

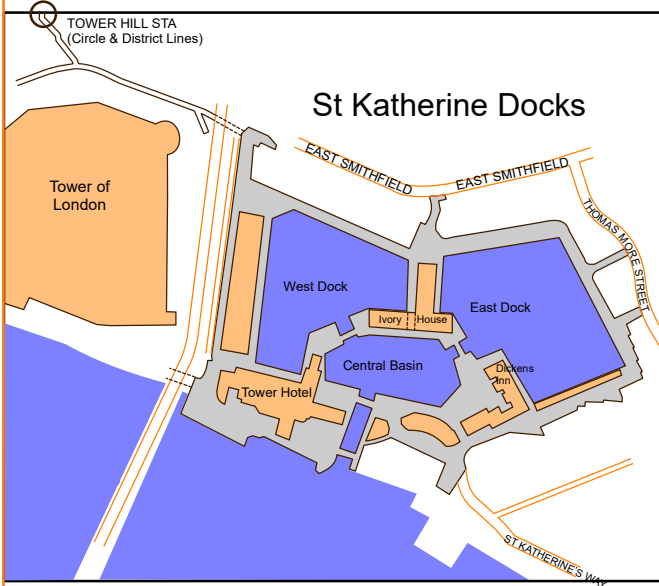
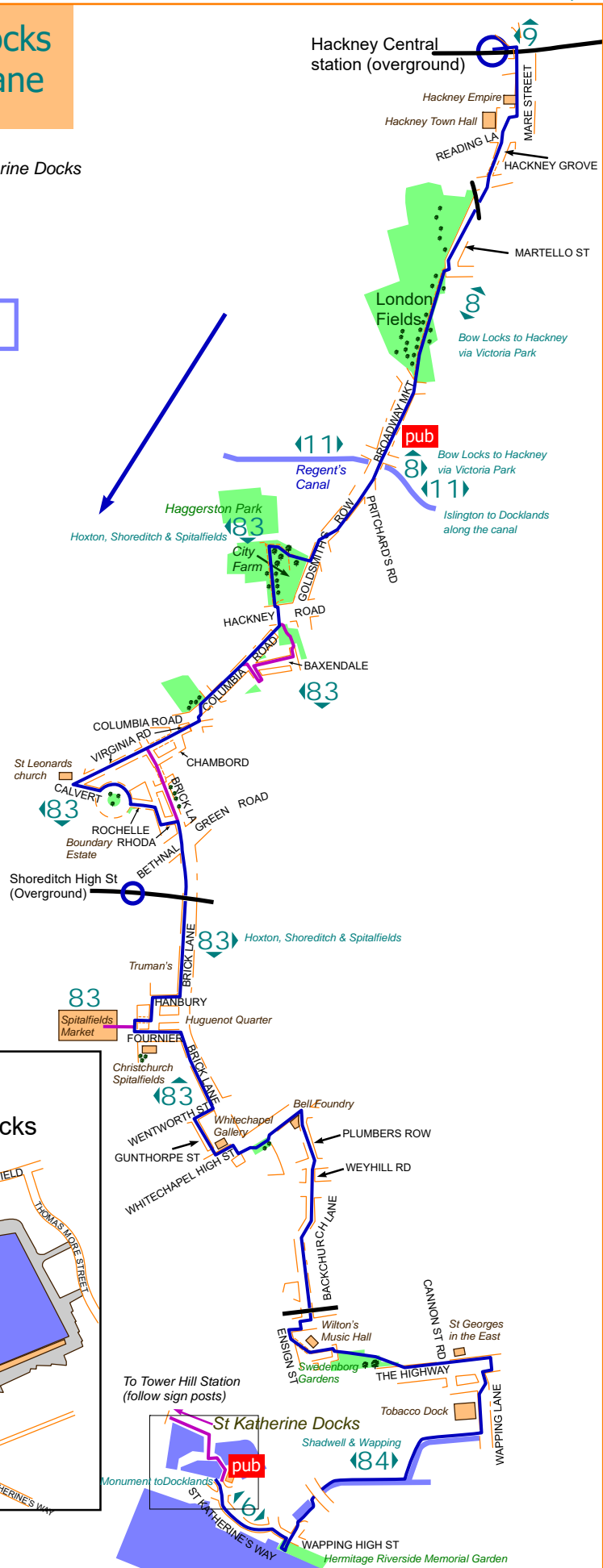
# Hackney to St Katherine Docks via Columbia Road, Brick Lane

This is the second half of a gradual downhill walk from Walthamstow to the River Thames, ending at St Katherine Docks

- main walk 8.4 km
  - option to Spitalfields Market
  - railway
  - ↕ connection with another walk
- 1 kilometre

Notes: See pages below

There are plenty of places to eat at Broadway Market and St Katherine Docks



Pubs: Dove, Dickens Inn (busy in tourist season)  
 Inspiration for walk from Patrick Hamilton, *Walking Across London*, Capital Travel Books

## walk notes

*Another walk inspired by Patrick Hamilton is the continuation of the last one. It is 8.4 km entirely on pavement and overlaps with several other walks.*

### **London Fields**

London Fields started as common land used for grazing animals before moving them to Smithfield Market.

### **Broadway Market**

Broadway Market is an old chartered market undergoing a revival, particularly in food, and is open on Saturdays.

### **Haggerston Park**

In 1821 land was purchased along Regents Canal on Hackney Fields for the Imperial Gas Light and Coke Company and for 120 years gas was produced from coal shipped in via the canal. After nationalisation in 1949 the works were closed and the canal basin filled in. The site was opened as a local park in 1958. In the 60s and 70s the park was extended towards the Hackney Road, enabling ecological and sports amenities.

### **Hackney City Farm**

Over the past twenty years, the farm has evolved from a derelict and dirty lorry park into a thriving popular community resource. It houses a wide range of farm animals as well as a rich cottage garden. The older outbuildings have all been renovated into animal housing and much of the main building has undergone refurbishment. It is now the home to the award winning Frizzante café, a well equipped pottery studio, Bike Yard East, Magnificent Revolution and offices for Kindle and Fonic

### **Columbia Road Market**

Columbia Road market is a flower market open since 1866, Sundays only but even when the market is absent the shops are fascinating to see.

### **Boundary Estate**

Arnold Circus is part of the Boundary Estate, opened in 1900 as a social housing scheme, the world's first council housing, to replace slums at Friar's Mount (Nichol's) rookery. Rubble from the slums was used to construct the mound in the middle of Arnold Circus. The original slum dwellers were forced eastwards rather than being re-housed in the estate.

### **Brick Lane**

The walk continues down Brick Lane which gets extremely crowded at week ends. Formerly called Whitechapel Lane the street accessed brick and tile factories from the

14th century.

The landmark **Truman's Brewery** opened in Brick Lane in 1669. For a brief time in the 1800s it was the biggest brewery in the world sending Imperial Stout to the Russian court and IPA to the British Raj. It remained resolutely independent until succumbing to the merger mania of the 1980s. In 1989 the brewery and pubs were sold and Truman's closed its doors.

**Christ Church Spitalfields** was built between 1714 and 1729 as part of the church building programme initiated by the Fifty New Churches act of 1711, backed by Queen Anne. Architect was Nicholas Hawksmoor. At the time, there were fears that 'godless thousands' outside the City of London had no adequate church provision, and that non-conformists –including large numbers of French Huguenot silk weavers– were moving into Spitalfields and bringing their non-conformist worshipping ways with them. The Commission stipulated that the new buildings should have tall spires so that they would tower above the smaller, non-conformist chapels. Funding was to be through taxes on coal coming into London. Building progressed fitfully.

Irish weavers joined the Huguenots, but both groups were finding it hard to compete with cheap French imports. In 1769, unrest boiled over, leading to the Spitalfields Riots. By the 19th century, most of the area's traditional industries, including silk weaving, had moved elsewhere, although the area still produced some textiles. The grand houses of the Huguenots became slums.

The Irish were followed by East European Jews escaping the Polish pogroms and harsh conditions in Russia; as well as entrepreneurial Jews from the Netherlands. From the 1880s to 1970s Spitalfields was one of the largest Jewish communities in Europe with over 40 Synagogues.

By the 20th century, Spitalfields became the home of many immigrants from Bangladesh, many of whom ultimately made their homes in and around the nearby Brick Lane.

### **Bell Foundry**

The Bell Foundry has been in continuous use since 1570, and having supplied 13.5 ton Big Ben and the original Liberty Bell and continuing to supply bells all over the world. The museum displays are open to visitors Monday to Friday 9am to 4.30pm. Tours

however have to be arranged well ahead.

### **Wilton's Music Hall**

There is a rather boring stretch of back streets before surfacing at Wilton's Music Hall. Wilton's started as five houses including an ale house built in the 1690s. The pub served the Scandinavian community and a concert room was built behind in 1839 and eventually became a licensed theatre. (Swedenborg Gardens was originally the site of the Scandinavian Church) John Wilton bought the business in around 1850 to found his music hall in 1859. In the 1860s. he combined the buildings. As the East End declined the hall became a Methodists Mission which continued until closure in 1956. It then became warehousing and then was threatened by area redevelopment. The London Music Hall Trust was founded in 1982 to do essential repairs. The Wilton's Music Hall Trust was formed in 2004 to fully open the building to the public, secure ownership and present a wider arts programme.

### **Wapping Ornamental Canal**

After skirting St George in the East (see walk 84) the walk passes down Wapping Lane and turns right along Wapping Ornamental Canal. The canal is built on reclaimed dockland which explains why the left bank is much higher than the right one, being the edge of the former dock. The canal turns left and again right where another canal joins, opposite imposing steps located at the original entrance to the dock via Wapping Pierhead and Wapping Basin. See Wapping **St Katherine Docks**

See <http://www.thehistoryoflondon.co.uk/st-katharines-docks/>

Until the beginning of the 19th century all goods were landed or loaded at wharves on the open river. As commerce from the Empire grew, in order to alleviate congestion on the Thames, a group of merchants, began to create new enclosed, tide-free docks for their ships. The West India Docks opened on the Isle of Dogs in 1802 and the London Docks at Wapping followed in 1805 and the East India Company opened their own docks at Blackwall in 1806. Others were developed at Rotherhithe.

In return for their investment in creating the docks, the owners were each granted by Parliament a twenty-one year monopoly on certain goods to and from particular areas of the world. Those monopolies were due to expire in the mid-1820s. Tonnage passing

through the port had continued to rise and several groups of investors and engineers began to make speculative plans for new sets of docks along the Thames to take advantage of the forthcoming free trade.

The St Katharine Dock Bill was passed by Parliament in June 1825. Thirteen acres of land were acquired by the dock company. The Times reported that 1250 houses and tenements were destroyed – displacing 11,300 inhabitants – as well as the medieval and historic Hospital of St Katherine and its 14th century church.

Thomas Telford was commissioned as Chief Engineer. His design with the warehouses close to the dock enabled goods to be offloaded direct to the warehouses. Although the docks were small they were cleverly designed and proximity to the centre of London was a financial advantage. It specialized mostly in tea from India and wool as well as a range of luxury and exotic items from around the world, including ivory, china, ostrich feathers, spices, tortoiseshell, mother of pearl, oriental carpets, raw materials to manufacture perfume and carpets.

However, the increase in competition and vessel size and the lack of railway access, reduced the viability of the relatively small St Katharine Docks. In 1864 the docks amalgamated with the London Dock Company, the first of several amalgamations. As ships progressed from sail to steam and the size of the steam vessels grew, less trade could be handled. The purpose of the docks changed to being a centrally located storage facility for vessels unloading at other docks on the Thames.

Much bomb damage was inflicted by WW2 and subsequently left derelict. In 1967 the decision was taken by the PLA to close St Katherine and London Docks.

The St Katharine Docks was the first London dockland regeneration project and became an award winning showpiece from the mid-1970s for Taylor Woodrow, the landowners at that time. The Ivory House, built in the 1850s and the only warehouse to survive the blitz, was converted into flats. New build residential properties followed.

The Dickens Inn pub was created from the structure of a former warehouse that was moved to Marble Quay. The regeneration drew in tourists attracted by the tranquil setting of this unique part of London, close to Tower Bridge and the Tower of London.