect Benjamin Ferrey, dates from 1857. The Pagoda is a notable example of a beautiful property, built in 1760 by Sir William Chambers in the style of a traditional Chinese pagoda. It was later leased to the Prince Regent, who would become King George IV, and used as a summer home by his wife Caroline, Princess of Wales. In 1871 the management of Blackheath itself passed by Act of Parliament to the Metropolitan Board of Works, thence to the London County Council, to the Greater London Council and when the GLC closed in 1986, responsibility was given to the two boroughs of Greenwich and Lewisham, where it remains today.