

# Fetcham U3A

## Explore London Group 6

### The Regents Canal

#### Little Venice to Camden

The Regent's Canal was built in the early 19th Century to link the River Thames at Limehouse to the Grand Union Canal junction at Paddington. One of the directors of the canal company was architect John Nash, famously commissioned by the Prince Regent (later George IV) to design Regent's park and the surrounding curved terraces. Nash's association with the Prince facilitated the Royal approval needed in naming the canal in his honour.

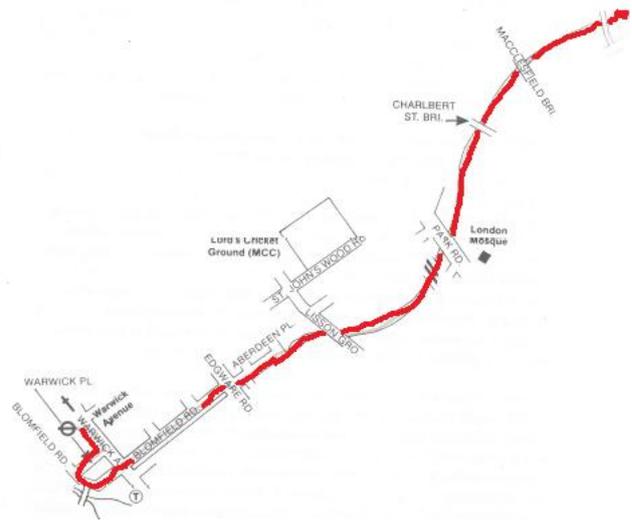
The Regent's Canal was finally completed and opened in 1820 at a total cost of £772,000, twice the original budget. After major engineering difficulties and accusations of financial embezzlement, the Canal successfully carried 120,000 tons of cargo through London in its first year. It was deemed a success.

The Regent's Canal is eight and a half miles long and flows from Little Venice through Camden and past Islington, Hackney and Tower Hamlets before it finally enters the Thames at Limehouse Basin in the East End.

This walk starts at the picturesque Little Venice and takes you through the beautiful green corridor of The Regent's Canal, Primrose Hill and St John's Wood. An area rich in history, this corner of London has played a significant part in the capital's development both economically and culturally. Boasting former residents of writers, artists and inventors this area has always been somewhat avant-garde and is now home to some of London's most desirable addresses.

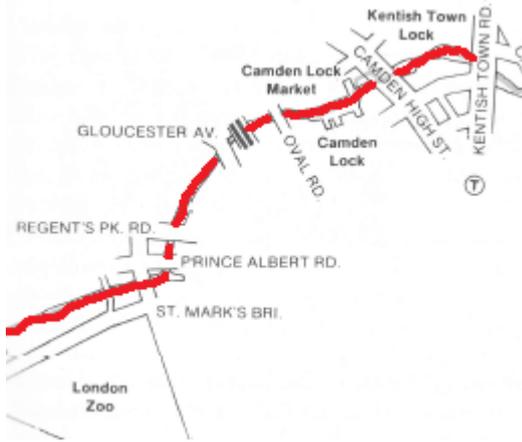
**Pool of Little Venice** - Take the left exit out of Warwick Avenue tube and, after climbing the stairs, walk straight ahead and take the first road on the right, Warwick Place. At the end of the road turn left and walk over Westbourne Terrace Road Bridge. On the right hand side of the bridge is the Old Toll House which dates from 1812. On the left is the Pool of Little Venice, so named by the poet Robert Browning who lived overlooking the canal

**Edgware Road** - On the bridge turn left towards the slope. Here you will find a footbridge back over the canal. Cross the footbridge on to the towpath opposite the Waterside Cafe and sign-posted to Camden and Regent's Park. Following the towpath under Warwick Avenue Bridge you will reach the pretty residential moorings of Blomfield Road, one of the most prestigious canal



mooring sites in London. Turn off the towpath onto Blomfield Road for a hundred metres. At the end of Blomfield Road the canal disappears into the Maida Hill Tunnel

**Lisson Grove** - The Crockers was built in anticipation of a new railway terminal which was eventually built further South at Marylebone. Continue straight ahead and along the pathway sign-posted Regent's Canal. Walk down the steep flight of steps and back onto the canal towpath. You have now reached Lisson Grove



**Regents Park** - Originally Nash intended to have The Regent's Canal running through the middle of the park although he was persuaded that the bad language of the Navvies would offend the refined residents of the area so altered his plans. Nash had plans to build 56 villas in Regent's Park, however only eight were completed.

**London Zoo** - Continuing along the towpath you will pass under two bridges. The first is an aqueduct carrying the forgotten River Tyburn over the canal.

The second is the notorious Maclesfield Bridge or 'Blow up Bridge'. Here, in 1874, a barge carrying gunpowder exploded and destroyed the bridge. Evidence of the explosion can be found on a nearby plane tree which survived the blast. Passing underneath the bridge the famous Snowdon aviary of London Zoo will come into view. Opened in 1965, the aviary was pioneering in engineering terms.

**Camden Lock** - Ahead you will see the Feng Shang Chinese floating restaurant moored in Cumberland Basin. This arm of the canal used to stretch towards Euston station but was largely filled in with bomb rubble after the Second World War. At this point the canal takes a sharp turn to the left towards Camden. From Cumberland Basin, Camden Lock is approximately five or ten minutes walk along the towpath. Ahead, the modern bridge built in the style of a medieval castle is known as the Pirate Castle. On the right-hand side is a youth club called the Pirate Club and on the left hand side is a pumping station for the electricity network. Electricity cables have been laid under the towpath to bring power to central London from the power stations on the Thames estuary and pumping stations like this one circulate water round the cables to keep them cool.

**Camden Lock Market**, - an old wharf was converted into an arts and crafts centre & antiques market. Camden is best known for its alternative and vibrant market scene, which centres on a cobbled courtyard just off the canal. Camden Lock Market is particularly lively at weekends and is a great place to break from the walk for shopping and refreshments. With its unique stalls, amazing smells and incredible atmosphere, Camden has an energetic personality that you'll find contagious