



*Seeing the Capital Differently*

## Canals

### Welcome to *CityThemes*

By printing this leaflet you have decided to discover, or rediscover, the sights and delights of **London** in a different way. We hope that you enjoy your explorations of our fascinating and historical capital city.

This leaflet has been designed to allow you to explore as the mood takes you. Both well-known and lesser-known attractions are included and they are randomly listed so that you plan your own itinerary and visit as many or as few as you wish.

Please note:- some places restrict entry and ask for prior application either in writing or by telephone. This is indicated where known. Others may change opening days and hours with little warning – it may be worth checking by phone if they are off the beaten track.

A very brief description of the reason for the choice of site is given but because of space it is not possible to include much detail. Again a telephone call to the site may help you to decide on whether a visit is worthwhile. Remember there may be other items that interest you at the same site.

Themes are constantly being updated and new titles added so please keep looking at our website or get in touch with us by e-mail or letter. We welcome your comments especially if you feel that some site should be included or details are incorrect/inaccurate. Contact details are

website: [www.citytheme.co.uk](http://www.citytheme.co.uk)  
e-mail: [info@citythemes.co.uk](mailto:info@citythemes.co.uk)  
address: CityThemes PO Box 42530, London E1W 3WL

### Enjoy Your Explorations

canals are artificial waterways for inland navigation and at one time were the main means of transporting goods across the country

*one of the main canals in the southern half of England is the Grand Union Canal built in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to link the industries of Birmingham with the port and warehouses of London. The section running from Paddington to the River Thames at Limehouse is known as the Regent's Canal. It in turn links with the navigable River Lee(Lea) on the east side of the capital via the Hertford Union Canal and the Limehouse Cut*

*most of the canals are little used nowadays except for pleasure purposes - cruising, fishing, walking. To walk along the tow paths, once used by the horses towing barges, is to see both the past and the present - parks, imposing warehouses, bridges, used and disused locks, dereliction and renovation, bird life - and at most times to have an escape from the noise and bustle of London & its traffic*

### **Grand Union Canal**

skirts Osterley Park to north and links to Brent River, Isleworth, Middlesex

*for 3 miles (4.8k) near Neasden the canal is part of the Brent River with the river providing water for the Canal from the Brent Reservoir (Welsh Harp). The Reservoir provides an area for sailing, swimming and bird life. Where the Canal links to the River Brent are attractive towpath walks*

### **Hanwell Flight**

Brent Park, W7

*a set of five manually operated locks drop the Grand Union Canal 50ft (15m) in less than a quarter of a mile (1km). Just above the Flight the Canal meets the road and railway. Here there are three bridges one above the other, built by Isambard Kingdom Brunel in 1837 - an engineering masterpiece*

### **Little Venice, W2**

transport: Warwick Avenue u/g, Paddington u/g & rail; buses 6,16,18,46,98,187

*a basin of the Regent's Canal with a small island. The name was coined by the poet, Robert Browning, who lived in Warwick Avenue from 1862 to 1887 after the death of his wife, Elizabeth Barrett-Browning. Little Venice provides a mooring for brightly coloured narrow boats usually decorated with tubs of flowers. It is the venue for a canal cavalcade over the early May bank holiday weekend which includes a night parade of illuminated boats. Boat trips are available from various companies between here and Camden (usually calling at London Zoo)*

### **Floating Boater**

Regent's Canal, Little Venice, W2

020 7266 1066 [www.floatingboater.co.uk](http://www.floatingboater.co.uk)

transport: Warwick Avenue u/g, Paddington u/g & rail; buses 6,16,18,46,98,187

opening: advance booking only. Please ring number above

*this company provides dining and music trips on the Regent's Canal aboard the 'Prince Regent', an Edwardian canal boat resplendent with mahogany and ash panelling*

*or the 'Lapwing', an 86 years old narrow boat with timbered saloon*

### **Regent's Canal**

can be seen at various locations including St John's Wood, London Zoo, Camden Town, Islington, Victoria Park, Mile End and Limehouse

opening: tow path daily 09.00-dusk

*the Regent's Canal is the part of the Grand Union Canal that links the basin at Paddington with the basin at Limehouse for access to the River Thames. Completed in 1820 it is 9 miles (14.5 km) in length, has 42 bridges, 12 locks and 2 tunnels. The Regent's Canal Tunnel runs for 2880ft (878m) under Upper Street, Islington and can be seen using the steps in Muriel Street (west end) or Colebrook Row (east end)*

*the towpaths, originally used by the horses towing the barges, are now used for walking, jogging, cycling or fishing. A striking feature of any canal are the narrow boats, usually brightly painted and decorated with flowerpots and knick-knacks. Some have been converted into cafes or galleries. Boat trips along sections of the canal are offered by various companies*

### **Camley Street Natural Park**

12 Camley Street, NW1

020 7833 2311

transport: King's Cross & St Pancras u/g & rail; buses 10, 17,45,46,63,214,259

opening: Mon-Thur 09.00-17.00, Sat-Sun 11.00-18.00

*set beside the Regent's Canal this re-created nature reserve, transformed from an old rubbish tip, has a canal side pond, meadow and woodland habitats. It provides a sanctuary for birds, butterflies, frogs, newts, toads and herons and is run by the London Wildlife Trust*

### **London Canal Museum**

12-13 New Wharf Road, King's Cross, N1 9RT

020 7713 0836 [www.canalmuseum.org.uk](http://www.canalmuseum.org.uk)

transport: Kings Cross & St Pancras u/g & rail; buses 10, 17,45,46,63,91,259,274

facilities: publications shop, tours by arrangement

opening: Tue-Sun 10.00-16.30

admission charge

*this museum's collection illustrates the history and working of London's navigable waterways and the life of the people living on them. A 1924 film shows what life was like on the Regent's Canal and there is a collection of Measham Ware, a pottery popular with canal boat families*

### **Camden Lock, NW1**

transport: Camden Town u/g, Camden Road rail; buses 24,27,31,168

*these three locks on the Regent's Canal begin the descent to Limehouse in East London where the canal meets the River Thames. The canal system was once widely used as a major means of transporting goods across Britain and the Interchange Warehouse is a remains of that past. The Warehouse is an area of covered canal basins that link to disused railway lines which lead in turn to the Camden Catacombs. These, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, provided stabling for the pit ponies used for shunting the railway goods wagons*

### **Narrow Boat pub**

119 St Peter's Street, N1

020 7288 9821

transport: Angel & Old Street u/g; buses 38,43,56, 73,214,341

facilities: meals & snacks lunchtime & evening  
opening: Mon-Sat noon-23.00, Sun noon-22.30

*this canalside pub overlooks the Regent's Canal and the narrowboat moorings on Wenlock Basin*

### **Limehouse Basin**

between Commercial Road and Narrow Street, E14

transport: Limehouse DLR & rail; buses 15,D3

*this basin is at the River Thames end of the Regent's Canal and links that Canal with the Lee (Lea) Navigation via the Limehouse Cut. It is now a marina for yachts and canal boats*

*the Limehouse Cut was opened in 1770 and is 1.5 miles (2.4km) long. A further connection from the Regent's Canal to the Lee (Lea) Navigation, the Hertford Union Canal (Duckett's Cut), can be found further north and runs alongside Victoria Park via Old Ford and under the Blackwall Tunnel Approach Road. It is 1.75 miles (2.8km) long and has three locks*

### **Lee (Lea) Navigation**

*the River Lee (Lea) was formerly the boundary between Middlesex and Essex and may have been used as a navigational waterway by the Romans. Nowadays it supplies some of London's water supply. Included in the River is a series of canals called the Lee (Lea) Navigation.*

*running from Hertford via Ware and Hoddesdon to Old Ford and Bow the LN joins the Thames at Canning Town. It is 30.75 miles (49km) long and has 20 locks. It runs through some very pleasant areas and offers facilities for all sorts of activities including fishing, boating, horseriding and bird watching*

### **Three Mills Island**

Three Mills Lane, Bow, E3  
020 8215 0050

transport: Bromley-by-Bow u/g, Bow Church DLR; buses 8,25,108,D8,S2

facilities: parking in Tesco car park; Still Café (Mon-Fri 09.30-23.00 (020 8215 3305))

*if you fancy a cruise along the canal then boat trips start from here. The 'Lady of Lee Valley' is available for both public and private use and has disabled access and refreshments. Telephone 01992 466111 for information or visit [www.riverleecruises.co.uk](http://www.riverleecruises.co.uk). Trips need to be booked in advance*

### **Canal Walk**

The Highway, Wapping, E1

transport: Wapping u/g, Shadwell u/g & DLR; buses 100, D3

*the original canals linking the various Wapping docks have been incorporated into modern estates. A walk through this Dutch-gabled housing estate shows the combination of the old and the new*

### **Grosvenor Canal**

Chelsea Bridge, SW1

transport: Pimlico u/g, Victoria u/g & rail; buses 11,24, 137,211,239,C10

*this canal and reservoir system constructed in 1725 by the Chelsea Waterworks Company to supply drinking water to Mayfair was improved in the 1820s by the Grosvenor Family. Most of the canal is now covered by Victoria Station although lock gates are still in evidence in Grosvenor Road beside the Western Pumping Station. The entrance that you can see is used by Westminster Council for access to its cleansing department works and barges*

*can be seen taking some of London's rubbish from here to tips in the Thames Estuary*

### **Royal Gunpowder Mills**

Beaulieu Drive, Waltham Abbey, Essex, EN9  
01992 707370 [www.royalgunpowdermills.com](http://www.royalgunpowdermills.com)

transport: Waltham Cross rail (25 min walk); buses 211, 212,213,240,250,505,517

facilities: disabled access & wcs; café; giftshop; special scientific interest tours by appointment

opening: daily April-Oct 10.00-18.00 (last admission 17.00)

admission charge

*an out-of-London museum outlining the history and development of gunpowder and surrounded by a park of wildlife, woodland and canals. The park is home to a large heronry which may be viewed by prior arrangement*

### **St Katharine's Dock**

St Katharine-by-the-Tower, E1  
[www.stkaths.co.uk](http://www.stkaths.co.uk)

transport: Tower Hill u/g, Tower Gateway DLR, Fenchurch Street rail; buses 15,42,78,100; boat Tower Millennium & St Katharines Piers

*a lock from the River Thames into the dock has a raising bridge. On the wall nearby is a useful description and diagram as to how the lock works*

### **Bushy Park**

Sandy Lane, Hampton, Middlesex, TW12  
020 8979 1586 [www.open.gov.uk/rp/rphome.htm](http://www.open.gov.uk/rp/rphome.htm)

transport: Teddington & Hampton Court rail; buses 111, 216,411,416,451,461,465,513,726,R68

opening: daily 05.00-22.30 Woodland Gardens 09.00-dusk

*the Longford River is an artificial river of 13miles created by King Charles II in 1639 in order to bring freshwater to Bushy Park and Hampton Court Palace. It provides Bushy Park with its streams & ponds and, via a culvert and over a waterfall, supplies the water for the Diana Fountain. Another culvert goes into a canal (Long Water) that runs through Hampton Court Palace grounds before eventually exiting into the River Thames at Hampton.*

### **Brentford Lock**

Commerce Road, Brentford, Middlesex

transport: Brentford rail; buses E2,E8,H28,H91

*this is an old gauging lock where the toll for using the lock was charged according to the weight and nature of the cargo. Note the octagonal toll office. The lock is controlled by traffic lights and operated by lock keeper*

A great deal of care has been taken in collecting the information in this leaflet but *CityThemes* cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of that information. It can cover only a few of the many interesting sites to be found in London and therefore must not be considered a definitive guide.

© CityThemes 2006