



### **The Walk**

*This is not a favourite walk. Much of it is confined to a dank path beside the river. However, at times the walk opens out into wider green spaces. At Kneller Gardens you can choose to follow the original River Crane or divert along the lower part of the Duke of Northumberland's River.*

### **Duke of Northumberland's River**

The Duke of Northumberland's River consists of two separate parts, feeding into and out of the River Crane. Only the lower section forms part of this walk.

The upper section diverts a small proportion of water from the River Colne at Longford, to reinforce the River Crane below Donkey Wood. For much of the way it flows alongside its younger "twin", the Longford River.

The lower section diverts water from the Crane in Kneller Gardens, Whitton, northward, originally to its mill then onwards to supply the ornamental ponds in the Duke of Northumberland's estate at Syon Park. Sluices control the flow into the park and into the Thames at Isleworth Ait.

### **Hounslow Heath**

Hounslow Heath public open space covers 200 acres and is all that remains of a much larger area of 4,000 acres. It was often used for military manoeuvres. In the 17th and 18th centuries, it was notorious as the haunt of highwaymen and footpads, being crossed by the Great West Road and the Bath Road. In 1784 it was chosen by the Ordnance Survey for its flatness and relative proximity to the Royal Greenwich Observatory to create a baseline for the eventual mapping of the whole

United Kingdom. A sighting was made of the spire of All Saints' church in Banstead, and along that line a length of 27,400 feet was very precisely measured. This work by General William Roy was the start of the Anglo-French Survey (1784–1790), which led to the Principal Triangulation of Great Britain.

In 1919, the aerodrome became the London Terminal Aerodrome, and hosted the first scheduled daily international commercial air services. In 1920 it surrendered its role to Croydon Airport, and was closed.

### **Crane Park**

Crane Park is the site of the once notorious Hounslow Gunpowder Mills, built where the island is today. There were other mills along the river as far back as 1066, producing swords, oil and flour. After the mills closed, and a brief period as an ornamental boating pond it became derelict. The pond was drained in 1981 and Crane Park Island designated a Local Nature Reserve, managed by London Wildlife Trust since 1986.

The banks of the Crane are home to a thriving colony of Marsh

Frogs and the rare Water Vole. Other wildlife includes: kingfisher, grey heron, tree creeper, great spotted woodpecker, chub, roach, perch, stickleback,

minnow, stone loach, bullhead, ruddy darter, willow, marsh-marigold, dryad's saddle. Riverside willow and osier are regularly coppiced, reedbeds are cut on rotation, and invasive species management is undertaken regularly.

### **Cranford**

Before the Norman Conquest, the village was a small Saxon settlement in all senses completely surrounded by its open fields abutting the north of Hounslow Heath and was in Elthorne Hundred for troop-mustering and taxation purposes. By the 13th century, the main area of Cranford Park and House, the High Street and Bath Road had been given to the Knights Templar (followed by the knights of St John of Jerusalem) as Cranforde St John. The rest, Cranford le Mote, included the manor house and stretched in a narrow taper to the north of the present M4.

The village still has some distinguished houses, including Stansfield House, a 17th-century listed building. Cranford also has one of only two remaining "lock-ups" in the Metropolitan Police area, this one built in 1838 to hold drunks and vagrants overnight, before finding use as a mortuary for the parish council. St Dunstan's Church stands in Cranford Park, adjacent to the stable block of Cranford House. The oldest surviving part is its 15th-century tower.

### **Isleworth Riverside**

Isleworth goes back to prehistoric times. There was settlement in Roman times, and in Saxon times the Manor of Isleworth was coterminous with the Hundred of Isleworth, which covered three later parishes of Heston, Isleworth and



Twickenham. Its north-eastern boundary was the Brent.

Beside the Thames, the early settlement benefited from river traffic and providing services, was surrounded by market gardens, supplying London, and had a large corn mill.

Today the character of Church Street is notable for differing styles and use of materials.

All Saints Church occupied its riverside site from the 13th century, being rebuilt in 1705, but in 1943 the whole church save the tower and parts of the stonework was burned to the ground by two boys. The rebuild was not completed until 1969. The four separate roofs, carried on columns quite independent both of each other and the walls, are panelled in Columbian pine. The central lancet window of stained glass is by Keith New and given in memory of Martin Waterston. Michael Blee was the architect. The new extensions are grafted to the medieval tower in a startling way.

The flat roofs project emphatically through the old windows. The ornamental sundial on the front of the Joshua Chapel was first erected in 1707 in memory of Susanna Lawes, wife of the Governor of Jamaica. Its markings are arranged to show the time in Isleworth, Jamaica, Jerusalem and Moscow.

The adjacent houses are most attractive. The ribbon of houses is basically 18th and 19th Century with later picturesque alterations. Butterfield House (Grade II) is two cottages transformed in 1971 into the Gothic style. Number 61 (Grade II) is early 19th Century finished in stucco with a tented balcony and earlier core. Number 59 (Grade II) is a two bay brick fronted house of 1825-30 and has an earlier core. Numbers 55-57 (Grade II) date

from the 1870's and have angular Gothic doorways. The London Apprentice Public House (Grade II) is early 18th century and made more prominent by being set at right angles to the road forming a landmark feature within the street scene.

Along the narrow section of Church Street is an attractive terrace of Georgian and Victorian buildings, opposite other later interestingly detailed housing and Richard Reynolds House (Grade II). No mills or warehouses remain, but the industrial character of narrow roads and paths to a riverside crane, the canalised waterway and stone bridge remain, the bridge being itself a (Grade II) listed building. At the south end of narrow Church Street, are two squares created mostly in 1986-8: an instant townscape with terrace houses, office and a riverside pub, all developed by Speyhawk. The development incorporates Holland House (Grade II), late 18th century with a 1840's façade and John Day House (Grade II), which is stone-fronted.

The dominant centrepiece is the Tudor gothic Old Blue School (Grade II) of 1841-2 by C F Maltby in an unusual pale brick with a little turret clock.

Nazareth House (Grade II), with its various additions, dominates the road leading towards Richmond. The former Isleworth House was lavishly rebuilt in 1832 by Edward Blore for George III's chaplain, Sir William Cooper. On Twickenham Road by South Street is Gumley House Covent School and Housing. Set back behind big gate piers and wall (Grade II), the centre is a c1700 house (Grade II\*) built for John Gumley, the eminent cabinet and mirror-maker. The place was expanded when

the convent took over in 1841.

Silverhall Gardens is what remains of Silverhall House, - the 19th century garden walls and the remains of an icehouse. Here can also be found Ingram's Almshouses (Grade II) dating from 1664.

### **Syon**

The Bridgettine Monastery of St Saviour and St Bridget of Syon, of the Order of St Augustine was founded in Twickenham in 1415 by Henry V. It moved to its later site before 1431 for reason of space. During the Reformation, the estate fell into the hands of Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset and brother to Jane Seymour. It is thought to be Somerset who began constructing a Renaissance-style house; he employed the botanist William Turner to build England's first botanical gardens at Syon and the house was largely completed by the time he was be-headed in 1552. It was inherited by John Dudley first Duke of Northumberland. Queen Mary restored the monastery, temporarily. In 1594 Queen Elizabeth I granted a lease of the manor to Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland on his marriage to Dorothy Devereux, (sister of Robert Devereux, 1st Earl of Essex), who later, in 1604, received a grant of the freehold from King James I. There were two more Percys before the line died out and inheritance transferred to a cousin, who married Hugh Smithson. He adopted the name Percy and was made the (second) first Duke of Northumberland in 1766. It was he who employed Capability Brown to remodel the park and Robert Adam to remodel the house interior, in grand style. The Park remains in the Percy family to this day.