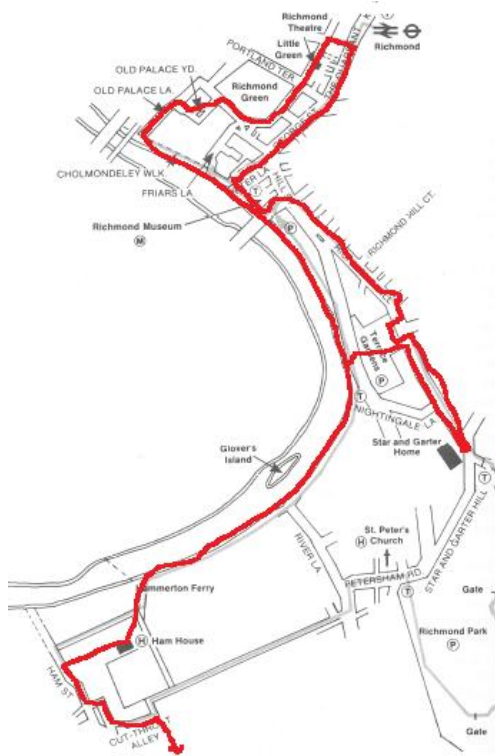


Fetcham U3A

Explore London Group 6

Richmond



This circular walk starts at the foot of Richmond Hill in Buccleugh Gardens once the grounds of Buccleugh House. Nothing remains of the house except the brick shelter on the right and, just beyond, the tunnel that led from the house to more gardens on the other side of Petersham Road. Now a public park called Terrace Gardens there is still a fine river god statue which the then occupant of Buccleugh House bought from the Coade factory at Lambeth in 1781

Explanatory panels in the middle of the top Terrace pinpoint the main landmarks in the panorama. Directly ahead, the roof of Ham House is visible above the trees to the left of the river; below are Petersham Meadows and the white Petersham Lodge; to the left of the meadows are Petersham House and Petersham Church.

The large brick building near left is the Petersham Hotel. Behind you is Downe House, the home of Rolling Stone Mick Jagger. The Wick on the corner belongs to The Who's Pete Townshend. Wick House was built for painter Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1771. It now a hostel for nurses at the Royal Star and Garter Home on the summit of the hill.

Founded after World War I, the Star and Garter cares for disabled servicemen and takes its name from its predecessor on the site, the Star and Garter Hotel, opened in 1738. Like other hotels and inns on the river, the Star and Garter's heyday came in the 19th century when hordes of visitors travelled out from London on the new railway in search of fun and fresh air. The novelist Charles Dickens held an annual private dinner at the hotel to celebrate his wedding anniversary. Fire put an end to the hotel in 1870.

Return back down the hill towards Richmond Green. In Tudor times this green served as the jousting field of the royal palace which was situated in the far right corner. Much later, houses, many of which remain, were built along the left and far sides of the green for court attendants and servants. The best of these houses are at the opposite end in Old Palace Terrace and Old Palace Place and further round to the right in Maids of Honour Row. The latter was built in 1724 for the maids of honour attending on the Princess of Wales, Princess Caroline of Anspach. Newer houses occupy the other two sides of the green. The old palace gatehouse has Henry VII's arms above the arch into Old Palace Yard.

There had been a royal house at Richmond throughout the medieval period but Henry VII, who preferred this palace to all his others, was the first to make it his major royal residence. He even changed its name from Shene to Richmond after the earldom of Richmond in Yorkshire. Elizabeth I, was the last monarch to use the palace. Most of it was demolished after Charles 1st execution in 1649.

Leave the Yard via the path marked by two white bollards in the far right corner. Turn left into Old Palace Lane and walk down towards the river past the White Swan pub..At the end of the lane on the left House, built in 1758 for Sir Charles Asgill, banker and City lord mayor. A stone plaque on the wall records that the royal palace extended to the river here and that Edward III, Henry VII and Elizabeth I.

Walk to the left along the Thames towpath (here called Cholmondeley Walk) past the gardens of Asgill House, with its superb copper beech and gazebo, and then the gardens of Trumpeters' House, the garden front visible at the end of a long lawn framed by trees,. On the left, Friar Lane, marking the site of the Franciscan friary of Shene founded by Henry VII in 1501, now joins the riverside. Next on the left is Water Lane by the White Cross Hotel (the friary's badge was a white cross). Beyond Water Lane is a terraced garden with a 1980s'development of neo-Georgian offices on top of the bank. The Victorian building on the left is the old Richmond town hall, now the central library tourist information office and local museum

Walk along side of the Thames pasts the Boat Houses and the cows grazing in the Petersham Water Meadows. . Walk past Ham Polo Club to the end of the avenue by the garden wall to Ham House. Now owned by the National Trust and open to the public, this fine Stuart house was the home of the Earls of Dysart until 1948. The first earl was granted the house, along with other property in Ham and Petersham, by Charles I in 1637.The earl had grown up with the king and, some say, had been his whipping boy: whenever the young prince did anything wrong, it was poor Dysart that was punished for it, not the prince.

In Petersham's little parish church lays the grave of George Vancouver, discoverer of Vancouver Island. Described in the 18th century as the most elegant village in England, Petersham still has many fine houses today. Opposite is Montrose House, built for a judge around 1700; the Dowager Duchess of Montrose lived here in the Richmond in the 1840s. Petersham House was built around 1674 .Beyond is Rutland Lodge, built in the 1660s and occupied by the Duchess of Rutland in the 1740s.