

# Fetcham U3A

## Explore London Group 6

### Greenwich

This is a circular walk around the Georgian riverside town of Greenwich. Travel by River Clipper from Westminster Bridge.



**The Cutty Sark** is the last of the great Tea Clippers and situated in the very heart of Greenwich, in a dry dock at the river's edge. Sadly, the ship was seriously damaged by fire while undergoing conservation work in 2007. A complete renovation of the Cutty Sark was estimated to cost £25 million. The ship has been in the dry dock since 1954, and was urgently in need of conservation. But total costs may now reach £35 million because of the extra time and money needed to complete the work following the fire.

#### Royal Maritain Museum

The museum was officially established in 1934 within the 200 acres (0.81 km<sup>2</sup>) of Greenwich Royal Park in the buildings formerly occupied by the Royal Hospital School, before it moved to Holbrook in Suffolk. These buildings had previously been occupied by the Royal Naval Asylum before it was incorporated into the Greenwich Royal Hospital School. It includes the Queen's House (part of the historic park-and-palace landscape of "Maritime Greenwich", which was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997) and the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, until 1948 the home of the Royal Greenwich Observatory.

#### Royal Naval Hospital

There is a rich history to the site even before Wren's Hospital. In Tudor times Greenwich Palace, reputedly Henry VIII's favorite palace and the birthplace of Elizabeth I. The hospital was established by Royal Charter in 1694 for the relief and support of seamen and their

dependants. Sir Christopher Wren planned the site and during the first half of the eighteenth century various illustrious architects, such as Hawksmoor, Vanbrugh and James 'Athenian' Stuart completed the design.

As the nineteenth century wore on, with peace established, numbers of Pensioners declined and the Hospital finally closed in 1869. Soon after this the Royal Naval College moved in heralding a new beginning for the site as a naval training centre for officers from around the world. In 1998 the Royal Navy departed for its new base at Shrivenham and responsibility for the College passed to the newly established Greenwich Foundation.

**Greenwich (Royal) Park** enjoys panoramic views over Docklands and the City of London, and is the oldest of London's royal parks. The park was stocked with deer in 1515, and their descendants still roam in the area, known as The Wilderness, today.

In 1662 Charles II had the park landscaped in a style inspired by the French gardener André le Notre who planned the gardens of the Palace of Versailles. You can climb the steep hill that divides the north and south of the park or visit the flower gardens, cafe, children's boating lake and playground.

The park will be used as the venue for Olympic and Paralympic equestrian and modern pentathlon events during the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

**The Royal Observatory** stands as a monument to navigational research. It is the original home of Greenwich Mean Time and is famous for being the source of the Prime Meridian line that divides the East from the West (longitude 0° 0' 0"). There is a time ball on the roof that rises halfway up its pole at 12.55pm daily throughout the year, reaches the top at 12.58pm and drops at exactly 1pm. It was erected in 1833. The ball provided a way for ships to check their time.

**Ranger's House** is an elegant Georgian villa in Greenwich Park which houses The Wernher Collection, a remarkable collection of works of art amassed by diamond magnate Sir Julius Wernher(1850-1912).

### **Queens House**

The Queen's House was designed by Inigo Jones in 1616, introducing Palladian architecture to England. It is admired for its Great Hall and Tulip Staircase. The house was given by Charles I to his French wife Henrietta Maria in 1635. The Queen's House is now part of the National Maritime Museum. It is home to 'Art for the Nation', a major exhibition that brings together 200 of the museum's finest works of art.

Nearly 700 works of art are on display, including early religious paintings and Dutch Old Masters, minute carved Gothic ivories, fine Renaissance bronzes and silver treasures revealing the genius of medieval craftsmen and the unparalleled quality of Renaissance decorative arts. The collection includes paintings by Gainsborough, Hogarth and Reynolds.

Return to Waterloo via London Bridge.